Doctoral Dissertation

The Proto-Myth of
Stephen the Great of Moldavia
By Teodora Artimon

Supervisor: Prof. Gerhard Jaritz

Submitted to the Medieval Studies Department, and
the Doctoral School of History
Central European University, Budapest

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Medieval Studies,
and
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

Budapest
2015

Acknowledgements

This entire doctoral dissertation would not have existed without the constant help and care of Gerhard Jaritz who literally picked me up when I was at my lowest and taught me how to continue and surpass myself in this five-year PhD journey. I thank you for everything you taught me, for enlarging my horizons, for making me feel that I can and should trust my own endeavours; I thank you for your kindness, your patience, and your unbelievable support! And I thank you for your laughter whenever you proved me that I was about to say or write something stupid!

I would like to thank Marcell Sebők who was always next to me from the very beginning of my journey at CEU. I thank you for embracing my not-so-orthodox methods of studying the Middle Ages, for encouraging me to continue on this path, and for inevitably becoming my partner in crime! Your support was and still is priceless!

I would also like to thank Gábor Klaniczay whose encouragements I have felt all throughout these years and who helped me shape my dissertation in its final stages. I thank you for all your help, for your openness to helping me strive, and for the kindness with which you always welcomed me!

I would like to thank everybody at the Medieval Studies Department, professors, coordinators, colleagues. You all helped me become a better scholar and a better person! And I particularly thank you, Csilla Dobos, for literally making me feel at home whenever I entered the 4th floor of the Nádor 9 building!

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family. You are my everything!

Table of Contents

List of Illustrations

Prologue

1486.

"In the month of March, the sixth day, on a Monday, Prince Stephen clashed with Hronoda at Bulgari, by a river named Siret. Then Peter Hronoda defeated Prince Stephen and won the battle and Prince Stephen fell off his horse and lay there among the dead from morning until noon. Then a boyar came riding his horse, named Purice, who recognized Prince Stephen. Then he took the Prince out of there, so that he was able to gather his army and send to [the new] Prince Peter a boyar named Pântece who subdued to Prince Peter and took him out of the battle after he convinced him that he had won it. And together with his troops, he beheaded Prince Peter and brought his head to Prince Stephen. This way, Prince Stephen remained the sovereign of his land, with the help of God."[1] *

***

The clash known as the Battle of Şcheia, where Stephen the Great of Moldavia (1457-1504) almost lost his throne and life, represented a critical juncture in his reign, although scarcely recorded and remembered. The prince's initial defeat, as well as his inability to rise from the ground and return to the battle field, were in profound contrast with the image he reflected (and wanted to have reflected) upon his subjects. As an unsurprising consequence, the official chronicles failed to detail the event and to name the two saviours of the Moldavian ruler:[2] the boyars Purice and Pântece. Just as unsurprisingly, the development of Stephen's image after his death continued to allow his anti-mythical characteristics to fall into oblivion. Nevertheless, the complex image of Stephen the Great can and should be retrieved from the mist of history. Who was the man behind Stephen's myth and how was his myth founded? The following pages will take the reader on a journey into the foundation period of Stephen the Great's myth, when his positive and negative traits were still present, known, and mingled: the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. This period of "germination," which may also be known as Stephen's proto-myth, is a subject which seems to not have been emphasised thoroughly, regardless of its intriguing aspect. This is a period when events such as Stephen's fall of his horse blend with testimonies of successful battles in order to create exceptional stories and memories of the prince. It is the beginning of the transformation of a man with outstanding military and political skills into a myth with remarkable resonation in posterity.

---

[1] "Cronica Moldo-Germană" [The Moldavian-German Chronicle], in Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică [Stephen the Great and the Saint. Portraits in chronicles] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 22. (henceforth: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle").

* Most translations of this dissertation were done by the author. Where it is not stated otherwise, it should be implied that the author is the translator.

[2] The only exception is the "Moldavian-German Chronicle," cited above.

Introduction

… then Prince Stephen came…[3]
The Moldavian-German Chronicle

Everybody needs a (medieval) hero

No community can exist without its heroes and saviours. Every society needs one or more emblematic figures which can represent its hopes and aspirations. Regardless if these figures are remembered in times of crisis or in times of well-being, they never cease to be part of the engine which animates a community. An endless list of great men who became national heroes may be compiled, among them France's and Germany's Charlemagne,[4] Lithuania's Vytautas the Great,[5] Hungary's Matthias Corvinus,[6] Albania's George Kastrioti Skanderbeg,[7] Switzerland's William Tell,[8] the Dutch William of Orange,[9] and others. Their names and achievements have been used in particular periods of time in order to energize their originating communities. Charlemagne's "afterlife" is signifcant as after his death, the Frankish Empire was divided and weakened so that in the troubling and unstable upcoming period, Charlemagne's time was looked back at as the long-vanished Golden Age.[10] The emperor's reputation grew so that by the twelfth century he was canonised and had his memory kept alive by *chansons de geste*, such as the Song of Roland. Medieval chroniclers as early as the twelfth century and, later on, Renaissance writers asserted that he liberated Jerusalem some three hundred years before the first crusade.[11] Twelfth- and thirteenth-century chroniclers told the story of Charlemagne's journey into the East as a historical fact, while

---

[3] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 22.

[4] See, for instance: Rosamond McKitterick, *Charlemagne. The Formation of a European Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[5] Giedre Mickunaite, *Making a Great Ruler. Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006).

[6] See: Péter E. Kovács, *Mátyás, a reneszánsz király* [Matthias, the king of the Renaissance] (Budapest: Officina, 2008) or András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest: Balassi, 2008).

[7] Kristo Frashëri, *George Kastrioti-Scanderbeg: The National Hero of the Albanians (1405-1468)* (Tirana: Naim Frashëri, 1962).

[8] For the transformation of historical William Tell into a legend, see: Randolph C. Head, "William Tell and His Comrades: Association and Fraternity in the Propaganda of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Switzerland," *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 527-557.

[9] For a recent study on William of Orange, see: Bryan Bevan, *King William III: Prince of Orange, the First European* (London: Rubicon, 2004).

[10] Lawrence S. Cunningham and John J. Reich, *Culture and Values. A Survey of the Humanities* (Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), 195.

[11] See chapter "<Charlemagne and the East> in France" in Anne Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 215-251.

2

humanists such as Petrarch also reacted to the legend. In fact, in his *Canzoniere*, Petrarch invoked the figure of the emperor as a crusader and role model for Philip the Fair,[12] in a time when conquering Jerusalem was seen as vital for Christians. Charlemagne was transformed into a flawless crusader, while other great medieval men went through similar processes of metamorphosis and became the heroes that the society needed to have. From this perspective, the "afterlife" of such a ruler is more unpredictable than the actual life of that very ruler.

Mythical contexts beyond the Middle Ages: the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries

When studying the mythical character of a ruler such as Charlemagne, a pattern becomes visible. Myths are in continuous transformation, just like the myth of this dissertation's main character, Stephen the Great of Moldavia. In order to comprehend the rise of Stephen's myth, one must examine its path, its shifts, and mutations. While this study will focus on the very foundation layers of Stephen's myth, it is essential to also understand something which may be called the "explosion" of the myth, when Stephen the Great irrevocably entered the realm of myth in Romanian consciousness, starting with the eighteenth century. Once the dimension of Stephen's image starting from the early modern period until today is understood, the need to explore the origin of his myth becomes apparent.

The historian Lucian Boia discusses history as comprised of two separate and successive histories. The first type of history was represented by a world which almost never changed, with people living in small communities where time passed unaltered. The second type of history is different: starting with the eighteenth century, the world entered the rapidly-moving modernity which meant that, as generations passed, the traditional structures which characterized the first type of history broke and were replaced by invention.[13] The world stepped into the new age of inventions and the modern world was born. Once in this new realm, may history have also started to be invented? The answer is "yes" because with the eighteenth century, humanity plunged into a world marked not only by a stronger self-consciousness, but also by a newer sense of national consciousness. It was this environment that waved the starting flag for the national myth-building projects which sheltered and brought up national heroes such as Stephen the Great. In Romanian history, the eighteenth and especially nineteenth centuries were frail periods which built on symbols for unity and safety. The necessity for these symbols grew, reaching a peak with the 1859 union of

---

[12] For more on the legends of Charlemagne and their development, see: Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 32-43.

[13] For a more thorough explanation of the two types of history, see: Lucian Boia, *Două secole de mitologie naţională* [Two Centuries of National Mythology] (Bucharest, Humanitas: 2011), 6.

the Moldavian and Wallachian principalities, when some of the pro-union arguments were based on the image of past heroes.[14] The supporters of the union initiated a programme which had a particular specificity for the mid-nineteenth century and for the newly-established Romanian state: politicians and historians such as Nicolae Bălcescu or Mihail Kogălniceanu presented national heroes with attributes of hope and protection.[15]

Beginning with the nineteenth century, the construction of national mythologies started to legitimately take shape and new interpretations of Romania's essential figures were welcomed into historiography. It was a process of mutation where although historical truth was not the primary concern, the pieces of this truth were reassembled in a way that Romania's history received a new and more emotional meaning.[16] Facts were subtly manipulated and, as a consequence, the Romanian pantheon of heroes started to be populated.

The "pantheon" is the collection of myths and heroes which history, historians, literary writers, artists, and others have built. The pantheon is full of symbolism and the historical myths that it gathers indicate an ethical code and a behavioural model – they must therefore be understood as guiding principles for its (Romanian) community.[17] The myth is thus oriented on the needs and ambitions of its community and is meant to inspire it. It moulds on the personality of that community so that it not only captivates the minds and hearts of its people, but it also speaks to a great variety of individuals. It is a social statement that represents the desires of the present based on the deeds of the past. Thus, the myth is deliberately fictionalized and manufactured.[18]

The Romanian pantheon of the nineteenth century, as theorized by Boia, consisted almost exclusively of rulers. These rulers were chosen by criteria such as their Romanian national spirit, their European value, or their implementation of authority: the ideal ruler, member of the pantheon, had to be a veritable Romanian with a European spirit, as well as a solid sovereign, capable to ensure the stability and prosperity of his country.[19] The first central figure of the pantheon was the Roman Emperor Trajan, who, having conquered Ancient Dacia in 106 AD, annexed it to his empire thus giving

---

[14] As the principalities united under the sole Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza and as the aftermath of this union unfolded, historians and writers started to lean on the image of characters such as Trajan of ancient Dacia, Mircea the Old of Wallachia, Stephen the Great and especially Michael the Brave of Wallachia, in order to support their pro-"Romanianness" arguments.

[15] Lucian Boia says that humanity has two great needs, protection and hope, and that these needs are what mark both the factual history and the history of the imaginary. See: Boia, *Două secole de mitologie naţională*, 8.

[16] As Lucian Boia points out, "new colours are never invented, only combinations of existing colours." See: Ibidem, 24.

[17] For more on the understanding of myths, see: Lucian Boia, *Istorie şi mit în conştiinţa românească* [History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2010), 67.

[18] Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhof, "Introduction: Myth in History, History in Myth," in *Myth in History, History in Myth*, ed. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhof (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 9.

[19] For a thorough explanation of the Romanian pantheon, its genesis and its hero-components, see: Boia, *Istorie şi mit*, 371-380.

birth to a Roman-Dacian mixture which supposedly developed into the Romanian people. The next figure was represented by both Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave of Wallachia, who both occupied an equally important place. They were symbols for preserving the Romanian integrity by means of withstanding the threat of Ottoman occupation, but not only. While they were both regarded as ultimate warriors, they also had certain extra-attributes which allowed them to go up the scale of the pantheon: Stephen was the preserver of Christian Orthodoxy and a warrior-saint by excellence, and Michael received the role of the first man to ever unify the principalities of Moldavia, Wallachia, and Transylvania, in a presumably supreme desire of the Romanians' unification.[20]

Entering the twentieth century, one can still notice the same names in the pantheon, but with certain changes in their hierarchy. Some characters became more important, while others faded away. As time progressed, new names were added, such as those of the members of Romania's Royal House. Charles I of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, the first king of Romania, entered the realm of myth while still alive.[21] In the first half of the twentieth century, medieval princes were left aside, allowing the double-image of Emperor Trajan and King Charles I to emerge in a mythical "imperial parallel,"[22] accompanied by the followers of the first king, Ferdinand and Charles II, who all propagated their own mythologies. Medieval heroes however remained present in collective memory and they became once more visible with the communist era. In the first stage of communism, medieval princes were only appreciated if they oppressed noble power and fully supported the well-being of the masses – therefore, rulers like Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave still did not ascend back to the upper "seats" of the pantheon, as they were supporters of the noble class.[23] During this time, the pantheon was headed by the leader of the Communist Party, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej,[24] followed by other personalities who led various popular revolts for the good of the masses. During the second stage of Communism, led by Nicolae Ceauşescu, medieval princes returned to the top. Based on the ideology that people should surround the leader of the state, Ceauşescu, putting

---

[20] Other historical characters followed Stephen and Michael, such as Mircea the Old of Wallachia, Alexander the Good, Vlad the Impaler, Peter Rareş, Neagoe Basarab, Vasile Lupu or Constantin Brâncoveanu, but they are less important for the purpose of this dissertation.

[21] Charles I ruled for 48 years, having the longest reign in Romanian history, this also being part of the reason why he entered the pantheon while he was still alive. A parallel will be noticeable, as the same happened to Stephen the Great, who ruled for 47 years and had already entered the mythical realm by the end of his life. For a thorough presentation of Charles I's reign, see: Vasile Docea, *Carol I şi monarhia constituţională. Interpretări istorice* [Charles I and the Constitutional Monarchy. Historical Interpretations] (Timişoara: Presa Universitară Română, 2001).

[22] Lucian Boia emphasizes what he calls the "imperial parallel" between Trajan and Charles I. The historian says that the year 1906, Charles' 40th jubilee, is marked by the simplification of the pantheon's structure as now the foundations of Trajan (thus, of the Romanian peoples) and or Charles (of the Romanian kingdom) are considered to be the most relevant, while all the other ones, of the Middle Ages, are seen as transitory and incomplete. See: Boia, *Istorie şi mit*, 390-395.

[23] Ibidem.

[24] Ibidem.

5

himself at the head of the pantheon, surrounded himself with leaders who were beloved by their people – Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Vlad the Impaler, Michael the Old, Neagoe Basarab, were all restored in high places. They remained on these places even after 1989, when although the pantheon left aside its communist personalities, it did not change as radically as one would expect: the principles of unity and authority remained imperative so the medieval heroes of this dissertation remained "alive" up until today.[25]

About the proto-myth

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyze the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century image of Stephen the Great in order to reveal the matrix of his myth's foundation – which will be called, further on, the "proto-myth." Condensed between 1457 and the end of the sixteenth century, the proto-myth represented the "birth" of Stephen's afterlife in the realm of Moldavian (and afterwards, Romanian) social imaginary.[26] Because of this reason, it should be seen as a rather fluctuating and uncertain period from a mythical point of view, bestowing on Stephen uncrystallized, yet already perceivable characteristics (such as occasionally being perceived as saint, but not canonized). It will be seen that all the "ingredients" which formed the myth of Stephen starting with the seventeenth century existed before the sixteenth century, allowing the study of the proto-myth: the prince was identified with the image of a genuine warrior and strategist, a saint, a successful administrator, a good Christian, an invincible ruler.

Stephen began to be perceived as invincible starting with his early military successes and culminating with the 1475 victory of the Battle of Vaslui, against the Ottoman army. This victory dazzled his contemporaries and set the path towards the creation of the prince's image. This path was formed of two intrinsic elements of image creation: self-fashioning in the fifteenth century and the propagation of this self-fashioning in the sixteenth century. Although self-fashioning was theorized with prevalence to the sixteenth-century Renaissance and the early modern period,[27] the conscious idea of fashioning human identity through manipulable and artful processes existed throughout history and may be easily applied to the intentions of Stephen the Great. Consequently, this dissertation will highlight the process of "making" the ruler (with stress on image creation strategies, particular features – such as his affinity for the Byzantine legacy – and appearance),

---

[25] For a thorough explanation of the information presented on the development of the pantheon since the nineteenth century up to this day, see: Ibidem, 368-453.

[26] In this dissertation the term "imaginary" or "social imaginary" is used in the sense of cultural belief (both an ethos as theorized by Cornelius Castoriadis and a fantasy as theorized by Jacques Lacan) of a certain group of people. See more: Claudia Strauss, "The Imaginary," *Anthropological Theory* 6 (2006): 322–344.

[27] See: Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

resulting in a distinct style, a pattern which was then propagated in the sixteenth century by his successors. It will frame the transformation of the self into a distinctive character and personality.

It is particularly relevant to observe the connection between self-fashioning and the achievement of mythical status. Self-fashioning occurs at the point of encounter between an absolute power or authority (God and Christianity, in the case of Stephen) and something perceived as negative, alien, or hostile (the pagan Other, mainly the Ottomans in the case of Stephen). Further on, this encounter produces an identity which is formed on the one hand by positive feelings of success and on the other hand by some loss of self resulting from the experience of threat.[28] Therefore, the construction of Stephen's image during his lifetime relied on the "conflict" between how Stephen and his court perceived him(self) individually and how Stephen and his court perceived him(self) in connection to an external threat. Similarly, the dichotomy between divine and demonic forces, light and darkness, good and evil inherently leads to the construction of myth. The dramatic encounter between the good and the bad leads to the deification of the one perceived positively and the demonization of the one perceived negatively.[29] Stephen's path into the mythical realm was possible because of these two processes: his self-fashioning (done internally, as a sign of his own self-perception) and his deification (done externally, by the ones who perceived him from the outside).

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, all of which present and comment upon particular facets of the Moldavian ruler's myth-making process. They present (more or less chronologically) the methods (employed intentionally or unintentionally) which built the foundations of the myth. While the dissertation browses through the most relevant aspects of the life and reign of Stephen the Great, it focuses on how these aspects influenced the machinery which enhanced the ruler's image. Undoubtedly, Stephen the Great was not alone when he started the so-called dynastic project or his church-building campaign, and the first part of the dissertation shows how these enterprises were fulfilled. With the help of the Royal Council and the Church, Stephen reached a level of self-fashioning never reached before in Moldavia: his image was enhanced by founding a large number of churches and monasteries, by embellishing them with innovative architectural elements and iconography, by presenting the ruler with the attitude and attributes of an emperor, by commissioning chronicles and votive images recording the prince's deeds and showing his image, by (re)creating his own history and his own time, by publicly commemorating both military success and defeats, and so on. Further on, in the sixteenth century, the successors of Stephen followed in the footsteps of their predecessor and continued, as much as the circumstances allowed, his cultural, political, and even mythical legacy. Stephen became a role model in the sixteenth century and all the

---

[28] See an overview of the conditions common to most instances of self-fashioning in: Ibidem, 8-9.

[29] Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet, "Introduction: Of Myths and Men," in *Haunted by History. Myths in International Relations*, ed. Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 1998), 8.

manouvers which hinted to this are presented in the second part of the thesis. While Stephen drew on the examples of early "Great" emperors and possibly on contemporary royal and imperial examples, his successors also added Stephen to their inventory of role models. Furthermore, Stephen's image was promoted by non-princely means which crystallized in the collective memory of the sixteenth century: songs were sang about him, his votive images were visible in a high number of locations (including in Wallachia), his battle pillars were still visible as signs of his victorious allure, certain battle fields such as that of Codrii Cozminului were still imbibed with fear for certain Moldavian enemies, and so on.

Concluding, this dissertation is comprised of two parts: the fifteenth-century life of Stephen the Great and his sixteenth-century afterlife. This dissertation should be seen, altogether, as an account of the "invention" of Stephen the Great in its very early stages.

Sources and methodological approaches

The image of Stephen the Great abounds in sources springing from the time of his reign until the post-modern period. This dissertation will solely review the sources of the proto-mythical time span, revealing various types of Stephen's image: his image as he had it reflected to his subjects during his reign; his image as reflected through his successors; his public image in the sixteenth century in Moldavia; the dichotomy between his positive and negative images outside the borders of Moldavia, both within the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. In order to reconstruct these images, different approaches will be used, categorized in three layers:

- The fifteenth-century layer: Stephen's heroic traits will be extracted from written sources and coupled with the imagery he commissioned in order to reveal the original ruling "programmeme" which served as foundation for Stephen's myth
- The sixteenth-century layer: the reflection of Stephen's patterns within the reigns of his successors in the sixteenth century, both on written and visual levels, thus revealing the proportion of Stephen's influence within these reigns
- The proto-mythical layer: a comparative approach between the heroic features (including traits of character, diplomatic and military strategies, symbolic commissions, reflections of observers, etc.) of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in a way which will uncover the continuity of Stephen's image within the sixteenth century, both as model and myth.

For all these three layers, both material and written sources will be used. In the category of material sources, the most abundant ones will be monastic commissions (of both Stephen the Great and his

successors) with their foundation inscriptions and interior and exterior iconographies with focus on specific mural scenes, although items such as vestments will also be evaluated. Within the sphere of written sources, the most plentiful are chronicles commissioned in the time of both Stephen the Great and his successors: for fifteenth-century-related events, The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia, The Moldavian-German Chronicle, The Chronicles of Putna no. I and II, The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle; while for the sixteenth century and the rulers of the first half of this century, the three chronicles of Macarie, Eftimie, and Azarie are particularly revealing. Further on, external chronicles are just as significant for the reconstruction of mythical Stephen: Polish sources such as Jan Długosz's *Historia Polonica*, Maciej Miechowita's *Chronica Polonorum*, Maciej Stryjkowski's *Kronika Polska*, and others; parts of Hungarian chronicles such as Antonio Bonfini's *Historia Pannonica*, Miklós Istvánffy's *Historia Regni Hungarici*, and others; relevant sections of German chronicles such as Jakob Unrest's *Chronicon Austriacum*; a significant variety of Ottoman sources belonging to chroniclers such as Tursun bei, Aşık paşazade, Mehmed Neşri, and others. Additionally, letters and charters springing from both inside and outside Moldavia will be part of the discussions, the most significant and famous of which are probably the letter written by Stephen the Great in 1475 to the Christian rulers; Pope Sixtus IV's letter to Stephen of the same year and of 1476; Stephen's Venetian physician Matteo Muriano's reports from Moldavia; various Polish-Moldavian, Ottoman-Moldavian treaties, as well as a bulk of communication between the neighbours of Moldavia regarding Prince Stephen; and many other similar official documents.

Stephen the Great's image will be explored within the frame of accounts which may be interpreted as mythically-suggestive. All the sources which hint to a super-human aura of the ruler will be collected, analyzed, compared to each other, and eventually included within a larger frame which signals the beginning of Stephen's myth. The sixteenth century, coupled with the end of the fifteenth century, will be seen as the engine which animated an image which is just as present in today's twenty-first century, as it was during the so-called period of the "proto-myth."

Chapter I

"Realities" of Stephen the Great

Ecce homo!

When browsing through the Romanian pantheon of national heroes, one can notice that Stephen the Great never left it. Although his presence in the pantheon fluctuated and was sometimes barely visible, his continuity exists. Stephen's "afterlife" was however not created by the early modern and modern Pantheon: rather, it began soon after the ruler's death and has still not ended today, his imaginary continually shifting and changing over the past 500 years.

When discussing the afterlife of the Moldavian prince, the fine line between the "real"[30] and the imagined should be pointed out, as well as the relationship between the two. Generally speaking, the connection between the "real" and the imagined is often times scarce, if not completely inexistent.[31] So who was the ruler and how was his image reflected after his death in 1504? How were his military and political enterprises portrayed after he died? What was the connection between his religious commissions and his saintly-like image? The next two chapters will dwell upon the historial "realities" of Stephen the Great, ending with the discussion of Stephen's transition into the realm of imaginary and myth starting from the sixteenth century up until the twentieth century.

Stephen's historical "reality" began sometime between 1437 and 1439, at the time of his birth[32] when, as Constantin C. Giurescu observed, Moldavia entered "the most beautiful period in its entire history."[33] Not much is known about the ruler's early years, before his enthronement. It is certain however that he was the son of Bogdan II and most likely the grandson of Alexander the Good.[34] It is also clear that his mother was *doamna* Oltea,[35] also known in some sources as Maria, and that he spent the first years of his life in a village named Borzeşti, where his father was born.

---

[30] As much as historical truth can be considered "real."

[31] On historical imagination, see: Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 1-43.

[32] The exact date of the ruler's birth can only be estimated. Various dates have been proposed, of which the most probable is the 1437-1439 interval. See: Leon Simanschi, "Formarea personalităţii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [The Formation of Stephen the Great's Personality], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt – Portret în Istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great – Historical Portrait], ed. Maria Magdalena Székely and Ştefan S. Gorovei (Putna: Muşatinii, 2003), 36 and Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior. O istorie a lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Princeps Omni Laude Maior. A History of Stephen the Great] (Putna: Muşatinii, 2005), 10-11.

[33] Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până la moartea regelui Ferdinand* [The History of the Romanians from the Oldest Times to the Death of King Ferdinand] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 139.

[34] The ascendance of Bogdan II is uncertain: he may be either the son of Alexander the Good himself or the son of Alexander's brother, therefore Alexander's nephew. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni laude Maior*, 9.

In 1450, his name appears for the first time in an official document next to the title of *voivode/prince*: on the 11th of February, Bogdan II associated his son to the throne in a document which vowed loyalty to the Hungarian Kingdom's governor, John Hunyadi.[36] Starting with this document, one can notice a variety of documents which attest the hereditary aspect of Stephen's reign and his connection to his predecessors.[37] One year after the 1450 document was issued, Bogdan II was murdered and the whereabouts of Stephen from this date to the date of his enthronement became unclear. The soon-to-be prince might have taken refuge in John Hunyadi's Transylvania, in Vlad the Impaler's Wallachia,[38] or even on the territory of the Ottoman Empire.[39]

Stephen's first recorded act after 1451 materialized in 1457 when he entered Moldavia with about 6000 people gathered from Lower Moldavia and Wallachia.[40] Peter III Aron, the man behind the execution of Stephen's father and the current ruler of Moldavia, was the target of Stephen's army. The battle was fought on April 12th at Doljeşti and resulted in the dethronement of Peter Aron, who fled to Poland. It was thus initially assumed that the enthronement of the new ruler, Stephen III, was made somewhere close to the battlefield, a place mentioned in chronicles as *Direptate:*

> And Prince Stephen gathered the great and small boyars and together with the Metropolitan Teoctist and many monks, at the place called Direptatea; and they were all asked: do all agree that he be your ruler? They all called out in one voice: May you rule for many years.[41]

---

[35] Stephen's mother will be named by her Romanian title, as there is no precise equivalent for the word *doamna* in English. *Doamna*, as the word itself says, is rooted in *domina*, an evident title for the leading lady of a kingdom or principality.

[36] *Documente moldoveneşti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare* [Moldavian documents dated before the time of Stephen the Great] II, ed. Mihai Costăchescu (Iaşi: Viaţa Românească, 1932), document no. 220; 751.

[37] Most of these documents were destined to foreign courts as on an internal level there was no need for the clarification of the hereditary aspect of Stephen's reign. See: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic – Stephen the Great's Titles. Diplomatic Tradition and Political Vocabulary," in *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 23 (2005), 50-51.

[38] Only hypotheses can be formulated about the whereabouts of Stephen during this period, the one regarding Stephen's stay at the court of Vlad the Impaler being the most plausible one (argued by historians from A.D. Xenopol to Maria Magdalena Székely). See, for instance: Ştefan S. Gorovei, *Muşatinii* [The Mushatin Dynasty] (Chişinău: Columna, 1991), 56.

[39] I would like to thank Ovidiu Cristea for this hint which highlighted the fact that Stephen's anti-Ottoman policies and alignment with the anti-Ottoman crusades, should not exclude a possible flee of young Stephen in the Ottoman Empire.

[40] "Prince Stephen, a son of Prince Bogdan, then came with a small army, with Wallachians, with the lower lands, having about 6000 people." See: "Cronica Moldo-Polonă" [The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portraits in chronicles] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 22. (henceforth: "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle").

[41] Grigore Ureche, *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], ed. Dan Horia Mazilu (Bucharest: Gramar, 2009), 35 (henceforth: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*). The account of Ureche is a later, seventeenth-century description. Contemporary sources describe the events in less detail: "Afterwards, the entire country was gathered with the Metropolitan Teoctist and he anointed him for the throne, on the River Siret, in a place named until today Dereptate." See: "Letopiseţul de la Putna I" [The Chronicle of Putna I], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 30. (henceforth: "The Chronicle of Putna I").

Nevertheless, the supposition that the coronation took place on a field and not in a princely church, as required by liturgical tradition, is an improbable and erroneous hypothesis.[42] It is most likely that the enthronement ceremony headed by the Metropolitan Teoctist I took place in the former capital of Moldavia, close to the princely palace of Siret, in the Church of the Holy Trinity.[43] Thus on April 12th 1457, Stephen inherited (or gained) an unbalanced and weak Moldavia. Since the death of Prince Alexander the Good in 1432, the principality went through a hectic period which weakened authority. The new ruler however guided the principality into a thriving period, leaving behind a politically unstable time marked by a series of rapidly-changing reigns approved only by noble parties.[44] Because of the power of the boyars, Stephen employed a series of methods (including large executions) in order to suppress their control – as the Polish Jan Dlugosz described, "by his harshness and righteousness, leaving no crime unpunished, he made them [the boyars] obey all his orders."[45] In fact, as a consequence of this rather hostile attitude of the prince, the relationship between him and his boyars remained characterized by an ever-present sense of suspicion throughout all of Stephen's reign. However, it was not the internal policies that gave Stephen's reign its fame, but the external deeds which were always intermingled within the Ottoman-Polish-Hungarian triangle.

A simple but well-defined periodization of Stephen's reign was made by the historians Maria Magdalena Székely and Ştefan S. Gorovei.[46] It implies three time slots: the 1457-1473 period, corresponding to the beginning and stabilization of the reign; the *Great Policy* (1473-1486), referring to the period of highest economical and military growth; and the *Great Prayer* (1486-1504), relating to the time of the numerous church and monastic commissions.

---

[42] The error of this hypothesis led to the misinterpretation and mistranslations of the chronicles. See: Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Ţara Românească şi Moldova* [A critical chronology of the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia] (Bucharest: Enciclopedica, 2001), 537-538.

[43] Dan Ioan Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Teoctist I and the princely anointment of Stephen the Great], in *Românii în Europa Medievală: între orientul bizantin şi occidentul latin* [Romanians in Medieval Europe: Between the Byzantine East and the Latin West] (Brăila: Istros, 2008), esp. 341-343.

[44] For more on the political situation surrounding the coronation of Stephen the Great, see: Leon Şimanschi and Dumitru Agache, "Înscăunarea lui Ştefan cel Mare: preliminarii şi consecinţe (1450-1460)" [The Enthronement of Stephen the Great: Preliminaries and Consequences (1450-1460)], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great. Historical Portrait] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003).

[45] *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor. Secolele XIV-*XVI [Collection of Documents regarding the History of the Romanians. Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries], ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Liliana Trofin (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii Bucureşti, 2006), 180. (henceforth: *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor*)

[46] The two historians outlined this periodization in their most recent monograph of Stephen the Great. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*.

1. Beginnings

There are three particular events which should be highlighted when discussing the first period: the conquest of the Chilia fortress, the conflict with the Hungarians at Baia, and the beginning of the conflict with the Wallachian prince.

Stephen the Great launched his reign with a series of military interventions into Hungarian territory. After his defeat, Peter Aron fled to Poland and then to the Hungarian Kingdom, where Stephen entered intending to capture the man who was still threatening his throne.[47] Peter Aron could not be captured however, but Stephen did not cease his attacks on the Hungarians. The boldest such attack took place in 1462 when the prince tried to gain control over the fortress of Chilia, which was at the time under Hungarian and Wallachian control.[48] The attack was unsuccessful and, moreover, the ruler's ankle was badly wounded[49] – a wound which would affect his health all throughout his life until his death.[50] The successful conquest of the Chilia fortress was possible only three years later, an event which did not thrill the Hungarian king, Matthias Corvinus, who "could not stand to be failed and disregarded by Stephen."[51] As a consequence, Matthias entered Moldavia with the purpose of dethroning Stephen and giving the throne back to Peter Aron. In December 1467, the two armies clashed by the town of Baia. Both sides were severly damaged, although Stephen seems to have won the battle,[52] while King Matthias was injured in the back by an arrow and thus forced to withdraw.[53] While the Battle of Baia largely put an end to the Moldavian-Hungarian dissentions, Stephen did not abandon the idea of capturing Peter Aron. He seems to have created a setup[54] for Peter in order to attract him back to Moldavia. Once he returned to Moldavia, he was "welcomed" by Stephen's army and Bogdan II's death was avenged with his decapitation.

---

[47] Peter Aron sought help at the court of the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus, where he was campaigning for the king's aid to support him regain the Moldavian throne. On the 5th of June 1461 however, Stephen tried a failed attack on Peter in Transylvania. See: "Letopiseţul de la Putna II" [The Chronicle of Putna II], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 33. (henceforth: "The Chronicle of Putna II").

[48] "In the month of July, the 22nd day, Prince Stephen came in front of Chilia and could not conquer it." See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 22.

[49] "…he was shot on his left ankle and then he left Chilia." See: Ibidem.

[50] Ironically, in a cyclic symbolism, one might argue that the wound gained in the first important battle led by Stephen the Great was also the wound that eventually contributed to his death.

[51] Jan Dlugosz about the battle of Baia in *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor*, 181.

[52] Many debates have been raised concerning the outcome of the battle of Baia with some historians arguing that the Moldavians won the battle and others arguing that the Hungarians did. See the history of the debates in: Alexandru Simon, "Valahii la Baia. Regatul Ungariei, Domnia Moldovei şi Imperiul Otoman în 1467 (The Wallachs in Baia. The Kingdom of Hungary, the Rule of Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire in 1467)," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A.D. Xenopol"* 46 (2009): 127-150.

[53] "Then King Matthias was shot by two arrows which he took with him out of the country." See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 23.

[54] Although the theory is still under debate, it seems that some of Stephen's boyars, pretending that they were not satisfied with the new ruler, wrote a fake letter to Peter Aron, asking him to return and to retake his righteous place as the prince of Moldavia. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 74.

The conflict with the Wallachian prince started during the first part of Stephen reign, in 1469, and lasted for over ten years. Radu the Fair, the ruler of Wallachia, was an ally of the Ottoman Empire, a fact which Stephen did not approve. Stephen wanted to replace Radu with a ruler with whom he would collaborate in his anti-Ottoman endoeavours, and to eventually transform Wallachia into a "Moldavian bastion."[55] The competition for the seat of Wallachia was full of twists as Radu the Fair was dethroned several times and replaced with Basarab Laiotă, the ruler appointed by Stephen. As a matter of fact, the intervention of Stephen in Wallachia was so intense that the Wallachian chronicle, *Letopiseţul Cantacuzinesc*, recorded that "the old Stephen of the Moldavian country … stood here in the country [Wallachia] and ruled for sixteen years."[56]

2. Conflicts

The period described as the *Great Policy* continued the conflict with Radu the Fair and Wallachia. Stephen the Great entered Wallachia accompanied by Basarab Laiotă and then provoked the military reply of Radu in 1473. The Wallachian was defeated and lost his throne, as well as his wife and daughter[57] who were taken into Moldavian captivity, but he returned one month later and removed Basarab Laiotă from his seat. Nevertheless, Stephen defeated Radu once more, although the latter was aided by an Ottoman army comprised of some 19.000 soldiers.[58] This ever-lasting enthronement-dethronement game with Radu the Fair[59] however fades away when compared to the events most eloquently identified with the *Great Policy* period: Moldavia's relationship with the Ottoman Empire.

In 1474, Basarab Laiotă, once more the prince of Wallachia, allied with the Ottomans but broke, at times, his fidelity to Stephen. Laiotă, like most Wallachian rulers,[60] understood that in order to remain on the seat of the principality he had to concede to the sultan, with whose force such a small piece of land as Wallachia could not rival. It seems that Stephen was the only one who genuinely believed that Wallachia could withstand the Ottoman power and this resulted in one of the

---

[55] See: Florin Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* [An Honest History of the Romanians] (Bucharest: Univers Encicopedic Gold, 2010), 110.

[56] *Cronicari munteni* [Wallachian Chroniclers] I, ed. Mihail Gregorian (Bucharest: Minerva, 1984), 55.

[57] Radu's daughter, Maria Voichita, was thus a prisoner at the Court of Suceava, only to later on become Stephen's third wife, the mother of the heir to the throne, Bogdan III.

[58] The Moldavian-German Chronicle recalls that Radu's army was formed of 13,000 Ottomans and 6,000 Wallachians. See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 24.

[59] All contemporary chronicles present the conflict between Stephen the Great and Radu the Fair. The most detailed however is "The Moldavian-German Chronicle." See the entire entry on this conflict in: Ibidem, 24-25.

[60] Basarab Laiotă was not the only one whom Stephen appointed prince of Wallachia but who politically betrayed him by allying with the Ottoman Empire. See: Ileana Cazan and Eugen Denize, *Marile puteri şi spaţiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* [The Great Powers and the Romanian Space in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries] (Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2001), 73-74.

main reasons for the beginning of the Ottoman-Moldavian conflict. There were several crucial causes which animated Sultan Mehmed II's anger towards the Danubian principality: Stephen the Great's endless interference in Wallachia; his refusal to pay Moldavia's tribute to the Ottoman Empire; and the conquest of the Chilia fortress, the port by the Danube, which the Ottomans wanted attached to their empire.[61] The tension between the Empire and Moldavia grew, but before an attack on Stephen's principality, the sultan gave him an ultimatum to pay his tribute. Aşîk Paşazade recalled how

> the sultan, with the help of Allah almighty, after he subdued the vilayets of all the unfaithful beys, he called to the Porte the ruler of Moldavia, and told him: "This time you will bring yourself the tribute, just like the tribute from the Wallachian vilayet is brought, and you will be with us just like the bey of Wallachia is, so that we know in which way you live with us." With these words the unfaithful was summoned, but he did not come and did not even take account of them [the sultan's words].[62]

Unsurprisingly, as Stephen decided to neglect the sultan's ultimatum, the attack on Moldavia was inevitable. It came in January 1475. The Ottoman army, formed of about 120.000 people as Maciej Stryjkowski estimated, plus a Wallachian army, headed by Paşa Suleyman, was sent towards Moldavia in the winter of 1474. Stephen the Great, based on the same estimation of Stryjkowski, had an army of around 40.000 people, to which an uncertain number of Polish soldiers were added together with 5.000 Szeklers and 1.800 Hungarians sent by King Matthias.[63] The numbers of the participants to the battle must have been highly exaggerated on both sides but it is nevertheless certain that there was a significant discrepancy between the two military forces. Being outnumbered, Stephen burnt the southern part of Moldavia thus making all subsistence resources perish.[64] It was

---

[61] These reasons were the engine for the beginning of the war between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. After the defeat of the Wallachian Prince Radu the Fair, the Sultan, already tired of Stephen's "misbehaviour," reacted quickly and violently. For a thorough explanation of the factors involved in the Ottoman-Moldavian conflict, see: Cazan and Denize, *Marile puteri şi spaţiul românesc*, 70-74.

[62] Aşîk Paşa Zade in Eugen Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună. Relaţiile turco-veneţiene şi influenţa lor asupra spaţiului românesc. Secolele XV-XVI* [The Romanians between the Lion and the Crescent Moon. The Ottoman-Venetian Relations and their Influence on the Romanian Space. Fifteenth-Sixteenth Centuries] (Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2009), 134.

[63] The numbers of the soldiers were estimated by Maciej Stryjkowski. See: Maciej Stryjkowski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 194.

[64] In the context of the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Danubian Principalities, Florin Constantiniu describes what he calls a medieval "asymmetric conflict," which refers to the clash between two numerically unequal armies. Constantiniu discusses the strategy used by the principalities in this type of conflict – always a defensive strategy, focused on a tactic meant to discourage the Ottoman conquest. This tactic implied avoiding an open-field battle and preventing the enemy from using its numerical and technical superiority. A demographic and economical void would be created by evacuating the population and destroying/burning the crops and houses located on the path of the enemies. The military groups that would detach from the main army in search for food, would be hit by surprise by the Vlach. This harassment of the enemy therefore not simply meant its weakening by not giving them access to food and shelter, but also meant the demoralization of the people who would feel insecure. See more: Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 87-93.

under these circumstances that the Ottoman army, tired and hungry,[65] entered Stephen's principality in February 1475. The prince made sure that the battle would not take place in an open field, but in a territory that would advantage him. The valley of the Bârlad River, close to the fortress of Vaslui, was a narrow space which could not allow the Ottoman army to unfold. The benefits of the site were enhanced by the bad weather conditions which had a visible impact on the Ottoman army.[66] The armies collided there, Stephen himself entering the battle[67] as the Ottomans were flanked within the valley. They seem to have been chased from the valley, as sources attest that a significant number of Ottoman soldiers died while many others were taken prisoners:

> … but there were those [of the Ottoman army] who were not used to fighting and got tired... They were looking for the chance to run away, and when they had the opportunity, they scattered away and they were what caused the defeat. Leaving the battle and the slaughter, they ran and they did not look back. There was no way to do that [to look back]. They stepped on each other as if they were a herd of sheep and the brave ones could not fight anymore. Suleyman Paşa could not gather in one place the soldiers who were spreading away…[68]

The battle, known as the Battle of Vaslui, was a resonating success which was reflected in the voices of the time, as well as in Stephen the Great's memorable letter to the Western leaders which described the confrontation and asked for help in the imminent reply of the Ottomans – a help which never came.

Although the Moldavians were successful at Vaslui and "took the sword in their hands and, with the help of God, went over them, stepped on them [the Ottomans] and took them through their spears,"[69] the Ottoman reply came promptly. This time, the sultan himself, Mehmed II, was leading the armies. The Ottomans had conquered earlier in the year the Khanate of Crimea, so at the time of the attack on Moldavia, in July 1476, the sultan had additional help from the Tartars, who attacked Moldavia from the North, while he was charging from the South.[70] While Mehmed advanced with his

---

[65] "The Islamic army was weak because it had gone through the expedition against Alexandria." See: Mehmed Neşri, in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 264. See also: Székely and Gorovei, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 113.

[66] "… on the other hand, it was a very difficult winter. Because of the cold, the army could not resist and suffered a defeat." See: Mehmed Neşri, in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 264.

[67] "… all the formations … were defeated by the Turks and a great danger was threatening them, until Stephen jumped himself in the middle of the Turks." See: Jan Długosz, "Historia Polonica," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 164.

[68] The Ottoman chronicler Tevarih-I Ali-I Osman on the Battle of Vaslui in *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor*, ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Liliana Trofin, 183.

[69] From the Letter of Stephen to the Christian rulers after the Vaslui victory (25 January 1475) in *Istoria României în texte* [The Romanian History in Texts], ed. Bogdan Murgescu (Bucharest: Corint, 2001), 136.

[70] "But Stephen was not frightened by these two so powerful enemies, meaning the Tartars and the Turks, who, with remarkable armies, raided over Moldavia almost at the same time." See: Jan Długosz, "Historia Polonica," 169-170.

numerous army[71] – among whom, also the men of Laiotă Basarab[72] – Stephen facecing the discontent of his own men who were eager to go back North to their lands and defend their households and families against the Tartar attack. Consequently, Stephen allowed his men to return to their homes for two weeks. This led to the unfortunate outcome that at the time of the clash with the Ottoman army, the prince stood without the largest part of his army.[73] The battle was fought at a site called Valea Albă or Războieni, and Stephen with his few men was unsurprisingly defeated. Stephen then retreated and the sultan headed towards the seat of Moldavia, Suceava, but could not conquer the fortress and eventually returned to Istanbul.[74] Altogether, the Battle of Valea Albă was a military failure for Moldavia, but at the same time it was a political success, because the prince remained on his seat and the principality was not transformed into a *paşalîc*.[75]

The last significant event which took place during the so-called *Great Policy* period was the conquest of Stephen's two most cherished fortresses: Chilia and Cetatea Albă (Akkerman). The two fortresses, essential trading points in the Black Sea region, were what may be called the "gates and the keys"[76] of Western trading into the East. Furthermore, they were the only missing pieces for the Ottoman Empire to close the Black Sea and have full control over it. Sultan Bayezid II eventually made the decisive move: he started the siege on the fortresses.[77] Chilia was conquered after a ten-day siege in July 1484 and Cetatea Albă was conquered shortly afterwards, in August.[78]

---

[71] The Moldavian-German Chronicle estimated that about 200.000 men comprised the Sultan's army, although the number may be exagerrated. "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 26.

[72] "… the Turkish tsar himself, named Mehmed-beg, came with all his power together with prince Basarab." See: "Letopiseţul anonim al Moldovei" [The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 17. (henceforth: "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia").

[73] Stephen allowed his men to go back and defend their homes for 15 days after which they were to return to the battlefield. Therefore, at the time of the battle, he was only accompanied by his boyar army, formed of about 10.000 to 12.000 men. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni laude Maior*, 154.

[74] "Then the Turks killed all the army of Prince Stephen … so that he escaped with a few men. And they burnt almost the entire country but they could not conquer any fortress." See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 26.

[75] Florin Constantiniu shows the Battle of Valea Albă as a perfect example for the asymmetric military conflict. A conflict involving an expedition of the Sultan with a numerous army in which the Ottomans were victorious, but could not take advantage of its undoubtful superiority to gain a political success: the dethronement of Stephen the Great. See: Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 88-89 and 112.

[76] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 222.

[77] One of the most thorough descriptions of the campaign, which also incorporates the Ottoman preparations, was written by Mevlâna Mehmed Neşri. See in: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 258-260. Nevertheless, the account written by Ibn Kemal in his *Tevârih-Âl-i Osman. VIII. Defter* is even more detailed than that of Mehmed Neşri. See its presentation in: Nagy Pienaru, Ovidiu Cristea, "Campania otomană din 1484. Mărturia lui Ibn Kemal – The Ottoman Campaign in Moldavia (1484). Ibn Kemal's Testimony," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2012): 43-58.

[78] Moreover, during this one-month period, Stephen seemed to have lost not only Chilia and Akkerman, but up to six ports by the Black Sea (Chilia, Licostomo, Cetatea Albă, Cetatea Neagră, Sevastopole and Ilice), which made the economical, military and, quite importantly, the psychological impact on the prince even greater. See details on the conquest and its consequences in: Alexandru Simon, "Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: new Documents," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 24 (2008): 177-196.

The conquest had a strong impact on Stephen's transition from the *Great Policy* period to the *Great Prayer* period, as the two fortresses had a unique emotional relevance for the prince. The results of the Ottoman campaign were disastrous: Chilia and Akkerman were conquered along with the entire Moldavian coast, allowing half of the urban Moldavian population to fall under Ottoman occupation.[79] Moreover, returning to Suceava after the unfortunate events, the court did not resume its duties until two years later at the end of the summer of 1486,[80] allowing speculation that the prince had lost his throne.[81] The prince however remained on his throne and made efforts to regain stability and even the lost fortresses,[82] also by asking help from the Polish and Hungarian kings,[83] although unsuccessfully. When he eventually realized that his efforts were ineffective, he lost his long-lasting "obsession"[84] for them and redirected his energy towards internal issues and grand church and dynastic-building programmes. This was the positive aspect of losing the fortresses: it opened the path towards new initiatives, leading to the rupture between the *Great Policy* and *Great Prayer* period.[85]

---

[79] Alexandru Simon, "Chilia şi Cetatea Albă în vara anului 1484. Noi documente din arhivele italiene" (Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: New Italian Documents), *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 26 (2008): 178.

[80] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 221.

[81] Simon, "Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: new Documents," 179 and 191.

[82] There are at least two documents which stand as proof for this. Firstly, Giovanni Dario documented that after the conflict, Stephen had returned to Suceava and caused numerous disorders (see: *22 Dispacci da Constantinopoli al doge Giovanni Mocenigo*, ed. Giuseppe Calo and Alvise Zorzi (Venice: Corbo e Fiore, 1992), 174), suggesting that the prince was trying to re-conquer lost territories. Secondly, a Venetian report from the Ottoman Empire reproduced in May 1485 a dialogue between a Moldavian ambassador to the Porte and a Pasha, which took place in Istanbul after the taking of Chilia and Akkerman. Stephen transmitted through his ambassador the information that he would refuse to pay the tribute to the Empire until he was returned the two fortresses which were rightfully his. The Ottoman unsurprisingly refused, arguing that "quelle duy terre stavano meglio in mano del Gran Turcho" ("…the two cities were better in the hands of the Great Turk.") See: Nagy Pienaru, "Moldova şi Imperiul Otoman. Solia lui Ştefan cel Mare din 1485" [Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. The messenger of Stephen the Great from 1485], in *Putna. Ctitorii ei şi lumea lor* [Putna. Its ktetors and their world] (Bucharest: Oscar Print, 2011), 85 (see the entire text: 85-86).

[83] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 221-222.

[84] Ştefan Andreescu actually used the word "obsession" when describing Stephen's affection for the fortresses. Ştefan Andreescu, "Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare: înţelesurile unei întreruperi" [The Chroncle of Stephen the Great: the meanings of an interruption], in *Istoria românilor: cronicari, misionari, ctitori (sec. XV-XVII)* [The history of the Romanians: chroniclers, missionaries, ktetors (Fifteenth-seventeenth centuries)] (Bucharest: Universităţii, 1997), 126. For more on this "obsession" and its consequences, see also: Ovidiu Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri. Cultură ero(t)ică în epoca ştefaniană* [Blood and Roses. (H)ero(t)ic Culture in the Era of Stephen the Great] (Chişinău: Cartier Istoric, 2005), 101-102.

[85] A second theory concerning the rupture between the two periods highlights Stephen's fall of his horse in 1486. See the Prologue and Chapter IV. See also: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Gesta Dei per Stephanum Voievodam," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 410-412.

3. Art and spirituality

The *Great Prayer* period, as its name also indicates, is marked by spiritual-related activity rather than by military enterprises. Of course, the military aspect of the reign was inevitably present, especially when recalling the Battle of Codrii Cozminului: the successor of Casimir IV, John Albert, was planning Stephen's dethronement and his replacement with his younger brother, Sigismund. Accordingly, after a period filled with pressure, John Albert attacked Moldavia in 1497. The battle ended with Stephen's victory and a peace treaty was signed with Poland two years later.[86]

Whereas the first thirty years of Stephen's reign were characterised on an artistic level by mostly building fortresses and fortifications, and by reconstructing some of the princely courts, the last twenty years of the reign were substantially linked to a programmeme focused on building churches and monasteries, by refining a unique architectural style and a Byzantine-based iconography. The most important edifice for Stephen was however built before the *Great Prayer* period: Putna Monastery. The monastery was erected between 1466 and 1469[87] and although it was destroyed in a fire and reconstructed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it still holds the most relevant items for Stephen the Great's dynastic image construction: the tomb of Stephen, plus eleven other tombs of the members of his family, which all survived the fire. Putna was built as a necropolis for the prince's family, meant to save not only his soul in the afterlife, but also the souls of the members of his family. Based on the richness of the edifice and the symbols of power which adorned the tombs and their surroundings, it has been suggested that this site was meant to be a recreation of historical memory, a *lieu de memoire*.[88]

Although it is questionable if, as legends say, Stephen built a church after each military victory, it is known that between 1487 and 1504 almost 30 churches and monasteries were built by the prince's order, plus several others commissioned by his boyars.[89] During this period, monastic art was enlivened. Architecturally, the so-called *Moldavian style* was established, which led to the mixture between Byzantine and Gothic models, where the Byzantine influence was reflected in the spatiality of the edifices, while the Gothic was visible in construction techniques and decorative elements.

---

[86] See a detailed description of the Battle of Codrii Cozminului in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 319-340.

[87] Vasile Drăguţ, *Dicţionar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Romanian Medieval Art] (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1976), 250.

[88] Maria Magdalena Székely elaborates on the idea of Putna as a *lieu de memoire* in her article "Le Monastère de Poutna – lieu de mémoire," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 37-71.

[89] Vasile Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI* [Mural Painting in Moldavia. Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1982), 11.

Iconographically, the style was a junction between the Paleologian and South-Danubian artistic influences and, as Vasile Drăguţ explained, it is characterized by an austere and grave sense of face expressions, by simple and clear compositions, and by warm, soft, and non-exuberant chromatics.[90] Moldavian painting reached its maturity with the age of Stephen the Great, not only from a stylistic point of view, but also from a communicational point of view. Certain aspects of the iconographical programme were designed to transmit not only religious messages, but also particular political messages, highlighting the princely authority and sometimes the animosity with the enemies of the principality. This is the case of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross, the mural scene commissioned at the Pătrăuţi Monastery. The Mounted Procession presents an army of military saints led by the Archangel Michael and Constantine the Great after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. The unique painting represents the establishment of both the Byzantine Empire and Christianity. The commission of this image symbolically suggests both the political and dynastic aspirations of the Moldavian ruler: the mural may be seen as a visual link between the desired "empire" of Stephen and the Empire of Constantine I, a link which will be discussed in the following chapters.[91]

Including a variety of local elements, the disposition and conception of the iconography was based on the Greek *Ermeneia*.[92] Thus the superior part of the church carried representations of the Divine Church with Christ Pantocrator placed in the central dome, while the lower part was dedicated to Biblical stories and military saints – interestingly, the votive image of the ruler and his family was represented within the space of the military saints. All edifices commissioned by Stephen were decorated with this type of iconography, leading Moldavian medieval painting to its peak. Some of the most important churches and monasteries are the Pătrăuţi Monastery, Milişăuţi Monastery, St. George Church of Hârlău, Voroneţ Monastery, St. Elijah Church in Suceava, St. Michael Church at Războieni, or Bălineşti Monastery.

4. "Love"

Stephen the Great married three times and each marriage was, as expected, replete with political and ideological aspirations. His first wife was Evdokia of Kiev, whom he married in 1463.[93] As her father was the cousin of Casimir IV, she descended from the family of the great dukes of Lithuania. The marriage alliance indicated the political orientation of Stephen at the time, as well as his

---

[90] Vasile Drăguţ, *Dicţionar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească*, 232.

[91] Vasile Drăguţ also suggested another interpretation of the mural. The Mounted Procession may also refer to the crusade-like battles fought by Stephen, thus suggesting his desire of political independence. See: Vasile Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 12-13.

[92] See: Paul Hetherington, *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysius of Fourna* (London: Sagittarius Press, 1974).

[93] "In the year 6971 [1463], June 5th, he made Evdokia his wife, the sister of the tsar of Kiev." See: "The Chronicle of Putna I," 30.

affiliation with Poland. The marriage with Evdokia only lasted four years, as the princess died in 1467. Nevertheless, during this short period of time, she gifted her husband with a strategic alliance with Poland.[94]

The choice of Stephen's second wife suggests both the prince's political orientation and some of his dynastic aspirations. In 1472, he married Maria Assen Palaiologos of the Principality of Mangup in the Crimean Peninsula, the last Byzantine territory which was still alive during Stephen's reign.[95] The name of the princess proves her connection to both the Byzantine and the Bulgarian Empires – she was a descendant of the Byzantine Palaiologian family and the Bulgarian Assenid dynasty.[96] Corina Teodor suggests three of Stephen's reasons for choosing Maria as wife. The first reason was political, in accordance with his anti-Ottoman policies: in a moment when new anti-Ottoman plans were being projected in Europe, having the Crimean peninsula on the Christian/Moldavian side was a great advantage. The second reason was commercial: the space which encompassed the Peninsula witnessed an ample international trade which Moldavian princes were well aware of ever since the end of the fourteenth century. The third reason was ideological: as the fall of Constantinople opened the door for a next emperor who would inherit the Byzantine Empire's legacy, both the Ottomans and Christians were eager to gain this new role. Stephen was no exception and the marriage to a Byzantine-descending princess was a symbolic step towards accomplishing this.[97]

The prince's third wife, whom he married six months after Maria of Mangup died, was Maria Voichiţa, the daughter of the Wallachian prince Radu the Fair. Unmistakably, Stephen married the second Maria because of his desire to bring Wallachia under Moldavian ideological regulation and to integrate it into Moldavia's external (anti-Ottoman) policy.[98] The fact that their son was named

---

[94] As Constantin Rezacheici points out, "the marriage with this princess of Kiev offered the young Moldavian prince the advantages of certain dynastic links in the Polish-Lithuanian-Moscow space, which lasted for a long period after the early death of Evdokia, and which, from an alliance point of view, were much more prestigious and practical than the links offered by the other two marriages of Stephen." See: George Marcu, *Între diplomaţie şi "iubire." Soţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Between Diplomacy and "Love." The Wives of Stephen the Great], on http://reteaualiterara.ning.com/profiles/blogs/ntre-diploma-ie-i-iubire-so-iile-lui-tefan-cel-mare?xg_source=activity&id=1971741%3ABlogPost%3A1262523&page=4, last time accessed on January 5, 2013.

[95] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 90.

[96] For more on the princess's origins, and especially on her Byzantine descendance, see: Maria Magdalena Székely and Ştefan S. Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina. O prinţesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei* [Maria Assen Palaiologos. A Byzantine princess on the throne of Moldavia] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2006), especially the chapter-articles "Rudenii byzantine ale Doamnei Maria" [Byzantine relatives of *Doamna* Maria], 112-143, and "Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Doamna Moldovlahiei" [Maria Assen Palaiologos, *Doamna* of Moldavia], 69-112.

[97] For more on the reasons for marrying Maria of Mangop, see: Corina Teodor, "State Reasons and Matrimonial Strategies in Moldavia During the Reign of Ştefan cel Mare," *The Yearbook of the "Gheorghe Şincai" Institute for Social Sciences and the Humanities of the Romanian Academy* 7 (2004): 15-16.

[98] This desire was reflected in the actual names of the two principalities: while before Stephen's reign, Moldavia was known as *Valahia Minor* and Wallachia as *Valahia Major*, sometime during Stephen's reign, the

Bogdan-Vlad (uniting the two most emblematic Moldavian and Wallachian historical names) is one of the most evident proofs for the political alliance made through this marriage.[99]

Stephen's three marriages reflect the prince's political inclinations, resulting in three distinct periods: the Polish period, the Byzantine period, and the Wallachian period. While Stephen's relations to all these three realms were constant during his entire reign, it may be stated that the prince's inclination towards one or the other became dominant at certain times, depending on his wife.

names changed and Moldavia became *Valahia Major*, while Wallachia was transformed into *Valahia Minor*. Moreover, Stephen's intitulature in official documents points to a suzerain-vassal relationship between the two principalities as the Wallachian prince is named "the son of my [Stephen's] reign." See more: Şerban Papacostea, "The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great: the Polish option (1459-1473)," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 25 (2007): 24-25. More aspects of this suzerain-vassal relation and of Stephen's intitulature will be discussed in Chapter 4 (subchapter "The Great").

[99] Nevertheless, a parallel hypothesis argues that political interests may have not been the only reasons which convinced Stephen to marry his third wife: may love have also been implied? Corina Teodor argues that certain representations of the royal couple seem to indicate that Stephen loved Maria. See: Corina Teodor, "State Reasons and Matrimonial Strategies in Moldavia During the Reign of Ştefan cel Mare," 18.

Chapter II

Creation and Reception in the Fifteenth Century:
Stephen's Reign and the Birth of the Dynastic Project

Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality
(Warren Bennis)

1. Stephen. The Great ruler

Stephen can be categorized among medieval ideal sovereigns, who all quickly jumped from historical reality into the realm of legend, men whose actions were perceived as superlative. This is confirmed by the ruler's characterization in Ureche's Chronicle of Moldavia[100] which opened the gates for Stephen's immortality at the beginning of the seventeenth century,[101] and allowed the prince's image to flourish beyond the frail period of the proto-myth.

In order to become an ideal sovereign, rulers had to have a certain kind of shining, a personal flair, and, surely, they had to know how to use these attributes in order to craft their image. Becoming an ideal sovereign depended on two factors: having a strong (positive) impact on others and creating a unique identity based on that very impact. Stephen the Great thus had to know how to effectively manage his image's reception and perception. Knowing how to manage image results in gaining power. This chapter will show that Stephen did indeed *create* himself. A preliminary proof for this fact is that he remained in collective memory as a prince who possessed the characteristics of an outstanding sovereign: he was chosen by God to save the Moldavian people; he fought for saving his lands and his subjects; he brought, maintained, and strengthened peace; he made rightful judgements; he supported, protected, and served the Church; he fought against unbelievers; he was always present among his soldiers; he was reasonable and pondered; he ruled with faith and fear of God; he was intelligent and pious; and he always chose the right and most trustworthy boyars to stand by his side.[102] One can discuss the "immense effort"[103] which characterised Stephen's entire

---

[100] According to Ureche, Stephen was a determined man, active and hardworking, persuasive, an exceptional organizer, and a perfect military commander who would almost always be victorious. See the entire description in: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 66.

[101] Dan Berindei, "Ştefan cel Mare în conştiinţa românilor" [Stephen the Great in the Conscience of Romanians] in *Comerorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte. Sesiunea solemnă a Academiei Române* [The Commemoration of Stephen the Great at 500 Years since his Death. The Solemn Session of the Romanian Academy] (Bucharest: Academia Română, 2004), 25.

[102] See: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Monarhul ideal in imaginarul evului mediu. Rene d'Anjou si Stefan cel Mare - Le monarque idéal dans l'imaginaire médiéval. René d'Anjou et Étienne le Grand," *Analele Putnei* I (2010): 292.

reign: all of Stephen's attributes were the result of his own efforts (coupled with the efforts of the Church and of the Royal Council)[104] to build a prosperous principality, but also a positive image. Altough he was perceived as exemplary, his most profound feature probably referred to the fact that he was a man of his people. Ştefan Gorovei encompassed in a few words the reason why Stephen was appreciated as a colossal ruler: Stephen "did not fight in wars in order to conquer other people, but he managed, however, to achieve a much more important conquest: that of the soul of his people."[105]

Conquering the soul of your subjects should imply a simple equation: promoting oneself, promoting what one does and, promoting others. On one hand, Stephen promoted himself by perfecting governance; by encouraging arts and culture to grow; and by restlessly defending his principality. The promotion of others, on the other hand, was visible within two axes. The first was the *family-Stephen axis*, which was visible in Stephen's dynastic-building campaign: Stephen wanted to connect his ancestors with his successors by means of family patterns in a grand dynastic project, as it will be seen further on. The second axis was the *subjects-Stephen axis*, which was closely tied to the idea of the prosperity of the lands and of the Moldavians themselves: the principality's richness and the prosperous economic situation which allowed the well-being of Moldavians surely contributed to the impact of the ruler's image.[106]

Consequently, it was Stephen and his closest counsellors who created something which may be labelled as the "Stephen the Great brand," which lives up until today and which is difficult to avoid in any Romanian's everyday life.[107] But how present was it during Stephen's time and in the sixteenth century, and was it difficult to avoid? How visible was the ruler's presence in the sixteenth century? It is certain that the idea of "the perfect Stephen" was born during the ruler's lifetime, and therefore is not merely a cultural creation. The propagation of Stephen as ideal ruler was done, according to Maria Magdalena Székely, within two levels. The first level was the affective one, which chronologically coincided with the actual reign of the ruler and with the immediate years following his death. The second level, the cultural one, coincides with a later time which could last for

---

[103] Ştefan S. Gorovei. "Ştefan cel Mare" [Stephen the Great] in Ş*tefan cel Mare şi Sfânt: 1504 – 2004. Portret în Istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great: 1504-2004. Historical Portrait] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003), 557.
[104] For the "team" behind the image of Stephen the Great, see: Chapter V, subchapter "2. Lessons from Stephen: creating a team for a great name."
[105] Gorovei. "Ştefan cel Mare", 555.
[106] Maria Magdalena Székely discusses the economic situation of Moldavia during the reign of Stephen and argues that it had a positive impact on how Stephen's subjects felt about their prince: "the economical factor is decisive… a community is inclined to appreciate a ruler during whose reign it had an enjoyable and plentiful life, rather than a ruler who only brought war to his people, regardless if that war was righteous." See: Székely, "Monarhul ideal in imaginarul evului mediu", 291.
[107] See a detailed presentation of today's Stephen the Great in the Epilogue.

centuries[108] – one may argue in fact that the cultural level of Stephen's image is still ongoing today. In the case of the Moldavian prince, the affective level coincides with the proto-myth, the time when the appreciation of the ruler's subjects was very much palpable. For understanding the proto-myth, it is relevant to highlight that the cultural level is dependent on the affective one: the affective generates the cultural. Therefore, although the affective period of the proto-myth is hardly discernible, its existence is undeniable. It only needs to be uncovered.

Stephen must have known that a strong reign had to be built on strong grounds, and on strong dynastic ties. Once he was enthroned, his obscure childhood and his need for legitimation must have encouraged him to inaugurate the construction of his dynasty, which allowed him to have a family which not only had firm roots in the past, but also had a prosperous future ahead. Stephen thus propelled the past, the present, and the future of his family and by doing this he made a decisive step for the promotion of his name in posterity. The name of Stephen began its ascent into immortality.

2. Identities mingled: the dynastic project

Stephen left his imprint on multiple levels of his reign: chroniclers were delicate with the words they used while writing the ruler's name on parchment, as well as the artists who carefully designed his and his wife's faces on manuscripts or textiles;[109] his soldiers, inspired by his ever-presence in war, composed songs about his bravery;[110] his donations and plentiful commissions allowed the clergy to recall him in sainthood; Szeklers and Polish people must have been content with the land and tax privileges Stephen offered them in Moldavia;[111] Moldavian subjects had the opportunity to admire his countless votive portraits painted in churches and monasteries which allowed the association of his name with a face; and so on. It may thus be assumed that Stephen, from the debut of his reign, methodically built his image not only for his present subjects, but also for the unborn heirs of Moldavia – peasants, boyars or rulers – within something that may be called a "dynastic project."

---

[108] For the explanation of the two levels, see: Székely, "Monarhul ideal in imaginarul evului mediu", 293.

[109] The most thorough examples, still extant today, are the portrait of Stephen the Great in the Gospels of Humor (1473), and the tomb cover of Stephen's second wife, Maria of Mangup.

[110] There are only later, sixteenth-century testimonies, about the chants presenting Stephen the Great, but it must be assumed that these chants originated in the time of Stephen and were propagated in the future. The chant recorded by the Polish Maciej Stryjkowski, reminded of Stephen in the following way: "Stephen, Prince Stephen, Stephen, Prince Stephen, you beat the Turks, beat the Tartars, beat the Hungarians, the Russians and the Polish." See: *Călători străini în Ţările Române I* [Foreign travelers in the Romanian Principalities I], ed. Maria Holban (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1970), 454.

[111] However, Stephen did not offer his help because of kindness, but because he had true economical reasons for colonizing Moldavia. For more information on Stephen's colonization efforts, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*; see also: Székely, "Monarhul ideal în imaginarul evului mediu", 292-293.

Although emerging in a crisis-stricken principality, Stephen was presented as a ruler embraced by divine protection from the early years of his reign. In 1457, young Stephen entered Moldavia with only a handful of people "on the Holy Week before Easter"[112] and dethroned the man who had executed his father. Starting with that Easter in 1457, the new ruler lived in heavenly protection: "Prince Stephen triumphed with the help of God"[113] – he succeeded not only to gain the throne, but to also keep it for almost 50 years.

Fig. 1: Votive portrait in Pătrăuți monastery
Image source: Tudor Photo Blog
(http://tudorphotoblog.blogspot.ro/2013/04/manastirea-moldovita-unesco.html, accessed: September 26, 2014)

With the guidance of God, the ruler started his dynastic-building campaign. "Prince Stephen had the help of God"[114] not only on the battle field, but also in his policy management. The fact that Stephen was in divine protection allowed him to become ("with the will of God"[115]) God's pendant on earth, a "father" to the Moldavian people. God therefore transformed the ruler into a mortal image of His immortal authority.[116] The ruler became the all-powerful father who was regarded as a symbol for courage, wisdom, and righteousness. If one analyses the votive image of Stephen and his family

CEU eTD Collection

---

[112] See: "The Chronicle of Putna I," 22; "The Chronicle of Putna II," 19; or "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," 41.
[113] "The Chronicle of Putna I," 30.
[114] Ibidem.
[115] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 14.
[116] For more on the way the fatherly archetype was venerated and the way God transmited his image through kings and rulers, see: Simona Nicoară, *Istoria și miturile. Mituri și mitologii politice moderne* [History and myths. Modern political myths and mythologies] (Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2009), 265-172.

at the Pătrăuți monastery [Fig. 1], one can absorb the authority of the father in this image (an authority which, in fact, surpassed the frames of the votive image and was felt within Moldavia as a whole): the father is an imposing figure who eclipses the other characters – his elder son and future ruler Bogdan III, his wife Maria Voichița, and his two younger daughters Maria and Anna. Although at a first glance, the figures of Stephen and his son Bogdan seem equal, the painter made a visible distinction between the two: while their clothing and crowns are almost identical, Stephen is significantly taller than his son, his facial expression inspiring wisdom and steadiness in comparison to Bogdan, whose delicate face indicates innocence and a need to still be guided by a firm hand. However, the authority of the father is inheritable, and one sees in the Pătrăuți image how Bogdan is about to take over the role of Stephen. It was natural for Stephen to want to pass on his function to his son as he was himself a continuator of the previous father-figures of Moldavia such as Bogdan I and Alexander the Good, from whom he received the function of father. One of the most important acts of church restoration and re-commission of which Stephen took care was that of St. Nicholas Church of Rădăuți [Fig. 7]. The votive image portrays Stephen standing next to his forefathers Bogdan I and Alexander the Good, in an act that perfectly describes the prince's belief in continuation.

Continuity was, in fact, Stephen's main dynastic goal. He brought together the past and the future into a "dynastic project."[117] Benoît Joudiou discussed the dynastic conception of Stephen the Great, which meant that the prince not only wanted to connect his reign to that of his predecessors, but also wanted to prepare his own succession, that is, to prepare his descendants to be the true heirs of his dynastic ideals. In order to understand how Stephen connected the past with the future, one must take a glimpse at how Stephen designed the entire concept of dynasty during his present.

2.1. Creating the past

2.1.1. The usurper and the neeed for legitimation

A confrontation between two usurpers took place on the 12th of April 1457, when Stephen the Great took the throne from Peter Aron. While Peter Aron himself usurped the throne from Bogdan II, Stephen, regardless the fact that he was taking the throne which legitimately should have been his, was nonetheless also usurping the throne from Peter Aron. The reign of Stephen was thus marked by two conflicting directions: that of the rightful ruler by blood, and the other of the usurper who dethroned the accepted prince of the time.

---

[117] For a thorough explanation of Stephen's dynastic project, see: Benoît Joudiou, "Le règne d'Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith] (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2004), 415-428.

Studying the various chronicles which describe the moment of Stephen's enthronement after the confrontation with Peter Aron, certain imprecisions become visible. In all versions of the chronicles written during Stephen's reign, the foundation of the event lies in the fact that after the battle with Peter, Stephen was named the new prince of the principality: the Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia recalled that Stephen "with the mercy of God took the sceptre of Moldavia,"[118] while the Moldavian-German Chronicle similarly described that Stephen, after having defeated his opponent, "remained leader in power."[119] However, should one take a look at the chronicles written at the Putna Monastery (Stephen's main commission and cultural haven decisively influenced by the power of the ruler), a slight discrepancy is visible. The Chronicles of Putna I and II recalled that after the confrontation with Peter Aron "the entire country came together, with the saintly Metropolitan Theoctist, and Stephen was anointed for his reign, in the place called Dereptate."[120] The Putna Chronicle II tells in a similar way how the entire people of Moldavia gathered for the ceremony of enthronement and how Stephen was anointed by the Metropolitan Theoctist, adding that during the ceremony he "took the sceptre of the Moldavian Principality."[121] A question rises at this point: was the ruler indeed anointed in "the place called Dereptate" and not at the Metropolitan Church of Suceava, as it would have been normal for the ceremonial of a new ruler? A number of debates have been going on among Romanian historians regarding the place of anointment, most of which conclude that the inclusion of the anointing ceremony at the battle field is an inaccuracy.[122] Constantin Rezachevici agrees that the moment of anointment is inaccurate, while he concludes that the three stages of the investment ceremonial[123] were blurred together in the chronicles of Putna so that, in fact, the anointment did happen at a place named Dereptate (eventually proven to be the Church of the Holy Trinity[124]), but at a slightly later time than the gathering of the country for the naming of the new ruler. This is a valuable point, especially considering Rezachevici's conclusion that

---

[118] "The Anoymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 14.
[119] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 22.
[120] "The Chronicle of Putna I," 30.
[121] "The Chronicle of Putna II," 33.
[122] Maria Magdalena Székely, Ştefan Gorovei and Benoît Joudiou all agree that the ceremony must have taken place somewhere else than at Dereptate – most likely, at the Metropolitan Church of Suceava. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 16. Also, see the article of Constantin Rezachevici, "A fost Ştefan cel Mare „ales" domn în aprilie 1457?" [Was Stephen the Great "chosen" prince in April 1457?] where the author argues for another opinion: that the gathering of the people and the anointment were two separate processes of the ceremonial of investment. See the article in: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003), 316-334. Also: Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare", esp. 341-343. Mureşan explains that the mention of the place called "Dereptate" in the Chronicles of Putna is owed to a mistranslation of the original text.
[123] The three stages would be: the naming of the new ruler in front of the most important personalities of the principalities (boyars of high ranking and clerics); the anointment (usually in a princely church); and the taking over of the sceptre. See: Rezachevici "A fost Ştefan cel Mare "ales" domn în aprilie 1457?," 330-332.
[124] Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare", 341-343.

Stephen the Great precipitated the ceremonials. This precipitation of ceremonials leads to the conclusion that Stephen needed a quick investment. Regardless the fact that he was the son of the previous ruler and descending from the dynasty of the Muşatini[125], he was nevertheless a usurper. Stephen the Great needed a boost of trust and legitimacy at the beginning of his reign – especially as his throne was still insecure due to Peter Aron's escape to Poland. This need for legitimacy materialized in the care Stephen had for the establishment and construction of his dynasty, that of the Muşatini. It may be argued that Stephen, starting from the very point of Peter Aron's defeat, made sure that his dynasty, as well as himself within this dynasty, were secured.

2.1.2. Writing a history of Moldavia

Lists of rulers from the beginning of the formal principality of Moldavia have been compiled ever since before Stephen's reign. Alexander the Good was as a prince under whose reign two types of writings were elaborated, possibly for the very first time: the Moldavian annals and a type of legendary narratives telling the story of Dragoş, the first ruler of the principality.[126] Stephen the Great, more than twenty years after the death of Alexander, continued to develop the beginnings of the Moldavian historiography, within two streams: on the one hand he had the annals which, traditionally, had a lapidary construction and which established the dynastic history of Moldavia; while on the other hand, he had detailed and narrative chronicles written under his guidance – especially the two versions of the Putna Chronicle which tell the heroic deeds of Stephen, and, just as importantly from the point of view of the dynastic project, Stephen had the so-called Deeds of the Unified Legend[127] commissioned.

The Deeds of the Unified Legend was compiled in Moldavia during the second half of the fifteenth century[128] but did not remain intact and the only material which still contains the history of the legend today is the more ample Moldavian-Russian Chronicle[129] composed sometime during the reign of Stephen's son, Bogdan III. The Deeds of the Unified Legend presents the story of the first legendary prince of Moldavia, Dragoş, and the way he discovered the land later-on known as the

---

[125] The Muşatin dynasty is the representative dynasty of the Moldavian principality, of which Stephen the Great was the most prolific representative. For a thorough presentation of the dynasty, see: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 6-18 and subsequent chapters.

[126] Ovidiu Pecican points to two annals written during the reign of Alexander the Good, one dating from 1403 and the other from 1413, and also to the legend of Prince Dragoş which was most likely written during the time of the same ruler. See: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 96-97.

[127] Romanian: *Gesta Legendară Unificată*.

[128] See more: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 108.

[129] For the text of the chronicle, see: *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan* [The Slavic-Romanian chronicles of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries published by Ioan Bogdan], ed. Petre P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: Academiei, 1959) (henceforth: *Cronicile slavo-române*) or the original written by Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia* [Old Romanian Chronicles written before Ureche] (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1891), 185-193 and 235-243.

Principality of Moldavia. None of the chronicles written during the time of Stephen evoke the legend of Dragoş, except for a short line in the Annals of Putna which recalls that "Prince Dragoş came from the county of Maramureş from the Hungarian Kingdom, while he was hunting a bison and he ruled for two years."[130] The fact that the Deeds of the Unified Legend fully retell the events surrounding Dragoş's legendary descent from the mountains into the Moldavian plains is what makes it a pillar in the dynastic quest of Stephen the Great. This is because Stephen identified Dragoş to be the very first member of his own dynastic line.

The legend describes how the mythical ancestors of the Wallachian people, Roman and Vlahata, left Venice and built the fortress of Roman, most likely somewhere on the territory of the Byzantine Empire.[131] After having settled, King Ladislas of Hungary called for their help during the Tartar invasion and, as a reward for their bravery, they were awarded various lands in the northern part of Transylvania. This is the point where the story turns to the character of Dragoş, one of the inhabitants of the new lands awarded by Ladislas, who goes on hunting into the woods of the Carpathians. He catches the trace of a bison and, following the animal, reaches the plains of Moldavia where he eventually kills the bison. Consequently,

> a thought from God came to their minds [that of Dragoş and his fellow hunters] to look for a place to live and to settle there, so they all gathered and decided to stay there… where Dragoş had killed the bison… and they chose the wisest man, Dragoş, and they named him prince. And that is when, with the will of God, the Moldavian country began its existence.[132]

One can notice two relevant issues, one explicit and the other one implicit. The explicit issue is that Stephen the Great, having this legend compiled during his time, not only attached his name to that of his ancestors who descended from northern Transylvania into Moldavia, but also attached his name to that of the Romans. The attachment to the Roman Empire gives Stephen a considerable legitimacy and power on a local level. However, what is even more relevant, although rather on an implicit level, is his attachment to the figure of Dragoş, who represented a key figure for Stephen and his dynastic programme.

As it shall be seen, Stephen was transformed into a cult. But "Stephen had his own cult for the memory of the first descender,"[133] that of Dragoş. Alexander the Good, in his Annals, traced his

---

[130] See: *Cronica şi analele putnene* [The Chronicle and the Annals of Putna] in Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia*, 193.

[131] For details on the interpretation of the legend, see: Ovidiu Pecican, *"Cneazul Neimet" din Gesta lui Roman şi Vlahata… adică regele german* ["Prince Neimet" from the Legend of Roman and Vlahata… meaning the German king] on http://ovidiupecican.wordpress.com/tag/cronica-moldo-rusa/, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

[132] See the full text in Bogdan, *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia*, 237-238.

[133] Sorin Ulea quoted by Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Umbra lui Dragoş. La Putna – The shadow of Dragoş. At Putna" *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 11.

own dynasty down to Bogdan I, the follower of the eclipsed (and legendary) Dragoş, and omitted the first prince and his so-called Drăgoşeşti family. However, Stephen changed this dynastic sequence as he "called his ancestors in order to support the deeds of the present."[134] Until the fifteenth century, Dragoş was overshadowed by the figure of Bogdan I who allegedly took the throne from him and thus entered the pages of Annals as the first official ruler of the principality. Therefore Stephen, by reviving the figure of Dragoş and by bringing him back into Moldavia's chronology, added in fact forgotten history and myth to reality. In this context of revival, one can discuss the birth of a "dynastic myth"[135] elaborated with the aid of Stephen. The dynastic myth or project, as Benoît Joudiou calls it,[136] was a means of strengthening princely legitimacy and a sign of Stephen's distinct strategy. This dynastic strategy implied several stages based on which the "new" history of Moldavia, that including Dragoş, was written. Besides the compilation of the Deeds of the Unified Legend, Stephen undertook two more crucial acts.

1. Evidence shows that Stephen wanted to build a strong link between himself and Dragoş. He brought the prince back to history, but not only by commissioning the Deeds of the Unified Legend. Stephen's sword, now in Topkapî in Istanbul, not only bears the inscription stating that it belonged to him,[137] but also bears two rather unique coats-of-arms: one of them is the bison head, the traditional symbol for Moldavia, but represented in its earliest, most archaic form (thus not the form used during the reign of Stephen);[138] and the second is a spear with two stars placed on a half-moon which represented a bow at origin. The second coat-of-arms belonged to the Drágffy family, none other than the followers of Dragoş in Transylvania, with whom Stephen kept close connections.[139] One can see thus that the symbol of the Drăgoşeşti family appears on such a personal item of Stephen, leading to the conclusion that Stephen considered or wanted to consider Dragoş to be his predecessor. However, this is not the most relevant element in the "resurrection campaign of Dragoş." The most relevant point is the alleged movement of the first prince's wooden church from Volovăţ into the premises of Stephen's most treasured commission, the Putna Monastery. There are no written sources from the time of Stephen to attest this movement, the earliest such source dating

---

[134] See: Ibidem, 13.

[135] For more details on the idea of the dynastic myth in the fifteenth century, see: Pecican. *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 163-164; and Dan Horia Mazilu, *Recitind literatura română veche* [Rereading the old Romanian literature] I (Bucharest: Universităţii, 1994), 139-142.

[136] Benoît Joudiou, "Le règne d'Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique," 415-429.

[137] "*Io* Prince Stephen, ruler of the country of Moldavia." See: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great 1504-2004. The Church. A History Lesson] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 243.

[138] For more on the coat-of-arms during the reign of Stephen, see: Tudor Radu Tiron, "Despre <soarele de amiază> din stema lui Ştefan cel Mare – About "the midday sun" from the coat of arms of Stephen the Great," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 51-74. See page 54 on an example of a sword attributed to Stephen the Great.

[139] More details in Gorovei, "Umbra lui Dragoş. La Putna," 14-15.

from the seventeenth century in the chronicle of Nicolae Costin.[140] Costin attests how the church of Volovăţ, where Dragoş was buried, was moved by Stephen the Great to the monastery of Putna, where it must have existed at the time Costin wrote his chronicle. The chronicler recalls that he learned from the elderly, "from word of mouth"[141] that the event happened as he described it in his writing. Many historical debates dealt with the authenticity of the various sources describing Stephen as the relocator of the wooden church, but it was Ştefan Gorovei who demonstrated that although there are no exact sources to testify the authenticity of the event, the history of the church's movement has a great potential to be proven historically-correct: Nicolae Costin stated that he learned the story from the word of mouth, just like a second commentator, monk Vartolomei Mazereanu of Putna, related the event implying that he had knowledge of the wooden church's history from the elder monks of Putna.[142] Based on these statements and on a document dating from 1723,[143] that Vartolomei Mazereanu must have been aware of (as it was archived at Putna), Gorovei concludes that Stephen indeed moved a church from Volovăţ to his main commission.[144] Moreover, in a different study, Gorovei thoroughly argues that there is no reason for historians to doubt that Dragoş was buried at Volovăţ and that Stephen consequently re-adorned his tombstone, although one cannot tell for sure whether Stephen also moved the tomb from its original place, or whether he left it in Volovăţ, underneath the floor of the moved church.[145]

2. One can only suppose that Stephen restored the tombstone of Dragoş. It is a certain fact however that he restored the tombstones of mostly all his predecessors in a vast renovation campaign at the Saint Nicholas Church of Rădăuţi, part of his "dynastic project." What was the main purpose of this campaign? Was it the result of a need to promote his dynasty, was it a kind of medieval public relations for the image of Stephen, or was it an expression of legitimation? It was a bit of everything. During the reign of Louis IX, when there was a consciousness of the frailty of the king's territorial and political power, as well as of the power of the mystique of kingship, a royal tomb programme was

---

[140] See: Nicolae Costin, "Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei de la zidirea lumii până la 1601 şi de la 1709 la 1711"[The Chronicle of Moldavia from the beginning of the world until 1601 and from 1709 to 1711], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în cronică*, 70-99.

[141] Ibidem.

[142] Vartolomei Mazereanu, "Istorie pentru sfânta mănăstire Putna" [A history for the saintly church of Putna], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în cronică*, 149.

[143] The document has its origin at the court of Prince Mihai Racoviţă and it is stating that the church of Volovăţ was moved by Stephen the Great to Putna. For the text of the document, see: Dimitrie Dan, *Mânăstirea şi comuna Putna cu două apendice* [The Putna monastery and settlement. With two appendices] (Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1905), 126–127.

[144] See: Gorovei, "Umbra lui Dragoş. La Putna," 6-11.

[145] For a full study on the existence of Dragoş's tomb at Volovăţ, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Biserica de la Volovăţ şi mormântul lui Dragoş Vodă" [The Church of Volovăţ and the tomb of Prince Dragoş], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie*, 135-147.

deliberatey conceived at Saint Denis.[146] Although it should be assumed that the Abbey sponsored the programme,[147] an easily treaceable parallel may be seen between what went on at Saint Denis and at the Saint Nicholas Church of Rădăuţi. In 1264, the bodies of eight Carolingian and eight Capetian kings and queens were moved to Saint Denis in newly-commissioned tombs identified with carved effigies on high bases. The tombs were not meant to impress by their number, but were intended to illustrate the genealogy (and thus the legitimacy) of the royal house, imbibing the new burial site with political and dynastic significance (and less with the care for the soul's salvation).[148] A similar campaign with similar purposes seems to have taken place during Stephen's reign, between December 1479 and May 1480.[149] The Saint Nicholas Church of Rădăuţi, the centre of the campaign, was built by Bogdan I shortly after 1359.[150] The church was named by Constantin Giurescu "the necropolis of Moldavian princes"[151] as it sheltered an impressive number of tombs, seven of which were restored by Stephen the Great within six months. As the commission of the first official prince of Moldavia, the church was the personification of the roots of the most powerful dynastic line of the principality – that of the Muşatini, to which Stephen also belonged. It is no surprise therefore that Stephen started the restoration with the tombstone of Roman I, the son of Muşata, the woman who gave name to the dynasty.[152] All restored tombstones bear the date of the restoration, an inscription attesting the re-adornment commissioned by Stephen, and the sign of a bison's head. Therefore, Roman I's tombstone inscription reads the following text:

> With the mercy of God, our blessed ruler, Prince Stephen, ruler over the entire country of Moldavia, son of Prince Bogdan, the ruler of Moldavia, embellished this tomb of his forefather, Prince Roman, ruler of Moldavia, in the year 6987 [1479], the month of December on the 15th.[153]

---

[146] Georgia Sommers Wright, "A Royal Tomb Programmeme in the Reign of St. Louis," *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974): 243.

[147] The article of Georgia Sommers Wright is demonstrating the hypoethesis based on which it was not Louis IX who commissioned the tombs, but the Abbey itself. The author suggests that a clear indication of this fact is that King Louis is mentioned at the tomb translations only in chronicles written after his canonization. See: Eadem, 224.

[148] For a detailed presentation of the tombs, see: Eadem, 224-243, esp. 224.

[149] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 210.

[150] Drăguţ, *Dicţionar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească*, 252-253.

[151] Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor* [The History of Romanians] I (Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei pentru Literatură şi Artă "Regele Carol II," 1935), 390.

[152] See: Ştefan S. Gorovei, *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* [The foundation of Moldavia. Controversial problems] (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 1997), 105-107.

[153] For all the inscriptions of the tombs restored by Stephen at the Church of Rădăuţi and for their discussion, see: I. C. Chiţimia, "Ştefan cel Mare, ctitor în domeniul istoriografiei" [Stephen the Great, a *ktetor* of historiography], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie*, 220-238.

Another six tombs were restored – those of Prince Laţcu; of Prince Bogdan, the brother of Alexander the Good; of Bogdan I; Bogdan II; Stephen I; and of Cneajna Anastasia[154] – the most relevant of which being that of Bogdan I, for its connection to the very roots of the dynasty:

> With the mercy of God, Prince Stephen, ruler of the country of Moldavia, the son of Prince Bogdan, embellishes this tomb of his forefather, of Prince Bogdan the Old, in the year 6988 [1480], the month of January in the day of 27th. This tomb was worked by Master Jan.[155]

It should be noticed that the name of the sculptor who crafted the tombstone is only mentioned on the tomb of Bogdan I, possibly because Bogdan I was the most important prince whose tomb was restored or because Master Jan only worked on this very tomb. Either way, the fact that the sculptor's name was mentioned gives a plus of importance to the restored tombstone and the man lying underneath it.

The tombs of Rădăuţi were not the only ones that Stephen restored: he also took care of the tombstones of Stephen II from the Neamţ Monastery and that of Ana, the wife of Alexander the Good, from the Bistriţa Monastery. Moreover, Stephen the Great intermingled the history of Moldavia with the deceased members of his close family: two of his children, Alexander and Ana, were buried next to the tombs of Alexander the Good and his wife Ana in the Bistriţa Monastery, while the body of his nephew Dumşa was placed next to those of Stephen's parents, Bogdan II and Oltea, at the Probota Monastery.[156]

There is one more issue which needs to be discussed in relation to the dynastic restoration campaign. In the church of Rădăuţi, Stephen not only restored his predecessors' tombs, but he also included one more visual scheme to enhance his connection to the past and make an explicit statement about his dynasty. The ruler commissioned a unique votive image [Fig. 2] when he had the church painted:[157] the image depicts Stephen, together with his wife Maria Voichiţa and his two illustrious predecessors, Bogdan I and Alexander the Good, standing in front of him. This very first

---

[154] The tombstone of Cneajna Anastasia was not restored within the six-month campaign. It was the last tombstone restored at Rădăuţi, seventeen years after the restoration campaign, in 1497. See: Chiţimia, "Ştefan cel Mare, ctitor în domeniul istoriografiei," 206-207.

[155] Ibidem, 205.

[156] See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 487.

[157] Although I. D. Ştefănescu believed that the church was painted during the reign of Alexander Lăpuşneanul, the truth lies in the analyses done by Virgil Vătăşianu and Sorin Ulea who agree that the painting was done by the order of Stephen the Great. A decisive argument for this is that the votive image shows Stephen, and no case Alexander. See: Sergiu Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine. Biserici, mănăstiri, cetăţi, curţi domneşti. Secolele XIV-XVI* [Commissions of the Muşatin dynasty. Churches, monasteries, royal courts. Fourteenth-sixteenth centuries] (Cluj: Casa Cărţii de Ştiinţă, 2001), 11.

genealogical image in the history of Romanian painting[158] represents the ruler's dynastic ideal in one simple glimpse, symbolizing continuity.

Fig. 2: Votive portrait in St. Nicholas Church of Rădăuți
Image source: Cezar Suceveanu, 2009

Stephen "resurrected" Dragoș from the erased pages of history and brought him back to chronology, while including him in the line of his own dynasty. Similarly, by restoring the tombstones of his forefathers, and by having the votive image of Rădăuți painted, he highlighted those historical figures of his dynasty who were most relevant for his present and for the construction of his dynastic goals. Stephen the Great did not undertake these actions because he was overly-impressed by his forefathers' deeds or because he felt uniquely attached to his long-lost relatives. He did so because of a politically-driven reason: he needed the names of his predecessors in order to correlate events of the past with the present so that the history of Moldavia could be written based on the ruler's desire.

---

[158] Drăguț, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Sec. XV-XVI*, 11.

2.2. Predicting the future

The "dynastic project" as designed by Stephen implied not only modelling the past, but also giving a recipe for the future and for the next rulers of Moldavia. With this project, he wanted to assure the continuity of the Muşatin dynasty. Although succession in Moldavia was done on hereditary basis, Stephen needed to strengthen the process and make sure that his sons will indeed be the ones to inherit the throne without encountering major obstacles.

> …the legitimate and illegitimate sons come to the throne without differentiation. Once the inheriting son is born, he is marked with a sign on his body with a hot iron so that when he reaches manly age, he can be easily recognized by this sign, without any doubt that he is a real son of a ruler.[159]

Although there is no proof that such "hereditary signaling" existed, Stephen the Great did make sure that his sons were marked as future rulers. The chronicles written under the commission of Stephen only scarcely mention the sons of the ruler and only in order to attest their deaths in short, lapidary sentences.[160] However, other facts and documents, described below, are certainly an indication of the hereditary signalling.

2.2.1. Naming, documenting, and associating the sons with the throne

The names of Stephen's sons are the initial signs which indicate his belief in continuity. Stephen had five legitimate sons: Alexander, Peter, Elijah, and, interestingly, two sons named Bogdan. All these names, without exception, are names of members of the Muşatin dynasty. The most prestigious and powerful names were, of course, those of Alexander and the two Bogdans. On the one side, Alexander, the eldest, was named after his great grandfather Alexander the Good, a fact which is most thoroughly attested by Alexander's burial next to his great grandfather, as explained in the Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia.[161] The situation of the two sons named Bogdan, on the other side, is intriguing because of the importance it reflects on the figures of Bogdan I and Bogdan II. Fifteenth-century chronicles confirm that the first son called Bogdan died in 1479, the same year in which the second son of the same name, the future heir of Moldavia, Bogdan-Vlad[162] III, was born.

---

[159] Anonymous description of Moldavia (written before 1535), in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române I* [Foreign travellers in the Romanian Principalities I], ed. Maria Holban (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1968), 199.

[160] See, for instance, the sequences in "The Chronicle of Putna no. II:" "In the year 6987 [1479] Bogdan, the slave of God, died, the son of Prince Stephen;" "In the year 6988 [1480], November 21st, Petru, the slave of God died, son of Prince Stephen;" "In the year 7004 [1496], July 26th, Alexander, the slave of God died, the son of Prince Stephen." See: "The Chronicle of Putna no. II," 35, 36, 37.

[161] "The Anoymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 18.

[162] At the beginning of his life, Bogdan is found in documents with both his names: Bogdan-Vlad. The second name, Vlad, has been interpreted as the expression of Stephen's desire to unite his dynasty with that of

Bogdan III was born on the 16th of June[163] while the elder Bogdan died on the 26th of July,[164] about one month after the birth of his younger brother. Although it was unconventional to baptize two siblings with the same name while both were alive, the addition of the name Vlad to the second Bogdan's name sets the difference between the two brothers. The baptism of both children with the name Bogdan lifts the relevance of Bogdan I as the founder of the Muşatin dynasty and Bogdan II as the father of Stephen the Great.

The names of the sons were however not the only signs of Stephen's aim to continuity. Benoît Joudiou argued that there are two types of documents which demonstrate the idea of dynastic succession: internal documents of donation or privileges, and treaties with the King of Poland, the suzerain of the Moldavian Principality.[165] In both cases, texts establish the continuity of various practices from Stephen to his sons.

Such is the case of the peace treaty dated July 12, 1499 between Stephen the Great on one side and John Albert of Poland and Alexander of Lithuania on the other side. Within the text of the treaty, discussing a possible Polish offensive into the Ottoman Empire, Stephen asserts: "… and then myself, Prince Stephen, in person and with all my power and with all the country of Moldavia, will go against the Turkish emperor unless – God forbid – I will not be able to do so and go myself, then my son Prince Bogdan will go in person, with all his power and mine."[166] The document ends with the following words: "…with this, may my loyalty and my son Prince Bogdan's loyalty, and my boyars' loyalty and peace not be broken…"[167] One can notice that Bogdan is the mentioned in the text as the certan follower of his father, certifying that the succession will take place in no other way than initially conceived by Stephen.

The name of Bogdan appears in other texts, privileges mainly, in a similar way. In 1502, Stephen confirmed the act of selling a land and made the transaction between the two parties official. Bogdan is also mentioned:

> … and this is my belief, of the above-mentioned Prince Stephen, and the belief of
> my beloved son Prince Bogdan, and that of our boyars… And after I die, the one
> who will be ruler of my country Moldavia, from my children or my family or who

---

Bogdan's mother, from Wallachia. For more details, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 209-210.

[163] "… in the same month, day 16, Stephen's wife gave birth to their son, Bogdan, the son of Prince Stephen, who lives up until today with the will of God." See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 27.

[164] *Repertoriul monumentelor şi obiectelor de arta din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The collection of monuments and artifacts dating from the reign of Stephen the Great], ed. Mihai Berza (Bucharest: Academiei, 1958), 254.

[165] Joudiou, "Le règne d'Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique", 417.

[166] *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor. Secolele IV-XVI*, 190.

[167] Ibidem.

will be chosen by God to be ruler of Moldavia, may he not change this privilege, but reassure it.[168]

The same formulations are found in other privileges: the son of the ruler is named as well as the fact that the follower, most likely the inheriting son as the privilege states, shall not make any changes to the will of Stephen expressed in the document. The only time when one can notice a slight change in these privileges is before the death of Alexander, the eldest son of Stephen. Before his death, both Alexander and Bogdan are mentioned in documents:

> … and this is my belief, of the above-mentioned Prince Stephen, and the belief of my beloved sons Alexander and Bogdan-Vlad, and that of our Moldavian boyars… And after I die, the one who will be ruler of my country Moldavia, from my children or my family or who will be chosen by God to be ruler of Moldavia, may he not change this privilege, but reassure it.[169]

One can notice that in the first example of a privilege given above, Bogdan is called "prince." This is because Stephen associated his son to the throne in order to make sure that he will inherit it – a frequent medieval practice (Stephen himself was also associated to his father's throne).

At a first glance, the son who initially seems to be associated to the throne was not Bogdan, but Alexander, Stephen's first-born. Alexander got married in 1489, to a woman who might have been a daughter of the Transylvanian nobleman Bartholomew Drágffy – direct descendant of Prince Dragoş,[170] a marriage which allowed Stephen's son to receive a new and higher status. Already before his marriage, documents show that he was given the court of Bacău, where he resided as the ruler and administrator of the lower part of Moldavia: documents therefore start to be issued in the name of Alexander. Such is, for instance, the one issued in Bacău on January 18th, 1482 which refers to Alexander as "filius domini Stephani Dei gracia waywode regni Moldavie,"[171] or another one issued at the same court in 1488 which says: "Sandrinus, Dei gracia filius illustrissimi principis Stephani wayvode Moldaviensis."[172] Therefore, one can notice that Alexander was solely titled as the son of Stephen, and was not identified with any princely title. This was because the first-born son was in fact not officially associated to the throne.[173] Alexander had an entire court under his own administration, a court which was independently managed and militarized, where Alexander was the

---

[168] Document from the archive of the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, no. 1248, in Florin Marinescu and Petronel Zahariuc, "Noi documente de la Ştefan cel Mare şi de la înaintaşii săi" [New documents from Stephen the Great and his predecessors], *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 187-188.

[169] Document from the archive of the Monastery of Vatopedi on Mount Athos, no. 1365, in Marinescu and Zahariuc, "Noi documente de la Ştefan cel Mare şi de la înaintaşii săi," 181-182.

[170] For a description of the circumstances surrounding Alexander's marriage and the hypotheses of his wedding, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 262-264.

[171] Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Documents of Stephen the Great] II (Bucharest: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co., 1913), 368.

[172] Ibidem, 379.

[173] For the thorough explanation, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 264-271.

sole commissioner of the stone church built there to which he donated a number of valuable liturgic objects and where he buried one of his close collaborators. However, despite all these privileges, there are no official documents issued by his father in which he be given the title of "prince."[174] The only documents in which Stephen names his son by the princely title are donation acts done for the remembrance of Alexander, after his death. Such is the donation act done for the Church of Bistriţa, the burial place of Alexander, two years after the son died: "… I had mercy so I gave for the remembrance of my son Prince Alexander …"[175] Or, similarly, another one for the same church, dated one year later: "… and I did for the forgiveness of the souls of my now-resting children, Prince Alexander and my daughter Ana, and I gave all the above-mentioned villages… to our saintly Church of Bistriţa."[176]

Although Stephen did not rule jointly with his son, he did give Alexander all the attributes in order to secure a smooth future succession. However, when Alexander died in 1496, all of Stephen's efforts were proven to be in vain. The next heir to the throne was Bogdan, with whom Stephen changed the strategy: Bogdan was officially invested as Prince of Moldavia. At the moment, it cannot be fully explained why Stephen did not formally associate his elder son, and why he did so with his youngest. What is certain is that once Bogdan was associated to the throne, his name was present in all relevant documents, accompanied by the princely title. Of course, the full princely title held only by the ruler in power, was only retained by Stephen: "*Io* Prince Stephen" versus the simpler "Prince Bogdan."[177] Moreover, although usually in the case of such associations, the co-ruler's role was mainly formal and usually only exerted internally, one can notice in the case of Bogdan that his role (and consequently, his importance) was strategically different than that of other co-rulers in the Moldavian and Wallachian space.[178] As revealed by the peace treaty between Moldavia and Poland from July 12th 1499, Bogdan was actively involved in external matters: the peace treaty not only mentioned Bogdan as co-ruler but also assures that, in case of an Ottoman offensive, Bogdan will be sent as head of the army, should Stephen not be able to do so.[179] Furthermore, the importance of Bogdan's association is not visible solely in official documents. Documents not issued by the Royal

---

[174] See an explanation in: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 541.

[175] Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, 128.

[176] Ibidem, 158.

[177] The appellative *Io* stood for *Ioan* (or Johannes in external documents), meaning "grace of God," an appellative which was only awarded to the official holder of the princely title. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 267; Emil Vârtosu, *Titulatura domnilor şi asocierea la domnie în Ţara Românească şi Moldova (până în secolul al XVI-lea)* [Royal titles and associations to the throne in Wallachia and Moldavia (until the sixteenth century)] (Bucharest: Academiei, 1960): 84-98. Also, a thorough explanation of the title *Io* can be found in Ştefan Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic," 45-48.

[178] For a thorough presentation of other cases of associations to the throne in Moldavia, which gives a better insight to Bogdan's association, see: Liviu Marius Ilie, "Several causes regarding the association to the throne in Wallachia and Moldavia (14th - 16th centuries)," *Analele Universităţii "Dunărea de Jos" Galaţi* 19 (2008): 75-90.

[179] For the entire text of the treaty, see: Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, 417-441.

Council attest that Bogdan was indeed known at Stephen's court as "Prince Bogdan." The Moldavian-German Chronicle thus attests that Stephen had a son with his wife known as "Prince Bogdan,"[180] while in 1502 Stephen's physician, Matteo Muriano, explains that " Prince Bogdan follows the example of his father."[181]

2.2.2. *Putna: the most prized jewel*

"In the year 6974 [1466], July 10, they started building, with the help of God, the Saintly Monastery of the Mother of God, at Putna."[182] It was three years later that the monastery, Stephen's first monastic commission, was consecrated. Soon afterwards it became Stephen's most important commission, a prosperous cultural centre, and, just as importantly, the resting place for Stephen and his closest family members.

Probably endless studies could be (and have been) written on the history of the monastery.[183] Should one study Stephen's dynastic programme, the most important aspect of Putna which should be analyzed is its tombs, their mapping within the monastery, and their significance. From the very beginning, the monastery was designed as a resting place for the prince's dynastic line.[184] Its conception has already been carefully explained and it has already been demonstrated that the monastery could not have been conceived other than as a realm of memory, particularly designed as such by Stephen.[185]

Putna has a rather tumultuous history: not long after its consecration, the monastery burnt down, while in the seventeenth century it was dismantled and rebuilt by 1662. Recent archaeological research[186] has shown that a number of 24 people were buried in the initial church – in its burial chamber, pronaos, and exonarthex. Their tombs were found as shown below:

- Five tombs in the burial chamber: those of Stephen the Great; Maria of Mangup, Stephen's second wife; the ruler's two children Peter and Bogdan; and Maria Voichiţa, the prince's third wife [Fig. 3 – space 1].

---

[180] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 24.

[181] Matteo Muriano in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 149.

[182] "The Chronicle of Putna II," 34.

[183] See, for example: Dumitru Nastase, "Les aigles bicéphales du Monastère de Poutna," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştin*e. 71-81; Gheorghe Moisescu, "Mănăstirea Putna la 500 de ani de la întemeiere 1466-1966" [The Putna Monastery 500 years after its building 1466-1966], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie*, 36-38; Ştefan Gorovei, "A Forgotten Founder at the Putna monastery and the Association at the Sovereign Power," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 21 (2003): 241-250.

[184] See more: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Le Monastère de Poutna – lieu de mémoire," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştin*e, 58; See also: Nicolae N. Puşcaşu and Voica Maria Puşcaşu, "Mormintele Putnei" [The tombs of Putna], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştin*e, 19.

[185] Ibidem.

[186] Such as that of Nicolae N. Puşcaşu and Voica Maria Puşcaşu, "Mormintele Putnei" [The tombs of Putna], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştin*e, 19-37.

- Thirteen graves were identified in the pronaos: Prince Bogdan III, son of Stephen; Maria Despina, Stephen's mother-in-law; Prince Stephen the Young, grandson of the great ruler; Maria Chiajna, the first wife of Prince Peter Rareş, son of Stephen. The other graves in the pronaos could not be identified [Fig. 3 – space 2].

- In the exonarthex, the tomb of the Metropolitan Theoctist, who died in 1477, was found along with other tombs which are less relevant for the present study [Fig. 3 – space 3].

Of course, one can easily notice that the most important tombstones are placed at the core of the monastery, in the burial chamber. The Moldavian burial chamber is significantly different from traditional western or eastern burial chapels which are usually placed at the side of the church's main axis.[187] The burial chamber, as seen in the case of Putna [Fig. 3 – space 1], is placed between the naos and the pronaos, an architectural strategy which heightens the importance of the people buried there:[188] Stephen, his two sons, and two wives remain, without a doubt, the essential figures of Putna. They remain in the centre of attention in eternity.
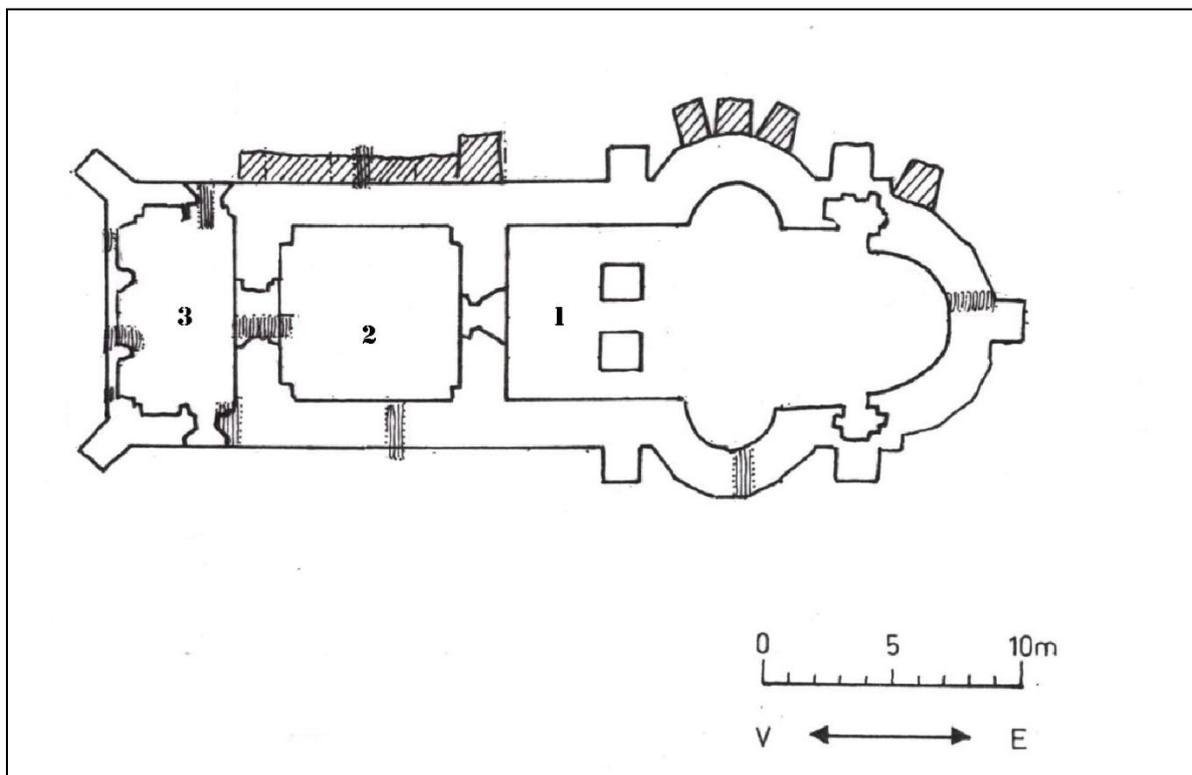
Fig. 3: Ground plan of Putna monastery with the burial chamber (1), pronaos (2), and exonarthex (3).

---

[187] Although the burial chamber was placed differently than in normal circumstances within the Christian world, the Moldavian burial chamber had its influences in Serbian architecture: here, rulers were placed within the main body of the church, in a high niche within the naos. See: Vlad Bedros, "Rolul ideologiei politice în apariţia şi fixarea tipului de necropolă voievodală în Moldova în secolele al XV-lea şi al XVI-lea" [The role of political ideology in the development of the voivodal necropolis in Moldavia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], *Studia Patzinaka* 1 (2005): 62-75.

[188] Jonathan Eagles, *Stephen the Great and Balkan Nationalism. Moldova and Eastern European History* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 99.

Apart from the fact that the tombs of Stephen's nuclear family are placed so centrally, signalling the ruler's authority and central power, other signs of Stephen's political and dynastic ideology were observed within the construction of the monstery. Putna seems to be a pure manifestation of princely power.[189] Out of all the Putna sarcophagi, the one belonging to Stephen is the only one built in marble. As marble was the sign of Byzantine power which was often used outside Greek territories as a reference to the Empire, it should be concluded that the Moldavian ruler, by having his sarcophagus produced in marble, made a statement about his political conceptions[190] – conceptions which were often intersected with the idea of imperialism, as it shall be seen in the following chapters. Apart from the sarcophagus of the ruler, other dynastic and political manifestations are easily observable: the funerary portraits found in the tomb's arcosolia; the neatly embroidered effigy of Maria of Mangup considered to be a genuine portrait of Stephen's second wife; the coat of arms decorating the tombs of the ruler's children; as well as the coat of arms found above the grave of Prince Bogdan III; and, nonetheless, the tomb covers with their expensive textiles.[191]

The monastery of Putna was therefore meant to bring people – may they be people of Stephen's past, or of his future, even up until today – closer to the ruler and his family, closer to him and his dynasty. The monastery, as well as Stephen's enterprises which were meant to strengthen the meaning of the dynasty, were a means for the prince to show his vision on the future and try to influence the future in such a way that his image and that of his family stays with the people of Moldavia. A most likely unintentional mistake supported this vision up until the twentieth century when, in 1966, Metropolitan Justin of Moldova and Suceava interpreteted the missing date of death on Stephen's tomb as a means of keeping the image of the prince ever alive, suggesting the concept of the "immortal sovereign."[192]

3. Creating memory and building fame: how Stephen did it

By putting together the dynastic programme described above, Stephen the Great meant to give prestige to his dynasty and himself. However, one might look at the dynastic programmeme and argue that the ruler's methods were not as straightforward as one might expect. Quite the opposite:

---

[189] The study written by Székely, "Le Monastère de Poutna."

[190] Ibidem, 9.

[191] Ibidem, 22.

[192] Both the date of the death and the number of years the prince ruled are missing from his tombstone. A number of hypotheses were developed including a human error or the death of the master carver before the death of the prince himself, up to the idea that the omission was deliberate in order to suggest the eternal presence of Stephen the Great in Moldavia. See: J. Eagles, *Stephen the reat and Balkan Nationalism*, 107-108.

he projected an image of himself which fixed his memory in his subjects' eyes and which allowed him to be transformed in the myth he is today. The next two subchapters will show how, besides strengthening the image of his dynasty, he built his own notoriety and how the people surrounding him helped bring his myth to life for the very first time in history.

3.1. Was Stephen his little principality's emperor?

A significant number of studies have been written on the "imperial" dimension of Stephen the Great's reign. Although arguments have already been brought to print concerning Stephen as emperor,[193] there are a few issues which are worth discussing in order to understand the foundation of the proto-myth: the ruler's marriages, his titles, and his "imperial" gestures.

3.1.1. Let us marry… an empress!

Stephen married Evdokia of Kiev in 1463 and, five years after her death, in 1472, he married Maria of Mangup. The two ladies never met, yet there is a meaningful connection between them: they were both linked to imperial legacies and in the chronicles written under Stephen the Great, their names were closely connected to the title of *emperor*. The Chronicle of Putna I recalls that "in the year 6971 [1463] June 5th, he took Evdokia as wife, the sister of Simeon, tsar of Kiev."[194] The title changed however and became more explicit in the Romanian translation of the chronicle: "In the year 6[9]71 [1463], July the 5th, he took Evdokia of Kiev as wife, the sister of Emperor Simeon."[195] Evdokia descended from the line of the great dukes of Lithuania as her father was Olelko of Kiev, first cousin of Casimir IV, King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania. In reality, Simeon, Evdokia's brother, was prince of Kiev and not emperor or tsar, but they were considered to be the descendants of the Rurik dynasty whose members were sometimes given the title of "emperor."[196] At the time of the marriage, Stephen had already signed a Polish-Moldavian peace treaty which allowed him to be in

---

[193] A wide variety of arguments have been elaborated in order to prove the reality or non-reality of Stephen as emperor. See, among others: Dumitru Năstase, "Ştefan cel Mare împărat" [Emperor Stephen the Great] in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt: 1504 – 2004. Portret în Istorie*, 568-611; Valentin Al. Georgescu, "L'idée impériale byzantine et les réactions des réalités roumaines (XIVe-XVIIIe siècles). Idéologie politique, structuration de l'État et du droit," *Byzantina* 3 (1971): 311-339; Constantin Rezachevici, "Neamul doamnei Evdochia de Kiev, în legatura cu descoperirea pietrei sale de mormânt la Suceava" [The family of Evdokia of Kiev, regarding the discovery of her tombstone in Suceava], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine*, 120, 125.
[194] "The Chronicle of Putna I," 30.
[195] Traducerea Românească a Letopiseţului de la Putna [The Romanian translation of the Chronicle of Putna], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 38.
[196] For more details on this descendance: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 49-50.

positive terms with Casimir IV,[197] but this does not underestimate the importance of the marriage: the marital contract aimed the reinforcement of the Polish-Moldavian relations, but Stephen was also interested in the legacy given by a woman with good family history.

Fig. 4: Tomb cover of Maria of Mangup, Putna Monastery
Image source:
http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Acope
ramantul-de-mormant-al-Mariei-de-
Mangop-s6-ss22-c9.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

---

[197] The peace treaty with Poland was a strategic move which assured Stephen that an attack from the Ottoman Empire would not take place. See more: Eugen Denize, *Stephen the Great and His Reign* (Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Institute Publishing House, 2004), 45-49.

The same happened when he married Maria of Mangup: "In the year 6980 [1472] September 14th, Prince Stephen took a wife, Maria from Mangup; there was a Christian empire…"[198] The Crimean principality, known as Mangup or Theodoro, being the last standing strip of Byzantine land, represented an opportunity for Stephen to attach his name to Byzantine legacy. Who was Maria of Mangup and how could her name have helped Stephen? There is no concluding genealogical information on Maria. Based on indirect material and written sources, it may only be implied that she was descending from the Palaeologan family.[199] Thus, she was a Byzantine princess coming from the Crimean peninsula, which meant that she represented a double advantage for Stephen: on the one hand, through a marital alliance with Crimea, Stephen could develop his influence on the seaside territory which would result in enhanced economic advantages; and on the other hand, Stephen could legitimately enter the realm of the Byzantine world. The importance of Maria's ideological heritage can be seen in a particular tomb cover: that of Maria herself [Fig. 4]. Recent studies have shown that the princess' tomb cover is "the only piece known today which brings together all the signs of power of the last Byzantine emperors:"[200]

- The first and most evident signs of Byzantine tradition which can be noticed on the tomb cover are the two two-headed eagles – one, on the right-lower part of the textile [Fig. 5], and the other on the upper-left part.

Fig. 5: The tomb cover of Maria of Mangup, Putna Monastery. Detail: The two-headed eagle
Image source:
http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Acoperamantul-de-mormant-al-Mariei-de-Mangop-s6-ss22-c9.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

---

[198] "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," 43.

[199] For some of the most significant and recent studies on the Byzantine wife of Stephen the Great, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Doamna Moldovlahiei I" [Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Princess Of Moldavia I], *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 9-50; Idem, "Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Doamna Moldovlahiei II" [Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Princess Of Moldavia II], *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 24 (2006): 55-80; Székely and Gorovei, *Maria Asanina Paleologhina: o prinţesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei*.

[200] Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, "Însemnele imperiale ale doamnei Maria Asanina Paleologhina"[The imperial signs of Princess Maria Asanina Paleologhina], in *Ştefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Atlet al credinței creștine*, 105.

- On the lower-left corner, the monogram of the Palaeologan family is visible [Fig. 6].

Fig. 6: The tomb cover of Maria of Mangup, Putna Monastery. Detail: The Palaeologan monogram
Image source:
http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Acoperamantul-de-mormant-al-Mariei-de-Mangop-s6-ss22-c9.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

- On the upper right corner, the monogram of the Assanis family appears, as Maria was also a descendant from the Bulgarian Assenid dynasty [Fig. 7].

Fig. 7: The tomb cover of Maria of Mangup, Putna Monastery. Detail: The Assen monogram
Image source:
http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Acoperamantul-de-mormant-al-Mariei-de-Mangop-s6-ss22-c9.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

- While the two monograms genealogically identify Maria as a descendant of both the Palaeologan and the Assenid dynasties, the signs inside the arcade and above the deceased's head solely stress the Byzantine legacy of the princess. The signs on the arcade are as following, from left to right: the Palaeologan monogram, a swastika, four crossed bars, two intertwined letters C, and an inversed Palaeologan monogram [Fig. 8]. It has already been shown that all these are signs were used in the Byzantine Empire or in connection to it, and especially in connection to the Palaeologan family.[201]

---

[201] For a thorough explanation of all these signs and examples of these signs in the Byzantine Empire, see: Ibidem, 94-109.

Fig. 8: The tomb cover of Maria of Mangup, Putna Monastery. Detail: The signs in the arcade
Image source: http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Acoperamantul-de-mormant-al-Mariei-de-Mangop-s6-ss22-c9.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

Stephen was interested in inheriting the Byzantine legacy and, in a period when the Ottoman Empire was pushing into Christian territories, Stephen was among those rulers who wanted to keep the Byzantine heritage intact. The Principality of Mangup was threatened by Ottoman occupation and, in a fifteenth-century world where Orthodox rulers were attracted by the idea of becoming the continuators of the emperors in Constantinople, it is easy to argue that Stephen might have imagined that, being married to a Byzantine princess and being able to defeat the Ottomans, he would inherit if (for sure) not Constantinople, then at least the small principality of Mangup.[202] It has been assumed, in fact, that after the Principality of Mangup was conquered by the Ottomans, leaving Stephen with no further possible interest in the Principality (and his Byzantine princess), the prince stepped back from his wife's life, and shifted his interested towards his third wife, Maria Voichiţa.[203]

---

[202] Stephen the Great was not the only ruler who aspired at being a new Byzantine ruler/emperor. Ivan III of Moscow married Sophia Palaeologus, granddaughter of Emperor Constantine XI, in the same year that Stephen married Maria: 1472. Although merely a supposition, Ivan III may have aspired to transform Moscow into the "Third Rome," just like, maybe, also Stephen had on his mind. See more: Alexander Gertsen and Nadezhda Gertsen, "Moldova şi principatul Theodoro la 1475" [Moldavia and the Principality of Theodoro in 1475], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine,* 142-143. Or, quite the opposite: this desired "transformation" of Moscow into the "Third Rome" may be seen as an early sixteenth-century phenomenon.
[203] Ibidem, 145.

The reasons behind Stephen's marriage to Maria Voichiţa are not connected to imperial aspirations, although she "was of high noble blood."[204] His choice for Maria stands in the ambition of the second part of his life when he was interested in connecting the Moldavian Muşatin dynasty with the Wallachian Basarab dynasty. A discussion of this connection is not needed at this point, but a relevant argument for this hypothesis has already been pointed out in the previous chapter: their first-born is named Bogdan-Vlad, Bogdan being the first prince of Moldavia, while Vlad was the first prince of Wallachia.

3.1.2. "Long live the Tsar!"

An indirect argument for Stephen as a ruler who wished to hold imperial power could be indicated by the date of his marriage to Maria of Mangup. They married on September 14th, 1472, which coincided with the date of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The Church did not allow weddings during feast days, which means that the ruler must have received an exemption from the Church for the marriage.[205] This shows that it was particularly important for him to marry his Byzantine wife on that precise day which commemorated the cross, the ultimate symbol of Christianity and the Byzantine world. As it has already been shown, this marriage allowed Stephen to aspire to the role as the new emperor of a new Byzantine world, but also allowed him to hope that Suceava, his seat, might become a new Constantinople.[206] It is intriguing how shortly after the prince's wedding to Maria of Mangup, his title changed. In very few, rather controversial sources, he now became tsar – emperor.

However, before discussing the particular instances of Stephen as "emperor," certain clarifications regarding the titling of the Moldavian ruler should be made. The Moldavian ruler did have a more or less standardized title, which was used in most of the documents of his time. Stephen was usually named with the following formula composed of five items:

[1] with the will of God + [2] *Io* + [3] Stephen + [4] voivode/prince +

+ [5] ruler [*domn*] + [6] (of the) Moldavian Principality[207]

---

[204] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 24.

[205] Or, another hypothesis states that the Metropolitan Teoctist surely did not perform the marriage ceremony, particularly because of the interdiction of marriage performances during feast days. See: Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 329.

[206] See: Maria Magdalena Székely and Ştefan S. Gorovei, "<Semne şi minuni> pentru Ştefan Voievod. Note de mentalitate medievală" ["Signs and miracles" for Prince Stephen. Notes of medieval mentality], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt – Portret în Istorie*, 72.

[207] The basic version of this formula ([1] Stephen + [2] prince/voivode + [3] ruler [*domn*] + [4] (of the) Moldavian + [5] Principality) plus the attributes which complement it (*with the will of God + Io*) have been presented and explained point by point by Gorovei in his article "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic": 41-78.

Most documents issued by Stephen's court respected this formula and resulted in syntagms such as the following: "Nos Stephanus woiewoda, Dei gratia dominus terrarum Moldaviae."[208] However, this formula changed occasionally: *Io* was sometimes replaced with *Noi* [Nos], as in the example above; the title *haeres* was also present especially in external documents; the syntagm "crowned by God" is also present in two manuscripts and a letter; the designation "lover of God" is always present in church inscriptions or manuscript donations; the title "great" which appears before his name in the inscription of the Putna Monastery; he is also called with the title *palatinus* replacing that of *voivode/prince* in Polish sources; and, last but not least, the title "emperor" or tsar.[209] One can notice the complex variations in the Moldavian ruler's designation which are invariably a mark of imprecision. It is particularly this imprecision which lead to various interpretations of the imperial title of Stephen.[210]

One cannot argue whether Stephen considered himself emperor or not, or whether he aspired to be one. So far, there are five known sources which recall Stephen as "tsar." The first instance, dated 1473, is found in the Gospel of Humor, commissioned by Stephen, where the epilogue of the manuscript, on the verso of folio 265, presents the ruler with the following titles: "The honourable and lover of Christ tsar, Io Prince Stephen, ruler of Moldovlahia."[211]

The following three instances can all be found in a single source: the Anonymous Chronicle, written at the court of Stephen. Firstly, the chronicle notes the following: "In the same year, August 29th, there was a big earthquake all over the world, while the tsar was sitting at his table."[212] The symbolic correlation between the tsar/emperor and a natural event of such a large scale has already been discussed. Historians reached a unanimous conclusion that the "divine sign" of the earthquake must have aimed Stephen, who was probably seen by the scribe of the chronicle as the ruler of the world, thus the appellative *tsar*.[213] Another event guided by the divine was also portrayed while mentioning "tsar" Stephen:

---

[208] Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, 266.

[209] All the examples cited at this point can be found, together with their explanation and contextualization, in Gorovei's article "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic," 41-78.

[210] Benoît Joudiou made this point very clear: "L'imprécision du titre souverain roumain ouvrait la porte aux interprétations les plus larges quant à la nature même de la *domnia*." See the article "Remarques sur la signification du titre "souverain" dans les Principautes Roumaines," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 19 (2001): 77.

[211] *Repertoriul monumentelor şi obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare*, 388.

[212] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 15.

[213] Dumitru Năstase explains that the chronicler is highlighting the earthquake as a world-wide event by describing it as "a big earthquake there all over the world." Because this world-wide event is correlated to the name of Stephen, the conclusion of the historian is that Stephen must have been seen as the ruler as the ruler of this very world. See: Năstase, "Ştefan cel Mare împărat," 568-569. See also: Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic," 73-74.

> And Prince Stephen with all his soldiers returned as a bearer of victory in his fortress Suceava and the Metropolitans and priests all came before him, holding the Gospels in their hands, praying and praising the Lord for all that has been given as a gift from the Almighty and blessing the tsar: "Long live the tsar!"[214]

One can notice that the "tsar" is mentioned twice within this sentence. And, not only is Stephen identified with imperial designation, but he is also enacting something which seems to be a triumphal entry into Suceava. It is easily understandable why this procession is associated to the word "tsar." The event takes place when Stephen returns from his victorious campaign against the Ottoman army which entered Moldavia in 1475.[215] A victory of such scale could have and did propel Stephen's name as a competitive ruler who deserved, in the eyes of the Moldavians, the title of *tsar*. Departing from his victory and returning for a moment to the dynastic project of Stephen the Great, one can notice that in this very same Anonymous Chronicle, not only was Stephen named "tsar," but also all his predecessors starting with Alexander the Good: they are all named with the generic "tsars of Moldavia" - *молдавстии царїє*.[216]

There is finally a fifth instance where Stephen is identified with the imperial title. A Bulgarian Book of Eight Tones, an *oktoihos* found in Kiev, describes the conquests of the fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman and, while telling the story, it names Stephen the "tsar of Moldavia."[217] While there are not enough arguments to support the theory that Stephen actually used the title of *emperor*, the appearance of the title in the official chronicles show that he strived to have his name connected to imperial dignity. The *oktoihos* is a further argument for this theory and its importance rises as it is a source not created in Stephen's principality: the fact that Stephen is named *tsar* in this document must be a reflection of Stephen's imperial aspirations outside the borders of Moldavia.

3.1.3. Suceava and imperial manifestation

In his 1476 campaign against Stephen the Great, Sultan Mehmed II was accompanied by the Italian Giovanni Maria Angiolello who was his treasurer at the time. Describing the expedition of the sultan in Moldavia, the treasurer also presented the capital of the principality, the princely seat of Suceava:

> <The city of> Suceava was surrounded by ditches and stockades. The houses and churches were built in wood and covered with shingle. The castle of Suceava was

---

[214] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.

[215] For a description of the events of 1475, surrounding the clash between the Moldavians and the Ottomans, see: Eugen Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună. Relaţiile turco-veneţiene şi influenţa lor asupra spaţiului românesc, secolele XV-XVI* [The Romanians between the Lion and the Half-Moon. Turkish-Venetian relations and their influence on the Romanian space, fifteenth-sixteenth centuries] (Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2009), 132-139.

[216] Quoted in Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic," 74.

[217] The Book of Eight Tones was found in Kiev by the philologist Ioan Bogdan who hypothesized that the document must be contemporary to Stephen the Great. See: Ibidem, 74.

the only one built in stone and plaster on the side of the city. It resisted well and was well equipped.[218]

Less than a century later, the French diplomat Blaise de Vigenère explained that Suceava, the fortress, was "wonderfully strengthened and almost unconquerable."[219] This "well-equipped" and "almost-unconquerable" Suceava was the location from where Stephen's power radiated [Fig. 9]. From this point of view, it is particularly important to see not only how it was reflected in sources (and, consequently, in the Moldavian imaginary),[220] but also how Stephen used this space in order to enhance his strength over the principality. A critical delimitation should be made at this point: the space used by Stephen for what will be named in the followings as "imperial manifestation" was that of the fortress itself and not that of the surrounding city.[221]

Fig. 9: The Fortress of Suceava, as seen in 2014
Image source: Teodora Artimon

The ruler's "imperial manifestation," if it existed in Moldavia, should be visible in court ceremonials and rituals, such as coronations, weddings, feasts, processions, etc. However, extant

---

[218] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române I*, 137-138.

[219] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române II* [Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Principalities II], ed. Maria Holban, M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968), 641.

[220] For a study of the city landscape and its reflection in medieval imaginary, see: Alexandru Pînzar, "Suceava în imaginarul medieval – Suceava in medieval imaginary," *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 25-50.

[221] Historians often times mixed the space of Suceava's fortress with that of Suceava's city. This confusion was deepened by inaccurate translations of sources which mixed the terms "fortress" and "city." Ştefan Gorovei made the situation clearer by taking the original versions of some of these sources and explaining how they make a clear delimitation between what was city and what was fortress. For his study, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Cetatea de scaun a Sucevei. O ipoteză – The Suceava fortress. A hypothesis," *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 15-24.

sources indicate no imperial-like ceremonials for any of these events.[222] The only ceremonies which may be resembled to anything imperial were Stephen's returns from battles to Suceava. These returns, which resembled triumphal entries,[223] seem to have been constructed based on a recipe which was enacted after a military victory. There are four instances when sources discuss these "entries:" the entries of 1465, of 1473, of 1475, and of 1481. No explicit naming of a triumphal procession/entry is made in any of these cases, however. There is, nevertheless, a formula used in all chronicles when presenting Stephen in Suceava, after a victorious battle. In its basic form, it can be read as following:

[Stephen] + [returns to Suceava] + [God]

The derivations from this formula alternate, but they always stress the fact that Stephen had returned with the help of God or thanking the divine for its help. The four known "entries" appear in most of the chronicles written during Stephen's reign and they present the prince as a triumphant leader of armies:

- The entry of 1465, after Stephen conquered the fortress of Chilia:

   And then he [Stephen] returned with all his army in his seat of Suceava. And he ordered all the metropolitans and the bishops and all the priests to thank God for what was given to him by God Almightly…[224]

- The 1473 entry, which took place after Stephen's victory over the Wallachian Prince Radu the Fair:

   And he took the wife of Prince Radu and his daughter, his only-born, and all the treasures and the vestments and his flags… And then he returned to his seat of Suceava. And then, the metropolitan with all the clergy made him a wonderful and beautiful greeting, but they especially praised God for all the gifts He had given to his servant, Prince Stephen.[225]

- The entry of 1475 is probably the most famous one because it was preceded by the victory of Vaslui, where Stephen defeated the Ottoman army led by Suleyman Pasha. This entry is

---

[222] Coronations and weddings are most often studied. Bogdan-Petru Maleon highlights that the hypothesis according to which a whole ceremonial following the Byzantine or Western model used to be performed since the foundation of the Moldavian state, should be excluded. See: Bogdan-Petru Maleon, "Observaţii privind dobândirea puterii princiare în Moldova epocii ştefaniene – Some Remarks on Gaining the Princely Power in Moldavia during Stephen the Great Epoch," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2011): 7-20. For information on the wedding of Stephen to his "imperial" wife Maria of Mangup, see, for example: Maria-Venera Rădulescu, "Episoade din istoria Moldovei redate pe cahle descoperite la Curtea Domnească de la Vaslui: nunta lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Maria de Mangop – The wedding of Stephen the Great and Maria of Mangup. Images on glazestore tiles discovered at Vaslui (15th century)," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (2006): 81-100.

[223] For a concise article concerning this subject, see: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Atributele imperiale ale cetăţii Suceava – Imperial attributes of the Suceava fortress," *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 5-14.

[224] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 14. This entry is also presented in the Chronicles of Putna I and II, in the Romanian translation of the Chronicles of Putna, and also in the Moldavian-Polish Chronicles.

[225] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16. This entry is also presented in the Chronicle of Putna II, in the Moldavian-German Chronicle, and in the Moldavian-Polish Chronicle.

particularly important as it has an aura of imperialism – the prince is acclaimed and he is welcomed in the fortress as an emperor:

> And their flags and large maces were taken away, more than 40 maces. And Prince Stephen returned as a bearer of victory with all his soldiers in his fortress Suceava and the Metropolitans and priests all came before him, holding the Gospels in their hands, praying and praising the Lord for all that has been given as a gift from the Almighty and blessing the tsar: <Long live the tsar!>[226]

- The entry of 1481 was preceded by another victorious battle with Wallachia, which took place at Râmnic:

> And Prince Stephen returned from there as a bearer of victory with all his army and his boyars, in his seat of Suceava. And there, Prince Stephen made a great feast to the metropolitan, the bishops, his boyars and his entire army. And he named a lot of *viteji*[227] and he gave a lot of gifts and expensive vestments to his boyars and his *viteji* and his entire army. And he let all of them go home and he taught them to praise and bless the Lord for all that has happened, because it all came from God.[228]

Given these four explicit examples, one can notice that the entries of Stephen in Suceava followed the recipe of a ritual: Stephen entered the fortress with his army, was welcomed by the clergy, and a religious ceremony took place after the entrance. The entry in 1481 ads to this information: not only did a religious ceremony take place, but a feast was also organized within which, probably, war plunder was distributed to the most significant soldiers, while others received higher titles as a result of their success in battle. But can one discuss a "triumphal entry?" Should one compare Roman or Byzantine triumphal entries to Stephen's entries based on extant sources, Moldavian entries seem rudimentary. Relevant elements of Stephen's entries remain unknown, the most important of which is the triumphal route. The Constantinopolitan triumphal route was dictated by the city landscape and further on detailed by custom,[229] therefore, although standardized, it was prone to change. However, when studying the Moldavian case, it is easy to notice that there exist no indicators of the route or its changes, or of the ruler's stops – apart from the obvious stop at the church where the religious ceremony took place. Also, apart from the "Long live the tsar!" acclamation of the 1475 entry, there are no other testimonies of acclamations, chants or intonations, all indispensable to triumphal entries. Similarly, while guilds would normally be involved in the decoration of the imperial

---

[226] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.

[227] The title of *viteaz* (pl. *viteji*) is a higher title in the Moldavian army. For a description of the Moldavian army composition, see: Ioan Cupşa, *Arta militară a moldovenilor în a doua jumătate a secolului al XV-lea (Ştefan cel Mare)* [The Moldavian military art in the second half of the fifteenth century (Stephen the Great)] (Bucharest: Editura Militară a Ministerului Forţelor Armate ale R.P.R., 1959), chapter II *Puterea militară a Moldovei* [The military power of Moldavia], especially 20-28.

[228] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 18.

[229] Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 208.

route, in cleaning the streets and stewing them with flowers,[230] there are no visual sources in Moldavia to attest any type of preparation of the fortress for such a major, imperial-like event. Surely, considering the description of the entries in the Moldavian chronicles, it must be assumed that these were large-scale events, involving a large public – although, again, there are no sources to indicate the existence of this public or the announcements made to the public about an upcoming entry.

Regardless of all these gaps, one cannot decisively argue that Stephen's entries were not moulded on the model of triumphal entries. Suceava did not have a triumphal route, but neither did Constantinople or Rome have a standardized one.[231] While one can argue that there was no standardized triumphal route in Suceava, one cannot argue that the route used by Stephen (whichever it was), was not meant to be triumphal. Moreover, the four above-presented sources indicate some aspects which can easily be linked to imperial behaviour: Stephen returns from his expeditions with a significant amount of goods, including princely hostages such as the Wallachian ruler's wife and daughter; he participates in religious processions involving the Metropolitan, bishops and a large body of clergy; he distributes war booty and grants higher dignities. Whether these aspects sum up the behaviour of an emperor is irrelevant. What is relevant, instead, is that they are signs of ostentatious showing of power. They are the elements which demonstrate the ruler's victory and, as Ovidiu Cristea highlights, they give the impression that one could not enter the fortress without being victorious. The historian points out two relevant sources which demonstrate that a fortress could only be entered by victorious men: the first one is the dialogue between Stephen and his mother, recorded by the chronicle of Ion Neculce, which presented how the mother forbade her son to enter the fortress after he was defeated at Războieni, unless he returned with victory;[232] the second source is the chronicle of Byhovec which recalls Suceava's siege by John Albert of Poland – when the Moldavians were asked to open the gates of the fortress they replied that they could not betray their ruler because he was fighting on the battle field, but should the king desire to enter the fortress he should "go, defeat him [Stephen], and the fortresses and all his country will be in your hands [of John Albert]."[233]

---

[230] Ibidem, 205-208.

[231] For a comparison between the triumphal landscape of Constantinople and Suceava, see: Székely, "Atributele imperiale ale cetăţii Suceava," 7-8.

[232] "Prince Stephen the Good, being beaten by the Turks at Războieni, went to enter the fortress of Neamţ. His mother being in the fortress, she did not allow him to enter and she told him that a bird does not disappear in its own nest. And that he should go gather his army, because victory will be his. And like this, because of his mother's words, he went and gathered army." See: Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte," 15.

[233] Quoted by Ovidiu Cristea in "Declanşarea războiului, victorii şi intrări triumfale în Moldova lui Ştefan cel Mare: evenimente, reprezentări, interpretări – War outbreak, victories and triumphal entries in Moldavia of Stephen the Great: events, representations, interpretations," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 131-132. Also, see Ovidiu Cristea's interpretation of Stephen's triumphal entries: Ibidem, 129-132.

Considering these arguments, one conclusion may be stressed: on the one hand, one may suppose that Stephen imagined and designed his entries based on the model of triumphal entries, while on the other hand, he surely designed his entries as manifestations of power which welcomed him as the most powerful figure in the principality. Although Stephen's entries were not as "triumphal" as those of Roman or Byzantine emperors, his figure as the supreme leader of Moldavia must have reverberated within the walls of Suceava as he entered them.

3.1.4. Stephen, the Last Emperor?

Stephen seemed to have wanted to surpass the status of an ordinary Moldavian ruler and resemble the image of an emperor – be it in the form of a Byzantine emperor or in the form of the Last Emperor. The myth of the Last Emperor had a valuable significance in the history of Christianity and its importance rose on the eve of the Apocalypse, believed to begin at the end of the fifteenth century.[234] The myth implied that a Roman emperor would have to live through a period of hardship and fight evil, in order to eventually defeat the enemy. Having defeated the enemy, he would surrender his imperial regalia to God and would thus put an end to the Roman Empire. The end of the world would follow, allowing the kingdom of God to be established.[235] A number of significant rulers were identified with the Last Emperor,[236] especially in times of distress and negative expectations, and Stephen the Great was seemingly one of them. Because the myth of the Last Emperor was known in fifteenth-century Moldavia,[237] one may deduct scarce facts which point to Stephen as a ruler identified with the Last Emperor. In connection to this, the messianic aspect of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross [Fig. 10], a mural scene painted in the narthex of the Pătrăuţi Monastery, should be pointed out.

---

[234] Based on the calculations of Gennadius Scholarius from his 1472 Chronograph, the end of days were to arrive in 1492. See more: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Ştefan cel Mare şi sfârşitul lumii – Stephen the Great and the End of the World," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 21 (2003): 256.

[235] More on the myth of the Last Emperor in: Maria Ana Travassos Valdez, *Historical Interpretations of the "Fifth Empire." The Dynamics of Periodization from Daniel to Antonio Vieira, S.J.* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, series ed.Robert J. Bast) (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 208-223.

[236] Such as Charlemagne or Frederick II. See: Ibidem, 211.

[237] The Apocalypse by Pseudo-Methodius of Patara contains the most widely-spread description of the Last Emperor as an apocalyptic figure. Pseudo-Methodius' Apocalypse was also to be found in a manuscript from Neamţ Monastery (now manuscript no. 135 at the Library of the Romanian Academy). See: Liviu Pilat, "Mesianism şi escatologie în imaginarul epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare – Messianism and eschatology during the time of Stephen the Great," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 107.

Fig. 10: *The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross*, Pătrăuţi Monastery
Image source: http://www.crestinortodox.ro (accessed: September 26, 2014)

As a scene rarely depicted in orthodox iconography[238] and much debated in historiography, this mural has been interpreted in several ways. Most historians conclude that it was intended to represent Stephen's crusade against his Islamic enemies, as well as a sign of the political and religious aspirations of the ruler.[239] The image illustrates a saintly mounted procession headed by a winged rider, identified in an inscription as the Archangel Michael, who leans towards the rider close behind him, identified as Constantine the Great in another inscription. Following the Archangel and Constantine, there are the military saints George and Demetrius, followed themselves by a large group of other saints. In the upper right corner of the scene, in the sky, a bright white cross is visible, which gives meaning to the entire mural. The Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross illustrates the miraculous vision of the Holy Cross by Emperor Constantine: on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge against the Roman Emperor Maxentius, Constantine had a vision of the cross, accompanied by the wording "in this sign, [you shall] conquer." He subsequently won the battle, opening the path towards Christianization throughout the Roman Empire. In drawing a parallel with Constantine's victory over the pagans, a significant number of studies have linked the emperor's victory with an eventual victory of Stephen the Great over his pagan enemies – namely, the Ottomans.[240]

---

[238] This scene cannot be found in any versions of the *Ermeneia*, the guide of Byzantine Orthodox iconographical programmemes.

[239] Both of these hypotheses were formulated in the first and groundbreaking study of the mural scene. Grabar, André. "Les croisades de l'Europe orientale dans l'art," in *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Age* (Paris: Collège de France, 1968), 169-175.

[240] A large number of historians referred to this interpretation of the scene, starting with the already-mentioned study of André Grabar. See some of the studies referring to the anti-Ottoman significance of this scene in: Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 13-16; Virgil Vătăşianu, *Istoria artei feudale în Ţările Române* [The history of feudal art in the Romanian Principalities] I (Bucharest: Academiei, 1959), 806; Idem, *Studii de artă veche românească şi universal* [Studies of old Romanian and universal art] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 51; Dan Zamfirescu, *Neagoe Basarab şi învăţăturile către fiul său Theodosie: problemele controversate* [Neagoe Basarab and his teachings to his son Theodosie: controversial problems] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1973), 85-86.

The scene painted in the Pătrăuţi Monastery offers insight into the various ideologies pursued by the ruler,[241] including the eschatological idea of the Last Emperor. While the scene was primarily interpreted by historians as an anti-Ottoman plea, it may also be seen as a representation of the last days in which the Last Emperor defeats his enemies. A parallel can be made between the Mounted Procession and the Russian icon of *Ecclesia militans*, painted after the conquest of Kazan by Ivan IV of Russia in 1552 [Fig. 11]. In *Ecclesia militans*, Ivan the Terrible follows the Archangel Michael in leading away a large group of military saints (including Constantine I) from the conquered city of Kazan and towards the New Jerusalem represented in the left corner of the icon. Based on this parallel, Liviu Pilat explains that the Moldavian scene of Pătrăuţi is the representation of the taking of Jerusalem by earthly soldiers, before the New Jerusalem descends.[242] The historian explains that the final scope of the Orthodox Crusade was the liberation of Jerusalem, while the liberation of Constantinople was "just a stage, the final point being the Emperor's entrance in Jerusalem."[243] While making this comparison, it should be stressed that Jerusalem may be identified with the image of the Cross (as in the scene of the Mounted Procession), especially in a monastery dedicated to the Holy Cross (like the Pătrăuţi Monastery was).[244] Stephen the Great may thus be identified in the scene of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross with the Last Emperor, while liberating Jerusalem and allowing the end of days to begin.

Fig. 11: *Ecclesia Militans*, Tretyakov Gallery
Image source: Wikimedia Foundation,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blessed_Be_the_Host_of_the_King_of_Heaven#mediaviewer/File:Blessed_Be_the_Host_of_the_King_of_Heaven%E2%80%A6_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg (accessed: September 26, 2014)

---

[241] At least three ideas may be noticed within the mural scene: the idea of an anti-Ottoman crusade; that of following the Constantinian model which shall be discussed in chapter V; as well as the eschatological idea discussed in this sub-chapter.

[242] See the full explanation in: Liviu Pilat, "Mesianism şi escatologie în imaginarul epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare" (Messianism and eschatology during the time of Stephen the Great). *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 111-113.

[243] Ibidem, 112.

[244] Ibidem.

3.2. One shall not forget the prince's face!

The act of commissioning has always been connected to its spiritual consequences. Donations were made with the primary purpose of having one's soul or the souls of one's family saved. Donors or *ktetors* built churches and monasteries, commissioned various liturgical and church objects, donated various sums of money to ecclesiastical sites, and so on. However, apart from the spiritual aspect of commissioning, the "public relations" implications of the act of donation cannot be neglected.

The functions of images are varied and although they may initially seem to have a solely spiritual purpose, spirituality rarely remains their only attribute. One of the imperative functions of images is that of proclaiming and promoting power. Within every church commissioned by Stephen the Great, the northern wall of the naos usually accommodated the votive image of the ruler. Facing the altar and visible to all participants at the mass, votive images represented the donor while offering the model of the church to Christ. Being visible was a vital part of political life as it meant eligibility for public life.[245] Thus the visibility of the ruler within a public (and holy) space such as a church or monastery was a needful strategy: art and visual means were part of creating a public persona and reputation.[246]

From the point of view of public relations, image is everything. Should a ruler decide to make a lasting impression on his subjects, he combined both painting and architecture in so-called "markers of royal magnificence."[247] Such a marker was also Stephen's Putna Monastery,[248] although the original perception of the monastery cannot be grasped anymore, as it burned down and was rebuilt afterwards.[249] In order to understand the original intensity of a marker of royal magnificence one must study images untouched by destruction – intact from an iconographic and architectural point of view.

It is difficult to find such intact votive portraits. There are only six remaining votive images which were commissioned by Stephen the Great in Moldavia: in the Church of St. Elijah in Suceava, in the monastery of Voroneţ, the Church of St. Nicholas in Rădăuţi, the monastery of Pătrăuţi, the St. Nicholas Church in Dorohoi, and the monastery of Dobrovăţ.[250] Apart from these six portraits of the

---

[245] For more on general manners regarding sight and social practice, see: Patricia Lee Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth Century Florence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 113-114.

[246] Eadem, 114.

[247] Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard Z. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff. Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 213.

[248] See: Székely, "Putna Monastery as «Lieu De Mémoire»," 1-27.

[249] See subchapter *3.1.2. Writing a History of Moldavia*.

[250] All these six votive images were painted in churches and monasteries. However, there are also a few other remaining images, not painted on church walls, which bear the figure of Stephen the Great: there are two stoles, one from Pătrăuţi and another from Dobrovăţ; there is the veil (*dvěrĭ*) of the altar door of Putna; and, last but not least, there is the bas-relief from the Vatopedi Monastery on Mount Athos.

ruler, there is another relevant one: the votive image in the manuscript of the Gospels of Humor. A recent study by Ion Solcanu demonstrated that only two of these images are original ones: the votive image of Voroneţ and the one preserved in the manuscript of Humor.[251] These two images are proven to be the only sources for the genuine, original face of Stephen the Great.

3.2.1. Stephen's face on walls

The Monastery of Voroneţ was built by Stephen the Great between May and September 1488 on the place of a former monastery with the same name and dedicated to the same saint: St. George.[252] A significant number of art historians debated on the exact dating of the paintings in the altar and naos, where the votive image is placed. It was initially assumed by Maria Ana Musicescu that it was painted after 1496 when the ruler's elder son Alexander died, but a more recent contribution shows that it was most likely painted in the autumn of 1499.[253] Whichever theory is correct, the study of the layers of painting demonstrated that they are the original ones, painted for sure before the ruler's death in 1504.

The votive portrait of Voroneţ presents Stephen the Great while offering the model of the monastery to Christ [Fig. 12]. The act of offering is mediated by the patron saint of the church, Saint George, while Stephen is followed by three members of his family: his daughter Maria, wife Maria Voichiţa, and son Bogdan III. A particular harmonious relationship between Stephen and Saint George is visible in the saint's body language: he is holding the ruler by his shoulder, tightly, as if in a gesture of encouragement when presenting him to Christ. Considering that votive images canonically present the ruler in a static position without revealing feelings or personal traits, the gesture of the saint highlights an aura of the ruler which can only be seen in another votive painting, in the Saint Elijah Church of Suceava [Fig. 13].

---

[251] All the other five votive portraits were destroyed intentionally either by the Ottoman troops in their 1538 campaign in Moldavia or by personal enemies of Stephen. The votive images were repainted at an unknown time after 1538. It is however possible that also the votive image of the church of Pătrăuţi remained in its original state, but this theory remains uncertain. See more: Ion I. Solcanu, "Portretul lui Ştefan cel Mare în pictura epocii sale. Noi consideraţii" [The portrait of Stephen the Great in the paining of his time. New considerations], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt – Portret în Istorie*, 117-130.

[252] For a recent and detailed history of the monastery, especially from an archaeological point of view, see: Nicolae N. Puşcaşu and Voica Maria Puşcaşu, "Mănăstirea Voroneţului. Arheologie şi istorie – The Voroneţ Monastery. Archaeology and history, *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 75-138. See also the history of Voroneţ from the *ktetors* point of view: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Ctitorii Voroneţului – The founders of the Voroneţ Monastery," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 139-156.

[253] Ion I. Solcanu, "Datarea picturii din altarul şi naosul bisericii Voroneţ" [Dating the painting in the altar and naos of the Church of Voroneţ], *Codrul Cosminului* 15 (1999): 263. Also, for the debates and the position of Maria Ana Musicescu, see: Solcanu, "Portretul lui Ştefan cel Mare în pictura epocii sale", 125.

Fig. 12: Votive image, Voroneţ Monastery
Image source: http://www.orthphoto.net (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Fig. 13: Votive image, Saint Elijah Church
Image source: Cezar Suceveanu, 2009

60

At St. Elijah, Stephen's hand is held by the patron saint of the church while presented to Christ. Stephen is introduced in an almost familial environment although he is facing the highest authority: Christ. This suggests that Stephen's votive portraits were conceived in such a way that they presented the prince as a person beloved by saints and appreciated by the Son of God. A further theory was hypothesised on the basis of this type of imagery, which referred to the fact that Stephen was presented in an almost saint-like manner, on the same level with the patron saints who introduced him to Christ.[254]

Returning to the actual physical aspect of the ruler, the viewer sees him wearing his princely vestments and his crown, both carefully embroidered and decorated with precious stones. Because the wall painting was finished during the reign of Stephen, it should be assumed that the painter was acquainted with the physiognomy of the ruler and thus painted him in the most realistic way for possibilities of the time: Stephen had a roundish face with a large forehead, with thick arched eyebrows above his blue eyes and his thin, pointed nose. His hair was long and blonde, just as his beard and prominent moustache. Most likely, this is the closest image to what may be called the "real," historical Stephen the Great. Analysing the image of Stephen at Voroneţ, the art historian Vasile Drăguţ concluded that within the solemn beauty of the votive portrait, the preoccupation of the prince with authority, as well as with the stability of the throne was obvious.[255] But did the fifteenth-century viewer understand Stephen's desires for the stability of his reign by looking at his portrait? It is difficult to say, although one issue is certain: by painting his portrait so accurately, Stephen made sure that his physical image, his face, would not fade away with time. His face was not to be forgotten.

3.2.2. Stephen's face on parchment

The same can be asserted about Stephen's image in the manuscript of the Gospels of Humor [Fig. 14]. The major difference however is the audience of the two images: while the portrait at Voroneţ was seen by a variety of people who entered the church, the portrait in the Gospels was seen by a significantly smaller number of people.

The physical appearance of Stephen in the Gospels manuscript is similar to his representation at Voroneţ, with the observation that here, he is some twenty years younger than in the manuscript (as the Gospels of Humor were commissioned in 1473). The prince's round face and pink cheeks suggest the representation of a younger man. The same blue eyes with thick eyebrows framed by long blonde hair and his pronounced moustache (without the beard) are gazing up to an enthroned Virgin Mary with her Son, while Stephen is presenting Christ the manuscript he had just

---

[254] For this presentation, see: Gorovei and Székely. *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 505-506.

[255] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală în Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI*, 17.

commissioned. On this occasion, the Mother of God is the mediator between the commissioner and Her Son.

Fig. 14: Votive portrait of Stephen the Great in the manuscript of the Gospels of Humor.
Image source:
http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Tetraevanghelul-de-la-Humor-1473-s6-ss22-c5.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

Apart from the realistic physical image of the ruler, there are two significant issues which strike the eye: the kneeling position of the ruler and a white space on the right side of the image which must be the place where another figure should have been painted. The fact that the prince kneels is compelling because he never kneels in any of his other votive images. In all his other five votive portraits, Stephen appears in a typical Byzantine standing position before Christ. A further particular element of the representation is the act of mediation done by the Virgin Mary herself – a fact particularly relevant as the Virgin never appears in any other votive images of Stephen. The fact that he is kneeling may thus be related to the presence of Mary – yet another connection to the

Byzantine Empire whose capital was symbolically placed under the protection of the Mother of Christ.[256]

While kneeling, Stephen faces a white space, which surely should have accommodated a second kneeling character. The white space seems to have never been painted, although the intention of having somebody represented there is apparent. An interesting question arises: who was supposed to be represented as the second kneeling character? Ovidiu Pecican and Dan Ioan Mureşan present a new hypothesis[257] which refreshes the logical supposition that the second character should have been Stephen's wife at the time of the manuscript's commission, Maria of Mangup.[258] The manuscript was commissioned in 1473 when Stephen was still married to Maria of Mangup. The year 1473 is also the year which marked the beginning of one of the most tumultuous periods in Stephen's reign: two more clashes with the Wallachians in 1473 and 1474, as well as two major military conflicts with the Ottoman Empire in 1475 and 1476. Observing these circumstances, Pecican concludes that the work of the Humor miniaturist "could have been stopped by a higher cleric (a father superior, a bishop, or even the Metropolitan himself) who, paying attention to both Stephen's policies and to the marriage to Maria of Mangup who had given the ruler only daughters, would have preferred, because of transparent reasons, calmer times in order to decide who would be the best one to stand next to the prince."[259] Should this hypothesis be accepted, a further argument could be given for the alleged "higher cleric's" reasoning on the ruler's wife: Maria of Mangup lost her ideological importance when the Ottoman Empire conquered the Principality of Mangup. Stephen thus lost his interest in both a possible Moldavian conquest of the princess' principality of origin and, consequently, for the princess herself.[260]

Mureşan deepens the discussion on the white space with further details. It is particularly revealing to notice how official chronicles (under the care of the Metropolitan Teoctist I)[261] avoided to detail the arrival of a princess of such high status as Maria of Mangup to Moldavia. Judging by the text of the Anonymous Chronicle, it seems that Maria did nothing more in Moldavia than arrive and, a few years later, die. The "silence" of the chronicles may be explained by the fact that Maria's arrival

---

[256] However, one cannot disregard Western examples of donor portraits where the donor is depicted kneeling. Given that kneeling is a typical position for donors in the West, a Western/gothic influence should not be omitted. See the hypothesis concerning western influences in: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 47-50.

[257] See the presentation of the whole theory in: Ibidem, 50-58.

[258] The first hypothesis which comes to mind is that the wife who was supposed to be portrayed in the white space was the prince's wife at the time of the commission. Just like the Stole of the Dobrovăţ Monastery (commissioned in 1504) had the images of Stephen the Great and Maria Voichiţa represented in the lower register of the cloth, the Gospels of Humor logically should have beared the representations of Stephen and his current wife in 1473, Maria of Mangup.

[259] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 57.

[260] See more in subchapter "Let us marry… an empress" and in: Gertsen and Gertsen, "Moldova şi principatul Theodoro la 1475," 145.

[261] See: Chapter V, subchapter "2. Lessons from Stephen: creating a team for a great name."

to Moldavia, just like the arrival of Zoe/Sophia Palaiologina to Moscow, was part of the vast plan of Cardinal Bessarion, the Latin Patriarch of Constantinople, to attract the two Orthodox states in the anti-Ottoman coalition initiated by Pope Pius II in 1464.[262] The cardinal was a strong opponent of Mark of Ephesus, the master of Teoctist's beliefs, and consequently, an opponent of the Metropolitan himself. Teoctist thus could not have agreed with Stephen's new alliance and he could also not have performed the marriage ceremonial between Maria and Stephen on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross (September 14th 1472), as the Orthodox rite did not allow it.[263] This rivalry between the Moldavian Metropolitan and Cardinal Bessarion (and, by analogy, between the Metropolitan and Maria of Mangup) seems to have resulted in a very visual message: the author of the image, Putna's monk Nicodim, refused to illustrate the new wife of the ruler, preferring to leave a suggestive blank space instead.[264]

Whether this hypothesis is accepted or not, it points out an important element in the ruler's image: the image of the ruler's wife was just as relevant as that of Stephen's. The wife was an integral part of the ruler's image and her visual appearance was carefully constructed.

Analysing these two votive portraits which surely became examples for later representations of the ruler, it is evident that the remembrance of the ruler's face was essential. Stephen was represented as a handsome man, full of potential, an image he is still identified with today. The exterior beauty is particularly significant as in the Middle Ages a beautiful exterior was the reflection of a beautiful interior.[265] Stephen's visual representations suggested two significant traits of his character: beauty (both interior and exterior), and authority, signalled by all his regalia, including his red shoes. The existence of red shoes (signalling greatness, power, and highest status) brings the discussion back to Stephen's ambition of becoming a genuine Byzantine (imperial) continuator. The miniature in the Gospels of Humor, the votive portraits in the Rădăuţi [Fig. 2] and Dorohoi monasteries, the representation of Stephen on the Veil of the Crucifixion at the Putna altar door [Fig. 15] and on the Stole of Dobrovăţ [Fig. 16], all still show the red colour of the prince's shoes. Red

---

[262] Dan Ioan Mureşan, "Patriarhia ecumenică şi Ştefan cel Mare. Drumul sinuos de la surse la interpretare" [The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Stephen the Great. The winding road from sources to interpretation] in *In memoriam Alexandru Elian. Omagiere postumă a reputatului istoric şi teolog, la zece ani de la trecerea sa în veşnicie (8 ianuarie 1998)* [In memoriam Alexandru Elian. Posthumous homage to the respected historian and theologian, at the tenth anniversary of his death (8 January 1998)] (Timişoara: Arhiepiscopia Timişoarei, 2008), 136. See also: Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 327-328.

[263] Nevertheless, Stephen did get married on the feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross. See: Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 329.

[264] Mureşan, "Patriarhia ecumenică şi Ştefan cel Mare," 138; and Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 329.

[265] The "other," the bad, the misunderstood is always the one with an unusual exterior, with a malformation, a different skin colour, a different religion, and so on. By contrast, the good is always the beautiful one, the one who fits the norms of the society. For a brief introduction to the medieval self and "other," see: Albrecht Classen, "The Self, the Other and Everything in Between: Xenological Phenomenology of the Middle Ages," in *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen (New York: Routledge, 2002), xi-lxxiii.

shoes were among the chief signs of Byzantine imperial rank and a preeminent symbol of power.[266] Unsurprisingly, Stephen was to be identified (and remembered) with the attributes of this type of imperial ranking.

Fig. 15: the Veil (dvěřï) of the Crucifixion from the Putna altar door. The representation of Stephen the Great is visible on the lower left corner, while that of his wife Maria is visible on the lower right corner.
Image source: http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Din-veacuri-de-la-Stefan-Voda-s6-ss22-c10.htm
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

---

[266] For a discussion on red shoes as a symbol of Byzantine power, see: Warren T. Woodfin, *The Embodied Icon. Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 145-146.
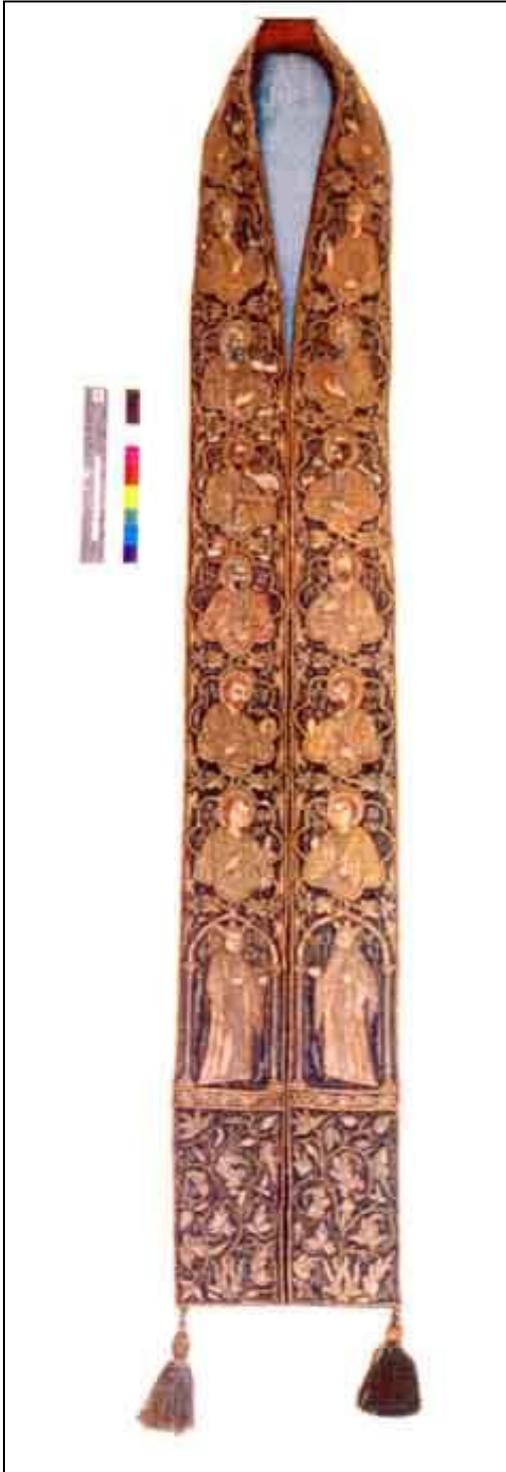
Fig. 16: Stole belonging to the Dobrovăţ Monastery with the representation of its commissioners Stephen the Great and Maria Voichiţa on the lower register.
Image source: CIMEC Institutul de Memorie Culturală, http://clasate.cimec.ro/Detaliu.asp?tit=Epitrahil--Anonim--Apostoli-evanghelisti-si-portrete-de-donatori&k=ACB8F2B32E874D06B25CA1045063A816
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

3.3. How to remember the prince's deeds: creating memory

3.3.1. Commemorating loss

At various times, Stephen created veritable memory. The Battle of Vaslui, which took place on the 10th of January 1475, was the prince's most resounding success. Twenty years after the battle, Stephen seems to have celebrated the victory of Vaslui, commemorating the lives lost during the

1475 clash with the Ottomans. In January 1495, Stephen moved to the fortress of Vaslui, along with his court, from where he issued a series of relevant documents. Between the 10th and 25th of January 1475, the prince issued acts of donations to the boyars who owned territories within the Vaslui area, most likely in gratitude for the families who suffered significant losses during the conflict. Moreover, starting with 1490, the entire Vaslui area was favoured with trading privileges, also interpreted as an act of recognition of Vaslui's sacrifices made 20 years earlier: any good brought to the town was to be spared of any tolls, except for fish, whose toll was rather symbolic (one fish for each waggon).[267]

A similar type of commemoration was staged in 1496, when Stephen commissioned the St. Michael Church of Războieni with a particular purpose: for the remembrance of his soldiers who died twenty years before in the Battle of Valea Albă or Pârâul Alb,[268] close to the church. The battle took place in 1476 and was the direct consequence of the Battle of Vaslui. Sultan Mehmet headed the Ottoman army which attacked Moldavia and defeated the weakened Moldavian army.[269] Twenty years later, Stephen had the following inscription added to the newly-commissioned edifice:

> In the days of the good-Christian and Christ-loving ruler, *Io* Prince Stephen, ruler of Moldavia with the mercy of God, son of Prince Bogdan, in the year 6984 (1476), in the twentieth year of his reign, the powerful Turkish emperor Mehmet II rose with all his eastern powers; and also Prince Basarab, known as Laiotă, came with him, with all of his Wallachian country. And they came to raid and take the Moldavian country; and they came up until here, at the place known as Pârâul Alb. And us, Prince Stephen, with my son Alexander, went before them and made great war with them, in the month of July, 26; and with the will of God, the Christians were defeated by the pagans. And a great number of Moldavian soldiers fell there that day… Because of this, *Io* Prince Stephen with all his good will, built this house in the name of the Archangel Michael; and for the remembrance of himself, of his wife Maria and his sons Alexander and Bogdan, and for the remembrance and acknowledgement of all the Christians who died here. In the year 7004 (1496), the 40th year of his reign, month of November 18th.[270]

This inscription is unique for the reign of Stephen the Great, but in August, 1973[271] archaeologists discovered that not only the inscription was unique, but also the church itself. It was, just like the Putna Monastery, a *lieu de memoire*, but in a more literal sense. A large ossuary was

---

[267] For a through explanation, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 301-304.

[268] Valea Albă or Pârâul Alb should be translated as "The White Stream."

[269] Mehmed II attacked Moldavia at the same time the Tartars attacked it from the North. Stephen was thus forced to divide his army and allow his men to return to their lands in the North in order to defend them. As a consequence, Stephen only faced the sultan with the so-called "Small Army" formed only of his trained boyars and soldiers. For the battle of Valea Albă, see: Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 111-112. Also, for the political circumstances of surrounding the battles of Vaslui and Valea Albă, see: Bogdan Murgescu, *Ţările române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa Creştină* [The Romanian Principalities between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2012), 17-20.

[270] See the inscription in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie*, 124-125.

[271] Ştefan Andreescu, "Câmpurile de bătălie: locuri ale memoriei. O nouă mărturie – The Battlefields: Places of Memory. A New Testimony," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 304.

found underneath the church, placed in exceptional positions underneath the altar and the naos suggesting tombs of martyrs,[272] which gathered the remains of the men who fought and died at the battle of Valea Albă/Războieni, on the 26th of July 1476.

The existence of this church with its remarkable inscription and ossuary is however not the only indication of Stephen's method of designing memory. Ştefan Andreescu discussed the recently-edited memoires of Dominican friar Martin Gruneweg (1562- about 1618). At the end of the sixteenth century, the friar travelled through Moldavia and observed that

> [Moldavia] rarely has peace and is continuously robbed at all its borders, because of which large spillings of blood occur, but wherever a great battle took place, the field is marked with one of these pillars [Fig. 17], instead of a cross. Such pillars can be seen very often, especially where an important person had died.[273]
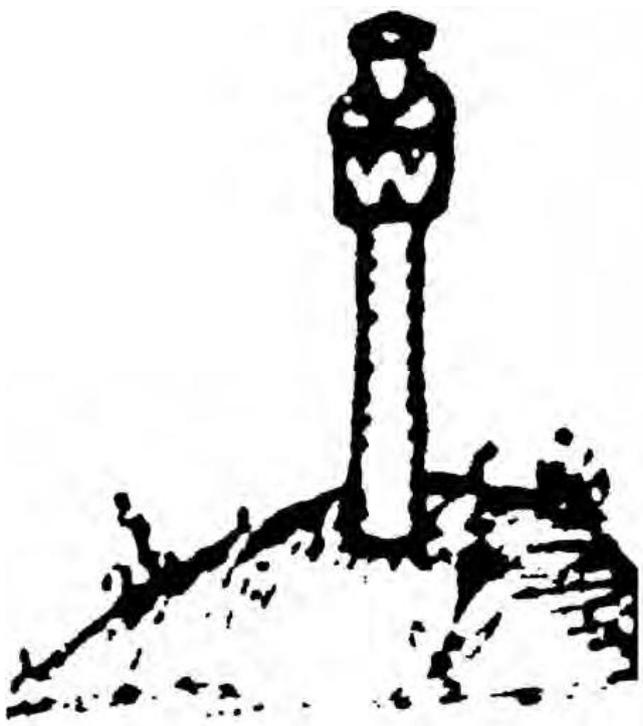
Fig. 17: Battle-field pillar as seen by the Dominican friar Martin Gruneweg in the sixteenth century.
Image source: Ştefan Andreescu, "Câmpurile de bătălie – locuri ale memoriei. O nouă mărturie" (The Battlefields – Places of Memory. A New Testimony) *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010).

The fact that Stephen marked his battle fields with pillars becomes apparent when studying other documents which point to the existence of battle-field pillars. In 1583, Prince Peter Şchiopul issued a donation act with the following words: "… and from Verboveţ to Olovăţ, up there on the road, between the land of Olhoveţ and Suceviţa, then downstream, by the fountain, where Prince

---

[272] The connection between the positions of the bones at Războieni and the tombs of martyrs was made by the archaeologist Gh. I. Cantacuzino. See: Ibidem.

[273] See the original text quoted by Ştefan Andreescu (at page 305) in: Almut Bues (Hg.), *Die Aufzeichnungen des Dominikaners Martin Gruneweg (1562 – ca. 1618) über seine Familie in Danzig, seine Handelsreisen in Osteuropa und sein Klosterleben in Polen* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 701-714.

Stephen's cross and pillar stand…"[274] Similarly, the Polish traveller Maciej Stryjkowski, on his way through Moldavia saw the "remains" of the battle of Vaslui, 1475:

> … and there, with a few men, he defeated a hundred thousand Turks and Tartars, with the help of God. He ordered that the bodies of the dead be burnt, whose bones are still visible today in large piles, which I saw with my own eyes… and also three crosses, which were built there as a sign of that victory.[275]

Stephen had his military deeds remembered –not only by visual schemes, but also with the help of donations and written means. Furthermore, as the ruler of his principality, Stephen was able to manipulate (his) time as he desired. In some of the documents he issued, a unique chronology was used, creating something which may be called "the time of Stephen the Great."[276] Instead of dating the document with the actual chronological time, Stephen had it dated with "his own" time. This way, the boyar Hanco received the gypsies brought from "the County of Basarabia, when I [Stephen] made war and burnt Floci and Ialomiţa."[277] Other similar documents refer to the fact that valuable documents of donation were lost or destroyed: some privileges from Princes Alexander the Good, Iliaş and Stephen were lost "when the Turks robed Horincea;"[278] other privileges were destroyed "when the Turkish emperor came and plundered our country;"[279] similarly, other documents from Alexander the Good went missing when "the Turks came upon us, at Pârâul Alb."[280] The context of the event in discussion, whether it was the destruction of certain documents or acts of privileges, thus became more important than the event itself. The event of the document became subdued to the context – a context which highlighted the acts of Stephen the Great. Stephen designed, in a way, his own history textbook.

3.3.2. Diplomacy and self-acclamation

Stephen emphasized the most important aspects of his reign as well as his military victories. Having discussed before Stephen's "triumphal" entries in Suceava, it should be assumed that the victory before the entry was announced to the Royal Council, as well as to the people of Suceava. However, no written evidence of such announcements survived, but it is likely that Stephen sent certain types

---

[274] Document quoted in Ibidem, 306.

[275] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române II*, 452-453.

[276] For more details on the concept of "the time of Stephen the Great," see Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, chapter "Timpul şi spaţiul unui suveran" [The time and the space of a sovereign], 485-491.

[277] Quoted in Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 489. Originally in *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldavia* II (1449-1486), ed. Leon Şimanschi (Bucharest: Academiei, 1976), document no. 191; 286. (henceforth: DRH A. II)

[278] Ibidem. Originally in DRH A.II, document no. 209; 317.

[279] Ibidem. Originally in DRH A.II, document no. 230, 352.

[280] Ibidem. Originally in DRH A.II, document no. 126; 246.

of reports from the battle field.[281] However, other types of written documents complement the lack of battle-field reports, such as the letter written by Stephen to Christian rulers after his victory against Suleyman Pasha in 1475.[282]

The letter, dated January 25, 1475, and meant to reach "the Hungarian Crown and all the countries where this letter will arrive,"[283] consists of two parts: the first part describes the victory, while the second one asks for help from Christian rulers upon the inevitable return of the Ottoman army. Both parts are well-constructed from a rhetorical point of view. The first part opens with a concise description of what the ruler sees in his enemies: "the unfaithful emperor of the Turks has been for a long time and still is the destroyer of Christianity and he thinks all day of ways to subdue it."[284] The letter then continues to build on the large discrepancy between the two armies. The army of the "unbeliever," "the destroyer of all Christianity" is portrayed in all its complexity: the number of soldiers is the first to be emphasized – "a great army of 120.000 people." After introducing the name of the man heading this large army, "Suleyman Pasha as its captain," the author of the letter (officially, Stephen) indicates all the other relevant people who participated:

> all the courtiers of the sultan, with the people of Rumelia and with the prince of Wallachia with all his power, with Asan-beg, Ali-beg, Scander-beg, Grana-beg, and Osu-beg, Valtivu-beg, Serefaga-beg, ruler in Sophia, Cusenra-beg, Paier-beg and his son Isac Pasha with all his crowd of janissaries.

This *dramatis personae*, "the greatest captains of the battle field,"[285] contrasts with the army of Stephen, which receives a simple pronoun: "us." This deep contrast between "us" and "the greatest captains," each of them individually named, highlights the importance of the Moldavian victory – Stephen and his unnamed (or anonymous) army succeeded in defeating all these personalities, whom Stephen suggestively named in his letter in order to articulate their seeming superiority. Moreover, this anonymous group "went against them [i.e. the Ottomans], stepped on them, and took them through the edge of my/our sword."

The second part of the letter is a plea for help. Suggesting that the Ottomans headed by the sultan himself will return in the month of May, Stephen was asking western rulers to support Moldavia, the "gate of Christianity," which, if lost, would endanger the integrity of the entire Christendom. The accent on Moldavia as the "gate of Christianity" is visible all throughout the second part of the letter – the letter reveals that Moldavia is a land (a gate) under the ever-protection of the

---

[281] These victories' communications should certainly not be compared to those of Byzantine (or Late Roman) victory bulletins or *litterae laureatae*, but one should imagine that such reports indeed existed.

[282] See the Romanian translation of the letter (there are three remaining original and contemporary translations in Italian and one in German) in Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, entry no. CXLIII, 319-321. See the translation also in a recent edition: *Istoria României în Texte*, 135-136.

[283] Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, entry no. CXLIII, 319.

[284] Ibidem, 320.

[285] Ibidem.

divine which until now withstood the Ottoman force but which cannot continue its role as "protective gate" without the help of western forces.

Stephen's letter was not only meant as a report of the battle and a plea for help, but also as a type of publicity text.[286] The rhetorical characteristics of the text suggest a precise agenda: that after 1475, Stephen the Great needed to be allied with (any) Christian force. In a recent study, Bogdan Murgescu suggested an intriguing hypothesis: that Romanian historians avoid the certainty that Stephen was the initiator of the Moldavian-Ottoman war, when he attacked Wallachia in 1473, resulting in the Ottoman offensive two years later. Moreover, Murgescu also highlights that the Moldavian prince's aim had not always been that of allying with the anti-Ottoman league – more likely, Stephen was interested in allying with any enemy of his enemy, regardless of the nature of his faith.[287] From this perspective, Stephen's letter to the Christian rulers is nothing else than a public relations text, meaning to convince the members of the anti-Ottoman league to join him against his most immediate threat: Sultan Mehmed II. Murgescu even calls the letter a "circumstantial plea,"[288] intended to determine its recipients to support the prince's interests.

Stephen was well aware of the need of publicity for his actions. He needed supporters thus he crafted an image which receied mythical proportions – although not because of the necessity of being acclaimed as hero, but because of the necessities implied by the political context of his time. Nevertheless, other contemporary fifteenth-century people revealed his heroic side, without being compelled by any political or historical contexts.

---

[286] Ştefan Gorovei also discussed an intriguing aspect of this publicity text. Analyzing the introductive words of the four different versions of the letter (three in Italian and one in German), he concludes that the initial and original version, which evidently predated these versions, did not include the wording "To the Crown of Hungary." Instead, the historian argues that Matthias Corvinus himself, being the first one to receive the letter, included this wording at the beginning of the letter together with the information that Stephen was one of his captains and that the army which defeated the Ottomans was in fact his own army. After this addition, the letter was further on sent to other Christian rulers. In fact, it was the Polish Jan Długosz to first point to the fact that Matthias wanted the acclamation for the victory at Vaslui for himself. This story is relevant because it highlights the propagandistic aspect of the letter. The image such a victory could bring with it, the image suggested by the letter itself, was a highly desired one by any sovereign of the fifteenth century. See the hypothesis of Ştefan Gorovei in: "Informaţie, propagandă, mistificare: scrisoarea din 25 ianuarie 1475 – Information, propaganda, mystification: the letter from the 25th of January 1475," *Analele Putnei* II (2007): 21-26.

[287] In fact, Stephen allied with the Ottomans themselves twice: once, against the Wallachian ruler Vlad the Impaler and second, against Poland. See: Murgescu, *Ţările române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa Creştină*, 16-17.

[288] Ibidem, 17.

4. Creating memory and building Stephen's myth: how others did it

Today, Stephen the Great is (superficially) known for his successful battles against the Ottoman Empire and for his saintly aura. Although not all of his battles were successful and not all of them were fought against the Ottoman sultan, and while his sanctity was barely visible during his reign, Stephen's portrayal made by his allies, enemies, onlookers or simple passers-by does reveal a particularly positive image of the ruler.

4.1. Christians on Stephen

4.1.1. The Pope: Stephen, the Champion of Christ

The title *Athleta Christi*, or Champion of Christ, awarded by the Pope to men who successfully defended Christianity in military campaigns, was also bestowed on Stephen the Great. The title which initially evoked an image of struggle[289] represented a significant honour in the Late Middle Ages as rulers such as John Hunyadi or George Kastrioti Skanderbeg received it following their battles with the Ottomans.[290] Primarily, successful military encounters against the Ottoman Empire resulted in the bestowal of this papal title, thus Stephen received it after defeating Suleyman Pasha at the notorious battle of Vaslui.[291]

The title *Athleta Christi* is probably the most distinguished one that Stephen had ever received from one of his contemporaries. However, Stephen was not literally named "Athleta Christi," but "verus christiane fidei athleta," the true champion of the Christian faith:

> … as all people of the earth know, the lawless Turks will not stop conspiring against the Christian faith and against those who received the holy baptism of rebirth and above all, against the beloved son, the noble man, Prince Stephen, duke of Moldavia, and against his dominions … and although the above-mentioned Stephen, as a true champion of the Christian faith, is prepared to resist the foulness and the attacks of the Turks, in order to carry such a heavy burden and in order to bring it to an end, his sole powers are not sufficient.[292]

---

[289] See the late antique and hagiographical origins of the title in: Thomas Head, *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 113-114.

[290] For the circumstances in which Skanderbeg was named "Athleta Christi," see: Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg: Pustet, 2009), 331-332. See also: Robert Elsie, *Historical Dictionary of Albania* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 74-75.

[291] For a contextualization of the events surrounding 1475 within the Eastern European frame, see: Ion Grumeza, *The Roots of Balkanization: Eastern Europe C.E. 500-1500* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2010), 98-99.

[292] *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1451-1510* [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1451-1510], II, Part 2, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (Bucharest: 1891), document no. CCXVI, 241 (entire text of the Pope's letter: 241-243). (henceforth: Hurmuzaki II.2).

Analyzing this extract, Ştefan Gorovei revealed the political connection between Stephen and Pope Sixtus IV, within the anti-Ottoman league initiated under the guidance of the Holy See.[293] Between 1476 and 1477, a set of letters between the Pope and the prince divulged the existence of this unique partnership. The exceptionality of this relationship is betrayed by the content of the written dialogues between Stephen and Pope Sixtus.

Stephen was the initiator of this "dialogue" with a letter in which he asked the Pope to invest a man suggested by him as the new bishop of Baia. The Pope accepted the plea and invested the man – "ex... desiderium tuum,"[294] as Sixtus IV pointed out in his response. Furthermore, in a different letter, Stephen also asked for financial help from the Holy See. The Pope once more answered positively: he would give Stephen all the funds collected from indulgences in the Catholic Churches of Baia and those in the fortress of Cetatea Albă. It was within this response that Stephen was named "verus christiane fidei athleta" and it is certainly remarkable to see how the head of the Catholic Church decides to fund an Orthodox prince with the indulgences collected from the most important Catholic churches of the Moldavian territory.[295] The Pope explained his decision, as seen in the extract above, by the fact that although Stephen was ready to resist the Ottoman attacks by himself, he would need further help in order to be successful.

4.1.2. Poland: the hero

Sources show that Polish writers (chroniclers, diplomats, geographers, or travellers through Moldavia) were the strongest admirers of Stephen amongst the neighbours of the principality. Although they occasionally portrayed Stephen as a blood-thirsty ruler, his general contemporary perception was one which displayed amazement.

Polish sources recall that Stephen the Great "was different from others by means of his perfidy, restlessness, agility, and deftness"[296] while he inflicted a deep fear in Polish soldiers because "many Polish men were disgracefully chased away"[297] by him. The feelings of fear seem legitimate as he was known to be ruthless with his enemies: he would "take out their bowels to see what they have eaten, or hang them and hack them into pieces. Others he killed by a terrible death, so that

---

[293] For the entire study on the connection between Stephen and the Pope, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "1473: Ştefan, Moldova şi lumea catolică" [1473: Stephen, Moldavia and the Catholic world], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt – Portret în Istorie*, 395-406.

[294] *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1451-1575* [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1451-1575], II, Part 1, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (Bucharest: 1891), document no. XVII, 14 (entire text of the Pope's letter: 14-15). (henceforth: Hurmuzaki II.1).

[295] See a thorough discussion of the significance of this issue in: Gorovei, "1473: Ştefan, Moldova şi lumea catolică," 401-402.

[296] Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 159.

[297] Maciej Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum*, in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 173.

nothing would remain of their bodies."[298] However, despite these merciless deeds (or maybe because of them), he was known as "the most famous prince and warrior of that time, known because of victories against the Turks."[299] When describing Stephen, Polish sources were in fact imbibed with the leitmotif of the brave hero. He was the "brilliant warrior,"[300] well-aware of his possibilities and resources and able to skilfully organize the handful of men who comprised his army: "Because of his rigour and rightfulness, leaving no crime unpunished, he subdued them [the Moldavians] and made them obey to all his orders. And not only the soldiers and the boyars, but also the peasants, whom he gathered for the army, teaching each of them how to defend their country."[301]

Furthermore, he was "lucky, wise and brave,"[302] "with a heart of a rarely-found bravery, always happy and tireless,"[303] "a grand soul,"[304] a good Christian, with a reign imbibed in divine:

> Stephen did not become vain after this victory [Vaslui, 1475], but he fasted for 40 days with water and bread. And he ordered that nobody in the entire country should dare to assign that victory to him, but only to God, although everybody knew that the success of that day was only owed to him.[305]

The impact of Stephen was strong enough to generate signs which were able to suggest a future defeat of the Polish army by that led by the Moldavian:

> 1494. In the city of Cracow, a woman gave birth to a child and a snake, who ate the back of the child and filled him with wounds. In a slum of the same city, another woman gave birth to an even uglier monster, which had rabbit neck and ears, and instead of his stomach it had a deformed intestine and opened a large and unbound mouth. This eeriness was born on the 22nd of October. Three years later, in the last days of the same month, the loud and unlucky battle against the Moldavians was fought.[306]

The "loud and unlucky battle" was that of Codrii Cozminului, fought in October 1497, when Poland's King John I Albert entered the Principality of Moldavia with the purpose of dethroning Stephen. Nature often symbolically announced imminent threats, just like it happened with the

---

[298] Ibidem.

[299] Bernard Wapowski, *Chronicorum Partem Posterorem*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 176.

[300] Ibidem, 181.

[301] Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, 159.

[302] Maciej Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum*, 175.

[303] Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, 170.

[304] Bernard Wapowski, *Chronicorum Partem Posterore,* in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 177. A similar characterization of Stephen as a man with a great soul can be found in Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 172.

[305] Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 164.

[306] Bernard Wapowski, *Chronicorum Partem Posterorem*, 179.

death of Stephen.[307] In the case of Codrii Cozminului, the imminent threat was none other than Stephen, perceived in sources as a fearful enemy. This image of the forceful enemy inspired three of the most concise and relevant Polish characterizations of Stephen the Great:

Jan Długosz acclaimed the ruler with the following words:

> Oh, wonderful man, you are nothing less than other heroic commanders, who all amaze us so much! In our days, he, the first of the princes of the world, wins a brilliant victory over the Turks. In my opinion, he is the most worthy man to lead and rule the world and he is especially worthy of the honour of being the commander against the Turks, with the advice, understanding and determination of all Christians…[308]

Maciej Miechowita had similar thoughts on Stephen the Great:

> Oh, triumphal and victorious man, who fought down all neighbouring kings! Oh, happy man, who was bestowed with all gifts, as others receive only some of these gifts from nature: some are wise and crafty, others are brave and righteous, and others are lucky against enemies. You are the only one who was given all these gifts together: righteous, foreseeing, crafty, victorious over all enemies! It is not in vain that he should be considered one of the heroes of our century.[309]

Finally, Bernard Wapowski also had only words of praise for the prince of Moldavia:

> Indeed, he was brave, crafty, and lucky in war. Because he won over Matthias, the king of Hungary … He drove the Tartars away many times. Mehmed, the emperor of the Turks, who after taking Constantinople, crossed the Danube with 120.000 Turks and robbed Moldavia, was defeated … Apart from these, he also defeated King Albert … Stephen was gifted with the virtues of a hero, therefore, he may rightfully be considered among the famous men of the art of war. [310]

4.1.3. Hungary: the (brave) rebel

When one compares Polish sources to Hungarian ones, their contrasting nature is apparent. Although Stephen's bravery and the successful military aspects of his reign were never omitted by Hungarian chroniclers, the accent fell on the rebellious nature of the Moldavian prince.

He was "a good protector of his country and his people, ready to die for them."[311] Nevertheless, possibly because he was too zealous in protecting his territory, Antonio Bonfini saw him as filled with revolutionary spirit: "As a subject of the king of Hungary, he [Stephen] had to pay all his taxes and to obey all orders, but he, driven by craze and his fierce temper, although fervent and

---

[307] Polish Chronicler Bernard Wapowski recalled nature's reaction on the eve of Stephen's death: "the rivers swelled from the numerous rains and they spilled outside their channels as never seen before; and not long afterwards, Stephen, the prince of Moldavia, died." See: Ibidem, 190-191.

[308] Jan Długosz, *Historia Polonica*, 165-166.

[309] Maciej Miechowita, *Chronica Polonorum*, 175.

[310] Bernard Wapowski, *Chronicorum Partem Posterorem*, 191.

[311] *Chronicon Dubnicense,* in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 207.

terrific in war, would not obey in any way."[312] The negative characterizations of Stephen were almost always connected to the Battle of Baia.[313] But however negative the characterizations became at certain points, they were nevertheless accompanied by praises of Stephen's military skills.

Hungarian chroniclers agreed that Moldavia, altogether, was rebellious under the guidance of Stephen,[314] although they also agreed that with the guidance of Stephen, Moldavia "defeated Suleyman Pasha and the commander of Rumelia so that out of 30.000 Turks, very few, those who by chance rode very fast horses, managed to get away."[315] Still, regardless of the success against the Ottoman armies, when the clashes between Stephen and Matthias were described, the Moldavian prince became perfidious:

> In that time, the entire province was ruled by a man with a unique boldness; his name was Stephen. This man, gathering a great number of people, hurried to set fire in many places of the city [the Fortress of Baia], after midnight, so that the king and all his men, dizzy with sleep and wine, would transform into ashes.[316]

Moreover, chronicles pointed to the fact that Stephen could only be victorious against the armies of King Matthias if he used unfair methods: "Prince Stephen decided that, in the darkness of the night, he will attack the royal army because, should he fail in battle, at least the darkness would help him."[317] Altogether, the equally positive and negative characterizations of the prince in Hungarian chronicles is best summarized in the sixteenth-century work of Miklos Istvánffy:

> …it is therefore seen that he must rightfully be considered among the men worth remembering of his time. But he was changing and unstable. He was proud and his unusual cruelty erased some of the fame and glory of his deeds.[318]

4.1.4. Farther voices: the fierce warrior

Other sources from beyond Moldavian borders combine the two contrasting views on Stephen: the veritable hero versus the brave rebel. Stephen's preeminent image is somewhat faded as he ceased to be the man Długosz, Miechowski, and Wapowski described, although he still remained the brave and powerful commander. Farther chronicles originating in German and Russian territories also add

---

[312] Antonio Bonfini, *Historia Pannonica ab Origine Gentis ad Annum 1495,* in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 208.

[313] For a detailed description of the Battle of Baia, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior,* subchapter "Lupta de la Baia" [The Battle of Baia], 59-70.

[314] "Moldavia also revolted." See: Petrus Ranzanus, *Epitome Rerum Hungaricarum* in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 211. Or, as in another instance: "Matthias headed the reins of his horses towards Moldavia, which was a rebel at that time." See: Ioannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 212.

[315] Felix Petancic, "Despre drumurile pe care trebuie să se pornească expediţia contra turcilor" [About the roads on which the campaign against the Turks should debut], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 214.

[316] Petrus Ranzanus, *Epitome Rerum Hungaricarum*, 212.

[317] Ioannes de Thurocz, *Chronica Hungarorum*, 213.

[318] Miklós Istvánffy, *Regni Hungarici Historia*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 216.

to Stephen's characterization the epithets bestowed on him by historians such as Antonio Bonfini: Stephen is once more a brutal, merciless ruler.

In the eyes of Jakob Unrest, the Moldavian ruler was wise and it was with the help of this virtue that he accomplished the victory of 1475 against Suleyman Pasha.[319] As the 1475 victory strongly echoed outside Moldavia, he was unsurprisingly portrayed as a ruler who accomplished the almost un-accomplishable: "The prince … soon afterwards killed 13.000 and caught 5.000 of them [the Ottomans]. And such a cry went all the way to Constantinople and such a cry rose, because for many years something similar had not been heard…"[320] A similar echo was recorded by an anonymous chronicle after the battle of Codrii Cozminului when Stephen defeated the Polish king:

> And the defeat of the Polish was so great, that the king barely returned with ten men, after which the king became sick. And then this saying was born: during the time of King Albert, the Polish army [*szlachta*] perished.[321]

However, these chronicles did not only present a good warrior and leader. They also described a cruel one, especially when he dealt with anyone threatening him or his principality. This was what happened when, after the Tartars tried to invade Moldavia, Stephen captured the Khan's son:

> And envoys from his father came, threatening Prince Stephen. Stephen however, ordered that the son of the Khan be killed in front of them and he impaled all of them [the envoys], except for one, whose nose and ears he cut down and sent him back like this to the tsar of the Tartars.[322]

A Lithuanian chronicle fills the lack of information in the above-cited extract and explains how the son of the Khan was actually executed: "… very few escaped with the Khan, and his eldest son was captured by the Moldavians and cut to pieces."[323] Unsurprisingly, there are similar accounts of how Stephen punished his enemies after his most famous battle, that of Vaslui: "… he ordered that the 11.000 captured Turks and Tartars be impaled, within ten rows of stakes."[324]

However, the most relevant characterization of Stephen from this group of chronicles is the following: "1504. Stephen died, the prince of Moldavia, brave warrior just like a second Alexander."[325] Stephen was not simply praised for his military deeds, but was compared to one of the

---

[319] "… again Prince Stephen entered Moldavia, where six groups of Ottoman armies were … whom he defeated with his wisdom and he made them run…" See: Jakub Unrest, *Chronicon Austriacum*, in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 222.

[320] *Cronică germană* [The German Chronicle], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 222.

[321] *Cronica de la mănăstirea Hustânscaia* [The Chronicle of the Hustynska Monastery], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 225.

[322] Ibidem, 224.

[323] *Cronica Lituaniană* [Lithuanian Chronicle], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 226-227.

[324] Ibidem, 227.

[325] *Cronica de la mănăstirea Hustânscaia*, 226.

already-mythical king-figures, that of Alexander the Great. The sheer comparison with the Macedonian king offers Stephen a magnificent dimension which surpasses the borders of his humble principality.

4.1.5. The doctor and the illustrious patient

By the end of his life, after a reign of almost half a century, Stephen the Great was starting to weaken as illness was taking over his body. At the beginning of his reign, in 1462, Stephen unsuccessfully engaged in the conquest of Chilia Fortress where his left ankle was severly injured.[326] This wound would never heal and would become a constant distress until the prince's very last days.[327] Living a lifetime in agony, Stephen called a significant number of doctors to his court, mostly from Venice, in order to help him heal.[328] One of the last doctors who came to Suceava was the Venetian Matteo Muriano who was sent by the Dodge Leonardo Loredano to heal not only the wound on Stephen's ankle, but, most likely, also the illness that ended his life: gout.

Once the Venetian doctor arrived to Suceava, he took some time to heal himself before he could start the treatment of the prince, because he arrived anguished in illness, as he mentions in one of the two letters he sent to the Dodge.[329] The two letters to the Dodge are, in fact, two political reports of the relations between Moldavia and its neighbours, but also reports on the relationships between the neighbours themselves – stressing Ottoman actions within the political "game" of Eastern Europe. The second letter is a thorough description of the postion of the Ottomans, as Matteo Muriano saw it through the eyes of Nicolo Leondari, a Greek with relatives in Constantinople who had information from Ottoman envoys.[330] Certainly, the letter presents the details which the doctor belived to be of interest for Venice, thus it presents no relevance for the ruler's image. The first letter however incorporates a pertinent description of Stephen. The "illustrious ruler,"[331] as Muriano called him, was "a very wise man, worthy of a lot of praise, beloved by his subjects, because he is merciful and righteous, always awake and generous, whose body would look good for his age if this terrible disease did not torment him."[332] After this description, the doctor promises to try to cure

---

[326] For the circumstances of the battle, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior,* subchapter "Asediul Chiliei" [The Siege of Chilia], 42-43.

[327] The issue of the wound and its effect on Stephen's life will be discussed in Chapter 5, subchapter "Selectiveness: the ommisions of Stephen's myth."

[328] See: subchapter "Selectiveness: the ommisions of Stephen's myth." Also, for a rich presentation of Stephen's wound, his illnesses and the doctors that have been called to Suceava, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior,* subchapter "Boala şi medicii" [The Illness and the Doctors], 421-427.

[329] "… it was a difficult illness which made me suffer from the first day of August when I arrived in Moldavia…" See: *Călători străini în Ţările Române I*, 148.

[330] See the second letter in *Călători străini în Ţările Române I*, 151-154.

[331] Ibidem, 150.

[332] Ibidem, 149.

the illness: "… I hope, with [the help of] God, to bring relief to him, as far as I can see now, at the beginning."[333]

However, the doctor seems to have brought no relief to Stephen, and his second letter does not mention at all the state of the prince's health. The fact that the first letter was sent shortly after Stephen occupied Pokkutia, a land disputed between Moldavia and Poland, and that the second letter was a lengthy report for Venetian interests, indicates that Matteo Muriano rather played the role of an envoy than that of a doctor. In fact, a letter written by Stephen to the Dodge attests that the doctor did not bring any improvements to his health condition: "adeo mai li dete alcun remedio in medicina."[334] Moreover, in an ironic twist, the doctor died while at the court of Stephen before the prince himself died.

Matteo Muriano was however a doctor,[335] despite the fact that he was more preoccupied with the political intertwines of Moldavia and its neighbours, than with the health of his own patient. The fact that he also acted as an envoy sheds a new light on Stephen's image as perceived by the doctor and Venice. The doctor presented the Dodge with a positive image of the prince. Muriano's first letter opened with a description of Moldavia, of its people and army, and, not least, of Stephen and his heir Bogdan. His words praised the ruler and his principality, as the "famous prince"[336] was presented with nothing but a pleasant and favourable aura.

4.1.6. Stories about Stephen: the merciful

Stories about Stephen's notorious deeds must have been circulating throughout Moldavia already before the prince's death, contributing to the genesis (mostly, by means of oral tradition) of the proto-myth. Nevertheless, it is difficult to trace the existence of these stories and usually only later testimonies such as those of Maciej Stryjkowski[337] shed light on their content.

However, one such story dated during Stephen's lifetime was told by Giovan-Maria Angiolello, an Italian from Vicenza who wrote the *Historia Turchesca* once he became the sultan's treasurer after 1474.[338] The story is part of the *Historia Turchesca* and it indirectly presents the

---

[333] Ibidem.

[334] Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, 467.

[335] In December 1502, an envoy was sent to Venice with the purpose of bringing to Suceava the medicine required by Matteo Muriano in order to improve the health of Stephen the Great. See the letter of the envoy in Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, 466.

[336] *Călători străini în Ţările Române I*, 148.

[337] Maciej Stryjkowski retells the verses of the song which used to be sung in Stephen's memory and describes lay pictures of Stephen. These songs and images are discussed in Chapter V, *Stephen's Impact in the Sixteenth Century. The proto-myth*. For Stryjkowski's account, see: *Călători străini în Ţările Române II*, 454.

[338] For Giovan-Maria Angiolello and his writings, see: Pierre A. MacKay, "The Content and Authorship of the Historia Turchesca" in *İstanbul Üniversitesi 550. yıl, Uluslararası Bizans ve Osmanlı Sempozyumu (XV. yüzyıl)*:

personality of Moldavia's prince while describing an episode of Ottoman military history. Angiolello detailed how Ahmed Pasha, the man who occupied Caffa, upon leaving it, captured some 300 young men, mainly Italian, whom he embarked on his ship in order to take them to Sultan Mehmed II, in Istanbul. While sailing the Black Sea, the 300 men uprised and took over the ship, killing and throwing all Ottomans overboard. The ship was then redirected towards Akkerman, the fortress belonging to Stephen the Great at the time. Once they arrived in Akkerman, Moldavia's prince seized the ship and all its valuables, but freed the 300 men who escaped to Poland and Hungary and further on to Italy and Genoa. Mehmed was upset with this outcome and sent an envoy to Stephen, ordering him to return all his values together with the 300 men, otherwise he would have to face consequences.[339]

Angiolello then reproduces the prince's answer who responded that

> he did not have any obligation to do this [return the valuables] because his harbours and lands were free, everybody being allowed to come, stay and go as they wished; people always arrive and he could not interfere with that; the ones who arrived with the said ship, came other times as well, with their goods, and they were not stopped, but they were allowed to follow their path; and this is what he did this time as well [allowed the men to leave].[340]

Stephen thus refused to return anything to the sultan, considering that although he did pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire, he was not obliged to pay anything more. Risking to infuriate the sultan, Stephen preferred to remain insubordinate. Returning the goods to the sultan would not have cost Stephen any efforts and not returning them may be regarded as a statement of independence. Although this story does not present Stephen as a man performing wise actions, Angiolello unveils a new face of the ruler: a stubborn, determined man willing to risk an Ottoman attack. How upset Mehmed was after Stephen's refusal is little known, but this event must have contributed to the set of causes which resulted in the Ottoman attack on Moldavia in 1475 – two years after the incident of the 300 prisoners.

The audience of this story was limited to Venetian high circles,[341] but it nevertheless contributed to the propagation of Stephen's image as a bold ruler. Stephen was surely a man with the attributes of a personality easy remember.

30-31 Mayıs 2003 (550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University, International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth century): 30–31 May 2003), ed. Sümer Atasoy (Istanbul, 2004), 213–223, esp. 214.

[339] For the Romanian translation of this story taken from *Historia Turchesca*, see: *Călători străini în Ţările Române I*, 132-133.

[340] Ibidem, 133.

[341] The *Historia Turchesca* was proved to be, in fact, a compilation of texts from various Venetian writers to which Giovan-Maria Angiolello had a wide contribution. See: MacKay, "The Content and Authorship of the Historia Turchesca," 219-221.

4.2. Ottomans on Stephen

Stephen the Great's reign was marked by Moldavia's relationship with the Ottoman Empire. He eventually subdued and accepted peace with the sultan as well as the payment of Ottoman tribute, but not before a series of conflicts which were mainly fought without substantial help from any Christian power of the time.[342]

In accordance with this tumultuous relationship, Ottoman sources which discuss the sultan's actions in Moldavia do not present the prince in a positive perspective. Documents and chornicles mainly focus on the two events which shook Moldavian-Ottoman relations: the 1475 Moldavian victory at Vaslui and the 1476 Ottoman counter-victory at Podul Înalt (Războieni). In almost all Ottoman instances, the battle of Vaslui is presented in brief words, while the battle of Războieni is described in its entire ampleness. Aşık Paşazade is a fine example in this sense: while he presented the events surrounding the year 1475 in no more than five sentences, he elaborated the events of 1476 in a space which encompases more than six times the space used for the battle of Vaslui.[343] Certainly, one would expect such an uneven presentation of the events, just as one would expect Moldavian chroniclers to show the Vaslui victory in vast words and the Battle of Războieni in fragmentary instances. Strangely enough, such a disproportion is not apparent in any Moldavian chronicle written during Stephen's lifetime.[344] Maybe from the Moldavian perspective both the victory and the defeat were expected, therefore both events received a similar amount of space. Or, possibly because both the victory and the defeat were ascribed to the divine, the chroniclers believed both should occupy a similar length of parchment.

Returning to Ottoman sources, the explanation for the disproportionate allocation of space for these two events is rather obvious. Nobody expected that the Ottoman army led by Suleyman Pasha would be defeated in 1475, thus, undoubtedly, the outcome of the battle created a wave of shock in the Ottoman world. Consequently, one year later, Mehmed entered Moldavia, leading his men against the defiant prince. The shock of 1475 surely contributed substantially to the negative characterizations of Stephen in Ottoman perspective.

---

[342] For insights to all the relevant conflicts between Stephen's Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire, see: Tahsin Gemil, *Românii şi otomanii în secolele XIV-XVI* [Romanians and Ottomans from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries] (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1991), chapter "Românii în faţa unui nou imperiu" [Romanians in front of a new empire]; Cazan and Denize, *Marile puteri şi spaţiul românesc*, Chapter III "Domnia lui Ştefan cel Mare – epoca de maximă afirmare politică a Moldovei medievale" [Stephen the Great – Medieval Moldavia's period of maximum political affirmation].

[343] See: Aşık Paşazade in *Ştefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 248-249.

[344] See the presentation of the 1475 and 1476 events in all these chronicles in *Ştefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, as following: "The anonymous chronicle of Moldavia," 16-17; "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 26; "The Chronicle of Putna I," 31; "The Chronicle of Putna II," 35; "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," 43.

Kara-Bogdan-oglu[345] was "the enemy from Moldavia,"[346] "the leader of the devils in Moldavia,"[347] the "unworthy giaour"[348] as Tursun Bei described him, and the "damned unfaithful"[349] as Aşık Paşazade named him. Stephen was disliked mainly because he disobeyed the sultan and refused to pay the tribute, and because, on top of his disobedience, he was victorious in 1475. One year later however, the Ottomans were avenged: because he "had shown recklessness in submission and in paying the tribute, he was defeated and punished as he deserved."[350]

Thus Sultan Mehmed rearranged the Ottoman-Moldavian balance in 1476 and, less than ten years later, the successor of Mehmed, Bayezid II took control over the two most beloved fortresses of Stephen: the ports of Chilia and Akkerman. With this conquest, Bayezid ended in 1485 Stephen's hostile policy towards the Ottoman Empire.[351] In fact, Aşık Paşazade highlighted that Stephen not only abandoned his hostile attitude, but took shelter in Poland until the situation of the fortresses was clear. In this context, Aşık Paşazade made a thorough characterization of the prince, rhetorically asking himself why Stephen abandoned his principality in what he perceived as a cowardly gesture:

> What kind of unfaithful man is this Kara-Bogdan-oglu that when such miseries come upon his vilayet that he could not find a place to guard his head! To this question, I answered in verses:
> He stepped on the Hungarian king,
> He broke the bow of Suleyman-bei,
> He scared even the one in Wallachia,
> And many times his [the Wallachian prince's] principality as well.
> Also, he stood face to face with Sultan Mehmed.
> His army was destroyed, but he fought well.
> He saved his head from the hands of his enemy.
> This is the unfaithful who defeated many armies.
> He was vain and rogue and full of himself,
> But he ran without shame from Ali-bei.
> The greatness of Bayezid-han made him run away,
> And go in the country of the Polish ruler.[352]

---

[345] This was the name by which Stephen the Great was known in the Ottoman Empire. See in: Aşık Paşazade, "Tevarih-I Al-I Osman" in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest: Academiei, 1966), 100.

[346] Tursun Bei, "Tarih-I Ebu-l Feth-I Sultan Mehmed-Han," in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române*, 69.

[347] Ibidem, 77.

[348] Ibidem, 78.

[349] Aşık Paşazade, "Tevarih-I Al-I Osman," in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române*, 96.

[350] Ibidem.

[351] After the year 1485, Stephen's reign entered a new phase: that of building and adorning churches and focusing on a more spiritual side of his reign. Ovidiu Pecican argues that it was the deep disappointment that Stephen felt when he lost these two fortresses that made him give up his hostile attitude towards the Ottomans. See this theory in Chapter I of this dissertation, subchapter "Art and spirituality."

[352] Aşık Paşazade, "Tevarih-I Al-I Osman," in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române*, 102.

Aşık Paşazade both praised and denigrated the ruler. Stephen was seen as having enough power to defeat a Pasha (Suleyman), but having no courage to stand in front of the new sultan, Bayezid. Although he was a skilled warrior, the position of Moldavia to the Empire did not allow the prince to be seen positively – regardless of the fact that he signed an *ahdname* which, technically, assured peace. Mehmed II offered Stephen an *ahdname*, an act which stipulated the conditions for peace after the conflict in 1476. This document explains, from an Ottoman perspective, the reasons for Stephen's betrayal:

> Kara-Bogdan, who, in the old days, was full of humanity and submitted to the High Nest of the Caliphate of the Ottoman dynasty and, most thoroughly, to the great Seat of my Empire, high as the sky, never mentioning his duties of obedience, nor the tribute established by the fermān, obeyed my orders and paid on time, without being late, the tribute that I established. However, for a while, devilish whispers ushered in his head the thought of revolt and trouble, and he stepped outside the cycle of subjection and, it seems, because of disobedience, he showed boldness and went outside the path of submission … This way, because of my wrath, with my glorious armies, bearing bravery, I ruined from the roots, like a hurricane, his prosperous country … and I gave him a terrific punishment with my brave and destructive hand. At this time, waking up from his ignorant sleep, being sorry and ashamed, he asked for foregiveness with thousands of humiliations … he placed his face to the ground for servitude.[353]

While in the eyes of Mehmed Stephen was a man lured by "devilish whispers" to revolt, for Aşık Paşazade and Tursun Bei, he and his Moldavians equalled evil itself. Naturally, other fifteenth-century Ottoman historians had similar views on Stephen. Mehmed Neşri also thought that Stephen was a "damned"[354] "giaour"[355] but, interestingly, he also made a eulogizing statement regarding the prince: "Istefan-bei from Moldavia, a very skilled man and great master in wars against giaours, served very well Sultan Murad and Sultan Mehmed."[356]

One must argue therefore that the figure of Stephen was not completely negative and this is a significant element when discussing the image of the Moldavian prince. The fact that a representative of the Ottoman Empire admitted that a man who probably caused the sultan some sleepless nights was in fact a skilled warrior, may be seen as a strike to its ego. Nevertheless, Stephen's courage is present in all his characterisations, although it was probably words like these ones that the sultan mostly enjoyed:

> Bogdan[357] ran with his face darkened,

---

[353] *Documente turceşti privind istoria României* [Turkish documents on the history of Romania] I (1455-1774) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei, 1976), 6.

[354] Mehmed Neşri, "Djihannuma, Tarih-I Al-I Osman," in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române*, 127.

[355] Ibidem.

[356] Mehmed Neşri in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 263.

[357] Stephen the Great.

With tears in his eyes and his heart broken.[358]

4.3. Vlachs on Stephen

The Vlachs, the ascendants of today's Romanians, were the inhabitants of the Moldavian, Wallachian, and Transylvanian principalities. There are a few main instances in which Vlach sources discuss the figure of Stephen, which may be divided into two dichotomous categories: good and bad – positive and negative characterizations.

4.3.1. Positive thoughts

In 1476, after the battle of Vaslui, the messenger of Wallachia's Prince Vlad the Impaler, Ladislaus,[359] was sent to King Matthias' court in order to relate the events of the clash between Stephen the Great and Suleyman Pasha one year earlier. Reaching Buda on the 7th of August, Ladislaus described the battle which transformed Stephen into a well-known leader. The report mainly discussed the battle, the positioning, the armies of the Ottomans and Moldavians, and the defeat of the Ottoman army. However, it also made a statement on the Moldavian leader:

> … it was rumoured that it was not believed that the Turk sent [his men] to conquer the mentioned territories; not until he confronted Prince Stephen, because, if he defeated Stephen, he would have gained those territories without any effort.[360]

It was obvious that should one defeat the ruler of a land, his territories would have become the possession of the conqueror; but from the perspective of Stephen's public perception it is meanigful to highlight the Moldavian "rumour" that Pasha Suleyman was not interested in any booty until he captured the prince. The Moldavian "rumour" suggested that the entire 1475 Ottoman expedition was aimed at the person of Stephen the Great, emphasizing the magnitude of the prince's percetion.

Stephen's perception was also visible in the Wallachian, so-called Cantacuzino Chronicle. The chronicle was written in the seventeenth century, but, considering that there are almost no sources contemporary to Stephen which discuss his image, this chronicle is a valuable text – especially as it was most likely inspired by older texts. The Cantacuzino Chronicle makes reference to the Wallachian rulers from 1290 to 1688. Interestingly, Stephen of Moldavia was also included in the line of

---

[358] The characterization of Stephen the Great after the defeat at Podul Înalt in 1476. See: Şemseddin Ahmed bin Suleiman Kemal Paşazade, "The Chronicles of the House of Osman," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 271.

[359] The identity of Ladislaus is unknown. Because Hungarian officials usually transformed foreign names in Hungarian version, Ladislaus could have been Romanian (his original name being Vlad or Vladislav), or he could have also been of Hungarian origin (his name being indeed Ladislas or László). See more on Ladislas and the reasons for his trip to King Matthias: *Călători străini în Ţările Române I*, 139-140.

[360] Ibidem, 142.

Wallachian rulers: "After that, Prince Ţepeluş ruled; and he made war at Râmnicu Sărat with old prince Stephen of the Moldavian Country. That was the time when Prince Ţepeluş died and Prince Stephen won. And he [Stephen] stood then here in the country and ruled for sixteen years."[361] The chronicle recalled a sixteen-year reign of the Moldavian prince in Wallachia, although in reality, he never ruled the Wallachian principality. The fact that Stephen was remembered to have reigned in Wallachia was the effect of the Moldavian-Wallachian relations. During Stephen's reign, Moldavia had a policy of suzerainty over Wallachia, often times trying to politically influence Wallachia's demeanour.[362]

Stephen must have had an even stronger impact on people who personally knew him. Unfortunately, no testimonies belonging to these people were preserved, except for a letter written by one of the ruler's daughters, Olena.[363] The letter answered a previous message and it praised God for the good news of her father's health, wishing him further health and happiness while praying for his well-being. From the perspective of Stephen's perception, the letter's introductory address is the most relevant part. Although a standardized formula, the address may also be seen as the daughter's formal characterization of her father:

> Glorified and happy through the gift of God, lover of Christ, and greatly blessed by God, crowned in all the countries of the Almightly, and to my sweet and precious lord and dear parent, *Ioan* Prince Stephen, with the mercy of God the ruler of the Country of Moldavia, a deep bow and faithful and true love from your beloved daughter, Olena, Grand Princess of Moscow.[364]

Olena addressed her aging father, "precious and beloved lord and dear parent,"[365] with kind and compassionate words. Although standardized, some of the letter's words and syntagms such as "precious," "dear parent," "true love," "beloved daughter" allow a narrow insight in the relationship between the two. Surely, should one analyze this characterizantion from the perspective of the father-daughter relationship, it becomes a subjective one which disregards any aspects of the father's characteristics as highly-acclaimed ruler – the daughter only cares about the individual

---

[361] *Letopiseţul Cantacuzinesc* [The Cantacuzino Chronicle], in *Cronicile româneşti* [Romanian chronicles] II, ed. N. Simache and Tr. Cristescu (Buzău: Tipografia şi Legătoria "Fraţii Dumitrescu," 1942), 6.

[362] During Stephen's reign, Moldavia became "Valahia Major" while Wallachia became "Valahia Minor," although before Stephen's rule, the principalities were known inversely (thus Moldavia was "Valahia Minor" and Wallachia was "Valahia Major"). Moreover, Stephen received the intitulature "the great" in the context of Moldavian-Wallachian relations when he became the unofficial suzerain of Wallachia. See: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări" – "Le Grand". Témoignages et interpretations," *Analele Putnei* 2 (2012): 7-37.

[363] Olena married Ivan the Young, son of the Grand Prince of Moscow Ivan III. She moved to Moscow with her husband, from where she wrote the anaylzed letter to her father, Stephen the Great. See more on Olena in: Dan Sluşanschi, "Princess Olena's safe-conduct through Poland and Lithuania (1482)," *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 34 (1995): 195-199.

[364] *Ştefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 362.

[365] Ibidem.

Stephen, not the heroic Stephen. This personalized aspect of the letter is what makes it unique: it is a characterization independent of Stephen's policies as prince or Stephen's actions as military leader.

4.3.2. Negative thoughts

While direct sources springing from the Moldavian or the Wallachian space referring to Stephen are difficult to be found, negative sources are even more difficult to find. This results in the scarce presentation of Stephen as a "negative" man from the Wallachian perspective.

In March 1481, Stephen the Great wrote a series of letters to the boyars of the Wallachian northern border announcing them that a man he called "my son Prince Mircea,"[366] should occupy the throne of Wallachia because the Wallachian principality was his "righteous origin."[367] Moreover, Stephen emphasized the fact that should this not materialize, he would "insist on his [Mircea's] well-being just as on my own well-being, with my own head and with my boyars and with all my country until he will be in his place of origin, Wallachia."[368]

The circumstances of this letter were unfortunate because Stephen already had a significant number of military interferences in Wallachia and this attempt to replace the Wallachian prince was not the first one.[369] The boyars he addressed in his letter must have already been discontented with all his interventions in their territory, which resulted in their aggressive, but also ironic response. On the back of the letter[370] sent to the boyars of Brăila, a bordering fortress to Moldavia,[371] the boyars wrote their infuriated answer:

> From all the boyars of Brăila and from all the princes and all Wallachians, we write to you, Moldavian Prince Stephen. Do you have any humaneness, do you have any mind, do you have any brains, as you are wasting your ink and paper for the child of a whore, Călţuna, whom you say is your son? If he is your son and you want him good, then let him rule in your place after you die, and take his mother and make her your wife; just like in our country all the fishermen of Brăila had her, you have her as well to be your wife. And teach your own country how to serve you, and beware of us; because if you are looking for an enemy, you will find him. And know this: we have a prince, great and kind, and we have peace with all our

---

[366] *Scrisori domneşti* [Royal letters], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia "Neamul Românesc," 1912), 25. (henceforth: *Scrisori domneşti*).

[367] Ibidem, 26.

[368] Ibidem.

[369] For more on the interventions of Stephen in Wallachia and the circumstances of this letter, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 194-200.

[370] *Istoria României în Texte*, 138.

[371] It was not surprising that the boyars of Brăila were not eager to support either Stephen or Mircea because Brăila had much to suffer from Stephen military actions in Wallachia. See, for instance, the episode of the burning of Brăila in 1470: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 76-77.

neighbours; and know that we will all come one by one against you and we will stand by our Prince Basarab even if we are to lose our heads.[372]

Stephen wrote similar letters to other boyars from bordering territories such as Buzău and Râmnic and he received similar answers.[373] The Wallachian boyars were not fond of Stephen the Great – every great myth or myth-in-the-making must have its opposers.

5. New beginnings

5.1. Stephen the Great dies

Should one look at the period of Stephen's lifetime and the period following his death as two distinct times, the ruler's death should be seen as bordering life and myth. Most stories that built his myth were the creation of his lifetime, but his actual myth started to blossom soon after his death. One may argue that his death was the transition towards the proto-myth or that his death was, in fact, a beginning. The beginning of Stephen's new life, as a myth.

> In the year 7012 [1504], the month of July 2, Tuesday, the servant of God died, *Ion* Prince Stephen, ruler of the Country of Moldavia, at about three o'clock in the day. And in that same year, before his death, there was a difficult and very harsh winter, as never seen before. And during the summer there were great rains and floods and drownings because of the great waters.[374]

The death of a ruler who was perceived with such magnitude could not, in medieval mentality, have remained unnoticed by nature. As the extract from the Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia shows, nature was enraged at the perspective of Stephen's death. It foretold his soon-to-come death. The natural events which foretold the famous death were not only recorded in Moldavian sources, but also in foreign ones: Bernard Wapowski recalled that "rivers swelled because of many rains and they overflew their channels, in a way that nobody has ever seen before; and not long afterwards, Stephen, the prince of Moldavia, died."[375] All throughout Europe, natural disasters were often seen as omens, being frequently juxtaposed with the death of monarchs or their

---

[372] See the text in: *Scrisori de boieri, scrisori de domni* [Letter from boyars, letters from princes], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia "Datina Românească," 1925), Letter VI, 16. See letter also in: *Istoria României în Texte*, 137-138.
[373] *Istoria României în Texte*, 138.
[374] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 21.
[375] Bernard Wapowski, *Chronicorum Partem Posterorem*, 190-191.

expulsion from the throne.[376] It is not surprising that Moldavian and neighbouring chroniclers linked the natural events of 1503 with the end of Stephen the Great's life.

As the end of Stephen's life approached, various possible successors to the Moldavian throne appeared. Two letters present the claimants to the throne which are highly suggestive from a mythical point of view.[377] On July 15th, 1504, Alexander Jagiellon wrote to Bishop Lucas Watzelrode of Warmia, while eleven days later Leonardo de Massari sent a similar letter to Venice's Zuan Badoer. Both letters reported an event which happened a few days before Stephen's death: the prince's logothete Ioan Tăutul, recently sent to Istanbul, returned to Moldavia with an Ottoman envoy who was to invest the Moldavian successor as soon as Stephen died. However, Stephen's eldest son, Bogdan, seemed to not have had full chances to the throne as the Ottoman envoy also brought with him a new claimant to the seat – supposedly, another son of the dying prince.[378] Both letters attest that the Ottoman envoy, accompanied by an entire army, having arrived to Moldavia, clashed with the Moldavian supporters of Bogdan.[379] Hearing about the conflict between the two parties, Stephen stunningly regained his physical power: "Tandem questo vene al orechie de Stefano Vayvoda el qual erra propinquus mortiel, qual cossi come in vita et sanita, ita in morte mostro esser et terribile et prudente."[380] Although weakened, Stephen seemingly regained his force and presented himself just as he used to be in healthy condition. He went to the field where the two groups were facing each other and ordered that the leaders of both groups be executed. Afterwards, he talked to the members of the groups and told them that his dying wish was for them to choose the right heir to the throne. Although Stephen did not suggest anyone as the heir, both groups decided in favour of

---

[376] N. B. Aitchison, "Regicide in early medieval Ireland," in *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval* West, ed. Guy Halsall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 119.

[377] The circumstances of the ruler's death and the situation of these claimants have already been presented in the most comprehensive study on the life of Stephen the Great. Also, the two letters which present the claimants have already been discussed in the study, thus only the meaning of the letters for the mythical image of Stephen is presented in this dissertation. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, subchapters "<Şi pe Ştefan voievod l-a ajuns moartea>" [<And death reached Prince Stephen>] and "Pretendenţe şi bănuieli" [Predenders and suspicions].

[378] There are not enough sources to identify this claimant. Although it cannot be thoroughly hypothesized, it may be argued that this claimant was in fact a nephew of Stephen, one of the future sixteenth-century princes of Moldavia, Stephen Locust, who was supported by the Ottoman Empire. See the theories on the claimants to the throne on the eve of Stephen's death in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 431-432.

[379] In fact, the letter of Alexander Jagiellon also makes reference to a third claimant to the throne: the bailiff of Suceava, Luca Arbore. Székely and Gorovei argue that the appearance of his name as a claimant in this letter is rather enigmatic, as he remains in his position as bailiff for 19 more years after Stephen's death. In normal circumstances, a claimant to the throne would have never been allowed to remain in such an influential political position. Therefore, it is difficult to believe that Luca Arbore was indeed a claimant. See more in: Ibidem, 432-433.

[380] Excerpt from the letter of Leonardo de Massari, quoted in: Ibidem, 431.

the same person: Bogdan, Stephen's eldest son. As a result, his son was crowned and two days later, as the letter of Massari indicated, the old ruler died.[381]

Stephen died, but he left behind the image of a great man, just as his appellative suggests. Starting with July 2nd, 1504, the day of his death, Stephen the Great never stopped growing. His imaginary was enriched with each century that passed, starting with the sixteenth century, the time of his proto-myth.

5.2. Life after death: the imaginary of Stephen the Great

The life of Stephen the Great was marked by a dichotomy which would later on become an intrinsic part of his myth: the Christian hero versus the seemingly unbeatable pagan enemy. The philosopher Ernst Cassirer explained how such a dichotomy works within the construction of myth:

> Myth always has a dramatic character. It conceives the world as a great drama – as a struggle between divine and demonic forces, between light and darkness, between the good and the evil. There is always a negative and a positive pole in mythical thought and imagination. Even the political myths were incomplete as long as they had not introduced a demonic power. The process of deification had to be completed by a process that we may describe as "devilization" (i.e., demonization.)[382]

5.2.1. The last will

It has been convened that the first instance of "demonization" in the case of Stephen is mostly visible more than one century after the ruler's death, in the first half of the seventeenth century. The historical myth of Stephen the Great probably started with the story presented by Grigore Ureche in his chronicle[383] which describes the moment of the prince's death and his last will: Stephen gathered his son and heir Bogdan III and "all his counsellors and the great boyars"[384] and ordered them to allow Moldavia to subdue to the Ottoman Empire because neither his son, nor any other ruler could withstand the ever-growing power of the sultan. The antithesis implied in this story between the Moldavian ruler and the Ottomans – thus, the demonization – has of course been known to Moldavians before Ureche. However, the fact that the chronicler highlighted that "[nobody] will be able to keep the country as he has"[385] gave an impulse to the emergence of Stephen the Great's myth in later centuries. Consequently, chroniclers and writers who followed Ureche retold and refined the

---

[381] The letter of Leonardo de Massari, quoted in: Ibidem.

[382] Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet, "Introduction: Of Myths and Men," in *Haunted by History. Myths in International Relations*, ed. Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet (Berghahn Books, 1998), 8.

[383] The chronicle was written sometime around the year 1642. See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*.

[384] Ibidem, 66.

[385] Ibidem.

story of Stephen's last will. Ion Neculce did not include new elements in the story,[386] but he was the one who allowed the myth to be transferred from history to literature.[387] A few years later, Dimitrie Cantemir, another seventeenth-century chronicler, elaborated the story of the will in a detailed monologue of Stephen which described the situation of Moldavia's neighbours in relation to the Ottoman Empire. Additionally, Stephen asked his successor to gain peace even with the price of a tribute, although should the sultan ask for more and want to "profane our religion,"[388] Bogdan and his people should rather "perish at the hand of the enemy."[389] The monologue was Stephen's plea to "tame this wild and raging beast, rather than irritate it with weapons."[390] Further on, the monologue that most thoroughly exemplified Stephen as a mythical hero whose last will was forever to be obeyed was written by a nineteenth-century playwright through whose ink Stephen was once more asking his successor not to fight the Ottoman because "Moldavia did not belong to my forefathers, does not belong to me or to you, but belongs to your descendants and to the descendants of your descendants."[391] Therefore, in order to secure Moldavia and the descendants of his descendants a safe life, the legend was saying that Bogdan had to accept the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire.

As one can easily notice, the "last will" motif was a "literary invention."[392] Stephen the Great, at the time of his death, could not have advised his son and boyars to allow Moldavia's dependence for the very first time, as this had already happened during the time of Peter Aron and Stephen himself had already paid the Ottoman tribute during 1457 and 1473, as well as after 1486.[393] Moreover, the *ahdname*, the peace treaty offered by Sultan Mehmed II to Stephen the Great recalled the position to be taken by the Moldavian prince:

> ...Surrendering my head, as I did before, to obey [the sultan] and also doubling my tribute, which used to be three thousand Florins each year, and rising it to six thousand Florins per year, I become the friend of your friends and the enemy of your enemies.[394]

---

[386] "When Prince Stephen the Good died, he left orders to his son Prince Bogdan, that he should subdue the country to the Turks and not to other countries, because the Turks are the wisest and strongest, and he would not be able to defend his country with the sword, as he [Stephen] did." See: Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte" [A collection of words], in *Letopisețul Țării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], ed. Anatol and Dan Vidrașcu (Bucharest: Litera International, 2001), 17.

[387] Although in the story of *O samă de cuvinte* [A collection of Words], Ion Neculce wrote under the appearance of a chronicle, he was in fact entering the realm of literature by writing a short story which portrays Stephen the Great as the main character. See: Nichita Stănescu, *Amintiri din prezent* [Memories from the Present] (Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1985), 56.

[388] Dimitrie Cantemir, *Istoria Imperiului Otoman. Creşterea şi scăderea lui* [The History of the Ottoman Empire. Its Rise and fall], trans. I. Hodosiu (Bucharest: Societăţii Academice Române, 1876), 273.

[389] Ibidem.

[390] Ibidem.

[391] Barbu Ştefănescu-Delavrancea, *Teatru* [Theatre] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1983), 53.

[392] Bogdan Murgescu in *Istoria României în texte*, 141.

[393] Ibidem.

[394] The *ahdname* given by Mehmed II to Stephen the Great (1480) in Ibidem, 142.

The story of the last will took this inaccurate shape in the chronicle of Ureche because of mainly one reason: as Moldavia was dependent on the Ottoman Empire in Ureche's seventeenth century, his story was trying to explain this undesired situation through Stephen's will – the fact that Stephen had seemingly allowed the submission of Moldavia to the Empire made the situation more acceptable. Moreover, Ureche's hypothesis was supported by the view on how Danubian rulers should manage Ottoman-Moldavian or Ottoman-Wallachian relationships. Submission to a more advanced power which could not be withstood was encouraged within the fragile Danubian space of the time, as seen in the sixteenth-century mirror of princes commissioned by the Wallachian Neagoe Basarab shows:

> And should there be pagans with large armies and larger power than yours, you should first approach them with good and kind words. Should you be able to reconcile with those kind words, you should know that that happened with the help of God and should they not want to reconcile with you through kind words, because of their lack of faith, you should give them as much money as you can. And do not love conflict and wars, and you should not think about fighting with them.[395]

6.2.2. In the aftermath of Stephen's "last will:" mythology and historiography

Myths can be paralleled with certain communities' aspirations and can be transformed according to the changing perceptions of those very communities. They are never static, they are ever-changing: myths die and are reborn in new guises, always adapting to their new audiences.[396] From this point of view, the past blends with the requirements present eventually creating a new version of the myth. The aim of this study is to uncover the first layer of Stephen the Great's myth, the proto-myth, as it appeared for the first time, in its original and purest state in the sixteenth century, soon after the ruler's death. Before dealing with the proto-myth however, the outcomes of the "last will" and the development of the myth after the "last will" instance need to be briefly explained by highlighting Stephen's most relevant mythical ups and downs.

The first legends on Stephen the Great were most likely already created in the sixteenth century, although they were not recorded in written form – at least not that one knows of today. Post-sixteenth-century (thus, post "last will") legends are however abundant. They explain that when the prince was born, the three fate spirits[397] offered him the gift of fame and foretold that he would have many accomplishments while defeating just as many enemies. The child grew up accordingly, in full strength and at the age of fifteen he killed a bear with his bare hands. As he became stronger,

---

[395] *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* [The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie], ed. Anatol Vidrașcu and Dan Vidrașcu (Chișinău: Litera International, 2001), 200.

[396] Cruz and Frijhof, "Introduction: Myth in History, History in Myth", 6-7.

[397] In Romanian folklore, three so-called *ursitoare*, fate spirits, descend upon a new-born child and decide the child's destiny and the path of his/her life.

legends told that he could fight thirty people at the same time without being afraid. He would always be safe as angles guarded him ever since he was born: when he was a young boy, he got lost in the woods where he reached a small cottage owned by two elderly men, who eventually turned out to be his two guardian angels. The angels taught him how to live wisely and how to always do good for his fellow men and for Moldavia. Supposedly, this is how the future ruler of the principality learned how to believe and trust in God. After Stephen was enthroned and as he engaged in his many battles, it was said that he always had an archangel by his side with a burning sword who kept him safe from any danger: nobody was able to approach the prince at a distance shorter than twenty meters because he would be stricken by the archangel's deadly weapon. Legends conclude that Stephen was so grateful to God and his archangel, that he built a church each time he returned from the battle field. Being a character so much surrounded by miracles and saintly beings, it is not surprising that stories about Stephen implied that he never died and instead ascended to Heaven in his earthly body. The spirit of the ruler was believed to descend back to earth and help Moldavians whenever the country was in danger or when it was engaged in war. It was also believed that Stephen would rise from the dead before the end of days, riding his horse and holding up his sword, although this would only happen if Moldavia were in a danger only Stephen could settle.[398]

All these stories and legends represented the foundation for the mid nineteenth-century literature that explored Stephen's actions in texts imbibed with eulogy. The period between mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries may be called the "age of national rebirth,"[399] as the political and national feelings of Romanians had never seen such an outbreak before. This period was characterised by the struggle of the two Danubian principalities, Moldavia and Wallachia, to gain their independence while they were stranded between the two colossal powers of the East: Imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The age of national rebirth essentially started with the Congress of Focşani in 1772 where Russian and Ottoman diplomats met in an attempt to reconcile as both parts were claiming the incorporation of the principalities' territories. Eventually, the age reached its peak with the 1848 Revolution. The ambition of the 1848 generation was to proclaim the rights of the principalities and to receive support from Europe in this unsettling period. Under these circumstances, in a time when Romanians were trying to achieve both independence and the

---

[398] For all these legends and other famous legends on Stephen the Great, collected from oral tradition, see: *Domnitori români în legende* [Romanian Princes in Legends], ed. Mihai Alexandru Canciovici (Bucharest: Rosetti Educaţional, 2005), 60-64 and 66-155. See also: *De la Dragoş la Cuza Vodă. Legende populare istorice româneşti* [From Dragoş to Prince Cuza. Romanian Popular Historical Legends], ed. V. Adăscăliţei (Bucharest: Minerva, 1988), 26-28, 43-48. A third and most recent very thorough presentation of the legends of Stephen is the following: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004). Portret în Legendă* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004). Legendary Portrait], ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei (Putna: Muşatinii, 2003).

[399] Anton Caragea, *Epoca Renaşterii Naţionale (1750 - 1878)* [The Age of National Rebirth (1750 - 1878)] (Bucharest: Universitatii, 2003), 5.

principalities' union, both literary creation and historical writing were absorbed and inspired by nationalist feelings. Thus, some 300 years after the prince's death, "when they decided to play the card of modernisation, westernisation and of national statute, Romanians did not continue to write their old history, but they broke up with it,"[400] creating this way a new Stephen the Great, in accordance with their new national and political needs. Although Stephen was often times in conflict with Wallachia, he became the symbol of national unity and the bond which united the two principalities.[401] The most relevant nineteenth-century poets and writers who focused on the Moldavian ruler were Vasile Alecsandri, Dimitrie Bolintineanu, Barbu Ştefănescu Delavrancea, Mihai Eminescu or, later on, Octavian Goga and Mihail Sadoveanu. Stephen's legends were now materializing into tributes to the prince pointing to his impassioned character and love for his nation. On the one side, Bolintineanu showed the ruler's human nature in his poem *Muma lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The Mother of Stephen the Great] as he portrayed him as a frightened man hesitant to return to the battlefield.[402] Alecsandri, on the other side, described and "dialogued" with a God-like ruler, telling him to "sleep, hero of Romanians/Oh! Stephen, holy saint!" (my translation)[403] while stressing that the ruler's supposed dream had finally come to reality: "Oh! Great heroic shadow,/Look at your dream:/We are unified in our thoughts,/Unified in God" (my translation).[404] One can thus see the birth of a new Stephen whose image was formed by two facets: one resembling the legends which were known through oral tradition and a second one imbibed with national feelings and a new sense of "Romanianness." In the same spirit of grandiose remembrance, both Octavian Goga and Mihai Eminescu dialogued with the ruler, describing to him the degrading situation of the Romanians and their need for him to watch over them:

> Great prince, in your country today
> Both dreams and thunders are dead...
> …
> Because our arms do not hold swords today,
> And our country has no flag...
> Your Highness! We are beaten by our needs![405] (my translation)

---

[400] Boia, *Istorie şi mit în conştiinţa românească*, 62.

[401] Of course, he was not the only symbol used for unity at the time. Other Moldavian and Wallachian rulers, such as Mircea the Old, Vlad the Impaler, Peter Rareş, Michael the Brave, Neagoe Basarab, Vasile Lupu and other were used for the propagation of the idea of the Romanian unity.

[402] Dimitrie Bolintineanu, *Muma lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The Mother of Stephen the Great] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#DimitrieBolintineanu, last time accessed: September 10, 2014. Of course, Bolintineanu was inspired by one of the legends collected by Ion Neculce in his "Collection of words." See: Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte", Legend no. IV, 15-16.

[403] "Dormi, erou al românilor/O! Ştefan, erou sfânt!" in Vasile Alecsandri. Imn lui Ştefan cel Mare [Hymn to Stephen the Great] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#VasileAlecsandri, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

[404] "O! mare umbră-eroică,/Priveşte visul tău:/Uniţi suntem în cugete,/Uniţi în Dumnezeu." In Ibidem.

[405] "Mărit voievoade, în ţara ta azi/Şi vise şi fulgere-s moarte.../…/ Căci braţele noastre azi spada nu strâng,/Şi steag ţara noastră nu are.../Măria ta! Suntem bătuţi de nevoi!" in Octavian Goga, *De la noi* [From Us] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#OctavianGoga, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

or

> Rise from your tomb,
> So that I can hear you blow your horn
> And see you gathering Moldavia.
> If you blow the horn once,
> All of Moldavia will gather,
> If your blow twice,
> Forests will come to your help,
> If you blow thrice
> All enemies will disappear.[406] (my translation)

Stephen the Great was resurrected in narratives and poetry which were not in accordance with historical reality, but which very much followed the precepts of art and literature created for patriotic education.[407] Historians also started to pick up on the poets' pace and they also fell in the trap of exuberant acclamation. In this period of predilection for the Middle Ages and its heroes, one of the first historians who idealized Stephen the Great was Mihail Kogălniceanu. Kogălniceanu was a historian who strived to make the history of Moldavia and Wallachia known outside Romanian borders[408] and who often emphasized the image of Stephen, as he did in one of his speeches in 1843. During the talk, he asserted that

> my heart is pumping when I hear the names of Alexander the Good, Stephen the Great and Michael the Brave; but, my people, I am not ashamed to say that these men represent much more to me than Alexander the Great, Hannibal and Caesar; these are the heroes of the world, but the most important for me are the heroes of my own country.[409]

In the same speech, he expressed his dedication to heroes such as Stephen: "our history also has stories and characters which cannot be less than those of the old heroes."[410] Accordingly, he wrote a number of studies on Stephen the Great which investigated events such as the Battle of Războieni and its causes or the relationship between Stephen and King John Albert of Poland, which all suggested that the Moldavian prince could equal already consecrated "old heroes." Interestingly,

---

[406] "Tu te-nalţă din mormânt,/Să te-aud din corn sunând/Şi Moldova adunând./De-i suna din corn o dată,/Ai s-aduni Moldova toată,/De-i suna de două ori,/Îţi vin codri-n ajutor,/De-i suna a treia oară/Toţi duşmanii or să piară" in Mihai Eminescu. *Doina* [Ballad], on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#MihaiEminescu, last time accessed on: September 10, 2014.

[407] Igor Caşu, "Ştefan cel Mare în simbolistica politică şi istoriografia basarabeană postbelică" [Stephen the Great in the political symbolism and the Bessarabian post-war historiography], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt în contextul epocii sale şi al posterităţii* [Saint Stephen the Great in the context of his time and of his posterity], ed. Demir Dragnev, Emil Dragnev, Igor Caşu, and Virgil Pâslariuc (Chişinău: Civitas, 2004), 108.

[408] Arguing that Moldavia and Wallachia were the only territories which did not have a thorough history written, he compiled the first complete history of the Romanians: *Histoire de la Valachie, de la Moldavie et des Valaques transdanubiens* (Berlin, 1837). See: Dumitru Vitcu, "Personalitatea şi epoca lui Ştefan cel Mare în creaţia istoriografică a unui romantic" [Stephen the Great's Personality and Age in the Historiographical Creation of a Romantic], *Codrul Cosminului* 10 (2004), 70.

[409] Kogălniceanu's speech at the opening of the class of national history in 1843 at the Academia Mihăileană. See: Mihail Kogălniceanu, *Opere* [Writings] II, ed. Alexandru Zub (Bucharest: Academiei, 1976), 389.

[410] Ibidem.

Kogălniceanu did not dismiss all the legends surrounding the image of the ruler. Quite the opposite, he accepted them as part of historical truth[411] – moreover, all the qualities that the historian attributed to Stephen were the ones that he desired for his contemporary leaders. Altogether, Kogălniceanu responded to the political and educational need of the period, an action which was repeated by other contemporary historians as well.

In 1871, the first commemoration of Stephen the Great took place at the Putna Monastery. A group of young Romanians studying in Vienna initiated the project and about three thousand Romanians, both from within and from outside the borders were present at the event. On this occasion, the historian A. D. Xenopol delivered a speech where he referred to Stephen as a symbol for all Romanians: "Stephen the Great ceases to be the hero of only one territory inhabited by Romanians, but becomes a central image for all people of the same nation."[412] Stephen thus became the figure who united all Romanians. In his volume, *Istoria românilor* [The History of Romanians], Xenopol continued to praise the prince and his "incomprehensible victories."[413] The "military genius"[414] of Stephen who managed to do the impossible when defeating so many of his enemies was explained by the historian: his strategy was to never be at war with two of his neighbours at the same time and, when he was at war, he used the ever-successful tactic of burning the fields so that the enemies would find it difficult to advance towards the core of Moldavia. In Xenopol's eyes, one sees a Stephen who is a highly-skilled military commander, a beloved leader, a man who would have been similar to Charlemagne or Caesar, had he ruled over a larger territory.[415] A man who, as described in his writings, gave greatness not only to his present, but also to his future: "the great-grandsons of that generation, us, today's Romanians, we feed ourselves from that stock of ancient glory and we pride ourselves with it as being our history's most priced jewel."[416]

A second commemoration which initiated a series of artistic manifestations and publications was that of 1904, which celebrated 400 years since the death of Stephen. The commemoration carried a substantial sense of nationalism as King Charles I of Romania not only compensated the lack of celebration of 300 years since the death of Michael the Brave in 1901, but also responded to the

---

[411] When compiling his writings, some of Kogălniceanu's most important sources were the chronicles of the seventeenth century, which were thoroughly based on legends propagated by oral tradition. See: Vitcu, "Personalitatea şi epoca lui Ştefan cel Mare în creaţia istoriografică a unui romantic," 70-71.

[412] For more on the celebrations that took place at the Putna Monastery in the middle of the nineteenth century, see: Caşu, "Ştefan cel Mare în simbolistica politică şi istoriografia basarabeană postbelică," 109.

[413] A. D. Xenopol, *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiana* [The History of Romanians from Dacia] II (Iaşi: Tipo-Litografia H. Goldner, 1889), 408.

[414] Ibidem, 410.

[415] Ibidem, 413.

[416] Ibidem, 418.

public opinion which wanted to associate with the Romanians from Transylvania[417] - thus, once more, Stephen became the binding material between dispersed Romanians.

Fig. 18: Coin representing Stephen the Great, ordered by the Romanian Society of Numismatics in 1904. Obverse. Image source: "Orders and Medals" Catalogue, no. MRR179: http://www.ordersandmedals.ro/medalii-romania/perioada-regalista (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Fig. 19: Coin representing Stephen the Great, ordered by the Romanian Society of Numismatics in 1904. Reverse. Image source: "Orders and Medals" Catalogue, no. MRR179: http://www.ordersandmedals.ro/medalii-romania/perioada-regalista (accessed: September 26, 2014)

On this occasion, the Romanian Society of Numismatics ordered a bronze commemorative coin from Stuttgart, having on one side the bust of the prince and an inscription with his name and ruling dates [Fig. 18], while on the other side having Stephen's coat of arms with an inscription marking 400 years from his death [Fig. 19].[418] Other similar coins were minted, but the most important image distributed throughout Romania with this occasion was the lithography created by Costin Petrescu and inspired by the votive image of the Humor Monastery [Fig. 20].

The lithography was not distributed alone. It was accompanied by the first complete history of the life and reign of Stephen the Great, written by Nicolae Iorga. This was the first piece of history on the reign of Stephen which allowed the propagation of a less romanticised image of the ruler, although the preface of the volume still represented Stephen as an actor who brings all Romanians together:

---

[417] The historian Andi Mihalache talks about the "Hungarisation" of Transylvania during the government of Tisza István (1901-1905) which provoked feelings of solidarity among the Romanians in Romania. See: Andi Mihalache, "Cum <a fentat> Carol I comemorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare" [How Charles I "feinted" the Commemoration of Stephen the Great], *Historia* on http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cum-fentat-carol-i-comemorarea-lui-stefan-cel-mare, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

[418] For more on the coin dedicated to Stephen's commemoration, see: George Buzdugan and Gheorghe Niculiţă, *Medalii şi plachete româneşti. Memoria metalului* [Romanian Coins and Plaquettes. The Memory of the Metal] (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1971), 93-94.

His memory has always enlightened the great church of our people's consciousness. Sometimes stronger, other times weaker, but no wind could blow it away. Even today it rises strongly, in the great flame of pride and gratitude which grows from all our hearts when one mentions the four hundred years which have passed since the death of the great and serene emperor of all Romanianhood.[419]

Fig. 20: Stephen the Great. Painting based on the lithography of Costin Petrescu from 1904.
Image source: http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Domnia-s1-ss10.htm (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Iorga was asked by the Minister of Culture, Spiru Haret, to write this history of Stephen which was "to be dispersed in thousands of copies everywhere, down to the bottoms of the country."[420] Therefore, in 1904, all efforts were directed towards presenting an exceptional model to the relatively newly-baptised Romanian nation. Stephen the Great was a guiding image for the beginning of the twentieth century.

After the celebrations of 1904, less personal/nationalistic researches of the ruler's history were initiated. Nicolae Iorga had studied before documents issued during the time of Stephen,[421] but

---

[419] Nicolae Iorga, *Istoria lui Ştefan cel Mare pentru poporul român* [The History of Stephen the Great for the Romanian People] (Bucharest: Artemis, 2004), foreword.

[420] Nicolae Iorga, *Orizonturile mele. O viaţă de om aşa cum a fost* [My Horizons. A Man's Life as it Was] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1984), 230, quoted in http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cum-fentat-carol-i-comemorarea-lui-stefan-cel-mare, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

[421] For example: Nicolae Iorga, *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor adunate din depozitele de manuscrise ale apusului* [Documents and Fragments regarding the History of Romanians Gathered from Eastern Archives] (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1897) – the third volume of this collection included relevant documents for the reign of Stephen. Also, Idem, *Studii şi documente cu privire la istoria românilor* [Studies and

researchers such as Ioan Bogdan[422] or Vasile Pârvan[423] also started to edit volumes of documents issued by Stephen and his Royal Council. Regardless of these efforts, Stephen did not cease to be the mythological figure that was to be looked up at by the entire nation: "his dynamics, his genius, his princely dignity, his initiatives and exceptional vitality would have been enough to build a Moldavian space of imperial proportions."[424] However, although the philosopher Lucian Blaga saw him as both a "dragon and an archangel,"[425] he stressed that the age of Romanian glory was born with Stephen, but also died with him as he had only left behind a dream of possibilities. Were Romanians able to follow this dream and explore its possibilities?

The dreams connoted by the reign of Stephen were always open for exploration, as the Romanian pantheon of heroes showed: Stephen never left the pantheon. It has been shown before that the image of Stephen and other medieval rulers faded when faced with the rising characters of the royal dynasty of Hohenzollern, but their image was resurrected once history entered its communist period. This was the time when historians such as Şerban Papacostea, Ilie Corfus, Constantin Rezachevici, Constantin Cihodaru, Ioan Caproşu, Leon Şimanschi, Georgeta Ignat, Dumitru Agachi, strived to write a less idealized history of Stephen the Great.

Starting with the 1960s, one can notice the restoration of Stephen's name through a variety of media. The cult of Nicolae Ceauşescu bloomed in the 1970s and the figure of Stephen the Great was also employed to enhance the president's image as the ultimate national hero. The figure of Stephen was used to parallel that of Ceauşescu in paintings such as that of Constantin Piliuţă titled *Eroii neamului* [The heroes of the nation]. The painting, created in 1977, presents Ceauşescu standing on a platform and having behind him the images of Burebista, Mircea the Old, Stephen the Great, Michael the Brave, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, and Nicolae Bălcescu [Fig. 21] – all personalities from Ancient Dacia up until the nineteenth century, meant to legitimize the present ruler, Ceauşescu. Moreover, in order to "fit" communist propaganda, some of Stephen's most characteristic features were censored. He ceased to be the saintly church-builder and became a ruler who reflected the reasoning of Nicolae Ceauşescu. The most expressive painting in this sense (but also a disturbing one)

Documents regarding the History of the Romanians] (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucţie, 1901) – in this collection as well, the third volume is the most relevant for the study of Stephen.

[422] Ioan Bogdan, *Documente moldoveneşti din sec. XV şi XVI în arhivul Braşovului* [Moldavian Documents from the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century from the Archive of Braşov] (Bucharest: Socecu & Co., 1905) and Idem, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The Documents of Stephen the Great] (Bucharest: 1913) in two volumes.

[423] Vasile Pârvan, *Relaţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Ungaria* [Stephen the Great's Relations with Hungary] (Bucharest: 1905).

[424] Lucian Blaga, *Trilogia culturii. Orizont şi stil* [The Trilogy of Culture. Horizon and Style] (Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969), 112.

[425] Ibidem.

is Dan Hatmanu's canvas which represents Stephen the Great leaning down from a painting and clinking a glass of wine with the president and his wife, Elena [Fig. 22].[426]

Fig. 21.: Constantin Piliuţă, Eroii Neamului [The Heroes of the Nation], 1977.
Image source: Adrian Cioroianu, "Cine a profitat de cultul lui Ceauşescu?" - http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web /general/articol/cine-profitat-cultul- lui-ceausescu (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Moreover, cinematography, carefully controlled, was also an indicator of the propagandistic usage of historical characters in Ceauşescu's cult of personality. The film *Ştefan cel Mare*[427] intended to create ideologies and to eulogise. Produced for the 500-year celebration of Stephen the Great's victory over the Ottomans at Vaslui, it was not merely an artistic endeavour, but was meant to "face-lift" the historical discourse as approved by the communist party.[428] The film was designed to stress the "Romanianness" of the people in the past and to create a stronger idea of the Romanian identity in the present. A parallel is made between the "Romanian" identity[429] of the fifteenth century and the Romanian identity of the twentieth century. Although in the film *Ştefan cel Mare* the viewer can often notice assertions such as "I am a Romanian prince" or "Wallachia is our sister country," the

---

[426] For more on the propagandistic paintings done in the 1970s by Ceauşescu's regime, see: Adrian Cioroianu, "Cine a profitat de cultul lui Ceauşescu?" [Who Took Advantage of the Cult of Ceauşescu?], *Historia* on http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cine-profitat-cultul-lui-ceausescu, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

[427] *Ştefan cel Mare – Vaslui 1475* [Stephen the Great – Vaslui 1475] was directed by Mircea Drăgan in 1975, with Gheorghe Cozorici interpreting the role of Stephen the Great.

[428] For more on the so-called "face-lifting," see: Teodora Artimon, "'Face Lifting' National Myths Through Historical Film. Stephen the Great as a Romanian Case Study," in *Mediaevalia Annual of the Centre for Medieval Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń*, ed. Jaroslaw Wenta, vol. I (2011).

[429] The fifteenth-century "Romanian" identity is referred to in quotation marks because one cannot discuss a sense of nationalism and Romanianhood in neither one of the medieval principalities that later became Romania (Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania).

Moldavian ruler, in reality, was of course unmarked by the idea of Romanian identity – for him, Moldavia was his home and the principality he had to defend.

Fig. 22.: Dan Hatmanu, *Aniversare* [Anniversary], 1983. Image source: Adrian Cioroianu, "Cine a profitat de cultul lui Ceauşescu?" - http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cine-profitat-cultul-lui-ceausescu (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Therefore, Stephen was not simply a mythological figure whose deeds were artistically re-enacted in the present, but was also an effective means of influencing public opinion. Once communism fell in 1989, the exuberance that placed Stephen the Great among the main actors of Ceauşescu's propaganda also fell. But Stephen never stopped being a central figure in the post-1989 historical mythology. In 1997, he became "Saint Stephen the Great" and his image as saint was officially restored as the Romanian Orthodox Church canonised him. Almost ten years later, in 2006, in a television show organised by the Romanian National Television where the popularity of various national personalities was measured, Stephen was voted by the public as "the greatest Romanian." Interestingly, in the presentation of the ruler during this TV show, the National Television prompted the idea that without Stephen, Romanians would have spoken Turkish today.[430]

---

[430] Ovidiu Ivancu, "Romanian National Heroes. An Interdisciplinary Approach," *Annals of "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia* 11 (2010): 158.

Chapter III

The Pursuit of the Dynastic Project:
Stephen's Successors

The past is never dead. It is not even past
William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun*

1. Memory, history, and relics in the sixteenth century

There are three ways one can take in order to go back into the past and explore it: memory, history, and relics.[431] Alternatively, these same three ways help one bring the past back to the present. Although they do not guarantee the accuracy of the past, they do, however, allow the past to be touched and experienced by the present. With the help of these ways, this chapter will show how the sixteenth-century successors of Stephen the Great used and reshaped the image of their great predecessor. Because memory, history, and relics intermingled in the reigns of these rulers, a scale of "using the past" may be outlined.

This chapter will present three groups of rulers who are particularly significant for the aftermath of Stephen's image. Although they were all part of the larger Muşatin dynasty, of which Stephen was the most prominent representative, they will be analyzed as three separate groups of rulers:

- **Stephen's Princely Group**, comprised of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young, the son, respectively grandson of Stephen the Great. The timespan of this first group expands from the death of Stephen the Great to 1527.

- **Rareş's Princely Group,** represented by the son of Stephen the Great, Peter Rareş and his own two sons, Iliaş and Stephen Rareş. Their time period goes from 1527 to 1552, the end of the reign of Stephen Rareş.

- **Alexander's Princely Group**, whose main personality is Alexander Lăpuşneanu. This third group, spanning from 1552 to 1572, also includes Alexander's son, Bogdan Lăpuşneanu.

- **Usurpers, claimants, and others**. This fourth group is a special one as it does not represent a compact line of leaders, but rather a mix of rulers who are relevant to the proto-myth for various reasons. It encompasses names of usurpers who relied on the name of Stephen for legitimation; of rulers who once enthroned, took the name "Stephen;" or of claimants to the

---

[431] For a thorough exploration of these three routes, see the chapter "How We Know the Past" in David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

throne. Their timespan does not only extend from the end of the Alexandrine Princely Group to the end of the sixteenth century, but also admixes with the three princely groups of the century.

Returning to the "usage of the past" scale, the presence of Stephen is most strongly felt within Stephen's Princely Group, comprised of the closest relatives of Stephen and administered by the same Royal Council as during the time of Stephen. The memory of Stephen was just as strongly felt within Rareş's Princely Group as Peter Rareş, the illegitimate son of the great prince, was probably his most enthusiastic successor. As shall be seen, these first two princely groups were the ones to best emulate their father's (respectively grandfather's) example, thus becoming a "living memorial"[432] of their predecessor and enhancing the idea of the proto-myth. Starting with Alexander's Group, one can notice how this expression of living memorial started to fade away and how collective memories and historical narratives replaced it. As the sixteenth century advanced, memory blended more and more with history, myth, and legends, eventually creating a blurry image of Stephen the Great – the image which can be known as the proto-myth and which stands, together with the fifteenth century, at the foundation of Stephen's myth.

At this point, the role of relics becomes essential. In the context of Stephen the Great and his proto-myth, relics are any given objects, constructions or artefacts originating in the time of Stephen himself, or objects originating in the sixteenth century which were inspired by Stephen, his environment, and culture. Whereas for the sixteenth century, the objects of Stephen are actual relics, the objects created by sixteenth-century successors are not relics, but reconstructions or imitations of actual relics – they only become relics when observed from beyond the sixteenth century, from the after sixteenth-century perspective.[433] "Something old or fabricated to seem old can bring the past to us, palpable and potent."[434] This is also the suggestion of this chapter: that with the help of memory, history, and relics, the successors of Stephen tried to bring the recent past back to the present.

2. Mythical dynamics in the sixteenth century

In order to be born, a myth must have an animating engine: the desire for better, the desire for something lost, longing, or nostalgia. The fascination with the past which was better than the present

---

[432] Catherine Keene used the idea of "living memorial" in her doctoral dissertation when discussing the children of Saint Margaret. See: Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: her life and memory* (Budapest: CEU, Budapest College, 2011) doctoral dissertation.

[433] For the theoretical explanation of the relic theory, see: David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 238-249.

[434] Ibidem, 247.

inherently gives birth to myth. The successors of Stephen the Great helped creating the proto-myth by their desire to be like their predecessor, which led in some cases to elaborated projects, as shall be seen. Myth is a "process of abstracting from experience the symbolization of desire,"[435] being a volitional process. Should the rulers of the sixteenth century not have wanted to live in the same prosperity as the people of Stephen's time did, one could not discuss the birth of the proto-myth. A successful myth must speak to a wide range of people. In this sense, powerful myths such as that of Stephen can convey multiple meanings – not just across time, but simultaneously as well.[436] From this point of view, the mythical dynamics of the sixteenth century may be divided in different perceptions of Stephen's image as man and myth. Did all four categories of the sixteenth-century rulers perceive Stephen in the same way? Did the Princely Groups closest in time to the reign of Stephen react differently to the work and image of their predecessor than the rulers farther in time from Stephen? How many layers of meaning can be outlined and what did each layer signify?

All these questions will be explored in order to understand which were the hopes, ambitions, and expectations of the sixteenth-century princes. Every generation defines its role by its aspirations and by comparing itself to the past. The case of the proto-myth is representative for this: the past was blended into the present,[437] and a preliminary example of this argument is the artistic synthesis initiated by Stephen which was continued not only up until the reign of Peter Rareş, but up until the time of the Movileşti family with whom the Moldavian sixteenth century ended.[438] The following pages will show how each year which passed from the death of Stephen, added to his proto-myth and how the mythical Stephen kept accumulating new features as Moldavia advanced in its tumultuous sixteenth century.

3. Stephen's Princely Group

Stephen the Great's first two successors, Bogdan the Blind and Stephen the Young, when compared to the other two princely groups, seem to have been somewhat left aside by historians. There are at least two main reasons which led to this historiographical outcome:

---

[435] Harry Garlick, *The Final Curtain: State Funerals and the Theatre of Power* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999), 9.

[436] Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff, "Introduction: Myth in History, History in Myth," in *Myth in History, History in Myth: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Society for Netherlandic History (New York: June 5-6, 2006)*, ed. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff (Leiden: BRILL, 2009), 7.

[437] For more information on the posterity of Stephen the Great (not only in the sixteenth century, but further on in history), see: Alexandru Zub, "Repere simbolice în posteritatea ştefaniană" [Symbolic markers in the posterity of Stephen], in *Comemorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte. Sesiunea solemnă a Academiei Române (30 iunie 2004)* [The commemoration of Stephen the Great at 500 years since his death. The solemn session of the Romanian Academy (June 30th, 2004)] (Bucharest: Academiei Române, 2004), 73-81.

[438] See: Răzvan Theodorescu, "Arta ştefaniană între sumă şi sinteză" [The art of Stephen between sum and synthesis], in *Comemorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte*, 48.

- *"Quiet" reigns*. Bogdan and Stephen were the "quiet" representatives of the Muşatin dynasty.[439] There were no memorable clashes with the Ottoman Empire or neighbouring kingdoms. Furthermore, the internal political situation was stable until the second half of Stephen's reign, as the Royal Council was comprised of almost the same members as it was during the reign of Stephen the Great.[440]

- *The continuation of the princely groups*. On the one hand, their reigns may be perceived as elongations of Stephen the Great's reign, meaning that both rulers are perceived as continuators and not innovators. On the other hand, Rareş and Lăpuşneanu are both perceived individually, as princes who not only continued in the path of Stephen's legacy, but who also developed and increased its notoriety.

3.1. Bogdan III the Blind

Apart from these three factors, the proximity of Bogdan's reign to that of his father's resulted into an unfortunate situation for the historiography related to him. Although sources and primary information available for Bogdan are quite abundant, there is no monograph on him,[441] and there are only a few relevant secondary sources related directly to his reign.[442] This is a result of the uneven comparison between Stephen the Great and his son which led to Bogdan's historiographical neglection. Nevertheless, documents are telling the story of Stephen's heir who followed the footsteps of his father and who transmitted his legacy onwards.

---

[439] Ştefan Gorovei characterizes Bogdan as one of those rulers who "although cannot add too much to their country's esteem and power, they know how to transmit with dignity the legacy of their predecessors." See: Gorovei. *Muşatinii*, 73.

[440] All these conflicts will be detailed in the subsections of this chapter.

[441] The only research project close to a monograph is a seminar paper written by a student in 1910: Iulian Marinescu, *Bogdan III cel Orb* [Bogdan III the Blind] 1504–1517 (Bucharest, 1910).

[442] Probably the most relevant articles written on Bogdan III are the following: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică – Bogdan III – political anthropology," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 265-278; Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea – Contributions to the history of the reign of Bogdan III," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 279-294; idem. "O controversă: <doamnele> lui Bogdan al III-lea – A Controversy: Bogdan III's <Wives>," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 145-157; Ovidiu Pecican, "Ideologia puterii centrale în Moldova lui Bogdan cel Orb" [The Ideology of the Central Power in Bogdan the Blind's Moldavia], in Ovidiu Pecican, *Troia, Veneţia, Roma* [Troy, Venice, Rome] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundaţiei pentru Studii Europene, 1998), 316–331; Liviu Pilat, "Mitropolitul Maxim Brancovici, Bogdan al III-lea şi legăturile Moldovei cu Biserica sârbă – Metropolitan Maxim Branković, Bogdan III and Moldavia's Ties with the Serbian Church," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 229-238; Virgil Pâslăriuc, "Marea boierime moldoveană şi raporturile ei cu Bogdan vodă al III-lea (1504–1517)" [The Great Moldavian Boyars and their Relationship with Bogdan III (1504-1517)], in Virgil Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie în Ţara Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea* [The Political Relations between the Great Boyars and the Ruler in Moldavia in the Sixteenth Century] (Chişinău: Pontos, 2005), 17–39; C. Burac, "Bogdan-Vlad, urmaşul lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Bogdab-Vlad, the Follower of Stephen the Great], *Anuarul Institutului De Istorie şI Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 25 (1988): 247–252.

3.1.1. Who was Bogdan?

Bogdan III is one of the rather few medieval rulers of the principalities whose exact date of birth is known: "… in the same month, day 16th, the wife of Stephen gave birth to their son, Bogdan, son of Prince Stephen, who lives today, with the mercy of God."[443] This excerpt from the Moldavian-German Chronicle indicates Bogdan's birth: June 16th 1479. Similarly, another chronicle contemporary to Bogdan tells about his death and length of reign:

> And after Prince Stephen, his son came to the throne, Prince Bogdan, who ruled for 12 years, nine months and three weeks and who died in the year 7025 [1517], 22nd of April[444] and was buried at the Putna Monastery, in the large pronaos, on the right side. May he forever be remembered.[445]

When he was born, the prince received the name Bogdan. He also received a second name which, combined with his first one, formed a symbolic nomination: Bogdan-Vlad. Bogdan-Vlad represented Stephen the Great's way of creating a symbolic reunion between the two dynasties of Moldavia and Wallachia,[446] while his name was also the embodiment of Stephen's political desires over Wallachia. Stephen seemed to have had an inheritance arrangement planned for both his sons: his elder one, Alexander, was to inherit Moldavia, while Bogdan (as his fatidic name indicated) was to reign over Wallachia. Bogdan eventually did not inherit Wallachia, but he did inherit his father's political ambitions over the neighbouring principality, as it shall be seen shortly. Despite these ambitions and unlike his father however, Bogdan's reign was not marked by the relationship with Wallachia. His reign was instead marked by a conflict which reverberated through the entire Muşatin dynasty: it began in the time of Peter I of Moldavia, escaladed and developed during the time of Stephen the Great and probably peeked with the rule of Peter Rareş.[447] In 1388, Peter I of Moldavia lended Władysław II Jagiełło a significant sum of money, receiving for the period of the loan (three years), as a pledge, the territory of Pokuttia.[448] Later on, Stephen the Great, animated by the fact that the agreement was not respected, invaded and occupied Pokuttia.[449] Bogdan III continued the conflict, although in a rather unintentional way. Looking for a marriage alliance with the

---

[443] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 27.

[444] The date of his death differs in this chronicle from the date on his tombstone: while in the chronicle the day of April 22nd is indicated as his death, the tombstone indicates that he died on April 20th. For the text of the tombstone, see: I. C. Chiţimia, "Ştefan cel Mare, ctitor în domeniul istoriografiei," 210.

[445] "The Chronicle of Putna II," 38.

[446] Bogdan I was the founder of the Moldavian principality, while Vlad was the founder of Wallachia. See the explanation of Stephen's dynastic project which included the naming of Bogdan and the significance of the name Bogdan-Vlad in Chapter II of this dissertation, subchapter "Predicting the future." Also, see a relevant discussion on the naming of Bogdan in: Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 265-273.

[447] The conflict between Peter Rareş and Poland, as a result of the conflict between Bogdan and Poland, will be explained in the subchapter referring to Rareş.

[448] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 453.

[449] For the history of Stephen's conflicts for Pokuttia, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 274-282.

Jagiełłonians, Bogdan seeked to marry Princess Elisabeth, the daughter of Cazimir IV and in June 1505, he signed a treaty with King Alexander Jagiełłon through which he ceded the territory of Pokuttia in return for the hand of Elisabeth.[450] The treaty included the agreement that, once the marriage was arranged, Bogdan would receive Pokuttia back as dowry. The territory thus became Polish property, but the marriage never materialized: Elisabeth refused to marry a prince who was "alterius ritus et monoculus."[451] In 1509, Bogdan complained to Pope Julius II about the situation.[452] Although the Pope summoned the new Polish king Sigismund I to respect the terms of the agreement, the humiliated prince understood that the marriage would never become official. As a consequence, he attacked and regained the lost territory of Pokuttia, only to be later on re-conquered by the Polish.[453] A peace treaty was then signed between the two parts which conditioned that Bogdan was to return all Polish territories still under his occupation, as well as all letters between himself and King Alexander. Moreover, he was never to mention this unsuccessful marriage alliance again.[454]

Regardless of this rather humiliating treaty and the unfortunate engagement to Elisabeth, he soon concluded a new and successful marriage alliance. In 1513, *Doamna* Ruxandra, daughter of Mihnea the Mean, prince of Wallachia, became the wife of Bogdan.[455] However, she gave him no children, thus the dynasty was continued through his two illegitimate sons: Stephen the Young and Alexander Lăpuşneanu.

3.1.2. Descriptions and representations

One of the most famous descriptions of Bogdan III directly links the character of the ruler to his great father: "… his son, Prince Bogdan, follows the example of his father, he is shy like a girl and brave like a man, friend of all virtues and of all virtuous men, he is a young man of about 25 years old."[456] Stephen the Great's physician, the Venetian Matteo Muriano, was reporting back to Venice about the environment at the court of Stephen, when he made this comparison between Bogdan and his father. There are no other elaborate descriptions contemporary to Bogdan III, except for Polish chronicles which generally discuss his eye issue, as it will be seen below. The closest other description in time to that of Muriano's is the comment of the seventeenth-century chronicler

---

[450] Gorovei, "Muşatinii," 71.

[451] Quoted in Gorovei, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea," 279.

[452] Hurmuzaki II.2, document no. CCCCLXV, 583-584.

[453] For a description of the political relationship between Poland and Moldavia and the situation of Bogdan's failed engagement to Elisabeth, see: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 71-72.

[454] See the entire text of the treaty in: Hurmuzaki II.2, document no. CCCCLXXXVIII, 624-631.

[455] For more information on the women in the life of Bogdan, especially on *doamna* Ruxandra, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "O controversă: <doamnele> lui Bogdan al III-lea," 145-157.

[456] From Matteo Muriano's report from Moldavia in 1502. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 148.

Grigore Ureche who believed that Bogdan was "not much different from the personality of his father."[457] Ureche wrote a detailed description of the prince when he presented the circumstances of his death:

> Prince Bogdan the Frightful, the son of Prince Stephen the Good, died in the year 7025 [1517] … eulogizing the brave things that he did, because it was not in drunkenness or feasts that he spent his time, but he was like an oak tree watching over all his sides, so that he would not damage the country that he inherited from his father.[458]

Based on these scarce descriptions, one can set apart two main characteristics of Bogdan: he was first of all continuing the legacy of his father and secondly, he had a medical issue with one of his eyes. These two characterizations are, most likely, interconnected. Interestingly, although Ureche calls Bogdan "the Frightful" (referring to his physical flaw), there are no Moldavian accounts contemporary to Bogdan which mention any kind of imperfection on the ruler's face. Nevertheless, Polish sources abound in descriptions relating to the ruler's eye: Matthias de Mechovia called him "Bogdan… uno oculo orbus," Bernard Wapowski referred to him as "Bogdanus filius monoculus," and Martin Kromer wrote "Cui (Stephani) Bogdanus filius luscus succesit."[459] While Constantin Rezachevici argues that the ugliness caused by his facial handicap was simply an amplification of reality made by Grigore Ureche,[460] one cannot state that Bogdan had no visible imperfection to his eye – otherwise, the Polish accounts cannot be explained. The lack of comments in Moldavian documents on this issue suggests that the authority in Moldavia wanted to keep Bogdan's problem away from the public sphere. This leads to the conclusion that Stephen the Great, Bogdan III, and their boyars were silent about this issue, just like Moldavian documents are sometimes silent about undesired situations.[461] Should documents had not kept this silence, the very succession of Bogdan to

---

[457] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 80.
[458] Ibidem, 86.
[459] For all these three sources, see: Iulian Marinescu, *Bogdan al III-lea cel Orb* [Bogdan III the Blind] (Bucharest: 1910), 24.
[460] The arguments of Constantin Rezachevici are very well constructed. He argues that Matteo Muriano, a physician himself, in his careful description of Bogdan never mentioned that he had any problems with his eyes. Similarly, he describes the episode when Emperor Maximilian I invited Bogdan to join him and his men for his coronation in Rome, arguing that Maximilian would have never invited Bogdan, unless he was flawless. However, he fails to mention the Polish chronicles describing Bogdan as "one-eyed," who, although not all contemporary to the ruler's life, lived in the period following his reign. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 547-548.
[461] An eloquent example for such a historical omission in documents is related to Stephen's equestrian accident in the Battle of Râmnic. At that time, Stephen fell off his horse and could not return to safety until a boyar named Purice found him. The boyar was not mentioned in any of the official chronicles of the court. The official chronicles only superficially state that the ruler had fallen off his horse at the Battle of Râmnic. Nevertheless, the Moldavian-German Chronicle and the Chronicle of Stephen the Great in Schedel's version both thoroughly explain the event and also mention the boyar and his saving act. See: The Moldavian-German Chronicle, 28; and *Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare. Versiunea germană a lui Schedel* [The Chronicle of Stephen the Great. Schedel's German Version], ed. Ion Const. Chiţimia (Bucharest: Casa Şcoalelor, 1942), 68.

the throne could have been jeopardized: a deformed ruler was not a desired ruler, but Stephen had no other choice but to appoint Bogdan as heir, as he was his only legitimate son still alive.[462]

One can only speculate on the nature of the eye issue: it may have been a glaucoma problem[463] or an injury resulting from a battle. Visual representations present him in a just as perfect way as written documents do, therefore the debut of his illness will most likely remain unknown. All votive portraits[464] show him as a handsome man with a smooth face. There are two aspects concerning the depiction of Bogdan III which are most noteworthy. Firstly, Bogdan is one of the few rulers who were represented during three time different periods: before becoming a ruler, while being the ruler, and after his death.[465] Secondly, in all these representations his iconography is closely related to that of his father's. Bogdan's physiognomy in votive portraits is the exact replica of Stephen the Great's physiognomy.[466] The fact that Bogdan commissioned his votive portraits by using the example of his father's representations is neither singular to the Mușatin dynasty after Stephen, nor is it accidental: both Bogdan and his followers used the image of Stephen in order to show their association to his family and legacy.[467]

3.1.3. Dynastic construction and the continuity of Stephen through the reign of Bogdan III

The so-called "last will" of Stephen the Great appeared for the first time in the chronicle of Grigore Ureche, where the events surrounding the death of Stephen were described:

> And when his end was approaching, he [Stephen the Great] called all his governors and councillors and great boyars and all who were able to come, and showed them that they would not be able to take care of the country as he did, because [among all their enemies] the Turk was strongest and wisest, therefore he advised that the country be subdued to the Turks.[468]

---

[462] See: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime și domnie în Țara Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea*, 19-20.

[463] Constantin Rezachevici highlights that glaucoma was a common problem in the Mușatin dynasty, both Alexander Lăpușneanu and Bogdan Lăpușneanu being affected by it. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 548.

[464] Votive portraits showing Bogdan were painted in the the Rădăuți Monastery, Voroneț Monastery, Pătrăuți Monastery, Saint Nicholas Church of Dorohoi, Saint Elijah in Suceana, Dobrovăț Monastery.

[465] Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 270.

[466] Maria Magdalena Székely describes a most representative example of this similarity when she discusses the veil [*dvĕrĭ*] of the Dormition donated by Bogdan in 1510 to the Putna Monastery (in which the votive image of the donor is visible) and the veil of the Crucifixion donated by Stephen to Putna as well and in which the donor is represented. M. M. Székely explains that the two representations of the rulers are identical, probably Bogdan's representation being copied after Stephen's. See: Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 271-272.

[467] This need of association between Stephen's followers and Stephen visible in visual representations will be explained later on in the chapter, in the section dealing with Peter Rareș.

[468] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 66-67.

The "will" is merely a "classical scholarly invention."[469] Stephen did pay tribute to the Ottoman Empire during his reign, just like he also signed an *ahdname* with the sultan in which he acepted the Ottoman Empire as suzerain.[470] Needless to say, Bogdan did the same, not because Stephen or his "will" obliged him to do so, but because the political situation between Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire constrained him.[471] Thus paying the tribute to the Ottoman Empire had nothing to do with either a supposed "will" of Stephen, or with the continuity of his legacy. There are other situations, however, which point to Bogdan as a genuine continuator of Stephen.

Discussing monastic commissions, one can notice that there are two main churches connected to the name of Bogdan: the church of Reuseni and the Saint George Church in Suceava. On the 8th of September 1503,[472] Stephen the Great gave the start for the construction of the Reuseni Church, his very last commission. Less than a year later, Stephen died, and Bogdan was left to finish the church which commemorated the place where Bogdan II, his grandfather, was executed.[473] In that same year, 1504, a few months after the death of his father, Bogdan completed the construction. The second church connected to Bogdan is Saint George of Suceava. The church was built between 1514 and 1522, therefore he was unable to finish his only monastic commission – his son, Stephen the Young did. The church is a reflection of Stephen's Neamț Monastery, with the exception that it is larger and it does not have a mortuary room. The construction of these two edifices does not necessarily reflect an ideological continuation of Stephen's reign – rather, these commissions represent a transition from the artistic boom of Stephen the Great to the art of Peter Rareș. Nevertheless, Bogdan had a distinct point in his policy which aligned him to his father's dynastic project.

The dynastic project was widely discussed in the previous chapter. Part of Stephen's project was his double-named son, Bogdan-Vlad. While Stephen hinted with this name to a possible dynastic union of the two principalities,[474] Bogdan seems to also have been attracted by the possibility of a Moldavian-Wallachian connection. Although in a less visible way, Bogdan walked into his father's footsteps with similar aspirations. Ştefan Gorovei pointed out a number of documents and

---

[469] *Istoria României în texte*, ed. Bogdan Murgescu, 141.

[470] *Documente turceşti privind istoria României*, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed, 5-6.

[471] See numerous documents and chronicles attesting the Moldavian prince paying taxes, such as this one: "…Also, from the *bey* of Wallachia and Moldavia … countless gifts arrived, together with the settled tribute." See: the chronicle of Kodja Hussein in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase* I, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet, 467.

[472] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 420.

[473] The inscription of the church indicates the location of the church as the place of Bogdan II's death: "In 7011, September 8, *Io* Prince Stephen, ruler of Moldavia with the mercy of God, started to build this church … in this place where the head of his father Prince Bogdan was cut…" See: Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 77.

[474] An actual political union of the two principalities was out of question at the time. However, one cannot suggest a definite hypothesis on the way Stephen imagined this union. See: Székely. "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 269.

descriptions, all dated between 1509 and 1513, in which Bogdan refers to himself not only as the son of Stephen, but also as the grandson of Radu the Fair, prince of Wallachia and father of his mother. At the moment there are only five known documents[475] which bear this information but the fact that they are dated between the years of war with Wallachia,[476] led Gorovei to argue that this was Bogdan's way of making a claim over Wallachia: the fact that he was the grandson of Radu the Fair legitimized him to enter Wallachia. This was reinforced by his emblematic double-name, which symbolically linked him to the Wallachian dynasty. One can thus notice a connection between the policies of Stephen and Bogdan on the level of the dynastic project. Bogdan followed the "recipe" left by his father and he followed it successfully, by eventually marrying a Wallachian princess, just like Stephen did.

The dynastic project was however not the only link between the father and his son. Bogdan seemed to also follow the attitude of his father both in war and after war. Based on the accounts of Poland's King Sigismund I, who complained in a letter to King Ladislas II of Hungary about the atrocities Bogdan had caused in his territories, it seems that he was a rather fierce enemy. In his letter, Sigismund also mentioned Mihnea the Mean, who also complained about the restlessness of Bogdan.[477] However, based on extant documents, it is difficult to say whether Bogdan was just as tenacious in battle as his father was. There are indications however that he was eager to continue the battle rituals of his father. The triumphal entries of Stephen the Great have already been presented in the previous chapter. It is important to highlight however that after the year 1481, the post-battle celebrations faded. The years between 1481 and 1497 represented a period of deep disturbance: there was a blood rain in the town of Roman, Putna Monastery caught fire, the two fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman were lost, and the prince fell off his horse during the Battle of Şcheia.[478] As these were all symbols for misfortune, it is easy to understand why Stephen allowed the ceremonies to fade in importance and why the ruler, upon returning from battle was not celebrated in Suceava anymore, but in the Fortress of Hârlău.[479] However, although Stephen decided to move the celebrations from Suceava to Hârlău, Bogdan changed this situation, and in 1509 he moved the welcoming of the victorious ruler back to Suceava.[480] The movement of the ruler's victorious entries back to Suceava must have had a deep symbolic meaning. It may be interpreted as Bogdan's way of

---

[475] See the texts of all five documents in Gorovei, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea," 280-281.

[476] The war with Wallachia started in 1507 and in 1513 Bogdan married Ruxanda, the daughter of Mihnea the Mean, the Wallachian prince. See: Ibidem, 283.

[477] See the entire original letter in: *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1510-1530* [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1510-1530], II, Part 3, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki (Bucharest: 1892), document no. LXXIII, 68-70. (henceforth: Hurmuzaki II.3)

[478] Székely, "Atributele imperiale ale cetăţii Suceava," 8-9.

[479] See: Eadem, 9.

[480] Eadem.

re-centralizing the victory celebrations, but it may also be regarded as the prince's desire to symbolically return to the period of Stephen's great military success.

3.2. Stephen the Young

One of Stephen's followers who fascinated historians because of his violent rise against his own boyars was Stephen the Young – the son of Bogdan and grandson of Stephen the Great. Stephen followed his father to the throne in the year 1517: "… Prince Bogdan … died in the year 7025 [1517] … And after him his son came to the throne, with same name as his grandfather, Prince Stephen the Young, on April 22nd."[481] Stephen was very young when he was enthroned: sources contradict each other on the exact age of the new ruler, but the most accurate information is probably that he was nine years of age at the time.[482]

Regardless that he was young when he became prince and that by the time he died, in 1527, he most likely did not have time to mature properly, one might argue that he was closer in attitude to Stephen the Great than his father ever was:

> This Prince Stephen was fully like his grandfather, Stephen the Great, because he was lucky in wars, he was always successful and he knew how to manage things, although he was very young, as well as he was a wrathful man who spilled blood too easily.[483]

There are further arguments for the closeness of young Stephen to his grandfather. Just like his grandfather, and afterwards his father, Stephen the Young also had fierce conflicts with Wallachia. The former prince of Wallachia, Neagoe Basarab, offered Stephen the right to choose a wife between his two daughters, Stana and Ruxandra.[484] In 1526 however, János Zápolya, the Transylvanian prince under whose protection both the widow of Neagoe Basarab and his daughters were, allowed the new Wallachian prince Radu of Afumați to choose first. Because he chose Ruxandra, the same daughter Stephen wanted to marry, conflict broke out and two consecutive wars took place between the two principalities in 1526.[485] In order to avoid these conflicts, Stephen proposed a deal, which was in perfect harmony with Stephen the Great's policy regarding Wallachia:

---

[481] "The Chronicle of Putna II," 38.

[482] The chronicler Macarie, contemporary to Stephen the Young, recorded the followings: "He left the reign to his son, Prince Stephen the Young, who was then only nine years old." See: "Cronica lui Macarie" [The Chronicle of Macarie] in Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia*, 200 (henceforth: "The Chronicle of Macarie"). Other sources however, which are external, hint to a somewhat older age. For these sources, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, footnote 32 on page 43.

[483] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 90.

[484] See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 555.

[485] For a description of these wars and the damage the two principalities caused to each other, see: Horia I. Ursu, *Moldova în contextul politic European. 1517-1527* [Moldavia in European Political Context. 1517-1527] (Bucharest: Academiei, 1972), 102-106.

in return for peace, Stephen the Young asked that his title of "great prince of Wallachia" be recognized by Radu of Afumați.[486] Naturally, the deal was never done and Stephen the Young was never known as the great prince of Wallachia, but, as Ştefan Gorovei argues, it is possible that this situation had its origin in the Moldavian-Wallachian relationship from the time of Stephen the Great which made the author of the Wallachian Cantacuzino chronicle recall that Stephen ruled in Wallachia for no less than 16 years.[487]

3.2.1. The "Golden Age" of Stephen the Great's boyars: their rise and fall

Stephen was too young to have met his grandfather and too young to have understood by himself the propagation of Stephen the Great's legacy. He was however guided through the precepts of his grandfather's legacy by his Royal Council, the most important boyars of Moldavia who were governing Moldavia while Stephen was too young to effectively rule.

Based on the account of chronicler and bishop Macarie, Luca Arbure, the bailiff of Suceava, was the man who "raised him and was his teacher."[488] In other words, Luca Arbure was Stephen the Young's tutor, in charge of his upbringing and education. Bailiff Arbure is known to have been in the Royal Council of Moldavia ever since the reign of Stephen the Great, therefore he was a member of the councils of three different princes. He was bailiff of Suceava for Stephen the Great starting with 1486,[489] after which he remained at the head of Suceava for another 19 years, all throughout the reign of Bogdan III, and for six more years during Stephen the Young's reign.[490] Moreover, Arbure was one of the closest and most trusted boyars of the Moldavian seat, probably not only because of his efficiency in his office, but also because of his close relation to Stephen the Great: Luca Arbore was Stephen's nephew.[491]

Luca Arbure's longevity was not singular. Almost the entire Royal Council, as known during the last years of Stephen the Great's reign, remained unchanged up until 1523. In one of the last documents issued in 1503 by the council of Stephen, the names of the boyars holding the most important dignities were the following: governor Giurgiu; boyar Şteful; Toader and Negrilă, bailiffs of Hotin; Eremia and Dragoş, bailiffs of Neamț; boyar Şandru from Cetatea Nouă; Luca Arbure, bailiff of

---

[486] See: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 77; and Ibidem, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea," 284.

[487] See the argument of Gorovei in: Gorovei, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea," 284.

[488] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 202.

[489] Lucian-Valeriu Lefter, "<Boierii noştri credincioşi.> Conexiuni genealogice în sfatul domnesc al lui Ştefan cel Mare" ["Our Our Faithful Boyars." Genealogical Connections in the Council of Stephen the Great], *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 265.

[490] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 433.

[491] Based on recent research, Luca Arbore is most likely the son of one of Stephen the Great's brothers. See: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Obârşia lui Luca Arbure. O Ipoteză" [The Provenance of Luca Arbure. A Hypothesis], in *In Honorem Paul Cernovodeanu*, ed. Violeta Barbu (Bucharest: Kriterion, 1998). See also: Lefter, "<Boierii noştri credincioşi>," 265-270.

Suceava; Clănău, grand sword-bearer; Isac, treasurer; Cozma Șarpe, seneschal; Moghilă *ceașnic*; Frunteș, high steward; and Petrică, *comis*.[492] As the reigns of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young developed, these names interchanged and mixed, but the most important ones remained in the council. Therefore, in 1517, the Royal Council still had the following high-ranking boyars: Toader and Negrilă, Șandru, Luca Arbure, Isac, Cozma Șarpe, and Petrică.[493]

These long-standing boyars[494] were the ones who agreed with the enthronement of young Stephen, as documents clarify.[495] They were the ones who made the most important decisions in state matters, and the ones who led the principality in a similar way as in Stephen the Great's time. These boyars were all experienced and were also the ones who, in fact, brought the views and projects of Stephen up to 1523. The year 1523 however, was a year of fundamental change which radically modified the composition of the Royal Council.

In 1523, King Sigismund of Poland wrote two significant letters to Hungary's King Ladislas in which he was stressing that a revolt broke out in Moldavia: the most important boyars rose against their prince and were preparing to dethrone him. In his first letter, Sigismund talked about a "dangerous revolt" which resulted in the execution of a number of boyars and the flight of others, together with their families, to Poland.[496] The other letter added a few more details: the boyars could not bear the "insolence and tyranny"[497] of Stephen and they wanted to replace the prince with his younger brother. Sigismund I detailed that Stephen, upon hearing about the plot against him, executed several other boyars.[498]

The causes which led to this revolt are not yet entirely clear as there are a number of possible situations which might have led to this outcome.[499] While all these situations were intermingled and interdependent,[500] one cause stands out: the faction of the boyars who were

---

[492] Document dating from October 7th, 1503, Suceava. See: *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova* III (1487-1504), ed. C. Cihodaru, I. Caproșu, N. Ciocan (Bucharest: Academiei, 1980), 529. (henceforth: DRH A. III)
[493] See, for reference, the 1517 act of donation issued by Stephen and his council on October 7th (exactly 14 years after the issue of the above-quoted document of Stephen the Great), in Hârlău: *Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova* I (1501-1550) [Documents regarding the history of Romania. Sixteenth century. A. Moldavia I (1501-1550)], ed. Mihail Roller (Bucharest: Academiei, 1953), 109. (henceforth: DIR A.1).
[494] For the continuity of the boyars up until the sixteenth century, see also: Lucian-Valeriu Lefter, "Moștenirea celor dintâi sfetnici ai lui Ștefan cel Mare – The inheritance of the first counsellors of Stephen the Great," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 153-172; and Idem, "Neamuri și înrudiri la boierii lui Ștefan cel Mare – Stephen the Great's Boyars. Families and Kinships," *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 111-144.
[495] "Stephanum ejius filium, undecium annos natum, omnium illius terre consiliariorum et nobelium consensus ad vojevodatum esse ascitum." See: Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CXCVI, 248-249.
[496] See entire text in original, in: Ibidem, document no. CCCIV, 487-488.
[497] Ibidem, document no. CCCV, 488.
[498] See entire original text in: Ibidem, 488-489.
[499] For a thorough presentation and analysis of these situations, see the entire chapter dealing with the reign of Stephen the Young in: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime și domnie*, 40-76.
[500] Ibidem.

militating for a pro-Polish policy. On the eve of the events of 1523, it seems that there were two colliding groups:[501]

- The group of the old and experienced boyars, all men "of the Council of his grandfather, Stephen"[502] who were thinking along the lines of Stephen the Great's policy of allying with Christian forces and especially with the Polish Kingdom when facing the Ottoman threat.

- The group of the boyars who realized that in order to keep their lands safe, they needed to collaborate with the Ottoman Empire. While apparently breaking with the anti-Ottoman policy of Stephen the Great, they did not: both Virgil Pâslăriuc and Bogdan Murgescu stressed that the "oscilation policy"[503] between the centres of power and the oscilation between military alliances with neighbouring powers[504] were part of Stephen the Great's legacy.

Based on the actions of Stephen the Young, it is obvious that he was a supporter of the second group. The reasons for his detachment from Poland are distorted, but one can speculate on several motives: the fact that Stephen wanted, just like his father, to marry one of the Polish king's daughters and he was refused to do so;[505] a personal aversion of Stephen towards Poland; or a way of breaking with the tutorship of the old boyars.[506] Whichever the reason, the conflict most likely broke out after the boyar Luca Cârje was sent to Sigismund with a message asking for help against the threat of the Ottoman Empire.[507] When the boyar returned with a neutral message which hinted that help would not be granted,[508] Stephen probably saw that the Council which sent Luca Cârje to Sigismund made a mistake and decided that a radical change was needed.[509]

As a consequence, Stephen the Young decapitated the pro-Polish faction of the Moldavian boyars – metaphorically, and physically as well! Luca Arbure, his tutor and closest counsellor, was

---

[501] See: Ibidem, 51-52.

[502] "…dzieda swoyeho, Stefana rady." See: Mihai Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod (1517-1527)* [Moldavian documents from Prince Stephen the Young (1517-1527)] (Iași: Institutul Român de arte grafice "Brawo," 1943), 542.

[503] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 52.

[504] Murgescu, *Ţările române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa Creştină*, 16-17.

[505] Before the conflict with Wallachia for the hand of Ruxandra, Stephen the Young and his boyars started to negotiate for the hand of Sigismund's daughter. However, it seems that the boyars of Stephen did not negotiate directly with Sigismund, but they discussed the potential alliance only with the Council of the royal seat. As it results from documents, Sigismund was not aware of the new Polish-Moldavian marriage and he eventually refused the alliance. See a letter of Peter Tomiczi explaining that Sigismund did not know about these arrangements and was very upset about the situation, believing that it may lead to conflicts, similar to those of the past (referring to Bogdan III): Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCLXXXIV, 403.

[506] For both last two reasons, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 52. For another discussion on the reasons of the revolt, see: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 76.

[507] For the original document, see: Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod*, 545-548. For a discussion of this document, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 50-51.

[508] See document in: Costăchescu, *Documente moldovenești de la Ștefăniță voievod*, 555-557.

[509] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 53.

decapitated at Hârlău, in April 1523,[510] being accused of treason.[511] While even before the execution of Arbure, some boyars started to flee away from Moldavia,[512] the conflict exploded after this event. This is visible in both external sources from Poland, and in internal chronicles. The "exodus" of the boyars frantically continued after Arbure's decapitation thus Sigismund sent messengers to Stephen, fearing that these conflicts would eventually disfavour international relations. Based on Polish accounts, the messengers were welcomed inappropriately and Bishop Miedyileski, who was part of the diplomatic group, was retained at the court of Suceava until one of the leading Moldavian boyars who escaped to Poland, Cozma Şarpe, was extradited.[513] These documents not only show the tense relations that Moldavia and Poland were facing, but also give a glimpse at how the Moldavian prince was seen in Poland: Stephen was the "iuvenis insolens"[514] who treated Polish diplomats in a "very arrogant and shameless"[515] way. These picturesque descriptions are to be found in other similar letters as well. One of the most colourful descriptions of the "cruel young man"[516] is found in a letter written by Sigismund to Hungary's King Ladislas. Sigismund was saying that the situation in Moldavia reached a point where the subjects of Stephen could no longer bear his insolence and tyranny and he described the situation caused by the prince as a "plague."[517] Sigismund continued by explaining that the principality faced great trouble because the prince was a tyrant. He thus recommended dislodging "the viper from his seat."[518]

But this "viper" was a fifteen-year-old[519] who could not have confronted skilled boyars such as Luca Arbure, Luca Cârje, or Cozma Şarpe by his own. The final confrontation between the boyars and their prince took place in September 1523.[520] Young Stephen must have had an experienced boyar next to him and an analysis of the conflict in late 1523 points to Toader Bubuiog,[521] the

---

[510] "… Prince Stephen cut the head of his hetman, who raised him and who was his teacher, in the month of April 7031 [1523] at the royal court of Hârlău." See: "The Chronicle of Macarie," 202.

[511] While Luca Arbure's desire to take the throne himself (a hypothesis which was proved to be incorrect by Maria Magdalena Székely and Ştefan S. Gorovei in their *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 433) was among the reasons for his execution, the most plausible reason is that he supported the idea of Stephen's replacement with his brother Peter. See: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 57.

[512] Such as Cozma Şarpe, the former seneschal, who left Moldavia before Arbure's execution: Ibidem, 54. See also primary information on the boyars who fled to Poland in one of Sigismund's letters to Stephen, asking him to forgive his boyars: Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCXCIX, 434.

[513] Ibidem, document no. CCCVI, 439 and document no. CCCVII, 440.

[514] Ibidem, document no. CCCVI, 439.

[515] Ibidem, document no. CCCVII, 440.

[516] Ibidem, document no. CCC, 435.

[517] Ibidem, document no. CCCV, 438.

[518] Ibidem.

[519] Should we accept Macarie's account that Stephen was nine years old when he was enthroned, it results that he was fifteen in 1523.

[520] "… they all raised against him, in September …" See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 89.

[521] There two main points which suggest that Bubuiog was Stephen's "right hand:" firstly, he was the bailiff of Roman, the territory where the final confrontation took place. Secondly, soon after the conflicts of 1523, he

logothete of the future Prince Peter Rareş. The conflict ended with Stephen's military success, as Macarie described in his chronicle:

> … all the boyars of Stephen rose against him, so that they would take him out of his seat. Prince Stephen, having help from nowhere, left his troubles in the hand of God, and He threw his wrath against them and He scattered them in the neighbouring countries and kingdoms.[522]

Analysing this conflict without precedent in the history of Moldavia, one must ask what led to it and what was the position of the boyars between Stephen the Great's policy and Stephen the Young's policy. Neagu Djuvara talks about the boyars of the principalities as having formed a "veritable oligarchy."[523] This "veritable oligarchy" is well applicable to the period following the death of Stephen the Great until 1523. Historians explained how Bogdan III followed the policy of his father and did not allow the formation of vast individual boyar territories, but he could not stop, however, the territorial grouping of large families which were eventually transformed into "epicentres of boyar resistance."[524] Can one speculate, in this sense, that once Stephen the Great died, his boyars started to become more independent? Can one say that although they remained within the frames of Stephen the Great's policies, they took advantage of the fact that the new ruler was not as powerful and started to gain more and more power? Yes. Stephen the Great managed to create a balance with the nobility which made it dependent on royal authority – he firstly made sure that large territories once owned by a handful of boyars were fragmented, thus minimising boyar power; and secondly, he changed the structure of the Royal Council in such a way that it did not represent boyar authority anymore, but the council became a representative of the principality.[525] Certainly, the minimization of boyar power was not to its benefit and the fact that boyars tried to regain power after Stephen's reign is not surprising. What is significant however, is the lack of balance that was created after Stephen's death: the Royal Council bloomed and lived its "golden age" especially during the early years of Stephen the Young's reign. Within this context, one can notice a highly significant matter: the followers of Stephen the Great to the throne, starting with Stephen the Young, continuously tried to return to that ideally-balanced relationship between the prince and his Royal Council. This wish of returning to this almost archetypal state is firstly visible with the conflict of 1523 and will become just as visible in the relationship of Peter Rareş and Alexander Lăpuşneanu with their Royal Councils.

---

was appointed with the highest dignity in Moldavia: he became logothete. For more details on this issue, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 62.

[522] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 202.

[523] See full article: Neagu Djuvara, "Les Grands Boiars ont-ils constitué dans les principautes roumaines une veritable oligarchie institutionelle et héréditaire?," *SOF* 46 (1987): 1-56.

[524] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 32.

[525] Ibidem, 9. See also: Şerban Papacostea, *Ştefan cel Mare domn al Moldovei. 1457-1504* [Stephen the Great ruler of Moldavia. 1457-1504] (Bucharest: Corint, 1990), 24-26.

The fact that Stephen the Young, just like his followers, had such acute conflicts with their closest boyars, led to a negative sharpening of their image – especially their image outside the borders of Moldavia. While it is highly probable that Stephen simply tried to regain the balance that once existed between the boyars and their ruler, his image was "stained" in foreign sources. Stephen the Young's reputation after the events of 1523 can be grasped in a letter written in 1525 by King Sigismund. In his letter, Sigismund noted that he would send a messenger to the Ottoman sultan, but although the road would be shorter through Moldavia, he preferred to send his men through Hungary, because he feared the Moldavian prince.[526]

3.2.2.   Weak artistic endeavours?

When compared to the monastic commissions of his grandfather, Stephen the Young's artistic endeavours are rather weak. He commissioned one monastery during his reign: the Bisericani Monastery. His monastery was built on an old fifteenth-century church[527] and its inscription offers a mistaken date of Stephen's commission: "This saintly church dedicated to the Annunciation, first built by Prince Stephen, son of Prince Bogdan, in the year 7020 [1512]…"[528] Regardless the mistaken date, the church was Stephen the Young's commission.[529]

The connection between the prince and his grandfather is thus invisible on an artistic level. Quite oppositely, historians have already exemplified the fact that he was not visibly interested in continuing the artistic legacy of Stephen the Great.[530] In the votive image of the Saint Elijah Church of Suceava,[531] Stephen the Young ordered that the daughter(s) of Stephen the Great be erased from the image and replaced with his own portrait. While this act may be proof of Stephen's lack of interest in dynastic continuation, it might also be the opposite of that. The act of replacing his aunts with himself may be seen as Stephen's way of connecting his image to that of his grandfather's. One may argue that Stephen the Young's tumultuous reign did not allow him to engage in any dynastic construction programmes, thus he simply had himself "inserted" in an already-commissioned dynastic portrait. After all, Stephen the Great also had a similar period of almost no monastic

---

[526] Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCCLIII, 502.

[527] Adam, *Ctitorii mușatine*, 87.

[528] Ibidem, 88.

[529] Stephen the Young's name appears in the church inaugural inscription.

[530] Maria Magdalena Székely, "Observaţii mărunte în vechi biserici moldoveneşti" [Small observations in old Moldavian monasteries], *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 15 (1997): 179. Alse see: Eadem, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 273.

[531] Commissioned in 1488 by Stephen the Great. See: Drăguţ, *Dicţionar encicopedic de artă medievală românească*, 272.

commissions: he started his church-building campaign only after signing a truce with the Ottoman Empire, after he ended (at least officially) his tumultuous conflicts with the sultan.[532]

3.2.3.   The Old and the Young

As much as Stephen the Young disagreed with the old boyars of Stephen the Great, it remains without doubt that his reign was marked by that of his grandfather's and by Luca Arbore's guidance. The fact that Stephen the Young's reign was administered for a significant period of time by his grandfather's Royal Council, is proof that it was a continuation of Stephen the Great's reign.[533] There were a variety of choices made during his reign which resemble the choices of his great predecessor, starting with his choices of wives and ending with his anti-Ottoman philosophy, as seen in an eloquent document of 1519. Stephen the Young, together with the prince of Wallachia, sent in 1519 a proposal to Pope Leo X, highlighting that they wished to have an alliance with the Holy See against the Ottoman Empire and that they were prepared to take part in any expeditions against the Ottomans. Stephen also promised that neither himself, nor the prince of Wallachia would sign any peace treaties or alliances with the sultan's Empire, unless the Pope agreed to it.[534]

Thus the reigns of both Stephen the Young and Bogdan III were influenced by Stephen the Great's policy and his boyars to such an extent that one may argue that Stephen's Princely Group was physically part of Stephen the Great's reign. Although they lived in Stephen the Great's shadow, Bogdan III and his son were his closest continuators. Nevertheless, the followers of Stephen's Princely Group brought a change to this act of continuation: they stepped out of the shadow of Stephen the Great and promoted themselves by using, developing, and mastering his governing means.

4.   Rareş's Princely Group

Peter Rareş, the main figure of Rareş's Princely Group, initiated such a political, artistic, and cultural richness that it delighted and continues to delight historians and writers alike.[535] Rareş not only

---

[532] See the categorization of Stephen's reign, with the artistic period delimitation, in Chapter I of this dissertation.

[533] For the continuity of Stephen the Great's boyars up until the half of the sixteenth century (to some extent, even up the end of the sixteenth century), see: Lefter, "Moştenirea celor dintâi sfetnici ai lui Ştefan cel Mare," 153-172.

[534] Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCXXIV, 307-308.

[535] See a chronological presentation of the monographies on Peter Rareş: Ioan Ursu, *Petru Rareş. Domn al Moldovei de la 20 Ianuarie 1527 până la 14 Septemvre 1538 şi din Februarie 1541 până la 3 Septemvre 1546* [Peter Rareş. Prince of Moldavia from January 20th 1527 to September 14th 1538 and from February 1541 to September 3rd 1546] (Bucharest: Convorbiri Literare, 1923); Paul Simionescu, *Petru Rareş, domnul şi vremea sa* [Peter Rareş, the prince and his age] (Bucharest, 1970); Dumitru Almaş, *Petru Voievod Rareş* [Prince Peter

raised Moldavia to a level similar to that of Stephen the Great's Moldavia, but he did so by relying on the model of his father – Stephen the Great himself. Despite the fact that he was Stephen's illegitimate son, he managed to become his father's most valued successor. Being such an influential and admired ruler, he overshadowed the reigns of his two successor-sons, Iliaş/Elijah and Stephen Rareş – one may in fact argue that he did so in a similar way that Stephen the Great overshadowed the reigns of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young.

4.1. Peter Rareş: the restless continuator

The "swan with golden feathers," as Peter Rareş's personal chronicler Macarie called him,[536] had an immense ambition largely animated by his vision of justice – this was visible throughout the actions of his entire reign, but was also verbalized by the prince himself:

> God helps the one who does not slug, the one who welcomes hardships and calls God for his help, God helps the one who loves justice and who judges with righteousness, because justice is true happiness for God, and for the tsar it is true wisdom.[537]

Peter Rareş was seeking justice – a justice which may be called his own two-fold justice. On the one hand, like any righteous medieval ruler, Rareş promoted and followed divine justice: "True justice is Christ … and God lives in the empire where there is justice and he gives it [the empire] his saintly help; and God's wrath never rises against that empire."[538] On the other hand, there was the justice that Rareş followed in the footsteps of his father, a justice which was more of a guideline that gave him the legitimacy to engage in purposeful projects – he had the precedent of his father, therefore he had the confirmation for continuing in the same way.[539]

4.1.1. *(Illegitimate) origins and (legitimate) enthronement*

The origins of Peter Rareş are covered in shade. While his official chronicler omits any information about his mother and only focuses on his descendance from Stephen the Great,[540] Grigore Ureche adds information on both his mother and on the way he was appointed to the Moldavian throne:

Rareş] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970); *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi (Bucharest: Academiei R.S.R., 1978); Ştefan S. Gorovei, *Petru Rareş* (Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1982). For literary works, Gheorghe Asachi's historical drama stands out: Gheorghe Asachi, *Petru Rareş* (Bucharest: Columna, 1970 – first edition: 1853).

[536] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 212.

[537] Ivan Peresvetov, "Jalba cea mare" [The large letter], in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 453.

[538] Ibidem, 457.

[539] Probably the most eloquent example in this sense is Rareş's invasion of Pokuttia, as it shall be seen in this subchapter.

[540] "… Prince Peter, the son of old Prince Stephen…" See: "The Chronicle of Macarie," 203.

> After the death of Stephen the Young, the boyars gathered and discussed whom they will choose as ruler, because custom did not allow the reign of somebody who had no princely blood. And discussing with each other, they learned from the Metropolitan about events that happened before Prince Stephen [the Young] and because Prince Stephen [the Young] was sick at Hotin, he ordered that if he died, nobody should come to the throne except Peter Măjariul, nicknamed Rareş, by the name of his mother who was named after another man [her husband], merchant in Hârlău, called Rareş. Thus, confirming that he was descending from the bone of Prince Stephen [the Great], they all raised him prince, on January 20th.[541]

One learns from this excerpt that Peter was the illegitimate son of Stephen the Great, raised under the protection of a man named Rareş, in the town of Hârlău. This was the general historiographical opinion for a long period of time[542] until it was proved that Peter Rareş was certainly not the fish merchant living unknowingly of his princely status,[543] but a man raised either within a family of boyars with noble connections in Hârlău and Baia,[544] or within the powerful boyar family of Cernat.[545]

Chronicles consented, as seen in the above quotation from Ureche, that it was Stephen the Young who appointed Rareş to the Moldavian throne. It is difficult to know how correct this information is,[546] but it is certain however that the Royal Council decided to appoint Rareş disregarding the sons of Stephen the Young.[547] This may be explained by the fact that Stephen's sons were still under-aged, but also by the fact that Stephen the Great's notoriety at the time could not allow the boyars to appoint anyone else to the throne but his closest descendant. Whichever the circumstances of his enthronement, it is certain that in 1527, upon receiving the throne of Moldavia, Peter Rareş was congratulated by King Sigismund I for becoming the follower of Stephen the Young.[548]

---

[541] Ureche, The Chronicle of Moldavia, 91.

[542] And it most likely remains so for several historians.

[543] For this opinion, see: Ion Toderaşcu, "Înscăunarea" [The enthronement], in *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi (Bucharest: Academiei, 1978), 63.

[544] It may have been that Maria, Rareş's mother, descended from the logothete Isaia's family from Baia, while her husband descended from a boyar named Bârlă from Hârlău. See: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Neamul dinspre mamă a lui Petru Rareş" [The family of Peter Rareş descending from his mother], *Arhiva Genealogică* 5 (1998): 169-178.

[545] Gorovei, *Petru Rareş*, 269. See also: Şerban Oraşcu, "Mama lui Petru Rareş" [The mother of Peter Rareş], *Magazin Istoric* 11 (1977): 36.

[546] Ovidiu Pecican hypothesized that the story of Rareş's enthronement as appointed by Stephen the Young is most likely a well-imbibed motif in Moldavian and Wallachian cultures, which had at least three more manifestations in three different rulers of Wallachia. See: Ovidiu Pecian, *Evul mediu fictiv* [Fictional Middle Ages] (Bucharest: Tracus Arte, 2012), 120.

[547] Stephen the Young's sons were the later prince John the Brave and the aspirant to the throne, Ivan Bogdan. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 560.

[548] Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCCCVII, 600.

4.1.2. The first reign: matching the father?

Peter Rareş wanted to be known as the son of Stephen the Great and evidence shows that he was deeply pleased with this status. During his reign, he commissioned a chronicle from bishop Macarie which was meant to show the history of his reign, preceded by short histories of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young. The introduction the chronicler makes to the work is relevant:

> And we try, as we can, to continue the story and to bring it up to our days, not because we want to brag ourselves in rhetorical boosts, but because we are following the princely orders of our illustrious and feared-by-enemies Prince Peter, the son of Stephen the Brave … to not allow the deeds of the past fall into the grave of oblivion.[549]

Peter, therefore, through the words of his chronicler, made his ambitions clear from the very beginning of his own story. Although the text refers to the continuation of the previous chronicles written in the fifteenth century, it nevertheless implies something more subtle (which may or may not have been intentional): Peter Rareş was going to "continue the story" of his father. But he could not continue the story if he was not known as the son of his father – which is why he became furious when Sigismund I confused him for the son of Bogdan III. During the conflict with Poland over Pokkutia, the strip of land for which both his father and his brother fought, Peter and Sigismund exchanged a number of letters. In one of them, Sigismund mistakenly mentioned Peter as the son of Bogdan. Peter's answer to this assertion came promptly, in 1531:

> And you say that I am not the son of Prince Stephen the Great, but that I am the son of Prince Bogdan, who was my brother. Here, your writer was misinformed and he was wrong to deny my father. And that part of Pokkutia, Prince Stephen the Great, my beloved father, kept for a long time in his possession.[550]

The very tone of this answer indicated that Stephen the Great represented a proud model for Peter. Nevertheless, while he tried to follow his father's "recipe," he failed to do one thing which led to the fatal end of his first reign: he omitted the fact that Stephen never confronted two enemies at the same time, and he concomitantly entered in conflict with two powers which, combined, could only lead to an unfortunate outcome – the Polish Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire.

The conflict with King Sigismund and Suleyman the Magnificent not only shows that Rareş tried to accomplish more than he physically could,[551] but it also unveils his way of conducting his policy and his larger-than-life personality. The "tyrant," as he was viewed by some from the very

---

[549] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 198-199.

[550] See the entire letter of Peter in: *Scrisori domneşti*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 46-49, esp. 47.

[551] Meaning that he tried to gain Moldavia's independence from both the Ottoman Empire and the Polish Kingdom. While he managed to do so with Sigismund, he greatly failed at doing so with Suleyman the Magnificent. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 562.

beginning of his reign,[552] started his relationship with Poland in good terms by signing an alliance which referred to maintaining peace between Moldavia and Poland and offering reciprocal help, when necessary.[553] Nevertheless, soon after signing this treaty, Peter Rareş sent Sigismund a letter in which he was asking for Pokkutia back[554] – arguing that it rightfully belonged to Moldavia not only since the time of Bogdan, but even before. As expected, the answer he received was negative, which led to military conflicts between the two rulers. In December 1530, Peter entered and occupied Pokkutia. As a consequence, Sigismund asked Rareş to respect their alliance and to free the territory. He refused and consequently the voivode of Galicia Ian Tarnowski entered and occupied Pokkutia once more for the Polish Kingdom. When he defeated Peter's armies left in Pokkutia, the Moldavian price responded promptly by leaving to Pokkutia with a new army. This fatally led to "the most embarrassing defeat that the world has ever seen"[555] when "over 7000 Moldavians were slaughtered"[556] at Obertyn on August 22nd 1531.[557] Not only did the Polish slaughter the Moldavians, but they also diminished Rareş's pride when they

> took all the artillery which was comprised of 50 bronze cannons and three golded flags, of which one is thought to be the investment flag received from the sultan. And these flags are now hung in the Cracow Cathedral. The cannons … once belonged to the King of Poland, who was defeated by the Moldavian price, that too brave captain Stephen [the Great].[558]

Moreover, the humiliation was even greater as Peter himself was wounded twice and some of his most important boyars were taken prisoners in Poland – the logothete Toader Bubuiog, the governor Huru, and cup-bearer Popescu.[559]

While Peter's precipitation to jump into battle with Jan Tarnowski without properly considering his strategy, inherently characterizes him as a poor military strategist,[560] he still remained

---

[552] In 1528, Tranquillo Andreis sent a letter to Jan Tarnowski, the commander of the Polish army, telling him about the situation in Wallachia. In this context, he mentioned Rareş saying that the only way towards Wallachia is by Moldavia – referring to the prince, he mentioned him as "that tyrant." See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 246.

[553] See the entire text of the treaty in: Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCCCX, 602-606. For a discussion of this document, see: Veniamin Ciobanu, "Apărător al moştenirii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Defender of Stephen the Great's legacy], in *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi (Bucharest: Academiei, 1978), 111-112.

[554] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 89.

[555] Ercole the Dalmatian described the events surrounding the conquest of the Pokkutia as he was in Moldavia at the time. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 315.

[556] Ibidem.

[557] For the through descriptions of the conquest of Pokkutia and the defeat at Obertyn, see: Ciobanu, "Apărător al moştenirii lui Ştefan cel Mare," 107-135; Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 84-85.

[558] Ercole the Dalmatian, in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 315.

[559] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 84.

[560] Maria Magdalena Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareş* [The Boyars of Peter Rareş] (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2002), 11.

a proud "rebellis inventus."[561] Although throughout the letters and the messengers sent between Moldavia and Poland after Obertyn, Peter tried to temper his demands by also giving up on Pokkutia, he was still asking for compensation after his defeat in Poland.[562] In this context, Nicholas Iskrzycki, the chamberlain of Camenitsa, was sent to negotiate with the Moldavian prince. The initiative failed, and Peter Rareş ended his dialogue with the following words:

> … and if His Highness the King will not want to finish fighting with me, do you see this icon of the Resurrection above my head? I swore on it before and I swear now that I will not stop revenging, even if my head falls ... even if the entire world falls on me.[563]

In 1533 however, it came to knowledge (and to Peter's knowledge)[564] that Sigismund did not want to "finish fighting" with Peter, and signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire that would surround Moldavia with enemies, isolate it, and eventually have Peter Rareş deposed.[565] In 1532, Peter Opalinski, Sigismund's judge, was sent to the Porte in order to discuss the Polish-Ottoman treaty. Reporting back to his king, while secluded in the Transylvanian fortress of Mediaş by Peter's men, he told Sigismund about the "terrible traps that the price of Moldavia prepared [for me], both when I went and when I returned, in Moldavia, Hungary, and Transylvania, as well."[566] Opalinski eventually escaped from Peter's "few thousands Vlachs."[567] Any vengeance from Peter was however useless because in 1538 Moldavia was attacked from three different parts: from the south by the Ottoman army led by Suleyman the Magnificent himself and accompanied by a Wallchian army; from the north by the Polish army; and from the east by the Tartar army.[568] Peter Rareş therefore found himself trapped between his neighbours: "And the head of Moldavia was struggling in the middle. There was no hope for any help."[569]

Peter thus committed the fatal mistake that his father always tried to avoid: in a mismatched diplomatic strategy, he raised all neighbouring powers against him and, "learning about the arrival of the Turks, Peter was stricken with fear"[570] and was forced to flee to Transylvania before Suleyman

---

[561] As Anderw Mihalevich called him in one of his letters to Ferdinand of Habsburg. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 302.

[562] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 351.

[563] Ibidem, 355.

[564] Sigismund's messenger, Peter Opalinski reported to his king that "…the prince of Moldavia foresaw that I would go to the Turk." See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 347.

[565] For a thorough description of what happened after the treaty, see: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 563-567.

[566] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 344.

[567] Ibidem, 348.

[568] "Next to the Turks came the Tartars as well, with their beastly faces, and next to the Turks came the leaders of the Wallachian armies too, and from the north [came] the low-minded Pols." See: "The Chronicle of Macarie," 207.

[569] Ibidem.

[570] The Chronicle of Mustafa Gelalzade ("Tabakat al-memalik ve daradjat al-mesalik"), in *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române. Extrase* [Turkish Chronicles on the Romanian Principalities] I, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet (Bucharest: Academiei, 1966), 264.

the Magnificent reached the gates of Suceava. However, before running to Transylvania, documents show that he did not abandon his seat without a military response. Peter Rareş thoroughly prepared for the clash with the Polish army and after another confrontation with Jan Tarnowski, he signed a peace treaty with the Polish Kingdom. Peace with the Ottomans, on the other hand, was not possible: although he defeated the Tartar army at Ştefăneşti,[571] he did not have the chance to confront Suleyman's men because of the treason of his most important boyars. It was only when his trusted boyar Huru told him about the plot of the Royal Council to ally with the sultan[572] that Peter left Moldavia and took shelter in Transylvania. It was the end of his first reign, dated 14th of September 1538.[573]

His first reign did not remain without echoes in Europe and, in November 1538, less than a month after the conflicts in Moldavia, Iacomo Verganalli of Pisa reported to Venice about the events of his return from Constantinople. Having met the Ottoman army returning from its campaign in Moldavia, he made several relevant observations, among which a characterization of Peter during the tragic events: Verganalli did not show Rareş as a desperate prince, but as a "reasonable ruler and diplomat, capable to defend himself, with a well-conceived defence plan, preoccupied with his honour and prestige in front on his army and subjects."[574]

Therefore, the "damned Moldavian, the one with evil behaviour,"[575] although demoralized,[576] seemed to still have remained a capable leader during the events of 1538. Moreover, while away from Moldavia, he recharged his energy, and set to regain his throne – a fact feared by at least some of his neighbours. In 1539, while Peter Rareş was kept in custody in the Transylvanian fortress of Ciceu,[577] Sigismund shared his thoughts with the Transylvanian prince János Zápolya on the possible return of Rareş to the throne: knowing the Moldavian prince's temper, as he said, the Polish King thought that if he were released from Ciceu, he would not loosen and he could create dangerous

---

[571] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 564.

[572] "But the keeper of the royal chamber, whose name was Hâră, learning about all this, told the prince everything and he said: oh, prince, the boyars are counselling to abandon you." See: "The Chronicle of Macarie," 208.

[573] The official date of the end of his first reign is 14th of September 1538, as noted by Macarie in his chronicle. See: Ibidem.

[574] Ioan Aurel Pop, "O mărturie veneţiană contemporană despre evenimentele din anul 1538 – A Venetian Document about the Campaign of Suleyman the Magnificent against Moldavia (1538)," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 23 (2005): 246. See the original text of the document in: Ibidem, 246-251.

[575] In the chronicle of Mehmed Pasha Kuciuk Nişandji, "Tarih-i Nişandji," in *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române,* 295.

[576] "… his heart was shaken and filled with fear, tears were falling from his eyes and endless sighs were coming out from the bottom of his heart. His look was miserable and sad." In: "The Chronicle of Macarie," 208.

[577] The fortress belonged to Peter, but he ceded it to the protection of Hungary and Prince János Zápolya. It is often recalled that Peter Rareş was retained there as a simple outcast in the fortress while the reality was that he lived there as a veritable prince: he had the right to justice, he was free to travel within Transylvania, his town Bistriţa paid him taxes, and he had diplomatic relations with Sigismund I, Charles Quint, and also some of his boyars in Moldavia. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică,* 566.

situations to both Hungary and Poland. However, the king also mentioned that there was also a downside to retaining Rareş in Ciceu: should Zápolya retain him, he may do this against the sultan's will and he may create an even worse situation.[578]

4.1.3. A man of (still) dynamic personality: the second reign

The discussions between Sigismund and Zápolya were useless, because the situation could only be clarified between Peter and Sultan Suleyman themselves. Although in 1538, Peter Rareş, as Abdülaziz Efendi described, "showed his hidden rebellion, spitting his filthy poison from his snake-like mouth,"[579] he still knew how to follow his interests and how to retie the relationship with the Ottoman Porte. While the reign of Moldavia was taken by Stephen Locust, appointed by the sultan, and afterwards by Alexander Cornea, appointed by the Moldavian Royal Council,[580] Peter was slowly paving his way back to the seat of Suceava. In 1539, he approached Suleyman for the first time and shortly afterwards, in 1540, he left the fortress of Ciceu for Istanbul.[581] Peter's payment for regaining the throne, as well as the investment of Alexander Cornea as the new Moldavian prince (which happened without the sultan's permission), made Suleyman accept Rareş's plea for the throne.[582] He thus returned to Moldavia, regardless of the Moldavian boyars' lamentations that "he brought only evil upon himself and our Christian country,"[583] and executed Alexander Cornea.

Peter knew how to guard his interests and make himself one of the sultan's men again. This is visible not only in the communication between Sultan Suleyman and King Sigismund,[584] but also in a letter written by a man named Husein, messenger of the sultan to the Polish King. Husein was advising Sigismund to keep good relations with Peter because "the sultan has shown him [Rareş] such a great honour that he has not shown to anyone in a long time."[585]

However, regardless of the sultan's statements, Mehmed bin Mehmed's words regarding the events of 1538 seem to still be valid for his second reign: "he was subdued only in appearance and in

---

[578] See the original text in: *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul XVI.* [Documents regarding the history of Romania from Polish archives. The sixteenth century], ed. Ilie Corfuş (Bucharest: Academiei, 1979), document no. 22, 29.

[579] The chronicle of Abdülaziz Efendi, "Suleimanname," in *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române*, 534.

[580] Both the reigns of Stephen Locust and Alexander Cornea will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

[581] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 566.

[582] Ibidem, 567.

[583] *Scrisori de boieri. Scrisori de domni*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, letter no. XIV, 25.

[584] See a number of letters between Suleyman and Sigismund in which the sultan announced the second enthronement of Peter, as well as Sigismund's acceptance of the situation. See, for example, Sigismund's letter to the Sultan of April 20th 1541 and Suleyman's letter to the Polish King from the beginning of 1541 in: *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, letters no. 27 and 28, 34-36.

[585] Ibidem, letter no. 29, 37.

fact he was a rebel."[586] Following the anti-Ottoman policy pursued by his father and risking to violate the treaty with the Ottoman Empire, Peter demonstrated that he was still in the anti-Ottoman camp. In 1544, upon learning that Joachim II Hector of Brandenburg was about to initiate an anti-Ottoman campaign, he hurried to promise Joachim II all his help, including money and animals, as well as the commitment of "selling" the sultan to the Christians. Peter's messenger said that "he [Rareş] wants to stay with the Christians and believes that he can help them more than others can."[587] Moreover, his anti-Ottoman position was visible on other occasions as well: even earlier, in 1542, Nicholas the Armenian, while passing through Moldavia, recorded Rareş's words about his Ottoman policy: "… if I saw that a Christian king rose with power and faith against the Turks, I would join him with faith and help him with all my powers."[588]

The policy of Stephen the Great therefore still lived on during both reigns of Peter Rareş, because of two of his most prominent actions: his campaign for Pokkutia and his anti-Ottoman campaign.But Stephen's legacy lived through another relevant aspect during Peter Rareş: cultural and artistic growth. Peter was, without a doubt, the most resourceful continuator of his father's artistic endeavours.

4.1.4. Art and visual culture[589]

While the reigns of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young were weaker from an artistic perspective, both reigns of Peter Rareş were not only prosperous from a cultural point of view, but they also brought Moldavia one step further in artistic development. Throughout his two reigns, Rareş resourcefully used the art developed by Stephen the Great.

4.1.4.1. Recycling, remembering, and modernizing

After an initial period of experimentation, Stephen the Great's art reached what art historians call the period of maturity in Moldavian art.[590] On the one hand, the so-called "Moldavian style in medieval architecture"[591] was developed, while on the other hand, mural painting bloomed and became the most significant decorative element of Stephen's artistic legacy.[592]

---

[586] The chronicle of Mehmed bin Mehmed, "Nuhnet-ut-Tevarih ve'l-ahbar," in *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române,* 411.

[587] *Scrisori domneşti*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, letter no. XXVII, 59.

[588] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 387.

[589] A study of Peter Rareş's artistic endeavours would require much more space than this subchapter. Because of practical reasons, this subchapter will only focus on the relationship between Peter's art to that of Stephen's.

[590] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI*, 12.

[591] For a description of the Moldavian style, see: Ibidem.

[592] For a brief discussion of Stephen the Great's art, see Chapter I, subchapter "Art and spirituality."

Following the example of his father, Peter Rareş made two relevant actions: firstly, he used the artistic patterns of his father and commissioned a number of edifices which recalled the art of Stephen, and secondly, he modernized the already established forms of Stephen the Great.

Peter and his family commissioned a number of ecclesiastic edifices: the Church of Probota, his main commission as princely necropolis, the Humor Monastery, the Moldoviţa Monastery, the Saint Demetrius and the Dormition churches of Suceava, Precista Church of Baia, Saint Paraschiva Church of Roman, Râşca Monastery, Saint Paraschiva Church of Târgu Frumos.[593] A relevant aspect of Rareş's commissions is that he conducted a veritable strategy of re-commissioning edifices commissioned by his predecessors, in an act of confirmation of his family ties with the Muşatin dynasty.[594]

The same type of confirmation happened with his most important commission, that of the Probota Monastery. Built in 1530,[595] the monastery was meant to replace Stephen the Great's main commission of Putna, as princely burial place. This decision was received with concern and anxiety by the monastic authorities of Putna, especially since Peter somewhat ignored Putna during his first reign.[596] As a consequence, in order to settle these anxieties, the prince built his necropolis in the proximity of an edifice once commissioned by his father, reinforcing, this way, the continuity between himself and his father. But this continuity was much more visible in the architectural resemblance between Probota and Putna: the two monasteries, with minor details, are in perfect architectural concordance with each other.[597] One may undoubtedly argue that Putna (as well as Neamţ) were models for Probota. Therefore Peter did not simply build a new princely burial location and he did not abandon his father's princely burial place. On the contrary, it seems that, in an act of ambition so characteristic to Peter Rareş, he wanted to build a new necropolis for himself and his followers, detaching himself from his father's commission but at the same time following him and his artistic precepts. Therefore, he wanted to build something new, but something new within the lines directed by his father. Moreover, the inaugural inscription of the church invokes Stephen the Great's

---

[593] See: Ion Solcanu, "Realizări artistice" [Artistic achievements], in *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 297.

[594] See more in: Maria Crăciun, "Apud Ecclesia: church burial and the development of funerary rooms in Moldavia," in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 144-166.

[595] Drăguţ, *Dicţionar enicopedic de artă medievală românească*, 247.

[596] Bogdan-Petru Maelon, "Mănăstirea Probota între ierarhia ecleziastică şi domnie. Semnificaţiile unor privilegii din secolele XV-XVI – The Probota monastery between the ecclesiastic hierarchy and the reign. The significance of some privileges during the 15th and 16th centuries," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (2006): 141.

[597] Probota was built respecting the achitectural plan of the Putna monastery, commissioned by Stephen the Great. See: Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI*, 23; A second architectural plan however, which inspired Probota was that of Neamţ monastery, also commissioned by Stephen. See: Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 90.

imperial legacy, in an act which indicates his belief in his legitimate right to build his own burial place:[598]

> With the will of the Father, and with the help of the Son and the action of the Holy Spirit, I, the slave of Jesus Christ, *Io* Prince Peter, ruler of Moldavia with the mercy of God, son of Prince Stephen the Old, with my good will, in the fourth year of my *imperial rule*, I built this church in the name of the miracle-doer Saint Nicholas, father superior being Grigore, in the year 1738, in October.[599]

Indeed, the son of Stephen seemed to have had grand plans, able to minimize his illegitimate origin. Analysing the architectural dynamism of Probota, Ion Solceanu concludes that the monastery portrays the "ambition of the prince to equal, if not even to exceed, Stephen the Great's constructions of Putna and Neamţ."[600] Peter's monastery is demonstrated to be not a simple replica of Putna, but a development of Putna's forms.[601] However, Probota was not the only monastery commissioned by Peter which owed its form to commissions of Stephen the Great. This was the case of Saint Demetrius Church of Hârlău which was a "veritable copy"[602] of Stephen's commission from the same town. Moreover, most of Peter's commissions combined the established architectural forms of Stephen the Great with novelties introduced by himself. By modernizing an already-established form, Peter identified himself with the art of Stephen, thus revealing the prince's "awareness of the capacity of imagery to fix identity."[603] Peter was constructing his image through the legacy of his father, he was building his own identity upon and with the help of the identity of Stephen the Great. At the same time, he was opening the door for new approaches in art, particularly in mural painting. One of the most efficient functions of images is that of promoting and proclaiming power and Peter Rareş used this function in both the interior and exterior of his churches.

Just like other rulers in the Christian world, Peter "sold" himself, his image, and authority, by using the Church as mediator. He firstly did so by using a classical method: commissioning the incorporation of his votive image within the iconographic programme of the church interior. Probably two of his best-known votive images are those of the Humor [Fig. 23] and Moldoviţa [Fig. 24] monasteries. In both images, in a devotional act mediated by the Holy Virgin, Christ is seated on a throne, his left hand holding the Bible and his right hand blessing the prince who is presenting him with the model of the monastery. Rareş is shown in all his sumptuousness: dressed in ceremonial clothing, he wears an ample crown and a brocade mantle with broad sleeves, everything

---

[598] Maelon, "Mănăstirea Probota între ierarhia ecleziastică şi domnie," 143.

[599] Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 90.

[600] Solcanu, "Realizări artistice," 296.

[601] For the description of the architectural developments at Probota, see: Ibidem, 296-297.

[602] Ibidem, 297.

[603] Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, 55.

embroidered in gold.[604] Art historians have discussed the votive portrait of Humor as having all characteristics of authenticity, being not a simple effigy, but a "true portrait with an expression that seems alive and energetic, denoting an aura of triumph."[605]

Fig. 23: Votive image, Humor Monastery
Image source: Cezar Suceveanu, 2011

---

[604] For a detailed description of the Humor votive image, see: Vasile Drăguţ, *Humor* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1973), 18.
[605] Ibidem.

Fig. 24: Votive image, Moldoviţa Monastery
Image source: Tudor Photo Blog, http://tudorphotoblog.blogspot.ro/2013/04/manastirea-moldovita-unesco.html
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

Fig. 25: Votive image, Dobrovăţ Monastery. Stephen the Great followed by Bogdan III and Peter Rareş
Image source: Cezar Suceveanu, 2009

Discussing votive images within the context of Stephen's proto-myth, the most significant ones are the so-called dynastic votive portraits.[606] The importance of belonging to the family of Stephen, so strongly manifested in Peter, is proven by the fact that all dynastic representations of this type, painted after the death of Stephen the Great, were created during the reign of Rareş.[607] The first act of commission done by Peter in 1529 was that of decorating with mural painting one of the last commissions of Stephen the Great, the monastery of Dobrovăţ, which, built during the last two years of Stephen's life, remained unpainted.[608] Described as a "connecting bridge"[609] between the reigns of Stephen the Great and Peter Rareş, the monastery bears "one of the most beautiful votive images in the painting of medieval Moldavia."[610] The mural painting [Fig. 25] shows three Moldavian princes, without any other members of their families: Stephen the Great, Bogdan III, and

---

[606] For the dynastic votive images commissioned by Peter Rareş, see: Elena Firea, "Concepţie dinastică în tablourile votive ale lui Petru Rareş" [Dynastic concept in the votive images of Peter Rareş], *Ars Transylvaniae* 14-15 (2004-2005): 143-161.
[607] Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 273.
[608] Drăguţ, *Dicţionar encicopedic*, 128.
[609] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 22.
[610] Ibidem, 24.

Peter Rareş. A similar dynastic votive image was painted at the command of Peter, in the same year of 1529, at the Bistriţa monastery. In this scene, Stephen the Great, accompanied by Saint John the New when offering the model of the church to Christ, is followed by Peter, while on the opposite of them stand Bogdan III and Stephen the Young.[611] The Church of Dorohoi also bears a similar image: Stephen the Great with his wife Maria, accompanied by Bogdan III, Stephen the Young, and Peter Rareş.[612] The fact that Peter integrated the dynastic idea in his votive images was not the only technique used by the prince to demonstrate his connection to his great predecessor. A study made by Teodora Voinescu pointed to the fact that the portraits of Peter found in the Humor and Moldoviţa monasteries directly resembled the portraits of Stephen the Great – the similarities of their physiognomies were proven to be striking.[613] The most apparent example for the physiognomy resemblances is the votive image of Dobrovăţ in which one can observe the comparability between Stephen, Bogdan III, and Peter Rareş:[614] identical clothing and crowns, round faces with arched eyebrows, the same moustache, chin, and long hair. Stephen was the model which inspired the figures of Bogdan and Peter and the fact that his physiognomy was copied by his successors is proof of his growing myth and of the existence of the proto-myth in the sixteenth century.

4.1.4.2. Mobilisation: an artistic anti-Ottoman crusade?[615]

Peter Rareş reproduced, recalled, and recycled the art of Stephen the Great. Furthermore, the greatest realization of Peter in art seems to be the introduction of the novel technique of church exterior painting.

A significant number of scholars have already pointed out Stephen's way of using painting in his own service.[616] He used church iconography not only for its classical religious role or for expressing princely authority, but he also used it in order to instruct about whom people should fear and to mobilize against Moldavia's most powerful enemy of the time – the Ottoman Empire. Leaning

---

[611] The image was painted on the façade of the monastery's tower. See: Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 272-273.

[612] Some historians, following the hypothesis of Sorin Ulea, believe that the "Peter" in this votive image is not Peter Rareş, but the brother of Stephen the Young, also bearing the name Peter. See: Sorin Ulea, "Datarea ansamblului de pictură de la Sf. Nicolaie-Dorohoi" [Dating the painting of Saint Nicholas in Dorohoi], *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, seria Artă Plastică* 11 (1964): 74–79. However, M. M. Székely believes that the image must represent Peter Rareş, as Stephen the Young was too little interested in representing dynastic continuity through art. See: Székely, "Bogdan al III-lea – note de antropologie politică," 273.

[613] Teodora Voinescu, "Portretele lui Ştefan cel Mare în arta epocii sale" [The portraits of Stephen the Great in the art of his time], in *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Moldavian culture during the time of Stephen the Great], ed. M. Berza (Bucharest: Academiei, 1964), 463-478.

[614] For a discussion of the votive images of Stephen the Great and their resemblance in their successors' votive pictures, see: Solcanu, "Portretul lui Ştefan cel Mare în pictura epocii sale", 117-129, esp. 128-129.

[615] This subchapter is inspired from: Teodora Artimon, *Peter Rareş and His Visual Concept: An Ambitious Sixteenth-Century PR Campaign?* Budapest: CEU, Budapest College, 2010. Master dissertation.

[616] See Chapter I.

on his father's artistic language, Peter Rareş, aided by his cousin and archbishop Grigorie Roşca,[617] seemed to have made a few steps further: most historians agree that they developed Stephen's (iconographic) language and took it outside churches and monasteries in a decoration incorporated within the entirety of the walls, from the apses to the narthex. This theory was however dismantled by Dumitru Năstase who demonstrated that the exterior iconography as developed during Peter's reign was in fact initiated by Stephen the Great.[618] Starting with a study of the Saint Nicholas Church of Bălineşti, commissioned by the logothete Ioan Tăutul, and based on the analysis of its exterior painting and architectural decoration placement, on its votive image and the church it represents in its initial construction configuration, on the placement of its founding inscription, Năstase concluded that sometime around the year 1499 it was decided that the church be painted both on the inside and on the outside. As such elaborate exterior painting had not been commissioned before, certain architectural mutations needed to be done – all of which stand as proof that the promoter of exterior iconography was in fact Stephen the Great. The typical Moldavian exterior of Bălineşti, embellished with slabs, ceramics, and enamelled discs, was sacrificed in the expectation of its exterior iconography.[619] The same change in the exterior layout of churches is visible in the monastic commissions dating from 1499 up to Stephen's death: three princely commissions (the churches of Volovăţ, Dobrovăţ, and Reuseni) and one commission of the boyar Arbure (the Arbure Monastery). All exterior decoration of these edifices suddenly disappeared, including the typical system of blind arches and niches, thus suggesting the preparation of the space for full mural painting.[620] It will be seen that the exterior painting which was to cover the walls was imbibed with anti-Ottoman messages. From this point of view, there is a compelling correlation between the initiation of this new type of art after 1499 and the historical circumstances of Moldavia: in 1499, Stephen signed a peace treaty with Poland, officially positioning itself in the anti-Ottoman camp, while in 1500, Stephen once more refused to pay the tribute which was equivalent to engaging in a conflict with the Ottoman Empire.[621]

The sheer fact that there is no extant exterior mural painting dating from the time of Stephen the Great (except maybe for the one at Bălineşti), does not automatically imply that it was a novelty

---

[617] Archbishop Dosoftei first mentioned Grigorie Roşca as Rareş's cousin. The same blood link was made between Archbishop Roşca and Toader by Matei Coruga, thus linking him to Peter Rareş. See: Matei V. Coruga, *Gheorghe al II-lea şi Grigorie de la Neamţ, doi mitropoliţi necunoscuţi ai Moldovei din secolul al XVI-lea* [Gheorghe II and Grigorie of Neamţ, two unknown archbishops of sixteenth-century Moldavia], in *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 89 (1997): 1230-1243.

[618] Dumitru Năstase, "Biserica din Bălineşti şi pictura ei exterioară" [The Church of Bălineşti and its exterior panting], *Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei. Seria artă plastic* 43 (1996): 3-18.

[619] Ibidem, 9.

[620] Năstase takes the example of the Church of Volovăţ and thoroughly describes all its architectural changes. Ibidem, 10-13.

[621] Ibidem, 16.

introduced by Peter Rareş. Rather, it suggests that between the period of exterior iconography of Stephen's time, up until the time of Peter, there was a period of experimentation with the new mural techniques. Peter's flourishing art with its quality and resistance must have been the result of an artistic evolution. The only visible remnants of this experimental period are the church walls stripped off their characteristic architectural decorations, seemingly awaiting their iconographic clothing.

Nathan Knobler talked about the "necessity of human beings to transform their experiences into visual symbols."[622] The exterior iconography, as known during Peter's time, relied on past historical experience creating a veritable visual dialogue[623] between the image and the viewer. Some historical experiences were evoked in scenes such as the Last Judgment [Fig. 26] or the Akathistos Hymn [Fig. 27] where Moldavian-Ottoman clashes were subtly recalled. With the reign of Stephen the Great still present in collective memory,[624] images such as doomed Ottomans and Tartars going towards the mouth of Hell [Fig. 28], as well as the triumph of Christians over the Ottoman-attacked Constantinople [Fig. 29] could have easily echoed the victories of Stephen the Great and inspired the viewers with courage and positive attitudes towards future possible conflicts.

Fig. 26: Last Judgement, Voroneţ Monastery. Image source: Teodora Artimon

[622] Nathan Knobler, *Dialogul vizual* [The Visual Dialogue] I, trans. Sorin Mărculescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1983), 12.

[623] Idem, *Dialogul vizual* [The Visual Dialogue] II, trans. Sorin Mărculescu (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1983), 172.

[624] By making a simple calculation, M. M. Székely and Ş. Gorovei, concluded that the image of Stephen was kept alive by generations of people who lived during his time, up until the reign of Alexander Lăpuşneanu: the children born in the ninth and tenth decades of the fifteenth century must have lived up until the middle of the sixteenth century. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 539.

Fig. 27: Akathistos Hymn, Moldoviţa Monastery. Image source: Teodora Artimon

Fig. 28: Last Judgement, Humor Monastery. Detail: Sinners' group
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Fig. 29: The siege of Constantinople, Moldoviţa Monastery. Detail from the Akathistos Hymn
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Fig. 30: Celestial Hierarchy, Moldoviţa Monastery. Southern and central apses
Image source: Teodora Artimon

There are four mural scenes which were painted on all exterior walls and repeated in an unchanged manner on each and every church. This way, the three apses always represent the Celestial Hierarchy [Fig. 30], a scene with a great number of characters arranged on usually six horizontal registers representing different groups of saints, angels, prophets, apostles, holy fathers,

136

and martyrs.[625] Further on, either the northern or the southern façade bears the Akathistos Hymn, accompanied by the representation of the Siege of Constantinople [Fig. 29];[626] while the Tree of Jesse [Fig. 31][627] appears on the opposite façade. The fourth grand theme is that of the Last Judgement [Fig. 26],[628] almost always present on the western wall.

Fig. 31: The Tree of Jesse, Moldoviţa Monastery
Image source: Teodora Artimon

---

[625] For a presentation of the scene of the Celestial Hierarchy from Humor, one of the best preserved such scenes, see: Vasile Drăguţ, Vasile Florea, Dan Grigorescu, and Marin Mihalache, *Pictura românească în imagini* [Romanian painting in images] (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970), 62.

[626] The Akathistos Hymn, probably written sometime after the Persian siege of Constantinople in 626, inspired the iconography of the Akathistos murals. See: Egon Wellesz, "The Akathistos. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9 (1956): 141-174.

[627] For the origins and model which inspired the Moldavian Tree of Jesse, see: Michael D. Taylor, "A Historiated Tree of Jesse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34 (1980-1981): 125-176.

[628] For a presentation of the most famous exterior painting of the time of Rareş, the *Last Judgment* from the Voroneţ monastery, see: Drăguţ and all, *Pictura românească în imagini*, 71-72.

Peter Rareş together with Grigorie Roşca were behind the exterior painting of a significant number of churches and monasteries: Probota (1532); Humor (1535), with the best preserved exterior murals; Moldoviţa (1537); Arbore (1541); Baia (1535-1538); Saint George of Suceava (1534); Saint George of Hârlău (1530); Coşula (1536-1538); Râşca (1551-152); Voroneţ (1547);[629] and most likely Dobrovăţ, which is yet to be dated. What is striking in all of these walls is the harmonization of the scenes in such a way that they seem to suggest an anti-Ottoman manifesto. Sorin Ulea was the first art historian to hypothesize this opinion,[630] but others supported and reaffirmed his opinion as well.[631] All four exterior scenes bear (sometimes less) visible elements which point to Rareş's political ideals:

- While the *Akathistos Hymn* is frequently represented in church iconography, the Moldavian Akathistos is the only one which contains an additional scene: the Siege of Constantinople [Fig. 29]. The scene is a (metaphorical) representation of a besieged Constantinople, which, with the divine help of the Holy Virgin, withstands its assaulters. It is usually identified with the Persian siege of Constantinople from 626. However, two details appear to set the battle and the siege not in Byzantine territory, but rather on Moldavian lands: first, the besiegers are dressed in Ottoman clothing and use cannons for breaking the walls;[632] second, the fortress is defended by a rider who is attacking his enemies while wearing typical fifteenth-sixteenth century Moldavian clothing.[633] Considering these details, the fortress cannot be identified with Constantinople in 626, but instead should be identified with Suceava, represented in a moment of hypothetical military success over the Ottomans.

- While the key point in the Akathistos Hymn is the Moldavian rider, the key point in the *Last Judgement* is the group of the damned. As an essential part of church iconography, the Last Judgement was meant as a self-assessment of the person looking at the scene, designed to "allow viewers to judge themselves when they see the Last Judgment."[634] However, the Moldavian Last Judgment seems to bear a second message as well, given by its key element.

---

[629] The Râşca and Voroneţ monasteries were painted on the exterior after the death of Peter Rareş but under the guidance of bishops Macarie and Grigorie Roşca who continued the legacy and ideology of the late ruler.

[630] See his two most relevant articles on this subject: Sorin Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I" [The origin and the ideological meaning of the Moldavian exterior painting I] *Studii şi cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 10 (1963): 57-93; Idem, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti II" [The origin and the ideological meaning of the Moldavian exterior painting II], *Studii şi cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 19 (1972): 37-54.

[631] See, for example, Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI* and Idem, *Pictura românească în imagini*.

[632] Ştefan Andreescu, "Pătrăuţi şi Arezzo: O comparaţie şi consecinţele ei" [Pătrăuţi and Arezzo: A comparison and its consequences], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al Credinţei Creştine* [Stephen the Great and the Saint. Champion of the Christian Faith] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004), 386.

[633] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I", 72.

[634] Cynthia Hahn, "Vision" in *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 56.

Characterized as a "real psychological centre of the composition,"[635] the two groups represented by the Ottomans and the Tartars [Fig. 28] within the entire group of the damned seem highly individualized: compared to the other groups of the Armenians, Latins, and Jews, they are not merely faces with similar physiognomy, but they are individualized portraits: Sorin Ulea argued in fact that this individualization was "mirroring the anti-Ottoman feelings of the masses."[636]

- *The Celestial Hierarchy* is a saints' procession, divided, upon the three church apses, in several registers comprised of different groups of holy people. Also named "the prayer of all saints," the scene is a representation of a prayer: the classical prayer scene of *Deisis* in which Christ, flanked by his Holy Mother and John the Baptist, appears in the middle of the central apse – therefore at the very core of the scene. While Sorin Ulea's interpretation might be somewhat far-fetched, he offers a unique explanation for the Celestial Hierarchy: connecting the scene with those of the Last Judgment and the Akathistos Hymn, the scholar argued that it was an "explicit iconographic replay and transposition"[637] of the anti-Ottoman prayer suggested by the Siege of Constantinople, the Akathistos Hymn, and the Last Judgment altogether. Therefore, seeing all three scenes as a grand prayer for the Moldavian cause, Ulea suggested that Peter was a prince well-aware of the visual persuasion possibilities.

- *The Tree of Jesse* is a representation of Christ's genealogy, linking him as direct descendant to the kings of Israel and thus evoking Biblical history.[638] Being among the most complex representations of this type,[639] one hypothesis states that the Moldavian Tree of Jesse was introduced in the exterior iconographic programmeme as a means of completing the message of the Celestial Hierarchy[640] and thus supporting its military purpose. A second interpretation however, might link Peter Rareş to his father. Discussing the scene, Michael Taylor argued that the liturgical role of the Tree is complemented by a dynastic role. Therefore, it is particularly interesting how at the Sopocani and Arilje monasteries, the Tree is correlated with dynastic images of Stephen Dragutin's sons, Uros and Vladislav, and with a dynastic procession. The most relevant development of such correlations is the creation of the genealogical tree of the Nemanjid dynasty (such as the one at Pec) which derived from the Tree of Jesse and which equates the descendants of Stephen Nemanja to those of Jesse, implying thus a divine

---

[635] Drăguţ and all, *Pictura românească în imagini*, 71.
[636] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I," 78.
[637] Ibidem, 84.
[638] For the meaning of the Tree of Jesse and its various visual representations, see: Arthur Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934).
[639] Drăguţ and all, *Pictura românească în imagini*, 64.
[640] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I," 88.

ordination of their rule.[641] Could it be that similar dynastic implications were suggested by the Moldavian Tree of Jesse?

Whether Peter had in mind a legitimation through the Tree of Jesse may be debatable. However, the militating messages of his exterior paintings point to a fact which directly connects him to Stephen the Great and which, indirectly, legitimize his actions: Peter finished what Stephen had started 30 years earlier. He perfectioned the exterior iconography as seemingly initiated by Stephen in the churches of Volovăţ, Dobrovăţ, Reuseni, but also at Bălineşti and Arbure.

4.1.5. "The great" continuator

As already mentioned, the most important monastic commission of Peter Rareş was that of Probota. Meant to be the princely burial place for himself and his family, Probota was surely a "jewel" for Peter, just like Putna was for his father. Moreover, the inauguration inscription of Probota gives a hint on the ruling aspirations of the prince: "…in the fourth year of my *imperial rule*, I built this church…"[642] This affirmation may go unnoticed, if not for his father's similar imperial aspirations.[643] Considering the history of Stephen the Great, the inscription suggests that Peter inherited his father's entire ideology, including that of a type of imperial ruling over Moldavia.[644] This argument is reinforced by the words of Rareş's official chronicler, Macarie, who described the seat of Moldavia as the "imperial town of Suceava."[645] Furthermore, the messengers of Ferdinand I to Moldavia also reinforced Peter's Byzantine aspirations when they recalled the prince's statement on his anti-Ottoman position in 1536. Peter allegedly explained his affinity to the western anti-Ottoman league with the following words: "And when his highness will want to start a general campaign against the Turks, he should send 15.000 soldiers, to whom I will add 45.000 chosen soldiers from my country, 20.000 from Transylvania and 25.000 from Wallachia."[646] The messengers then explained the prince's plans with these armies: "With these men, with the help of God, he wants to go to Constantinople."[647] The fact that "he wants to go to Constantinople" reveals two details: on the one hand, the existence of his desired association to the Byzantine Empire, just like in the case of his father; and on the other hand, his exceptional (but improbable) desire to liberate Constantinople by starting a military offensive against the most threatening force of the time.

---

[641] For the detailed explanation of thus argument, see: Taylor, "A Historiated Tree of Jesse," 164.
[642] Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 90.
[643] See Chapter II, subchapter *4.1. Was Stephen his little principality's emperor?*
[644] B. P. Maleon argued that the imperial inheritance of Stephen implied an "exceptional mission, that of defending the right faith within the Orthodox world, without meaning that the ruler would have any claim on a universal suverainty." See: Maelon, "Mănăstirea Probota între ierarhia ecleziastică şi domnie," 143.
[645] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 212.
[646] Marc Pemfflinger and Balthazar Banffy's report to Ferdinand I in *Călători străini în Ţările Române* I, 378.
[647] Ibidem.

Returning to Probota, the monastery holds yet another symbolic message which can most likely be attributed directly to Peter:[648] Saint Mercury, painted within the interior iconography, holds a shield with a unique symbol on its inside – the double-headed eagle. Analysing the symbol (well camouflaged within the shield in such a way that only a few initiated people would understand its message),[649] M. M. Székely decrypted one of its possible messages. Considering that Saint Mercury was a military saint and that the double-headed eagle was an imperial symbol for the rebirth of Christianity, it might be that these two elements (the saint and the symbol) were painted together with a precise purpose: a call for a fight against the enemies of Christianity, the Ottomans.[650]

Peter Rareş seems to have been the successor who most thoroughly followed the "recipe" of Stephen the Great's dynastic project: he fought for Stephen's goals and ideals (see not only the anti-Ottoman campaigns, but also somewhat smaller endeavours such as that for Pokkutia); he was the most thorough continuator of Stephen's art (Peter gave a rebirth to the Moldavian art as established by Stephen); he continued the "imperial" legacy of his father (not only by the affirmations as seen above in Probota's commissioning inscription, but also by smaller facts, such as marrying an Orthodox woman with imperial origins[651]). Moreover, he was also… "the great." In a Transylvanian letter dating from 1543, Peter Rareş was named by the appellative of his father: "Moldavus magnus, dux Valachorum."[652] For the moment, this is the only known document in which he is called as "the great Moldavian," therefore his fame was not perpetuated by his name, as it happened with his father. Nevertheless, this nomination calls attention to the dimension of Peter's reign.

As a veritable heir of his father, although illegitimate, Peter Rareş inherited Stephen's ambitions, as well as his ways of thinking and acting. But the fact that the same blood was running through their veins, seems to also have brought certain negative aspects with it. By the end of his reign, just like it happened by end of his father's reign, Peter was frequently accompanied by a doctor who took care of a never-healing ulcer. The question which is yet to be answered is the following: was he suffering from diabetes, just like Stephen did, having a similar ulcer which did not

---

[648] In her article dealing with this issue, Maria Magdalena Székely concludes that two-headed eagle may have been either Peter's direct contribution, or it may have also been the personal contribution of the church painters. See: Maria Magdalena Székely, "Un manifest de putere la mănăstirea Probota?," in *De Potestate. Semne şi expresii ale puterii în evul mediu românesc* [De Potestate. Signs and expressions of power in the Romanian Middle Ages] (Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 2006).

[649] Eadem, 514.

[650] Eadem, 515.

[651] Peter was married for the second time (or third time, as he might have had two wives before the last one) with Jelena Branković, the daughter of the Serbian despot Iovan Branković. See: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Familia lui Petru Rareş" [The family of Peter Rareş], in *Peter Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 266-271.

[652] Quoted by Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 95.

heal until his death?[653] It may certainly be the case, as Peter purchased a pair of glasses in 1546, because of an eye disease which may have been easily caused by diabetes.[654] Peter was a genuine continuator of Stephen the Great, mentally, politically, and… physically.

4.2. Stephen Lăcustă (Locust) and Alexander Cornea: a type of interregnum

As a ruler "haunted by the illegitimate-son obsession of affirming his dynastic legitimacy,"[655] Peter Rareş never accepted the gap between his two reigns. The chronicle of Macarie quickly passes over the two reigns of Stephen Locust and Alexander Cornea: after a two-sentence description of the "substitutes,"[656] the chronicler suggests that this was enough information on the temporary rulers, and that he, together with his audience, should "return again to our story, to tell it all."[657] Consequently, Peter perceived the two rulers as simple usurpers who were nothing but a parenthesis to his reign,[658] which, in his view, lasted for no less than 19 and half years.[659]

Stephen Locust (1538-1540) was a "princely offspring"[660] born in Istanbul sometime between 1496 and 1497,[661] as the youngest child of Alexander,[662] Stephen the Great's eldest son who died in 1496. Although he was Stephen the Great's grandson, certain documents attest the fact that he was titling himself as the actual son of Stephen: "son of the old Prince Stephen."[663] Regardless however of this direct legitimation through Stephen the Great, he was not, at least at the beginning of his short reign, following the precepts of his grandfather's way of ruling Moldavia: "… he is 30 years of age, and 25 of these years, he spent at the court of the sultan … therefore he is just like a pasha."[664]

Being the man of the sultan, Stephen was accepted with difficulty by the boyars who would have preferred a man of their own. This was the main reason why the relationship between the

---

[653] M. M. Székely explained Peter's physical distress. For a full explanation of the issue and the questions posed by the historian, see: Maria Magdalena Székely, "La curte, la Petru Vodă" [At the court of Prince Peter], *Revista Istorică* 7-8 (1997): 494-495.

[654] Eadem, 494.

[655] Răzvan Theodorescu, *Civilizaţia românilor între medieval şi modern* [Romanian civilisation between medieval and modern] I (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987), 18.

[656] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 211.

[657] Ibidem.

[658] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 94.

[659] This is attested by the Chronicle of Eftimie who recorded Peter's second reign. The text recorded that Peter's reign lasted for 19 years and a half. See: "Cronica lui Eftimie" [The Chronicle of Eftimie] in Ioan Bogdan, *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia*, 214. (henceforth: "The Chronicle of Eftimie").

[660] Ottoman journal from the expedition of 1538. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 385.

[661] Gorovei, "Ştefan Lăcustă," in *Petru Rareş*, 163.

[662] „...the new prince of Moldavia, who is the natural son of Sandrin [Alexander]." See: Fabio Mignanelli's account in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 466.

[663] From the treaty signed between Stephen Locust and Sigismund II, quoted in Gorovei, "Domnia lui Ştefan Lăcustă," 162.

[664] Fabio Mignanelli in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 466.

prince and his Royal Council went through an apparent peace: Stephen was trying to keep the throne, thus he preferred to stay in neutral relations with his boyars.[665] His two years at the head of Suceava were thus relatively peaceful, the most extreme event of his reign being a locust invasion, which was so violent that it lent its name to the prince himself.[666] However, "Locust" was not the only epithet that Stephen received. A more telling one was recorded by Humor's Father Superior, Paisie. In 1540, he finished copying a manuscript of the Acts of the Apostles which he dated as following: "And at that time, Prince Stephen the Small and the Mean was ruling, in the year 7048 [1540]."[667] Referring to Stephen Locust, his denomination must have implied a comparison[668] and the existence of a Stephen "the Great and the Good" – none other than Stephen the Great himself. Father Paisie made reference to the discrepancy between the two Stephens, enhancing Stephen the Great and and revealing his image in posterity.

Peter Rareş's actions eventually led to the end of Stephen's reign. Receiving the news that Peter was on his way to the sultan with the purpose of regaining Moldavia's throne, the boyars who betrayed him took action in a way that could assure their continuity in the Royal Council, but, most importantly, that would assure the continuity of their own lives. Feeling threatened by the return of Peter and having no support from Stephen, in the night December 20th or 21st of 1541,[669] the boyars Mihul and Trotuşanu, the same who led the plot against Rareş in 1538, entered Stephen's bedroom and murdered him.[670] An anonymous group of boyars later on tried to justify their actions regarding both Peter and Stephen in a letter to King Sigismund, dated between 1540 and 1541: disappointed by two terrible rulers (on the one side, Peter Rareş, who "would not stay at peace, but would have continuously entered wars and spilled Christian blood"[671] and who "did not care neither about the blood, nor about the good of Christians"[672]; and, on the other side, Stephen Locust who was nothing but "a Turk dressed in our clothing"[673] who would have eventually led to "his own collapse and this poor country's collapse"[674]), they had no other choice than to replace him by force with Alexander Cornea.[675]

---

[665] Stephen was aware that he could not rely too much on the boyars, especially given the negative welcome he received when appointed as the new prince of Moldavia. See: Gorovei, "Domnia lui Ştefan Lăcustă," 165-169.
[666] Ibidem, 167.
[667] Quoted in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 539.
[668] Ibidem.
[669] Gorovei, "Domnia lui Ştefan Lăcustă," 174.
[670] The murder of Stephen Locust was picturesquely described by Grigore Ureche. See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 160.
[671] *Scrisori de boieri. Scrisori de domni*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 25.
[672] Ibidem.
[673] Ibidem.
[674] Ibidem, 26.
[675] See the full letter in: Ibidem, 25-27.

Alexander Cornea's reign (December 1540 – February 1541) lasted for only one month and three weeks and was deemed to fail from its very beginning. The only act that the short-lived prince had the chance to do was send messengers to Sigismund I, Suleyman the Magnificent, and Ferdinand of Habsburg in order to receive their approval as the new occupant of the Moldavian throne and in order to sign new peace treaties with them.[676] Of course, these requests remained without outcome as Peter Rareş was already crossing the Danube into Moldavia by the end of January 1541.[677] Under these circumstances, Alexander Cornea and some of his boyars[678] faced an uncertain future.

While the old collaborators of Rareş abandoned Alexander and allied once more with Peter,[679] Alexander had no other choice than to beg for his life, asking the newly-restored prince to cut his nose off instead of receiving execution.[680] Unsurprisingly, Peter did not comply and had him executed, but the fact that he asked for his nose to be cut off might reveal Alexander's identity: as only members of the princely family had the right to have their noses cut instead of being executed, Alexander Cornea could have been a member of the dynasty.[681] This descendance from Stephen the Great is also confirmed by the above-mentioned boyars' letter to Sigismund: "And we took a new prince, whom we all know is descending from rulers, son of prince Bogdan and grandson of old Prince Stephen, rightful heir of the principality of Moldavia."[682] While several other official documents attest Alexander's connection to the family of Stephen,[683] the unofficial version, pled by his enemies, stated that he was nothing more than boyar Mihu's page.[684]

Regardless of the fact that they descended from the Muşatin dynasty, the two reigns of Stephen Locust and Alexander Cornea prove that in order to be able to fulfil the so-called dynastic project of Stephen the Great, it was not enough to be related in blood to the great predecessor: one had to also have the personality and ardor of Stephen, just like both Peter and, later on, Alexander Lăpuşneanu, who were both thrown off their throne, but successfully returned in full competence.

---

[676] Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Domnia lui Alexandru Cornea," in *Petru Rareş*, 177-178.

[677] Ibidem, 178.

[678] The most important boyars who led the revolts against Stephen the Young, Peter Rareş, and Stephen Locust were members of the great Găneşti and Arbureşti families. For a thorough description of the two families, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Găneştii şi Arbureştii" [The Găneşti and the Arbureşti families], *Cercetări istorice* 2 (1971): 143-159.

[679] Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareş*, 315.

[680] Eadem, 165.

[681] For this hypothesis, see: Constantin Rezachevici, "Originea şi domnia lui Alexandru vodă Cornea (c. 21 decembrie 1540 – 9 sau 16 februarie 1541) – după documente inedite din Polonia" [The origin and the reign of prince Alexander Cornea (about December 1540 – 9 or 16 February 1541) – from unique documents from Poland], *Revista Istorică* 7-8 (1992): 803-827, esp. 820.

[682] *Scrisori de boieri. Scrisori de domni*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 26.

[683] See these documents in: Gorovei, "Domnia lui Alexandru Cornea," 176.

[684] Ibidem.

4.3. Elijah Rareş/Mehmed bey

The eldest son of Peter Rareş, Elijah (Iliaş) (1546-1551), was ethroned in Suceava soon after the death of his father, receiving the immediate approval of the sultan. This prompt confirmation from Sulyeman the Magnificent leads to the hypothesis that Peter arranged the succession of his son, just like Stephen the Great did for Bogdan III: "Prince Peter, the father of Iliaş, he is now dead, and his eldest son [Iliaş] is now ruler of Moldavia in his place, being recognized by the Ottoman Emperor."[685]

Should one superficially compare the reign of Peter to those of his two sons', the conclusion would be that the sons were anomalies. While Rareş was a prince with strong ideals and ambitions, fully capable to fulfil his goals, Elijah and his younger brother Stephen seem to have been nothing but deviations from the path of the dynastic project: while one of them willingly converted to Islam, the other one, quite the opposite, started a mass persecution of non-Christians in Moldavia. However, one cannot judge these deviations without looking a bit deeper into the issue.

4.3.1. Breaking with the dynastic project?

Although Elijah "ruled over all his subjects with goodness and with the greatest wisdom and care, but also with gentleness,"[686] he did something bound to surprise the people of Moldavia: being in Istanbul, on the Saturday of May 30th 1551, the prince abandoned his Christian faith and embraced Islam under the name of Mehmed, receiving the office of *sanjak-bey* of Silistra,[687] on the southern bank of the lower Danube. This reverberated outside the border of Moldavia with such a force that on the 15th of May, before the actual conversion, Poland's Sigismund wrote to all his important counsellors, asking for advice on the eve of such a serious situation: learning that Elijah left for the Porte for his conversion, he told his counsellors that when the Moldavian prince would return to his principality, he would firstly send all those who would not embrace Islam to the empire and secondly, he would "fill" Moldavia with Ottomans. Feeling threatened by the proximity of a principality "filled" with Ottomans, "very dangerous enemies to Poland," the king feared that in such conditions, war with the Ottoman Empire was inevitable.[688]

The circumstances of Elijah's conversion were presented in similar terms by contemporary chronicler Eftimie, who saw in the prince a "wolf in sheep's clothing."[689] Sent by his father to Istanbul

---

[685] *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, ed. Ilie Corfuş, document no. 61, 124.
[686] Sixteenth-century anonymous description of Moldavia. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 200.
[687] Nagy Pienaru, "Un act otoman privitor la convertirea voievodului Iliaş (30 mai 1551) – An Ottoman Document Concerning Prince Iliaş' Conversion to Islam (30 May 1551)," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 101.
[688] See the entire letter of King Sigismund in: *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, ed. Ilie Corfuş, document no. 77, 153-154.
[689] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 216.

as guarantee for his fidelity to the Ottoman Empire, Elijah spent there about a year and four months,[690] returning to Moldavia shortly before Peter died.[691] Eftimie furiously described the prince's reign as closely related to the period he spent in the Ottoman capital: he brought to his court in Moldavia several Ottoman counsellors,[692] he adopted Ottoman fashion which was also taken on by some of his boyars,[693] and he also exasperated his Moldavian opponents by bringing women from the Ottoman Empire to his court.[694] However, despite Ottoman flourishing in Suceava, Elijah did not step away from his father's and grandfather's Ottoman policy: he followed the same policy that Peter followed during his second reign, meaning that he preserved mindful and positive relations with the Porte, while continuing to search for possibilities of rising against it.[695] Moreover, regardless of his inclination towards Islam, he continued to donate goods, lands, and money to several monastic settlements: Dobrovăţ,[696] Probota,[697] and Voroneţ.[698]

Nevertheless, the young prince in his very early twenties[699] responded to the sultan's call to personally bringing the tribute.[700] He arrived to Istanbul loaded with gifts – horses, money, brocades, fine silk – and asked the sultan to give him five hundred janissaries to take them to Moldavia in order to help him regain some of his Transylvanian fortresses.[701] All these gifts and the plea to complete his army with janissaries lead to one conclusion: Elijah's intention was to return to Moldavia, despite the

---

[690] There was an initial confusion regarding the time he spent in Istanbul. It was initially believed that Elijah was sent to the Sultan in 1542, when, in fact, a different son of Peter Rareş was sent: Alexander. Elijah was sent only after Alexander died in Istanbul and remained there for almost a year and a half. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 589. For this same subject, see also: Idem, "Petru Rareş între sultan şi lumea creştină în 1541-1542, după noi izvoare polone – Solia hatmanului Petru Vartic din 1542" [Peter Rareş between the sultan and the Christian world in 1541-1542, based on new Polish sources – the mission of Petru Vartic from 1542], *Revista Istorică* new series 5 (1990): 442-443.

[691] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 589.

[692] The Chronicle of Eftimie, 214.

[693] Ştefan Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă în Moldova urmaşilor lui Petru vodă Rareş – Ottoman Pressure and Orthodox Reaction in Moldavia in the Time of Prince Petru Rareş' Descendants," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 35.

[694] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 215. See also: Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 34.

[695] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 590.

[696] *Documenta Romaniae Historica*, A. Moldova IV (1546-1570), ed. Ioan Caproşu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2008), document no. 29, 59-61. (henceforth: DRH A. IV)

[697] Ibidem, document no. 42, 84-85; document no. 43, 86; document no. 59, 103.

[698] Ibidem, document no. 61, 106-114.

[699] On the possible age of Elijah, see: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Familia lui Petru Rareş" [The Family of Peter Rareş], in *Petru Rareş*, 268.

[700] After Peter Rareş's return to the throne for the second time, the Sultan asked that the taxes be brought to him every two years by the prince himself. As Peter never did this, and as Elijah had no son to send in his place to Istanbul, he had no choice but to go himself. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 595.

[701] Giovanni Maria Malvezzi, the mission of the Habsburgs to the Ottoman Empire, reported all these issues. See: Hurmuzaki II.1, 263.

beliefs of his Moldavian opponents and boyars.[702] One question however remains unanswered: why did the prince convert, breaking one of the most important aspects of the dynastic project?

Although Elijah seemingly left Moldavia believing that he would return, his conversion was nevertheless a voluntary act,[703] making the understanding of his decision more difficult. Consequently, something must have happened in Istanbul which led to his conversion. Did the sultan force him to convert or did the circumstances in Moldavia oblige him to do so? Sources indicate several hypotheses, none of which can be, however, thoroughly supported with concomitant documents:

- A letter written in 1551 by Bernanrd Pretwicz, based on the testimony of a member of Elijah's suite to Istanbul, attested that Sultan Suleyman forced the Moldavian to convert: he was faced with the decision of choosing between exile or becoming a high-ranking Ottoman official. The boyars accompanying him seem to have been faced with the same decision.[704]

- A different reason for the conversion was connected to Peter Rareş's widow, Elena Branković.[705] The sixteenth-century report of Bernardo Navagero pointed to the fact that Elena was a woman who loved the company of many men, but Elijah had one of her lovers executed.[706] Similarly, a Venetian report from Istanbul, dated June 7th 1551, revealed the fact that the conversion was the result of Elijah's conflict with his mother who preferred to have one of his other brother's on the throne: "… per haver visto la madre sua più inclinata agli altri fratelli che a lui."[707]

- Moreover, both of the above-mentioned reports pointed to the close relationship between Elena Branković, the boyars, and Stephen Rareş, the younger brother of Elijah.[708] As a consequence of this relationship, Elijah might have feared to be deposed and executed,

---

[702] In Eftimie's view, the principality was aware of Elijah's desire to convert. He presented this in the episode of the gathering at Huşi were the prince reassured his skeptical boyars that he had no intention of converting and that he would return to Moldavia. See: "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 216.

[703] The greatness and pomp of the conversion ritual of May 30, 1551, in contradiction with the official austere regime, leads to the conclusion that the conversion was a voluntary act, transforming it into an occasion for celebration. Moreover, the sultan seemed to have used the conversion of Elijah as a subtle act of propaganda for Islam. See: Pienaru, "Un act otoman privitor la convertirea voievodului Iliaş", 102-103.

[704] See the presentation of this letter in: Matei Cazacu, "La Conversion à l'Islam du prince Iliaş Rareş. Un nouveau témoignage," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 75-78.

[705] Based on extant documents, one cannot affirm whether Elena was Elijah's biological mother or his step-mother.

[706] See: Ovidiu Cristea, "<Si e fatto Turcho: di ricco povero, di Signor Schiavo.> Bailul veneţian Bernardo Navagero despre turcirea lui Iliaş Rareş" – <Si e fatto Turcho: di ricco povero, di Signor Schiavo.> The Venetian Bailo Bernardo Navagero on Iliaş Rareş' Conversion to Islam," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 89.

[707] For the document, a report written by the Venetian Lodovico Beccadelli, see: Ştefan Andreescu, "În legătură cu proiectul lui Iliaş Rareş" [On the project of Iliaş Rareş], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie A. D. Xenopol Iaşi* 19 (1982): 653.

[708] For the report of Lodovico Beccadelli, see: Ibidem, 653-654; for the report of Bernardo Navagero, see: Cristea, "Si e fatto Turcho," 89-90.

eventually preferring to convert.[709] Based on this same theory, historian Constantin Rezachevici developed the hypothesis of a *coup d'etat* in Moldavia: supposedly, Stephen was enthroned while his brother was in the Ottoman Empire, on the basis of the belief that Elijah left Moldavia with the sole purpose of converting. Consequently, facing his deposement and fearing for his life, Elijah decided to embrace Islam, this being the only way to stay alive.[710] This theory is reinforced by Bernardo Navagero's report, who recalled the echoes coming from Moldavia soon after the conversion of the former price. According to that report, Stephen declared that should his brother not have converted to Islam, he would have executed him in order to take the throne.[711]

Sources are proven to be complex and sometimes contradicting each other when presenting the most significant event in the reign of Elijah. It is difficult to discern the actual factors which led to the deviation from the dynastic project, but it is also difficult to belive that Elijah converted based solely on his beliefs and without being influenced by external factors. The only sources which argue for the willing conversion of Elijah are, unsurprisingly, internal documents – the chronicles of Eftimie and later on that of Grigore Ureche, viciously describing a menacing Christian turned Muslim.[712] Whichever the reasons however, the Moldavians visibly condemned him and consequently did all their best to erase him from history.

4.3.2. Art and condemnation

Of course, it was not the breaking with the dynastic project that was condemned by the people of Moldavia, but it was the fact that Elijah brought to his court certain aspects of Ottoman lifestyle and that, eventually, he abandoned his Christian faith. Probably the most eloquent argument for this affirmation is the Last Judgment scene in the Râşca monastery [Fig. 32]. Built during the time of Peter Rareş and fully painted during that of Stephen Rareş, the monastery, with its exterior painting, is a representation of the fatalistic state of mind[713] in which Moldavia entered after the events in 1538 and after Elijah's conversion. It is not surprising therefore to see a character standing out from the

---

[709] Cristea, "Si e fatto Turcho," 89.

[710] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 595.

[711] Cristea, "Si e fatto Turcho," 92.

[712] Certainly, because the debates on the conversion have not yet been solved, historians are also arguing for the conversion as a personal decision of the ruler. See, for example: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime și domnie*, 128.

[713] Without going into too much detail, it is useful to mention the feelings of threat and fear which reverberated in Europe regarding the advancement of the Ottoman Empire after the fall of Constantinople. The belief that the Ottoman advance prefigured an impending catastrophe, up to the scale of the end of the world, was felt in Moldavia as well. For European representations of the fears concerning the Ottoman Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see, for instance: Heather Madar, "Durer's depictions of the Ottoman Turks: A case of early modern Orientalism?," in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750. Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011): 155-158.

Ottoman group of the Last Judgment scene: Elijah. The portrait of the former prince is unique because it has no inscription next to it to indicate his name, as it usually happened in such cases. It is certain therefore, that everybody was aware of the identity of the character,[714] genuinely showing the impact the conversion had on Moldavians.

Fig. 32: The Last Judgement, Râşca Monastery
Image source: Teodora Artimon

The Râşca representation of the former prince is his only posthumous portrait.[715] All his other representations date from his lifetime which, after his conversion, were all negatively marked or went through a process of historical erasing: all the inscriptions of his name were removed[716] and his representation in the votive image of Probota was blackened [Fig. 33]. Moreover, a different type of erasing also took place between 1550 and 1552, the period which marked the end of Elijah's reign: Elena Branković commissioned no less than three churches, all of which exluded the name of Elijah, the prince (still) in function.[717]

---

[714] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 26.

[715] The monastery was painted by the Greek painter Stamatelos Kotronas in 1552. For details on the painter, see: Mihail Bălan, *Mănăstirea Râşca* [The Râşca Monastery] (Bucharest: ASA, 2009), 7. See also: Sorin Ulea, "Autorul ansamblului de pictură de la Râşca" [The author of the painting at Râşca], *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, seria Artă Plastică* 15 (1968): 169-170.

[716] See: Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 97; and Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 26.

[717] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 42.

Fig. 33: Votive image of the Probota Monastery with the blackened image of Elijah Rareş
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Whether this was a way of forgetting the deeds of Elijah or a way of condemning his sins, it is certain that the prince's actions had a significant impact on Moldavia. It most likely had the highest impact on the people who were closest to him, such as his brother Stephen. It would be logical therefore to believe that the persecutions initiated by Stephen against non-Christians were the direct result of Elijah's embracement of Islam.

4.4. Stephen Rareş: "You all go to Hell!"

Evidence suggests that Stephen Rareş (1551-1552) was eager to receive the throne of Moldavia from his brother Elijah. Should one accept the theory that Stephen boycotted the reign of his brother, it may be assumed that while Elijah brought a considerable amount of gifts and money to the sultan in

order to reinforce his rule, Stephen must have secretly offered more for the throne.[718] There consequently seems to have been a "fiscal war" going on between the two brothers who were both trying to offer more for the throne. Stephen obvisouly eventually won, but with a costly price: the usual tribute of 15,000 florins per year was increased, as Stephen's promised, to 30,000 florins.[719]

With an explosive personality that could have matched that of his father, Stephen Rareş took the repression of the boyars to a new level, which eventually led to the tragic end of his reign. On the one hand, soon after taking the throne, he radically changed the componence of the Royal Council,[720] while on the other hand, his attitude towards his closest counsellors was nothing near friendly: two of his most important boyars were beaten with a hammer after which he ruthlessly addressed to all his boyars – "You all go to Hell, because you are no good in what you should be doing."[721]

It was, in fact, not only his boyars that Stephen wanted to "send to Hell." Starting with the second day of his reign,[722] he began persecuting mainly Armenians, but also Hungarians, Ottomans,[723] and non-Christians generally. He started by destroying the Armenian churches in Suceava, after which he continued destroying the churches of Armenians in Hotin, Siret, Iaşi, Vaslui, Botoşani, and Roman, forcing Armenian population, including priests and monks, to convert to Orthodox Christianity.[724] Interestingly, these persecutions[725] did not start with the reign of Stephen Rareş, but with that of Stephen the Great himself.

---

[718] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 600.

[719] Ibidem, 600-601. Because of Stephen's short reign, the increased tax was for the first time only paid later, by the next prince, Alexander Lăpuşneanu, who was infuriated with this obligation. For the documents attesting the payment by Lăpuşneanu, see: *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, ed. Ilie Corfuş, document no. 85, 179 and 181.

[720] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 132.

[721] The account of an anonymous Szekler from 1552. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 101.

[722] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 44.

[723] For information on the persecution of Hungarians and Ottomans in Moldavian territories, see the report of an anonymous Szekler on the fanaticism of Stephen Rareş in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* I, 99-101.

[724] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 44.

[725] It is still unclear why Stephen focused his persecutions on Armenians. It was supposed that the hesychast ideology of Bishop Macarie, under whose strong influence Stephen was during his entire reign, was the engine for these persecutions. See, for Bishop Macarie: Sorin Ulea, "O surprinzătoare personalitate a evului mediu românesc: cronicarul Macarie" [A surprising personality of the Romanian Middle Ages: the chronicler Macarie], *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, Seria Istoria Artei* 34 (1985): 14-48. Another reason for the persecution was studied by Virgil Pâslăriuc, who argued that one of the reasons may have been the prosperity of the Armenians, which was a common catalyzer for persecutions. See Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 130-131. However, at the same time, Ştefan Andreescu argues that there is no possibility to create a hierarchy on the types of people who were persecuted – therefore, based on some documents (such as the oath of vassalage from Alexander Lăpuşneanu to Poland mentioning that Stephen persecuted Szeklers and Armenians – in that order), one cannot argue for sure that the Armenians were the focus of the persecutions. See: Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 47-48.

An Armenian chronicle dated 1556 revealed the fact that Stephen Rareş was persecuting Armenian and Ottoman merchants.[726] The Ottoman merchants, as the document indicates, were in fact Jews under Ottoman rule. From this point of view, one can notice continuity with the reign of Stephen the Great, who similarly persecuted any type of merchants coming from the Ottoman Empire.[727] Moreover, these persecutions continued also under the reign of Alexander Lăpuşneanu,[728] therefore one may discuss a long-term persecution that went from the reign of Stephen the Great up until probably the time of Lăpuşneanu. Peter Rareş may also be included in this "persecution line" as one can see in the Last Judgment scenes commissioned by him that Armenians, Jews, and certainly Ottomans were included in the groups of the damned. While one cannot see this persecution as continuity in terms of the dynastic project or in terms of continuing the legacy of Stephen the Great, it can be seen as a particular non-dynastic element of Stephen the Great's reign which was continued by his successors.

Whichever were the circumstances of the persecution, it is certain that the "tyrant,"[729] as some Moldavian boyars called him, or the "mad man,"[730] as Eftimie named Stephen in his chronicle, led his external policy in the same way Stephen the Great, Peter Rareş, and even Elijah Rareş did: he maintained a safe relationship with the Ottoman Empire while he was searching for possibilities of anti-Ottoman alliances.[731]

5. Alexander's Princely Group

The Princely Group "founded" by Alexander Lăpuşneanu was the last one to reflect most of Stephen the Great's ideals. Keeping in line with the precepts of the dynastic project, but also bringing an array of novelties to the Moldavian princely environment, Lăpuşneanu's reign and (to a lesser extent) that of his son's Bogdan, should be seen as matching the old but foreseeing the new.

Today, Alexander's name is just as notorious as Stephen the Great's name. However, their fame is owed to different perceptions of the princes: while Stephen is the ideal monarch, Alexander is the vengeful ruler. What usually comes to the mind of non-historians when hearing Lăpuşneanu's name does not have much in common with historical facts, but rather with a short story written in

---

[726] See the discussion of this document in: M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, *Prigoana armenilor din Moldova sub domnia lui Ştefan Rareş (1551-1556)* [The Armenian Persection in Stephen Rareş's Moldavia (1551-1556)], *Ararat* New Series 13 (2002).

[727] A document by A. Veress revealed the fact that the ruler "killed or locked down several Ottoman merchants in the Neamţ Fortress." See: Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 46.

[728] Ibidem, 45.

[729] Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. CCLXIII, 288.

[730] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 218.

[731] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 605.

1840 by Costache Negruzzi.[732] Negruzzi told the story of a cruel Alexander who after three years of exile returned to the throne for his second reign only to take revenge on the boyars who betrayed him and contributed to his dethronement. The author described the massacre of the boyars in a vivid way which left a stigma on the image of the historical Alexander Lăpuşneanu. It is essential therefore to understand the difference between the literary Alexander and the historical Alexander (who followed the guidelines of the Muşatin dynasty). It is just as essential to understand the factual dimension of the massacre (known today as probably the most famous bloodshed in Romanian medieval history), which is not necessarily a product of history, but a product of medievalism.[733]

5.1. Alexander Lăpuşneanu

Alexander Lăpuşneanu ruled twice as Moldavian prince (1552-1561 and 1564-1568). Although the son of Bogdan III the Blind and the grandson of Stephen the Great, he did not rise from a princely environment. Before taking the throne, Peter (Alexander's birthname) was a somewhat small boyar holding the title of high steward.[734] The chronicle of Eftimie highlighted the nature of his status before the enthronement: "he was hidden just like the light is hidden behind the window … but he has now shown himself just like a bright star on the northern sky…"[735]

5.1.1.   A troubled first reign

Just like his grandfather, Alexander usurped the throne. Residing in Poland at the end of Stephen Rareş's reign, he seized the moment of taking over the throne. The events unfolded in Alexander's favour: Stephen was murdered and Ioan Joldea was named successor by Peter Rareş's widow, Elena. Moreover, Joldea was to marry Ruxandra, Elena and Rareş's daughter, should Alexander had not interfered. Elena's agenda was interrupted in September 1552, when Lăpuşneanu, supported by a few boyars but also by Poland's Sigismund II,[736] usurped the throne. In order to assure the stability of his newly-attained seat, the Moldavian-Polish Chronicle described how the prince "ordered that

Peter's old widow be strangled and married her daughter who was with Joldea."[737] Later on, the prince had four children with Ruxandra, the eldest being the future prince Bogdan Lăpuşneanu.[738]

While the reign of Alexander was influenced by that of Stephen the Great, the prince could not match his grandfather in one fundamental aspect, which in fact none of Stephen's followers could: maintaining a balance between the central power and the Royal Council. The first conflict which erupted between the ruler and his nobles involved one of his former allies and his mother-in-law, Elena Rareş. The conflict ended without any success for Alexander's enemies, but also with the death of Elena.[739] A second similar conflict emerged as the boyars disagreed with Alexander's external policy which leaned towards alliances with the Ottoman Empire.[740] This new conflict featured the boyar Lupu Huhulea[741] as its main engine but also as the proposed replacement for Alexander as he was related, on paternal line, with Stephen the Great.[742] Alexander succeeded in suppressing the uprising, but he failed to suppress the third upheaval.

In a battle which took place at Verbia on November 1561,[743] Jacob Heraclides, supported by the boyars exiled after the previous two upheavals,[744] defeated Alexander and forced him to flee out of Moldavia. The success of Heraclides was owed not only to the exiled boyars and to his German, Spanish, Polish and Hungarian mercenaries,[745] but most relevantly to the boyars of the Royal Council who allied with the usurper, betraying Lăpuşneanu.[746] Heraclides consequently took the reins of

---

[737] "Cronica moldo-polonă" [The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle] in *Cronice moldoveneşci înainte de Urechia*, ed. Ioan Bogdan, 231-232. (Henceforth: The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle in *Cronice moldoveneşci înainte de Urechia*)

[738] For more information on the children, see: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 101.

[739] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 139-140.

[740] For a description of the external policy of Alexander which led to this upheaval, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 141. For an alternative read, see also a less up-to-date study which discusses the external policy of Alexander: N. C. Bejenaru, *Politica externă a lui Alexandru Lăpuşneanu* [The external policy of Alexander Lăpuşneanu] (Iaşi: Presa Bună, 1935), 51-60.

[741] More on Lupu Huhulea in: Lucian-Valeriu Lefter, "Despre solidarităţi şi descendenţe la boierii lui Ştefan cel Mare. Câteva precizări – About the Solidarities and the Lineage of the Boyars of Stephen the Great. Several Clarifications," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2011): 373.

[742] For the description of Lupu Huhulea but also of the conflict itself, see: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 141-143.

[743] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 626.

[744] The exiled boyars were not the only ones who opposed the reign and policy of Alexander. On one side, both the Pols and the Habsburgs were discontent with Alexander's favourable policy towards the Ottoman Empire. On the other side however, the Ottoman Empire was not content in supporting a ruler who was unable to come to agreements with any of his neighbouring powers. See: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 144-145.

[745] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 627.

[746] Chronicler Azarie emphasized the dimension of this betrayal: "Some of the most important soldiers betrayed the prince and started to run away…" See: *Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan* [Slavic-Romanian chronicles from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, published by Ioan Bogdan], ed. Petre P. Panaitescu (Bucharest: Academiei, 1959), 131. (Henceforth: *Cronicile slavo-române*)

Moldavia, while Alexander set for Istanbul. Lăpuşneanu spent a time in Istanbul "in the house they (i.e. his family) have in this city",[747] only to be moved afterwards to Allepo.[748]

5.1.2. Exile and another type of interregnum

During Alexander's exile, two rulers headed Moldavia and played their parts in the political dynamics of Suceava's seat. Jacob Heraclides (Despot) and Stephen Tomşa were both main actors in what may be called an "interregnum" of Alexnader Lăpuşneanu.[749]

Jacob Heraclides (1561-1563) was a unique character in the Moldavian ruling line. Significantly, not being related to the princely family, he was the first prince to create a break in Stephen the Great's dynasty, thus marking its inevitable decline. Not being related to the Muşatin dynasty, Heraclides was not Moldavian, but a "Greek adventurer," as historiography labelled him.[750] The prince who usurped the throne of Alexander was a man of numerous characteristics, highly educated and experienced, who travelled all throughout Europe. He was a "slippery" man[751] who knew how to mould himself on any given situation, being "a veritable man of sixteenth-century Renaissance."[752] As a consequence, he also knew how to act in order to receive legitimation for the Moldavian throne: inventing an extravagant genealogy, Heraclides first of all announced his "relationship" to Lăpuşneanu's wife Ruxandra, claiming to descend from the family of the Serbian despot Iovan Branković. Later on, Heraclides claimed descendance from the family of a Moldavian boyar who was executed by "the tyrant" (Alexander Lăpuşneanu?).[753] But the prince also had a third, more relevant genealogical legitimation, connecting him directly to Stephen the Great. In several internal documents, one can find Despot (as he was also known, given his claim of descendance from the Branković family) titling himself in the following way: "*Ion* Prince, ruler of Moldavia, nephew of

---

[747] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 170.
[748] Ibidem, 169.
[749] There was a third actor as well: Dimitrie Wiśniowiecki. He is not presented in this chapter because he did not follow any of the precepts of Stephen the Great and he did not manage to rise on the Moldavian throne. He was one of the most famous aspirers to the Moldavian throne who claimed to have decended from the line of Stephen the Great. The latest theories argue that he might have been the son of Peter Rareş. See: Ilona Czamańska, "Descendenţi ai lui Ştefan cel Mare în familia Wiśniowiecki. Câteva noutăţi" – Descendents of Stephen the Great in the Wiśniowiecki family. Several new things," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 255-264.
[750] See one of the classical studies of Romanian history: Constantin C. Giurescu, *Istoria românilor de la cele mai vechi timpuri până la moartea regelui Carol I* [The history of Romanians from the most ancient times to the death of King Charles I] (Bucharest: Cugetarea, 1943), 279. See also: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 103; Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 632.
[751] The report of Belsius to Emperor Maximilian in 1562. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 171.
[752] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 632.
[753] For both these claims (the connection to Alexander's family and the descendance from the Moldavian boyar), see: Johann Sommer, "Vita Iacobi Despotae Moldavorum reguli," in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 258.

Stephen the Old."[754] Although he claimed to have direct family connections with Stephen the Great, he followed precepts opposite to those of Stephen. Moreover, he also committed a mistake Stephen was careful not to commit: while his reign was unique, opening Moldavia for Western political, economical, cultural,[755] and especially religious influences,[756] he could not eventually come to terms with his boyars who failed to agree with all the changes he brought to Moldavia. As a consequence, after two years at the head of Moldavia, Despot was dethroned, replaced with Stephen Tomşa (1563-1564), and later on executed.

Tomşa's princely "career" was shortlived.[757] Alexander Lăpuşneanu had already received the new investment on the Moldavian throne from Suleyman the Magnificent when Tomşa sent his envoys for the investment.[758] His dethronement was therefore a matter of time and Lăpuşneanu regained his throne in May 1564. What is interesting in Tomşa's reign is an aspect regarding the prince's name. Tomşa was elected prince before the actual fall of Despot, when he defeated his merecenary army at Săpoteni (August 1563) and when Despot was forced to seclude himself in the fortress of Suceava.[759] Following this victory and preparing to head for Suceava, Tomşa, "an average man among boyars,"[760] was chosen by the leaders of the rebellion to be the new Moldavian prince.[761] The boyars not only chose him as their prince, but they also honoured him with a new name, "a name with appeal to the people."[762] "They named him Prince Stephen,"[763] most likely making reference to the most famous Stephen of the time: Stephen the Great. Tomşa could not legitimise himself by means of dynastic continuity, therefore using the name of the fifteenth-century acclaimed predecessor was a strategic move to subtly make himself accepted by his subjects. The boyars used the same legitimation tactic when presenting to Ottoman officials their proposed successor to the throne, but adding a supposed descendance from the line of Stephen the Great: "we elected as

---

[754] Gheorghe Pungă, "Cu privire la arborele genealogic a lui Despot vodă" [On the genealogical tree of Prince Despot], *ArhGen* 7 (1995): 31. See also: Liviu Pilat, "Cultul Sfintei Cruci în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare – The cult of the Holy Cross during the time of Stephen the Great," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2005): 15.

[755] For instance, the prince founded the School of Cotnari, meant to be a Renaissance type of academy. For more information on the novelties introduced by Heraclides, see: Cazan and Denize, *Marile puteri şi spaţiul românesc in secolele XV-XVI*, chapter "Despot Vodă, moment de apogeu al imixtiunii Habsburgilor în spaţiul românesc" [Prince Despot, an apogee of Habsburg interference in the Romanian space].

[756] Despot introduced the Reformation to Moldavia, making Lutheranism the state religion and thus infuriating the Orthodox representatives. See: Ibidem.

[757] For an elaboration concerning the reign of Stephen Tomşa, see: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 671-681.

[758] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 104.

[759] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 672-673.

[760] *Cronicile slavo-române*, 132.

[761] In fact, it was more than an election. Tomşa was not simply elected, but he rather had no choice but accept this role, as the other boyars (such as Barnovschi, Spancioc, or Moţoc – probably more entitled for the throne), were aware of the possible consequences of assuming the throne and thus refused the crown. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 149.

[762] Antonio Maria Graziani, quoted in Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 149.

[763] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 117.

prince one of our people, named Stephen, who is the son of a real prince. The above-mentioned prince is the son of Prince Stephen the Young who was the son of Bogdan [the Blind]."[764]

5.1.3. The return of the "tyrant:" the second reign

Certainly, this seek for legitimation did not bring the newly-"baptized" Stephen Tomşa any success in gaining the throne, as Alexander Lăpuşneanu was soon to return to Moldavian lands and assure both the end of Tomşa's reign and life. Sultan Suleyman agreed with the reinvestment of the "tyrant Alexander"[765] considering the return of the prince as a punishment for the rebellions that troubled Moldavia during this "interregnum."[766] And Alexander indeed made sure that all his opposers were punished as his second reign debuted with what may be known as the "best promoted medieval massacre in Moldavia:"[767]

> When Alexander came to the throne, in only one day he gave the Turks 60 Moldavian boyars ... they had been invited for a meal, and afterwards, many of them were killed.[768]

Thus, with the occasion of a single meal, Alexander executed some 50-60 boyars.[769] The second reign of Alexander was consequently much more filled with unexpected and anxieties than the first one. Many boyars detached from the ruler "because of the tyranny which he showed with much more cruelty against women and children compared to how he used to show it before, against men."[770] One might further on argue that representatives from all layers of the society detached from the ruler as he brought back the persecuting policy of Stephen Rareş and Stephen the Great: "The Moldavian Alexander forced all people of all kinds to receive new baptism and to follow the religion of the Moldavians."[771] After Heraclides Despot's campaing for the Reformation, Alexander seeked to place Moldavia back to what he believed to be the right path. These persecutions seemed to have been the method employed by the ruler. Similarly to the persercutions that took place during the reign of Stephen Rareş, the prince's target were Armenians, but also Hungarians and Germans from Moldavia most of whom were Protestants.[772]

---

[764] *Documente turceşti privind istoria României*, document no. 53; 58-59.

[765] *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 123.

[766] "… he would punish them enough if he imposed Alexander as their ruler; his endless hate for the Wallachians [*the term also refers to the Moldavians*] surpassed the cruelty of his soul." See: the report of Antonio Maria Graziani, quoted in Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 683.

[767] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 153.

[768] "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," in *Cronice moldoveneşci înainte de Urechia*, 232.

[769] The number differs, depending on the sources. The later chronicle of Grigore Ureche talked about the execution of 47 boyars. See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 118, esp. 120.

[770] 1564 Hungarian report on the return of Alexander. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 311.

[771] Report of Emperor Maximilian's messenger, Belsius (April 1564), *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 140.

[772] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 45.

Alexander's tyrannic fame surpassed the borders of Moldavia both by these actions but also by his direct pleas to King Sigismund II for support in capturing the Moldavian boyars who fled to Poland. The communication between the king and the prince is relevant: while the prince was "complaining so much"[773] to Sigismund asking him to capture his boyars and accusing that there was a Moldavian conspiration going on in Poland against him,[774] the Polish king advised Alexander to stop acting in any cruel way with his boyars.[775]

5.1.4. *Stephen's last great successor*

The "tyrant" never lacked positive insights. The chronicler Eftimie exclusively referred to him in positive terms, bestowing on him epithets such as "the good"[776] or "the wonderful."[777] The same did chronicler Azarie who described the prince as "the brave and most wise soldier, the wonderful Alexander."[778] These chronicles were springing from the princely circles (Eftimie's chronicle was commissioned by the prince himself),[779] therefore such a positive perspective cannot be surprising. However, regardless of the tyranny external sources mention many times, the positive implications of Alexander's reign cannot be overlooked. His reign was a remarkable combination of Stephen's dynastic project and the introduction of artistic novelties influenced by Hungarian and Polish Renaissance-inspired courtlife.

The reign of Alexander began in comparable terms to that of Stephen the Great. In 1552, after Ioan Joldea was dethroned and sent to a monastery, Alexander was staged a reception ceremony. A proper enthronement ceremony took place a few months later, in April, at the Saint George Church in Hârlău – coincidentally (?) "one of Stephen's favourite residences."[780]

When analyzing the reign of Lăpuşneanu, the fact that the ruler followed the example of an ideally-perceived prince becomes apparent: leaving his violent outbursts aside, Alexander was proven to be a prince with military, diplomatic, and administrative qualities.[781] The fact that Stephen the Great was the image behind Lăpuşneanu's ideal prince is proved by several details:

- The most relevant (but also the traditional) way in which Alexander subscribed to the legacy of Stephen the Great are his acts of renewal and donations to the late prince's commissions. This

---

[773] Letter of Sigismund I to Sultan Selim II (June 4th, 1567). See: *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, letter no. 150; 293.

[774] Ibidem.

[775] The instructions of Nicholas Brzeski, Polish messenger to Moldavia. See: Ibidem, document no. 133; 260.

[776] *Cronicile slavo-române*, 123.

[777] Ibidem.

[778] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 218.

[779] See more about the chronicler Eftimie in: Gheorghe Pungă, "Adevărata identitate a cronicarului Eftimie" [The real identity of chronicler Eftimie], *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol" Iaşi* 25 (1988): 275-280.

[780] Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 39.

[781] Gorovei. *Muşatinii*, 101.

way, two years after his enthronement, the ruler initiated an adornment campaign of Stephen's commissions. He started by focusing on the original commission of Prince Alexander the Good, the Bistriţa Monastery. Bistriţa was one of the monasteries which received a special attention from Stephen the Great who not only added a bell tower to the construction,[782] but who also buried here his eldest son, heir to the throne. The symbolism of this burial laid in the dynastic connection between Stephen's eldest son and Alexander the Good, Stephen's grandfather.[783] The connection between the "old" Alexander and the "new" sixteenth-century Alexander was even deeper: Lăpuşneanu entirely rebuilt the monastery in 1554.[784]

However, this was not the most suggestive dynastic stratagem. In 1559, Lăpuşneanu enlarged the Saint Nicholas Church of Rădăuţi by adding an exonarthex.[785] As seen before,[786] Rădăuţi was a keypoint in the dynastic construction of Stephen the Great. It represented Stephen's dynastic affirmation by the commission of the dynastic votive portrait, but also by the restorations done to the tombs of his predecessors buried here. The church was therefore almost a personification of Moldavia's dynastic lineage and the fact that Alexander decided to leave his imprint on it is not surprising.

The Saint Demetrius Church of Suceava also bears an imprint of Alexander's reign: the prince added a bell tower to Peter Rareş's commission. The connection to his great fifteenth-century predecessor was made through the inscription of the tower in which the representation of Stephen the Great's old coat of arms[787] can be noticed. Moreover, Lăpuşneanu made the same dynastic statement when he minted his coins which bore the same coat of arms, inspired by that of Stephen.[788]

This way, Alexander Lăpuşneanu brought back to actuality the spectre of Stephen the Great. He contributed to the creation of the dynasty's and Stephen's memory in a similar way (altough lesser) to that of Peter Rareş. A further eloquent example for this is the reproduction of objects commissioned by his predecessors, the most famous of which being the embroidered *dvĕrĭ*, veil for the altar doors, which was donated to the Putna Monastery in 1510 by his father, Bogdan

---

[782] Drăguţ, "Dicţionar enciclopedic," 56.
[783] See Chapter II, subchapter "Creating the past."
[784] Drăguţ, "Dicţionar enciclopedic," 56.
[785] Ibidem, 253.
[786] See Chapter II, subchapter "Creating the past."
[787] Mihai Berza, "Stema Moldovei în veacul al XVI-lea" [The Moldavian coat of arms in the sixteenth century], *Studii şi cercetări privind istoria artei* 1-2 (1956): 99-128 esp. 109. For more details on the bell tower, see: Vasile M. Demciuc and Justinian Remus A. Cojocar, *Biserica "Sfântul Dumitru" Suceava* [The Saint Demetrius Church of Suceava] (Suceava: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Sucevei şi Rădăuţilor, 2009), 159-169.
[788] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 107.

the Blind. Half a century after this donation, Alexander had the embroidery copied and in 1561 he offered it to his most celebrated monastic commission, the Slatina Monastery.[789]

The Slatina Monastery was the main commission of the prince and the last burial place of members of the Muşatin dynasty. Knowing that Peter Rareş faced certain difficulties when transforming his main commission into a princely burial place,[790] Alexander took great care in making honouring gestures to the Probota monastery,[791] the initial burial place of the ruling family. Presented as a divine creation,[792] Slatina was consecrated in 1558[793] and became the princely necropolis where Alexander, his wife, and their children were buried. The fact that Peter Rareş and Alexander Lăpuşneanu were the only two rulers to build their own monastic burial places is proof for their significance in the line of Stephen the Great's successors.[794]

- Following these commissions, the succession issue most visibly connected Alexander to Stephen the Great. Stephen appointed his successors and Alexander did the same, by two different means. In March 1565, Lăpuşneanu had an act prepared which stated the order of his heirs to the throne: the first would be his eldest son Bogdan, followed afterwards by Stephen, Ionaşcu, Elijah, Peter, and Constantine.[795] This order is also represented in the votive image of the Slatina Monastery where Alexander presents the model of the commissioned edifice to Christ, followed by all his eight children [Fig. 34]. This type of "testament" was then followed by a direct naming of Bogdan as follower, before his death. Alexander's chronicler Azarie tells the story of the events surrounding the prince's death: on his dying bed, Alexander became a monk with the name Pahomie and ordered that the sceptre be given to his son Bogdan.[796] Of all his six sons, only Bogdan managed to take the throne, the other ones being pushed aside by the rulers of the second half of the sixteenth century.

---

[789] Theodorescu, *Civilizaţia românilor între medieval şi modern* I, 25.

[790] See: Subchapter on Peter Rareş, *Rareş's Princely Group*.

[791] Bogdan Petru Maelon discusses the main gestures which point to Alexander's concern for Probota. A document dated March 1554 reassured the ownerships of Probota, the monasterie's juridicial privileges over the villages belonging to it, as well as its rights to gather taxes owed to the Metropolitan. See more in: Maelon, "Mănăstirea Probota între ierarhia ecleziastică şi domnie," 145-147.

[792] Ibidem, 145.

[793] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 102.

[794] Lăpuşneanu however did more than keeping with Stephen's dynastic "recipe." He made one step further: when building his necropolis, he renewed the Moldavian style, introducing new architectural elements. One may argue that Slatina, together with its royal house, represented the Moldavian transition from old to new, from Medieval to a Moldavian type of Renaissance. The ecclesiastic settlement of Slatina was formed by an inner court which housed the church and the royal house. The main feature which linked the church to the Renaissance style are its sculpted ornaments, while the royal house's facade with its portal and windows suggest a type of Renaissance influenced by the Polish and Hungarian courts. A well placed between the house and the church, built and decorated in a style which reminded of central-European and Italian palaces, completed the scene. See: Theodorescu, *Civilizaţia românilor între medieval şi modern* I, 25-26.

[795] Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. CCCCXCV, 532.

[796] *Cronicile slavo-române*, 135.

Fig. 34: Votive image of the Slatina Monastery. Alexander Lăpuşneanu followed by all his children in the order he wished they followed him to the throne
Image source: Cezar Suceveanu, 2010

- Alexander, similarly to Stephen, was not only preoccupied with the future of his dynasty, but also with its past. This fact is not only visible in readornments or copies of Stephen's or Rareş's commissions, but also in other expressions of dynastic affinity. One such example is a document dated August 22nd 1567, the celebration of the Virgin Mary, with the occasion of which Alexander made a donation for the remembrance of Peter Rareş and his family, as well as for his successor, Stephen Rareş.[797] Naturally, Elijah Rareş was not mentioned. Such manifestations of remembering the past and foreseeing the future were in accordance with Stephen's dynastic project and were thus an involuntary act of creating the proto-myth.

Alexander Lăpuşneanu was proved to be one of Stephen the Great's most notabe followers. Just like Peter Rareş, he was absorbed in the dynasty by his actions, but also by certain inevitable family traits: although one cannot judge the continuation of the dynasty on the basis of health problems, it is appealing to notice how Stephen the Great, Peter Rareş and Lăpuşneanu seemed to have suffered from a similar sugar disearse which affected their eyesight or gave them ulcerous rashes.

---

[797] *Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova* [Documents regarding the history of Romania. The Sixteenth Century. A. Moldavia] II (1551-1570), ed. Mihail Roller (Bucharest: Academiei, 1951), 174. (henceforth: DIR A.2).

Consequently, suffering from a "defectuositas oculorum"[798] but also trying to treat a wound on his leg,[799] Lăpuşneanu eventually died as a monk and Moldavia's seat was taken by his son, Bogdan.

5.2. Bogdan Lăpuşneanu and the end of Stephen's dynastic project

In 1568, an anonymous Hungarian wrote about the death of Alexander Lăpuşneanu.[800] Shortly afterwards, Sultan Selim II announced Sigismund II and the Khanate of Crimeea that the Moldavian prince had died and that the throne would be taken by his son Bogdan,[801] as agreed with Alexander before his death.

Bogdan IV Lăpuşneanu (1568-1572) was a child when he received the throne,[802] which might explain his weak dynastic endeavours. His mother Ruxandra became regent and she was at the head of Moldavia for two years, until she died.[803] Ruxandra was a woman with "the mind of a man, a big soul, crowned with wisdom,"[804] therefore she was the one to guide her unsurprisingly immature son.[805] Bogdan seemed to not have been concerned with Moldavia's policies and he made decisions which displeased the Royal Council. This let to the aggravation of the relationship between the boyars and the prince, which culminated after the death of Ruxandra with the replacement of the old boyars with young ones, much closer to the prince's age.[806] Moreover, he included Polish counselors in his Royal Council, thus manifesting his inclination towards a pro-Polish policy. The sultan was dissatisfied with any Moldavian solicitude towards Poland,[807] which was eventually the reason for Bogdan's deposement in 1572.[808]

---

[798] Quoted in Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 105.

[799] *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone*, ed. Ilie Corfuş, document no. 143; 280.

[800] The exact cause of death is difficult to discerne. The Hungarian who wrote the letter of 1568 simply mentioned that he died of "fever" and other documents are just as ambiguous. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 391. See also: Paul Ştefănescu, *Lumea văzută de medici. Mari bolnavi, mari conducători de stat* [The world seen by doctors. Great sick people, great rulers] (Bucharest: Medicală, 1991), 53-81.

[801] See the two letters in: *Documente turceşti privind istoria României* I, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed, documents no. 87 and 88; 85.

[802] Altough sufferent sources suggest different ages for Bogdan, the prince was 13 years old and nine months when he assumed the throne. See: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 692.

[803] Azarie's chronicle recorded that she had been ill ever since before 1567. See: *Cronicile slavo-române*, 137.

[804] Ibidem.

[805] Dan Horia Mazilu, *Văduvele. Sau despre istorie la feminin* [The widows. Or women's history] (Bucharest: Polirom, 2008), 487.

[806] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 695.

[807] The Sultan's uneasiness with Moldavia's positive policy towards Poland is visible in various letters. One such example is Selim's letter dated August 14, 1572 to Prince John the Brave, Bogdan's successor, which implied that Poland had no power over choosing the head of Moldavia and that he should not worry about having the throne usurped by somebody benefiting from Polish support (referring to Bogdan's younger brother, Peter). See: *Documente turceşti privind istoria României* I, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed, letter no. 122; 114-115.

[808] "…the Sultan sent Ivonia [Prince John the Brave] in his place [Bogdan's], because of the schemes of the Moldavians against Bogdan." See: The report of Bartłomiej Paprocki in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 407. See also the presentation in Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 695.

In his four years on the throne of Moldavia, Bogdan did not have the chance to equal his father. His dynastic manifestations were absent, the only link apparent between him and his great grandfather Stephen the Great being that of blood. Bogdan Lăpuşneanu's reign marked the fall of Stephen's dynasty – of the Muşatin dynasty. Altough the Moldavian second half of the sixteenth century did benefit the reigns of several direct successors belonging to the line of Stephen the Great, his legacy was never to be revived in a similar manner. The only way the image of Stephen was still kept alive in the aftermath of the Muşatin dynasty was by means of mythical revival.[809]

6. Usurpers, claimants, and others

As the Muşatin dynasty was slowly dying out, ten rulers within fourteen reigns[810] succeeded to the Moldavian throne between 1572 and 1600. While some of these reigns were ephemeral, others were more enduring and meaningful on a long term. Such were the reigns of Prince John the Brave (or the Terrible), Peter the Crippled, or Aron the Tyrant. This last part of the chapter will focus on those rulers who were significant for Stephen the Great's legacy, therefore reigns such as those of John the Brave and Aron the Tyrant will be emphasized.[811]

Alexander's Princely Group was succeeded in 1572 by Prince John (1572-1574), also known with two antagonistic appellations: "the Terrible," as designated by the prince's contemporaries, and "the Brave," as labeled by nineteenth-century historiography which reinvented him and included him in the pantheon of national heroes. John's image was amplified based on the same type of events that propagated Stephen into mythical immortality: the (successful) fight against the Ottoman Empire. The differences between the two myths are nevertheless substantial and one cannot equal the cirmstances which made Stephen "the Great" to those which made John "the Brave."

---

[809] See an analysis of the historical evolution of the ideal monarch and the ways in which he can be revived in: Simona Nicoară, *Istoria şi miturile. Mituri şi mitologii politice moderne* [History and myths. Modern political myths and mythologies] (Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2009), subchapter "*Bunul împărat* în sensibilitatea colectivă: un mit care a străbătut secolele" [*The Good Emperor* in collective sensibility: a myth through centuries], 165-172.

[810] This counting also includes the reign of Alexander Potcoavă, who ruled for only one month (March-February 1578). See this short and troubled reign in: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 722-724. Also, one may count in the second half of the sixteenth century, fifteen separate periods of reins, headed by eleven rulers. This counting is eligible if one includes Peter Şchiopul (the Crippled)'s son, who was named co-ruler by his father. See: Ibidem, 745-752.

[811] The reign of Peter the Crippled, although highly significant for the history of the Moldavian sixteenth century, is less relevant for the propagation of Stephen the Great's legacy, therefore his achievements will not be emphasized in this chapter. The reigns of other sixteenth-century rulers fall in the same category: John Potcoavă, Alexander Potcoavă, Stephen Răzvan, and Jeremiah Movilă.

John was the illegitimate son of Stephen the Young, thus the great grandson of Stephen the Great.[812] Although an educated and wise man, as chronicler Azarie described him,[813] he could not keep turmoil away from his principality.[814] Generally however, his policy was in line with that of his predecessors: from the limits imposed on his boyars (which led to his appellation as "the Terrible"[815]), to initializing a reinforcement of the centralized power, and to his anti-Ottoman reactions,[816] his reign reminded of past successful ones. The most spectacular aspect of his reign was the conflict with the Ottoman Empire. Following his refusal to comply with the Sultan's disposition of doubling the Moldavian tribute to the Ottoman Empire,[817] John convinced his boyars to stand against "Turkish greed and avidity."[818] The first Ottoman offensive took place in the spring of 1574 at JilişTea where the Moldavian prince, aided by a Polish army, defeated the Wallachian troops sent by Sultan Selim II.[819] As a consequence, John made a political move which was previously made only by Stephen the Great: he enthroned an ally on the seat of Wallachia[820] who agreed with his anti-Ottoman policy. This unique aspect of his reign was brief however, as the second offensive of the sultan came abruptly and ended with the prince's defeat[821] and eventual execution.[822]

Some observations should be made at this point: although the campaign against the Ottoman Empire and his attempt to influence Wallachia regarding the anti-Ottoman policy resemble Stephen's dynastic project, his other actions betray sharp differences. Two aspects are probably the most relevant:

- Stephen the Great also dominated his boyar aristocracy, but he kept a satisfying balance between the central and the noble powers. John, by contrast, had serious conflicts with his

---

[812] The prince made sure to include his descendance in documents he issued and to name not only his father, but also grandfather Bogdan III, as well as his great grandfather. For several examples of such documents, see document no. 10, 14, 16, 17, and 20 in DIR A.1. See also a document referring directly to his descendance from Stephen the Great: "… from my great grandfather, Prince Stephen the Old…" in Ibidem, document no. 40; 31.

[813] The chronicler described him as a man with a "deep mind, eloquent, and learned in books." See: *Cronicile slavo-române*, 148.

[814] Shortly after his enthronement in 1572, Abbot Cyrus reported to Maximilian II about the disturbances happening in Moldavia. See: *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti* [Documents regarding the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia] I, ed. Andrei Veress (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1929), 325-326.

[815] See a contemporary report which shows his "tyranny," as quoted in the source: The report of Bartłomiej Paprocki in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 405, 407.

[816] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 116-117.

[817] Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 128.

[818] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 127.

[819] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 183.

[820] Prince Vintilă was named prince of Wallachia. His reign was short-lived however, as he only managed to keep his throne for four days. See: Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 128.

[821] See the report of the battle and the defeat dated May 1574 in: Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. DCLXVII, 693-694.

[822] John was captured and "tore in four parts" by the Ottoman troops. See the 1574-1575 report of Maciej Stryjkowski in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 455.

boyars which resulted in a telling denomination: "John the Terrible." Moreover, his entire reign was labeled as "tyrannic."[823]

- Although John tried to save his seat and successfully lead an anti-Ottoman defense, the outcome was disastrous: as the neighbouring powers had a negative position towards a Moldavian opposition against the Ottoman Empire,[824] the prince isolated Moldavia.[825] The historical context of the time did not allow John to become an authentic follower of Stephen the Great.

Therefore, the resemblances with the dynastic project do exist, but one may label them as "fake" resemblances. This is a representative aspect for the rulers of the second half of the sixteenth century: while the direct successors of Stephen the Great bear several (sometimes hardly visible) reminiscent characteristics of the dynastic project, the existence of these characteristics is not marked by a particular ideology, but rather by the coincidental turn of events in these rulers' reigns.

This was the case of John the Saxon (1579 - 1582), illegitimate son of Peter Rareş[826] and Lutheran who "did not love Orthodoxy … and [who] showed his heresy."[827] Probably the closest connection of John to the dynastic project was marrying Maria, "a very rich wife from Cyprus" thought to belong to the Palaeologian family[828] – however, marrying her was also circumstantial, as the ideological connection to the Byzantine Empire was not as relevant as her wealth, which allowed John to buy the seat of Moldavia.

The connection to the dynastic project by means of church building was also scarce, with only a few relevant examples in the sixteenth century. During his second reign, Alexander Lăpușneanu built a church dedicated to Saint Nicholas.[829] In 1594, his son Aron the Tyrant[830] (1591 – June 1592; October 1592 – 1595), rebuilt and recommissioned the church under his very name: the Aroneanu Church.[831] Although known as the Tyrant (or as "the Terrible"[832]), when analysing his anti-

---

[823] Internal sources exclusively refer to John in negative terms. Although external sources generally see him as a brave man, there are also some which see him as tyrannic. Bartłomiej Paprocki, for example, names him "the great tyrant." See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 405.

[824] Maximilian II for example militated for the replacement of John with Albert Laski. See: Ibidem, 182.

[825] Ibidem.

[826] He refers to Stephen the Great as "my gradfather, Prince Stephen the Old" and to Bogdan III as "my uncle, Prince Bogdan." See: *Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova* III (1571-1590) [Documents regarding the history of Romania. Sixteenth century. A. Moldavia III (1571-1590)], ed. Mihail Roller (Bucharest: Academiei, 1951), 174-175. (henceforth: DIR A.3).

[827] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 141. See a different reference to his religious beliefs, in: Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. XIV, 25.

[828] Martin Joachim Bielski, *Kronika polska*, quoted in Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 730.

[829] Constantin Cihodaru, Gheorghe Platon, *Istoria orașului Iași* [The history of the city of Iași] I (Iași: Junimea, 1980), 328.

[830] Aron refers to himself as the son of Alexander Lăpușneanu: "*Io* Prince Aron, the son of the departed and too good Prince Alexander." See: DIR A.1, 39-40.

[831] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 153.

Ottoman policy, Aron seems to have been more in line with the dynastic project than his brother Bogdan was. One may argue that the last grand anti-Ottoman move of the Mușatin dynasty was Aron's entrance in the Christian anti-Ottoman league. Within this context, Aron ordered the execution of all Ottomans and Ottoman creditors in Moldavia and he swore that he broke all his agreements with the sultan and that he was obeying the Christian league. Moreover, in 1594, Aron signed an anti-Ottoman alliance with Wallachia's Prince Michael the Brave which resulted in an anti-Ottoman upheaval in Iași correlated with a similar anti-Ottoman upheaval in Bucharest.[833] All these anti-Ottoman struggles were however cut back when Aron was replaced with Stephen Răzvan (April 1695 – September 1695). During his short reign, Stephen did not have the chance to accomplish any grand actions. His name however raised several debates. Not being related in any way to Stephen the Great's family, he was thought to have taken the name of "Stephen" after he was enthroned Moldavian prince. In fact, Stephen was his baptizing name;[834] therefore he bore the double name Stephnen Răzvan ever since before 1595. The name of "Stephen" was considered a royal name at the time as it recalled, in collective memory, the image of Stephen the Great.[835] It is no surprise therefore that once he received the throne, the prince prefered to use only one of his names: Stephen.[836] Considering that his subjects also refered to him with the single name of "Stephen,"[837] one can easily imply that the prince promoted his royal name which subtly connected him to the already iconic image of Stephen the Great.

The most admirable ruler of the second half of the sixteenth century, who mostly mirrored the image of an ideal monarch, was however not a descendant of the Mușatin dynasy. He was the first representative of the Wallachian Basarabi dynasty to take over the Moldavian throne: Peter the Crippled (1574-1577; 1578-1579; 1583-1591).[838] Although on the seat of Moldavia for a long period of time, Peter could not keep the throne for his followers and he could not establish a new dynasty. The sixteenth century however did end with the birth of a new dynasty: the Movilă dynasty.[839] The

---

[832] Comparing his reign to "the good and serene" reign of his predecessor, Peter the Crippled, Grigore Ureche names Aron as "the Terrible" (Ureche, The Chronicle of Moldavia, 148). Therefore, the appellation "the Tyrant" is a later invention.

[833] For all these actions and anti-Ottoman alliances and outbreaks, see: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 771-774; Gorovei. *Mușatinii*, 127-128.

[834] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 781.

[835] Ibidem.

[836] See documents issued by his court in: DIR A.1, 120, 122-126.

[837] "Our lord, Prince Stephen." Quoted in Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 782.

[838] Peter hoped for a peaceful reign and thus engaged in cultural and economic projects which propelled the Moldavian environment. His reign is not discussed in this dissertation as there are no relevant connections between himself and Stephen's dynastic project. For a thorough presentation of his reign, see the three entries of his three reigns in: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*.

[839] For two thorough studies of the Movilă dynasty see: *Movileştii. Istorie şi spiritualitate românească – "Casa noastră movilească"* [The Movilă family. Romanian history and spirituality – "Our Movilă Home"], ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely (Suceava: Mușatinii, 2006); *Movileştii. Istorie şi spiritualitate românească –*

particular feature of this dynasty rests in the figure of the founder Jeremiah Movilă's mother, who was the daughter of Peter Rareş. The legacy of Stephen the Great was therefore transferred to the seventeenth century, under a new guise.

7. Conclusion: fixing patterns, fixing memory

The rulers of the sixteenth century are divided in two well-defined categories. Up until 1572, when the last Princely Group ends, the reigns follow a pattern – not a univocal pattern, but one which may be seen as springing from the example of Stephen the Great's reign. All three Princely Groups have their ideological roots in the reign of Stephen the Great, implying, in general terms, several fundamental formulas: the prince is Christian Orthodox; the prince fights for the principality's territorial, religious, and economical integrity; the prince supports the dynastic cultural legacy by acts of donations and commissions; the prince is engaged in creating imperial connections and legacy. By contrast, most of the post-1572 reigns were chaotic and disorganized.

The projection and fixing of Stephen's proto-myth was thus supported only by the Princely Groups through various means. Fixing meaning and memory can be easiest seen by looking at the amount of money spent on building edifices[840] which reinforced Stephen's legacy: churches, monasteries, tombs, princely houses. Stephen started "creating" his memory during his lifetime and his successors continued these endeavours which were always ideologically and politically driven – such as the case of Peter Rareş who built his Probota monastery using the precise model of Stephen's Putna monastery. By commissioning such edifices, veritable symbols of power, the successors created a collective identity of lineage. All these commissions consisted of elements which altogether expressed the status of Stephen the Great's family and dynasty: sometimes starting with the very grand plan of the commissioned monastic structures and ending with votive images which evoked dynastic prestige. Visibility was decidedly a key element for fixing memory. Sixteenth-century commissioners reproduced, reinvented, and modernized already-established forms of Stephen's legacy. This implied the display of wealth, power, and pomp, all of which formed the identity of the dynastic lineage. Prestige, power, and stability were the elements which launched and supported the lineage identity and by that, the proto-myth itself. The rulers of the first half of the sixteenth century were the ones to encourage the creation and propagation proto-myth. The first half of the sixteenth century was without a doubt the engine of Stephen the Great's myth which propelled it in history in

---

Ieremia Movilă. Domnul. Familia. Epoca [The Movilă family. Romanian history and spirituality – Jeremiah Movilă. The prince. The family. The Epoch] II ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei, Maria Magdalena Székely (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2006).

[840] For the explanation of this methodology, see: Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence*, 6-9.

various guises and under different intensities, up until the modern day. Without the three Princely Groups, Stephen the Great's myth might have been fundamentally different from what it is today.

Chapter IV

Stephen's Impact in the Sixteenth Century
The Proto-Myth

Everything you can imagine is real
Pablo Picasso

1.   Stephen and collective memory in the sixteenth century

Because finite individual memory opens out into the limitlessness of collective memory,[841] this chapter will explore certain mental patterns of the sixteenth century which point to Stephen's most relevant traits. They will be highlighted in sources springing from the court, from internal and external letters and documents, from foreigners travelling through Moldavia, from external allies or enemies. The juxtaposition of all these sources will allow sight beyond visual representations and rhetorical expressions of the time. It will allow sight into the imaginary of Stephen the Great.

Although collective memory implies a societal unity of thought, the memories of people who witnessed a common event are not identical because memory evokes different associations and feelings for each of them.[842] Nevertheless, in case of ideal monarchs such as Stephen the Great, most mental evocations are grouped around certain characteristics which reunite rulers under the sphere of sainthood, warfare, and generally speaking, under the sphere of exceptionality. Descending from a long line of princely ancestors, having a special relationship with God, bringing back peace and prosperity after decades of trouble, Stephen the Great continuously accumulated, improved, produced, and changed[843] the principles of his reign. Without a doubt, he may be included in the stereotyped categories of hero monarchs developed in medieval thought.[844]

Chapters II and III have shown how Moldavian princes created themselves and how this staging (which implied written and visual representations) led to an environment of monarchic ideals,[845]

---

[841] Michael Uebel, "The Pathogenesis of Medieval History," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41 (2002): 51.

[842] Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1 (1989): 6.

[843] Accumulation, improvement, production, and change are the four ideals of governmentality, as defined by Jürgen Pieters and Alexander Roose. See: Jürgen Pieters and Alexander Roose, "The Art of Saying 'No'. Premonitions of Foucault's 'Governmentality' in Étienne de La Boétie's *Discours de la servitude volontaire*," in *Mystifying the Monarch. Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), 96.

[844] See more: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 73.

[845] Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere discuss the sacralisation and staging of European monarchies which led to the creation of ideal models of kings, of ideal monarchs. See: Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, "The Monarchy: A Crossroads of Trajectories," in *Mystifying the Monarch*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, 11.

often times related to the image of Stephen the Great. Chroniclers such as the anonymous author of Stephen's chronicles, such as Macarie, Azarie, or Eftimie all privilege the exemplarity of their main characters,[846] although sometimes without following historical accuracy. The model of the ideal ruler was universal: the prince was to be wise, honest, fair, always correctly dressed and well-informed in his public appearances, and should he not have these qualities, he was to be shown in public as rarely as possible so that his ideal image would not be distorted.[847] Not surprisingly, chronicles portrayed rulers with highly-dignifying characteristics. Although yet difficult to argue, the engine behind the policy, the image, and the anonymous chronicles of Stephen the Great was most likely the Moldavian Metropolitan, Teoctist I.[848] A pattern then becomes apparent in the reigns of Stephen's closest successors: the followers of Teoctist I became their mentors, in a manner resembling the relationship between Teoctist and Stephen the Great. This pattern is most visible in the case of Peter Rareș: Macarie, the future Metropolitan of Moldavia, who became one of the prince's closest advisers and promoters of his policy, as well as the author of Peter's chronicle. Similar although less spectacular relationships can be seen between Alexander Lăpușneanul and Bishop Eftimie as well as between Peter the Crippled and monk Azarie, who although not highly-ranked, was the disciple of Macarie. The connection (and occasionally continuation) between the chroniclers, from Teoctist I to Azarie, was significant when princes decided who would handle their image[849] – always members of the clergy. The image of the ideal ruler was in the hands of chroniclers, but, just as importantly, it was in the hands of those responsible for the education of young princes. A good education was essential in the creation of an ideal monarch.[850] Usually, mirrors of princes were the most accurate manuals on how a soon-to-be king would be educated. However, because the only extant mirror of princes in today's Romanian territory dates from the sixteenth-century Wallachia,[851] the situation on

---

[846] Royal and princely biographies/chronicles all have one essential element in common: they all depart from the kingly ideal. Regardless of the fact that chronicles also act as legitimizers for the ruler or that they add innovations to conventional notions of kingship (such as Machaut's *Prise d'Alexandre* which offers several answers for the question „Should the King crusade?"), they are still based on the idea of the ideal monarch. See more details in: Daisy Delogu, *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign. The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2008), 6-7.

[847] Philippe de Commynes universally professed these characteristics of the ideal ruler in the fifteenth century. See: Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, "'Et le prince respondit de par sa bouche.' Monarchal Speech Habits in Late Medieval Europe," in *Mystifying the Monarch*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, 59.

[848]

[849] See more on the connection between the chroniclers, as well as between the chroniclers and their princes in: Elena Cărțăleanu, *Eroul și eroismul în cronografia moldovenească din secolul XVI* [The hero and heroism in sixteenth-century Moldavian chronicles], PhD dissertation (Chișinău, 2009), 16-17.

[850] It was not by chance that Giles of Rome (c. 1247-1316) explained in his *De regimine Principum* that, due to a good education, the prince could build an ideal image based on wisdom and virtue, and could thus appeal to his people to imitate his model. See: Eadem.

[851] The text known as "Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie" [The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie] was commissioned by the Wallachian Prince Neagoe Basarab (1512-1521). See

princely educators in Moldavia needs further exploration. Most often, educators were the very same image handlers – monks, bishops, even Metropolitans. Lay educators also stand out however, such as Luca Arbore, the bailiff of Suceava, who was the man behind the reigns of both Bogdan III and Stephen the Young. The creation of the ideal monarch in Moldavia, as elsewhere, was a complex and collective effort. The lay and the clergy reunited in an effort to bring the humane and divine together in one man: an ideal ruler, skilled at governing and warfare, bearing the attributes of a saintly man and capable of inspiring his subjects.[852]

2. Stephen, the warrior: echoes in the sixteenth century

The divine was an essential factor in an ideal reign as the ruler could not overcome the difficulties of his reign without godly support. War was one such unavoidable difficulty during which the monarch had to demonstrate his qualities and his privileged connection to the divine by leading his (Christian) army to victory and re-establishing the pace and harmony of his reign.[853]

Stephen the Great succeeded a significant number of times to re-establish peace and harmony which is why he remained in collective memory as a veritable army commander. Sources eulogize his victories during his lifetime, but his military success is just as strongly echoed in the sixteenth century. For instance, the prince notoriously celebrated his military victories with feasts which sometimes lasted for up to three days.[854] This allowed the creation, in collective memory, of a link between the image of the prince and the concept of a victorious reign, which boosted Stephen's prestige both during his lifetime and in the aftermath of his reign.[855] Therefore his qualities as military commander, his bravery, his strength and heroism, his military strategies, were continuously evoked in the sixteenth-century as well, in a manner which highlighted a certain gallant image of the ruler.

---

the text in: *Învățăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie* [The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie], ed. Anatol Vidraşcu and Dan Vidraşcu (Chişinău: Litera International, 2001).

[852] The image of the good monarch represents a strong symbol for the self. Because of the ruler's power, freedom, and centrality, individuals want to resemble him and wish to have his unlimited power. See more in: Harvey Birenbaum, *Myth and Mind* (Boston: University Press of America, 1988), 86.

[853] For more on the divine implications on war in Stephen the Great's Moldavia, see: Cristea in "Declanşarea războiului," 105-132, esp. 129.

[854] See, for instance, the battle with Wallachia's Prince Radu the Fair in 1473, whom Stephen dethroned after which "… he stayed there for three days, rejoicing." See: "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.

[855] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 454.

2.1. Military strategies

Without a doubt, the signs of Stephen's reign were still visible after his death, in the sixteenth century – his family's restored tombs, his numerous and vivid recently-painted votive portraits, his commissions, especially Putna monastery, the battle-field pillars and crosses placed at the locations of renowned battles, as well as the colonies of Szeklers and Polish the prince brought to Moldavia who were thankful for the privileges they received.[856] Because of these signs, the people and, most notably, the chroniclers of the sixteenth century had a lively memory of Stephen the Great. Chronicles recorded numerous aspects of his (especially) military deeds, such as strategies, descriptions of battles and the prince's military actions, characterizations of his heroism, as well as characterizations of the prince himself by means of his armed deeds.

Stephen's military strategies usually employed unexpected offensives and strategies based on speed, calculated usage of the natural environment, and of his usually out-numbered army.[857] The fact that Stephen faced (and often times defeated) prominent enemies, such as the Ottoman, Polish, or Hungarian armies, increased his notoriety as a highly-celebrated victor. There are two notable operations which were remembered by the chroniclers of the sixteenth century:

- His attacks were unexpected. Not only did Stephen attack unexpectedly, but he also instigated certain conflicts between his enemies. Martin Cromer recalled how in 1503, a year before Stephen's death, the Moldavian prince created a diversion which facilitated his way to conquer Pokkutia. Supposedly "instigated by Stephen,"[858] the Tartars attacked Podolia and Russia, while Stephen "without anyone expecting it"[859] attacked and easily conquered the neighbouring Pokkutia.

- He preferred to employ various military tactics, rather than military force. As Marcin Bielski stated:

    > rather by means of tactics than by force, he [Stephen] decoyed and hit from every spot the large and frightening army of the Turks. He especially weakened them, in the Lower Country, on the path of the Turks, by destroying everything on their way, burning even the grass, because of which the Turks and their fragile horses died of hunger. Then, after he attracted the Turks into a dangerous location … Stephen attacked them there, with fewer men, and crushed 100.000 Turks and Tartars…[860]

---

[856] For a detailed description of all these elements, see Chapter II.

[857] For Stephen's most-famously employed strategy, see: Chapter I, subchapter "Conflicts."

[858] Martin Cromer, "Polonia sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 193.

[859] Ibidem.

[860] Marcin Bielski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 198.

This passage referred to the strategy usually employed by Stephen the Great when facing a numerically-superior enemy: that of burning the fields, crops and houses on the way of the enemies thus creating a demographic and economic void which would weaken the invaders.[861]

As portrayed by sixteenth-century writers, Stephen was an exceptional strategist. Due to his tactics, his military successes were widely spread as some of Stephen's enemies "not only suffered great losses, but endured disaster as well."[862]

2.2. War-time descriptions and recollections

The several resounding victories of Stephen allowed the prince to be perceived as a man of many military skills. The chronicles of the sixteenth century made generous descriptions not only of the battle of Vaslui, but also of his military enterprises altogether. Moreover, many writings recall not only one achievement at a time, but highlight Stephen's three-fold victories against his neighbours: the Ottomans, the Polish, and the Hungarians. However, Stephen was not praised alone: often times, chroniclers presented the "warrior"[863] Moldavian army which, under Stephen's command, was capable of defeating larger armies.

Some of the first reports to appear soon after Stephen's death in 1504 indirectly indicated the prince's military significance. Such is the example of King Ladislas II of Hungary who ordered that the northern-Transylvanian territory of Maramureș, neighbouring Moldavia, prepare for war. In his letter, the king explained that the prince of Moldavia had died, thus they must be prepared to proceed to Moldavia in order to retain it from being conquered by enemies.[864] Naturally, the death of a prince often times caused turmoil both on the inside and outside of a principality or kingdom, but in his letter, Ladislas was not only concerned with a territory under his subjection, but also made a subtle implication: Stephen preserved Moldavia's territorial integrity without major intrusions. Without Stephen, Moldavia was vulnerable.

Following 1504, an abundance of direct and indirect recollections of Stephen's military campaigns emerged. In 1514, King Sigismund I reported to Pope Leo X about the Ottoman advance. In this context, he elaborately recalled "Stephen, the old prince,"[865] who defeated the Ottoman Empire three times regardless of their numerous armies which descended upon the principality. The king additionally mentioned the trouble Stephen had caused to both kings Matthias and John

---

[861] See more on this tactic in: Constantiniu, *O istorie sinceră a poporului român*, 87-93.

[862] Martin Cromer on the battle of Baia between Stephen the Great and Matthias Corvinus in 1469. See: Martin Cromer, "Polonia sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum", 193.

[863] Anonymous description of Moldavia dated 1587. See: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* [Foreign travellers on the Romanian Principalities] III, ed. Maria Holban (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1971), 201.

[864] See the original letter in: Hurmuzaki II.2, document no. CCCCXXIII, 525.

[865] Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CLVII, 171.

Albert.[866] Blaise de Vigenère was similarly contemplating on the three-fold victories that Stephen, ("the bravest and most famous army commander of his time"[867]) was renowned for: the French diplomat remembered "the greatest man of his time … who gained the most beautiful victories over Mehmed, the Ottoman sultan, Matthias, the king of Hungary and John Albert, the king of Poland."[868] The fact that Stephen defeated the three fundamental powers in Moldavia's surroundings became somewhat of a leitmotif in sixteenth-century literature and Stephen consequently became the ultimate almost-undefeatable warrior.[869]

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century official internal documents and Moldavian chronicles highlighted the large numerical discrepancy between the local and invader armies.[870] External sources also emphasized this aspect, offering Stephen a plus of heroic traits as he was portrayed plunging into battle with little concern of his numerical inferiority: "… sending 120.000 soldiers against Prince Stephen who had only 40.000 men, [the Ottomans] were defeated and only five or six thousand of them survived."[871] Stephen not only "defeated the unspeakably numerous Turkish army,"[872] but also the numerous Polish armies. In 1570, Polish diplomat Andrzej Taranowski, recalled his recent journey through Moldavia: "… I travelled from Poland to Constantinople through Moldavia, through the beech forest[873] where 73 years ago, in the year 1497, 50.000 Polish men were killed by the Moldavians in one day."[874] Unsurprisingly, for a certain period of time Moldavia was perceived with the same attributes as its Prince Stephen was: invincible and unconquerable. By the end of the sixteenth century, the image of undefeatable Moldavia became synonymous with Stephen the Great. Sources hinted to a Moldavian military "golden age:" "This country of Bogdania, whose leading settlement is Iași, used to be called Moldavia; but since the Ottoman sultans had it subdued 50 years

---

[866] See the entire original reference to Stephen in: Ibidem.

[867] Blaise de Vigenère (*Description du royaume de la Poloigne*), in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 640.

[868] Ibidem.

[869] See other relevant descriptions of Stephen's victories against the Ottomans, Hungarians, and Pols: in 1587, Johannes C. Decius Barovius referred to Stephen as "that prince of Moldavia who often times defeated the greatest armies of the people of Moscow, Scythians, and Turks, and who destroyed Suleyman Pasha, the bey of Rumelia…" See: Johannes C. Decius Barovius in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* III, 216. In the same year of 1587, an anonymous description inspired by the history written by Matthias Miechowski praised Stephen: "… during Pope Sixtus' pontificate, to whom he sent envoys with booty earned by defeating Sultan Mehmed, the Turks, the Polish, the Tartars and the great King Matthias Corvinus." See: "Anonymous Description of Moldavia from 1587," in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* III, 201.

[870] See for instance: Chapter II, subchapter "How to remember the prince's deeds: creating memory." See also: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 26.

[871] Blaise de Vigenère (*Description du royaume de la Poloigne*) in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 640.

[872] Giovanni Francesco Commendone's short description of Wallachia and Moldavia, in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 376.

[873] Taranowski referred to the forest of Codrii Cosminului, where the Moldavian-Polish battle took place on October 26, 1497.

[874] Andrzej Taranowski's description of his journey through Moldavia (1570), in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 398.

ago, its name was changed to Bogdania or Karabogdan, meaning black land and this is due to the endless blood which shed while taking this province."[875]

2.3. Remains of war, remains of victories

However, while passing through Moldavia, most travellers not only remembered Stephen the Great's victories, but they also experienced the impact Stephen had in Moldavia: they either witnessed local people's ways of remembering the prince or they physically observed the remains of Stephen's reign. In probably the most thorough (and famous) description of Stephen's reign, Maciej Stryzgowski described how the people of the sixteenth century kept Stephen's memory and legacy alive. Based on Stryzgowski's account, both his deeds and his physical image were well-imbedded in collective memory:

> Moldavians and Wallachians always play their violins and sing in their language at all their gatherings: "Stephen, Prince Stephen, Stephen, Prince Stephen who defeated the Turks, defeated the Tartars, defeated the Hungarians, the Russians and the Polish." When I went to the Ottoman Empire, I saw at Bucharest, the seat of the Wallachian Prince where I had dined, that on the wall of the Prince's bedroom a face was painted on wood, in old style, showing this Stephen as a tall man with his royal crown on his head.[876]

With his description, Stryzgowski unveiled the actual impact Stephen had not only in Moldavia, but also in the neighbouring Wallachia. The fact that the Wallachian prince owned a painted image of Stephen is remarkable, considering the rather unfriendly relationships between the Wallachian and Moldavian princes, especially during Stephen's reign. The painted image in the royal bedroom does have an ideological explanation however. Stryzgowski travelled through Wallachia during the time of Prince Alexander II Mircea (1568-1577), at the turn 1574. This was a turbulent period for both Moldavia and Wallachia: Alexander's brother, Peter Șchiopul [the Crippled][877] had taken over the seat of Moldavia with the help of the Wallachian prince. Alexander's desire to take over Moldavia seemed to be just as great as Peter's. He was not only actively and personally involved in the taking of Moldavia,[878] but he also added a significant ideological aspect to the entire operation: he used the

---

[875] In reality, Moldavia had been called "Karabogdan" by the Ottomans since the fifteenth century. Moreover, the author of the excerpt made confusion between Karabogdan (referring to Moldavia) and Karabildan (referring to black soils, as a consequence of bloodshed). See the original text: François de Pavie's description of his 1585 journey to the Ottoman Empire, in *Călători străini despre Țările Române* III, 182.

[876] Maciej Stryzgowski's description of his travel through Moldavia and Wallachia, in *Călători străini despre Țările Române* II, 454.

[877] Three times Moldavian prince: June 1574 – November 1577; January 1578 – November 1579; October 1583 – August 1591.

[878] The proof for his active involvement in the taking of Moldavia stands in the words of his logothete Tatul, who on the 12th of April 1574 issued a document "in the town of Râmnicu Sărat, when our Prince Alexander

image of the most iconic Moldavian prince and incorporated it into his reign. In other words, Alexander symbolically welcomed Stephen into Wallachian history, thus symbolically merging the two principalities – ironically, just like Stephen wanted to merge them during his own reign.

Stryzgowski's description also shows Stephen's relevance in Moldavian collective memory. Already in the second half of the sixteenth century, the ruler seemed to have surpassed the realm of the humane. As songs were sang about him he entered the world of the immortal, of myth. Without a doubt, rulers remembered in such folkloric manners were beyond what the average ruler meant: they were not only heroes, but they were rulers *chosen* to be remembered as such in the aftermath of their death. This mythical aura of Stephen the Great was further on enhanced by physical remains of his heroic deeds. References to still-visible bodily remains of Moldavian, Ottoman, and Polish soldiers who fought both at Vaslui and Războieni were explicit and numerous. Stryzgowski's detailed portrayal of Stephen also included information on these almost-relics, with reference to the Battle of Vaslui: "He [Stephen] ordered that the bodies of the dead be burnt, and this left behind bones and large high piles which I saw with my own eyes when I went to Turkey in the year 1575, and I saw as well three crosses which were built as a sign of that victory."[879] The text was referring to the bodies of the Ottomans, explaining at the same time that the Moldavians defeated "100.000 Turks and Tartars."[880] The piles of bones were a factor in Stephen's propagation in the realm of myth. Therefore should one had passed by the river of Bârlad, where the clash took place, one would have supposedly seen the remains of a Moldavian victory. Stryzgowski's text is even more significant as the author describes the battle scene on its 100 anniversary. As described by the Polish diplomat, the scene seems to have still been vibrant and charged with emotions even 100 years after the celebrated confrontation. Before Stryzgowski however, the battle scene was described almost identically by Marcin Bielski[881] who emphasized both the piles of bones and the stone crosses erected there for the remembrance of the victory. The preservation of these tokens until almost the end of the sixteenth century and the reactions of the sixteenth-century observers to them proves that Stephen's intention of protecting and perpetuating his reputation[882] was a success. There are no sources describing the Moldavian feelings regarding the battle scenes, but should one recognize the impact they had on

---

was away in the Principality of Moldavia in order to enthrone his brother Prince Peter as prince of the Principality of Moldavia." See: *Documenta Romaniae Historica* B. Țara Românească VII (1571-1575), ed. Ștefan Ștefănescu and Olimpia Diaconescu (Bucharest: Academiei, 1988), 229-231.

[879] Maciej Stryzgowski's description of his travel through Moldavia and Wallachia in *Călători străini despre Țările Române* II, 453.

[880] Ibidem.

[881] "… and the bodies, he [Stephen] ordered that they be gathered, in such a way that piles of bones are visible up until today, next to three stone crosses reminding of that victory." See: Marcin Bielski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 198.

[882] For the various means used by Stephen to enhance his name, image, and legacy, see Chapter II, subchapter "Identities mingled: the dynastic project."

foreign travellers through Moldavia, one must assume that their impact on the local community was just as strong, if not much stronger.

The Battle of Codrii Cosminului, where Stephen the Great defeated the Polish army in 1497 echoed not only amazement, but also fear. In 1563, the Veronese mercenary Alessandro Guagnini was part the army which dethroned Jacob Heraclides.[883] While describing the expedition, he claimed to have seen the whitened bones, reminders and remains of the Polish defeat.[884] His account was confirmed by another[885] similar recording, that of Antonio Maria Graziani, the biographer of Heraclides. In his text, Graziani presented the retreat of the Polish army after the prince's death:

> But after they advanced this way without facing the enemy, they felt fear that a trap might have been prepared for them; and their concern and suspicion was amplified by the fact that they were retreating through the same woods in which the memory of King John Albert's great defeat by the Moldavians headed by Stephen, their tireless and fearless "king," was still alive.[886]

Graziani does not mention the human remains of the Polish army, but he does mention something of profound impact: "the memory … [which was] still alive." This memory generated an amalgam of feelings which combined awe and fear. The "fearless and tireless *king*" was still alive in that forest and the fact that he evoked such dynamic feelings is proof for the existence of the proto-myth.

2.4. A sixteenth-century "definition" of Stephen, the warrior

The large number of descriptions concerning Stephen's actions on the battlefield resulted in texts which may be seen a veritable "definitions" of the Moldavian ruler as warrior. The most particularized and complex definition belongs to the Polish Maciej Stryjkowski who touched upon different levels of Stephen's reign – thus, touching upon all three points described above. His report begins with the description of Stephen in his most acclaimed battle: Vaslui, 1475. In this context, Stryjkowski recounts the composition of both armies, as well as the strategy and deployment of the Moldavians. Further on, he describes the booty and prisoners taken by the Moldavians, as well as the human remains still visible 100 years after the end of the battle. A large part of Stryjkowski's

---

[883] The text of Alessandro Guagnini has several errors: the mercenary wrote that the campaign took place in 1562, although the correct date is 1563; similarly, the text claims that Alessandro took part in the campaign on the side of Jacob Heraclides, although historical evidence shows the opposite. See more details in: *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 291.

[884] Ibidem.

[885] Certainly, these two accounts of the human remains in the Codrii Cosminului forest were not the only extants ones. A different account was given by Stanislaus Sarnicius who suggested that among the bones must have also been Moldavian ones: "… in the year 1562, they saw in those forests the bones of those who were surrounded and killed by the Moldavians. But I believe that there are also bones of the Moldavians among them." See: Stanislaus Sarnicius, "Annales seu de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum et Lithuanorum," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 196.

[886] Antonio Maria Graziani in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 621.

description relates to the ruler's victories against the Ottomans, Polish, and Hungarians – consequently, Stephen was the "clever and lucky"[887] prince, who not only overcame all these enemies, but who additionally also "wounded the king himself [Matthias] with three spears"[888] at the Battle of Baia. The fact that Stephen was in such close combat with both Matthias and John Albert is emphasized by the Polish historian who concluded that "any historian can rightfully eulogize him [Stephen] for this blessed luck with such a small country."[889]

This description must have been the result of the combination of two different sources: previously-written histories such as that of Maciej Miechowita[890] and contemporary accounts, most likely Moldavian, gathered while travelling through Moldavia. The mixture of these two sources and the fact that they reverberated so profoundly in the sixteenth century is another indication of the existence of the proto-myth. Stryjkowski's definition of Stephen's heroism was not singular however, as several others emerged. Martin Cromer revoked the Moldavian as "a man worth remembering at all times for the greatness of his soul, for his ingenuity, for his competence in the art of war and for his lucky wars against the Turks, Hungarians, Polish, and Tartars."[891] Similarly, for Joachim Cureus, Stephen was "an unspeakably brave and tireless man."[892] Moreover, he emphasized that it was difficult to find another warrior more heroic than Stephen was in his time.[893]

Indirect accounts also pointed to a certain admiration neighbouring countries had for the prince. The rivalry between the Hungarian and Polish seats indirectly revealed Stephen's perception outside Moldavian borders: "This way, this great warrior who defeated the Turks, Tartars, and Hungarians, subdued to the Polish king. Should such a submission had been made to Matthias, he would have surely been proud of it."[894] This affirmation summarises the positive image Stephen had, an image which inspired all the praises of the sixteenth century.

2.5. A brave man, but…

However, negative traits also emerged within these "definitions." Cureus highlighted that Stephen was "not only a fearless man, but also a cruel one," continuing to describe how, after the clash with

---

[887] Maciej Stryzgowski in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 454.

[888] Ibidem.

[889] Ibidem. Also, see the entire description of Stephen written by Stryzgowski in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 452-454.

[890] Miechowita wrote *Chronica Polonorum* in which Stephen was named an "admirable and victorious man." See: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 173-176.

[891] Martin Cromer, "Polonia sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 194.

[892] Joachim Cureus, "Gentis Silesiae Annales," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 334.

[893] Ibidem.

[894] Marcin Bielski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 200.

the Tartars in 1468, Stephen had the son of the Khan cut into four pieces in front of his envoys and had his head sent back to his father.[895] Stephen thus seems to have been perceived as a brave man, but nonetheless as devious and unstable.[896] As one would expect, all negative understandings came from enemies of the principality. While they all agreed on Stephen's fame in war and his braveness,[897] negative accounts were explicit: "[he defeated] King Matthias, although rather by means of deceit which he often times used, than by means of real power … he was unstable … he was proud and his unusual cruelty erased a little from the fame and glory of his deeds."[898] Recalling the Battle of Baia where Matthias was defeated, the Hungarians were not eager to praise Stephen. Neither were the Ottomans, especially when remembering the Battle of Vaslui: "…that damned prince of Moldavia, who surpassed in wickedness the Devil himself."[899] Not surprisingly, negative portrayals also appear in Wallachian descriptions of Stephen's heroic deeds:

> He was a brave man and he made many wars … he would not stay to rest and, with luck on his side, he defeated many. He was however ungrateful for the good he received and he was ungrateful to Prince Radu, the Wallachian, with whose help he gained the Moldavian throne and afterwards came with war upon him unexpectedly, and Radu fled to the Ottomans, while Stephen took his wife and daughter Voichița, whom he then married.[900]

Just like the Hungarians and the Ottomans, the Wallachians admitted that Stephen was a hero, but given the rivalry between the two principalities, they did not offer him the acknowledgement other accounts did. The above-quoted fragment is dated seventeenth century, but because there are no similar sources originating in the sixteenth century, one must assume that this chronicle relied on older texts which did not survive beyond their time. This is evident because the feelings evoked in this seventeenth-century chronicle are similar to those contemporary to Stephen the Great, when Wallachians acknowledged Stephen's qualities but nevertheless disapproved of him.[901]

3. The sixteenth-century public image of Stephen the Great: the leader

With such heroic characteristics, Stephen the Great became in the sixteenth century the representation of an ideal leader. Folklore shaped collective memory by means of popular songs such

---

[895] Joachim Cureus, "Gentis Silesiae Annales," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 334.
[896] Miklós Istvánffy actually referred to him as a "man famous for his wars, but changeable when it comes to his temper and faith." See: Miklós Istvánffy, "Regni Hungarici Historia," in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 215.
[897] Istvánffy said that he "proved himself to be above all his enemies." See: Ibidem.
[898] Ibidem, 216.
[899] Kemal Pașazade in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 276.
[900] Radu Popescu, "Istoriile Domnilor Țărâi Românești" [The histories of the Wallachian princes], in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 152.
[901] See more: Chapter II, subchapter ""Romanians" about Stephen."

as the one described by Strijkowski, but also by exploiting the remnants of Stephen's life: on the one hand, the physical image of the prince still visible in his church foundations, his impressive tomb at the Putna Monastery, or the battlefields and their markers erected at Stephen's order; on the other hand, the recollections of people who lived during the prince's reign were exploited.

3.1. The colonizer

Stephen the Great ruled for 47 years and it was calculated that at least two generations of children were born in the 1480s and 1490s who lived roughly until 1550.[902] Both these generations must have been able to perpetuate their memories of the ruler all throughout their lives – therefore, up until the middle of the sixteenth century. Similarly, a second group of people were likely to preserve a positive image of the prince: landowners. Two large volumes[903] of documents issuing donations from Stephen the Great were published – most of these documents being land donations. As anticipated, all people who received these donations had their existence positively tied to the name of Stephen the Great. Colonizers from Transylvania and Poland also had their names tied to Stephen as the prince brought them to Moldavia, offering them land privileges, particularly during the Moldavian-Polish conflicts and Transylvanian persecutions.[904] These colonisations had two-way advantages: while Stephen offered colonizers unoccupied lands, they were obliged to be part of Stephen's so-called small host, the permanent princely army.[905] Moreover, with this strategy, Stephen also strengthened central power and diminished the chances of political anarchy. Fifteenth-century Moldavia benefited from large so-called "deserted"[906] territories which were given by the central power to colonizers in order to organize new settlements and work the lands for agricultural purposes. Colonizers therefore received tax-free lands and were exempt from obligations to the

---

[902] Gorovei and Székely calculated that the generations born in the 1480s and 1490s must have been able to perpetuate Stephen's image up until mid sixteenth century. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 539.

[903] DRH A. II and DRH A. III.

[904] See more information on the propagation of Stephen's memory through landowners and colonizers in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 539-540.

[905] The Moldavian army was formed of two military divisions. The first one was the small host (or small army) which was the Moldavian permanent army comprised of boyars and their personal armies. The second type of army (the large host) mainly comprised of peasants, was only called at war in times of imminent danger when large numbers of soldiers were needed. See: Nicolae Stoicescu, *Curteni și slujitori. Contribuții la istoria armatei române* [Courtiers and servants. Contributions to the history of the Romanian army] (Bucharest: Militară, 1968), 6-7.

[906] A deserted territory was considered to be a territory without an owner – therefore not belonging to any boyar or the Church, it was under the control of the prince. See more: Petre P. Panaitescu, *Obștea țărănească în Țara Românească și Moldova – Orânduirea feudală* [Peasants in Wallachia and Moldavia – Feudal Organization] (Bucharest: Academiei, 1964), 96.

principality[907] – except for the obligation of military service, of course. Considered to be small boyars as part of the lower nobility,[908] historians see this social category as a catalyst for the preservation of Stephen the Great's memory: "I think that the preservation of Stephen's name up until today (while the names of other rulers were erased in light of tradition) is owed to a great extent, to this act of colonization."[909]

Stephen was thus supported by a large number of subjects who, already before the time of his death, had perceived him as a ruler with a mythical aura.[910] The fact that the length of Stephen's reign was overstated both during his lifetime and afterwards, is proof for this superhuman perception: in 1497, an Ottoman source was claiming that Stephen had been ruling in Moldavia for 52 years,[911] just like one century later, Kodja Husein was emphasising that the prince, "a master in war," was "famous among Christian kings for his wiliness and was an evil-doer who ruled for 90 years."[912] The impact of Stephen the Great becomes apparent once one comes in contact with such sources highlighting the outstanding nature of his reign. The fact that the Moldavian's exceptionality was perpetuated is verified by sources which particularly emphasize the transmission of Stephen's prominence in time: at the end of the sixteenth century, Transylvanian Valentin Prepostvari was using Stephen as an example to the Moldavian Prince Aron the Tyrant – should Aron had been inspired by the acts of his predecessor, he would have gained a name comparable to that of Stephen the Great whose "brave fame and name" still lived "today and will live until this world will exist."[913] One should thus conclude that Stephen's image was very much present in the memories of the sixteenth-century Moldavians. Not surprisingly, Prince Stephen received the appellation "the Great."

---

[907] Matei D. Vlad, *Colonizarea rurală în Ţara Românească şi Moldova (secolele XV-XVIII)* [Rural colonization in Wallachia and Moldavia (Fifteenth – eighteenth centuries)] (Bucharest: Academiai, 1973), 18.

[908] Panaitescu, "Ştefan cel Mare. O încercare de caracterizare," 16.

[909] Ibidem, 17.

[910] Arnold van Gennep explained that any ruler who was able to surround himself with a large number of faithful subjects was eventually perceived by them as immortal: one could not understand the death of a man who was appreciated as superior from all points of view and who had a substantial influence on one's life. See: Arnold Van Gennep, *La formation des légendes* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1929), 121. From this point of view, Romanian historians compared Stephen the Great to other "immortal" rulers such as King Arthur, Frederic I Barbarossa, Frederic II, or Constantine XI. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 484-489.

[911] *Der fromme Sultan Bayezid. Die Geschichte seiner Herrschaft (1481-1512) nach den altosmanischen Chroniken des Oruc und des Anonymus Hanivaldanus.* (Osmanische Geschichtsschreiber), ed. Richard F. Kreutel 9 (Graz: Verlag Styria, 1978), 93. Also quoted in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 485.

[912] Kodja Husein, "Beda'i ul-veka'I," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 289.

[913] *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti* [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia], ed. Andrei Veress, IV *Acte şi scrisori (1593–1595)* [Documents and letters (1593-1595)] (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1932), document no. 27, 45–55. Also quoted and exemplified by Cristea in "Declanşarea războiului," 106.

3.2. The Great

Until recently, it was believed that the appellative "the Great" was attached to Stephen's name in the sixteenth century. The earliest attestations of the designation were believed to spring from two sources: the account of the Austrian Baron Sigismund von Herberstein and a communication between Prince Peter Rareș and King Sigismund I. As a diplomat, Herberstein travelled twice to Moscow (in 1517 and 1526) and subsequently wrote his *Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*[914] which detailed his expeditions but which also mentioned the name of the Moldavian prince twice. There are three original versions of the text (Latin, German, Italian), thus Stephen's name appears six times altogether. Of these six times, the Moldavian is presented with his "the Great" appellative four times, suggesting that during Herberstein's travels to Moscow, Stephen was commonly known as "the Great."[915] Years later, in February 1531, Peter Rareș received a letter from Sigismund I in which the Polish king referred to Stephen as *Stephanus ille Magnus*.[916] Furthermore, Stephen was known as "the Great" also to the sixteenth-century Ottomans who were familiar to him as "Qodjea Istefan."[917]

In the fifteenth century, Moldavia and Wallachia were externally known as *Valahia Minor* (Moldavia) and *Valahia Major* (Wallachia) – denominations showing both territorial and political limitations.[918] During the reign of Stephen the Great however, *Valahia Minor* was ambitioned to hold political power over the neighbouring *Valahia Major*.[919] As Moldavia attempted to increase its influence over Wallachia, diplomatic reports became indicative of one principality's (claimed) "greatness" over the other. Consequently, in August 1473, a foreign report referred to Stephen as "dem grossen Walachen."[920] As the "great Wallachian" syntagm also referred to a "great" Wallachia, one can notice a change in the perception of both principalities: at a certain time during the reign of Stephen, Moldavia became *Valahia Major* and Wallachia was transformed into *Valahia Minor*. This change in perception was owed to Stephen's anti-Ottoman policy which progressively tried to

---

[914] Three editions of the book are available at: http://gdz.sub.uni-goettingen.de/dms/load/img, last time accessed: February 6, 2014.

[915] For the thorough explanation of this hypothesis, see: Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări", 8-13.

[916] See the context of this letter in Chapter III, subchapter "Peter Rareș." See letter in: *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. 1510-1600* [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1510-1600] Suplement II, vol. 1, ed. Ioan Bogdan (Bucharest: 1893), 21-22. (henceforth: Hurmuzaki Suplement II vol. 1).

[917] Bayezid II referred to Stephen as such in a document dated 1581. "Qodjea" was used as a synonym for "old," but also for "great" or "enormous." See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 538-539.

[918] For a short historical presentation of the *Valahia Minor* and *Valahia Major* nominations, see: Papacostea, "The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great: the Polish option (1459-1473)," 22-23.

[919] See the conflicts between Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as Stephen's several attempts of replacing the Wallachian ruler with one of his allies, in Chapter I, subchapter "Conflicts." Also regarding a more symbolic attempt of gaining supremacy over Wallachia, see the symbolism of the name of Stephen's son and heir, Bogdan-Vlad: Chapter II, subchapter "Predicting the Future."

[920] The report reproduced the latest news coming from Poland and was sent from Strasbourg and destined to Albrecht III Achilles, Elector of Brandenburg. See: Papacostea, "The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great," 25 (the original text of the report is reproduced in footnote 27).

integrate Wallachia as well.[921] The fact that the two principalities interchanged their nominations during Stephen's reign reflects the extent of the prince's influence. Not only did his principality gain the "Major" title, but Stephen himself gained a new title[922] which shortly afterwards received a deeper symbolic understanding: he became the "great Wallachian," the self-proclaimed suzerain of the Wallachian principality, as sources divulge.[923] This was the beginning of a titling process which propelled Stephen's name into posterity. He was soon transformed from the "great Wallachian" into a more personal and individual "Stephen the Great." A recent thorough analysis[924] presents the stages of this transformation:

- The known first instance of "the great" Stephen appears in 1473, in the above-cited document which mentions the prince as "dem grossen Walachen."

- The second known instance is dated 1481[925] and appears in the inscription of the entrance tower at the Putna Monastery: "the great Prince Stephen, son of the great Prince Bogdan."[926]

- A third instance is documented for 1491 in the Gospel written by Teodor Mărişescul for Alexander, Stephen's the eldest son. It bears the description of Alexander, as follows: "the son of the great Prince Stephen."[927]

- Soon after Stephen's death, in 1510, a funeral inscription from Suceava refers in Greek to Manoil Murati, the deceased who lived during the time of Prince Bogdan, the son of "the great Prince Stephen"[928]

---

[921] Papacostea, "The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great," 22-23.

[922] For intitulature of Stephen the Great, see: Gorovei, "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic", 41-78 (Subchapter no. VIII referring particularly to the titling "the great").

[923] The terminology used by internal sources indicates a feudal relationship between Moldavia and Wallachia, where Moldavia had the suzerain role. Şerban Papacostea highlighted two particular examples. The first one refers to the chronicle of Grigore Ureche where the chronicler states that Vlad Călugărul, the Wallachian prince, turned his back on "his lord, Prince Stephen" – suggesting a feudal-like relationship between princes Stephen and Vlad. The second example points to a 1481 document in which Stephen announced the inhabitants of the Wallachian borderline that he would appoint to the Wallachian throne Mircea, "the son of my reign" – making reference to the "father" and "son" relationship which evoked the suzerain-vassal relationship between two rulers. See: Papacostea, "The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great," 24-25.

[924] Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 7-37.

[925] Although the inscription is dated 1481, the present inscription was re-carved in the eighteenth century, based on the original one.

[926] Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 15. See also the original text in: *Repertoriul monumentelor şi obiectelor de artă*, ed. Mihai Berza, 49.

[927] Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 15. See also: Mihai Berza, "Trei Tetraevanghele ale lui Teodor Mărişescul în Muzeul Istoric de la Moscova" [Three Gospels written by Teodor Mărişescul at the Moscow Historical Museum] in *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Moldavian culture during the time of Stephen the Great], ed. Mihai Berza (Bucharest: Academiei, 1964), 590.

[928] Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Trei "probleme" din biografia lui Ştefan cel Mare – Trois "questions" de la biographie d'Étienne le Grand," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 249. It should be highlighted that Ştefan Gorovei also points to another inscription dated between 1491 and 1510. He discusses a fourth description which does not make direct reference to Stephen the Great, but to his father Bogdan: the Menaion of March 1504 written at the Putna Monastery makes reference to Stephen as "the son of the great Prince Bogdan." See: Ibidem, 15-16 and *Repertoriul monumentelor şi obiectelor de artă din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare*, ed. Mihai Berza, 422-423.

- In 1514, King Sigismund wrote to Pope Leo X about the Eastern European relationship between Christians and Ottomans.[929] Within the letter, the adjective "magnanimus" is used twice with reference to Stephen: "De quibus vojevodam illum magnanimum olim Stephanum – (is enim Stephanus … erat … natura vafer, subdolus, varius, strenuus et magnanimous, ob que a teneris appellabatur vulpis astuta)"[930]

- The other two relevant sources describing Stephen as "the great" are the ones belonging to Sigismund von Herberstein between the years 1517 and 1527 ("Stephanus ille magnus Vuaivoda Moldaviae," "der groß Stephan Weyda," "quel gran Stephano Vuayuuoda di Moldauuia," "magnus ille Stephanus Moldavuiae palatines," and "quel gran Stephano Pallatino"[931]) and to King Sigismund I in 1531 ("Stephanus ille Magnus, Stephanus Magnus"[932])

This sequence of sources show a history of the meaning of Stephen's greatness, as one can see the intitulature transforms from a feudal connotation into a clear indication of personal "greatness," by the end of the prince's life. More relevantly, Stephen was not a simply a self-proclaimed "great" prince in the Moldavian-Wallachian relationship, but he was "great" outside the Moldavian borders as well, allowing more complex understandings of the prince's greatness. The development of Stephen's intitulature shows that already in the first half of the sixteenth century, Stephen's "greatness" was perceived inside and outside Moldavia in terms of personal identity.

3.3. The over-imagined

As the sixteenth century invoked and mystified Stephen the Great, his proto-myth successively developed. One of the most compelling proofs for the mystification of the prince is the fake documentation claimed to have been written during his reign. While one cannot estimate with precision which documents were written when, they are a confirmation of the role Stephen played in collective memory, regardless of their time of conception.

Roughly 37 fake documents[933] referring to Stephen the Great are known to have survived up until today. Being relatively easily identifiable by usually analysing the lists of boyars who "signed"

---

[929] See the entire letter in: Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CLVII, 168-182.

[930] Ibidem, 171. See also the discussion on this part of the text in: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Trei "probleme" din biografia lui Ştefan cel Mare," 248-249.

[931] See all the excerpts of Herberstein's text with reference to Stephen the Great (in original languages), as well as their discussion, in: Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 8-13.

[932] See the original letter in: Hurmuzaki Suplement II vol. 1, 21-22.

[933] *Documenta Romaniae Historica* is the most comprehensive collection and sums up a number of 37 fake documents for the entire period of Stephen's reign. See: DIR A.2, 414-460 (24 documents); and DIR A.3 (13 documents). Other collections also include fake documents dating from Stephen's time. See: *Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Iaşi* [Documents regarding the history of the city of Iaşi] I *Acte interne (1408-1660)*

them,[934] fake documents relate to all periods of Stephen's reign. The vast majority refer to land donations and property confirmations. They clarify whom the land was given to and signal territorial borderlands, as donation acts usually do. These forged property confirmations indicate that certain people relied on the name of Stephen the Great in order to gain rights to certain lands. The effect of documents signed by Stephen and his Council becomes more apparent when analysing documents which hint to certain territorial disputes. There are a number of documents which delimit a land or a settlement between two boyar families or groups of families;[935] similarly, there is a document which details the fact that a certain boyar Bogdan sold his lands to Stephen the Great who afterwards donated them to another boyar, Avram Frîncu.[936] As these documents may reveal certain boyar disputes, an issue becomes certain: the (probable) disagreement was solved by invoking a document "issued" by Stephen the Great. Indirectly, the image of Stephen "the judge"[937] becomes visible in posterity. During his reign, the prince solved disputes in such a way that there were no complaints or re-judgements of his decisions after his death (as it often times happened with other princes).[938] The righteousness of his decisions was then propagated in the aftermath of his reign, which resulted in such forged documents.

Stephen's righteousness may be tied to other types of fake documents as well: donations of settlements or lands,[939] as well as donations to monasteries such as Bistriţa, Neamţ, or Humor.[940] All these documents, regardless their type, indicate a high level of trust in the late ruler, whose name on a document was sufficient for the acceptance of certain land donations or rights.

The most captivating forged documents however, are those relating to the fight against Ottomans and Tartars in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. With a stress on the bravery against the "other," these documents genuinely show the image Stephen had: that of a veritable propagator of the Christian cause and a restless commander against the Ottoman threat. All three documents to be presented were proved to be written between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, thus after the period of the proto-myth. Their relevance however does not fade as they

---

[Internal documents (1408=1660)], ed. Ioan Caproşu, Petronel Zahariuc (Iaşi: Dosoftei, 1999), 545. See also: Ioan Bogdan, *Documente false atribuite lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Fake documents attributed to Stephen the Great] (Bucharest: Socec, 1913) – this collection also consists of the documents found in *Documenta Romaniae Historica* volumes cited above.

[934] See one of the first analyses done on three such documents in: Francisc Pall, "Acte suspecte şi false în colecţia <Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare> a lui Ioan Bogdan" [Suspicious and fake documents in the Ioan Bogdan's collection "The Documents of Stephen the Great"], *Revista Istorică* 4-6 (1933): 105-113.

[935] For instance: DRH A.III, document VII, 543-545; DRH A.II, document X, 433-435.

[936] DRH A.II, document XX, 453-455.

[937] For the image of Stephen as judge and the disputes he settled during his reign, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 462-468.

[938] Ibidem, 462.

[939] See, as examples, documents XII or XIV in DRH A.II, 438 and 444.

[940] See the acts of donation to these monasteries in: DRH A.II, documents III and IV, 416-420; and DRH A.III, documents I, IV, X, 532-533, 538-540, 550-551.

are emulations of the pre-seventeenth-century collective memory. The documents closest in time to the proto-myth are two donation acts which reward the bravery of two boyars with lands. Dated 12th of May 1475 (therefore shortly after the Battle of Vaslui), but conceived after 1610,[941] an act "issued" by Stephen signalled the donation of a land by the River Bârlad to a certain Avram Huiban because of "his bravery at the battle with the Turks from upper Vaslui."[942] Supposedly ten years later, in 1485, Stephen issued a new document in gratitude to another Moldavian act of bravery: Maluşca and Cozma Rizan, together with their brothers, received lands by the banks of the Vişnovăţ River in order to establish new settlements. The document stated that these lands were a reward to the four men for their bravery in defending the Moldavian border from Tartar attacks.[943] The third document is the most fascinating one, although it is the less useful from the proto-myth perspective, as it was most likely written sometime in mid-nineteenth century.[944] Dated September 7th 1474, the document accommodates Stephen's orders regarding the imminent Ottoman attack, materialized in the 1475 Battle of Vaslui. Through his boyar Gavril Boldur, Stephen ordered that all Moldavian boyars part of the so-called small host, be prepared for the confrontation. The instructions to the Moldavian soldiers end in a paragraph which not only sums the orders of Stephen, but also sums the way Stephen was perceived in posterity: "Be healthy and merciless, just like your parents and your grandparents were. Have trust … do not be afraid of the pagan multitude…"[945]

A last type of forged documents completes the collection of documents which delineate the image of Stephen the Great in collective memory. A document dated 1480 showed that the Moldavian prince was the establisher of the guild of the poor in the town of Iaşi: "… the poor of the market of Iaşi have gathered … and discussed among us and we were willingly organized in a guild, by the order of the above-mentioned prince, Stephen the old."[946] The good, compassionate, and giving Stephen the Great transpired in this document.

Analyzing these documents altogether, an "imagined" image of the ruler may easily be highlighted: Stephen the Great was the humane protector of the poor, the supreme judge whose decisions were irrefutable, merciful with the helpless and merciless with enemies. Undoubtedly, these characteristics were the intrinsic elements of Stephen's image in the aftermath of his death. Because any type of mythical narrative is the direct result of collective memory processes,[947] this image was also the catalyst for the large amount of legends surrounding the ruler's life and deeds.

---

[941] The extant document is a supposed 1610 translation of an original Slavonic document. However, in 1610, Slavonic documents were not yet translated. See: DRH A.II, 452.

[942] Ibidem, document XIX, 452.

[943] Ibidem, document XXIV, 460.

[944] The document was written in a style which points to nineteenth-century forgery. See more: Ibidem, 452.

[945] See entire document: Ibidem, 450-452, esp. 452.

[946] Ibidem, document XXI, 456.

[947] van Gennep, *La formation des légendes*, 5.

3.4. The legendary

Legends are the most useful tool for demonstrating the existence of the proto-myth. A significant number of legends detail aspects of Stephen the Great's life, some of which can be traced back to the ruler's life, uncovering the veracity of some of these stories.

At the turn of the seventeenth century, Ion Neculce was compiling his "Collection of words." A quarter of the 42 legends present in Neculce's compilation relate to Stephen's reign, a fact which demonstrates the impact he had on collective memory, as well as the reaction of collective memory to his image. Neculce's collection includes two of Stephen's most well-known legends, both of which mingle between truth and legend.

The image of Stephen as righteous judge and protector of the poor also emerges in these legends. The story known as the "The Hillock of Purcel"[948] shows Stephen on a Sunday morning, while going to mass in Vaslui. Once he left his court, he heard a man calling his oxen to plough his land. Surprised that somebody would work on a Sunday, the prince ordered that the man be brought to him. The man named Purcel was ploughing his land ("now known as the Hillock of Purcel")[949] when he was summoned to Stephen. Purcel explained to the ruler that, being a poor man, he had to work on Sundays, especially because his brother did not agree to lend him his plough only on this day of the week. Consequently, Stephen decided to "take the plough of the rich brother and give it to the poor brother, to be his."[950] It has already been shown that this legend seems to have its origin in historical truth:[951] the story was propagated by the P(B)urcel[952] family and was transmitted to Neculce in the seventeenth century by a follower of the family. Surely, while one cannot attest the truthfulness of the entire legend, it is more relevant to highlight the fact that the Purcel family kept the righteous judgement of Stephen in their memory for centuries.

The second legend which broke historical boundaries presented Stephen in an atypical and non-princely situation: a defeated prince who had fallen off his horse. As the fifth legend in Neculce's collection, the story describes the events which took place at the battle of Şcheia, where Stephen was defeated by a claimant to the throne, Peter Hroiot.[953] During this battle, Stephen fell off his horse and was not able to return to safety. In Neculce's version of the events, the boyar Purice

---

[948] See legend number VII in Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte," 16-17.

[949] Ibidem, 17.

[950] Ibidem.

[951] Mircea Ciubotaru, "De la Vilneşti la Movila lui Burcel. Observaţii onomastice şi istorice" [From Vilneşti to the hillock of Burcel. Identity and historical observations], *Arhiva Genealogică* VI (1994): 143–149. See also: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "Ion Neculce şi tradiţiile Putnei" [Ion Neculce and the traditions of Putna] *Analele Putnei* 1 (2005): 55.

[952] The family name was changed into Burcel in the nineteenth century. See: Ciubotaru, "De la Vilneşti la Movila lui Burcel. Observaţii onomastice şi istorice," 143-149.

[953] See information on the Battle of Şcheia in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 235-238.

offered the prince his horse but still he could not mount because "he was a small man."[954] Consequently, the boyar offered that he crouched in front of the horse in such a way that Stephen could step on his back and then mount the horse. "I will crouch into a small hillock"[955] and so he did. Stephen then replied: "Poor Purice, should you and I be able to escape safely, you shall change your name to Movilă (meaning "hillock")."[956] They both escaped and Stephen eventually returned to his throne. The legend said that Stephen rewarded the boyar with a high dignity, as well as with a new name – that of Movilă. Much later, at the end of the sixteenth century, the Movilă family became the ruling family of Moldavia. The legend, in the version presented by Neculce, stressed the connection between Stephen the Great and the new dynasty of the Movilă family. Historical sources however presented a somewhat different image: Purice did help Stephen out of the battle, but only after the prince had spent half a day "among the dead."[957] Moreover, the name-change of Purice was not mentioned in original sources, thus suggesting that Neculce's legend suffered a transformation with the domination of the Movilă family, under whose reign the legend was widespread.[958]

Analyzing these two legends, one may notice two propagation channels for Stephen's image: one popular and another princely. The P(B)urcel family, whose representative was aided by Stephen the Great, was a small family of boyars originating in Lower Moldavia.[959] They propagated among themselves the story of Stephen's righteous judgement for several generations through oral tradition. Oppositely, the legend of Stephen's defeat was propagated at a much higher level, that of the princely court of the Movilă family,[960] and was altered in such a way that it suited the legitimatized discourse of the throne. Surely, both of these channels had their own particularities and interests in propagating the image of Stephen – especially the princely spheres. The genesis of Stephen's public (imagined) image was thus a complex process born on different layers (both legendary and historical) and continuously developed from the time of his death. Additionally, the supernatural surrounding Stephen's death[961] added to the prince's immortality and complemented legends such as those told by Ion Neculce.

All this information leads once more to the discussion on Stephen's designations: he was "the great," suggesting that his close followers were well aware of his immortal dimension. However, his immortal dimension did not only include his "the great" appellative, but others as well – all of which reveal the perception of the prince in the sixteenth century. In 1509, five years after the prince's

---

[954] See legend number V in Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte," 16.
[955] Ibidem.
[956] Ibidem.
[957] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 28.
[958] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 35.
[959] Ciubotaru, "De la Vilneşti la Movila lui Burcel. Observaţii onomastice şi istorice," 147-148.
[960] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 35.
[961] See Chapter II, subchapter "New beginnings: Stephen the Great dies."

death, a monk from the Putna Monastery was naming the ruler "Prince Stephen the Good and the Old."[962] Given the designation "the Old," one would expect the existence of a "Stephen the Young," but as Stephen the Young was only enthroned in 1517, Ştefan Gorovei concluded that "the old" naming must be a synonym for "the great."[963] However, "the old" appellative may also refer to another one of Stephen's dimensions: the wise Stephen, transforming his naming into a legitimate "Prince Stephen the Good and the Wise."

Should one collate all of Stephen's designations in the sixteenth century, three of them would be prominent: the good, the old, and the great. These designations are in opposition to the ones of the seventeenth century, when the image of Stephen slightly changes as he becomes the good, the old, and the saint.[964] By comparing Stephen's cognomina of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, one of them stands out: "the saint." The prince seems to become saint only in the seventeenth century. Thus what happens in the sixteenth century? Is Stephen the Great saint also in the sixteenth century?

4. Stephen, the saint?

Stephen is a saintly hero – a hero considered saint,[965] although not canonized until recently.[966] The parameters for canonization in the Orthodox Church were very broad in the Middle Ages as three main general criteria emerged: orthodoxy; perfection in virtue which could be demonstrated by defending the faith even to the point of death; and evidence of supernatural signs and miracles.[967] Stephen only accomplished the first two criteria, thus he was not sanctified until the end of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the time between his lifetime and canonization allowed the evolution of the idea that Stephen was in fact saint, bestowing on him various saintly characteristics which made the transition from man to saint.

Although lacking any signs of miracles performed during his lifetime or by his tomb after his death, the Prince lived a life imbibed with Christianity: following the Battle of Vaslui, Stephen fasted

---

[962] See: Damaschin Mioc, "Materiale româneşti din arhive străine" [Romanian documents in foreign archives], *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 6 (1973): 333-334.

[963] Of course, after the reign of Stephen the Young, "the old" designation needs no more explanation as rulers such as Peter Rareş, Alexander Lăpuşneanul or the Movilă family frequently use it. See the analysis of the text in: Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 18-19.

[964] See the chronicles of Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin, or Ion Neculce, all cited before. See also: Gorovei, "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări," 19-20.

[965] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 82.

[966] Stephen the Great was canonized on the 20th of June, 1992 by the Romanian Orthodox Church. His sanctification is still contested by many.

[967] James C. Skedros, "Reading the Lives of the Saints" in *Thinking through Faith. New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars*, ed. Aristotle Papanikolaou and Elizabeth H. Prodromou (New York: SVS Press, 2008), 172.

for forty days on water and bread only, he built the Church of Războinei on the bodily remains of those fallen in battle, as well as he attributed all his victories to God while he considered all his defeats divine punishments.[968] Stephen however should not be seen as a man who lived in full piety, but rather as a princely saint beatified for acts of bravery, church building, commissions, while he was also known for un-saintly acts.[969] Altogether, the sanctity of Stephen depended on his very person and personality. Divine kinship was dependent on the corroboration of several elements, not unknown to Stephen's reign: a unique individual, special circumstances, and specific means.[970] Moreover, in order to reach veneration, a prince had to outstrip his predecessors and peers and to rise to extraordinary power.[971] Eventually, his sanctity may easily be seen as a declaration or confirmation of excellence. The previous chapters have already shown the extraordinary nature of Stephen's reign and personality. Not surprisingly, all these factors led to the perception of the prince as an authentic hero-saint.

Stephen the Great continuously supported the Church and had close relationships with certain members of the clergy such as the Metropolitan Teoctist or the Hermit Daniil. Meeting Daniil had a profound impact on the life and accomplishments of the Moldavian prince. Two of the most visible outcomes of the connection between the Daniil and Stephen are the constructions of both the Putna and the Voroneț monasteries.[972] Later narratives show that the relationship between the two men seems to have been much deeper – on a mythological level. Whether the story known as "A collection of words" narrated by Ion Neculce at the turn of the seventeenth century[973] is historically accurate is not important – what is relevant in the following account is that, almost three centuries after his death, the prince was still present in collective memory, in both his heroic and saintly form. Out of the 42 short stories/legends presented by Neculce, 9 of them refer directly to the reign of Stephen, two of which are particularly relevant for the perception of Stephen as a saintly figure. The first story details the relationship and the influence Hermit Daniil had on Stephen: following the

---

[968] Jan Długosz emphasizes some of these aspects in Stephen's reign: "Following this victory [that of Vaslui], Stephen did not become conceited, but he fasted for 40 days with water and bread. And he ordered in the entire principality that nobody should dare to assign this victory to him, but only to God, although everybody knew that the victory of this day was only owed to him." Jan Długosz, "Historia Polonica," in *Portret în cronică*, 164. See also: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 474.

[969] His conflicts with the boyars, sometimes violent, are probably the most thorough example for this.

[970] Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000), 19.

[971] Ibidem.

[972] See a comprehensive study on the life of Hermit Daniil: Constantin Turcu, "Daniil Sihastru. Figură istorică, legendară și bisericească" [Hermit Daniil. Historical, legendary and church character], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie*, 178-192.

[973] Ion Neculce wrote a chronicle of Moldavia together with the so-called "A collection of words." The "Collection" presents a number of 42 stories/legends connected to the history of Moldavia and based on oral tradition – therefore, they are stories "heard from man to man," as the chronicler himself points out. See the collection in: Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte", 13-33.

Battle of Războieni where the prince was defeated by the Ottoman army, Stephen seeks refuge and advice with the hermit. The prince asks Daniil whether he should subdue Moldavia to the Porte. The hermit's answer is definite: no, "the war is his [Stephen's]."[974] Consequently, Stephen returned to the battlefield and upon Ottoman retreat, he built the Monastery of Voroneț, as Daniil asked him to. The relevance of this legend stands in the relationship between the ruler and God, a relationship mediated by Hermit Daniil. Ovidiu Cristea highlights that defeat (such as the one at Războieni, which leaves the prince exhausted) was interpreted as a sign of God's anger for the sins committed by the ruler. Consequently, Stephen seeks a way to reconcile with divinity and thus approaches Daniil, a representative of God. Once the prince comes in contact with the hermit, the reconciliation process begins. Daniil promises Stephen that he will be triumphant, although this comes at a price, or a "gift exchange:"[975] God offers Stephen victory, while Stephen offers God the Monastery of Voroneț.[976]

The other legend narrated by Neculce and connected to the divinity is much shorter, but just as suggestive. The story, second in the line of 42 legends of the "Collection," is accommodated within two telling sentences: "Prince Stephen the Good won many wars. And it is heard from the old and elderly that be built as many churches as many wars he won."[977] This account of the connection between the battles and the churches built is not singular. The Syrian Paul of Aleppo, while passing through Moldavia at the time Neculce was writing his chronicle, reported that Stephen had built 44 churches, equivalent to his military victories.[978] Chronicler Grigore Ureche, decades earlier, was reporting the same number of 44 churches.[979] It thus becomes evident that the legend concerning Stephen's 44 churches[980] was being propagated from Stephen's lifetime.

Both legends of Daniil's advice and that of the 44 churches hint to Stephen's connection to the divine. Both stories intuitively conclude that war led the prince closer to the divine and that there was an interactive relationship between the prince and God. God rewarded Stephen with military

---

[974] Ibidem, 15.

[975] Ovidiu Cristea, "Despre raportul dintre principe şi "omul sfânt" în Ţările Române. Întâlnirea lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Daniil Sihastrul" [The relationship between the prince and the "holy man" in the Romanian Principalities. Stephen the Great meeting Hermit Daniil], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt – Portret în Istorie*, 196.

[976] See the entire interpretation of the meeting between Stephen and Daniil in Neculce's legend: Ibidem, 195-197.

[977] Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte," 13.

[978] "Stephen was a famous hero in war and feared by all. He had 44 campaigns or battles against the Turks, Tartars, Polish and Hungarians. He defeated all of them many times, therefore his name became famous and was feared by all and this was due to his abilities and sharp mind. Among his foundations are 44 monasteries and stone churches." See: Paul of Aleppo in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* VI [Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Principalities], ed. M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Mustafa Ali Mehmet (Bucharest: Ştiinţifică și Academică, 1976), 28-29.

[979] "Prince Stephen ruled for 47 years, two months and three weeks and he built 44 churches…" In: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 66.

[980] It is still uncertain how the counting up to number 44 occurred. It might have happened that more churches, now destroyed, were known in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries when these accounts are dated. See also: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 468-469.

and political success and Stephen showed his gratitude with his church and monastic foundations. But the connections between Stephen's war and the divine were more profound.

On a visual level, the link between Stephen and the saintly world is still visible in Moldavian churches. As a *ktetor*, Stephen had a large number of votive images painted in his church commissions. Some of them are particular however, as the painter (or the *ktetor* himself) seems to have wanted to highlight a familiar and intimate relationship between the prince and the mediator saint of the mural painting. It has already been shown in Chapter II that in two particular votive images, Stephen is guided towards Christ in a visibly friendly way by the mediators of the act of commission (Saint George, respectively Saint Elijah) who affectionately hold the prince by his shoulder and by his hand.[981] This sympathetic relationship between the prince and the divine is also reflected on the battle field, although in a somewhat different way.

In certain military events, saints appear in order to aid the prince and his army: Saint Procopius appears riding his horse above the Battle of Râmnic (1481),[982] while Saint Demetrius also shows himself on a horse at the Battle of Codrii Cozminului (1497).[983] The two accounts of saints riding above the battle fields are dated seventeenth century, thus one may assume that collective memory worked in such a way that it "paired" Stephen with saints in these particular battles. A development of this "pairing" can be traced, highlighting how the collective memory of the sixteenth century transformed facts into myths. Contemporary chronicles date the Battles of Râmnic[984] and Codrii Cozminului,[985] revealing that the celebration of Saint Procopius coincided with the victory of the first battle, while the celebration of Saint Demetrius corresponded to the success of the latter. Thus the concurrence of the saints' days and the military victories (which may or may not have been simple coincidences!)[986] was materialized into the actual physical presence of the saints on the battle field, helping the prince gain victory.

Interestingly, both battles where saints physically appear were led against other Christians (in the Battle of Râmnic, the opposing army was led by the Wallachian Basarab the Young, while at

---

[981] See: Chapter II, subchapter "Stephen's face on walls."

[982] "…it is said that Saint Procopius showed himself to Prince Stephen, mounted above the war and armed as a brave man, being of help to Prince Stephen and offering to support to his army." See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 50.

[983] "… some say that Saint Demetrius had shown himself to Prince Stephen in this war, riding and armed as a brave man, helping him and supporting his army." See: Ibidem, 60.

[984] See: "The Anonymous Chronile of Moldavia," 17; and "The Chronicle of Putna I," 32.

[985] See: "The Chronicle of Putna no. II," 37; "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 20.

[986] Although there is not enough evidence to fully support this theory, chronicles do hint to the fact that, when Stephen could, he paired his battles with saints' celebrations. See the two battles of Râmnic and Codrii Cozminului, as well as the attack against Brăila in 1470 which took place on the Tuesday before the Easter days of fasting and the distribution of flags before the campaign in Wallachia which took place on the feast day of the Archangel Michael. See discussion in: Cristea, "Declanşarea războiului," 123. See also: Gorovei, "Gesta Dei per Stephanum Voievodam," 411-412.

Codrii Cozminului the Moldavians clashed with the Polish army). Relevant battles against the Ottomans (such as those of Vaslui or Războieni) remain silent as to whether Stephen was aided or not by saintly characters. Historians theorized that this plus of "sanctity" in the battles against other Christians should be seen as a justification for the conflict – therefore, in these particular cases, Grigore Ureche, the author of the seventeenth-century chronicle describing these interventions, highlighted that the divine agreed with the violence against Christians.[987]

There was one instance however which attested a type of saintly apparition within Stephen's conflicts with the Ottoman Empire – although not in historical sources but in a legend preserved at Mount Athos. At a certain point of uncertainty in Stephen's struggle against the Ottomans, Saint George appeared to the prince in a dream and encouraged him to start the attack against his enemies. The second day, Stephen, aided by the presence of the saint, clashed with the Ottomans and gained victory.[988]

Therefore one can notice that Stephen had a collection of attributes which eventually led to his canonization: he was a man of faith, who dedicated a considerable amount of his reign to the Church and projects of the Church (commissions, donations), he fasted, he dedicated his victories to the divine, he was thought to be aided by saints and he was even identified with Saint George. However, none of these accounts are as telling as Maciej Stryjkowski and Marcin Bielski's reports. Stryjkowski's exhaustive presentation of the ruler ends in a meaningful assertion: "… because of his unbelievable bravery, they consider him a saint."[989] Bielski's description of Stephen ends in an almost identical argument (as Stryjkowski was probably inspired by Bielski's writings): "…and because of his unbelievable bravery, they call him saint."[990]

Stephen's saintly aura was thus present in the "afterlife" of the ruler ever since the beginning of the sixteenth century. Regardless of the fact that he was only canonized half a millennium after his death, the followers of Stephen and the collective memory they carried seem to have perceived Stephen in all his complexity: as a saintly hero.[991]

---

[987] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 480-481.

[988] Cristea, "Declanşarea războiului," 124-125. See also: Matei Cazacu, *Minuni, vedenii şi vise premonitorii în trecutul românesc* [Miracles, visions and premonition dreams in the Romanian past] (Bucharest: Sigma, 2003), 57; and Damian P. Bogdan, "Quelques témoignages des liens roumano-grecs sous le règne d'Etienne le Grand, prince de Moldavie," *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen* 5 (1967): 122.

[989] Maciej Stryzgowski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 195.

[990] Marcin Bielski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 206.

[991] Stephen the Great's sanctity must be understood in medieval terms. Although throughout Stephen's reign, there are no references to any saintly acts required by a man to gain canonization, Stephen's sanctity should be understood within the sphere of medieval royal kingship. Although human by nature and actions, Stephen should be seen as saintly "because he represented and imitated the image of the living Christ" and he represented the mediation between heaven and earth. See: Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton, 1957), 87-88.

5. Selectiveness: the omissions of Stephen's (proto)myth

As seen in the previous pages, Stephen's qualities ranged from kindness to sainthood, while his flaws encompassed anger and impulsivity. Nonetheless, his qualities prevailed and thus constructed an almost perfect ruler. Stephen's followers remembered him as a hero and perpetuated his memory by embedding it in collective memory, which often forgets failures and sins.[992] Thus, a valid question arises: who was Stephen the man and were his flaws concealed by history?

5.1. A distressing life-time wound

One of Stephen's frantic preoccupations was the conquest of the Fortress of Chilia. As a crucial trading point by the Danube River and in the proximity of the Black Sea, Chilia was a reason for disruptions between Moldavia, Hungary, Wallachia, and the Ottoman Empire throughout the entire fifteenth century. In June 1462, Stephen the Great thought he found the most proper moment to re-conquer the fortress.[993] The attack of the Moldavians was a failure however and the fortress remained unconquered.[994] The defeat at Chilia was Stephen's first military failure which also resulted in a physical mark which he bore until the end of his life: "he was shot by a weapon on his left ankle."[995]

The lists of physicians and doctors who were called to the seat of Suceava in order to heal Stephen's wound,[996] demonstrate that the prince's left ankle never fully stopped tormenting him. Quite the opposite, it was one of the causes of his death.[997] One may assume that following the events of 1462, Stephen was forced to walk aided by a cane, especially as sources hint at his walking disability.[998] Given the circumstances of his health, it would not be highly surprising to discover a

---

[992] Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1 (1989): 5.

[993] Chilia was under Hungarian and Wallachian occupation, with Hungarian guards defending it. In 1462, Mehmed II attacked Vlad the Impaler, the Wallachian prince of the time. Stephen found this moment the most proper one for an attack on Chilia. See the full description of the events, in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 42-44.

[994] It was conquered by Stephen only later, in 1465, under whose domination it remained until 1484, when it was annexed to the Ottoman Empire. See: Ibidem, 51-57 and 213-222.

[995] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 22.

[996] The most famous doctor was Matteo Muriano who came from Venice in the last years of Stephen's life. See his two accounts of the prince and his stay in Suceava, dated 1502 and 1503: *Călători străini în Țările Române I*, 148-154. See the other doctors who were called to heal Stephen in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 423-427.

[997] The wound on Stephen's ankle was aggravated by the end of his life and it was furthermore complemented by blood circulation disorders and gout which affected both his legs. See: Nicolae Vătămanu, *Voievozi și medici de curte* [Princes and court doctors] (Bucharest: Editura enciclopedică, 1972), 44.

[998] The Chronicle of Byhovec mentioned that in the Battle of Codrii Cozminului, Stephen "was very sick with his legs and, wanting to satisfy his will, he forgot about his infirmity and illness, [and] he ordered that he be brought on a sleigh…" See: Chronicle of Byhovec in *Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 235.

frustrated and sometimes embittered ruler, who externalized his feelings according to the "psychology of the impaired."[999] Medical and psychological researchers have demonstrated that there is a crucial connection between physical impairment or chronic pains and psychological distress, especially in the case of leaders.[1000] A ruler suffering from chronic pain, such as Stephen, would most probably have his decisions affected, resulting in "abnormal illness behaviour."[1001] As a leader, he would try to compensate his physical impairment (which he identifies as a weakness), as his capacity to lead is also perceived by means of physical and health conditions.[1002] The same situation is visible with Bogdan III whose eye injury/handicap was not recorded in internal documents and chronicles and about which one can only learn from Polish sources.[1003] A ruler did not want to be perceived as weak, especially not because of a physical distress. It thus becomes unsurprising when a physical problem is occasionally complensated by cruelty or harsh decisions.

In other words, the frustration caused by Stephen's wound may be an alternative for the explanation of his sometimes bitter behaviour and his outbursts which often times had political echoes.[1004] The theory of the embittered ruler is attractive as it may explain several facets of Stephen's behaviour – some of the prince's personal offenses, war-time offenses, or even political offenses. The following subchapters should however not be considered as direct results of his handicap as all these offenses which will be presented are complementary to the attitude of the quintessential medieval ruler, avid for showing his authority and prestige.[1005]

---

[999] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 22.

[1000] See, for instance: Gordon Waddell, Martin Bircher, David Finlayson, Chris J. Main, "Symptoms and signs: physical disease or illness behaviour?," *British Medical Journal* 289 (1984): 739–741. Gordon Waddell, Chris Main, Emyr W. Morris, Michael Paola, Iain Gray, "Chronic Low-Back Pain, Psychologic Distress, and Illness Behavior," *Journal of Spinal Disorders and Techniques* 9 (1984): 183-196. I. Pilowsky, N.D. Spence, "Patterns of Illness Behaviour in Patients with Intractable Pain," *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 19 (1975): 279–287.

[1001] The term 'abnormal illness behaviour' was introduced to characterize syndromes of excessive or inadequate response to symptoms. See: Laurence J. Kirmayer; Karl J. Looper, "Abnormal illness behaviour: physiological, psychological and social dimensions of coping with distress," *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 19 (2006): 54-60.

[1002] The assertion of Franklin D. Roosevelt is relevant in this case: "I will walk without crutches. I will walk into a room without scaring everybody half to death. I will stand easily enough in front of people so that they will forget I am a cripple." Quoted in: Richard L. Bruno, Nancy M. Frick, "The Psychology of Polio as Prelude to Post-Polio Sequelae: Behavior Modification and Psychotherapy," *Orthopedics* 14 (1991): 1186.

[1003] See chapter III, subchapter *3.1.2. Descriptions and representations*.

[1004] Ovidiu Pecican also theorized the idea that Stephen was frustrated by his wound and marked by the psychology of the impaired. See: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 21-25.

[1005] See, for instance, a case study on medieval royal violence: Anne McKim, "Scottish National Heroes and the Limits of Violence," in *"A Great Effusion of Blood"? Interpretin Medieval Violence*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Thiery, Oren Falk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

5.2. Political/trading offences

A bitter attitude is sometimes visible in some of Stephen's actions. Two Genoese documents issued in 1467 and 1468 relate and complain about the prince's attitude towards Genoese merchants passing through the Moldavian principality. On the 18th of January 1468, the former Consul of Caffa, Gregorio de Reza, issued a thorough complaint against Stephen the Great, addressed to the Genoese authorities.[1006] Having his mandate as Consul of Caffa terminated in December 1465,[1007] Gregorio de Reza was to return to Genoa by travelling through Moldavia. The document described that during Gregorio's mandate, the trading relationship between Moldavia, Caffa, and the Consul were highly positive. This is the reason why Gregorio de Reza was surprised that when he first asked the Moldavian prince for a safe-conduct pass through Moldavia for his return trip to Genoa, Stephen refused to issue it. On a second plea for the safe-conduct pass, Gregorio was told that he did not need a pass and that he would find a "letera de paso"[1008] to collect at the Fortress of Akkerman. Consequently, Gregorio accompanied by his retinue passed through all of Moldavia without incidents, until they reached the border for exit. Upon exiting, the group was stopped and had all of their belongings confiscated. They were afterwards brought in front of Stephen the Great who accused them of not having presented themselves in front of him while passing through his principality.[1009] They replied that they were not informed by the boyars of Akkerman that an official visit was required, especially as they did not pass by the close proximity of the prince. Disregarding their arguments, Stephen imprisoned them and allowed them to be submitted to "deadly torture"[1010] administered by two or three of his men. Eventually, with intervention from Caffa and the Khan of the Crimean Tartars, they were released[1011] (without their goods however, which remained in the possession of the Moldavians), but not before Stephen warned them that he is bestowing on them great mercy by not killing them.[1012]

[1006] The full letter in: *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* III [Documents and fragments concerning the history of Romanians III], ed. Nicolae Iorga (Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1897), 42-45.

[1007] Ştefan Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>" [The Genoese on the "Moldavian road"], in *In honorem Ioan Caproşu. Studii de istorie* [In honorem Ioan Caproşu. Studies of history], ed. Lucian Leuştean, Maria Magdalena Székely, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Petronel Zahariuc (Iaşi: Polirom, 2002), 214.

[1008] *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* III, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 43.

[1009] "Vaivoda me dixe: <perche non eramo andati davanti ala soa segnoria?>". See: Ibidem, 44.

[1010] "… ne missero a suplicio de morte." See: Ibidem.

[1011] See more on their release in: Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 215.

[1012] "… lo qualle Vaivoda manda per noi e ne dixe che grande gracia ne faxevia a scanparne la vita." See: *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* III, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 44.

The second document, dated May 1467, recalled similar events which also took place while Gregorio de Reza and his men were retained in Moldavia.[1013] Another group of three Genoese merchants (also belonging to the retinue of Gregorio de Reza) were stopped while attempting to exit Moldavia at the Fortress of Hotin.[1014] The chances of this second group were however not as fortunate as those arrested with Gregorio de Reza: although they held both a general safe-conduct pass[1015] and a letter of passing, the three men were brought in front of Stephen and sentenced to death. Nevertheless, after all their belongings and valuables (adding up to 2000 ducats) were confiscated, they were eventually allowed to buy their freedom back.[1016] However, only two of them survived the Moldavian imprisonment as one of them died because of the treatment received in Moldavia.[1017]

Stephen's attitude was positive and permissive at first, but was then followed by an abrupt change of reaction. This almost "bipolar" attitude against the Genoese has no other known term of comparison in the history of Moldavia and there is only one instance when foreign messengers are known to have radically diverted their route in order to present themselves to the prince[1018] (thus indicating a possible ritual of presenting oneself to the ruler). Then how should this situation be explained? Moldavia's role in Eastern European trading had a significant impact on the outcome of the Moldavian-Genoese relationship. Stephen's attitude has been explained as reflecting the prince's policy of trying to impose Moldavia as a significant power in the Black Sea region.[1019] This policy implied the fact that high dignitaries (such as Gregorio de Reza) passing through Moldavia were supposed to present themselves in front of the prince in sign of recognition of his sovereignty.[1020] This hypothesis explains the reaction of the ruler. One exception arises though: did Stephen need to

---

[1013] See the reproduction of the original document in: Ştefan Andreescu, "Un nou act genovez cu privire la Ştefan cel Mare – A New Genoese Document about Stephen the Great," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 132-136.

[1014] As this group of men was also part of Gregorio de Reza's retinue, this document clarifies the location of all the Genoese men's arrest: the Fortress of Hotin. See: Andreescu, "Un nou act genovez cu privire la Ştefan cel Mare," 135.

[1015] While Gregorio de Reza was Consul at Caffa, Stephen the Great had sent him a safe-conduct pass to allow all the Genoese of Caffa to safely pass through Moldavia at any time. See: *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* III, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 43.

[1016] See the original description in: Andreescu, "Un nou act genovez cu privire la Ştefan cel Mare", 133-134. See a discussion of these events in: Idem, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 216.

[1017] Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 216.

[1018] In April 1598, a Wallachian-Transylvanian messenger, together with a messenger of the Crimean Khan, both coming from Crimea, did not simply pass through Moldavia: although they entered Moldavia in the southern part, they went all the way up to Suceava, presenting themselves to the prince. This resulted in an almost two-month delay. See: Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 217.

[1019] Ibidem.

[1020] Ibidem. It also seems that the custom of presenting oneself in front of the prince is a long-term Moldavian custom, borrowed from the Byzantine Empire. See: Andreescu, "Un nou act genovez cu privire la Ştefan cel Mare," 136.

apply "deadly torture"[1021] on the Genoese who disregarded his sovereignty? Ever since the beginning of the fifteenth century, Moldavia had a significant role in the trading route from the Black Sea to the west and Suceava was declared in 1408 one of the centres where trading goods were to be disembarked.[1022] Stephen's attitude thus must be explained as part of his support to Moldavia as important actor in the East to West trading route. Nevertheless, the fact that Stephen's frustration was triggered when his sovereignty and authority were minimized by a dignitary who did not act in the expected manner, should not be overlooked.

5.3. Personal offences

Legends represent one of the people's methods of constructing and disseminating memory. Historical legends are often times related to actual events, although historical sources may have lost track of those events. Some of the legends collected by Ion Neculce are rooted in historical reality, as it has already been shown in this chapter. One of these legends alludes to the behaviour of a ruler marked by an impetuous need of positive image.

The third legend in Neculce's collection tells the story of the establishment of Putna Monastery. Supposedly, in order to decide on the placement of the monastery, the prince shot his arrow from the top of a hill deciding that the altar would be built on the place his arrow landed. Alongside with Stephen, a few boyars and children were also asked to shoot their arrows. One of the children disturbingly shot farther than the prince himself. As a consequence, Stephen had him decapitated and had a "stone pillar" built close to the monastery, on the place where his life was taken. When relating the story, Neculce makes reference to the propagation method of the legend: "… this is what people tell"[1023] – thus the legend of the cruel prince was circulated in sixteenth-century Moldavia.

This legend is not particularly relevant for the un-shown and forgotten image of the ruler, but rather for the importance given by Stephen to appearances. When the child shot his arrow farther than Stephen, the prince was seen (or saw himself) in an inferior position: the "great" was weaker than the "small." The fact that Stephen was so disturbed by the child's potential, shows the prince's concern for his own positive and intact image.[1024]

[1021] *Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor* III, ed. Nicolae Iorga, 44.
[1022] A privilege issued by the Moldavian Prince Alexander the Good in 1408 indicated that Suceava was a mandatory centre of disembarkment. See: Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 210.
[1023] Ion Neculce, "O samă de cuvinte," 14.
[1024] See also: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 19.

5.4. War-time offences

War was a condition of the medieval ruling group and rulers fought and organized their men to fight because war advanced their social position: it fulfilled the will of God who expressed His blessing by making them victorious, as well as it increased the ruler's and the upper class' material wealth and political prestige.[1025] Not surprisingly, Stephen was a "champion"[1026] of war whose political prestige grew with every conflict, but whose wars, as expected, did not avoid abusive behaviours. Some of the war-time actions linked directly to the ruler sometimes unveil the personality of an embittered prince. While chronicler Ureche characterized Stephen as "a warrior whose heart was always attracted by spilling of blood,"[1027] contemporary Antonio Bonfini believed Stephen was simply "bedevilled and cruel."[1028]

Contemporary chronicles do not detail the 1470 siege of the Wallachian borough of Brăila, as most of the accounts sum the fact that the borough was plundered and burnt.[1029] Except for the Moldavian-German Chronicle which tells that "… he [Stephen] spilled a lot of blood and burnt the entire borough of Brăila and not even unborn children were left alive as he slit the breast of the mothers and took the children out…"[1030] Grigore Ureche later on developed this account while stressing the personality of Stephen and the impact it had on the Battle of Brăila: "as the human reaction of craving the most that which one does not have, Stephen was not satisfied with what he had, and because of greed, he wanted to own that which was not his."[1031] Of course, taking these events out of context and solely highlighting the atrocities caused by the Moldavians in the Wallachian territory would be a mistake. But one should not omit the fact that these were most likely the consequences to the Wallachian ruler's incursion in Moldavia: in the summer of 1469, Radu the Fair attacked Moldavia, trying (unsuccessfully) to re-conquer the Fortress of Chilia from Stephen.[1032] Within this context, the words of chronicler Ureche receive an alternative interpretation. Moldavia and Wallachia were engaged in an escalating conflict for supremacy over the Lower Danube and Black Sea trading system in which Chilia played a major role. Consequently, Stephen attacked Wallachia in 1470 in order to "silent" Wallachia's most powerful trading point by the Danube,

---

[1025] Antonio Santosuosso, *Barbarians, Marauders, and Infidels. The Ways of Medieval Warfare* (Oxford: Westview Press, 2004), 2.

[1026] See: Chapter II, subchapter "The Pope: Stephen, The Champion of Christ."

[1027] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 36.

[1028] Antonio Bonfini, "Historia Pannonica ab origine gentis ad annum 1495," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 208.

[1029] See: "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 15; "The Chronicle of Putna I" in Ibidem, 30; "The Chronicle of Putna II," 34; "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," 42.

[1030] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 23.

[1031] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 40.

[1032] Şerban Papacostea, "Relaţiile internaţionale ale Moldovei în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie*, 522-523.

Brăila,[1033] and to thus guide the entire trading activities to his Chilia Fortress.[1034] Returning to Ureche's words, one may discuss a certain amount of greed, but not in the sense of greed for the wealth of Brăila, but for the wealth achievable by the fall of Brăila. Nevertheless, while the attack on Brăila is easily explainable,[1035] the massacre of women and children may still be subject for further discussion on Stephen's psychology.

The same Moldavian-German Chronicle portrays another incident with Radu the Fair. In 1473, Stephen made his decisive move on the prince of Wallachia: he attacked, dethroned, and replaced him with a Moldavian ally,[1036] while he imprisoned his wife and only daughter in Moldavia, at his seat in Suceava.[1037] The chronicle explains that four days after his defeat, Radu tried a counter-offensive with the help of 6000 Wallachians, enforced by 7000 Ottoman soldiers. Faced with a new conflict, "Stephen manly headed towards them … destroyed them, and those whom he caught alive, he impaled through their navels, crosswise one above the other."[1038] While this account matches medieval war-time offenses and one should not be surprised by this type of slaughtering, Maciej Miechowschi offers an additional spectacular description of how Stephen used to handle his prisoners: "And Stephen, the prince of Moldavia, used to take out the bowels of his prisoners in order to see what they had eaten, others he used to hang and cut into pieces. Some he killed by means of terrible death, so that nothing would remain of their bodies."[1039]

5.5. A daunting fall

The horse was an indispensable element of a medieval ruler's image, especially as it was an integral (yet unofficial) part of his regalia.[1040] The image of the king necessarily bore (alongside with aspects

---

[1033] However, not only Brăila was attacked with the occasion of this campaign. Târgul de Floci and Ialomiţa, another two crucial trading points by the Danube were also besieged and burnt. See the evolution of the campaign: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 76-77.

[1034] See more: Papacostea, "Relaţiile internaţionale ale Moldovei," 522-524.

[1035] Stephen himself "explained" this military campaign against Wallachia with the help of a symbolic gesture: he started the attack on what "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia" called "cheese Tuesday," meaning the last Tuesday before the beginning of the Easter Fast. A significant number of battles initiated by Stephen took place on saints' or feast days. All these military offensives were exclusively initiated against other Christians (Polish, Wallachians), hinting to the fact that the date of the beginning of the conflict was seen as a symbol for having God's approval for the war. See: Cristea, "Declanşarea războiului," 123-124.

[1036] Radu the Fair was replaced by Stephen with Basarab Laiotă. See: "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 24.

[1037] Radu's daughter Maria would later on become Stephen's third and last wife who would give birth to his heir to the throne, Bogdan III. See: Ibidem.

[1038] Ibidem, 24-25.

[1039] Maciej Miechowschi, "Chronica Polonorum," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 173.

[1040] Sergio Bertelli, *The King's Body. Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 98.

regarding judicial and economical obligations) the aspect of chivalry,[1041] of the mounted, combatant king.

The ruler on horseback was triumphant, while the ruler off horse was either subdued, defeated, or in danger – depending on the circumstances of his dismount. Marcin Bielski described the events of 1485 at Colomeea, when Stephen the Great laid his oath of loyalty to the Polish king, Casimir IV Jagiellon. What is of particular interest with this account is the excerpt regarding Stephen's dismounting: "Stephen came riding on an adorned horse, and after he dismounted, the king's courtiers surrounded him and guided him to the king."[1042] Another[1043] description of this ritual is offered by Bernard Wapowski who completes the ceremonial: "… and Stephen also arrived, with the leaders of his people, in great pomp. When he approached the royal tent, he was separated from his men by a line of Polish riders. Dismounting, he was guided into the tent…"[1044] Studying the accounts of the Colomeea Oath, one can sketch the grandeur of the prince on horseback, the heavy horse gear and embellishment, suggesting a ruler in victory. Opposed to this image is the act of dismounting in front of the Polish king which is the first symbolic gesture of the ritual to suggest the outcome of the ceremony: Moldavia's subdual.

The Colomeea accounts are however not the only ones which show Stephen in chivalric glory. A Lithuanian chronicle details a military clash between Stephen and Ibrahim Pasha[1045] in which the image of the Moldavian prince on horseback dominates the scene. "With his mace and spear,"[1046] Stephen defeats the Pasha in a triumphant gesture: "Stephen rode his horse by his [the Pasha's] side; he stuck his spear into his [the Pasha's] neck, and carried him like that to his Moldavians."[1047] When analysing this source, Ovidiu Cristea points to the fact that the portrayal of Stephen is an allegory meant to symbolize victory, similarly to the image of the Byzantine emperor on horse which is known to have been a major symbol for imperial triumph.[1048]

When on horse, Stephen, just like other medieval rulers, was the embodiment of victory. Riding was however a high-risk activity which often times ended tragically or at least dramatically: Frankish king Louis III hit his head while chasing a girl on horseback, King Alfonso I of Portugal was

---

[1041] Jacques le Goff, *Héros et Merveilles du Moyen Âge* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 96. See also: Dominique Barthélemy, "Qu'est-ce que la chevalerie, en France aux Xe et XIe siècles?," *Revue Historique* 290 (1993): 17.

[1042] Marcin Bielski, "Kronika Polska," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 200.

[1043] Certainly, these two accounts mentioned here are not the only ones related to the oath of Colomeea. Jan Dlugoz, Martim Cromer, and the Ambassador of Queen Elisabeth to Poland also presented it. For a discussion of the last account, see: Victor Eskenasy, "Omagiul lui Ştefan cel Mare de la Colomeea. Note pe marginea unui ceremonial medieval" [The Oath of Stephen the Great at Colomeea. Observations of a medieval ceremonial], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie*, 440-459.

[1044] Bernard Wapowski, "Chronicorum Partem Posteriorem," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 177.

[1045] The portrayal of the chronicle is most likely an imagined one. See: Cristea, "Declanşarea războiului," 125.

[1046] Quoted by Ovidiu Cristea in: Ibidem.

[1047] Ibidem, 126.

[1048] See the discussion on the text in: Ibidem: 125-126.

severely injured in a fall from his horse in 1167 during a battle, Serbian king Stefan Dragutin broke his leg in 1282 after falling off his horse which led to him surrendering his rule to Stefan Milutin.[1049] Stephen the Great was also among the rulers who had an unfortunate equestrian accident: during the Battle of Şcheia in March 1486, Stephen fell off his horse and was unable to mount back. The Chronicles written at Putna all flatly mention that Stephen fell off his horse but he remained uninjured.[1050] The Moldavian-German Chronicle however details the entire event: "… and Prince Stephen fell off his horse and he lay among the dead from morning until noon. Then a boyar named Purice came riding, who recognized Prince Stephen. Then he took the prince out of there…"[1051] The fact that all the official chronicles of Putna are reluctant to reveal the entire line of events of that morning suggest once more the care that Stephen had for his own image: the name of the saviour Purice is not mentioned in official chronicles because the image of a startled and disoriented prince did not match that of a great ruler.

Nevertheless, one should assume that Stephen was disoriented and frightened while alone and "among the dead" on the battlefield of Şcheia. The fact that he could not lift himself up and leave is another indication for the terrifying situation in which the ruler found himself. The inability to move is an indication that the prince was severely injured.[1052] Stephen however soon regained his control and won the battle. Schedel's German Version of the Chronicle of Stephen the Great points to a symbolic gesture for recovery: once Purice found him fallen on the ground, the chronicle recalls that "the prince then left on his horse."[1053] Mounting back on his horse, Stephen became once more the authoritative and imposing prince. The fall was however not left without any consequences, especially personal ones reflected in the artistic choices of Stephen after 1486. The first 30 years of Stephen reign were dominated by the construction and reconstruction of fortresses and princely courts.[1054] The 1487-1503[1055] time span however, gave birth to what is called "the Moldavian style in

---

[1049] For all these accounts and more, see: Irina Metzler, *A Social History of Disability in the Middle Ages. Cultural Considerations of Physical Impairment* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 52-53.

[1050] "In this war, Prince Stephen fell off his horse, but God watched over him and he remained unharmed." See: "The Chronicle of Putna I," 32. "And in that war, Prince Stephen fell off his horse, God watched over him." See: "The Chronicle of Putna II," 36. Almost the exact account is to be found in "The Romanian Translation of the Chronicle of Putna" in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 40.

[1051] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 28.

[1052] Another theory was however indicated for Stephen's inability to move: the fall off the horse was connected to the prince's ankle wound gained in 1462. Because of the wound, Stephen may have not been able to mount back on his horse therefore he remained helpless until Purice came to aid him. See: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 21; and Vladimir Beşleagă, "Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare - Versiunea germană a lui Schedel – The Chronicle of Stefan the Great - German version of Schedel," *Contrafort* 115-116 (2004): 17.

[1053] *Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare. Versiunea germană a lui Schedel*, ed. Ion Const. Chiţimia, 68.

[1054] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 10.

[1055] The church building programmememe started in 1487 with the Church of Pătrăuţi and ended in 1503 with the beginning of the construction for the Church of Reuseni.

medieval architecture,"[1056] a period in which even two or three churches/monasteries were built per year, at Stephen's commission.[1057] Asking himself why the sudden shift in the prince's architectural programmeme, Ştefan Gorovei made an appealing psychological connection between the church-building period and the horse fall of 1486. As it often happens during dramatic moments in any person's life, Stephen might have made a vow during his ordeal "among the dead," promising to dedicate his time to the divine if he were to be saved.[1058] Although there is no proof to validate this hypothesis, later examples show that such vows were indeed made by Moldavian princes. During the emotional events of 1538, when Moldavia was invaded by the Ottoman army, Peter Rareş retreated to the Bistriţa Monastery. A document dated 1546 reveals the prince's reaction to the impossible situation:

> Then, seeing that I cannot withstand them, I left the soldiers and, running, I arrived at the Bistriţa Monastery and I entered the church and I fell down in front of the holy icons and I cried a lot. And with me, the Father Superior with the clergy cried with ardent tears. And I promised Christ and His Holy Mother that, should I return to the seat of my empire, I would rebuild this holy church from the ground.[1059]

Stephen's fall was disturbing and his reaction must have been similar to that of his son Peter in 1538. Although they were both emotionally affected by these events, they were both able to "get back on the saddle." One may even argue that regaining control is a dynastic trait as Alexander Lăpuşneanul also had a startling equestrian accident, although with no emotional consequences: the Chronicle of Eftimie tells that Alexander, "embraced by the warmth of love of God,"[1060] decided to commission his Slatina Monastery, but before the building process started, he went to select the best site for its construction. While on his way, by the Moldova River, "his horse tripped and the prince completely fell into the water; the river was swollen then."[1061]

Lăpuşneanul's fall was just as little exploited in contemporary sources as was Stephen's fall. The fall was firstly an "omission" ordered by Stephen, before it became one of the "omissions" of Stephen's (proto)myth. The omissions presented in this subchapter show that Stephen "filtered" himself his image, influencing the development of his myth.

[1056] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din Moldova*, 12.

[1057] Almost 30 monastic edifices were built during this period. See: Ibidem, 11.

[1058] See the full explanation in: Gorovei, "Gesta Dei per Stephanum Voievodam," 409-410.

[1059] See the original text in: *Moldova în epoca feudalismului. Documente slavo-moldoveneşti* [Moldavia during feudalism. Moldavian-Slavic documents] I, ed. P. Gh. Dmitriev, D. M. Dragnev, E. M. Russev, P. V. Sovetov (Chişinău: Ştiinţa, 1961). The text also quoted in: Gorovei, "Gesta Dei per Stephanum Voievodam," 409.

[1060] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 221.

[1061] Ibidem.

6. The outcome of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries: a "filtered" prince

Stephen the Great was good and bad, loving and cruel, Christian and wicked. While these dichotomies made Stephen a complete human being, the negative aspects of his life were broadly "filtered" and the proto-myth was thus born. In order for the proto-myth to exist, Stephen's failures and somewhat darker sides needed to fall into oblivion. Although the impact of his health condition on some of his actions remains debatable, some contemporary sources do connect the ruler's oppressive behaviour to his failures. A Polish document associated Stephen's defeat at Războieni with his behaviour and with the attitude of his own people.[1062] The document explained that "this entire Principality of Moldavia and its people openly objected to the ruler's tyranny and cruelty of his taunts,"[1063] suggesting that Stephen's tyrannical attitude was one of reasons behind the sultan's campaign in Moldavia in 1476.[1064] Regardless of such sources which are highly scarce, contemporary chroniclers and historians managed to refine Stephen's image so that he was transformed into the great warrior, leader, and even saint extant in past and present collective memory. Thus the importance of the real man (regardless of his tyrany) lessened starting with the sistxeenth century when Stephen entered the realm of myth and received the specific aura of the super-rulers to be remembered in posterity.

[1062] See: Cristea, "Despre raportul dintre principe şi "omul sfânt," 195.

[1063] *Războieni. Cinci sute de ani de la campania din 1476* [Războieni. Five hundred years since 1476], ed. Manole Neagoe (Bucharest: Direcţia Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1977), document no. 32, 185.

[1064] "Quod nequaquam contra gentem, sed adversus gentis walachie tam inmanem tortorem in tanto robore dumtaxat adventasset et, ne singillatim singula attingere oporteat, Turcus ipse non solum armis, sed eciam, si possibile foret ipsis coloribus Stefanum wayvodam conficere machinatur." See: Ibidem and Cristea, "Despre raportul dintre principe şi "omul sfânt," 195 (footnote 13).

Chapter V

Shifts and Changes
The Verification of the Proto-Myth

All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy;
for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves.
Anatole France

The reign of Stephen the Great created a transformative revolution which changed Moldavia from a marginalized principality into a demarginalized and relevant political actor of Central-Eastern Europe. Stephen took Moldavia out of shade, out of its "European corner," and placed it on the map of important European military and economic entities. For the period of the second half of the fifteenth century, Moldavia, its stability, and its prosperity, were identified with Stephen the Great to the point where one could argue that Moldavia *was* Stephen and vice-versa. This identification was reinforced by the statement made by Hungarian King Ladislas II in 1504, shortly after Stephen's death: he ordered the nobles of Maramureş in Northern Transylvania to prepare for military conflicts because they may need to enter Moldavia and stop any enemy who might endanger the integrity of Moldavia.[1065] In other words, following Stephen's death, Moldavia started to be perceived differently: it was vulnerable.

Was this vulnerability of Moldavia the only perceivable change after Stephen's death? How different did the principality become once it lost its ruler? This chapter will ponder on the various changes which occurred after Stephen's passing in 1504 and will analyze a few instances of the "before and after" situation created when the ruler's life ended: the image of the ideal prince, the image of the hero, and the models used by Stephen and his successors, and the Moldavian perception of the Ottoman enemy. By evaluating these instances, the dimension of the prince's impact and influence may be better understood, as well as the birth of the proto-myth.

1. The ideal sovereign during Stephen's reign and afterwards: the beautiful prince and the model of his economy

Chapters II and IV have already shown the dimension of Stephen the Great – the man, the myth, the image. The prince possessed qualities and attributes which propelled him to the status of ideal ruler. He was chosen by God to rule; he brought Moldavia stability, prosperity, and eventually peace; he

---

[1065] Ladislas was fearing that the integrity of one of his vassal territories would be jeopardized. See the original letter in: Hurmuzaki II.2, document no. CCCCXXIII, 525.

was righteous and he defended his subjects and their lands; he supported the Church and the development of arts and culture.[1066] It has also been shown that Stephen entered the realm of myth shortly after his death, while his "huge moral authority"[1067] placed his name among those of ideal monarchs.

Fig. 35: Stephen the Great wearing his crown and red shoes. Votive image, St. Nicholas Church in Dorohoi (commissioned during the reign of Peter Rareş).
Image source: http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Tablouri-votive-s6-ss22-c4.htm (accessed: September 26, 2014)

Stephen was also visually idealized and although he died at a significantly mature age (over 60, possibly even older than 65),[1068] his depictions regularly represented him as a beautiful and often times young man. In all his representations,[1069] his body is a symbol for his power and hierarchic status: Stephen is magnificent, beautiful, and strong.[1070] His physical characteristics are all idealized

---

[1066] For all these attributes and their indication in contemporary sources, see: Chapter II.

[1067] Ştefan Gorovei and Maria M. Székely thoroughly discussed the "ideal" aspect of Stephen's reign: the fact that he descended from the Muşatin dynasty which assured his legitimacy, his marriage alliances, his military qualities, his political flair, and his close relation to the Church contributed to the "ideal" image of the ruler. See: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 543.

[1068] As it has already been explained in chapter I, Stephen's age when he received the Moldavian throne is unknown. He must have been however around the age of 20, which leads to the conclusion that he must have been above the age of 60 when he died, in 1504. See also: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 539.

[1069] There are six preserved votive images in churches and monasteries commissioned both during his lifetime and in the sixteenth century (in the Church of St. Elijah in Suceava, in the Monastery of Voroneţ, the Church of St. Nicholas in Rădăuţi, the Monastery of Pătrăuţi, the St. Nicholas Church in Dorohoi, and the Monastery of Dobrovăţ), two representations on stoles originating from the Pătrăuţi and Dobrovăţ monasteries, one representation on the Crucifixion Veil of the Putna altar door, and another in the manuscript of the Gospels of Humor. See: Chapter II, subchapter "One shall not… forget the prince's face!"

[1070] The representation of the royal or noble body in the Middle Ages was always along the lines of beauty and strength, as opposed to the body of the peasant which was rather ugly and wretched. See: Shulamith Shahar,

while his princely vestments enhance his dignity with their details, embroideries, and applied precious stones. Just as importantly, his crown, and his sometimes still visible red shoes [Fig. 35] complete the image of an authoritative and perfect prince. Just like divinity and divine authority was represented in the Middle Ages through the image of youth and beauty,[1071] royal authority was represented with the same physical attributes. Moreover, beauty was chivalric,[1072] thus the representation of Stephen as a graceful man was natural, regardless of the fact that little is known of his actual, non-officially-adjusted appearance.[1073] The same grace and chivalric beauty is visible in the votive portraits of Stephen's close successors – in fact, the entire portraiture of the first half of the sixteenth century was inspired by the figure and portraits of Stephen the Great,[1074] suggesting his growing mythological dimension.

Stephen and his followers were thus represented with the image of beautiful flawless rulers who were to radiate the same beauty outside their bodies – in the relationship with the principality, their subjects, their allies, and even their enemies.

Stephen's painted beauty was indeed reflected in the way he ruled Moldavia. While his subjects must have appreciated his successful military enterprises, Stephen's most applauded act (which elevated him to the status of ideal ruler in the eyes of his people) was the stability and economical abundance he brought to Moldavia. The economical factor is decisive in a ruler's perception: a carefree life and fiscal generosity always positively influence the perception of a ruler, most often transforming him into an esteemed personality who not only understands the needs of his subjects but who also cares for their well-being.[1075] The fact that Stephen eased the taxes of certain subjects[1076] and the fact that a type of "financial relaxation"[1077] was perceived all throughout Moldavia contributed to Stephen's image as ideal sovereign: regardless of the name of the man occupying the throne, regardless of image and his "beautiful" representations in votive images, what mattered most for the subjects was their living conditions.[1078]

Growing Old in the Middle Ages. "Winter Clothes Us in Shadow and Pain", trans. Yael Lotan (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 37.

[1071] All throughout the Middle Ages, God was portrayed as young and handsome (only during the Renaissance, God the Father appeared as a dignified-looking old man). Similarly, the representations of Christ and the Virgin Mary always showed them as young and beautiful (even during the crucifixion, when Mary must have been at least 50, she was portrayed often as a young woman). See more in: Ibidem, 52-53.

[1072] Ibidem, 52.

[1073] The most well-known aspect of his physical appearance is his height: "This Prince Stephen was not a tall man." See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 66.

[1074] Solcanu, "Portretul lui Ştefan cel Mare în pictura epocii sale. Noi consideraţii," 129.

[1075] Székely, "Monarhul ideal în imaginarul evului mediu," 291.

[1076] Chapter V explained that Stephen brought to Moldavia a significant number of Szekler and Polish colonizers whom he offered lands and financial advantages. See: subchapter "The Colonizer."

[1077] Székely, "Monarhul ideal în imaginarul evului mediu," 293.

[1078] See more on this idea in: Eadem.

While the successors followed the "recipe" of Stephen's physical appearance in their votive portraits, did they also succeed in following his economic "recipe," keeping Moldavia's prosperity on a balanced level? While a positive answer to this question would lead to the conclusion that Stephen was a model for his successors, who imposed an efficient and long-lasting economic system, a negative answer would explain Stephen's fast propagation into mythical immortality: living in unfavourable economic conditions after Stephen's death, the Moldavians would have sought a return to the economic golden age established by the great ruler, elevating his figure to mythical dimensions.

Fifteenth-century Moldavia (just like Wallachia) was a less developed principality when compared to other contemporary Western and Central European states – it was a poorly inhabited territory with small towns, insufficiently developed from a technological, agricultural, and production point of view.[1079] Nevertheless, during the second half of the fifteenth century, it benefited from an economic growth, especially because of the trading routes which transited Moldavia between Europe and the Black Sea region, such as those of the Genoese.[1080] Moldavia was thus integrated in an international system of trading which brought a certain amount of profit to the principality and allowed it to develop.[1081] This development was stopped however in the sixteenth century, when political circumstances deterred Moldavia's economic opportunities.

After Stephen's death in 1504, his internal and external policies were not interrupted but were continued by both his son and grandson and their Royal Councils which were largely comprised of the same members as Stephen's Council was.[1082] Although the pressure of the boyars was high and significant conflicts intervened between the central power and the nobility,[1083] economic stability was not affected up until Peter Rareş's deposition. When Peter returned to the throne for the second time and had Alexander Cornea dethroned, his subjects rejoiced at the perspective of regaining their stability: "The people left this Alexander who lacked energy and who did not defend the weak from the powerful, and joined Peter, their first prince, who used to defend them against the injustice of the powerful."[1084] Defending the weak from the powerful essentially referred to the care of the ruler for the financial well-being of his subjects, a fact which was not as destabilized by Cornea's

---

[1079] Murgescu, *Ţările Române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa creştină*, 303.

[1080] See: Andreescu, "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>," 204-221.

[1081] Murgescu, *Ţările Române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa creştină*, 304.

[1082] See details on Bogdan III and Stephen the Young's reigns in: Chapter III, subchapter "Stephen's Princely Group."

[1083] See especially the conflict of 1528 between Stephen the Young and his boyars: Ibidem.

[1084] *Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1531-1552* [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1531-1552], II, Part 4, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, ed. Nic. Densuşianu (Bucharest: 1894), document no. CXLVIII, 279 (henceforth: Hurmuzaki II.4)

interruption of Peter's reign, as it was by the growing influence of the Ottoman Empire in Moldavia throughout the entire sixteenth century.

A number of causes led to the increased influence of the Ottoman Empire in Moldavia. External factors such as the defeat of the Hungarians at Mohács,[1085] the Polish-Ottoman alliances,[1086] the inflation in Ottoman economy,[1087] coupled with internal factors such as Peter Rareş's "disobedience" which ended with his dethronement in 1538,[1088] resulted in a fiscal load on the Moldavian princes whose consequences were widely felt by the Moldavian subjects. Although the principality never lost its special political status as vassal to the Ottomans[1089] (which granted it a certain amount of independence), the Empire undermined Moldavia by two means: it occupied a few of its relevant economic centres[1090] and it deepened its political control over Moldavian rulers – meaning that the annual tribute paid by the princes in order to safeguard the principality's independence was significantly increased.[1091] Consequently, while the tribute was no more than 2.000 ducats in 1456, it was raised by the end of the sixteenth century to 66.000 ducats.[1092] Additionally, the Moldavian princes paid the rather unofficial *peşkeşler* contribution when they mounted the throne, which often times exceeded the amount paid as official tribute – additionally, given the fact that by the second half of the sixteenth century the Moldavian princes were frequently changed, the Moldavian (but also Wallachian) *peşkeşler* started to be regarded as an almost official annual tribute to the Empire.[1093]

[1085] For a succinct presentation of the Battle of Mohács, see: Miklós Molnár, *A Concise History of Hungary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 84-86 and 87-88.

[1086] Such as the peace treaties signed between Poland and the Ottoman Empire in 1525, 1528, and the "perpetual" peace treaty of 1533. See: Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State. 1386-1795* (*A History of East Central Europe* IV) (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2001), 49.

[1087] As the inflation only affected the Ottoman *akçe*, the Ottomans raised the payments done in ducats – such as the payments of the Moldavians. See more: Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule. 1354-1804* (*A History of East Central Europe* V) (Washington: University of Washington Press, 1996), 121.

[1088] For the presentation of the circumstances which led to the Sultan's campaign in Moldavia and Peter's dethronement, see: Chapter III, subchapter "Peter Rareş."

[1089] This status implied that all internal matters were left to the decisions of the Moldavian princes, elections for princely dignities were conducted without changes, no mosques were to be constructed in Moldavia, while no Ottomans were to settle in the principality as well as no Ottoman garrisons were to be stationed there. See more: Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule*, 121.

[1090] Especially economically-powerful border-line centres, such as Chilia and Akkerman. See more information on the history of their conquest in: Ovidiu Cristea, "Campania din 1484 în lumina unor noi mărturii veneţiene – L'expédition du sultan Bajazet II contre la Moldavie (1484) dans les rapports vénitiens de Constantinople," in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine*, 187-274. Alexandru Simon, "Chilia şi Cetatea Albă în vara anului 1484. Noi documente din arhivele italiene – Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: New Documents," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 26 (2008): 177-196.

[1091] Murgescu, *Ţările Române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa creştină*, 305.

[1092] Ibidem.

[1093] The first payment of this kind was made by Peter Rareş during his attempt to regain the throne for the second time. The amount rose to 12.000 ducats plus various deliveries in kind. See: Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule*, 122.

As a consequence to all these changes, the internal taxation system was radically changed. In order for the princes to be able to pay their dues, they were forced to increase taxes. Although merchants adapted as much as they could to the new fiscality,[1094] its effects on society were disastrous: entire communities of people were unable to pay the raised taxes, resulting in two different outcomes. On the one hand, people committed fiscal evasion, thus fraudulently avoiding taxes. On the other hand, while the small nobility faced a difficult financial situation, peasants faced an even worse situation: production was shattered because in order to pay for their taxes, peasants were forced to sell their animals and their estates (thus their very freedom), and take refuge either on the lands of boyars as dependent peasants or even on Ottoman territories where taxes were less burdening.[1095] As peasants were selling their estates, the nobility who bought their property grew stronger and richer. Owning outstretched territories, the boyars thus often times conflicted with the central power and the prince,[1096] resulting in a sixteenth century filled with economic and internal political turmoil.

The economic and social situation of Moldavia thus radically changed and the disruption with the relaxed fiscal environment of Stephen was reflected not only in the new taxation methods, but also in the "voices" of the time. The reigns of the first half of the sixteenth century (those of Stephen's direct successors) represented a buffer period, a period of calmness before the fiscal storm to be seen during the second half of the sixteenth century. This period mainly ended with the Alexandrine Princely Group when although Alexander Lăpuşneanu doubled the tribute in order to regain his throne for the second time, the economic situation was still under control.[1097] The situation exploded however during the reign of Jacob Heraclides. Chronicler Azarie recalled how the prince "threw upon his people heavy taxes and he did not take pity on the poor."[1098] The

---

[1094] Tax payers now had to sell the large majority of their production. Because of the large increase of princes in Central Europe and the Ottoman Empire, they redirected their production towards outside the borders, creating an export-oriented economy which never existed before in Moldavia. See: Murgescu, *Ţările Române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa creştină*, 306.

[1095] Ibidem, 308.

[1096] See this issue in one of the classical descriptions on the economic situation in the Danubian principalities: Giurescu, *Istoria românilor. Din cele mai vechi timpuri până la moartea Regelui Carol I*, 285-287.

[1097] For instance, the prince was in charge of the foreign trade with economic relations stretching as far as Venice and Russia. See: Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 102. Moreover, although chronicler Eftimie was biased when recording the life of Alexander Lapuşneanul, he nevertheless made a few remarks which highlight that Moldavia was still going through a positive period: "Alexander the Good and the New … was good and merciful with all the people. The boyars received all their lands and wealth back, as well as those who had suffered from injustice." See: "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 219-220.

[1098] *Cronicile slavo-române*, 132.

overwhelming new taxation system and the additional (and unusual)[1099] tax of one ducat per family for the payment of the prince's mercenaries,[1100] resulted into a peasant uprising in 1563:[1101]

> The peasants … started to feel great hatred against those whom they considered to be the source of all their misfortunes. They answered that they would gladly comply to the prince's will and that they would pay the ducat which is asked of them, but only if they have the possibility to do so.[1102]

Although princes made efforts to balance the Ottoman requests with the internal fiscal system, the situation continued to worsen. Prince John the Terrible's success in convincing his Royal Council to refuse the sultan's order of doubling the tribute led to no improvement;[1103] just like Peter the Crippled's attempts to improve the internal situation were in vain. Peter the Crippled ruled Moldavia four times (1574 – November 1577; December 1577 – February 1578; March 1578 – 1579; 1582 – 1591) and his last reign ended with a self-exile from Moldavia, owed to the fiscal pressure he faced during his time on the throne. The tribute owed to the sultan progressively rose during his four reigns, reaching a peak by his last one: in order to regain his throne for the last time, Peter paid the sultan 200.000 ducats, with the promise that he would pay another 200.000 ducats during a period of two years. Additionally, he had to pay the sum of over 60.000 ducats owed to the sultan by the previous Moldavian prince Iancu Sasul, plus a secret tribute of 100.000 ducats (for both the sultan and his pachas) to which the official annual tribute of 15.000 ducats was added.[1104] With such taxes (and with the tribute reaching its highest point between the 1591-1593 period),[1105] it is not surprising to conclude that Moldavia reached one of its darkest economic points which led to the prince's exile: tired of the Ottoman greed, as chronicler Ureche described it,[1106] Peter decided to leave Moldavia and take shelter in Tirol, together with his family.[1107]

[1099] "Disturbing cries were following him [the prince] asking him to stop the unusual payment of that one ducat." See: Johan Sommer, "Vita Iacobi Despotae Moldavorum reguli" in *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II, 264.

[1100] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică,* 660.

[1101] For details on the uprising, see: Al. Grecu, *Răscoala ţăranilor din Moldova în anii 1563-1564* [The uprising of the Moldavian peasants in the years 1563-1564], *Studii* VI (1953): 201-213.

[1102] *Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor*, ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Liliana Trofin, 124.

[1103] Chronicler Grigore Ureche described Peter's plea to the boyars of the Royal Council: "And gathering the county, he asked them [the Royal Council] with many gentle words in order to turn their hearts towards him and to show them the Turkish greed and avarice … telling them that all what the Turks do, they do for bribe, burdening them, impoverishing them, and weakening them." See: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 127.

[1104] Anonymous description of Moldavia of 1587, *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* III, 204.

[1105] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 740. See also a detailed study on this issue: Mihai Berza, "Haraciul Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti în secolele XV-XIX" [The Moldavian and Wallachian tribute in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 2 (1957): 7-47.

[1106] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 147.

[1107] See a thorough description of the events in: Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 740-741. See also a detailed anonymous report about Peter's exit from Moldavia in: *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti. Acte şi scrisori (1585–1592)* III [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. Documents and letters (1593-1595)], ed. Andrei Veress, (Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1931),

The end of the sixteenth century was marked by the same fiscal pressure. Following Peter the Crippled to the throne, Prince Aron's reigns (1591 – June 1592; September 1592 – 1595) were to such an extent burdening that he started to be known as "Aron the Terrible" only a few months after mounting the throne.[1108] His methods of collecting taxes were recalled by chronicler Grigore Ureche who described how men known as *dăbilari* (tax collectors), accompanied by Ottoman representatives, visited every tax-payer peasant and requested not only the tax, but also one ox from each and every one of them – peasants owning more oxen were forced to hand over more than one ox, in order to cover the loss resulting from peasants who did not own oxen at all.[1109]

By separately examining the first and the second half of the sixteenth century, the discrepancy between the two periods becomes evident. The princes of the first half of the century remained within the ruling precepts of Stephen the Great, but the rulers of the second half of the sixteenth century, given the economic Ottoman pressure, were unable to do so. The degradation of the Moldavian central power becomes easily noticeable not only when considering the economic, social, and internal political situations, but also when studying the names of the rulers. The princes of the first half of the century had no negative bynames, while some of those ruling in the second half of the century did bear significant negative appellations: John the Terrible (named as such by his boyars because of his attitude against them),[1110] Aron the Tyrant/the Terrible, Alexander the Wicked.[1111] This degradation signals the death of a golden age, as well as the difference between an ideal monarch and his epigones. Unsurprisingly, the Moldavians noticed the social, economic, and political differences between the time of Stephen the Great and that of his less-successful followers, a discrepancy which allowed the propagation of Stephen into the realm of mythology.

2. Lessons from Stephen: creating a team for a great name

A sovereign could not be perceived as perfect, ideal, successful, or politically, economically, and artistically powerful if he stood alone. A wide array of people were involved in the making of a ruler's image with a just as a wide array of instruments and methods, as seen throughout chapters II and III.

---

document no. 167; 248-249. See also the description of the prince's last meeting with his Royal Council in: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 147-148.

[1108] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 757.

[1109] See the entire description concerning both the collection of the new tax paid in oxen and the description of the colleting process by both the *dăbilari* and the Ottoman representatives in: Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 149.

[1110] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 115.

[1111] Alexander claimed to have descended from the Muşatin family as the grandson of Alexander Lăpuşneanu. He ruled in Moldavia for roughly one month (June – July 1592) and ruled for a longer period in Wallachia (August 1592 – September 1593), where he actually gained his negative appellative. See more: Ibidem, 125-126.

The ruler's image mostly depended on two actors: the Royal Council and the Church. Before Stephen the Great was enthroned and reformed a significant number of internal policies (including the role of the Royal Council), the influence of the boyars was politically and economically paramount.[1112] When Stephen took control of the Moldavian "reins," he substantially diminished the influence of the boyars over the central power: he fragmented the large boyar domains, thus also fragmenting boyar power; furthermore, he changed the composition of the Royal Council in such a way that the boyars became representative of the principality and not of the nobility, as it had been before.[1113] These changes were not welcomed by the boyars and something which may be called a *tacit war* was growing between the boyars and their ruler, which prompted boyars to the idea of changing the prince.[1114] Stephen however assured support among boyars, creating a "team" which supported and assisted him. He added new roles and new members to the Royal Council, all favouring him. The great nobility now received high dignities and military functions raised, but the most important changes introduced by Stephen were those regarding his close relationship to the boyars: he started to avoid the medieval type of "job rotation" in order to specifically create a loyal and more dependent nobility, while he also placed in key positions some of his relatives, more loyal than anyone outside his family.[1115] He made sure that relatives such as Vlaicul, the prince's uncle, or Şandru, the prince's brother-in-law, received large territories, creating a "nobility of his own."[1116] However, regardless of his strategy to surround himself with family, Stephen did execute boyars who were members of his own kin when necessary.[1117] Apart from this group of boyars, the prince's power also relied on the small nobility which formed his court and permanent army and which represented his most devoted internal collaborators. Stephen's means for having the small nobility interested in supporting him is most visible in the category labelled as "viteji,"[1118] whom Stephen endowed with lands and privileges[1119] in order to tighten their loyalty, approval, and assistance.

[1112] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 8.

[1113] Ibidem, 9.

[1114] See the various claimants to the throne supported by boyars from outside the principality (but most likely also from inside the principality) in: Petre P. Panaitescu, "Ştefan cel Mare. O încercare de caracterizare" [Stephen the Great. An attempt to characterize the prince], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în istorie*, 14.

[1115] Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 9-10.

[1116] Panaitescu, "Ştefan cel Mare. O încercare de caracterizare," 15.

[1117] For instance, Stephen had executed one of his brother-in-laws, Isaia. This happened in 1470 in Vaslui, when he executed a larger number of boyars who were seemingly opposing Stephen's policy of the time. See: Lefter, "Despre solidarităţi şi descendenţe la boierii lui Ştefan cel Mare," 370-371.

[1118] The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia describes that after the Battle of Vaslui in 1475, Stephen "made a great feast for his metropolitans and for his *viteji* and for all his boyars." See: "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 17.

[1119] Ibidem, 16-17. For the "viteji" and their colonization process, see also: Chapter V, subchapter "The Colonizer."

Stephen's loyal boyars, "the foremost counsellors of my reign,"[1120] remained almost unchanged in the Royal Council throughout the prince's reign – the most important families which belonged to the council continued to have representatives in the council up until the end of the sixteenth century.[1121] Although they were often interested in the prosperity of their own legacy, they were promoters of the prince's idealized image, their most visible contributions being church commissions such as the Church of Dolheşti, commissioned by Stephen's brother-in-law Şandru,[1122] the Church of Bălineşti, commissioned by the logothete Ioan Tăutu, or the Arbure Monastery commissioned by Luca Arbure. The cases of Bălineşti and Arbure are particularly revealing for the significance of Stephen's close advisers in promoting their prince. It has already been shown that the initiator of the external church iconography in Moldavia was Stephen the Great, in the period between 1499 and his death in 1504.[1123] Out of the five edifices commissioned during this time and whose exterior walls were prepared for outdoor iconography, two were commissioned by the boyars Tăutu and Arbure. Although the Church of Bălineşti was commissioned shortly before the first princely commission done after 1499 (that of the Church of Volovăţ),[1124] it remains unquestionable that Tăutu's commission was part of Stephen's exterior wall painting campaign, whose initiator was the prince himself. The same should be assumed about Luca Arbure's monastery which was commissioned, as its inscription says, "with the support" of his prince.[1125] Stephen's new (and subtle) anti-Ottoman policy and visual strategy was thus propagated with the help of his counsellors.

After the year 1481, the compilation of the Anonymous Chronicle was initated by Ioan Tăutul, as the particular interest of the chronicle for the logothete's actions in the 1497 Moldavian-Polish war shows.[1126] This chronicle was however based on a previous text, elaborated by the Metropolitan Teotist I, who was probably the most powerful engine behind Stephen the Great. This text was most likely inspired by the chronicle of Manasses and was thus written in a similar style.[1127] In fact, it has already been shown that the Metropolitan was the promoter of the Slavonic writing bloom of the beginning of Stephen's reign.[1128] Teoctist however not only commissioned this text, but he also

---

[1120] As Stephen named them. See: Lefter, "Moştenirea celor dintâi sfetnici ai lui Ştefan cel Mare," 172.

[1121] Ibidem.

[1122] Drăguţ, *Pictura murală din* Moldova, 11.

[1123] See Chapter III, subchapter "4.1.4.2. Mobilisation: an artistic anti-Ottoman crusade?"

[1124] Năstase, "Biserica din Bălineşti şi pictura ei exterioară," 10.

[1125] Ibidem, 16.

[1126] Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 322.

[1127] Ibidem, 321.

[1128] The inspiration for the Slavonic writings came from the Bulgarian cultural environment, as Dimitrie Cantemir had already pointed out in the seventeenth century. See: Emil Turdeanu, "Manuscrise slave din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Slavonic manuscripts in the time of Stephen the Great] in *Oameni şi cărţi dealtădată* [People and books from history] I, ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely (Bucharest: Enciclopedica, 1997), 25–167. See also: Mureşan, "Patriarhia ecumenică şi Ştefan cel Mare," 160.

supervised the compilation of the first lists of rulers from the fifteenth century.[1129] Furthermore, he was also the man behind the official chronicles springing from the monastic environment and behind the establishment of the Putna Monastery. Within this role of supervising the process of chronicle creation, one can conclude that he was also the one to assign the title of "tsar" to Stephen in 1475, referring to the prince's role as "defender of Orthodoxy."[1130] Given the rich cultural environment of Putna, it is no surprise that Teoctist was also the co-founder of the monastery alongside Stephen, helping him adorn it with not only material riches, but with a library as well.[1131] Unfortunately, when the monastery burnt in 1484, the entire collection gathered by Teoctist[1132] was lost.[1133] Finally, a just as important contribution of the Metropolitan to Stephen's life took place at the beginning of his reign. It has already been shown that Teoctist I headed the enthronement ceremony,[1134] but another issue should be pointed out: in the 1457 enthronement ceremony, he inaugurated the "first version of the Moldavian anointment."[1135] In a period of rapidly changing rulers which had no tradition of anointment ceremonies, it has been pointed out that the Metropolitan Teoctist was, in fact, the "importer and reinventor in Moldavian context of the anointment ceremony based on the Byzantine model."[1136]

The Church and the prince's closest boyars were thus the promoters and creators of Stephen's image, just like it happened with his successors, whose most eloquent example is Peter Rareş. Starting with his enthronement, Peter was supported by all the members of the Royal Council, who unanimously elected him, based on his association to Stephen the Great and Stephen the Young. The collaboration between the central power and the Royal Council was fruitful[1137] but it lasted only up until 1538 when the conflicts between the prince and his boyars exploded and eventually ended Peter's first reign. "Peter's growing appetite for war,"[1138] as Pâslăriuc calls it, his over-active external policy especially concerning Pokkutia (thus against Moldavia's strongest ally against the Ottoman Empire), his alliance with Ferdinand I, were all triggers which made some of the boyars doubt the correctness of Peter's policies. Interestingly enough, Peter seems to have been aware of the boyars' disengagement: a hypothesis argues that the campaign for Pokkutia was not only the result of Peter's

---

[1129] Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 324.
[1130] Ibidem, 325-326.
[1131] Emil Turdeanu, Etudes de littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines (Leiden: Brill, 1985), chapter "L'activité littéraire en Moldavie à l'époque d'Etienne le Grand (1457-1504)," 125-130.
[1132] Turdeanu was only able to reconstruct a small part of the library collection. See: Ibidem.
[1133] See also: Mureşan, "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare," 329-330.
[1134] See: Chapter I, subchapter "The <reality> of Stephen the Great."
[1135] Mureşan, "Patriarhia ecumenică şi Ştefan cel Mare," 107.
[1136] Ibidem.
[1137] This is visible especially in external campaigns against Transylvania and in the campaigns against Pokkutia. See: Pâslăriuc, *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie*, 77.
[1138] Ibidem.

desire to gain a new buffer zone at the north of Moldavia, but also the prince's way of "not giving the boyars the chance to plot against him ... by making them interested in regaining a province whose income would have contributed to the tribute for the Ottoman Empire, which was already overwhelming."[1139] Within the context of the war for Pokkutia, the figure of Toader emerges, the pillar of Peter's armed conflict with Poland. As the bailiff of Hotin, he was in charge of the northern Moldavian lands of Hotin which neighboured the Polish territories, controlling and directing the events going on at the northern border starting with the beginning of the Moldavian-Polish hostilities in 1530.[1140] Although there is no evidence of any monstatic foundations linked to the name of Toader, a different type of deep connection marks his relationship to the prince: the bailiff of Hotin was Peter's half brother through their mother Maria.[1141] Peter might have had several other blood relatives at his court, but they remained undocumented – this argument is supported by the fact that the boyars Mihu and Gavril Trotuşanu claimed the throne after the events of 1538, suggesting a blood tie to the prince.[1142]

While Toader's implication in Peter's policies was strictly military, a second relative of the prince was part of his ideological and artistic enterprises: the Archbishop Grigorie Roşca, Peter's cousin,[1143] without whom the prince's external mural painting campaign could not have been the same. Peter's persuasion campaign was largely based on monastic exterior iconography, which was representative of the prince's anti-Ottoman policy. Grigorie Roşca was a significant actor in the construction of this campaign. In 1530, he supervised and directed the construction of the Probota Monastery, after which he headed the monastery as its father superior. He also facilitated the development of the Voroneţ Monastery, most importantly by arranging for the painting of the monastery's exterior and by supporting its literary activity.[1144] Because of his work at the Voroneţ exterior painting, art historian Petru Comărnescu went as far as identifying Grigorie Roşca as the initiator of the exterior painting,[1145] although this has been proven to be false.[1146] Moreover, although after Peter's death, exterior iconographies ceased to be painted, Archbishop Roşca added one last item of exterior painting which showed his collaboration with the late ruler: he added the painted exonarthex to the Voroneţ Monastery, which bears the most elaborate Last Judgement scene to be found in Moldavia.

[1139] Ciobanu, "Apărător al moştenirii lui Ştefan cel Mare," 118.
[1140] Székely, *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareş*, 184-185.
[1141] Eadem, 166, 176.
[1142] See: Eadem, 166-190.
[1143] Coruga, *Gheorghe al II-lea şi Grigorie de la Neamţ*: 1230-1243.
[1144] Emil Turdeanu, *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 117.
[1145] As quoted by Dragut, et all, *Pictura românească în imagini, 57-58.*
[1146] Dumitru Năstase, "Biserica din Bălineşti şi pictura ei exterioară," 3-18.

A just as important actor for the propagation of Peter's ideologies and image (although not related by blood) was the logothete Toader Bubuiog. Just like Stephen's logothete Ioan Tăutul was at the core of the commission of the princely chronicle, so was Toader Bubuiog when he solicited Bishop Macarie to continue writing the official chronicle, becoming the co-founder of the chronicle, as the beginning of Macarie's text suggests: "Let us try … to continue the story … and to accomplish the princely orders of the brilliant and feared-by-his-enemies Prince Peter, son of Prince Stephen the Brave, and the orders of the great logothete Toader."[1147] Furthermore, the logothete was the commissioner of one of the most representative monastic edifices bearing exterior iconography: the Humor Monastery. The monastery was built in 1527 and its inscription attests the boyar foundation done with the will of Peter Rareş.[1148] Moreover, Humor is the only monastery which bears the signature of the court painter, Toma, on the scene of the Siege of Constantinople,[1149] probably revealing the head of the iconographic school which was formed in Moldavia during Peter's reign.

It becomes evident that the princely image creators were representative for something which may be called a "ruling triangle." The prince was at the top of the triangle, flanked by significant members of the Royal Council and the Church. Figures such as the logothetes Ioan Tăutul and Toader Bubuiog or the Metropolitan Teoctist I and the Bishop Macarie were not only involved in political or religious matters, but they were also the promoters of the image of their princes, as exemplar rulers.

3. Constructions of the hero

The reign of Stephen the Great coincided with the Renaissance period. Although fifteenth-century Moldavia can hardly be defined in convetional Renaissance terms, some of the attributes typical to the hero of this period are also applicable to Stephen the Great. An ideal figure, reminiscent of both the chivalric knight and the good Christian, capable to fit into a heroic poem,[1150] the Renaissance hero was typically a warrior of great stature and formidable skills, visibly superior to ordinary mortals, thus bearing superior qualities such as extraordinary virtue and self-centredness. Displaying endurance and fortitude, the Renaissance hero often found himself in a struggle with destiny and torn between two forces – positive and negative.[1151] Stephen encompassed these characteristics of

---

[1147] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 198.
[1148] The translation of the inscription reads: "With the will of the Father and the help of the Son and Holy Spirit, through the wish of Prince Peter, son of Prince Stephen, this church was built … with the costs and tiredness of the servant of God, the boyar Teodor, great logothete, and his wife Anastasia in the year 7038 (1530) in the month of August 15." See: Drăguţ, *Humor*, 9.
[1149] Ibidem, 32.
[1150] Michael West, "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal of Christian Heroism" *PMLA* 88 (1973): 1013.
[1151] For a deeper description of the characteristics of the Renaissance hero, see: M. A. Di Cesare, "<Not Less but More Heroic>: The Epic Task and the Renaissance Hero," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 12 (1982): 61-63.

the Renaissance hero, and he bore an additional one, also typical for the Renaissance: he had the potential to transcend conventional humanity.[1152] On the eve of his death, Stephen rose from his dying bed just to arrange peace between two parties who were in conflict over his potential successor. His weakness faded as if by miracle and returned, for a brief period of time, to the physical and mental strength which characterized him before he had fallen on his dying bed.[1153]

However, Stephen was closer in characteristics to the typical medieval hero than to the Renaissance hero. The hero, as recalled in medieval heroic traditions, is more often represented in the image of a knight, rather than in that of a monarch.[1154] Nevertheless, the hero-king is a present in heroic tradition, especially when the monarch reflects the essential chivalric attributes: courage, wisdom, and crusading character. On the one hand, valour and wisdom are the two poles of chivalry, with wisdom sharpened by experience and expressed in terms of prudence. When both valour and wisdom are equally present, one may discuss a balanced chivalric personality.[1155] On the other hand, the knight is impregnated with crusading spirit.[1156] All these aspects of the medieval hero are visible in the chronicles commissioned by Stephen the Great: Stephen's bravery and military actions were wisely calculated,[1157] while his crusading spirit is ever present in contemporary texts.[1158]

3.1. The hero in the fifteenth century

Up until the chronicles of Stephen the Great, the knightly hero was only vaguely present in Moldavian chronicles, as the main presence was that of the divine (although without being purposely mentioned).[1159] Once chronicle writing developed and became less lapidary in the fifteenth century, the chronicles of Stephen's reign started to present the "main character" as a representative of Christianity in his confrontation with the pagans. All of the main actions present war-related enterprises, all motivated and animated by the Christian background of the prince. The prince thus

---

[1152] Ibidem, 63.
[1153] See the background to this story in: Chapter II, subchapter "Stephen the Great dies."
[1154] See a detailed presentation of medieval heroic traditions in: Alois Wolf, "Medieval Heroic Traditions and Their Transitions from Orality to Literacy," in *Vox Intexta. Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. Alger Nicolaus Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 67-89.
[1155] Franco Cadrini, "The Warrior and the Knight," in *Medieval Callings*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 81.
[1156] Just like one can notice in *Chanson de Roland*, which gave birth to the model of the Christian knight. See: Jacques Le Goff, *Héros et merveilles du Moyen Age* (Paris: Points, 2009), 227.
[1157] The previous chapters (especially Chapter II) showed that Stephen was prudent when entering into battle and he was always careful to not enter any conflicting situations with more than one enemy at the same time.
[1158] For Stephen's "crusading" enterprises, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, subchapters "Cruciada lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Stephen the Great's crusade] (44-47), "Ultima cruciadă" [The last crusade] (363-371), and "Sfârşitul cruciadei" [The end of the crusade] (407-409).
[1159] Ovidiu Pecican, *Evul mediu fictiv. Reprezentări despre medievalitatea românească (şi nu numai)* [The fictional Middle Ages. Representations of the Romanian Middle Ages (and not only)] (Bucharest: Tracus Arte, 2012), 111.

becomes the personification of the ideal crusader who fights for Christian precepts, while seemingly only fighting for the integrity and independence of his principality.[1160]

Stephen, the hero of fifteenth-century chronicles, was essentially presented as a man of military enterprises. The fact that he was a successful military man (a hero) is hinted throughout the entire body of the chronicles, as the verb "to defeat" (and its derivates: "to be victorious," "victory"), coupled with the wording "to defeat *again*" are constantly present throughout the texts. The chronicle of Putna no. I recalled Stephen's first military encounter as "the first victory,"[1161] suggesting that a lifetime of victories was to begin. The Chronicle indeed described another 11 victories, six of which being specifically presented with wording related to the verb "to defeat."[1162] The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia further on developed the victor's merits when suggesting that his battles were to ever be remembered: "… and Prince Stephen *defeated again* … and this war and that death will be spoken of until the end of ages."[1163] The Anonymous Chronicle also incorporated the most relevant acknowledgment of this type: Stephen is the "bearer of victory." With this description, Stephen was identified with one of the models of ultimate victors: Saint George. The Apocalypse describes Saint George entering battle at the end of days as a victor heading for victory.[1164] By analogy, Stephen does not enter the battle as a victor (or bearer of victories), but exits it as such: "And Prince Stephen returned with all his soldiers as a bearer of victories"[1165] and "Prince Stephen returned from there as a bearer of victories."[1166] The analogy between the Moldavian prince and the warrior saint indirectly adds to the heroic attributes of Stephen.

Thus Stephen is presented as always returning to his seat with victory and success. But Stephen also returned with peace: "and he came with many riches and with peace to Suceava, at the seat of his country."[1167] Although a contradiction to the inherent condition of the warrior-hero, the fact that he brought peace was a confirmation of his successful heroic condition – Stephen could never become a hero, unless successful in war.

Stephen was also presented as wise and prudent on the battle field, proving once more that he was in harmony with the condition of the hero. He did not allow his enemies to know the number of his soldiers – quite oppositely, he preferred to surprise his enemies, as he did in 1473 with the Wallachian Prince Radu the Fair: "Then all the troops united in the night in such a way that neither

---

[1160] See the explanation of this idea, in: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 66.
[1161] "The Chronicle of Putna I," 29.
[1162] Ibidem, 29-33.
[1163] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 17.
[1164] See a more detailed explanation of the comparison between Saint George and Stephen the Great in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 447.
[1165] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.
[1166] Ibidem, 18.
[1167] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 25.

Prince Radu nor his army knew about them and thought that they [the Moldavians] were as scarce as they had seen them to be."[1168] The battle field did not however only present acts of strategic wisdom, but also acts of victory, by which the chroniclers suggested the Moldavian superiority. The most eloquent examples of this kind were those implying that the enemy army was physically chased away after their defeat. After the Moldavian army defeated the Ottomans in 1475, the Moldavian-German Chronicle recorded that the Moldavians "chased them [the Ottomans] another eight whole miles in a difficult mud."[1169] Similarly, after the Hungarian-Moldavian clash of Baia in 1467, the Hungarian King himself was portrayed as running away: "King Matthias was also speared; he barely escaped in disgrace on a different road to Hungary, with a few soldiers."[1170]

The end of the Moldavian-Polish Chronicle is significant: "he was a brave, lucky, and pious man."[1171] This triangle of epithets encompasses the entire heroic personality of Stephen, comparable to the denomination bestowed on Stephen by the sixteenth-century chronicler Azarie: "Prince Stephen the Brave,"[1172] "… renowned for his bravery."[1173]

3.2. The hero in the sixteenth century

Although some collective representations (such as those of heroes) which influence the entire social life are generally similar,[1174] the chronicles of the sixteenth century differ from those of the fifteenth century because of one essential fact: the evolution of the hero. While the chronicles of Stephen's reign lack an elaborate linguistic style, the chronicles which start with Macarie's texts bloom linguistically. Macarie was strongly influenced by the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses[1175] and this is highly visible in the style of his text: Bishop Macarie borrowed the entire linguistic set of Manasses, using a poetic style filled with eulogistic epithets and moralising phrases. The followers of Macarie, chroniclers Eftimie and Azarie, borrowed and continued Macarie's style thus remaining within the frame of the same eulogistic language and style. As a consequence, the image of the hero also developed and received more superlative characteristics, in line with the new chronistic style. Macarie, Eftimie, and Azarie presented their protagonists much more expressively than previous

---

[1168] Ibidem, 24.

[1169] Ibidem, 26.

[1170] "The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle," 42.

[1171] Ibidem, 45.

[1172] *Letopisețul lui Azarie* [The Chronicle of Azarie], ed. Ioan Bogdan (Bucharest: Carol Gobl, 1909), 131. (henceforth: The Chronicle of Azarie).

[1173] Ibidem, 132.

[1174] Marc Bloch, *Les rois thaumaturges: Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983), 38.

[1175] The first scholar to make a connection between the chronicle of Macarie and that of Manasses was Ioan Bogdan. See: Ioan Bogdan, *Cronice moldovenesci*, 75-76.

chronicles did. Although this "evolution" of the hero was not as visible in the presentations of Bogdan III and Stephen the Young, it became evident with the descriptions of Peter Rareș and especially Alexander Lăpușneanul who were transformed into the ultimate expressions of the Moldavian warrior and military hero. Rareș and Lăpușneanul were, as reflected in chronicles, the complete heroes.

In an overview of the rulers of the sixteenth century as presented in the chronicles of Macarie, Eftimie, and Azarie, three types of princes emerge: the positively-perceived, the negatively-perceived, and the neutrally-perceived. The positive and negative were clearly delimited, thus highlighting the sixteenth-century society's need of positive assurance. The rulers perceived negatively were either those considered outsiders to the dynasty (like Stephen Locust or Alexander Cornea, both rulers during Peter Rareș's "interregnum") or those considered to have gravely violated Orthodox Christian precepts (such as Peter Rareș's two sons, Elijah "the wolf in sheep clothing"[1176] and Stephen "the savage killer"[1177] and "furious madman"[1178]). The rulers perceived neutrally are only presented through their actions, while their personal characteristics are neglected. Macarie portrayed Bogdan III's reign in a series of military events, some indeed successful, but without glorifying the ruler. Stephen the Young however, although also perceived neutrally, does show heroic signs also present in the descriptions of Stephen the Great. Following the same formula as that in the Chronicle of Putna no. I, Stephen the Young was presented to have "won the first victory,"[1179] although the subsequent chain of victories is incomparable between the two Stephens. Also, just like Stephen the Great, he is portrayed to have chased his enemies away, after having defeated them: "The remaining ones, those who were able to run, headed away by foot, naked and with no weapons."[1180]

The positively-perceived rulers are the personification of the rightful fight bearing the essential features of the medieval hero: valour and daring. Macarie, the official chronicler of Peter Rareș, presented his commissioner with a history of truly epic sizes: the hero of the story, bearing all the absolute characteristics of a victorious ruler, has the perfect reign and family; the harmony of the ruler's life is shattered however when his enemies start to plot against him, planning his dethronement; he nevertheless manages to save his life with the help of his loyal servant who warns him about the scheme; he runs away with nothing but his beloved horse, crosses the mountains into Transylvania while facing difficult natural conditions, and eventually escapes; he then asks for help from the superior "judge" (the sultan) who credits his rightfulness and gives him back his throne;

[1176] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 216.
[1177] Ibidem, 218.
[1178] Ibidem.
[1179] "The Chronicle of Azarie," 131.
[1180] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 200.

Peter then punishes the traitors in the end, as he regains the primordial balance and becomes once more the hero of high qualities of the beginning of the story.

Both Macarie and Azarie[1181] present Peter with superlative heroic characteristics. He was the "brave Prince Peter"[1182] who "showed acts of bravery, "[1183]whom enemies could not withstand,[1184] and who would most often return to his royal seat "after brilliant victories."[1185] Also, he was perceived as self-aware of his heroic condition: "… as the Polish were pressing Moldavia and considering that not avenging the insult he had suffered would not be an act of bravery but an act of unpardonable weakness for the brave man, he went into battle inflamed with anger."[1186] Peter thus had to accomplish a number of preconditions in order to fit the role of the brave ruler, especially as he was not seen as an ultimate heroic ruler, but rather as a humane type of hero. Peter was the impersonation of the complete hero: he was not a flawless fighting machine, but a man who carried deep feelings, who cried, was afraid, and, at times, did not know how to act. In the eve of his flight to Transylvania in 1538, the prince's feelings overwhelmed him: "… hearing that, Prince Peter felt shaken and his heart filled with fear, tears were dropping from his eyes and continuous sighs were echoing from the bottom of his heart."[1187] This was the point where Peter was portrayed as the fleeing anti-hero, "just like a fleeing slave."[1188] He was not the victorious ruler on his horse anymore, but the ruler who "seeks escape on a fast horse."[1189] He thus became the impersonation of the fallen hero. Nevertheless, Macarie suggested that this new condition of the prince was only incidental and although he was in agony, his status did not suffer changes: "the great man in brave acts and furious like a lion in battle, he was now walking naked, with his hands wounded and barefoot."[1190] A veritable hero could rise from dust at any time which was what Peter also did: he claimed back what belonged to him, regained his possessions and royal seat, and eventually, as Macarie described, he seemed to have lived happily ever after once he returned to his initial heroic state.[1191] Macarie wrote

---

[1181] Ioan Bogdan first discovered a second version of a chronicle telling the story of Peter's reign within the Chronicle of Azarie. Azarie's text was largely based on that of Macarie, thus the two versions are largely similar.

[1182] "The Chronicle of Azarie," 137-138. "The Chronicle of Macarie," 205.

[1183] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 205.

[1184] "… they could not withstand the brave Prince Peter…" Ibidem, 206.

[1185] "After a brilliant victory … Prince Peter returned to his duties." Ibidem. Azarie recalls a similar returning from the battle field: "… and returning from war with victory…" "The Chronicle of Azarie," 137. The same victorious returns are also recorded by chronicler Eftimie: "And Prince Peter victoriously returned to his country." "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 213.

[1186] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 206.

[1187] Ibidem, 208.

[1188] Ibidem.

[1189] "The Chronicle of Azarie," 140.

[1190] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 208.

[1191] The most widely known version of Macarie's chronicle ends with Peter's return to the seat in 1541 and gives the impression of the end of an epic history, with the main characters living in bliss. The second version, intermingled with the Chronicle of Azarie continues the story through Peter's second reign, up until 1551. See

his texts on Peter in such a way that he created a man difficult to forget, just like his father, "the forever unforgettable Stephen,"[1192] was.

The history of Alexander Lăpușneanul, as written by his commissioned chronicler Eftimie, presented a similar eulogistic image. From the very titling of his text on Alexander, Eftimie reveals his perception of the prince: "The reign of Prince Alexander the Brave and the New."[1193] The entire text on the prince, starting with the titling, revealed a personality endowed with all the necessary characteristics of a veritable hero. After a thorough presentation of Alexander's political and military actions for taking the throne, the "brave and overly-wise soldier, the wonderful Alexander"[1194] took the throne. Appearing as a "bright northern star,"[1195] and although only being involved in two military offensives,[1196] the prince is the impersonation of the absolute military hero. While the sintagm "Alexander the Brave" is most common throughout the text, the prince is also wise, generous, righteous, kind, and an inherently handsome man admired by all his subjects (and compared by them to Christ).[1197] Nevertheless, just like Peter Rareş, Alexander was also portrayed in his humanity: when Alexander lost his reign in a similar manner Peter had lost his, the prince was just as devastated and grieved for the loss of his throne.[1198] Azarie's Chronicle however ended with Alexander's return to the throne and the reestablishment of balance, highlighting the complete hero ruler.

3.3. Heroic contradictions between the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries

When comparing the heroic histories of the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, both an evolution and an involution are discernible. On the one hand, as chronicles developed in the sixteenth century, the characterization of the "main character" became more and more elaborate and eulogistic. The hero was endowed with more positive and expressive features focusing on bravery but also ranging from wisdom to kindness and to physical beauty. While the characterisation of Stephen the Great

---

more: Ştefan Ciobanu, *Istoria literaturii române vechi* [The history of early Romanian literature] (Bucharest: Eminescu, 1989), 65.

[1192] When introducing Peter, Azarie described him as the son of "the forever unforgettable Stephen." See: "The Chronicle of Azarie," 135.

[1193] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 218.

[1194] Ibidem.

[1195] Ibidem.

[1196] The Chronicle of Eftimie describes two military actions initiated by Alexander (except for the taking of the throne), both against the prince of Wallachia.

[1197] "Therefore people were coming from all the places of the country to brighten at the sight of his face, of his generosity, of his kindness and beauty; and they were looking at the prince's face as if it were the face of Christ, because he seemed to be a dream." See: Ibidem, 219. Alexander was of course also wise: "Prince Alexander, like a man with reason and overly-wise and kind…" See: Ibidem.

[1198] "… then a lot of cries and tears were shed and a lot of sighs." See: "The Chronicle of Azarie," 149.

was lapidary and his attributes were indirectly suggested by his actions and the way he managed the large number of battles (and victories) in which he was involved, the chronicles of the sixteenth century presented their princes directly, detailing all their characteristics. While Macarie initiated this type of writing and his Peter Rareș reflected the image of perfection, the laudatory language peaked with the Chronicle of Eftimie and his description of the life and character of Alexander Lăpușneanul.

On the other hand, the acts of bravery and victories have a decreasing trajectory. While Stephen's chronicles abounded in successful military enterprises and were mostly defined by them, the chronicle of Macarie did present a brave military leader, but a less spectacular one with much less battles to fight. Lăpușneanul descended even more on the ladder of military actions and Eftimie described him as involved in only two battles, both against the Wallachian Prince and both less remarkable than those of Stephen.

Therefore, the scale of the actual military successes is inversely proportional with the characterizations bestowed on the rulers at the head of these military successes. While Stephen was a highly active military leader, his portrayals almost completely lacked direct characterization; and while Alexander Lăpușneanul's actions implied less action on the battle field, he was described as the ultimate warrior and hero, regardless of the fact that his description lacked legitimate grounds. While the simple explanation for this eulogistic literature stands in the fact that it was inspired by the writings of Manasses, one may also see in this flamboyant yet less heroic literature as an attempt to equal Stephen's "golden age."

4. Models for Stephen the Great and his successors

4.1. Between "the great" myths: from Alexander to Constantine

Stephen the Great's life events and commissioned chronicles point to several patterns which reveal his ideological models: Constantine the Great, Alexander the Great, Judah Maccabee.

Judah Maccabee, an excellent military commander, created a veritable liberation movement replete with unexpected victories against more advanced enemies.[1199] Unsurprisingly, Stephen the Great was perceived as having similar traits as Judah did and his chronicles hint to the fact that Stephen modelled his image on that of Judah. The First Book of Maccabees, while describing one of Judah's victories, observed that he defeated all his enemies with the edge of his sword.[1200] The

---

[1199] See details on the Maccabee revolt and the military enterprises led by Judah Maccabee in: Norman Gelb, *Kings of the Jews. The Origins of the Jewish Nation* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010), 161-173, esp. 161-166.
[1200] Quoted in Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 512.

Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia, describing the events of 1475, recalled a similar action achieved by Stephen: "… those pagans were taken by God through the edge of the sword."[1201] When describing the same battle of 1475, Stephen himself used similar wording in his letter to the Christian rulers of the West: "I took them all through the edge of my sword."[1202] Moreover, the prince resembled Judah Maccabee in another aspect: when Judah returned from battle, he used to thank God by offering him praising. Stephen did the same: upon returning from the conquest of Chilia, after dethroning Radu the Fair of Wallachia in 1473, or after the victory of Vaslui in 1475, Stephen returned each time to Suceava and praised God for the success He bestowed on Moldavia.[1203] Nevertheless, while the presence of Judah's model is visible throughout Stephen's reign, it was not as determinant as those of Constantine the Great and Alexander the Great.

The comparisons between Alexander the Great and the Moldavian prince are valid especially when paralleling several events of the *Roman d'Alexandre* with events of Stephen's life, as recorded in the chronicles of the fifteenth century. The *Roman d'Alexandre* was translated in Slavonic and circulated throughout the Danubian Principalities already before the end of the fourteenth century.[1204] Although the points of comparison between the two rulers' lives may seem circumstantial, Stephen must have been aware of the existence of the *Roman d'Alexandre* and the exemplification of Alexander as model for Stephen remains valid.[1205] At least three comparisons are easily discernible when analyzing the lives of the rulers. Alexander's father Phillip was murdered in a plot and upon Alexander's return from a military campaign in Armenia, he avenged his father's death and punished the ones responsible. Similarly, Stephen avenged his father's plotted death, regained the throne, and eventually punished Peter Aron. Further on, the similarities connect to the Battle of Vaslui. Upon returning victoriously to his seat in 1475, Stephen was greeted by the voice of the clergy who was blessing him while exclaiming "Long live the tsar!" It may be argued that the model for this victorious entry stands in Alexander's triumphal entries when he was similarly greeted by clergy crying out similar acclamations.[1206] The last similarity, in the chronological order of Stephen's reign, is

---

[1201] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.

[1202] Ioan Bogdan, *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* II, entry no. CXLIII, 321.

[1203] For the detailed comparison between Judah Maccabee and Stephen, as well as for the extracts of the above-mentioned sources, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 513.

[1204] The first version which circulated at the north of the Danube River was most likely similar to the versions of Western Europe – it was a heroic narrative. Nevertheless, after the end of the fourteenth century, its function began to change and local and folkloric elements were added to the narrative. For a full account on the development of the *Roman d'Alexandre* in the Danubian Principalities, see: Ovidiu Pecican, "*Alexandria* în evul mediu românesc" [The Roman d'Alexande in the Romanian Middle Ages], *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai – Historia* 1-2 (1996): 3-16.

[1205] "Stephen's heroic and political representations were inspired, apart from the Biblical narrative, by the heroic story of Alexander of Macedon." See: Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri*, 68.

[1206] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 514. Stephen's entry in Vaslui may also be compared to Constantine the Great's triumphal entries.

connected to his last marriage to Maria Voichiţa. Stephen's marriage to his Wallachian enemy's daughter, after his defeat, resembles Alexander's marriage to Roxane: after Alexander defeated the Persian King Darius, he went on to marry his daughter, Roxane.

The most relevant fact about the parallel between Stephen and Alexander however lies in the fact that comparisons went beyond Stephen's court and commissioned chronicles and were recorded by foreign chronicles as well. When Stephen died in 1504, the Russian chronicle of the Hustynska Monastery recalled the ruler as "Prince Stephen, brave soldier just like a second Alexander."[1207] A few years later, during the reign of Peter Rareş, the Ottoman Matrakçı Nasuh compared the fortress of Suceava to the fortresses erected by Alexander the Great: "… the sultan … descended with good luck on the plain of the Suceava Fortress, that fortress like a wonderful bird with numerous and strong walls, similar to those constructed by Alexander the Great."[1208]

Just like any medieval monarch, Stephen acquired his models from Biblical and legendary kingly examples, Emperor Constantine the Great also being one of them. Stephen's reign was marked by the aspiration to the Constantinian standards. One of the first connections to the Constantinian model is visible in the year 1473 when Stephen defeated the Wallachian Prince Radu the Fair and conquered Wallachia. Following the victory, Stephen's first triumphal entry to Suceava took place and thus his series of triumphal entries had begun. Liviu Pilat explains that this first entry is highly relevant from a symbolic point of view as it celebrates the conquest of an Ottoman-dependant Christian territory. The entry thus signified the resizing of the Christian space.[1209] A second entry followed in 1475, following Stephen's victory over the Ottoman army at Vaslui. This entry is even deeper on a symbolic level because of its resemblance to Constantine's triumphal entry in Rome, after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge:[1210] both entries present a *bearer of victories* entering the fortresses, the noticeable difference being that Constantine was welcomed by a wide variety of people (from ordinary subjects to clerics and aristocracy), while Stephen was recorded to have been welcomed by representatives of the clergy.[1211] The fact that Stephen was described as "bearer of victories" has already been shown to parallel the image of Saint George, who was identified as such in the Book of Revelation.[1212] Nevertheless, while the first connection concerning the wording "bearer of victories" should be made to Saint George, it may legitimately also be applied to the

---

[1207] *Cronica de la Mănăstirea Hustânscaia* in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică*, 226.

[1208] Matrakçı Nasuh, "Fetihname-I Kara-Bogdan," in *Cronici tuceşti privind Ţările Române*, ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 229.

[1209] Liviu Pilat, "Modelul constantinian şi imaginarul epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [The Constantinian model and the imaginary of Stephen the Great's period], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine*, 435.

[1210] See more: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 514.

[1211] For a comparison between the two texts describing the entries (Stephen's entry in the Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia and Constantine's entry in Efimij of Tarnovo's encomium), see: Pilat, "Modelul constantinian," 436-437.

[1212] See: Chapter III, subchapter "Suceava and imperial manifestation."

connection to Constantine, as the emperor was similarly perceived as an ultimate victor and the impersonation of Christian victory.[1213]

While both entries described were dominated by the clergy resulting in what may be called "civilian liturgies,"[1214] the entries of 1481 and 1497 may rather be seen as "military liturgies,"[1215] also identifiable with the reign of Constantine the Great. The entries were now less dominated by the clergy, as by the soldiers who took part in the battles and whom Stephen gave wise advice to after returning from the battle field. The same pattern was visible with Constantine who also shared his wisdom with his soldiers after war.[1216]

Another pattern which connects Stephen to the Constantinian model is his appellation as "tsar."[1217] Being the tsar/the emperor of his principality not only suggests his ambition of ruling and defending a Christian territory, but also suggests his connection to his imperial ambitions, which were just as thoroughly suggested by his marriage alliance to a Byzantine princess.[1218] The inspiration taken from Constantine the Great is however not only visible in Stephen's actions or in written evidence. It is just as apparent in visual representations. The mural scene of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross, located in the narthex of the Pătrăuţi Monastery [Fig. 34], encompasses the entire imperial ambitions of Stephen the Great, suggesting that Constantine was the model he most thoroughly followed.

As already discussed in chapter II,[1219] the scene was interpreted in several ways with most historians concluding that it was intended to represent Stephen's crusade against his Islamic enemies, but also the ruler's political and religious aspirations.[1220] Most theories draw on the idea that the scene is a visual link between Constantine's victory over the pagans and Stephen's eventual victory over another type of pagans, suggesting that Stephen had this scene painted as a sign of his belief in a future anti-Ottoman victory. Moreover, Sorin Ulea highlighted the consistency of the message with the scene's placement: directly above the entrance door of the narthex, placed in such a way that people exiting the monastery would almost surely memorize the image.[1221] Altogether, the scene represented the time of Christian victory, regardless of the historical period in which it materialized. The scene may be seen as a link between Constantine the Great and Stephen the Great

---

[1213] Pilat, "Modelul constantinian," 438.

[1214] Ibidem, 440.

[1215] Ibidem.

[1216] For details on this point of comparison, see: Ibidem, 438-440.

[1217] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia" mentioned the "tsar" appellations. See: "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 15, 16.

[1218] See more: Chapter III, subchapter "Was Stephen his little principality's emperor?"

[1219] See subchapter *4.1.4. Stephen, the Last Emperor?*

[1220] Both of these hypotheses were formulated in the first and groundbreaking study of the mural scene. Grabar, André. "Les croisades de l'Europe orientale dans l'art," in *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Age* (Paris: Collège de France, 1968), 169-175.

[1221] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I,"76.

as a "new Constantine," just like in the very same monastery of Pătrăuţi, Emperor Constantine himself acted as the mediating link between Stephen and Christ in the votive image. The fact that Constantine was represented as mediator in the votive image is a confirmation of his role as monarchic model: Constantine was an ideal ruler, and ideal military commander, a saint, and, maybe most importantly, the first man to (successfully) fight in the name of Christianity.

A just as relevant heroic model for Stephen the Great was that of military saints. The legends surrounding Stephen's life and reign suppose that he had built one monastery or church after each of his victories. While the verification of this legend is difficult to do, it is certain that Stephen used to symbolically thank God for his victories or offer remembrance to his soldiers who perished in battle, by means of donations on military saints days and by building monasteries dedicated to military saints. The two most distinct such examples are those referring to the Church of Războieni and that of Milişăuţi. Războieni was built after the Moldavians were defeated at Valea Albă in 1476, for the remembrance of the soldiers who died during the clash. The church was dedicated to the Archangel Michael and was consecrated on the 8th of November 1496, on the feast day of Saint Archangels Michael and Gabriel.[1222] The Church of Milişăuţi, built in remembrance of the battle of Râmnic, was similarly dedicated to a military saint and symbolically connected to the feast day of a different military saint. The Battle of Râmnic was fought in 1481, on the 8th of July, thus on the feast day of Saint Procopius. The church was consequently dedicated to Saint Procopius, while its building started on the 8th of June 1487, the feast day of another military saint, Theodore Stratelates.[1223] The churches of Hârlău, Baia, and Voroneţ were similarly dedicated to a military saint (Saint George), while the feast date of Saint Demetrius is also connected to at least two other similar symbolic acts. On the 26th of October (the feast of Saint Demetrius) 1493, Stephen donated a Gospel Book to the church located in the Fortress of Hotin – Hotin being a southern bordering fortress, one may easily assume that this was the place where the soldiers guarding the southern entrance to Moldavia would pray.[1224] An even more interesting connection is made to Saint Demetrius with the occasion of the Battle of Codrii Cosminului in 1497. The chronicler Grigore Ureche recalled the saint's apparition by the prince's side, describing that "Saint Demetrius, mounted on a horse and armed like a brave man, showed himself to Stephen in this war, helping him."[1225] The chronicler also assumed that the church built in Suceava, dedicated to Saint Demetrius, was erected as a result of Stephen's victory against

---

[1222] Székely, Gorovei, "<Semne şi minuni> pentru Ştefan Voievod," 73.
[1223] Ibidem, 74.
[1224] Ibidem, 75.
[1225] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 60.

the Polish at Codrii Cosminului.[1226] However, the church Ureche referred to was most likely that built by Peter Rareş, thus having no direct connection to Stephen.[1227]

4.2. Between the Christian and the non-Christian model

With its geographic positioning, Moldavia was at the junction of east and west from an array of perspectives: political, cultural, economical. Just like his principality, Stephen also found himself within the same junction, adding to it the influence of east and west political models, the most representative of whom were, for the second half of the fifteenth century, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II and the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus. The relationship of the Moldavian prince with both these rulers was never liniar – they were at times allies and at other times, enemies. This however did not exclude the fact that, through their influence and authority, they were (diametrically opposed) models for Stephen the Great.

At a first glimpse, it seems that Matthias, Mehmed, and Stephen had it all – they enlivened and incorporated Hungary, the Ottoman Empire, and Moldavia. They were the physical projections of their territories. All three of them engaged in elaborate programmes of image construction which transformed them into the immortal rulers they are today. Stephen, directly or indirectly, must have been able to draw upon both Matthias's and Mehmed's image construction programmemes. Stephen was closer to Matthias from all points of view: geographically, politically, religiously, culturally. Moreover, the path of the reigns of the two Christian rulers were significantly similar: they both gained the throne as outsiders and were forced to legitimize their reigns resulting in elaborate dynastic campaigns, while they both set on a quest to becoming ideal Christian warriors. It is thus evident that Stephen was more influenced by the means and methods of legitimation and personal image construction of Matthias, than those of Mehmed. Nevertheless, Mehmed was the Other and the Other is always a highly influencing entity, as it will be seen shortly.

4.2.1. Matthias Corvinus

Matthias ruled the Hungarian Kingdom for 32 years (1458-1490), throughout most of Stephen's reign. His ascendance and legitimation was not without trouble as he was not a member of a royal family, thus eligible to rule. He was the son of John Hunyadi, a Transylvanian nobleman who became the prince of Transylvania under Sigismund of Luxembourg because of his exceptional characteristcs

---

[1226] "… after the lucky victory of this war, he returned to his seat in Suceava … and built the church in the name of Saint Demetrius." See: Ibidem.
[1227] See: Demciuc and Cojocar, *Biserica "Sfântul Dumitru" Suceava*, 41-127.

as warrior and statesman.[1228] When Matthias began his long-lasting reign, Hungary was in a similar state of almost anarchy as Moldavia was: since 1440, the kingdom had been going through civil war.[1229] Also similar to the reign of Stephen the Great, Matthias' reign was deeply marked by the relationship with the Ottoman Empire. The conflicts with the sultan broke out violently during the first period of his reign, only to later become more balanced, resulting in a peace treaty during the last decade of his reign.[1230] Particularly because of this tumultuous relationship, the Hungarian king was regarded by Venice and Rome as a true anti-Ottoman, Christian warrior.[1231] Although Stephen enjoyed a similar perception at the Holy See,[1232] Moldavia did not enjoy the same political and hierarchical influence as Hungary did.[1233] Furthermore, Matthias had the advantage of a royal status, while Stephen did not. Stephen was not king – he rather equalled the rank of a duke, or worse, he was the palatine of either Hungary or Poland.[1234] The fact that Stephen was either under the suzerainty of Hungary or Poland, reveals the relationship between the Hungarians and the Moldavians. Although during the first part of Stephen's reign, Moldavia was Polish-orineted and thus in conflict with Hungary, the treaty signed with Matthias in July 1475[1235] changed the Moldavian alliance orientations for a period of ten years. Nevertheless, in 1485, Stephen once more turned away from Hungary and returned to Poland by signing the treaty of Kolomea with Casimir IV, only to become once more the vassal of Matthias less than ten years later.[1236] It is known that Stephen was considered inconsistent in his policy and alliances by the Hungarians,[1237] but Stephen seems to have played this "diplomatic game" strategically. Referring to the kings Matthias and Casimir, he allegedly affirmed: "I have thrown a bone between two dogs so that they would eat each other."[1238] Consequently, Stephen was ruler and vassal who often created frustrations and who, after his victory at Vaslui in 1475, became "a great Christian ruler, a hope, but still a problematic ruler and vassal."[1239]

[1228] István Tringli, "King Matthias and the Medieval Hungarian State," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 57.

[1229] Ibidem.

[1230] Ibidem.

[1231] Alexandru Simon, "Aparatele diplomatice ale Moldovei şi Ungariei în a doua jumătate a secolului XV. O privire comparativă (Moldavian and Hungarian Diplomatic Structures in the Second Half of the 15th Century: A Comparative Overview)," *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane "Gheorghe Şincai" al Academiei Române* VIII-IX (2005-2006): 202.

[1232] See Chapter II, subchapter "5.1.1. The Pope: Stephen, the Champion of Christ."

[1233] Simon, "Aparatele diplomatice," 203.

[1234] Simon, "Valahii la Baia. Regatul Ungariei, Domnia Moldovei şi Imperiul Otoman în 1467," 128.

[1235] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 27.

[1236] Ibidem.

[1237] See the perception of Stephen by the Hungarians and his characterizations as inconsistent in policies in: Chapter II, subchapter "5.1.3. Hungary: the (brave) rebel."

[1238] Quoted in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 27.

[1239] Alexandru Simon, "În jurul bătăliei de la Vaslui (1474-1475). Consideraţii asupra relaţiilor dintre Regatul Ungariei, Moldova şi Ţara Românească (Around the Battle of Vaslui (1474-1475). Thoughts on the Relations between the Kingdom of Hungary, Moldavia and Wallachia)," *Studia Universitatis Babes Bolyai – Historia* 2 (2004): 3.

Nevertheless, as both rulers' reigns progressed, the relationship between them smoothened (especially after the Battle of Baia, the disappearance of the claimant Peter Aron supported by Matthias, and after Stephen avoided supporting a Polish attack on Hungary in 1471),[1240] making way for the import of image creation means from Hungary to Moldavia.

The Renaissance bloomed in Hungary during the reign of King Matthias and its development was strongly tied to the royal court and the image of the king. He cultivated the so-called *all'antica* style,[1241] unfamiliar north of Alps, mostly for political reasons, being fully aware of its significance as a vehicle of royal power.[1242] The king expanded the Royal Castle of Buda, adding a significant number of Renaissance elements for which the monumental coats of arms, inscriptions, enormous architectural carvings, or statues such as that of Hercules, stand as proof.[1243] Such a richly-adorned Renaissance castle must have mirrored the fictive Roman genealogy that Antonio Bonfini bestowed on the king,[1244] thus strengthening his claim for the throne. Furthermore, he commissioned the renowned Bibliotheca Corviniana with richly illuminated manuscripts. The library itself soon became a tool for royal propagation as it revealed the king's intellectual and dynastic interests.[1245]

In the process of building his reputation, Matthias attracted to his court not only artists and architects from Italy, but also learned humanists, such as Francesco Bandini and Antonio Bonfini.[1246] The interest in the support of scholars may be interpreted in two ways, both in connection to Matthias' image. On the one hand, not being an heir to an established ruling house, clasically-educated men may be seen as part of his strategy of legitimation. On the other hand, the culture that he introduced in Hungary with the help of these scholars was in line with the Roman tradition and Papal authority. As a king often clashing with the Ottoman Empire, this may have been a way in which he presented himself as the actual flag-bearer of the Catholic Church and the proper follower of Roman emperors.[1247]

One may notice astounding similarities between the reigns of Matthias and Stephen the Great. They were both in need of legitimation thus they both created an elaborate dynastic history for themselves, they were both Christian defenders at the borderlands of the Ottoman Empire, and it was their military and political successes which propagated their mythical image into posterity.

[1240] Ibidem, 4.

[1241] See: Árpád Mikó, "A Lasting Legacy. Renaissance Art in Hungary (15th–17th Centuries)," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 68-78.

[1242] Ibidem, 70.

[1243] Ibidem, 69.

[1244] Bonfini presented the Hunyadi family as descending from the Romans. See: Jean W. Sedlar, *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages. 1000-1500* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 452-453.

[1245] Darin Hayton, "Martin Bylica at the Court of Matthias Corvinus: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Hungary," *Centaurus* 49 (2007): 186.

[1246] Pavel Kalina, "European Diplomacy, Family Strategies, and the Origins of Renaissance Architecture in Central and Eastern Europe," *Artibus et Historiae* 30 (2009): 175.

[1247] See the explanation of both these interpretations in: Ibidem, 175.

Furthermore, they both entered the mythical sphere if not already during their lifetime, then surely soon after they died, as the epithets conferred to Matthias in the anonymous verses composed shortly after his death (1490) show:

> …
> Of Hungary the brilliant star
> And fearless champion in war,
> A beauteous refuge for the poor—
> Greatness and glory had you in store.
> You in our honour glory revealed,
> Giver of boldness to all who yield;
> You the Hungarian people's shield
> But to the Poles a dread foe in the field.
> Of all the powerful kings the best
> In great affairs with victory blest,
> Of your own people's trust possessed,
> Now be with God for ever at rest.[1248]

4.2.2. Mehmed II the Conqueror

Mehmed II, one of the most renowned sultans of the Ottoman Empire, was an ambitious young man, nineteen years of age, when he raised at the head of his empire in 1451. Already highly trained in military matters and administrative leadership, he managed to conquer Constantinople[1249] within the first two years of his sultanate.[1250] Having conquered the newly-baptized Istanbul, the sultan started its retransformation into an imperial city, but also started his lifelong interaction with European culture and arts. During his thirty-year sultanate (1451-1481), his empire grew exceedingly until it incorporated most of Anatolia, Crimea, the Balkans, and penetrating as deep as Hungary. Unsurprisingly, three popes called for crusades against this "venomous dragon" as Pope Pius II called him[1251] and "son of Satan, perdition, and death," as Pope Nicholas V referred to him.[1252] Stephen the Great found himself among the fighters against this great conqueror alongside Pope Sixtus IV.[1253]

Stephen's policy was caught between the Hungarian-Ottoman-Polish triangle, the Ottoman-Moldavian relations deeply influencing the development of the principality and the image of the Moldavian prince. With the Venetian-Ottoman conflicts unfolding in the west and the Tartar-Ottoman ones in the east, Stephen took advantage of the divided Ottoman military situation which

---

[1248] See all the verses in: Anonymous, "Song on the Death of King Matthias," *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 53-54.

[1249] The former Byzantine capital had ceased to be the powerful flourishing city it one was, with its population mostly having fled and enduring severely reduced economic possibilities. See: Douglas A. Howard, *The History of Turkey* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2001), 40.

[1250] See the events of the conquest of Constantinople in: Franz Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 87-101.

[1251] Quoted in: John Freely, *The Grand Turk: Sultan Mehmet II. Conqueror of Constantinople and Master of an Empire* (New York: Overlook Press, 2009), 3.

[1252] Quoted in: Ibidem, 4.

[1253] See: Chapter II, subchapter "5.1.1. The Pope: Stephen, the Champion of Christ."

seemed to offer him the opportunity to escape Ottoman dominance.[1254] Until the "key year" of 1473,[1255] documents do not show any direct reference to a desire to confront the sultan,[1256] although the prince had commited unfavourable acts towards him.[1257] The situation changed drastically in 1473, when Stephen decided to break the settled relations with the Ottoman Empire by stopping to pay the tribute and by replacing the Wallachian prince (Radu the Fair, and Ottoman ally) with one of his allies – an act of open hostility against the sultan.[1258] This is the point when the Moldavian-Ottoman conflict became visible, resulting in a series of wars, battles, but also periods of peace.[1259] The two most resounding conflicts were that of Vaslui when Stephen emerged as victor[1260] and that of Războieni, when one year after Vaslui, Mehmed himself headed his armies into Moldavia and erased the Ottoman shame of the previous battle by defeating Stephen.[1261] Approximately four years after the disaster of Războieni, Stephen signed a peace treaty with Mehmed, agreeing to pay 6000 florins as tribute.[1262] Stephen however seems to only have paid the tribute once (when the treaty was signed), the Moldavian-Ottoman conflicts escalading once more in 1484 when the Ottomans, headed by their new Sultan Bayezid II, conquered the fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman. The relationship between Stephen and Mehmed II however ended with the peace treaty of 1480 (or 1481), soon after which the sultan died.

It is difficult to say how much Stephen benefited from the cultural influence of Mehmed. Starting with the sultanate of Mehmed, the interest of Renaissance Europe in Oriental motifs increased to such an extent that by the sixteenth century, Ottoman figures became common in European painting.[1263] In Moldavia, however, no such traces of influence are visible, especially as the strict Byzantine iconographic canons did not allow such incursions. Although no comparisons can be made on an artistic level, there are certain aspects which allow comparisons on the level of image creation. Once Mehmed conquered Constantinople, he faced the Byzantine culture still alive in the

---

[1254] Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună*, 123.

[1255] Ştefan Gorovei highlights the beginning of the anti-Ottoman actions of Stephen in the year 1473, a year which he argues to be a "key year." See: Ştefan S. Gorovei, "1473 – Un an-cheie al domniei lui Ştefan cel Mare" [1473 – a key year in the reign of Stephen the Great], in *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în istorie*, 389-395.

[1256] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 93.

[1257] For instance, the first major anti-Ottoman action took place when Stephen conquered the Fortress of Chilia in 1465. See: Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună*, 124, 127.

[1258] Gorovei, "1473," 389.

[1259] Denize, *Românii între Leu şi Semilună*, 127.

[1260] Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 109-117.

[1261] Ibidem, 147-159.

[1262] Ibidem, 192.

[1263] Also, one could observe the Ottoman influence in the later paintings of Bellini and his followers, in Pinturicchio's frescoes in the Borgia apartments in the Vatican, and in Carpaccio's works. See: Esin Atil, "Ottoman Miniature Painting under Sultan Mehmed II," *Ars Orientalis* 9 (1973): 120.

city – a fact which enabled him to extend his cultural horizons.[1264] Nevertheless, even before the fall of Constantinople, Mehmed seems to have been familiar with European history and culture: aside from his Muslim teachers, he also had one Latin and one Greek tutor.[1265] It is well-known that Mehmed had a high interest in European art and that during the last three years of his life he established a grand European workshop in Istanbul.[1266] The sultan sent pleas to Venice, Florence, Naples, and Rimini asking for master builders, painters, bronze sculptors, intarsia artists, and other craftsmen.[1267] Once the numerous artists were at the sultan's court, a group of Ottoman artists practicing the Italianising style was established, who were learning from the foreign invitees.[1268] What is interesting to notice is that, just like Matthias, Mehmed brought to his court a concept foreign to his culture which could only enhance his image as head of the empire. The Renaissance was brought to Istanbul by special imperial demand and the sultan's request for European painters (especially portraitists) indicated his aspirations to immortalize his image, just like the great rulers of his past – but also of his present.[1269] It seems that the sultan was particularly interested in belonging to the "cult of world rulers."[1270] By the end of his life, he adopted the Western idea of perpetuating the ruler's image through art and portraiture, a generally-employed idea in Europe, including by rulers such as King Matthias and Prince Stephen.

Apart from the common ground of legitimation through artistic means, a second common feature between the sultan and his (at sometimes) subdued prince emerged on the level of models for reigning. Mehmed was curious by nature[1271] and this curiosity extended to the culture, history, and society of the territories he faced on a military level.[1272] This interest was visible in the volumes collected in his library which stored over fifty manuscripts dealing with historical, geographical, and military subjects.[1273] One of the manuscripts from the library was Arrian's *Anabasis*, the classical source on the life of Alexander the Great. The text accompanied a volume of the history of Mehmed written by Kritobulos, a Greek courtier, whose recurring motif was Mehmed's image as a new Alexander.[1274] Alexander thus became the classical model of Mehmed II. Apart from Kritobulos,

---

[1264] Julian Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts," *Oxford Art Journal* 5 (1982): 3.
[1265] Ibidem, 4.
[1266] See: Chapter 8 "A Renaissance Court in Istanbul" in Freely, *The Grand Turk* and subchapter "Art, literature and science" in Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*.
[1267] For the actual artists Mehmed sent for and the ones who were dispatched to Istanbul, see: Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox," 4-5.
[1268] Ibidem, 5.
[1269] Atil, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," 105, 119.
[1270] Ibidem, 105.
[1271] For the Sultan's personality, see: Babinger, *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*, 409-432.
[1272] Atil, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," 104.
[1273] Ibidem, 105.
[1274] Raby, "A Sultan of Paradox," 6.

several other contemporary writers compared the sultan with Alexander (and also with Caesar) quoting him as having said that if Alexander conquered the East from the West, he would conquer the West from the East.[1275]

A common axis becomes visible when looking at the images of Mehmed, Stephen, and Matthias, which transcends any type of political, cultural, and religious differences. All three of them were among "the greats" of the fifteenth century and they all expressed their greatness through similar means: legitimation through grand image construction schemes and alignment with classical models – probably the two most perfected means of becoming a character to be respected in the present and remembered in posterity. Image construction schemes were imported and exported throughout all of Europe, therefore it is no surprise that the three rulers' means were so similar. Whether the three of them were models for each other remains an open debate, but it is certain that on a particular level (which was eventually transformed into a mythical level), their views concurred.

4.3. Stephen's models in the sixteenth century

Saint Demetrius' "motif" continued to emerge during the reigns of Stephen the Young and Alexander Lăpuşneanul, highlighting a continuation of the "military saint" heroic model. In 1518, Stephen the Young's army defeated the Tartars. When Grigore Ureche recorded the event, he added the description of the victory celebrations: "And Stephen returned in great praise and ordered all the boyars to gather at Hârlău, on the day of Saint Demetrius, and they gathered there, they feasted and there was great joy."[1276] Therefore, Stephen decided to celebrate his victory on the feast of a military saint, while Alexander Lăpuşneanul decided (unwillingly, as Ureche recalled) to erect a monastery in the name of the very same military saint. Grigore Ureche recorded the story connected to the construction of the Pângăraţi monastery:

> Afterwards he made Pângăraţi, but more because of fear than because of desire, as Saint Demetrius showed himself many times in his dreams, frightening him to build a church on that very place, so he began work with fervour and built it.[1277]

The first recordings of the monastery date from the beginning of the fifteenth century when Simeon the Monk built on its place a wooden convent. On the very location of the initial construction, Stephen the Great then built a wooden church in 1462 which was burnt down by the Ottomans in 1476.[1278] The connection between Stephen and Alexander through Demetrius is therefore double: firstly, Saint Demetrius appears to both of them, and secondly, Demetrius urges

---

[1275] Atil, "Ottoman Miniature Painting," 104.
[1276] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 87.
[1277] Ibidem, 107-108.
[1278] For the history of the Pângăraţi Monastery, see: Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 103-104.

Alexander to rebuild the church built by Stephen. Therefore just like Stephen the Great, Alexander was placed under the sign and care of military saints. Significantly, Peter Rareş also signalled his placement under the care of Saint Demetrius by his commission dedicated to the saint in Suceava: the Saint Demetrius Church of Suceava.[1279] The model of the military saint is emblematic for Stephen the Great and his direct followers, especially Peter Rareş who was profoundly marked by the image of military sainthood.

The importance of military sainthood is visible from the first monastery painted by the order of Peter Rareş: the Monastery of Dobrovăţ, the last commission of Stephen the Great, whose iconography was not finished by the end of his reign. Prince Peter finished the monastery by adding its painted decorations. Significantly, the pronaos carried the representations of military saints shown mounted on their horses. Once the prince started commissioning his famous exterior iconographies, the role of military saints gained much more significance. As previously discussed,[1280] the exterior iconography initiated by Peter Rareş was comprised of four main scenes: the Akathistos Hymn, the Last Judgement, the Celestial Hierarchy, and the Tree of Jesse. The Celestial Hierarchy and the Akathistos Hymn are most representative for the significance of military saints.

The Celestial Hierarchy, always located on the three church apses, is the representation of a saints' procession divided in several registers and converging towards a *Deisis* scene in the middle of the registers. The usually five or six registers depict different groups of saints and holy people: angels, prophets, apostles, bishops, missionaries, hermits, and, most importantly, military saints. Significantly, the military register is usually placed closest to the eye of the viewer, in the lowest or second-lowest register, suggesting a(n anti-Ottoman) militant interpretation of the entire scene.[1281] The importance of military sainthood is however given by another aspect of the Celestial Hierarchy. The central axis usually bears the representation of the *Deisis*, where Christ is flanked by the Holy Virgin and John the Baptist. There are two exceptions however, in both of which the representation of *Deisis* is replaced with the representation of a military saint. At the Voroneţ Monastery, Saint George (also the patron saint of the monastery) is not represented in the military saints' register, but in the central axis, towards which all the other registers converge [Fig. 36]. Similarly, the Celestial Hierarchy of the Humor Monastery also bears as central figure a saintly military character: the Archangel Michael, leader of the celestial armies [Fig. 37].

[1279] Solcanu, "Realizări artistice," 297.

[1280] See: Chapter III, subchapter "Art and Imagology."

[1281] Sorin Ulea developed the hypothesis that the military saints were the representation of the anti-Ottoman military and ideological struggles of Peter Rareş. See: Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I," 80-87.

Fig. 36: Voroneţ Monastery, Celestial Hierarchy – Central Apse, St. George in the lower centre
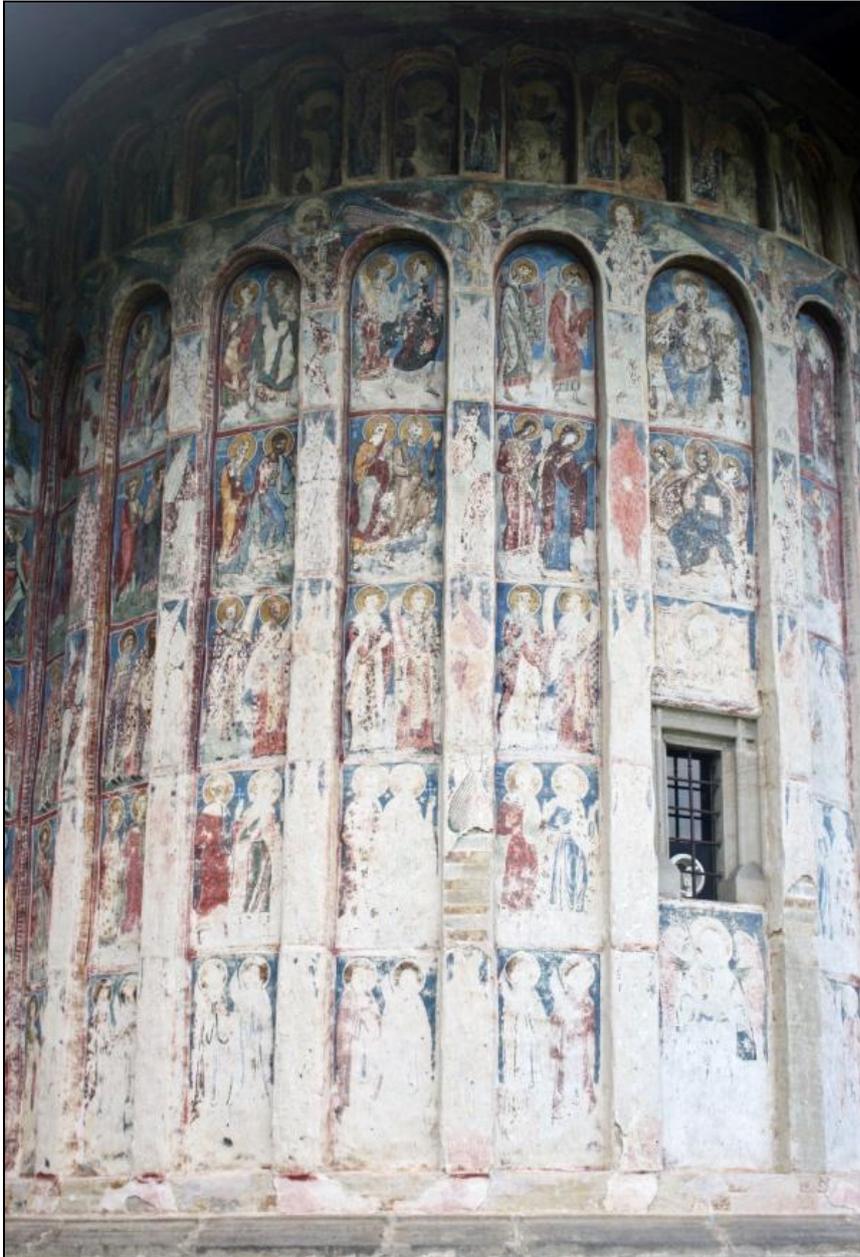Image source:
Teodora Artimon

Fig. 37: Humor Monastery, Celestial Hierarchy – Central Apse, Archangel Michael in the lower centre
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Military saints are in fact highly visible throughout the entire iconography commissioned by Peter Rareş, as various representations of military saints emerge within the exterior paintings of Rareş's commissions. This way, both Humor and Moldoviţa monasteries bear on the left side of the Akathistos Hymn the images of (four) mounted military saints: George, Demetrius, Mercurius, and Nestorius [Fig. 38]. Moreover, several representations of Saint George were introduced within the exterior iconography in different forms: 12 of the scenes of Saint George's life are still visible at the Probota Monastery; the northern façade of the Humor Monastery bears an entire representation of the saint's life; while Saint George slaying the dragon was represented at the Voroneţ Monastery.[1282]

[1282] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti II," 45-46.

Similarly, the western façade the Arbure Monastery bears the images of both Saints George and Demetrius converging towards Christ ascending to heaven.[1283]
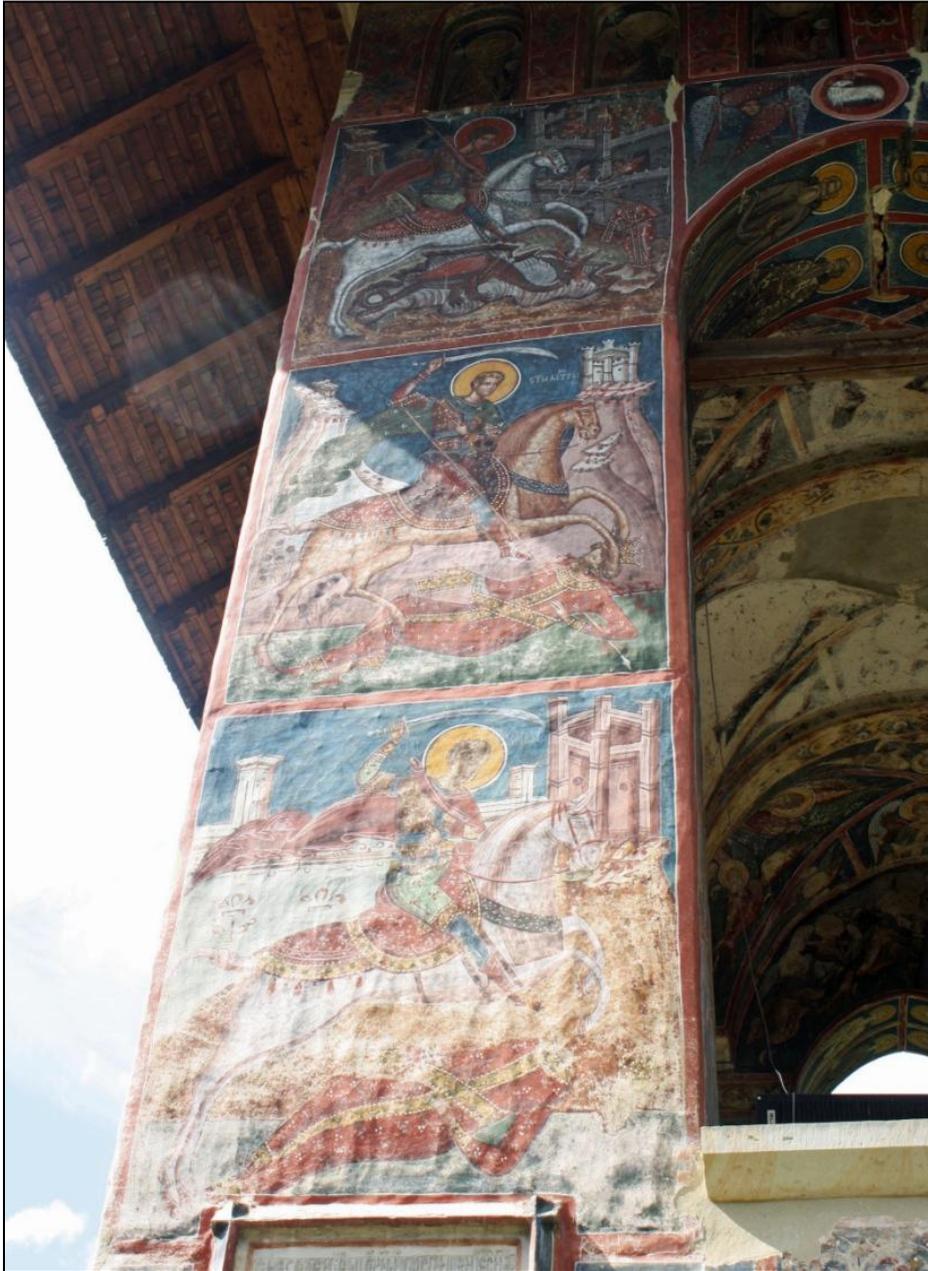

Fig. 38:
Moldoviţa Monastery, mounted military saints
Image source: Teodora Artimon

The Arbure Monastery in fact brings together both the models of the military saint and of Constantine the Great. Firstly, the Celestial Hierarchy of Arbure is complemented by a second similar type of scene: another hierarchy constructed on a single register and comprised entirely of military saints. Secondly, this scene includes along its military saints the figures of Constantine the Great and his mother Helen.[1284] The Constantinian symbolism is highly vivid at Arbure.

[1283] Ibidem, 46.
[1284] Ulea, "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I," 86.

Before discussing the Constantinian symbolism of Arbure, a few observations about the Akathistos Hymn should be made. As it has already been shown,[1285] the Moldavian Akathistos Hymn is the only one to bear the additional scene of the Siege of Constantinople. Although the representation was inspired by the 626 Persian siege of Constantinople, its details have proven that the scene is a clear representation of a siege of the Moldavian capital of Suceava.[1286] The sheer implied comparison between the victorious Constantinople of 626 and a supposedly soon-to-be-victorious Suceava of the sixteenth century reveals both the ambitions of Peter Rareş and the fact that he considered Constantinople and its emperors as models. All exterior iconographies commissioned during the reign of Peter Rareş bear the representation of the Siege of Constantinople/Suceava, with one exception: that of the Arbure Monastery. In the Arbure version, the inscription on the scene [Fig. 39][1287] clarifies the fact that it is the representation of the actual 626 Persian siege, leaving no other interpretations possible.

Fig. 39: Arbure Monastery, inscription on the Siege of Constantinople, clarifying that the scene represents the 626 siege of Constantinople
Image source: Teodora Artimon

The reason why the Siege of the Arbure Monastery was specifically indicated as the one in 626 lies in the political circumstances of the painting's time of commission: it was painted during Peter's second reign when the prince returned to the throne with the help of the sultan and, as a consequence,

[1285] See Chapter III, subchapter "Art and visual culture."

[1286] The details which set the scene in Suceava and not in Constantinople are the following: the besiegers are dressed in Ottoman clothing and use cannons for breaking the walls, while the fortress is defended by a rider wearing typical fifteenth-sixteenth century Moldavian clothing. See: Eadem.

[1287] The inscription reads: "The Emperor Chosroe went against Constantinople with the Persian armies, Scythians, and Lebanese, in the days of the Emperor Heraclius. The Virgin Mary with her prayers made a rain of thunders and fire fell upon the invaders." See translation in: I. D. Ştefănescu, *Arta feudală în Ţările Române. Pictura murală şi icoanele de la origini până în secolul al XIX-lea* [Feudal art in the Romanian Principalities. Mural painting and icons from the origins to the nineteenth century] (Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1981), 199.

could not have any negative representations directed towards the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, Peter Rareş still had his ambitions portrayed in the church: while the Siege of Constantinople received neutral message, the prince had Stephen the Great's scene of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross painted within the interior iconography of Arbure. It was Peter's way of making two statements: firstly, by having this scene painted, he kept alive the initial message of the Siege of Constantinople, transferring it to this new representation; and secondly, he resurrected the message Stephen the Great had denoted in his Mounted Procession at the Pătrăuţi Monastery. Thus, it becomes apparent that Constantine the Great was a model not only for Stephen, but also for his son Peter.

Further proof for the Constantinian model is the name of Peter's youngest son with Elena Branković: Constantine, who was born in 1542 and who died twelve years later in Istanbul.[1288] Moreover, a sixteenth-century claimant to the Moldavian throne alleged that he was Rareş's son and that he was named Bogdan-Constantine,[1289] bearing both the Moldavian princely name and the Byzantine imperial name. Similarly, Alexander Lăpuşneanul's son bore the name of Constantine the Great.[1290] Furthermore, in the case of Lăpuşneanul, the Constantinian model is not the only discernible one: the one of Alexander the Great seems to also be visible. His oath of faith to the Polish king (issued in Bakota on September 5th 1552), is the only document in which Lăpuşneanul's birth name and chosen name are both mentioned: Peter Alexander. While "Peter" was his given name, Lăpuşneanul chose "Alexander" to be the only name to use after his enthronement. Therefore, the name reminding of his uncle (Peter Rareş) was replaced, as it was supposed in historiography, with the one which made reference to Alexander the Great, rather than to the Moldavian Alexander the Good.[1291]

5. Perspectives on the menacing Other

The echoes of Stephen's reign actively reverberated in the immediate aftermath of his time. The prince's external policy and his so-called "crusades"[1292] against the Ottoman Empire shaped the perception of the empire in sixteenth-century Moldavia. This subchapter will comparatively debate the issue of the imaginary with reference to the Ottoman "other" at the turn of the fifteenth century. It will discuss the possible understandings and portrayals of the "other" during the reign of Stephen

---

[1288] Gorovei, "Familia lui Petru Rareş," 268.
[1289] Bogdan-Constantine died in 1573. Ibidem.
[1290] Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. CCCCXCV, 532.
[1291] Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică*, 616.
[1292] For references to what is called in modern historiography "Stephen the Great's crusade," see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, subchapters "Proiecte de cruciadă" [Crusading projects] and "Noi proiecte de cruciadă" [New crusading projects], 85-85 and 184-187.

the Great and, by comparison, during two remarkably different types of reigns from the perspective of the interaction with Ottomans: those of Peter Rareş and Elijah Rareş. Should one analyze the Moldavian reigns of the first half of the sixteenth century, one would recognize different levels of interaction with the Sultan's empire, and consequently, different layers of representation as well.

5.1. Stephen's Ottomans

When Stephen assumed the throne in 1457, his anti-Ottoman views had probably already thoroughly developed. The perception of the Ottoman "other" was generally negative in both Danubian Principalities, especially when represented in political circumstances: a 1359 anti-Ottoman alliance between the Wallachian Prince Mircea the Old and the Hungarian King Sigismund described the Ottomans as "those terrible and deceitful sons of lies, enemies of the name of Christ and our irreconcilable enemies."[1293] Similarly, one year before Stephen's enthronement, his predecessor referred to the Ottomans in similar terms: "those Turks, who plundered and plunder so many times."[1294] To have become prince of Moldavia under these already established perspectives, and given the political turmoil that arose in the aftermath of the siege of Constantinople, Stephen could not have remained an unbiased observer. It is not surprising, therefore, that his reign was marked by Christian-Muslim political, religious, and social dichotomies.

The most thorough representations of the Ottomans can be found in sources describing or discussing the victory of Vaslui, but also those concerning the failed battle of Războieni – although information is much scarcer in the latter case. Most chronicles contemporary to Stephen or written shortly after his death present the clashes of Vaslui and Războieni in such a way that a Moldavian portrait of the Ottomans can be reconstructed. The Ottoman is unquestionably the stranger, the foreigner, the enemy *par excellence*. While there are no physical descriptions of the Ottoman, it becomes evident that he is constructed[1295] as the opposite of the Moldavian. He is firstly marked as different by language and religion, as phrases referring to the "unfaithful tongues"[1296] and "pagan tongues"[1297] indicate when presenting the battle of Vaslui. The same descriptions are repeated in the case of Războieni where the good Christians fell "under the hands of the unfaithful and pagan

---

[1293] *Relaţiile internaţionale ale României în documente (1368-1900)* [Romanian international relations in documents (1368-1900)], ed. Ion Ionaşcu, Petre Bărbulescu, Gheorghe Gheorghe (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971), document no. 5, 90.

[1294] Act dated 1456 between Prince Peter Aron and his Royal Council, on deciding to seek peace with the Ottoman Empire. See: Ibidem, document no. 16, 113.

[1295] For a useful study on the construction of the enemy, see: Umberto Eco, *Inventing the Enemy*, trans. Richard Nixon (New York: Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2012), chapter "Inventing the Enemy," 1-22.

[1296] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 16.

[1297] Ibidem, 17.

tongues."[1298] Furthermore, another essential characteristic referred to their multitude: they were numerous, largely outnumbering the Moldavians and their army. It is relevant to notice how references to the large Ottoman army only appear in descriptions of the victorious battle of Vaslui.[1299] One may argue that in order to explain the Moldavian defeat of Războieni, the chroniclers could have mentioned the numerical superiority of the enemy. However, they opted for a different rhetorical strategy: they showed the significance of the Vaslui victory by pointing out that the Moldavians defeated a large army, rather than explaining the defeat at Războieni through numerical inferiority. The fact that the enemy is numerous also implies that he is destructive. As expected, all information regarding the Ottoman destructiveness refer to the disaster of Războieni. Chronicles reveal that the sultan's men "plundered the country and came to Suceava and burnt the market and went back, plundering and burning the country."[1300] Further sources say that the Ottomans ravaged "the entire country"[1301] but that they could not however "conquer any fortresses."[1302] Although after the Battle of Războieni, Stephen remained on his seat and the principality was not transformed into a *paşalîc*, the Ottoman army won the battle and the sultan did not leave Moldavia other than as a victor. One chronicle however, known as "The German version of Stephen the Great's Chronicle," gave a different image of what happened, suggesting that the Ottomans did not retreat because they were suffering from hunger and plague,[1303] but because of another reason: fear. The chronicle implies that Stephen retreated after the defeat, but soon re-gathered his armies and confronted Mehmed for a second time.[1304] At this point, the German chronicle says: "the Turks believed that he [Stephen] received help from the Poles or the Hungarians and they ran towards their home."[1305] The same chronicle projects a similar imagined reality, but in the context of the battle of Vaslui. Immediately after the victory of Stephen, the chronicle recounts how "the Turk could barely escape

---

[1298] Ibidem.

[1299] There are three relevant entries referring to the number of the Ottomans: "… and a great mass was cut…" in "The Chronicle of Putna I," 31; "… then a large mass with no number fell and many were caught alive, without number…" in "The Chronicle of Putna II," 35 – the fact that they were "without number" refers to the fact that they were innumerable; "… they cut a large mass of Turks …" in "Analele Putnene" [The Annals of Putna] in *Cronicele moldoveneşti înainte de Urechia*, ed. Ioan Bogdan, 196.

[1300] "The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia," 17.

[1301] "The Chronicle of Putna I," 31.

[1302] "The Moldavian-German Chronicle," 26.

[1303] After Stephen lost the battle, he retreated to the mountains while the Sultan proceeded to Suceava, but, because his army was suffering from hunger and plague, he did not conquer the fortress and preferred instead to leave Moldavia.

[1304] This description of the offensive return of Stephen does not match with the actual historical events. In reality, Stephen's whereabouts after the defeat at Războieni are unknown, while the Ottoman army returned to the Empire after being exhausted and unable to conquer Suceava and the strategic Moldavian fortresses. See a thorough presentation of the battle at Războieni in: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 147-159.

[1305] *Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare (Versiunea Germană a lui Schedel)*, ed. Ion Constantin Chiţimia, 66.

… they [the Ottomans] were chased another eight full miles, on heavy mud."[1306] Once more, the image of the frightened Ottoman emerges. Note in particular the fact that the chronicler emphasizes the "eight full mile" pursuit, which is not simply a way of praising the Moldavian success, but it is also a portrayal that suggests the actual image that the Ottomans had in Moldavia. The real image was naturally the reverse of what the chronicle was highlighting. This depiction of the chase is, rather, the reverse image of reality. Neither Stephen the Great nor any of his chroniclers ever found it necessary to mention such a chase with a different enemy, such as the Wallachian Prince Radu the Fair, for instance, with whom Stephen had just as many military conflicts,[1307] but who did not represent any threat to Moldavia.

The image of the Ottomans is also perceivable through other texts such as Stephen's letter of 1475 where he frames his idea of the Ottoman threat,[1308] as well as through visual images such as the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross where one of its interpretations focuses on the anti-Ottoman message of the scene.[1309] The Mounted Procession scene also highlights the contrasting representations of the Moldavians and the Ottomans. Although the viewer sees the army of the Christians, the army of the enemies is nevertheless present. Whenever a victorious army is represented, the image of the defeated army is also represented in absence, with the viewer "seeing" it unconsciously. Therefore, the representation of the victor's glory brought with it the unseen and unconscious opposite representation of the defeated non-Christian/Ottoman army. While the viewer of the Mounted Procession saw the triumphant army of Archangel Michael and Constantine I in full colour and vividness, the omission of the defeated gave him the freedom to imagine the opposing army as he wished – regardless of the Ottoman's real image. The fact that the Pătrăuţi scene features Constantine the Great, gives the impression that the enemy, now defeated (or soon to be defeated), must have been a powerful one.

Such subtle characterizations are balanced by more visually straightforward formulations. A number of stove tiles dated 1481-1490 were discovered in the princely house in Suceava.[1310] The tiles present a narration which presents the contrast between medieval Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. Based on these tiles, the narration of a now-lost literary creation has been reconstructed which relates the conflict between the Ottoman Empire and Christianity, offering Moldavia an essential role in this conflict.[1311] The tiles present contrasting groups of animals.

[1306] Ibidem, 65.

[1307] For the decisive and most relevant conflict between Stephen the Great and Radu the Fair, see: Gorovei and Székely, *Princeps Omni Laude Maior*, 98-101.

[1308] See the description of the letter in: Chapter II, subchapter "4.3.2. Diplomacy and self-acclamation."

[1309] See: Chapter V, subchapter "3.1.1. Between "the great" myths: from Alexander to Constantine."

[1310] Paraschiva Victoria Batariuc, *Cahle din Moldova medievală. Secolele XIV-XVII* [Tiles from Medieval Moldavia. Fourteenth-Seventeenth Centuries] (Suceava: Istros, 1999), 179-180.

[1311] Pecican, *Sânge şi trandafiri.*, 156-160.

On the one hand, there are the exotic and fantastic animals (two parrots, a camel, an elephant, birds with long and strong claws with large opened wings, a hippogriff) which place the story in an oriental and imaginary setting. On the other hand, there are the more familiar forms such as a boar, a crowned crane, and a pelican that is tearing its chest so that it can feed its youngsters with its own blood. All these latter heraldic animals suggest Moldavia, but also the very representation of the Moldavian dynastic coat of arms.[1312]

Apart from the contrasting animals, one may notice the human opposition: the young rider, a hunter dressed in Western clothes (representative of the Moldavians) and accompanied by a falcon is opposed to the impaled man, who can be identified as an Ottoman. At this point, the interpretation of the tiles becomes clear: the Ottoman Empire is an exotic jungle filled with strange animals. The otherness of the Ottomans is highlighted through contrast with the image of the hunter, who hunts among the wild animals of this peculiar setting. The hunter is aided by Christian symbolic attributes such as the already-mentioned crowned crane or sacrificial pelican. This imagery brings with it an expected conclusion: the impaled Ottoman could only be the representation of the symbolic and victorious chase of the Moldavian while hunting his enemy.[1313]

5.2. The Ottomans of Stephen's successors

The ultimate goal of Stephen the Great, visible through all representations of the other, was to overcome the looming Ottoman threat. A change in the representation of the other occurred during the two reigns of Peter Rareş, when the Ottoman concern became central. Although the imagery of the other in the time of Rareş was comparable to that of Stephen the Great's time, Rareş developed and provided it with a more pronounced and visible meaning.

5.2.1. *Peter Rareş: linking and disliking*

Stephen's anti-Ottoman policy was continued during Rareş's time in a good versus bad contrast scheme, or, as Macarie himself characterized the Christian-Ottoman relations, in a "lightness and darkness medley."[1314] Should one analyze the perception of the Ottoman Empire springing from the royal seat, one would notice three different but circular stages: negative perception, positive perception, and negative perception once more. However, not all these perceptions were truthful, as some of them (especially the positive ones) were influenced by the political interests of the prince.

[1312] See this description of the animals in: Ibidem, 157-158.
[1313] Ibidem, 159.
[1314] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 201.

Following the example of his father, Peter Rareş used Stephen's artistic patterns but, more importantly, he improved upon the already established forms. The four mural scenes representative for the exterior iconography of Peter's reign have already been presented and their (anti-)Ottoman implications were revealed.[1315] All these representations, beginning with the realistic portrait of the Ottomans in the *Last Judgment* scene and ending with the symbolic defeat of the Ottomans in the *Siege of Constantinople*, show how the Ottomans were perceived. They were the "undefeatable,"[1316] as Peter himself referred to Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent and his empire, whom the Moldavians hoped to defeat in an uncertain future. Almost all these representations in exterior monastic iconography were painted during Peter's first reign and should be considered within the larger context of the prince's desire for independence from neighbouring powers.

In 1538 however, Peter lost his seat and fled from Moldavia. He had no other choice but to seek help with the sultan, who eventually repositioned him on the Moldavian throne. Peter's (re)presentation of the Ottoman Empire and of Suleyman now changed drastically, leading into the positive perception stage. It is no surprise that the prince now saw good in the sultan, because he had been able to return Rareş to power. There is significant contrast between the descriptions of the Ottomans during the first reign and the descriptions from Peter's period of exile. During the first reign, he not only carried out massive anti-Ottoman propaganda through exterior iconography and the chronicle he commissioned from Macarie, but also some of his letters explicitly refer to the Ottoman people in negative terms. Before and especially during 1538, the "damned ruler Suleyman"[1317] who was "just like a bird with large wings who binds to itself smaller birds"[1318] and his "brute and evil"[1319] men who attack like "wild goats,"[1320] were described with repudiating words: presenting the invasion of 1538, Macarie described how

> the emperor lost no time, and blowing just like a sharp wind from the east and like a thunderstorm which moans heavily, he rose with his lion-like scream, taking with him [towards Moldavia] a crowd of beasts.[1321]

However, once Peter Rareş lost his throne, the Ottomans were suddenly "transformed" into merciful people and their sultan became full of kindness. The chronicle of Macarie tells how after

---

[1315] See: Chapter III, subchapter "4.1.4. Art and visual culture."
[1316] In a letter written in 1541 by Peter Rareş to Toma Boldorffer, boyar in Bistriţa. See: *Scrisori domneşti*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, letter no. XXVI, 57.
[1317] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 202.
[1318] Ibidem, 207.
[1319] Ibidem, 208.
[1320] Ibidem.
[1321] Ibidem, 207.

1538 Peter self-exiled himself at the Ciceu fortress, and how the prince asked for the sultan's "most powerful"[1322] help:

> The proud emperor of the Turks, hearing about this and seeing what had happened, felt pity for prince Peter and ordered prince János to let him go[1323] … Even the barbaric Turk felt sorry for the suffering prince and he called him in order to invest him prince again.[1324]

The chronicler continues with a description of Istanbul and Peter's stay there:

> And after he entered the most beautiful imperial city of Constantinople and once he was within its strengthened walls, he immediately went before the great emperor and he unexpectedly tamed the soul of the barbarian. He looked at the prince with human love and allowed him to take his deserved rest.[1325]

This last quote from Macarie has the most to say about the perception of the Ottomans in Moldavia: the soul of the barbarian was finally tamed and, most strikingly, the sultan looked at Peter with "human love," thus suggesting that the sultan could not see anyone with appropriate "human" feelings or even that he did not usually have natural human feelings; in Moldavian eyes, he was inhuman. A similarly softened representation of the Ottomans is visible in the letters that Rareş sent while staying at the sultan's court. The letters reveal that the prince trusted Suleyman while highlighting, just like Macarie did, the good terms on which he was welcomed to Istanbul:

> You should know that I am in Constantinople, in good health, thank God, and well received by His Imperial Majesty and viziers and kept in honour: I do not lack anything, thank God … I trust in God and in His Imperial Majesty that the situation will change soon.[1326]

The Moldavian prince was now humble and obedient. Moreover, he was in awe when he returned to his much-desired throne: "… the undefeated Emperor, our much-merciful lord, and the much-enlightened viziers, our gracious lords, gave us back Moldavia, our country, exactly as I had it before…"[1327]

However, as Peter's second reign demonstrates, the positive perception stage was followed once more by a negative one.[1328] Interesting, however, is that this third stage did not entirely show straightforwardly negative representations of the Ottomans, but was a grey zone in which negative views towards the Empire were held, but could not be openly expressed. As seen before, the

---

[1322] Ibidem, 210.
[1323] János Zapolya, the ruler or Transylvania, who had power of decision over Peter's staying in Transylvania.
[1324] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 210.
[1325] Ibidem.
[1326] *Scrisori domneşti*, ed. Nicolae Iorga, letter no. XXV, 55.
[1327] Ibidem, letter no. XXVI, 56.
[1328] For instance, Peter wanted to ally with Joachim II Hector of Brandenburg in order to initiate a new anti-Ottoman campaign. See: Chapter III, subchapter "4.1.3. A man of (still) dynamic personality: the second reign."

iconography of Arbure Monastery was commissioned when Peter returned for his second reign.[1329] The anti-Ottoman meaning of the *Siege of Constantinople* from Arbure disappeared, only to be replaced by a new, much more subtle anti-Ottoman addition, the scene of the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross.[1330]

Peter Rareş thus built up an ambiguous image of the Ottomans, although his true perception of the sultan and his empire remained visible throughout his entire reign. It is relevant however to see the way Peter moulded the image of the Ottomans in order to aid his political interests, creating in this way a grey zone of representation.

5.2.2. Elijah Rareş: the anomaly

Peter's eldest son, Elijah, was the Moldavian prince with the deepest connection to the Ottoman Empire. The prince's life before his conversion is most relevant for the perception and representation of the Ottomans during his reign. Elijah had embraced the Ottoman lifestyle from the very beginning of his reign. Having been sent by his father to Istanbul as a guarantee for his fidelity to the Ottoman Empire, Elijah spent about a year and four months there, and returned to Moldavia shortly before Peter died.[1331] Having returned to Moldavia, Elijah brought Ottoman lifestyle back to his court in Suceava. There are no Moldavian sources which directly describe the Ottoman way of living, but there is one source which thoroughly presents the small Ottoman "enclave" which was born in Suceava during Elijah's time: the Chronicle of Eftimie, contemporary of Elijah who wrote his text a few years after Elijah's reign.[1332] By examining the presentation of this Ottoman-ruled territory in a Christian land, a thorough image of the Ottoman other would become visible.

Before looking at the text, it should be emphasized that Eftimie was not entirely biased when he wrote his chronicle. As a bishop, a man of the Church,[1333] and under the commission of Prince Alexander Lăpuşneanul, Eftimie could not have remained impartial when telling the story of Elijah; his recounting of some elements of the prince's "Ottoman" court and behaviour were surely exaggerated. Nevertheless, the court did exist and regardless of the author's known biases, its description is pertinent.

The description of Elijah's reign begins in fairly positive terms by showing the kind and loving side of the prince who was good and righteous towards his boyars and those surrounding him. The tone of the chronicle then abruptly changes and opens with a description that would demonstrate

---

[1329] Chapter V, subchapter "3.2. Stephen's models in the sixteenth century."
[1330] Ibidem.
[1331] See Chapter III, subchapter "4.3.1. Breaking with the dynastic project?"
[1332] "The Chronicle of Elijah" is the continuation of Peter Rareş's official chronicle written by Macarie and was written under the commission of Prince Alexander Lăpuşneanul. See: Ciobanu, *Istoria literaturii române vechi*, 287.
[1333] Eftimie was most likely the Bishop of Rădăuţi. See: Ibidem.

how Elijah was bound to Ottoman lifestyle before actually becoming a subject of the Ottoman Empire. At this stage of the description, Eftimie offers a specific reason for Elijah's misconduct: "an illness was starting to grow at the bottom of his heart."[1334] This statement shows a general (Moldavian) perception of the Ottomans and, more acutely, of Islam: regarded as an illness, it was an unhealthy and unnatural "infection." Following this statement, the chronicler made a comparison between what was Moldavian/Christian and what was other: the prince was told to have abandoned the righteous faith for the evil faith.[1335]

The actual description of the court follows, with insights into its daily life. To the exasperation of the chronicler, who was an eyewitness to the events, Elijah seemed to have brought to Suceava a large number of people from the Ottoman Empire: from friends to counsellors and preachers whom Eftimie refers to as "damned Turks."[1336] The most representative of these people was a man named Hadâr, whose precise role at the court of Elijah remains unknown. He must have been one of the highest-ranking Ottoman representatives in Moldavia, as he is the only one whose name the chronicle provides. Hadâr was one of the prince's closest men: they were not only spending their time together, but the chronicle suggests that they also lived together.[1337] Moreover, Hadâr must have been a type of personal adviser, an imam, a preacher because the chronicler highlights that Elijah was "listening to his bitter teachings."[1338] The Moldavian prince was thus learning from Hadâr's Islamic teachings, but also the Ottoman lifestyle.

As expected, Eftimie and the Moldavian boyars were outraged by these events, resulting in resentful descriptions of the Ottoman who was influencing their prince: Hadâr was "the most deceitful and evil man because of his demonic teachings and his witchery … perverted by his actions, but even more perverted by his soul."[1339] Under the influence of his adviser, Elijah grew more into the Ottoman way of living: he stopped eating pork and drinking wine. This exotic behaviour (from the Moldavian perspective) is emphasized by the adjective bestowed on Elijah when describing his eating preferences: "the shameless."[1340] Elijah's new habits go further: while he stoped eating pork, he continued eating meat on Christian feasts, as well as on Wednesdays and Fridays. Eftimie regarded this as a way of "insulting our true faith,"[1341] and Elijah also "hated the priests and the deacons, [and] he called the monks enemies and demons."[1342] More importantly, the prince became something of

---

[1334] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 214.
[1335] "This way he abandoned the rightful faith for the evil faith, the well doing for wiliness and wickedness, and he started to strongly believe and keep with the Turkish law and its deceitful teachings." See: Ibidem.
[1336] "He made friends and made counselors and teachers some damned Turks." Ibidem.
[1337] "With this man prince Elijah spent his time, and they even lived together." Ibidem.
[1338] Ibidem.
[1339] Ibidem.
[1340] Ibidem, 215.
[1341] Ibidem.
[1342] Ibidem.

an iconoclast, accepting the Muslim interdiction on the painting of human figures; he regarded all icons as expressions of idolatry.[1343]

The violent clash of ideologies, although exaggerated by the chronicler, is very much present in these few lines. The chasm between the two opposite sides was dug even deeper by Eftimie as he explained that "he [Elijah] bought filthy whores with many thousands of akçes and golden coins."[1344] In other words, the prince had a harem at his court in Suceava. A later chronicle, written at the beginning of the seventeenth century, also mentions this harem: "Having next to him young Turkish counsellors, with whom he was spending the day and was enjoying himself, and fornicating by night with Turkish women, he shifted away from Christian customs."[1345] There was more however: apart from respecting the Ottoman eating habits, learning Islamic teachings, having a harem, and spending his days with his foreign counsellors, there was another intriguing aspect which Eftimie noticed but only briefly mentioned. Hadâr was interested in birds, which was was yet another exotic pastime, from the Moldavian point of view.[1346] Eftimie evidently believed that the prince's youth and innocence allowed him to be "dragged in the abyss of loss."[1347] Moreover, the chronicler highlighted that all of Elijah's misconduct was done under the influence of Hadâr, thus trying to explain what he regarded as unthinkable.[1348]

Eftimie's perception of what was happening at the court of the Moldavian prince was negative. A similar description of a different Ottoman or Ottoman-influenced court would have most likely not included all the resentful and malicious comments with which Eftimie described the Ottomans living in Suceava. Amazement towards the unfamiliarity of the Ottoman world would have probably prevailed in another account.[1349] Eftimie's chronicle, which was written in the context of a Christian prince embracing Islam and bringing Ottoman lifestyle to his Christian court, was another matter. In this short description seen through Eftimie's biased eyes, sixteenth-century Moldavians regard their most threatening enemies as heretics,[1350] unbelievers, men of the devil, and strange people with an elaborate list of even stranger habits.

[1343] "… the holy icons, the face of Christ and of the Holy Mother of God and of all the saints, he called idols." Ibidem.

[1344] Ibidem.

[1345] Ureche, *The Chronicle of Moldavia*, 103.

[1346] For a presentation of the Ottoman preoccupation with animals, especially birds as seen in Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq's letters concerning the Ottoman Empire, see: Hasan Güneş, Nadide Güneş, "A Nation Having Internalized Love for Animals, The Ottomans," *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Science* 6 (2012): 59-66, esp. 60-63.

[1347] "The Chronicle of Eftimie," 215.

[1348] The fact that all these acts were seen as unthinkable can be proved with Eftimie's statement that "… he seemed to be under a spell …" See: Ibidem, 217.

[1349] See for example some descriptions which lack the deep vengeful and vicious characteristic of Eftimie's chronicle in the letters written by Busbecq on his travels to the Ottoman Empire: *The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq*, trans. Edward Seymour Forster (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005).

[1350] "… all these unlawful heretic acts…" See: "Cronica lui Eftimie," 215.

5.3. Between Stephen and Elijah: mingled representations

The preoccupation with the Ottoman threat emerged with the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, only three years before Stephen the Great became the prince of Moldavia. It is therefore understandable why Stephen's reign was marked by the relationship with the Ottoman Empire and why he had a constant concern with the territorial integrity and the independence of Moldavia. Stephen was not overt in his strategies meant to encourage the anti-Ottoman struggles. He instead discreetly represented his hopes of Ottoman defeat in mural scenes such as the Mounted Procession of the Holy Cross and in less opulent commissions than Peter Rareş's imposing exterior church painting.[1351] Elijah Rareş applied policies similar to his father's, although considerably less visible, especially given the conversion incident. It is relevant however that he influenced the perception of the Ottomans in Moldavia – or, at least he helped the shaping of its representation in sources, especially in Eftimie's description of Elijah's Ottoman-inspired court. Without such furious representations, one could not fully understand the dimension of Moldavian views of the Ottomans.

The perception of the Ottomans in Moldavia was not a result of the dynastic project, although Stephen's anti-Ottoman programme surely had its influence in the ambition of his followers to withstand the empire of the sultan. Stephen's success in his clashes with the Ottoman armies must have been something his followers wanted to equal and this fact, indirectly, might have increased the negative perception of the menacing other in Moldavia.

6. Then and after: the prince of many

The shifts and changes which occurred within the ruling sphere of Moldavia after the reign of Stephen the Great, verify the process of proto-mythical creation. Stephen's reign represented a turning point in the history of medieval Moldavia. He changed the way both the ruler and his enemy (most visibly, the Ottoman sultan) were perceived and he heightened the expectations of the subjects from their prince. The prince was now supposed to be able to fulfil at least two crucial ruling objectives: successfully defend the principality from any external threat and ensure stable and prosperous living conditions for his people. The historical developments of the sixteenth century did not allow the fulfilment of these objectives. While prosperous living conditions for the population of Moldavia were difficult to be achieved in the new fiscal conditions of Moldavia, the growing Ottoman pressure did not allow the "birth" of a new Stephen-like hero. Two decisive outcomes resulted from

---

[1351] Certainly, not only of Peter's beliefs, but also of his closest adviser Bishop Macarie, who was a veritable engine in the creation of this iconography, and certainly of his closest counselors who were involved in these commissions.

this situation: firstly, Stephen's time started to be perceived as a lost golden age resulting in his slow entrance into the mythical realm; and secondly, Stephen became a model figure for his followers. Consequently, the patterns of Stephen's reign, together with his dynastic project were propelled into the sixteenth century and into the reigns of prolific rulers such as Peter Rareş and Alexander Lăpuşneanul. The positive factors which defined Stephen's reign (including his character, his actions, and the historical conditions of his time) transformed him into the ultimate type of Moldavian leader.

The complexity of Stephen's proto-myth was however not only given by the fact that he became an ultimate type of leader, but also by the fact that his image was comprised of so many various perceptions. Stephen was not solely perceived from one angle, but from a variety of angles which led to the birth of a many-fold ruler.[1352] All throughout this dissertation, the different types of "Stephens" were presented, within both the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. Stephen the Great was the prince of many:

- **The prince of official documents**. Visible throughout charters, letters, and chronicles, this prince represents the image that Stephen and the Royal Council wanted to present. He is the ultimate Christian warrior.[1353] He is imbibded with goodwill and mercy and he rewards both the living and the dead.[1354] He unites the past with the present and the future,[1355] while he impersonates the attributes of an emperor.[1356] Altogether, the prince of official documents seems to be flawless, especially as events such as the fall of his horse at the battle of Şcheia[1357] are concealed from documents springing from the court.

- **The prince of foreigners**. The prince of foreigners is visible in the chronicles, letters, and reports of any type of non-Moldavians, including Christians, Ottomans, but also Wallachians. Should one look at all these documents altogether, their prince starts to receive a more balanced image: he is not the entirely positive ruler of the Moldavian official documents anymore as his weaknesses, his harshness, and generally negative characteristics become visible.[1358] He is the prince of colliding extremes: he is both a saint[1359] and "the leader of the devils."[1360] This is probably the most complex prince because his image is comprised of

---

[1352] The following short presentation on Stephen's many-fold image is inspired by the analysis on Saint Louis done by Jacques Le Goff. See: Jacques Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, trans. Gareth Evan Gollrad (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), "Part II: The Production of Royal Memory: Did Saint Louis Exist?"
[1353] See Chapter II, subchapter "4.3.2. Diplomacy and self-acclamation."
[1354] See Chapter II, subchapter "4.3.1. Commemorating loss."
[1355] Chapter II, subchapters "3.1. Creating the past" and "3.2. Predicting the future."
[1356] Chapter II, subchapter "4.1. Was Stephen his little principality's emperor?"
[1357] Chapter IV, subchapter "5.5. A daunting fall."
[1358] See: Chapter II, subchapter "5. Creating Stephen's memory and building his myth: how the others did it" and Chapter IV, subchapter "5. Selectiveness: the omissions of Stephen's (proto)myth."
[1359] See especially the reports of Stryjkowski and Bielski in Chapter IV, subchapter "4. Stephen, the saint?"
[1360] See: Aşık Paşazade, "Tevarih-I Al-I Osman" in *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I in Chapter II, subchapter "5.2. The Ottomans on Stephen."

perspectives depending on Stephen's (direct or indirect; positive or negative; satisfying or unsatisfying) interactions with foreigners describing him.

- **The prince of his immediate followers**. This prince is the model prince. He is the example of the heirs to his throne, each of whom tries to fit within their predecessor's shoes (or throne) as much as possible. Although the circumstances of the sixteenth century did not always allow it, all heirs from Bogdan III to Alexander Lăpuşneanul tried to continue the legacy of the dynastic project.[1361]

- **The prince of the Putna Monastery**. The prince of Putna has a similar impact to that of the prince of the official documents. However, the prince of Putna is more visually engaging as upon the entrance in Putna, one could grasp the entirety of Stephen's understanding of his reign. The prince of Putna bears all the attributes of the dynastic prince with which Stephen envisioned himself. Generalizing, this prince may also be seen as the prince of ecclesiastic commissions. He thus becomes the prince of arts and of innovation, as well as the prince of Christian Moldavia.[1362]

- **The "real" prince**. The real historical prince is invisible, but he exists within all the other princes presented above. One could only assume what was the image of Stephen, the man. He was surely the ambitious Christian warrior and political strategist visible within all the other Stephens, but he must have also been afraid at times, tired, lacking interest, embittered, and angry. Just like any other subject of his Moldavia, he was first and foremost a man. What makes this man remarkable is that he transformed himself from the "real" prince into all the other princes and eventually, into the proto-myth.

[1361] See Chapter "III. The Pursuit of the Dynastic Project: Stephen's Successors."
[1362] Chapter II, subchapter "3.2.3. Putna: the most prized jewel."

Conclusion
Stephen, the Model

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, you are a leader.
John Quincy Adams

The models of Stephen of Great (Constantine the Great, military saints, Alexander the Great) were transferred into the sixteenth century and also served Stephen's successors as models to their reigns. Having such mythically-established models like Emperors Constantine and Alexander was not unexpected. Nevertheless, it was less expected that Stephen the Great himself entered the sphere of these mythically-established models already at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The argument that Stephen became model is not demonstrated by the fact that his successors followed his policy and continued to reign Moldavia in a similar way. Rather, it is demonstrated by the acts the successors copied from their great predecessor, from triumphal entries, to imperial ideals, to the monastic replicas of Stephen's commissions, and others:

Self-representations. Moldavian chronicles recorded that, following a successful battle, Stephen returned to his capital fortress of Suceava in pomp and celebration. Following several internal disturbances,[1363] Stephen moved these Moldavian-typed triumphal entries to the fortress of Hârlău. Nevertheless, once Bogdan III was enthroned, he moved the entries back to Suceava starting with 1509. This act was deeply symbolic for the return to Stephen's way of celebrating his most acclaimed victories. Consequently, Stephen was transformed into Bogdan's model and, by transition, Alexander the Great was also transformed into his model.

Art. Art is the best setting for the argumentation that Stephen the Great was a model for his immediate successors. Also, it is the best means to show that Peter Rareş was the most thorough follower of Stephen's model. Stephen as model for Peter emerges through three main aspects. Firstly, the sticking architectural resemblance between Stephen's and Peter's main commissions: undoubtedly, the Putna Monastery was a model for the Probota Monastery.[1364] Furthermore, not

---

[1363] There was a blood rain in the town of Roman, the Putna Monastery caught fire, the two fortresses of Chilia and Akkerman were lost, and the prince fell off his horse during the Battle at Şcheia. See: Székely, "Atributele imperiale ale cetăţii Suceava," 8-9.

[1364] See details in Chapter III, subchapter "Recycling, memorialising, and modernizing."

only was the architecture of Probota inspired by Putna, but the architecture of Peter's Neamţ Monastery was also inspired by the same main commission of Stephen.[1365] Similarly, the Church Peter built in Hârlău (Saint Demetrius) is a replica of Stephen's church commission from the same location of Hârlău.[1366] Secondly, Peter's physiognomy in his votive portraits is just as strikingly similar to that of Stephen the Great. The votive portraits of the Humor and Moldoviţa monasteries were proven to directly resemble the portraits of Stephen the Great,[1367] just like Peter's representation in the votive image of Dobrovăţ reflects the same physical traits as those of the other two characters in the image – Stephen the Great and Bogdan III. Thirdly, Peter employed the same persuasive visual language used by his father, but with a significant improvement: while Stephen reflected his anti-Ottoman policy through isolated representations, Peter used the entire space of the exterior monastic walls to develop an iconography subtly imbibed with similar messages meant to encourage the onlookers.

The model of Stephen thorough artistic commissions is also highly noticeable during Alexander Lăpuşneanul's reign, as he connected his name to some of the most priced commissions of Stephen the Great. This way, he entirely rebuilt the Bistriţa Monastery and added an exonarthex to the Saint Nicholas Church of Rădăuţi,[1368] both edifices with deep meaning for Stephen the Great.[1369] A just as significant sign that Alexander was inspired by Stephen the Great was that the coat of arms represented on the coins minted by him was inspired by that of Stephen.[1370]

Dynastic continuity

Dynastic ideologies: the connection between Moldavia and Wallachia. Stephen the Great wanted to connect, at least on a dynastic level, the two principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.[1371] His suggestively-double-named son, Bogdan-Vlad, showed the same ambitions of claiming influence over the neighbouring principality. A significant way in which Bogdan III did this, was by referring to himself, in a series of five known documents dated between 1509 and 1513, not as simply the son of Stephen, but also as the grandson of Radu the Fair, prince of Wallachia.[1372] Further on, Bogdan

---

[1365] See: Ibidem. See also: Solcanu, "Realizări artistice," 296.

[1366] Ion Solcanu calls the Saint Demetrius Church a "veritable copy" of Stephen's commission. See: Ibidem, 297.

[1367] Voinescu, "Portretele lui Ştefan cel Mare în arta epocii sale," 463-478.

[1368] Drăguţ, *Dicţionar enciclopedic*, 56 and 253.

[1369] See details: Chapter III, subchapter "The last great successor of Stephen."

[1370] Gorovei, *Muşatinii*, 107.

[1371] His acts of military influence over Wallachia, the exchange of the naming of the two principalities (Valahia Major and Valahia Minor), the dynastic implications of the Moldavian influence in Wallachia have all already been discussed in Chapters II, III, and IV.

[1372] Gorovei, "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea," 280-283. See also: Chapter III, subchapter "Bogdan III the Blind."

married a Wallachian princess (just like his father), making the ideological connection to Wallachia more visible.

"Imperial" continuation. Peter Rareş followed Stephen in most of his policies. Stephen the Great was closely tied to the imperial legacy of the Byzantine Empire and it is therefore no surprise that Rareş also tied himself to the same legacy. The fact that he married a princess with strong dynastic heritage (although not Byzantine – Elena Branković, daughter of Serbian Despot Branković) is probably the most visible of his "imperial"-linked actions. Additionally, documents dating from his reign also point to the similar imperial ambitions his father had: while the inauguration inscription of the Probota Monastery identified the year of the construction with "the fourth year of my *imperial rule*,"[1373] Rareş's chronicler Macarie described the capital seat of Moldavia as the "imperial town of Suceava."[1374] Moreover, Peter's desire to "conquer" Constantinople[1375] is just as relevant for this continuation.

Dying wills. There is particular connection between Stephen the Great and Alexander Lăpuşneanul. Before his death, Stephen is known to have appointed his son Bogdan III as heir to the throne. On the same basis of naming his heirs, Alexander issued a document in 1565 which specifically named the order of his five sons to the throne.[1376] Moreover, Alexander also appointed his eldest son to the throne shortly before his death, just like Stephen did. Therefore both Bogdan Lăpuşneanul and Bogdan III followed their fathers upon their will of succession.

External policy. The fact that the anti-Ottoman policies of Stephen's successors were similar to those of Stephen himself is not surprising and was dictated by the political circumstances of the time. It was a natural act for the successors to wish for alliances with the Holy See and the Western world,[1377] as well as to continue the external policy of Stephen the Great: searching for such alliances with the west while maintaining a safe relationship with the Ottoman Empire,[1378] thus a creating a safe balance.

In the introduction to his book on Saint Louis, Jacques Le Goff presented one of the prioritizing questions which stood at the forefront of his mind when conceiving his study: "Did Saint Louis

---

[1373] Adam, *Ctitorii muşatine*, 90.

[1374] "The Chronicle of Macarie," 212.

[1375] See the discussion of this subject in: Dan Ioan Mureşan, "Rêver Byzance. Le dessein du prince Pierre Rareş de Moldavie pour libérer Constantinople," *Etudes byzantines et post-byzantines* IV (2001): 207-265.

[1376] Hurmuzaki II.1, document no. CCCCXCV, 532.

[1377] In 1519, for instance, Stephen the Young sent a letter to Pope Leo X explaining that the Moldavians were ready for an alliance and for any military expeditions against the Ottoman Empire. See: Hurmuzaki II.3, document no. CCXXIV, 307-308.

[1378] Andreescu, "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă," 605.

exist?"[1379] The same question should be asked for Stephen the Great and the answer lays in the production of his memory, as presented within these chapters. At the end of this dissertation, the answer to the question "Did Stephen the Great exist?" should be, without hesitation, *yes*.

Stephen the Great was metaphorically erected on a pedestal next to the most iconic medieval models, thus becoming himself one of those very models. Just like his models that who already mythically established, Stephen himself, became by analogy a myth. Nevertheless, Stephen was not erected on this pedestal by his followers alone. The abundance of internal and external sources, dated both fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, reveal his image as ideal monarch, as hero, and myth. Stephen was a man of complex personality and traits, an intriguing character who changed the face of Moldavia and the way Moldavian rulers were perceived (and have been perceived ever since): although he was a usurper, a wicked and sometimes immoral man, he was also the saviour, the church builder, the good Christian, the art reviver, the dynastic "architect," the colonizer, the diplomat, the "champion of Christ," the Last Emperor, the rebel, the fierce warrior, the crusader, the weak patient, the dreamer, the hero, the great. Stephen was the man bound to become myth, a myth which still continues to grow and create new facets of the ruler's image even 500 years after his death.

Stephen's myth seems to be destined to live on indefinitely, revealing new perceptions of the ruler as time passes. Because of this condition, the possibilities of studying his myth are boundless. Although today's perception of the prince in pop culture, literature, or politics is delightful to examine, in order to recreate a fully historical image of Stephen the Great as myth, it is necessary to also elaborately research the mutations, perceptions, and various reinterpretations of the ruler in the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. A collection of studies separately focusing on each century which has passed since the death of Stephen from a mythical perspective would be not only useful for the understanding of the mythical development of any medieval heroic figure, but it would also complete the image of the prince which had not ceased to intrigue the imagination of so many people (rulers, writers, artists, politicians, ordinary people) for so many centuries.

[1379] Le Goff, *Saint Louis*, xxxi.

Epilogue

2014.

More than half a millennium has passed since the death of Stephen the Great of Moldavia, but his presence among Romanians is possibly just as vivid today as it was during his lifetime. His image was transformed into the proto-myth and the proto-myth was then transformed into myth, until Stephen became an integral part of the Moldavian and afterwards Romanian cultural and social realms.

The year 2014 coincided with the celebration of 510 years since the passing of the great prince, which resulted in various types of commemorations, some filled with piety, others replete with jubilation. Two events of 2014 stand out, both of which are representative for the different, sometimes opposite understandings Stephen's image has received up until the 21st century.

In 1871, the poet Mihai Eminescu encouraged Romanians to "transform Putna [Monastery] into the Jerusalem of the Romanian people and the tomb of Stephen into an altar of national consciousness."[1380] Seemingly, Putna has veritably become a site for pilgrimages and imposing celebrations, a fact proven by the over 2000 people[1381] who gathered at the monastery on the 2nd of July 2014 in order to commemorate 510 years since his passing in 1504. An array of people arrived at the site of Stephen's tomb, ranging from clergy (the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bucovina, archbishops and bishops, accompanied by an impressive number of priests and deacons), administrative officials, representatives of the police and local administrations, to ordinary people coming not only from Romania but also from the Republic of Moldova, many of them dressed in traditional costumes. An uncommon arrival was staged by the members of the Romanian Christian Orthodox Students Association who, also dressed in national costumes, travelled by foot from the city of Suceava to the Putna Monastery.

Within the liturgy headed by His Holiness Teofan, the Metropolitan of Moldavia and Bucovina, and aided by the Patriarchal Choir, the sermon performed by His Holiness Teodosie, the Archbishop of Tomis, summed up the image of Stephen today:

> Prince Stephen the Great is truly a man chosen by God, he is the good ruler, the brave, the one full of love and divine gifts, and in his 47 years of reign he believed, prayed, fasted, and defeated … he respected his people and was careful not to have

---

[1380] This advice was part of Mihai Eminescu's speech at the first student congress in the honour of Stephen the Great which was organized at Putna, between the 14th and the 17th of August 1871. See more on the commemoration in Chapter I (now pages 23-24). See also: *Înainte, împreună. Programmemeul România Jună 2030* [Forward, together. The *România Jună* Programmeme 2030] (Bucharest: Visarta, 2012), 15-18 and 30-31.

[1381] Neculai Roşca, "Peste 2000 de credincioşi, ieri, la Putna, de ziua pomenirii voievodului Ştefan cel Mare" [Over 2000 Christians were present yesterday at Putna at Stephen the Great's commemoration] *Obiectiv de Suceava* (local online newspaper), http://www.obiectivdesuceava.ro/local/peste-2-000-de-credinciosi-ieri-la-putna-de-ziua-pomenirii-voievodului-stefan-cel-mare-galerie-foto/, last time accessed on August 23rd, 2014.

traitors sell his country. He loved his country, loved his people, loved faith, because
he knew that without faith, neither his country nor his people would resist.[1382]

The liturgy ended with military honours and a parade. After the military orchestra of Suceava performed several military and heroic hymns, flower garlands were laid by Stephen's tomb, guarded by an always-lit candle. The entire day then ended with the members of the Romanian Christian Orthodox Students Association who, late in the night, lit the so-called "torches of gratitude," surrounded the monastery, and then bowed by the tomb of the prince.[1383]

The feeling of devotion for the saintly and ever heroic prince was present all throughout the celebrations of the 2nd of July. One could easily notice the pedestal on which Stephen was metaphorically erected as a national hero and saint. However, a very different type of glorification was perceivable one month later, when a carnival was staged by the shore of the Black Sea in which Stephen the Great had the main role. Radu Mazăre, the mayor of the harbour city of Constanţa is known to be a flamboyant character who engages in the organization of costumed carnivals (similar to those in Rio de Janeiro) where he places himself as the main character. He has already headed the carnival impersonating historical characters such as Suleyman the Magnificent, Emperor Caesar, or Louis XIV, but on August 2nd he interpreted Stephen the Great of Moldavia. The carnival starts with a procession of chariots throughout the city of Constanţa, headed by the mayor's chariot which, on this occasion, was embellished with medieval Moldavian motifs: it bore on its front side the Moldavian symbol of the ox, while a fake horse was placed on its centre which the mayor mounted. Mazăre wore a red cloak, a golden garnished blouse with a large cross on it, a moustache and a wig with long hair, as well as an imposing crown. He was accompanied by two acclaimed folk singers[1384] impersonating Prince Stephen's mother and Vrâncioaia, the legendary old lady who was said to have helped Stephen win a battle.[1385] At the end of the procession, the "actors" went up on a stage

---

[1382] See the extract from the sermon in: Daniela Micuţariu, "Sfântul Voievod Ştefan cel Mare, sărbătorit ieri, la Putna, de mii de credincioşi" [Saint Stephen the Great, celebrated yesterday at Putna by thousands of Christians] *Monitorul de Suceava* (local online newspaper), http://www.monitorulsv.ro/Local/2014-07-03/Sfantul-Voievod-Stefan-cel-Mare-sarbatorit-ieri-la-Putna-de-mii-de-credinciosi, last time accessed on August 25th, 2014.

[1383] For a full presentation of the events, see: Ibidem.

[1384] Irina Loghin and Maria Cârneci. See: Cosmin Vaideanu, "Primarul Radu Mazăre l-a interpretat pe domnitorul Ştefan cel Mare la carnavalul din Mamaia" [Mayor Radu Mazăre interpreted Prince Stephen the Great at the Carnival of Mamaia], *Mediafax* news agency, http://www.mediafax.ro/social/primarul-radu-mazare-l-a-interpretat-pe-domnitorul-stefan-cel-mare-la-carnavalul-din-mamaia-foto-13026134, last time accessed on August 25th, 2014.

[1385] The legend which features Stephen the Great and Vrâncioaia is set on the background of a battle between the Moldavians and the Hungarians within the plains of Vrancea. Stephen was losing the battle and took shelter at Vrâncioaia's house who not only offered him food and a place to rest, but who also offered her seven sons to aid Stephen in winning the battle. In the end, Stephen did win the battle with the help of the seven brothers. See the versions of the legend in: *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în legendă* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in legends] (Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003), 185-197 (Bătălia din munţii Vrancei [The battle of the mountains of Vrancei]) and 231-234 (Povestea Vrancei [The story of Vrancei]).

prepared for the reproduction of several episodes of the prince's life: the ultimatum given by Stephen's mother to return to the battle field and defeat the Ottomans; Stephen's meeting with Vrâncioaia, but also with Hermit Daniil; a scene from the Ottoman camp; a clash between the Ottomans and the Moldavians. The entire enactment ended with the mayor's words: "This was Stephen the Great."[1386]

While the commemoration at Putna revealed the perception of Stephen from the point of view of religion and national identity, the so-called Carnival of Mamaia revealed his perception from a lay, but also from a political point of view. Firstly, with the carnival, Stephen was taken out of his saintly aura and introduced in the realm of entertainment and amusement. Stephen ceased to be target of prayers and gained a human side, among carnival chariots and club dancers. Moreover, he became the almost explicit model for the mayor of Constanţa. Radu Mazăre stressed his high esteem for the ruler: "What happened on stage was more than pious ... I did not stay at the carnival dressed as Stephen the Great because he is a saint and I did not mean to associate him with what the rest of the carnival is about."[1387] Indeed, it was for the first time that the mayor did not remain on stage to watch the rest of the carnival. Moreover, the mayor's description of his interpretation betrays an affinity to the image of the great prince: "It was an uplifting situation for me, as leader … It [the role] fits me, I must admit. If I had played a simple spahi, it would have probably been more difficult, but I was able to play a Romanian leader very well."[1388] Additionally, describing his costume, he clarified that the crown did not bother him at all and that when he took it off, it "felt as if something was missing."[1389] Needless to say, the mayor's words suggest that he identified himself with the image of the imposing ruler. As implied by the mayor's extravagant attitude and statements, Stephen's crown could have been his own, just like Stephen's role as leader could have been his. Although Mazăre's entire staging was ostentatious and heavily criticized, the association of Mazăre with Stephen was a masked demonstration of power, done through the image of Stephen the Great – just like Stephen had used the image of iconic characters such as Constantine the Great or Alexander the Great, the leaders of today seem to use the iconic image of Stephen himself in order to enhance their own reputation.

Thus Stephen the Great has been a model, but not only for leaders (of Stephen's or today's times) but for any ordinary person living on Romanian territory. Stephen became omnipotent, omnipresent, and received as many guises as one could imagine. His image was personified for as many reasons as:

[1386] Quoted in: Cosmin Vaideanu, "Primarul Radu Mazăre l-a interpretat pe domnitorul Ştefan cel Mare."
[1387] Ibidem.
[1388] Ibidem.
[1389] Ibidem.

- Advertising campaigns: such as that of the *ROM* Chocolate, which, coupled with the traditional *Pegas* bicycle brand, created the "Marea Unire Digitala" [The Great Digital Union] campaign which used the image of Stephen as promoter for a digital "union" between Romania and the Republic of Moldova [Fig. 40];

Fig. 40: One of the advertisements used for the "Marea unire digitala" campaign where one of Stephen's most iconic images is used with the (marketing) purpose of uniting online the people of Romania and Moldova. The campaign was initiated by the *ROM* Chocolate brand and was aided by the *Pegas* bicycle – both of them being imbibed with national identity as they had both been produced for nearly half a century.
Image source:
http://www.romautentic.ro/mareaunire/
(accessed: September 26, 2014)

- Environmental causes: such as the placards used in the manifestations against the construction of the gold mine at Roşia Montană which hinted to Stephen the Great and his legacy [Fig. 41]);

Fig. 41: Placard used at a manifestation against the Roşia Montană Gold Corporation project. The text says: "Roşia Montană is not yours. It belongs to the followers of your followers." It hints to the fictional speech of Stephen the Great written by the playwright Barbu Ştefănescu-Delavrancea: "Moldavia did not belong to my forefathers, does not belong to me or to you, but belongs to your followers and to the followers of your followers." (Barbu Ştefănescu-Delavrancea, *Teatru* [Theatre] (Bucharest: Minerva, 1983), 53).
Image source: www.facebook.com (accessed: September 26, 2014)

- Artistic causes: in 2010, a virtual museum (unavailable online anymore) was created which incorporated representations of Romanian cultural figures as caricatures. The over 1500 artists[1390] who were exhibited also created a representation of Stephen the Great which showed the prince counting his victories against the Ottomans [Fig. 42];

Fig. 42: Caricature of Stephen the Great counting his battles against the Ottomans (2010).
Image source: Flemming Aabech/Nicole Ioniţă
http://www.aabech.dk/fig/Udstilling_i_Rumaenien.pdf (accessed: September 26, 2014)

- Nationalistic causes: the rather extreme online publication *Ziarul Ştefan cel Mare* [Stephen the Great Newspaper] whose slogan is "Unity, justice, brotherhood"[1391] states its purpose from the opening webpage: "A national, political, and independent publication which militates for the independence, suzerainty, integrity, and reunification of Romania."[1392]

Stephen's modern impersonations are however much more meaningful in the Republic of Moldova, where both fractions created after its declaration of independence (pro-Romanian origin and pro-Moldovan origin) used Stephen the Great as proof for their causes: as the conflicts between Stephen and the Wallachians were largely speculated and interpreted, the prince became the great Moldovan and the means of legitimization for the newly-established state.[1393] Nevertheless, probably

---

[1390] See the presentation of the exhibition: "Mari români, cum nu i-aţi mai văzut" [Great Romanians, as you have never seen them before], *Evenimentul Zilei* online, http://www.evz.ro/mari-romani-cum-nu-i-ati-mai-vazut-897342.html#ixzz2wIuSzU9z, last time accessed: August 26th, 2014.
[1391] http://www.ziarulstefancelmare.ro/, last time accessed: August 26th, 2014.
[1392] Ibidem.
[1393] For a very concise presentation of the Moldovan version of Stephen's myth, see: Virgil Pâslariuc, "Ştefan cel Mare în bătălia politică din Republica Moldova" [Stephen the Great within the political battle in the Republic of

the most accurate perceptions of Stephen the Great today are revealed by direct testimonies of everyday ordinary people. The twentieth-century guest books of Putna Monastery are filled with zealous remarks and comments,[1394] as the twenty-first century comments continue in the same spirit of piety and national identity, also revealing the mythical dimension of Stephen the Great.[1395] Most comments recall Stephen while asking for protection in prayer ("Saint Hermit Daniil, Saint Stephen, ask the Lord to forgive us, Amen!" [Fig. 43]) or while thanking the prince for his legacy ("Thank you, Stephen the Great, for what you have given the Romanian nation" [Fig. 44]).
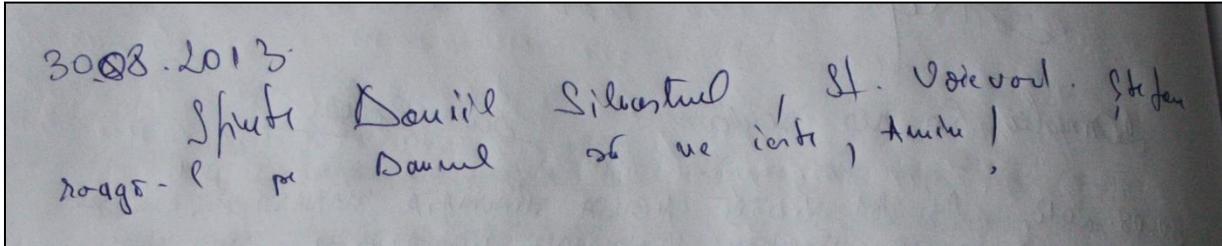
Fig. 43: "Saint Hermit Daniil, Saint Stephen, ask the Lord to forgive us, Amen!"
Guest book of Putna (August 2013). Image source: Teodora Artimon
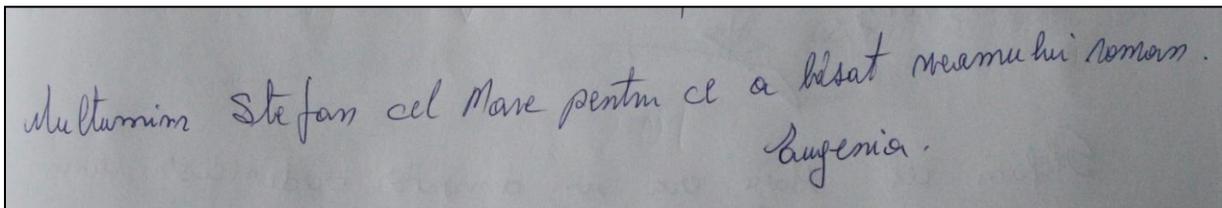
Fig. 44: "Thank you, Stephen the Great, for what you have given the Romanian nation."
Guest book of Putna (September 2013). Image source: Teodora Artimon

Some of them are written in lengthier expressions of devotion, others in short but telling assertions. A man who signed himself as simply "Cristi" made a just as simple (but conclusive) affirmation: "Without Stephen, we would have been a ~~vile~~ weak nation" [Fig. 45] The visitor changed his mind and decided to lessen the dramatic affirmation by replacing the word "vile" with the word "weak."
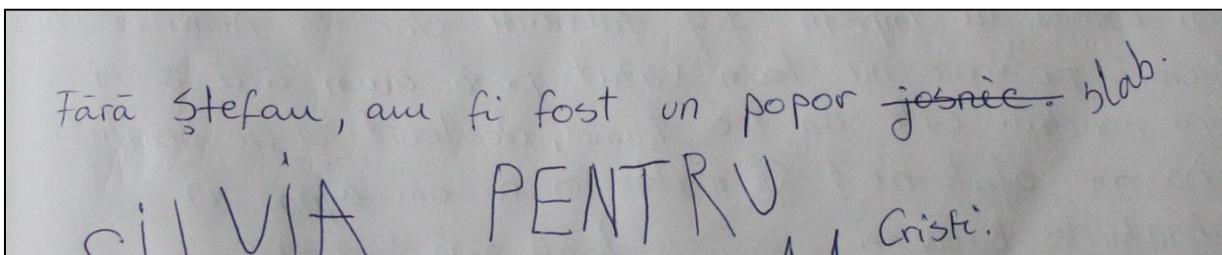
Fig. 45: "Without Stephen, we would have been a ~~vile~~ weak nation." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Moldova], *Historia* online version of the magazine http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/stefan-cel-mare-batalia-politica-republica-moldova, last time accessed: August 26th, 2014.
[1394] See: Monah Alexie Cojocaru, "The guest books of the Putna Monastery. Between history and eternity," *Analele Putnei* 1 (2007), 181-212.
[1395] All extracts which will be presented are dated August and September 2013 and have been collected by the author of this dissertation.

Many comments recall the pride of being the followers of Stephen ("… proud to be Romanian – a follower of Stephen" [Fig. 46]), while others attest a lifelong desire to visit the burial place of the prince: "I wished, ever since I was a child, to return once more to Putna and to the tomb of the Great Stephen. My wish has finally come true…" (signed by Valentin, 53 years old [Fig. 47]).
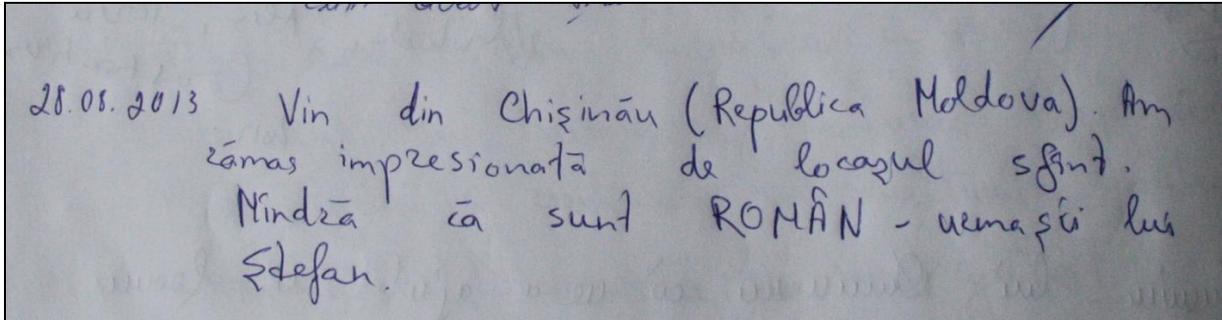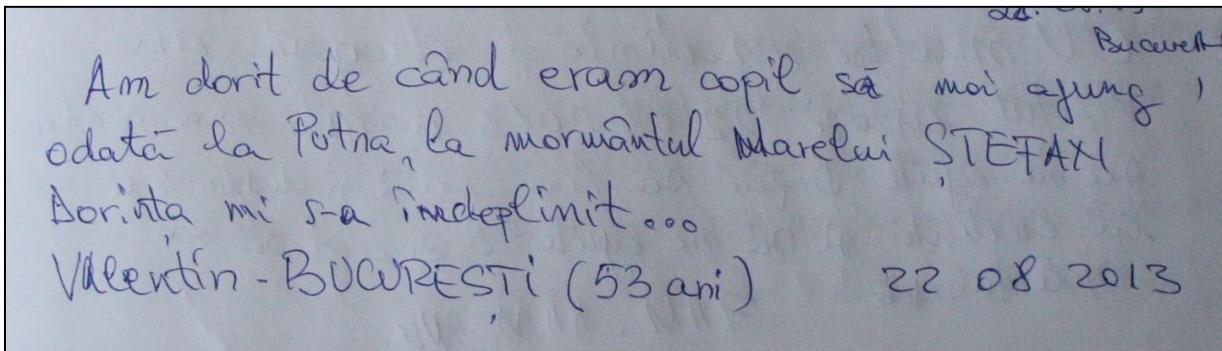

Fig. 46: "… proud to be Romanian – a follower of Stephen." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Fig. 47: "I wished, ever since I was a child, to return once more to Putna and to the tomb of the Great Stephen. My wish has finally come true…" Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

A type of sublime admiration is also attested in many comments: "I nourish a great respect and a boundless love for the one who was the prince of Moldavia, Saint Stephen the Great" [Fig. 48].
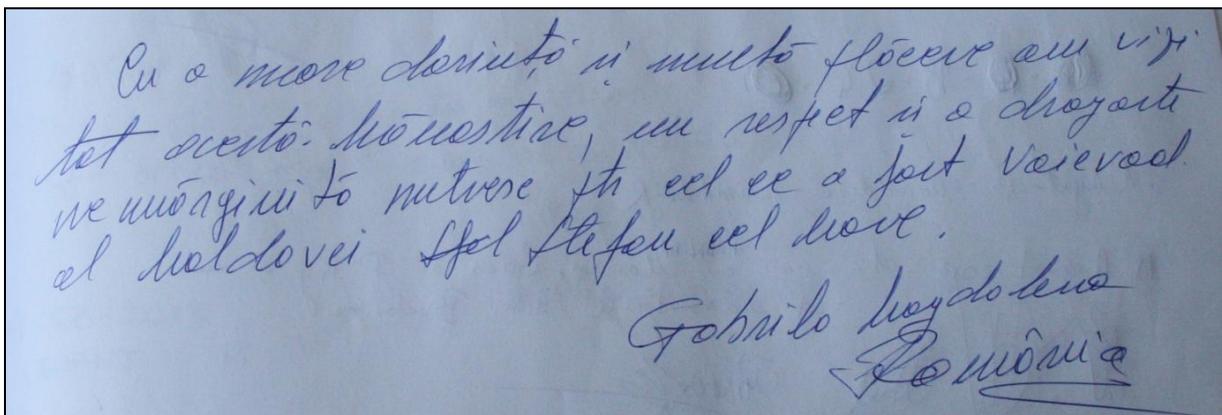
Fig. 48: "… I nourish a great respect and a boundless love for the one who was the prince of Moldavia, Saint Stephen the Great." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Nevertheless, the most important aspect perceivable in the comments is the encouragement that the past should live on through Stephen's legacy ("Let us NOT forget the past!" [Fig. 49]), as well as the explicit confirmation through the visitors' eyes that Stephen is still recognized as a genuine mythical hero.
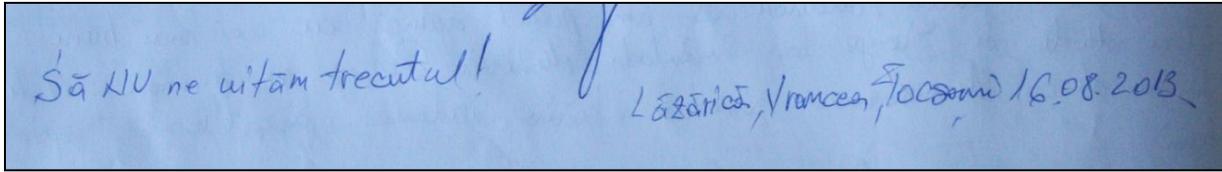

Fig. 49: "Let us NOT forget the past!" Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

There are two indicators of Stephen's mythical perception in the extracts of Putna. The first one is perceived through the verses of Adrian Păunescu's poem *Jurământ la Putna* [A Wov at Putna] which one often times encounters as comments ("Rise up, Stephen, and behold your sons/Because the times are hard/Forever faith to our Fatherland/We vow, Your Highness" [Fig. 50]).
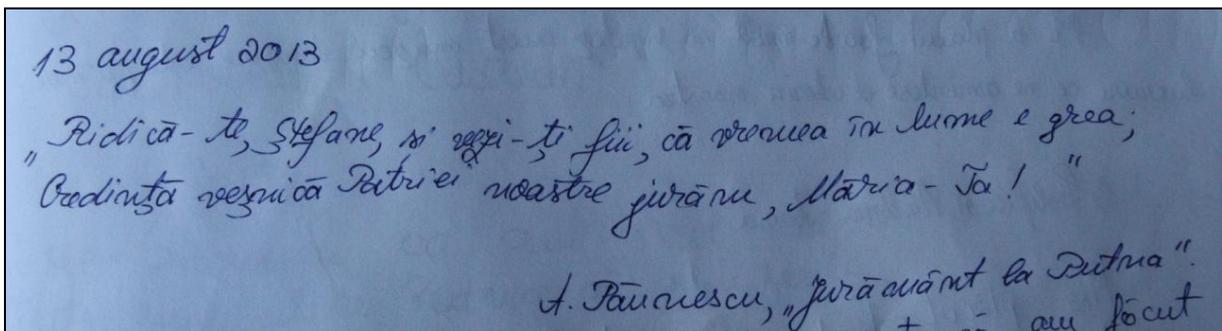

Fig. 50: "Rise up, Stephen, and behold your sons/Because the times are hard/Forever faith to our Fatherland/We vow, Your Highness." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

The second one is observed through free-written comments which embody the entire sphere of Stephen's celebrated characteristics as hero-saint:

- "Putna will always represent for me a true legend on the path of whose prince we would like to follow." [Fig. 51]
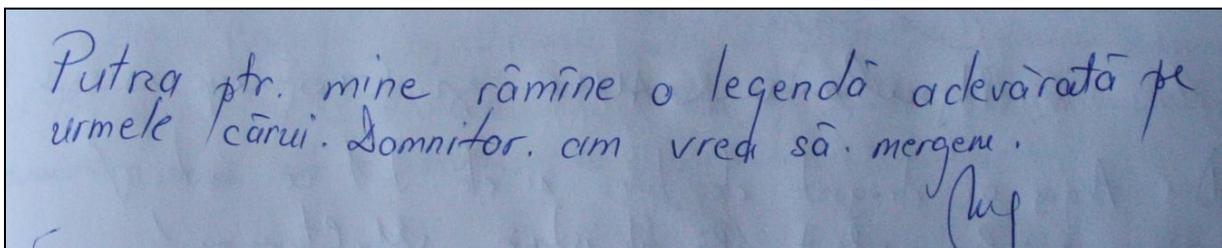

Fig. 51: "Putna will always represent for me a true legend on the path of whose prince we would like to follow."
Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

- "Wonderful! We miss Prince Stephen the Great to unite our nation and guide it towards the truth, faith, and prosperity. Thank you, Stephen!" [Fig. 52]
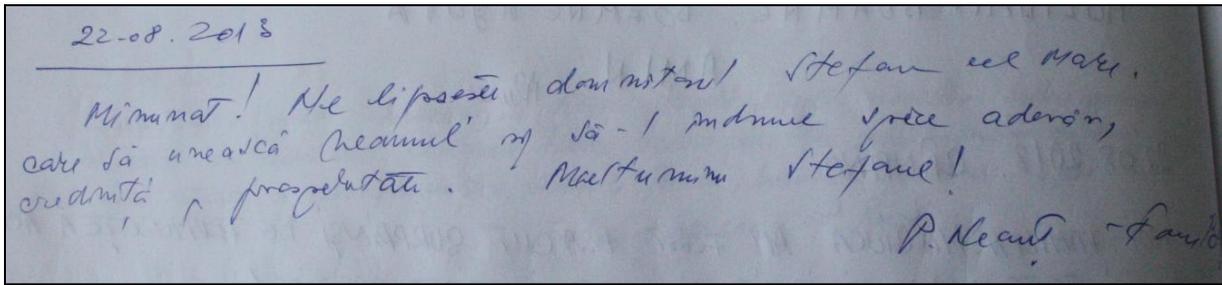
Fig. 52: "Wonderful! We miss Prince Stephen the Great to unite our nation and guide it towards the truth, faith, and prosperity. Thank you, Stephen!" Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

- "A dead epoch? A controversial ruler? Not at all! He was a providential personality of the past, present, and future Romanian nation, joined in perfection. Saint Stephen is watching over us and is asking God to have the necessary patience and wisdom to be able to move the rock of faithlessness, oblivion, and indolence." [Fig. 53]
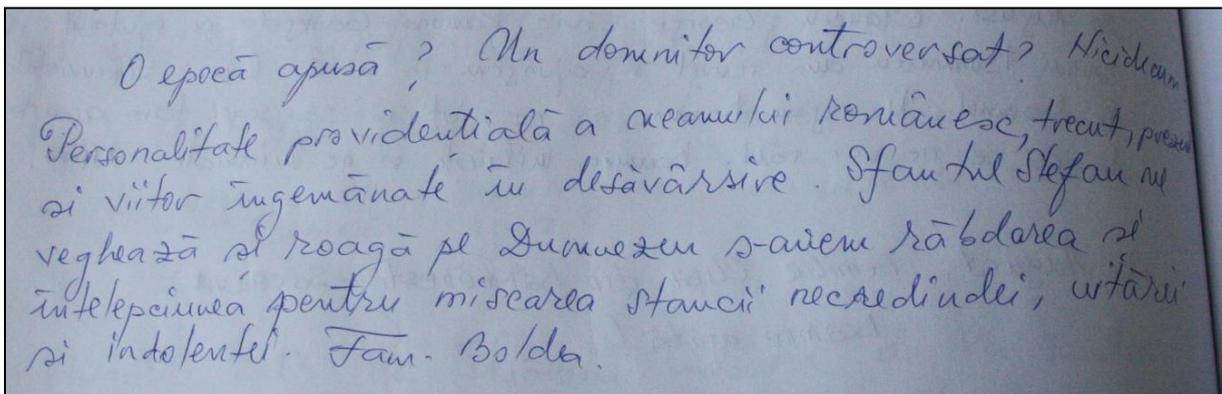
Fig. 53: "A dead epoch? A controversial ruler? Not at all! He was a providential personality of the past, present, and future Romanian nation, joined in perfection. Saint Stephen is watching over us and is asking God to have the necessary patience and wisdom to be able to move the rock of faithlessness, oblivion, and indolence." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

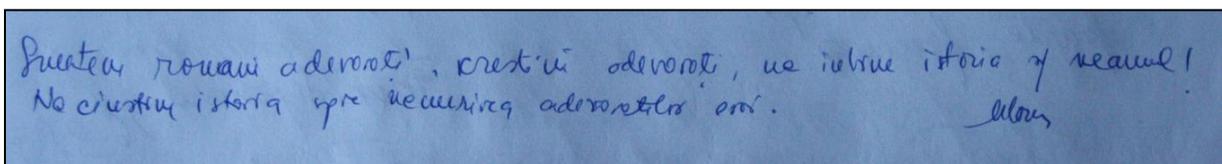- "… we cherish history for the immortality of our true heroes." [Fig. 54]

Fig. 54: "We are real Romanians, true Christians, we love our history and people. We cherish history for the immortality of our true heroes." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

266

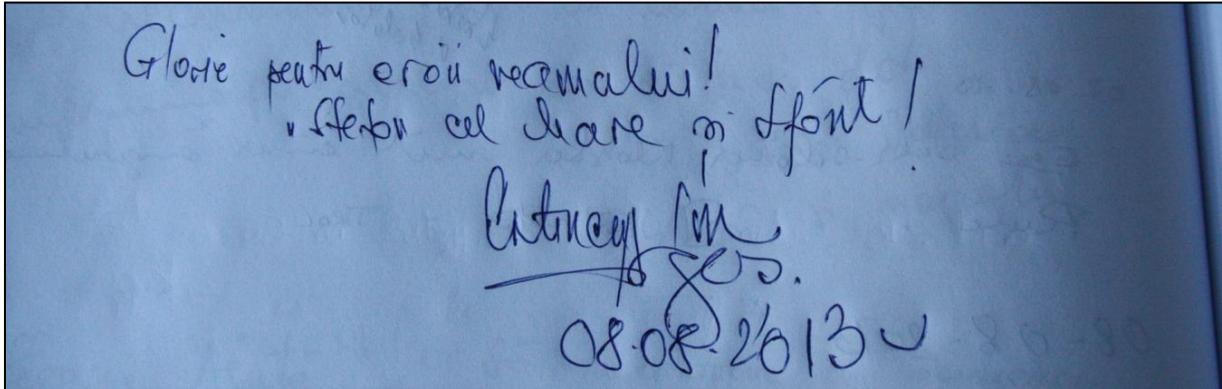- "Glory to the heroes of our nation! Saint Stephen the Great!" [Fig. 55]

Fig. 55: "Glory to the heroes of our nation! Saint Stephen the Great!" Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

- "History is always calling us, in those holy places, in order to see who we were and how capable our forefathers were. God bless all those who laid a brick on the foundation of this country. Sleep in peace, Saint Stephen the Great!" [Fig. 56]
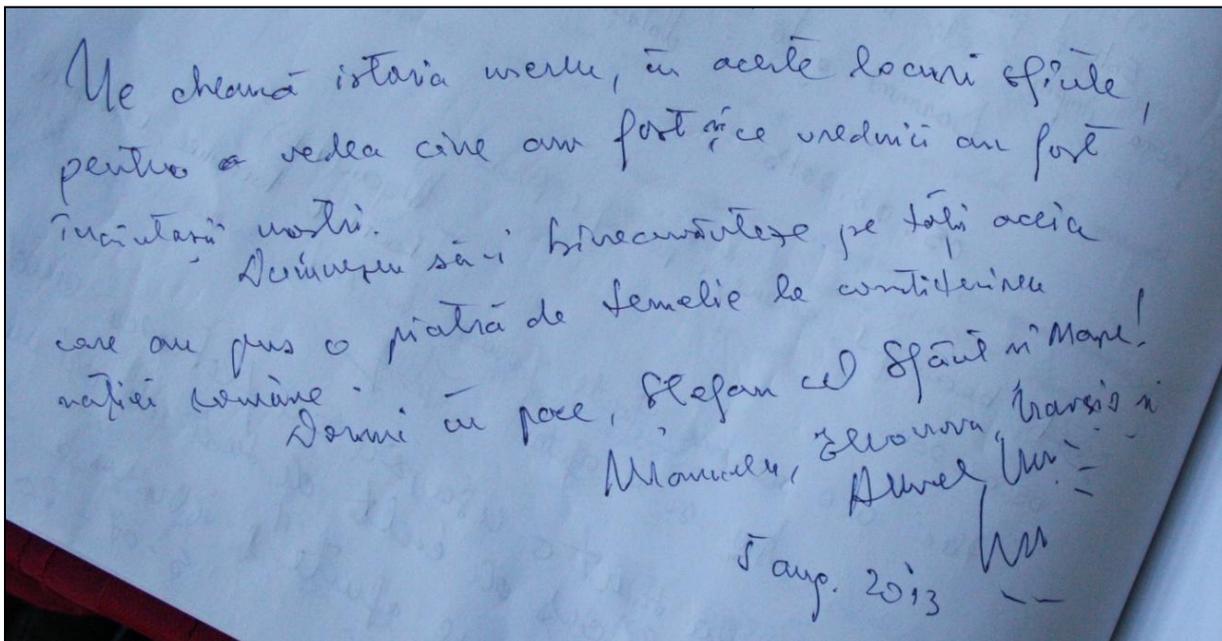

Fig. 56: "History is always calling us, in those holy places, in order to see who we were and how capable our forefathers were. God bless all those who laid a brick on the foundation of this country. Sleep in peace, Saint Stephen the Great!" Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

267

- "We came here looking for God and we enjoyed all the memories and heroic acts of Stephen the Great. We leave in hope that his [Stephen's] spirit still dwells in us and [we hope] that his memory will forever exist in my [our] minds and souls" [Fig. 57]
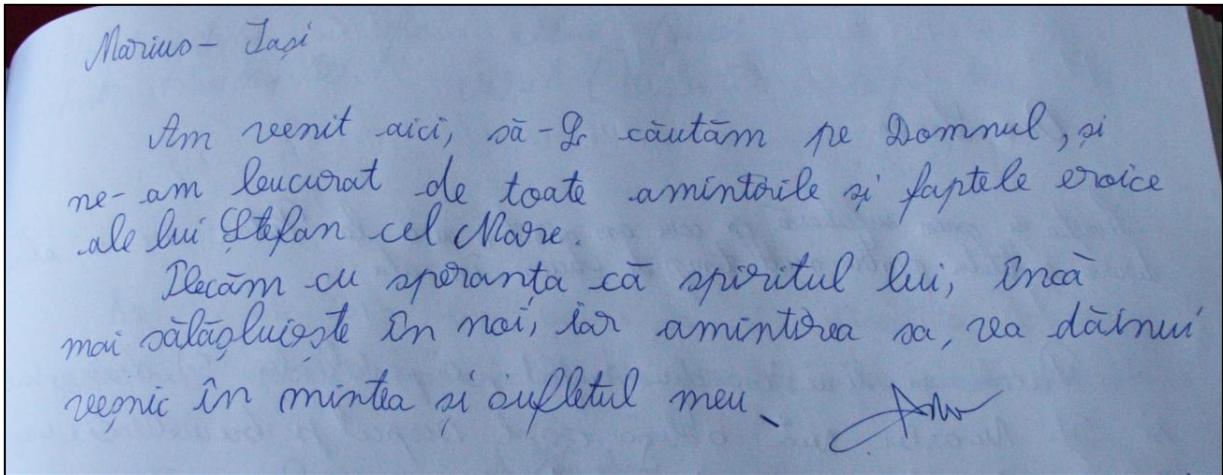

Fig. 57: "We came here looking for God and we enjoyed all the memories and heroic acts of Stephen the Great. We leave in hope that his [Stephen's] spirit still dwells in us and [we hope] that his memory will forever exist in my [our] minds and souls." Guest book of Putna (August 2013)
Image source: Teodora Artimon

Stephen's spirit still dwells in the existence of today's Romanians. Whether he is the impersonation of the liberating saint, of the perfect hero, or of the genuine Romanian, one fact is certain: Stephen's proto-myth bloomed in the sixteenth century in such a way that it gave birth to a myth which, up until today, did not cease to gain new and outstanding attributes. The future is bright for Stephen the Great of Moldavia as he continues to grow, inspire, and exist.

Bibliography

Primary sources

22 Dispacci da Constantinopoli al doge Giovanni Mocenigo, ed. Giuseppe Calo and Alvise Zorzi. Venice: Corbo e Fiore, 1992.

Abdülaziz Efendi. "Suleimanname." In *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 530-540. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor III [Documents and fragments concerning the history of Romanians III], ed. Nicolae Iorga. Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1897.

Acte şi fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor adunate din depozitele de manuscrise ale apusului [Documents and Fragments regarding the History of Romanians Gathered from Eastern Archives], ed. Nicolae Iorga. Bucharest: Imprimeria Statului, 1897.

Almut Bues (Hg.), *Die Aufzeichnungen des Dominikaners Martin Gruneweg (1562 – ca. 1618) über seine Familie in Danzig, seine Handelsreisen in Osteuropa und sein Klosterleben in Polen*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008.

Anonymous. "Song on the Death of King Matthias." *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 53-56.

Aşık Paşazade. "Tevarih-I Al-I Osman." In *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 83-105. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Bielski, Marcin. "Kronika Polska." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 196-206. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Bonfini, Antonio. "Historia Pannonica ab Origine Gentis ad Annum 1495." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 207-211. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Călători străini în Țările Române I [Foreign travellers in the Romanian Principalities], ed. Maria Holban. Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1968.

Călători străini despre Țările Române II [Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Principalities], ed. Maria Holban, M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu. Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968.

Călători străini despre Țările Române III [Foreign travellers on the Romanian Principalities], ed. Maria Holban. Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1971.

Călători străini despre Țările Române VI [Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Principalities], ed. M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru and Mustafa Ali Mehmet. Bucharest: Ştiinţifică şi Academică, 1976.

Chronicon Dubnicense. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 207. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Costin, Nicolae. "Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei de la zidirea lumii până la 1601 şi de la 1709 la 1711"[The Chronicle of Moldavia from the beginning of the world until 1601 and from 1709 to 1711]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 70-99. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Cromer, Martin. "Polonia sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 193-194. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Cronica de la mănăstirea Hustânscaia" [The Chronicle of the Hustynska Monastery]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 224-226. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Cronica Lituaniană" [Lithuanian Chronicle]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 226-233. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Cronica lui Eftimie" [The Chronicle of Eftimie]. In *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia* [Old Romanian Chronicles written before Ureche], ed. Ioan Bogdan, 212-223. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1891.

"Cronica lui Macarie" [The Chronicle of Macarie]. In *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia* [Old Romanian Chronicles written before Ureche], ed. Ioan Bogdan, 198-212. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1891.

Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare. Versiunea germană a lui Schedel [The Chronicle of Stephen the Great. Schedel's German Version], ed. Ion Const. Chiţimia. Bucharest: Casa Şcoalelor, 1942.

"Cronica Moldo-Germană" [The Moldavian-German Chronicle]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 22-29. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Cronica Moldo-Polonă" [The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 41-46. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Cronica moldo-polonă" [The Moldavian-Polish Chronicle]. In *Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia* [Old Romanian Chronicles written before Ureche], ed. Ioan Bogdan, 223-235. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1891.

Cronicari munteni [Wallachian Chroniclers] I, ed. Mihail Gregorian. Bucharest: Minerva, 1984.

Cronicile slavo-române din secolele XV-XVI publicate de Ioan Bogdan [The Slavic-Romanian chronicles of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries published by Ioan Bogdan], ed. Petre P. Panaitescu. Bucharest: Academiei, 1959.

Culegere de documente privind istoria românilor. Secolele XIV-XVI [Collection of Documents regarding the History of the Romanians. Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries], ed. Adina Berciu-Drăghicescu and Liliana Trofin. Bucharest: Editura Universităţii Bucureşti, 2006.

Cureus, Joachim. "Gentis Silesiae Annales." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 334-337. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Długosz, Jan. "Historia Polonica." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 158-173. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldava II (1449-1486), ed. Leon Şimanschi. Bucharest: Academiei, 1976.

Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova III (1487-1504), ed. C. Cihodaru, I. Caproşu, N. Ciocan. Bucharest: Academiei, 1980.

Documenta Romaniae Historica, *A. Moldova* IV (1546-1570), ed. Ioan Caproşu. Bucharest: Academiei, 2008.

Documenta Romaniae Historica B. Ţara Românească [Wallachia] VII (1571-1575), ed. Ştefan Ştefănescu and Olimpia Diaconescu. Bucharest: Academiei, 1988.

Documente false atribuite lui Ştefan cel Mare [Fake documents attributed to Stephen the Great], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: Socec, 1913.

Documente moldoveneşti de la Ştefăniţă voievod (1517-1527) [Moldavian documents from Prince Stephen the Young (1517-1527)], ed. Mihai Costăchescu. Iaşi: Institutul Român de arte grafice "Brawo," 1943.

Documente moldoveneşti din sec. XV şi XVI în arhivul Braşovului [Moldavian Documents from the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century from the Archive of Braşov], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: Socecu & Co., 1905.

Documente moldoveneşti înainte de Ştefan cel Mare [Moldavian documents dated before the time of Stephen the Great] II, ed. Mihai Costăchescu. Iaşi: Viaţa Românească, 1932.

Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova I (1501-1550) [Documents regarding the history of Romania. Sixteenth century. A. Moldavia I (1501-1550)], ed. Mihail Roller. Bucharest: Academiei, 1953.

Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova II (1551-1570) [Documents regarding the history of Romania. The Sixteenth Century. A. Moldavia (1551-1570)], ed. Mihail Roller. Bucharest: Academiei, 1951.

Documente privind istoria României. Veacul XVI. A. Moldova III (1571-1590) [Documents regarding the history of Romania. Sixteenth century. A. Moldavia III (1571-1590)], ed. Mihail Roller. Bucharest: Academiei, 1951.

Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti I [Documents regarding the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia], ed. Andrei Veress. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1929.

Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti. Acte şi scrisori (1585–1592) III [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia. Documents and letters (1593-1595)], ed. Andrei Veress. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1931.

Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti [Documents concerning the history of Transylvania, Moldavia and Wallachia], ed. Andrei Veress, IV *Acte şi scrisori (1593–1595)* [Documents and letters (1593-1595)]. Bucharest: Cartea Românească, 1932.

Documente privitoare la istoria oraşului Iaşi I [Documents regarding the history of the city of Iaşi] *Acte interne (1408-1660)* [Internal documents (1408-1660)], ed. Ioan Caproşu, Petronel Zahariuc. Iaşi: Dosoftei, 1999.

Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone. Secolul XVI. [Documents regarding the history of Romania from Polish archives. The sixteenth century], ed. Ilie Corfuş. Bucharest: Academiei, 1979.

Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1451-1575 [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1451-1575], II, Part 1, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, Bucharest: 1891.

Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1451-1510 [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1451-1510], II, Part 2, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki. Bucharest: 1891.

Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1510-1530 [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1510-1530], II, Part 3, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki. Bucharest: 1892.

Documente privitoare la istoria Românilor. 1531-1552 [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1531-1552], II, Part 4, collected by Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, ed. Nic. Densuşianu. Bucharest: 1894.

Documente privitoare la istoria românilor. 1510-1600 [Documents regarding the history of Romanians. 1510-1600] Suplement II, vol. 1, ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: 1893.

Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare I (1457-1492) [The Documents of Stephen the Great], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: 1913.

Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare II (1493-1503; 1457-1503) [The Documents of Stephen the Great], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: 1913.

Documente turceşti privind istoria României I [Turkish documents on the history of Romania] 1455–1774, ed. Mustafa A. Mehmed. Bucharest: Academiei, 1976.

Der Fromme Sultan Bayezid. Die Geschichte seiner Herrschaft (1481-1512) nach den altosmanischen Chroniken des Oruc und des Anonymus Hanivaldanus (Osmanische Geschichtsschreiber), ed. Richard F. Kreutel 9. Graz: Verlag Styria, 1978.

Husein, Kodja. "Beda'i ul-veka'I." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 288-297. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Istoria României în texte [The Romanian History in Texts], ed. Bogdan Murgescu. Bucharest: Corint, 2001.

Istvánffy, Miklós. "Regni Hungarici Historia." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 214-216. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Letopiseţul anonim al Moldovei" [The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 14-22. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Letopiseţul Cantacuzinesc: 1290–1688 [The Cantacuzino Chronicle: 1290–1688], ed. N. Simache and Tr. Cristescu. Buzău: Tipografia şi Legătoria "Fraţii Dumitrescu," 1942.

"Letopiseţul de la Putna I" [The Chronicle of Putna I]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 29-33. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

"Letopiseţul de la Putna II" [The Chronicle of Putna II]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 33-38. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Letopiseţul lui Azarie [The Chronicle of Azarie], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: Carol Gobl, 1909).

Matrakçı Nasuh. "Fetihname-I Kara-Bogdan." In *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 223-232.. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Mehmed Neşri. "Djihannuma, Tarih-I Al-I Osman." In *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 110-134. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Mazereanu, Vartolomei. "Istorie pentru sfânta mănăstire Putna" [A history for the saintly church of Putna]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 147-151. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Mehmed Pasha Kuciuk Nişandji. "Tarih-i Nişandji." In *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române. Extrase* [Turkish Chronicles on the Romanian Principalities] I, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet, 290-296. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Mehmed bin Mehmed. "Nuhnet-ut-Tevarih ve'l-ahbar." In *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române. Extrase* [Turkish Chronicles on the Romanian Principalities] I, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet, 400-436. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Miechowita, Maciej. "Chronica Polonorum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 173-176. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Moldova în epoca feudalismului. Documente slavo-moldoveneşti [Moldavia during feudalism. Moldavian-Slavic documents] I, ed. P. Gh. Dmitriev, D. M. Dragnev, E. M. Russev, P. V. Sovetov. Chişinău: Ştiinţa, 1961.

Mustafa Gelalzade. "Tabakat al-memalik ve daradjat al-mesalik." In *Cronici turceşti privind Ţările Române. Extrase* [Turkish Chronicles on the Romanian Principalities] I, ed. Mihail Guboglu and Mustafa Mehmet, 259-277. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Neculce, Ion. "O samă de cuvinte" [A collection of words]. In *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], ed. Anatol and Dan Vidraşcu, 13-33. Bucharest: Litera International, 2001.

Petancic, Felix. "Despre drumurile pe care trebuie să se pornească expediţia contra turcilor" [About the roads on which the campaign against the Turks should debut]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 213-214. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Peresvetov, Ivan "Jalba cea mare" [The large letter]. In *Călători străini în Ţările Române* I [Foreign travellers in the Romanian Principalities], ed. Maria Holban, 452-463. Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1968.

Popescu, Radu. "Istoriile Domnilor Ţărâi Româneşti" [The histories of the Wallachian princes]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 151-157. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Ranzanus, Petrus. "Epitome Rerum Hungaricarum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 211-212. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Relaţiile internaţionale ale României în documente (1368-1900) [Romanian international relations in documents (1368-1900)], ed. Ion Ionaşcu, Petre Bărbulescu, Gheorghe Gheorghe. Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1971.

Repertoriul monumentelor şi obiectelor de arta din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare [The collection of monuments and artifacts dating from the reign of Stephen the Great], ed. Mihai Berza. Bucharest: Academiei, 1958.

Sarnicius, Stanislaus. "Annales seu de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum et Lithuanorum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 196. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Scrisori de boieri, scrisori de domni [Letter from boyars, letters from voivodes], ed. Nicolae Iorga. Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia "Datina Românească," 1925.

Scrisori domneşti [Royal letters], ed. Nicolae Iorga. Vălenii de Munte: Tipografia "Neamul Românesc," 1912.

Sommer, Johann. "Vita Iacobi Despotae Moldavorum reguli." In *Călători străini despre Ţările Române* II [Foreign Travellers on the Romanian Principalities], ed. Maria Holban, M. M. Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, Paul Cernovodeanu, 257-268. Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1968.

Stryjkowski, Maciej. "Kronila Polska." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 194-196. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Thurocz, Ioannes de. "Chronica Hungarorum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 212-213. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

The Turkish Letters of Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, trans. Edward Seymour Forster. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005.

Tursun Bei. "Tarih-I Ebu-l Feth-I Sultan Mehmed-Han." In *Cronici turceşti privind Tările Române. Extrase. Sec. XV – mijlocul sec. XVII* I [Turkish Chronicles regarding the Romanian Principalities. Extracts. From the fifteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century], ed. Mihail Gublogu and Mustafa Mehmet, 67-79. Bucharest: Academiei, 1966.

Unrest, Jakub. "Chronicon Austriacum." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 222-223. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Ureche, Grigore. *Letopiseţul Ţării Moldovei* [The Chronicle of Moldavia], ed. Dan Horia Mazilu. Bucharest: Gramar, 2009.

Vechile cronice moldovenesci până la Urechia [Old Romanian Chronicles written before Ureche], ed. Ioan Bogdan. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1891.

Wapowski, Bernard. "Chronicorum Partem Posterorem." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în cronică. 1504-2004* [Saint Stephen the Great. Portrait in chronicles. 1504-2004], 179-191. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Secondary Literature

_____. *Studii de artă veche românească şi universal* [Studies of old Romanian and universal art]. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987.

Adam, Sergiu. *Ctitorii mușatine. Biserici, mănăstiri, cetăți, curți domnești. Secolele XIV-XVI* [Commissions of the Mușatin dynasty. Churches, monasteries, royal courts. Fourteenth-sixteenth centuries]. Cluj: Casa Cărții de Știință, 2001.

Aitchison, N. B. "Regicide in early medieval Ireland." In *Violence and Society in the Early Medieval West*, ed. Guy Halsall, 108-125. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998.

Alecsandri, Vasile. *Imn lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Hymn to Stephen the Great] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#VasileAlecsandri, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Alexandrescu-Dersca Bulgaru, M. M. "Prigoana armenilor din Moldova sub domnia lui Ştefan Rareş (1551-1556) [The Armenian Persecution in Stephen Rareş's Moldavia (1551-1556)] *Ararat* New Series 13 (2002): 71–94.

Almaş, Dumitru. *Petru Voievod Rareş* [Prince Peter Rareş]. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970.

Andreescu, Ştefan. "În legătură cu proiectul lui Iliaş Rareş" [On the project of Elijah Rareş]. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie A. D. Xenopol Iaşi* 19 (1982): 643-661.

_____. "Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare: înţelesurile unei întreruperi" [The Chroncile of Stephen the Great: the meanings of an interruption]. In *Istoria românilor: cronicari, misionari, ctitori (sec. XV-XVII)* [The history of the Romanians: chroniclers, missionaries, ktetors (Fifteenth-seventeenth centuries)], 124-129. Bucharest: Universităţii, 1997.

_____. "Genovezi pe <drumul moldovenesc>" [The Genoese on the "Moldavian road"]. In *In honorem Ioan Caproşu. Studii de istorie* [In honorem Ioan Caproşu. Studies of history], ed. Lucian Leuştean, Maria Magdalena Székely, Mihai-Răzvan Ungureanu, Petronel Zahariuc, 204-221. Iaşi: Polirom, 2002.

_____. "Pătrăuţi şi Arezzo: O comparaţie şi consecinţele ei" [Pătrăuţi and Arezzo: A comparison and its consequences]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al Credinţei Creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 375-389. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Un nou act genovez cu privire la Ştefan cel Mare – A New Genoese Document about Stephen the Great." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 132-136.

_____. "Presiune otomană şi reacţie ortodoxă în Moldova urmaşilor lui Petru vodă Rareş – Ottoman Pressure and Orthodox Reaction in Moldavia in the Time of Prince Petru Rareş' Descendants." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 25-59.

_____. "Câmpurile de bătălie: locuri ale memoriei. O nouă mărturie – The Battlefields: Places of Memory. A New Testimony." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 303-308.

Artimon, Teodora. "'Face Lifting' National Myths Though Historical Film. Stephen the Great as a Romanian Case Study." In *Mediaevalia Annual of the Centre for Medieval Studies at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń*, ed. Jaroslaw Wenta. Torun: 2011.

_____. "Peter Rareş and His Visual Concept: An Ambitious Sixteenth-Century PR Campaign?" Budapest: CEU Budapest College, 2010. Master dissertation.

Asachi, Gheorghe. *Petru Rareş*. Bucharest: Columna, 1970 – first edition: 1853.

Atil, Esin. "Ottoman Miniature Painting under Sultan Mehmed II." *Ars Orientalis* 9 (1973): 103-120.

Babinger, Franz. *Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Bălan, Mihail. *Mănăstirea Râşca* [The Râşca Monastery]. Bucharest: ASA, 2009.

Barthélemy, Dominique. "Qu'est-ce que la chevalerie, en France aux Xe et XIe siècles?" *Revue Historique* 290 (1993): 15-74.

Bass, Bernard M. "From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision." *Organizational Dynamics* 18 (1990): 19–31.

Batariuc, Paraschiva Victoria. *Cahle din Moldova medievală. Secolele XIV-XVII* [Tiles from Medieval Moldavia. Fourteenth-Seventeenth Centuries]. Suceava: Istros, 1999.

Bedros, Vlad. "Rolul ideologiei politice în apariţia şi fixarea tipului de necropolă voievodală în Moldova în secolele al XV-lea şi al XVI-lea" [The role of political ideology in the development of the voivodal necropolis in Moldavia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries]. *Studia Patzinaka* 1 (2005): 62-75.

Bejenaru, N. C. *Politica externă a lui Alexandru Lăpuşneanu* [The external policy of Alexander Lăpuşneanu]. Iaşi: Presa Bună, 1935.

Berindei, Dan. "Ştefan cel Mare în conştiinţa românilor" [Stephen the Great in the Conscience of Romanians]. In *Comerorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte. Sesiunea solemnă a Academiei Române* [The Commemoration of Stephen the Great at 500 Years since his Death. The Solemn Session of the Romanian Academy], 25-37. Bucharest: Academia Română, 2004.

Bertelli, Sergio. *The King's Body. Sacred Rituals of Power in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003.

Berza, Mihai. "Haraciul Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti în secolele XV-XIX" [The Moldavian and Wallachian tribute in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries]. *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 2 (1957): 7-47.

_____. "Stema Moldovei în veacul al XVI-lea" [The Moldavian coat of arms in the sixteenth century]. *Studii şi cercetări privind istoria artei* 1-2 (1956): 99-128.

_____. "Trei Tetraevanghele ale lui Teodor Mărişescul în Muzeul Istoric de la Moscova" [Three Gospels written by Teodor Mărişescul at the Moscow Historical Museum]. In *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Moldavian culture during the time of Stephen the Great], ed. Mihai Berza, 589-613. Bucharest: Academiei, 1964.

Beşleagă, Vladimir. "Cronica lui Ştefan cel Mare. Versiunea germană a lui Schedel – The Chronicle of Stefan the Great. German version of Schedel." *Contrafort* 115-116 (2004): 16-18.

Bevan, Bryan. *King William III: Prince of Orange, the First European*. London: Rubicon, 2004.
Birenbaum, Harvey. *Myth and Mind*. Boston: University Press of America, 1988.

Bisaha, Nancy. *Creating East and West. Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004.

Blaga, Lucian. *Trilogia culturii. Orizont şi stil* [The Trilogy of Culture. Horizon and Style]. Bucharest: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969.

Bloch, Marc. *Les rois thaumaturges: Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale, particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*. Paris: Gallimard, 1983.

Bogdan, Damian P. "Quelques témoignages des liens roumano-grecs sous le règne d'Etienne le Grand, prince de Moldavie." *Bulletin de l'Association Internationale d'Etudes du Sud-Est Européen* 5 (1967): 120-128.

Boia, Lucian. *Istorie şi mit în conştiinţa românească* [History and Myth in Romanian Consciousness]. Bucharest: Humanitas, 2010.

_____. *Două secole de mitologie naţională* [Two Centuries of National Mythology]. Bucharest: Humanitas, 2011.

Bolintineanu, Dimitrie. *Muma lui Ştefan cel Mare* [The Mother of Stephen the Great] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#DimitrieBolintineanu, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Bruno, Richard L. and Nancy M. Frick. "The Psychology of Polio as Prelude to Post-Polio Sequelae: Behavior Modification and Psychotherapy" *Orthopedics* 14 (1991): 1185-1193.

Burac, C. "Bogdan-Vlad, urmaşul lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Bogdab-Vlad, the Follower of Stephen the Great]. *Anuarul Institutului De Istorie şI Arheologie A.D. Xenopol* 25 (1988): 247–252.

Buzdugan, George and Gheorghe Niculiţă. *Medalii şi plachete româneşti. Memoria metalului* [Romanian Coins and Plaquettes. The Memory of the Metal]. Bucharest: Ştiinţifică, 1971.

Cardini, Franco. "The Warrior and the Knight." In *Medieval Callings*, ed. Jacques Le Goff, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, 75-111. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Cain, Albert C. and Barbara S. Cain. "On Replacing a Child." *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 3 (1964): 443-456.

Cantemir, Dimitrie. *Istoria Imperiului Otoman. Creşterea şi scăderea lui* [The History of the Ottoman Empire. Its Rise and fall], transl. I. Hodosiu. Bucharest: Societăţii Academice Române, 1876.

Camille, Michael. "Visionary Perception and Images of the Apocalypse in the Later Middle Ages." In *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, 276-293. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Caragea, Anton. *Epoca Renaşterii Naţionale (1750 - 1878)* [The Age of National Rebirth (1750 - 1878)]. Bucharest: Universitatii, 2003.

Cărţăleanu, Elena. "Eroul şi eroismul în cronografia moldovenească din secolul XVI" [The hero and heroism in sixteenth-century Moldavian chronicles]. PhD dissertation. Chişinău: 2009.

Caşu, Igor. "Ştefan cel Mare în simbolistica politică şi istoriografia basarabeană postbelică" [Stephen the Great in the political symbolism and the Bessarabian post-war historiography]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt în contextul epocii sale şi al posterităţii* [Saint Stephen the Great in the context of his time and of his posterity], ed. Demir Dragnev, Emil Dragnev, Igor Caşu, and Virgil Pâslariuc, 104-127. Chişinău: Civitas, 2004.

Cazacu, Matei. *Minuni, vedenii şi vise premonitorii în trecutul românesc* [Miracles, visions and premonition dreams in the Romanian past]. Bucharest: Sigma, 2003.

_____. "La Conversion à l'Islam du prince Iliaş Rareş. Un nouveau témoignage." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 75-78.

Cazan, Ileana and Denize, Eugen. *Marile puteri şi spaţiul românesc în secolele XV-XVI* [The Great Powers and the Romanian Space in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries]. Bucharest: Editura Universităţii din Bucureşti, 2001.

Chiţimia, I. C. "Ştefan cel Mare, ctitor în domeniul istoriografiei" [Stephen the Great, a *ktetor* of historiography]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 200-220. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Cihodaru, Constantin. "Politica internă" [The internal policy]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 57-85. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

Cihodaru, Constantin and Gheorghe Platon. *Istoria oraşului Iaşi* I [The history of the city of Iaşi]. Iaşi: Junimea, 1980.

Ciobanu, Ştefan. *Istoria literaturii române vechi* [The history of early Romanian literature]. Bucharest: Eminescu, 1989.

Ciobanu, Veniamin. "Apărător al moştenirii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Defender of Stephen the Great's legacy]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

Cioroianu, Adrian. "Cine a profitat de cultul lui Ceauşescu?" [Who Took Advantage of the Cult of Ceauşescu?]. *Historia* on http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cine-profitat-cultul-lui-ceausescu, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Ciubotaru, Mircea. "De la Vilneşti la Movila lui Burcel. Observaţii onomastice şi istorice" [From Vilneşti to the hillock of Burcel. Identity and historical observations]. *Arhiva Genealogică* VI (1994): 143–149.

Classen, Albrecht. "The Self, the Other and Everything in Between: Xenological Phenomenology of the Middle Ages." In *Meeting the Foreign in the Middle Ages*, ed. Albrecht Classen, xi-lxxiii. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Constantiniu, Florin. *O istorie sinceră a poporului român* [An Honest History of the Romanians]. Bucharest: Univers Enciclopedic Gold, 2010.

Coruga, Matei V. *Gheorghe al II-lea şi Grigorie de la Neamţ, doi mitropoliţi necunoscuţi ai Moldovei din secolul al XVI-lea* [Gheorghe II and Grigorie of Neamţ, two unknown archbishops of sixteenth-century Moldavia]. *Biserica Ortodoxă Română* 89 (1997): 1230-1243.

Crăciun, Maria. "Apud Ecclesia: church burial and the development of funerary rooms in Moldavia." In *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, 144-166. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Cristea, Ovidiu. "Despre raportul dintre principe şi "omul sfânt" în Ţările Române. Întâlnirea lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Daniil Sihastrul" [The relationship between the prince and the "holy man" in the Romanian Principalities. Stephen the Great meeting Hermit Daniil]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 192-200. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "Campania din 1484 în lumina unor noi mărturii veneţiene – L'expédition du sultan Bajazet II contre la Moldavie (1484) dans les rapports vénitiens de Constantinople." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al Credinţei Creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 187-275. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Declanşarea războiului, victorii şi intrări triumfale în Moldova lui Ştefan cel Mare: evenimente, reprezentări, interpretări – War outbreak, victories and triumphal entries in Moldavia of Stephen the Great: events, representations, interpretations." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 105-132.

_____. "<Si e fatto Turcho: di ricco povero, di Signor Schiavo.> Bailul veneţian Bernardo Navagero despre turcirea lui Iliaş Rareş - <Si e fatto Turcho: di ricco povero, di Signor Schiavo.> The Venetian Bailo Bernardo Navagero on Iliaş Rareş' Conversion to Islam." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 79-99.

Cruz, Laura and Willem Frijhoff. "Introduction: Myth in History, History in Myth." In *Myth in History, History in Myth: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of the Society for Netherlandic History (New York: June 5-6, 2006)*, ed. Laura Cruz and Willem Frijhoff. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Cunningham, Lawrence S. and John J. Reich. *Culture and Values. A Survey of the Humanities*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.

Cupşa, Ioan. *Arta militară a moldovenilor în a doua jumătate a secolului al XV-lea (Ştefan cel Mare)* [The Moldavian military art in the second half of the fifteenth century (Stephen the Great)]. Bucharest: Editura Militară a Ministerului Forţelor Armate ale R.P.R., 1959.

Czamańska, Ilona. "Descendenţi ai lui Ştefan cel Mare în familia Wiśniowiecki. Câteva noutăţi – Descendents of Stephen the Great in the Wiśniowiecki family. Several new things." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 255-264.

Dan, Dimitrie. *Mânăstirea şi comuna Putna cu două apendice* [The Putna monastery and settlement. With two appendices]. Bucharest: Lito-Tipografia Carol Gobl, 1905.

De la Dragoş la Cuza Vodă. Legende populare istorice româneşti [From Dragoş to Prince Cuza. Romanian Popular Historical Legends], ed. V. Adăscăliţei. Bucharest: Minerva, 1988.

Delogu, Daisy. *Theorizing the Ideal Sovereign. The Rise of the French Vernacular Royal Biography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press Incorporated, 2008.

Demciuc, Vasile M. and Justinian Remus A. Cojocar. *Biserica "Sfântul Dumitru" Suceava* [The Saint Demetrius Church of Suceava]. Suceava: Editura Arhiepiscopiei Sucevei şi Rădăuţilor, 2009.

Denize, Eugen. *Stephen the Great and His Reign*. Bucharest: The Romanian Cultural Institute Publishing House, 2004.

_____. *Românii între Leu şi Semilună. Relaţiile turco-veneţiene şi influenţa lor asupra spaţiului românesc, secolele XV-XVI* [The Romanians between the Lion and the Half-Moon. Turkish-Venetian relations and their influence on the Romanian space, fifteenth-sixteenth centuries]. Târgovişte: Cetatea de Scaun, 2009.

Deploige, Jeroen and Gita Deneckere. "The Monarchy: A Crossroads of Trajectories." In *Mystifying the Monarch. Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, 9-23. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Di Cesare, M. A. "<Not Less but More Heroic>: The Epic Task and the Renaissance Hero." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 12 (1982): 58-71.

Dictionary of Symbols, ed. Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, trans. John Buchanan-Brown. London: Penguin Books, 1996.

Djuvara, Neagu. "Les Grands Boiars ont-ils constitué dans les principautes roumaines une veritable oligarchie institutionelle et héréditaire?" *SOF* 46 (1987): 1-56.

Docea, Vasile. *Carol I şi monarhia constituţională. Interpretări istorice* [Charles I and the Constitutional Monarchy. Historical Interpretations]. Timişoara: Presa Universitară Română, 2001.

Domnitori români în legende [Romanian Princes in Legends], ed. Mihai Alexandru Canciovici. Bucharest: Rosetti Educaţional, 2005.

Drăguţ, Vasile. *Humor*. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1973.

_____. *Dicţionar enciclopedic de artă medievală românească* [Encyclopedic Dictionary of Romanian Medieval Art]. Bucharest: Ştiinţifică şi Enciclopedică, 1976.

_____. *Pictura murală din Moldova. Secolele XV-XVI* [Mural Painting in Moldavia. Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries]. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1982.

Drăguţ, Vasile and Vasile Florea, Dan Grigorescu, Marin Mihalache. *Pictura românească în imagini* [Romanian painting in images]. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1970.

Eagles, Jonathan. *Stephen the Great and Balkan Nationalism. Moldova and Eastern European History*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2014.

Eco, Umberto. *Inventing the Enemy*, trans. Richard Nixon. New York: Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, 2012.

Elsie, Robert. *Historical Dictionary of Albania*. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2010.

Eminescu, Mihai. *Doina* [Ballad] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#MihaiEminescu, last time accessed on: September 10, 2014.

Eskenasy, Victor. "Omagiul lui Ştefan cel Mare de la Colomeea. Note pe marginea unui ceremonial medieval" [The Oath of Stephen the Great at Colomeea. Observations of a medieval ceremonial]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 440-459. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Firea, Elena. "Concepţie dinastică în tablourile votive ale lui Petru Rareş" [Dynastic concept in the votive images of Peter Rareş]. *Ars Transylvaniae* 14-15 (2004-2005): 143-161.

Frashëri, Kristo. *George Kastrioti-Scanderbeg: The National Hero of the Albanians (1405-1468)*. Tirana: Naim Frashëri, 1962.

Freely, John. *The Grand Turk: Sultan Mehmet II. Conqueror of Constantinople and Master of an Empire*. New York: Overlook Press, 2009.

Funkenstein, Amos. "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness." *History and Memory* 1 (1989): 5-26.

Garlick, Harry. *The Final Curtain: State Funerals and the Theatre of Power*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1999.

Gelb, Norman. *Kings of the Jews. The Origins of the Jewish Nation*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2010.

Gemil, Tahsin. "Agresiunea otomano-tătaro-poloneză" [The Ottoman-Tartar-Polish Aggression]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 151-161. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

_____. *Românii și otomanii în secolele XIV-XVI* [Romanians and Ottomans from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries]. Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 1991.

Georgescu, Valentin Al. "L'idée impériale byzantine et les réactions des réalités roumaines (XIVe-XVIIIe siècles). Idéologie politique, structuration de l'État et du droit." *Byzantina* 3 (1971): 311-339.

Gertsen, Alexander and Nadezhda Gertsen. "Moldova şi principatul Theodoro la 1475" [Moldavia and the Principality of Theodoro in 1475]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 141-157. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Giurescu, Constantin C. *Istoria românilor din cele mai vechi timpuri până la moartea regelui Ferdinand* [The History of the Romanians from the Oldest Times to the Death of King Ferdinand]. Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000.

_____. *Istoria românilor* I [The History of Romanians]. Bucharest: Editura Fundaţiei pentru Literatură şi Artă "Regele Carol II," 1935.

Goga, Octavian. *De la noi* [From Us] on http://www.stefancelmare.ro/Scrieri-s4-ss20.htm#OctavianGoga, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Goleman, Daniel and Richard E. Boyatzis, Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership. Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence.* Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 2002.

Gorovei, Ştefan S. "Găneştii şi Arbureştii" [The Găneşti and the Arbureşti families]. *Cercetări istorice* 2 (1971): 143-159.

_____. "Domnia lui Alexandru Cornea" [The Reign of Alexander Cornea]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 175-179. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

_____. "Familia lui Petru Rareş" [The family of Peter Rareş]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 266-271. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

_____. *Petru Rareş.* Bucharest: Editura Militară, 1982.

_____. *Muşatinii* [The Mushatin Dynasty]. Chişinău: Columna, 1991.

_____. *Întemeierea Moldovei. Probleme controversate* [The foundation of Moldavia. Controversial problems]. Iaşi: Editura Universităţii "Alexandru Ioan Cuza," 1997.

_____. "1473: Ştefan, Moldova şi lumea catolică" [1473: Stephen, Moldavia and the Catholic world]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 395-406. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "A Forgotten Founder at the Putna monastery and the Association at the Sovereign Power." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 21 (2003): 241-250.

_____. "Ştefan cel Mare" [Stephen the Great]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt: 1504 – 2004. Portret în Istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great: 1504-2004. Historical Portrait], 556-560. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "1473 – un an-cheie al domniei lui Ştefan cel Mare" [1473 – a key year in the reign of Stephen the Great]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt: 1504 – 2004. Portret în Istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great: 1504-2004. Historical Portrait], 389-395. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "Gesta Dei per Stephanum Voievodam." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 389-415. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Biserica de la Volovăţ şi mormântul lui Dragoş Vodă" [The Church of Volovăţ and the tomb of Dragoş voivode]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie* [Stephen the Great and the Saint 1504-2004. The Church. A History Lesson], 135-147. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Doamna Moldovlahiei I" [Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Princess Of Moldavia I]. *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 9-50.

_____. "Ion Neculce şi tradiţiile Putnei" [Ion Neculce and the traditions of Putna]. *Analele Putnei* 1 (2005): 55–72.

_____. "Titlurile lui Ştefan cel Mare. Tradiţie diplomatică şi vocabular politic – Stephen the Great's titles. Diplomatic Tradition and Political Vocabulary." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 23 (2005): 41-78.

_____. "Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Doamna Moldovlahiei II" [Maria Asanina Paleologhina, Princess Of Moldavia II]. *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 24 (2006): 55-80.

_____. "Informaţie, propagandă, mistificare: scrisoarea din 25 ianuarie 1475 – Information, propaganda, mystification: the letter from the 25th of January 1475." *Analele Putnei* II (2007): 21-26.

_____. "Cetatea de scaun a Sucevei. O ipoteză – The Suceava fortress. A hypothesis." *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 15-24.

_____. "Contribuţii pentru istoria domniei lui Bogdan al III-lea – Contributions to the history of the reign of Bogdan III." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 279-294.

_____. "Umbra lui Dragoş. La Putna – The shadow of Dragoş. At Putna." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 5–26.

_____. "O controversă: <doamnele> lui Bogdan al III-lea – A Controversy: Bogdan III's <Wives>." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 145-157.

_____. "Trei <problem> din biografia lui Ştefan cel Mare – Trois <questions> de la biographie d'Étienne le Grand." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 239-252.

_____. "<Cel Mare>. Mărturii şi interpretări – <Le Grand.> Témoignages et interprétations." *Analele Putnei* 2 (2012): 7-37.

Gorovei, Ştefan S. and Maria Magdalena Székely. "Însemnele imperiale ale doamnei Maria Asanina Paleologhina" [The imperial signs of Princess Maria Asanina Paleologhina]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 81-113. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. *Princeps Omni Laude Maior. O istorie a lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Princeps Omni Laude Maior. A History of Stephen the Great]. Putna: Muşatinii, 2005.

Grabar, André. "Les croisades de l'Europe orientale dans l'art." In *L'Art de la fin de l'antiquité et du Moyen Age*, 169-175. Paris: Collège de France, 1968.

Grecu, Al. "Răscoala ţăranilor din Moldova în anii 1563-1564" [The uprising of the Moldavian peasants in the years 1563-1564]. *Studii* VI (1953): 201-213.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Grumeza, Ion. *The Roots of Balkanization: Eastern Europe C.E. 500-1500*. Lanham: University Press of America, 2010.

Güneş, Hasan and Nadide Güneş. "A Nation Having Internalized Love for Animals, The Ottomans." *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Science* 6 (2012): 59-66.

Hahn, Cynthia. "Vision." In *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, ed. Conrad Rudolph, 44-64. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Hayton, Darin. "Martin Bylica at the Court of Matthias Corvinus: Astrology and Politics in Renaissance Hungary." *Centaurus* 49 (2007): 185–198.

Head, Randolph C. "William Tell and His Comrades: Association and Fraternity in the Propaganda of Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Switzerland." *The Journal of Modern History* 67 (1995): 527-557.

Head, Thomas. *Hagiography and the Cult of Saints: The Diocese of Orléans, 800-1200*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hetherington, Paul. *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysius of Fourna.* London: Sagittarius Press, 1974.

Heuser, Beatrice and Cyril Buffet. "Introduction: Of Myths and Men." In *Haunted by History. Myths in International Relations*, ed. Beatrice Heuser and Cyril Buffet, vii-x. Berghahn Books, 1998.

Howard, Douglas A. *The History of Turkey*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 2001.

Ilie, Liviu Marius. "Several causes regarding the association to the throne in Wallachia and Moldavia (14th - 16th centuries)." *Analele Universităţii "Dunărea de Jos" Galaţi* 19 (2008): 75-90.

Iorga, Nicolae. *Studii şi documente cu privire la istoria românilor* [Studies and Documents regarding the History of the Romanians]. Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Instrucţie, 1901.

_____. *Orizonturile mele. O viaţă de om aşa cum a fost* [My Horizons. A Man's Life as it Was]. Bucharest: Minerva, 1984.

_____. *Istoria lui Ştefan cel Mare pentru poporul român* [The History of Stephen the Great for the Romanian People]. Bucharest: Artemis, 2004.

Ivancu, Ovidiu. "Romanian National Heroes. An Interdisciplinary Approach." *Annals of "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia* 11 (2010): 153-164.

Învăţăturile lui Neagoe Basarab către fiul său Theodosie [The teachings of Neagoe Basarab to his son Theodosie], ed. Anatol Vidraşcu and Dan Vidraşcu. Chişinău: Litera International, 2001.

Schmitt, Oliver Jens. *Skanderbeg. Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan*. Regensburg: Pustet, 2009.

Joudiou, Benoît. "Le règne d'Étienne le Grand et la succession: une perspective idéologique." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 415-429. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Remarques sur la signification du titre "souverain" dans les Principautes Roumaines." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 19 (2001): 67-77.

Kantorowicz, Ernst H. *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

Kalina, Pavel. "European Diplomacy, Family Strategies, and the Origins of Renaissance Architecture in Central and Eastern Europe." *Artibus et Historiae* 30 (2009): 173-190.

Keene, Catherine. "Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: her life and memory." Budapest: CEU Budapest College, 2011. Doctoral dissertation.

Kirmayer, Laurence J. and Karl J. Looper. "Abnormal illness behaviour: physiological, psychological and social dimensions of coping with distress." *Current Opinion in Psychiatry* 19 (2006): 54-60.

Klaniczay, Gábor. *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000.

Klein, Peter K. "Introduction: The Apocalypse in Medieval Art." In *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, ed. Richard K. Emmerson and Bernard McGinn, 159-200. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.

Knobler, Nathan. *Dialogul vizual* I [The Visual Dialogue], trans. Sorin Mărculescu. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1983.

_____. *Dialogul vizual* II [The Visual Dialogue], trans. Sorin Mărculescu. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1983.

Kogălniceanu, Mihail. *Opere* II [Writings], ed. Alexandru Zub. Bucharest: Academiei, 1976.

Kovács, Péter E. *Mátyás, a reneszánsz király* [Matthias, the king of the Renaissance]. Budapest: Officina, 2008.

Kubinyi, András. *Matthias Rex*. Budapest: Balassi, 2008.

Latowsky, Anne. *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.

Le Goff, Jacques. *Héros et Merveilles du Moyen Âge*. Paris: Points, 2009.

_____. *Saint Louis*, trans. Gareth Evan Gollrad. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009.

Lecuppre-Desjardin, Elodie. "'Et le prince respondit de par sa bouche.' Monarchal Speech Habits in Late Medieval Europe." In *Mystifying the Monarch. Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, 55-65. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Lefter, Lucian-Valeriu. "Moştenirea celor dintâi sfetnici ai lui Ştefan cel Mare – The inheritance of the first counsellors of Stephen the Great." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 153-172.

_____. "Neamuri şi înrudiri la boierii lui Ştefan cel Mare – Stephen the Great's Boyars. Families and Kinships." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 111-144.

_____. "<Boierii noştri credincioşi.> Conexiuni genealogice în sfatul domnesc al lui Ştefan cel Mare" ["Our Our Faithful Boyars." Genealogical Connections in the Council of Stephen the Great]. *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 253–282.

_____. "Despre solidarităţi şi descendenţe la boierii lui Ştefan cel Mare. Câteva precizări – About the Solidarities and the Lineage of the Boyars of Stephen the Great. Several Clarifications." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2011): 369-376.

Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

MacKay, Pierre A. "The Content and Authorship of the Historia Turchesca" in *İstanbul Üniversitesi 550. yıl, Uluslararası Bizans ve Osmanlı Sempozyumu (XV. yüzyıl)*: 30-31 Mayıs 2003 (550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University, International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth century): 30–31 May 2003), ed. Sümer Atasoy, 213-223. Istanbul: 2004.

Madar, Heather. "Durer's depictions of the Ottoman Turks: A case of early modern Orientalism?" In *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye, 1450-1750. Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, ed. James G. Harper, 155-185. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

Maelon, Bogdan-Petru. "Mănăstirea Probota între ierarhia ecleziastică şi domnie. Semnificaţiile unor privilegii din secolele XV-XVI – The Probota monastery between the ecclesiastic hierarchy and the reign. The significance of some privileges during the 15th and 16th centuries." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (2006): 131-150.

_____. "Observaţii privind dobândirea puterii princiare în Moldova epocii ştefaniene – Some Remarks on Gaining the Princely Power in Moldavia during Stephen the Great Epoch." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2011): 7-20.

Marcu, George. *Între diplomaţie şi "iubire." Soţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Between Diplomacy and "Love." The Wives of Stephen the Great] on http://reteaualiterara.ning.com/profiles/blogs/ntre-diploma-ie-i-iubire-so-iile-lui-tefan-cel-mare?xg_source=activity&id=1971741%3ABlogPost%3A1262523&page=4, last time accessed on January 5, 2013

Marinescu, Florin and Petronel Zahariuc. "Noi documente de la Ştefan cel Mare şi de la înaintaşii săi" [New documents from Stephen the Great and his predecessors]. *Analele Putnei* [Annals of Putna] 1 (2008): 187-188.

Marinescu, Iulian. *Bogdan al III-lea cel Orb* [Bogdan III the Blind]. Bucharest: Academiei, 1910.

Mazilu, Dan Horia. *Recitind literatura română veche* I [Rereading the old Romanian literature]. Bucharest: Universităţii, 1994.

_____. *Văduvele. Sau despre istorie la feminin* [The widows. Or women's history]. Bucharest: Polirom, 2008.

McCormick, Michael. *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

McKim, Anne. "Scottish National Heroes and the Limits of Violence." In *"A Great Effusion of Blood"?* In *Interpreting Medieval Violence*, ed. Mark D. Meyerson, Daniel Thiery, Oren Falk, 131-147. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.

McKitterick, Rosamond. *Charlemagne. The Formation of a European Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Mickunaite, Giedre. *Making a Great Ruler. Grand Duke Vytautas of Lithuania*. Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006.

Mihalache, Andi. "Cum <a fentat> Carol I comemorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare" [How Charles I "feinted" the Commemoration of Stephen the Great]. *Historia* on http://www.historia.ro/exclusiv_web/general/articol/cum-fentat-carol-i-comemorarea-lui-stefan-cel-mare, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Mikó, Árpád. "A Lasting Legacy. Renaissance Art in Hungary (15th–17th Centuries)." *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 68-78.

Mioc, Damaschin. "Materiale româneşti din arhive străine" [Romanian documents in foreign archives]. *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 6 (1973): 325-347.

Moisescu, Gheorghe. "Mănăstirea Putna la 500 de ani de la întemeiere 1466-1966" [The Putna Monastery 500 years after its building 1466-1966]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt 1504 – 2004. Biserica. O lecţie de istorie* [Stephen the Great and the Saint 1504-2004. The Church. A History Lesson], 36-38. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Molnár, Miklós. *A Concise History of Hungary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Movileştii. Istorie şi spiritualitate românesacă – "Casa noastră movilească" I [The Movilă family. Romanian history and spirituality – "Our Movilă Home"], ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2006.

Movileştii. Istorie şi spiritualitate românesacă – Ieremia Movilă. Domnul. Familia. Epoca II [The Movilă family. Romanian history and spirituality – Jeremiah Movilă. The prince. The family. The Epoch] ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2006.

Mureşan, Dan Ioan. "Rêver Byzance. Le dessein du prince Pierre Rareş de Moldavie pour libérer Constantinople." *Etudes byzantines et post-byzantines* IV (2001): 207-265.

_____. "Teoctist I şi ungerea domnească a lui Ştefan cel Mare" [Teoctist I and the princely anointment of Stephen the Great]. In *Românii în Europa Medievală: între orientul bizantin şi occidentul latin* [Romanians in Medieval Europe: Between the Byzantine East and the Latin West], 303-416. Brăila: Istros, 2008.

_____. "Patriarhia ecumenică şi Ştefan cel Mare. Drumul sinuos de la surse la interpretare" [The Ecumenical Patriarchate and Stephen the Great. The winding road from sources to interpretation]. In *In memoriam Alexandru Elian. Omagiere postumă a reputatului istoric şi teolog, la zece ani de la trecerea sa în veşnicie (8 ianuarie 1998)* [In memoriam Alexandru Elian. Posthumous homage to the respected historian and theologian, at the ten year anniversary of his death (8 January 1998)], ed. V. V. Muntean, 87-180. Timişoara: Arhiepiscopia Timişoarei, 2008.

Murgescu, Bogdan. *Ţările române între Imperiul Otoman şi Europa Creştină* [The Romanian Principalities between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe]. Bucharest: Polirom, 2012.

Năstase, Dumitru. "Biserica din Bălineşti şi pictura ei exterioară." *Studii şi cercetări de istoria artei. Seria artă plastic* 43 (1996): 3-18.

_____. "Ştefan cel Mare împărat" [Emperor Stephen the Great]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 568-611. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "Les aigles bicéphales du Monastère de Poutna." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 71-81. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Negruzzi, Costache. *Alexandru Lăpuşneanu*. Bucharest: Corint, 2002 – first edition: 1840.

Nelson, Jonathan K. and Richard Z. Zeckhauser. *The Patron's Payoff. Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Nicoară, Simona. *Istoria şi miturile. Mituri şi mitologii politice moderne* [History and myths. Modern political myths and mythologies]. Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2009.

Oraşcu, Şerban. "Mama lui Petru Rareş" [The mother of Peter Rareş]. *Magazin Istoric* 11 (1977): 422-431.

Pall, Francisc. "Acte suspecte şi false în colecţia <Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare> a lui Ioan Bogdan" [Suspicious and fake documents in the Ioan Bogdan's collection "The Documents of Stephen the Great"]. *Revista Istorică* 4-6 (1933): 105-113.

Panaitescu, Petre P. *Obștea țărănească în Țara Românească și Moldova – Orânduirea feudală* [Peasants in Wallachia and Moldavia – Feudal Organization]. Bucharest: Academiei, 1964.

_____. "Ştefan cel Mare. O încercare de caracterizare" [Stephen the Great. An attempt to characterize the prince]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 12-32. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Papacostea, Şerban. *Ştefan cel Mare domn al Moldovei. 1457-1504* [Stephen the Great ruler of Moldavia. 1457-1504]. Bucharest: Corint, 1990.

_____. "Relaţiile internaţionale ale Moldovei în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare" [The Moldavian international relations during the reign of Stephen the Great]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 517-556. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "Politica externă a lui Ştefan cel Mare: opţiunea polonă (1459-1472) – The Foreign Policy of Stephen the Great: the Polish option (1459-1473)." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 25 (2007): 13-28.

Pârvan, Vasile. *Relaţiile lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Ungaria* [Stephen the Great's Relations with Hungary]. Bucharest: 1905.

Pâslăriuc, Virgil. *Raporturile politice dintre marea boierime şi domnie în Ţara Moldovei în secolul al XVI-lea* [The Political Relations between the Great Boyars and the Ruler in Moldavia in the Sixteenth Century]. Chişinău: Pontos, 2005.

Pecican, Ovidiu. "*Alexandria* în evul mediu românesc" [The Roman d'Alexande in the Romanian Middle Ages] *Studia Universitatis Babes-Bolyai – Historia* 1-2 (1996): 3-16.

_____. "Ideologia puterii centrale în Moldova lui Bogdan cel Orb" [The Ideology of the Central Power in Bogdan the Blind's Moldavia]. In Ovidiu Pecican, *Troia, Veneţia, Roma* [Troy, Venice, Rome], 316-331. Cluj-Napoca: Editura Fundaţiei pentru Studii Europene, 1998.

_____. *Sânge şi trandafiri. Cultură ero(t)ică în epoca ştefaniană* [Blood and Roses. (H)ero(t)ic Culture in the Era of Stephen the Great]. Chişinău: Cartier Istoric, 2005.

_____. *Avalon*. Cluj Napoca: CA Publishing, 2011.

_____. *Evul mediu fictiv. Reprezentări despre medievalitatea românească (şi nu numai)* [The fictional Middle Ages. Representations of the Romanian Middle Ages (and not only)]. Bucharest: Tracus Arte, 2012.

_____. *"Cneazul Neimet" din Gesta lui Roman şi Vlahata… adică regele german* ["Prince Neimet" from the Legend of Roman and Vlahata… meaning the German king] on http://ovidiupecican.wordpress.com/tag/cronica-moldo-rusa/, last time accessed: September 10, 2014.

Petru Rareş, ed. Leon Şimanschi. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

Pienaru, Nagy. "Un act otoman privitor la convertirea voievodului Iliaş (30 mai 1551) – An Ottoman Document Concerning Prince Iliaş' Conversion to Islam (30 May 1551)." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 27 (2009): 101-110.

_____. "Moldova şi Imperiul Otoman. Solia lui Ştefan cel Mare din 1485" [Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire. The messenger of Stephen the Great from 1485]. In *Putna. Ctitorii ei şi lumea lor* [Putna. Its ktetors and their world], 85-99. Bucharest: Oscar Print, 2011.

Pienaru, Nagy and Ovidiu Cristea. "Campania otomană din 1484. Mărturia lui Ibn Kemal – The Ottoman Campaign in Moldavia (1484). Ibn Kemal's Testimony." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2012): 43-58.

Pieters, Jürgen and Alexander Roose. "The Art of Saying 'No'. Premonitions of Foucault's 'Governmentality' in Étienne de La Boétie's *Discours de la servitude volontaire.*" In *Mystifying the Monarch. Studies on Discourse, Power, and History*, ed. Jeroen Deploige and Gita Deneckere, 79-99. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.

Pilat, Liviu. "Mesianism şi escatologie în imaginarul epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare – Messianism and eschatology during the time of Stephen the Great." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 101-116.

_____. "Modelul constantinian şi imaginarul epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [The Constantinian model and the imaginary of Stephen the Great's period]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al Credinţei Creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 429-445. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Cultul Sfintei Cruci în vremea lui Ştefan cel Mare – The cult of the Holy Cross during the time of Stephen the Great." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2005): 5-16.

_____. "Mitropolitul Maxim Brancovici, Bogdan al III-lea şi legăturile Moldovei cu Biserica sârbă – Metropolitan Maxim Branković, Bogdan III and Moldavia's Ties with the Serbian Church." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2010): 229-238.

Pilowsky, I. and N. D. Spence. "Patterns of Illness Behaviour in Patients with Intractable Pain." *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 19 (1975): 279–287.

Pînzar, Alexandru. "Suceava în imaginarul medieval – Suceava in medieval imaginary." *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 25-50.

Pop, Ioan Aurel. "O mărturie veneţiană contemporană despre evenimentele din anul 1538 – A Venetian Document about the Campaign of Suleyman the Magnificent against Moldavia (1538)." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 23 (2005): 241-252.

Pugh, Tison and Jane Weisl. *Medievalisms. Making the Past in the Present*. London, New York: Routledge, 2013.

Pungă, Gheorghe. "Adevărata identitate a cronicarului Eftimie" [The real identity of chronicler Eftimie]. *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie şi Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol" Iaşi* 25 (1988): 275-280.

_____. "Cu privire la arborele genealogic a lui Despot vodă" [About the genealogical tree of Prince Despot] *ArhGen* 7 (1995): 23-38.

Puşcaşu, Nicolae N. and Voica Maria Puşcaşu. "Mormintele Putnei" [The tombs of Putna]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 19-37. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

_____. "Mănăstirea Voroneţului. Arheologie şi istorie – The Voroneţ Monastery. Archaeology and history." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 75-138.

Raby, Julian. "A Sultan of Paradox: Mehmed the Conqueror as a Patron of the Arts." *Oxford Art Journal* 5 (1982): 3-8.

Rădulescu, Maria-Venera. "Episoade din istoria Moldovei redate pe cahle descoperite la Curtea Domnească de la Vaslui: nunta lui Ştefan cel Mare cu Maria de Mangop – The wedding of Stephen the Great and Maria of Mangup. Images on glazestore tiles discovered at Vaslui (15th century)." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 14 (2006): 81-100.

Războieni. Cinci sute de ani de la campania din 1476 [Războieni. Five hundred years since 1476], ed. Manole Neagoe. Bucharest: Direcţia Generală a Arhivelor Statului, 1977.

Rezachevici, Constantin. "Petru Rareş între sultan şi lumea creştină în 1541-1542, după noi izvoare polone – Solia hatmanului Petru Vartic din 1542" [Peter Rareş between the sultan and the Christian world in 1541-1542, based on new Polish sources – the mission of Petru Vartic from 1542] *Revista Istorică* new series 5 (1990): 427-455.

_____. "Originea şi domnia lui Alexandru vodă Cornea (c. 21 decembrie 1540 – 9 sau 16 februarie 1541) – după documente inedite din Polonia" [The origin and the reign of Prince Alexander Cornea (about December 1540 – 9 or 16 February 1541) – from unique documents from Poland]. *Revista Istorică* 7-8 (1992): 803-827.

_____. *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Ţara Românească şi Moldova* [A critical chronology of the rulers of Wallachia and Moldavia]. Bucharest: Enciclopedica, 2001.

_____. "A fost Ştefan cel Mare „ales" domn în aprilie 1457?" [Was Stephen the Great "chosen" prince in April 1457?]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 316-334. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. "Neamul doamnei Evdochia de Kiev, în legatura cu descoperirea pietrei sale de mormânt la Suceava" [The family of Evdokia of Kiev, regarding the discovery of her tombstone in Suceava]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 113-133. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.

Rubin, Patricia Lee. *Images and Identity in Fifteenth Century Florence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Santosuosso, Antonio. *Barbarians, Marauders, and Infidels. The Ways of Medieval Warfare*. Oxford: Westview Press, 2004.

Sedlar, Jean W. *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages. 1000-1500*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Shahar, Shulamith. *Growing Old in the Middle Ages. "Winter Clothes Us in Shadow and Pain"*, trans. Yael Lotan. London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

Silver, Larry. *Marketing Maximilian. The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Simionescu, Paul. *Petru Rareş, domnul şi vremea sa* [Peter Rareş, the prince and his age]. Bucharest: Enciclopedica, 1970.

Simon, Alexandru. "În jurul bătăliei de la Vaslui (1474-1475). Consideraţii asupra relaţiilor dintre Regatul Ungariei, Moldova şi Ţara Românească (Around the Battle of Vaslui (1474-1475). Thoughts on the Relations between the Kingdom of Hungary, Moldavia and Wallachia)." *Studia Universitatis Babes Bolyai – Historia* 2 (2004): 3-26.

_____. "Aparatele diplomatice ale Moldovei şi Ungariei în a doua jumătate a secolului XV. O privire comparativă (Moldavian and Hungarian Diplomatic Structures in the Second Half of the 15th Century: A Comparative Overview)." *Anuarul Institutului de Cercetări Socio-Umane "Gheorghe Şincai" al Academiei Române* VIII-IX (2005-2006): 199-226.

_____. "Chilia şi Cetatea Albă în vara anului 1484. Noi documente din arhivele italiene – Naples, Milan and the Moldavian Question in the Summer of 1484: New Documents." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 26 (2008): 177-196.

_____. "Valahii la Baia. Regatul Ungariei, Domnia Moldovei şi Imperiul Otoman în 1467 (The Wallachs in Baia. The Kingdom of Hungary, the Rule of Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire in 1467)." *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie "A.D. Xenopol"* 46 (2009): 127-150.

Skedros, James C. "Reading the Lives of the Saints." In *Thinking through Faith. New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars*, ed. Aristotle Papanikolaou and Elizabeth H. Prodromou, 159-183. New York: SVS Press, 2008.

Sluşanschi, Dan. "Princess Olena's safe-conduct through Poland and Lithuania (1482)." *Revue roumaine d'histoire* 34 (1995): 195-199.

Solcanu, Ion. "Realizări artistice" [Artistic achievements]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 292-318. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

_____. "Datarea picturii din altarul şi naosul bisericii Voroneţ" [Dating the painting in the altar and naos of the Church of Voroneţ]. *Codrul Cosminului* 15 (1999): 257-265.

_____. "Portretul lui Ştefan cel Mare în pictura epocii sale. Noi consideraţii" [The portrait of Stephen the Great in the paining of his time. New considerations]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 117-130. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Stănescu, Nichita. *Amintiri din prezent* [Memories from the Present]. Bucharest: Sport-Turism, 1985.

Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004). Portret în Legendă [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004). Legendary Portrait], ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei. Putna: Muşatinii, 2003.

Stoicescu, Nicolae. *Curteni şi slujitori. Contribuţii la istoria armatei române* [Courtiers and servants. Contributions to the history of the Romanian army]. Bucharest: Militară, 1968.

Stone, Daniel. *The Polish-Lithuanian State. 1386-1795* (*A History of East Central Europe* IV). Washington: University of Washington Press, 2001.

Strauss, Claudia. "The Imaginary." *Anthropological Theory* 6 (2006): 322–344.

Sugar, Peter F. *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule. 1354-1804* (*A History of East Central Europe* V). Washington: University of Washington Press, 1996.

Székely, Maria Magdalena. "La curte, la Petru Vodă" [At the court of Prince Peter]. *Revista Istorică* 7-8 (1997): 485-496.

_____. "Observaţii mărunte în vechi biserici moldoveneşti" [Small observations in old Moldavian monasteries] *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 15 (1997): 171-180.

_____. "Obârşia lui Luca Arbure. O Ipoteză" [The Provenance of Luca Arbure. A Hypothesis]. In *In Honorem Paul Cernovodeanu*, ed. Violeta Barbu, 419-429. Bucharest: Kriterion, 1998.

_____. "Neamul dinspre mamă a lui Petru Rareş" [The family of Peter Rareş descending from his mother]. *Arhiva Genealogică* 5 (1998): 169-178.

_____. *Sfetnicii lui Petru Rareş* [The Boyars of Peter Rareş]. Iaşi: Editura Universităţii Alexandru Ioan Cuza, 2002.

_____. "Ştefan cel Mare şi sfârşitul lumii – Stephen the Great and the End of the World." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 21 (2003): 255-262.

_____. "Le Monastère de Poutna – lieu de mémoire." In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Atlet al credinţei creştine* [Saint Stephen the Great. Champion of the Christian Faith], 37-71. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2004.
_____. "Putna Monastery As «Lieu De Memoire»." *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* 22 (2004): 73-101.

_____. "Un manifest de putere la mănăstirea Probota?" In *Omagiu Virgil Cândea la 75 de ani* II [Homage to Virgil Cândea at 75 years of life], 297-312. Bucharest: Academiei, 2002.

_____. "Atributele imperiale ale cetăţii Suceava – Imperial attributes of the Suceava fortress." *Analele Putnei* 2 (2008): 5-14.

_____. "Bogdan al III-lea: note de antropologie politică – Bogdan III: political anthropology." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2008): 265-278.

_____. "Ctitorii Voroneţului – The founders of the Voroneţ Monastery." *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 139-156.

_____. "Monarhul ideal in imaginarul evului mediu. Rene d'Anjou si Stefan cel Mare – Le monarque idéal dans l'imaginaire médiéval. René d'Anjou et Étienne le Grand." *Analele Putnei* I (2010): 283-302.

Székely, Maria Magdalena and Ştefan S. Gorovei. "<Semne şi minuni> pentru Ştefan Voievod. Note de mentalitate medievală" ["Signs and miracles" for Prince Stephen. Notes on medieval mentality]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 67-86. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

_____. *Maria Asanina Paleologhina. O prinţesă bizantină pe tronul Moldovei* [Maria Assen Palaiologos. A Byzantine princess on the throne of Moldavia]. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2006.

Şimanschi, Leon and Dumitru Agache. "Înscăunarea lui Ştefan cel Mare: preliminarii şi consecinţe (1450-1460)" [The Enthronement of Stephen the Great: Preliminaries and Consequences (1450-

1460)]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt. Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great. Historical Portrait], 292-316. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Şimanschi, Leon. "Formarea personalităţii lui Ştefan cel Mare" [The Formation of Stephen the Great's Personality]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt: 1504 – 2004. Portret în Istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great: 1504-2004. Historical Portrait], 32-42. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Ştefănescu, I.D. *Arta feudală în Ţările Române. Pictura murală şi icoanele de la origini până în secolul al XIX-lea* [Feudal art in the Romanian Principalities. Mural painting and icons from the origins to the nineteenth century]. Timişoara: Editura Mitropoliei Banatului, 1981.

Ştefănescu, Paul. *Lumea văzută de medici. Mari bolnavi, mari conducători de stat* [The world seen by doctors. Great sick people, great rulers]. Bucharest: Medicală, 1991.

Ştefănescu-Delavrancea, Barbu. *Teatru* [Theatre]. Bucharest: Minerva, 1983.

Taylor, Michael D. "A Historiated Tree of Jesse." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 34 (1980-1981): 125-176.

Teodor, Corina. "Raţiuni de stat şi strategii matrimoniale în Moldova lui Ştefan cel Mare – State Reasons and Matrimonial Strategies in Moldavia During the Reign of Ştefan cel Mare." *The Yearbook of the "Gheorghe Şincai" Institute for Social Sciences and the Humanities of the Romanian Academy* 7 (2004): 9-19.

Theodorescu, Răzvan. *Civilizaţia românilor între medieval şi modern* I [Romanian civilisation between medieval and modern]. Bucharest: Meridiane, 1987.

_____. "Arta ştefaniană între sumă şi sinteză" [The art of Stephen between sum and synthesis]. In *Comerorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte. Sesiunea solemnă a Academiei Române* [The Commemoration of Stephen the Great at 500 Years since his Death. The Solemn Session of the Romanian Academy], 47-53. Bucharest: Academia Română, 2004.

Tiron, Tudor Radu. "Despre "soarele de amiază" din stema lui Ştefan cel Mare" [About "the midday sun" from the coat of arms of Stephen the Great]. *Analele Putnei* 1 (2009): 51-74.

Toderaşcu, Ion. "Înscăunarea" [The enthronement]. In *Petru Rareş*, ed. Leon Şimanschi, 47-57. Bucharest: Academiei, 1978.

Travassos Valdez, Maria Ana. *Historical Interpretations of the "Fifth Empire." The Dynamics of Periodization from Daniel to Antonio Vieira, S.J.* (Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, series ed. Robert J. Bast). Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Tringli, István. "King Matthias and the Medieval Hungarian State." *The Hungarian Quarterly* 190 (2008): 57-67.

Turcu, Constantin. "Daniil Sihastru. Figură istorică, legendară şi bisericească" [Hermit Daniil. Historical, legendary and church character]. In *Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (1504-2004): Portret în istorie* [Saint Stephen the Great (1504-2004): Historical Portrait], 178-192. Suceava: Muşatinii, 2003.

Turdeanu, Emil. *Apocryphes slaves et roumains de l'Ancien Testament*. Leiden: Brill, 1981.

_____. *Etudes de littérature roumaine et d'écrits slaves et grecs des Principautés Roumaines*. Leiden: Brill, 1985.

_____. "Manuscrise slave din timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare." In *Oameni şi cărţi dealtădată* [People and books from history] I, ed. Ştefan S. Gorovei and Maria Magdalena Székely, 25-167. Bucharest: Enciclopedica, 1997.

Uebel, Michael. "The Pathogenesis of Medieval History." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41 (2002): 47-65.

Ulea, Sorin. "Datarea ansamblului de pictură de la Sf. Nicolaie-Dorohoi" [Dating the painting of Saint Nicholas in Dorohoi]. *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, seria Artă Plastică* 11 (1964): 69-79.

_____. "Autorul ansamblului de pictură de la Râşca" [The author of the painting at Râşca]. *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, seria Artă Plastică* 15 (1968): 165-174.

_____. "O surprinzătoare personalitate a evului mediu românesc: cronicarul Macarie" [A surprising personality of the Romanian Middle Ages: the chronicler Macarie]. *Studii şi Cercetări de Istoria Artei, Seria Istoria Artei* 34 (1985): 14-48.

_____. "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti I" [The origin and the ideological meaning of the Moldavian exterior painting I]. *Studii şi cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 10 (1963): 57-93.

_____. "Originea şi semnificaţia ideologică a picturii exterioare moldoveneşti II" [The origin and the ideological meaning of the Moldavian exterior painting II]. *Studii şi cercetări de Istoria Artei. Seria Artă Plastică* 19 (1972): 37-54.

Ursu, Horia I. *Moldova în contextul politic European. 1517-1527* [Moldavia in European Political Context. 1517-1527]. Bucharest: Academiei, 1972.

Ursu, Ioan. *Petru Rareş. Domn al Moldovei de la 20 Ianuarie 1527 până la 14 Septemvre 1538 şi din Februarie 1541 până la 3 Septemvre 1546* [Peter Rareş. Prince of Moldavia from January 20th 1527 to September 14th 1538 and from February 1541 to September 3rd 1546]. Bucharest: Convorbiri Literare, 1923.

Van Gennep, Arnold. *La formation des légendes*. Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1929.

Vârtosu, Emil. *Titulatura domnilor şi asocierea la domnie în Ţara Românească şi Moldova (până în secolul al XVI-lea)* [Royal titles and associations to the throne in Wallachia and Moldavia (until the sixteenth century)]. Bucharest: Academiei, 1960): 84-98.

Vătămanu, Nicolae. *Voievozi şi medici de curte* [Princes and court doctors]. Bucharest: Editura enciclopedică, 1972.

Vătăşianu, Virgil. *Istoria artei feudale în Ţările Române* I [The history of feudal art in the Romanian Principalities]. Bucharest: Academiei, 1959.

Vitcu, Dumitru. "Personalitatea şi epoca lui Ştefan cel Mare în creaţia istoriografică a unui romantic" [Stephen the Great's Personality and Age in the Historiographical Creation of a Romantic]. *Codrul Cosminului* 10 (2004): 69-74.

Vlad, Matei D. *Colonizarea rurală în Ţara Românească şi Moldova (secolele XV-XVIII)* [Rural colonization in Wallachia and Moldavia (Fifteenth – eighteenth centuries)]. Bucharest: Academiai, 1973.

Voinescu, Teodora. "Portretele lui Ştefan cel Mare în arta epocii sale" [The portraits of Stephen the Great in the art of his time]. In *Cultura moldovenească în timpul lui Ştefan cel Mare* [Moldavian culture in the time of Stephen the Great], ed. M. Berza, 463-478. Bucharest: Academiei, 1964.

Waddell, Gordon and Martin Bircher, David Finlayson, Chris J. Main. "Symptoms and signs: physical disease or illness behaviour?" *British Medical Journal* 289 (1984): 739–741.

Waddell, Gordon and Chris Main, Emyr W. Morris, Michael Paola; Iain Gray. "Chronic Low-Back Pain, Psychologic Distress, and Illness Behavior." *Journal of Spinal Disorders and Techniques* 9 (1984): 183-196.

Watson, Arthur. *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1934.

Wellesz, Egon. "The Akathistos. A Study in Byzantine Hymnography." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 9 (1956): 141-174.

West, Michael. "Spenser and the Renaissance Ideal of Christian Heroism." *PMLA* 88 (1973): 1013-1032.

White, Hayden. *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973.

Wolf, Alois. "Medieval Heroic Traditions and Their Transitions from Orality to Literacy." In *Vox Intexta. Orality and Textuality in the Middle Ages*, ed. Alger Nicolaus Doane and Carol Braun Pasternack, 67-89. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

Woodfin, Warren T. *The Embodied Icon. Liturgical Vestments and Sacramental Power in Byzantium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Wright, Georgia Sommers. "A Royal Tomb Programme in the Reign of St. Louis." *The Art Bulletin* 56 (1974): 224-243.

Xenopol, A. D. *Istoria românilor din Dacia Traiana* II [The History of Romanians from Dacia]. Iaşi: Tipo-Litografia H. Goldner, 1889.

Zamfirescu, Dan. *Neagoe Basarab și învățăturile către fiul său Theodosie: problemele controversate* [Neagoe Basarab and his teachings to his son Theodosie: controversial problems]. Bucharest: Minerva, 1973.

Zub, Alexandru. "Repere simbolice în posteritatea ştefaniană" [Symbolic markers in the posterity of Stephen] in *Comemorarea lui Ştefan cel Mare la 500 de ani de la moarte. Sesiunea solemnă a Academiei Române (30 iunie 2004)* [The commemoration of Stephen the Great at 500 years since his death. The solemn session of the Romanian Academy (June 30th, 2004)], 73-81. Bucharest: Academiei Române, 2004.