

A Humanist's Pontifical Playground

Pius II and Transylvania in the Days of *John Dragula*

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ONE OF the political letters deemed worthy to be cited and copied by Pope Pius II (*olim* Enea Silvio Piccolomini) in his *Commentaries* was the message allegedly sent by Vlad III the Impaler (*Dracula*), voivode of Wallachia, to Sultan Mehmed II on 7 November 1462.¹ The missive was the textual embryo of Book XI, chapter 12 (*Iohannis Dragule immanis atque nefanda crudelitas, eiusque in regem Hungarie deprehensa perfidia, et tandem captivitas*), covering over a fifth of the chapter.² The *Dragula* chapter was placed between the depiction (in chapter 11) of the Viennese conspiracy against Albert VI of Habsburg, the rival brother of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg (April 1462),³ and the emphatic presentation (in chapter 13) of the royal anti-Ottoman request sent by Stephen Tomašević, the new king of Bosnia, to Pius II (roughly a year earlier, in the late summer of 1461, a date the pope nevertheless failed to mention, though he extensively quoted both the oration of Tomašević's envoys and the subsequent papal response).⁴ The case of *John Dragula* (the opening paragraph of chapter 12 was: *Austrialem sevitiā et crudele descripsimus Alberti facimus. Adūcienda est Iohannis Dragule atrox nequitia et natura immanis, cuius inter Valachos, quibus profuit, adeo nobilitata sunt scelera, ut nulla queant tragoedia superari*)⁵ explicitly linked chapters 11 and 13 (the first words in the latter chapter read: *Stephanus circa idem tempus...*).⁶

Frequently overlooked, the chapters that frame the account of the infamous deeds of the voivode of Wallachia outline its logical political context, founded on Matthias Corvinus.⁷ The son of John Hunyadi, who had executed *John Dragula's* father, Vlad II *Dracul* (just *Dragula* according to the pope),⁸ was (as recorded also by Pius II): (1) the overlord (i.e. suzerain) of *John Dragula*, (2) the arch-rival of Frederick III,⁹ and (3) the challenged suzerain of Stephen Tomašević.¹⁰ Prior to the *Dragula* issue of 1462,¹¹ Pius II had loyally served Frederick as his secretary and envoy (from late 1442 until he was elected pope in August 1458)¹² and had sent a crown for Stephen Tomašević's royal coronation on Christmas Day 1461 (against the opposition of Matthias, whose Bosnian rights Pius II nevertheless claimed, in his *Commentaries*, to have defended).¹³

South-Eastern and East-Central European Context and the Papal Text

ALTHOUGH HE spoke and wrote highly of John Hunyadi, chiefly for his anti-Ottoman crusader merits,¹⁴ Pius II was hardly a supporter of Matthias' contested reign and policies (he vividly described Matthias' election as king of Hungary in January 1458 as: <he> *rolled from prison onto the throne*).¹⁵ When writing prior to the *Crusade of Ancona* (where the pope met his end in August 1464) about *John Dragula's* deeds,¹⁶ Pius II was also fully aware of the developments in East-Central Europe¹⁷: 1. *Dragula's* actions had rapidly become the object of anti-Hunyadi propaganda written in German, after Albert VI, Matthias' ally, had triumphed over Frederick III in December 1462 (however, Albert passed away a year later)¹⁸; 2. Matthias and Frederick had come to a Hungarian royal arrangement (very costly for the Hunyadis),¹⁹ less than two months after Mehmed II had Stephen Tomašević beheaded, following the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia's capital, Jajce, in May 1463.²⁰

The letter sent by *Dragula* to Mehmed, publicly addressed towards the end of 1461²¹ also in the name of Pius II in the hope of converting the sultan to Christianity, must be perceived within this formally wide, but in fact rather narrow, political framework, well-suited for Renaissance rhetoric.²² The pope never truly refuted the allegations that he had authored the "Epistle to Mehmed" in the eventually vain, but rather common humanist hope of injecting Turkish (i.e. *Trojan*) primal stamina into decayed Christendom.²³

John Dragula's letter is the only extant proof of his treason against Matthias, a treason left unrecorded by all other parties involved in the Wallachian-Hungarian-Ottoman affairs of 1462, including Frederick (who spearheaded a printed *Dragulian* anti-Hunyadi campaign in the late 1480s).²⁴ For his part, Matthias' stance, known largely from sources posterior to *John Dragula's* release from custody by the same king (1473–1474), was that he had imprisoned John at the end of November 1462 because of the innumerable cruelties of the vicious voivode.²⁵ These cruelties, against both Muslims and Christians, formed—along with the feud between the fathers of John and Matthias—Pius II's prologue to his edition (if one may dare to call it so) of the epistle sent by *The Impaler* to the famed *Conqueror of Constantinople*.²⁶

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

To the Emperor of Emperors and Lord of Lords that are under the sun, to the Great Emir and Great Sultan, Mahomet, blessed in all things, <I?> John Voivode and Lord of Wallachia, <offer> my humble allegiance. I, the servant of Your Great Empire, announce You that I am setting out today for my land, with a host, and I trust in God to obtain it, unless

*You command me otherwise. Therefore, I ask You to forgive my mistake and my great sin, for I, imprudently, sinned against You and did harm in Your land; and, may Your Clemency show me mercy and forgive me, so that I can send envoys to you. I know the entire part of Transylvania and entire Hungary and I am accustomed to the conditions and to the matters of the places. If it pleases Your Highness, in order to atone for my sins, I can deliver the entire part of Transylvania into your hands, which, once in Your possession, will allow to subdue entire Hungary to Your power. My envoys will present You more. I, for as long I live, will be your servant of unwavering faith. May God grant many years to Your Great Empire. Written at Rhotel, on the seventh day before the Ides of November, 1462.*³⁰

Vlad (aka *John Dragula*) informed Mehmed II that he was about to leave for Wallachia and reclaim his throne.³¹ Vlad's brother and Mehmed's favourite, Radu III the Handsome, had become ruler of Wallachia in August 1462, due not so much to Ottoman arms (Mehmed had withdrawn in July), but because of the endorsement of local boyars, tired of Vlad's excesses.³² In effect, as recorded by virtually all Christian sources (when chronicling Vlad's deeds, Pius mentioned his Danubian attack on Mehmed, but not the sultan's campaign against the voivode) and equally unanimously contested by the Ottomans,³³ Vlad had even forced Mehmed to retreat (although, for Matthias, Belgrade's defense had taken precedence over that of Wallachia in the summer of 1462).³⁴

Christian (and Muslim) exaggerations aside, Vlad was in the position to offer a deal to Mehmed in autumn 1462.³⁵ In exchange for the sultan's pardon for his *imprudent* sins, Vlad was not to overthrow Radu³⁶ and promised to take Transylvania for Mehmed, opening the way for Hungary's conquest.³⁷ Vlad was familiar with Transylvania, which had largely disobeyed Matthias' anti-Ottoman commands.³⁸ According to the same Pius, Vlad awaited the sultan's (urgent) response in order to send envoys to him, with *more* on the planned rapt of Transylvania and the collapse of Hungary, *Christendom's bulwark*.³⁹

Vlad was dismantling—or worse, perverting—the anti-Ottoman power gathered by John Hunyadi as *voivode of Transylvania and Wallachia* (recorded as such in fall 1445 by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, not John's friend at that time).⁴⁰ This highly unstable—in kind and in fact—power (also because of the often strained relations between John and Wallachian lords, within and outside of Hungary) had made it difficult for Enea to defend John's reputation in the aftermath of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople,⁴¹ in a debate—initiated by Enea—with Cardinal Zbigniew Oleśnicki⁴² about the true heroes of the Cross and the rightful rulers of Hungary (Habsburgs or Jagiellonians).⁴³ Since before Matthias became king and Enea pope, Pius II, like Venice (in the absence of better options) or Frederick III (given also his and John's common enemy: Ulrich von Cilly),⁴⁴ had to cling on to the Hunyadis,⁴⁵ albeit having a personal eastern favorite:⁴⁶ Matthias' late predecessor and John's unwanted king: Ladislas V the Posthumous († 1457).⁴⁷

Secretary to Ladislas' warden (read guardian) and uncle, Frederick III, Enea Silvio Piccolomini had thought highly of young Ladislas, of his prospects, and even concerned himself with his education.⁴⁸ Enea thought little in return of Ladislas' other uncle, Ulrich von Cilly, to whom however Albert of Habsburg's and Elisabeth of Luxembourg's son was indebted for his political survival.⁴⁹ At first, Enea seemingly believed—not without reason—that Mathias had usurped Ladislas, not his throne, but his destiny.⁵⁰

It may well be that Enea, by then Pope Pius II, fully accepted Matthias only after John Hunyadi's son went to war against the Ottomans in autumn 1463 and retook Jajce, the fallen capital of the Bosnian Kingdom on Christmas Day.⁵¹

At any rate, between 1455 and 1457 (chiefly after the deaths of both John Hunyadi and Ulrich von Cilly in the second half of 1456),⁵² Ladislas had resembled an ugly duckling about to turn. He was wise enough not to use ethnicity against the Hunyadis (when condemning their *crimes* in March 1457)⁵³ and to direct—through privileges⁵⁴—the Wallachians against them (at the end of August that same year, which proved to be his last). Rescued by the *plague* into eternal glory, John Hunyadi, who had lost much Hungarian power to Ladislas V and Ulrich von Cilly,⁵⁵ had bequeathed a great name and a heavy political burden to Matthias. Matthias, John's "replacement heir,"⁵⁶ had not proven worthy of it since his enthronement in early 1458.

By 1462, Matthias' main crusader accomplishment was allowing his uncle, the king-maker Michael Szilágyi (deprived of royal support while in the midst of his foes),⁵⁷ to lose his head at Mehmed II's feet, eager to avenge the debacle of Belgrade.⁵⁸ Still, in spite of the calls of Frederick III or Stephen Tomašević, Pius II, well acquainted with Hunyadi matters, largely refrained from openly endorsing Matthias' numerous adversaries and remained benevolent towards him.⁵⁹

By 1462, the monarchic record of Pius II, enthroned in September 1458, seven months after Matthias, was not superior to that of John Hunyadi's son.⁶⁰ John's successor as the *athlete* of Christendom and Pius' favorite, Skanderbeg, kept extending his truces with Mehmed II and fighting in Italy for his suzerain, Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples (Pius' protégé).⁶¹ The Turk thus added Trebizond (1461) to his conquests of Smederevo (1459) and Morea (1460), while Paris and Prague turned into centers of "anti-Papal resistance."⁶² The situation began to rapidly change in 1462.⁶³ By fall 1463, Pius II had his Holy War and Matthias his Holy Crown.⁶⁴

Humanist Statesmanship and the *Corrupt* Nature of the Wallachians

LIKE SO many passages in the letter sent to Mehmed by Vlad, with Matthias "at his side"⁶⁵ (the king spent three months in Transylvania in the autumn of 1462),⁶⁶ a letter constructed on allusions and innuendos, Vlad's message to Mehmed is comprehensible—in its entirety—only within the actual armed political framework of 1462. This framework was carefully "obliterated," both by Vlad in his letter, and by the "editor" of the letter, Pius, aware of Matthias⁶⁷ unprecedented, and unrepeated, stay in Transylvania.⁶⁸ The pope's intentions were rather clear from the beginning of the chapter on Vlad's ignominy, explicitly *added* to the description of the vile Austrian turmoil, stirred-up by Albert VI, Matthias' ally and the *unworthy* brother of Frederick III of Habsburg, Pius' imperial benefactor.⁶⁹ The heir of Saint Peter wrote of the decayed descendants of Rome, the Wallachians, speakers of *imperfect, corrupted Italian*, who had been subjected to *John Dragula's* hideous nature and highly traumatic tyranny.⁷⁰

. . . We have described the Austrian ferocity and cruelty of Albert. To these we must add the atrocious infamy and monstrous nature of John Dragula, whose crimes are so notorious among the Wallachians, whom he commanded, that no tragedy could surpass them.⁷¹

The Wallachians live beyond the Danube between the Euxine⁷² and the parts called today Transylvania, where there are seven German-speaking cities.⁷³ The Wallachians use Italian in their language,⁷⁴ but an imperfect, corrupt <one>.⁷⁵ Some think that once Roman legions were sent there against the Dacians, who used to inhabit these lands, and that these legions were commanded by a certain Flaccus,⁷⁶ from whose name they were called first Flacci⁷⁷ and, then with a change of letters, Valachi.⁷⁸ Their descendants, as has been said above [in regard to John Dragula⁷⁹], turned out more barbarous than the barbarians. . . .⁸⁰

For Pius II, who did not hesitate to call himself a *German cardinal* (a *cardinale tedesco*),⁸¹ prior to his rise from Bishop of Siena to pope (1457–1458), the whole *John Dragula* affair seemed to be an “explanatory note” for and within a broader Papal Wallachian topic,⁸² which he had already addressed whilst only a cardinal, in spring 1458, in his *De Europa*, in a significantly more friendly manner, with no decay or corruption in sight (hence, the perverting effect of *John Dragula*’s rule upon the Wallachians).⁸³ In his *Commentaries*, Pius built the narrative bridge between the nature of the Wallachians and Vlad’s actions by recalling, in his own fashion, Vlad’s old treachery against the Hunyadis and the Cross. In 1456, year recorded by Pius, on the eve of the *miracle of Belgrade* (omitted by him), Vlad, entrusted with Transylvania’s defense by John Hunyadi, had attacked and deposed Vladislav II (John’s—nevertheless rebellious—proxy), who opposed the advancing Ottoman host.⁸⁴ Vlad’s deeds of 1462 were “in fact” a natural consequence of those of 1456, as Pius II also said nothing about the Hunyadi–*Dragula* entente between them.⁸⁵

Pius omitted at least two relevant pieces of information he had recorded earlier on in his *Commentaries*.⁸⁶ 1. About six weeks after Mehmed’s retreat from Wallachia, Matthias’ envoys arrived in Rome and stated that the sultan had offered Bosnia and Wallachia to their king in exchange for peace.⁸⁷ They returned home with some 50,000 ducats, in coin and promise, from the Papacy and Venice.⁸⁸ 2. Afterwards, in a sort of Ottoman summary of the year 1462 (inserted however prior to both the *Dragula* affair and the Bosnian embassy to Rome),⁸⁹ Pius indicated that the Turks had prevailed in Wallachia and thus plundered Transylvania,⁹⁰ as well as the sultan’s conquest of Genoese Lesbos (Mytilene).⁹¹ This did indeed take place in the immediate aftermath of the “overlooked” clash between Mehmed II and Vlad III.⁹²

At least in writing, Pius did not seem to care what had actually happened that year in Wallachia. The chapter’s ending is eloquent in this respect.⁹³ After mentioning that *the Wallachian is still languishing in prison* (or *is being wasted in prison*),⁹⁴ the pope wrote that *he is a tall, fine-looking man who appears fit to rule, so much do men’s countenances differ from their hearts*.⁹⁵ The *John Dragula* story has a moral.⁹⁶ It went much deeper than its main manifold character. Fact and fiction seemed to be kept in balance by *John Dragula*’s letter to Mehmed II.⁹⁷

Writing in Julius Caesar’s third person style,⁹⁸ Pius took his distance from the provenance and from the wording of the translated copy of the letter (Slavonic was the main

language of communication between Mehmed and the surviving powers at Christendom's southern borders).⁹⁹ He pointed at Matthias as the provider of "edited" information on *John Dragula's* case. Pius' main Hungarian contact at that time was nevertheless Cardinal Denis Szécsi, archbishop of Esztergom and Matthias' chief-chancellor, but increasingly at odds with the Hunyadi king, since spring 1462.¹⁰⁰ In spite of this growing conflict, in early autumn, Pius II had entrusted Szécsi with the payment of the wages (for 1,000 riders) promised by the pope to Matthias' envoys.¹⁰¹

Pius presented himself as merely the recipient of the Latin translation of the letter. The original, in Bulgarian, had been intercepted, presumably by Matthias' men (the pope was unexpectedly vague in this respect),¹⁰² because the king then ordered *Dragula's* arrest.¹⁰³ Similar letters to two high-ranking figures, a Muslim and a Christian,¹⁰⁴ whom *Dragula* asked to intercede on his behalf with the sultan, were likewise intercepted¹⁰⁵:

1. To *the bassa*. *The pasha* can be identified only with grand-vesir Mahmud Angelović, of Serbian descent, instrumental in securing Mehmed's Wallachian survival in 1462.¹⁰⁶
2. To the *lord* <of> *Thoenon* (*Thoenone dominus*).¹⁰⁷ He is a literally unknown figure,¹⁰⁸ unless we turn to Ancient Rome and to Diodorus of Sicily, one of Pius' main sources of inspiration at that time, chiefly for the pope's recently completed *De Asia*.¹⁰⁹ Diodorus mentioned *Thoenon* (*Thynion*),¹¹⁰ lord of Syracuse in Sicily, *tyrannus Siculorum*, famed ally, and victim of Pyrrhus.¹¹¹ In the 1400s, the Szeklers of Transylvania, of whom Pius did not think highly in the *Commentaries* (contrary to his earlier work, *De Europa*, from 1458),¹¹² were named *siculi*¹¹³ and even deemed colonists from Sicily,¹¹⁴ ruled by Naples, a trusted Papal fiefdom in 1462.¹¹⁵

Two issues were self-evident for anyone accustomed to Wallachian politics (obviously the case of Matthias' royal Hungarian chancery).¹¹⁶

1. Vlad <would have>¹¹⁷ never called himself only voivode *John* (if John at all) of Wallachia (in Slavonic charters, the usual style was *Io*¹¹⁸ *Dan/Mircea/Radu/Vlad* <islav> *Voivode and Lord of Wallachia*).¹¹⁹
2. The Roman papal dating, based on the ides of a month, was by no means employed in such Wallachian letters (or their transcripts),¹²⁰ letters which were furthermore chiefly undated in the case of urgent missives (such as the one sent by *John Dragula* to Mehmed II).¹²¹

Both *Dragula's* imposed Christian name (*John*)¹²² and the adapted Roman dating (*the Ides of November*)¹²³ of the ill-fated letter were in effect singled out by Pius II, at the beginning and at the end of an epistle centered around *John Dragula's* offer to hand over Transylvania to the sultan, with aid also from a certain *lord* (even *master*) <of> *Thoenon*, whose only correspondent led to Ancient Rome and to the *siculi*, the Transylvanian Szeklers,¹²⁴ quite restless throughout 1462.¹²⁵ A few points were most clear in Pius' writings, as ambitious *clerk*, as cardinal or as pope,¹²⁶ not to mention that, no later than 1468, Italian envoys placed the *siculi*, who had rebelled against Matthias, among the king's ancestors.¹²⁷

1. *John Huniates* was the name of Matthias' father.¹²⁸ He had executed *John Dragula's* father, *Dragula*, and sided with the *Dans* against the rival clan of the *Draguls* in the conflict over Wallachia.¹²⁹
2. The warring Wallachians were the descendants of Ancient Rome.¹³⁰ They inhabited the former imperial province of Dacia and their settlements spread as far south as *Thrace*.¹³¹
3. Transylvania had once been a part of this Dacia.¹³²

It had witnessed the rise of John Hunyadi, a Wallachian native, if not also his birth.¹³³ 4. The Wallachians spoke a *corrupt* version of *Italian*, in contrast to all their neighbors, including the *Transylvanians*.¹³⁴ The latter's tongue was *Teutonic*.¹³⁵ 5. The Wallachians and *Transylvanians* (a name used by Pius also for the Szeklers and the Wallachians in the province) shared the blood of the *Getes*,¹³⁶ who had become *Goths* and spread both to the West and to the East, to the Adriatic and to the Black Sea, coveted by Rome's and Buda's Matthias,¹³⁷ and to which Stephen Tomašević's Bosnia and *John Dragula's* Wallachia served as gateways.¹³⁸

The Hunyadi File of Pius II and his Rendering of the *Dragula* Affair

THE ROMAN roots and the bellicose nature of the Wallachians were primary *topoi* of the Renaissance political views on the Eastern Christendom,¹³⁹ since before the Roman(izing) “media campaign” of Matthias Corvinus (1470s–1480s),¹⁴⁰ nothing but a *Valachorum regulus* for Habsburg followers.¹⁴¹ From the outset of his own story of *Dragula*, Pius had detailed the Roman roots of the Wallachians, with all their *barbaric* shortcomings, and the Italian form of their language, with all its *imperfections*.¹⁴² The pope then further inserted them into *Dragula's* alleged letter to Mehmed by means of *Dragula's* Christian name (*John*) and through the Roman dating of the letter (*the Ides of November*), intertwined with Transylvania (part of the Kingdom of Hungary), to which *Dragula* was most familiar, as rightfully asserted in the said letter (he had guarded Transylvania's borders, together with the Szeklers/*siculi*).¹⁴³

Albeit presenting *John Dragula's* case, in direct connection to Matthias' main royal concerns at the time, both readily outlined in the *Commentaries* (the Holy Crown of Hungary, held by Frederick III of Habsburg, and the Roman crown of Bosnia, received by Stephen Tomašević), Pope Pius II kept his silence in respect to three other equally delicate matters (of which he was fully aware).¹⁴⁴ The roots of the situation date back to March 1462.¹⁴⁵

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

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

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

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

Unless he averted a far greater danger for John Hunyadi's son through his depiction of the Roman Wallachians fallen under *Dragula's* mad yoke,¹⁵⁸ Pius II did not help Matthias by highlighting the *Dragula* affair that connected the monarchic ambitions and the family network of the Hunyadi offspring.¹⁵⁹ The pope himself did not feel very comfortable with the entire business for he had—reluctantly (as it would seem)—vouched for Matthias,¹⁶⁰ therefore, at least, adding pressure to Pius' already tense relation with Frederick.¹⁶¹ By hanging the “*Dragula* portrait” between the Habsburg conflict in Vienna and the dispute over Bosnia in Rome, Pius reminded Matthias of his place and of his limitations. According to Venice, immediately after Pius learnt of the Transylvanian events of November 1462, he—temporarily—placed Hungary (and Matthias) under the control of a committee of cardinals,¹⁶² already one of Matthias' worst fears.¹⁶³ By speaking politely, and as positively as possible of Matthias and his otherwise justifiable actions, while excepting other known problematic issues,¹⁶⁴ Pius placed the twenty-year-old monarch at his mercy.¹⁶⁵ Still, *Dacia* and *Dragula* endured together under Matthias.¹⁶⁶ As time went by and Matthias kept Vlad alive and in his service,¹⁶⁷ Pius II's *Dragulian* entry in his *Commentaries* began to also resemble a controlled Papal detonation¹⁶⁸ of a subject very harmful for the Hunyadis (as well as for the *corrupt* and *imperfect* Wallachians, with whom Pius II's chapter on handsome *John Dragula* had begun).¹⁶⁹

In the same “pattern” (*Dacia*-family ties), the two matters resurfaced in the following two decades,¹⁷⁰ when the *Wallachian blood* connection between the Hunyadis and Mehmed II (and his offspring) was revealed (following Matthias' lead)¹⁷¹ and the great tide of printed stories in German on Dracula covered the unequal empire of Frederick.¹⁷² If one follows through Pius' innuendo, in addition to his dynastic Hungarian claim, Frederick (who initially had not even considered competing for Hungary)¹⁷³ had a natural right upon both Hungary and *Dacia* (upon both Matthias and Vlad, in effect¹⁷⁴), because Transylvania(ns) spoke *Teutonic*.¹⁷⁵ Notwithstanding such speculation, Matthias definitely could not part ways with either Frederick or Vlad, well after the death of Pius, *olim* Siennese Bishop Enea Silvio Piccolomini.

Upon Vlad's release from royal custody, Matthias gave him a new wife: Justine Szilágyi, the king's first-degree cousin on his mother's side.¹⁷⁶ In the aftermath of the final break between Frederick and Matthias and of the fall of Venetian Negroponte that

same year 1470 (which extensively redrew the crusading plans),¹⁷⁷ Vlad had been named *Dracula of Moldavia and Wallachia* by Habsburg supporters.¹⁷⁸ After his death (1476) and indirectly (as the work was intended for Matthias, next to Pope Sixtus IV¹⁷⁹), Vlad was called *king of Dacia* by Martino Segono, Latin bishop of Novo Brdo (a Serbian hotbed of unrest for Mehmed),¹⁸⁰ in the prelate's anti-Ottoman treatise (1480/1481).¹⁸¹

In between these dates, the bishop of Eger, Gabriele Rangoni (until recently bishop of Transylvania),¹⁸² presented Vlad as a mass-murderer, unleashed against the Turks by his and Rangoni's master, King Matthias, Vlad's most ardent supporter at the time.¹⁸³ With the exception of Vlad's anti-Ottoman report of February 1462, the prelate's letter of March 1476 to Pope Sixtus IV¹⁸⁴ is to this day the only extant direct documentary evidence—outside the vast realm of chronicles, poems and memoirs—for *Dragula's* insatiable cruelty. Against all Christian opposition (foreign and domestic),¹⁸⁵ Matthias did not halt until his *captain* Vlad was again in power south of the Carpathians.¹⁸⁶ The king continued to speak highly of *Ladislav Dragula*¹⁸⁷ even after Vlad's mysterious death.¹⁸⁸

To further increase tension, Mehmed II twice returned north of the Lower Danube after a failed summer campaign: (1) in November 1462, when, in Pius II's words, Vlad III promised him Transylvania (and from there on the *entire Hungary*) and was certainly arrested by Matthias;¹⁸⁹ (2) in October–November 1476, just before the mysterious death of Vlad, recently restored to at least partial Wallachian power by Matthias.¹⁹⁰ John Hunyadi's son said nothing of Mehmed's returns, although: (1) in 1462, the return would have substantiated all charges against Vlad, and (2) quite the opposite in 1476, the return would have rendered much needed glory¹⁹¹ to Matthias' restoration of Vlad to the Wallachian throne, as a personal victory over the insatiable sultan.¹⁹²

Like Pius II in 1462–1463, Sixtus IV looked the other way in 1476–1477.¹⁹³ Like in the autumn of 1462, Mehmed II's return and Vlad III's disappearance (this time final) completed a Hungarian-Wallachian summer failure to halt the sultan (a failure even greater in 1476 than it had been in 1462).¹⁹⁴ A third debacle, this time a real disaster, came in 1484, when Mehmed's son,¹⁹⁵ Bayezid II, took control over the mouths of the Danube and the Dniestr, cutting off Matthias and the Wallachians from the Black Sea, the target of Pius II's once great crusader plans.¹⁹⁶

On each occasion (1462, 1476 and 1484), Transylvania (as well as parts of Hungary proper) failed Matthias, either by not obeying his commands or by following them with great delay.¹⁹⁷ Pius II, above all a statesman (even though not a Caesar), in spite of his professed reluctance,¹⁹⁸ had more than accurately placed Transylvania—through the means of the *John Dragula* story¹⁹⁹—at the crusader heart of the problems of Matthias, *king of Hungary, Dacia* etc.²⁰⁰

□

Notes

1. The main editions of the preserved manuscripts are *Pii II Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt*, edited by Adrian van Heck, *Studi e Testi*, 312–313 (Vatican City, 1984); *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, edited by Ibolya Bellus and Iván Boronkai (Budapest, 1993). For reasons of accessibility, we use the so-called

- Johannes Gobellinus edition (available also online): *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii rerum memorabilium que temporibus suis contigerunt* (Frankfurt, 1614).
2. *Commentarii* (1614), 296–297, last discussed by Matei Cazacu, *Dracula*, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages 450–1450, 46 (Leiden–Boston, 2017), 164–165.
 3. *Commentarii* (1614), 295–296. On Albert: Konstantin Moritz A. Langmaier, *Erzherzog Albrecht VI. von Österreich (1418–1463): Ein Fürst im Spannungsfeld von Dynastie, Regionen und Reich* (= J. F. Böhmer, *Regesta Imperii*, suppl. 38) (Cologne–Vienna–Graz, 2015).
 4. *Commentarii* (1614), 297–298. On Pius II, who voluntarily mingled events, and Bosnia, see Emir O. Filipović, “The Key to the Gate of Christendom? The Strategic Importance of Bosnia in the Struggle against the Ottomans,” in *The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century: Converging and Competing Cultures*, edited by Norman Housley (New York, 2017), 151–168.
 5. *Commentarii* (1614), 296. Ștefan Andreescu—“En marge des rapports de Vlad Țepeș avec la Hongrie,” *Revue Roumaine d’Histoire* 16, 3 (1977): 507–512—was the first to notice a relation between the Viennese and the Wallachian events of 1462.
 6. *Commentarii* (1614), 297. The words and the context of the Bosnian Roman *Habemus Fidem* oration of November 1462 (which Pius II logically used to chronologically connect *Dragula’s* arrest by Matthias to the Bosnia issue) is most relevant for the stance of the pope towards *Dragula’s* Christian master, almost nine months before the Habsburg–Hunyadi treaty of Wiener Neustadt (see also van Heck’s critical edition *Commentarii*, 2: 683–685).
 7. See also Constantin A. Stoide, “Luptele lui Vlad Țepeș cu turcii (1461–1462),” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie “A. D. Xenopol”* (Iași) 15 (1978): 15–38; Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venečija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)* (Sarajevo, 1996), 294–302.
 8. Francisc Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara în Țara Românească și Moldova în anii 1447–1448,” *Studii: Revistă de istorie* (Bucharest) 16, 5 (1963): 1049–1072.
 9. Karl Nehring, *Matthias Corvinus, Kaiser Friedrich III. und das Reich: Zum Hunyadisch-Habsburgischen Gegensatz im Donauraum*, 2nd edition (Munich, 1989).
 10. See the collection of essays *Pad Bosanskog kraljevstva 1463. godine/ Fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia in 1453*, edited by Srđan Rudić, Dubravko Lovrenović, and Pavle Dragičević (Belgrade–Sarajevo–Banja Luka, 2015), chiefly the studies of Boris Babić, Pavle Dragičević, Emir Filipović, and Arandel Smiljanić.
 11. For Pius II and the Wallachians see Ovidiu Mureșan, *Renaștere, umanism, papalitate în secolul al XV-lea* (Cluj-Napoca, 2006); Andreea Mârza, *Enea Silvio Piccolomini și cruciada târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2009).
 12. Martin Wagendorfer, *Die Schrift des Eneas Silvio Piccolomini*, Studi e Testi, 441 (Vatican City, 2008); Barbara Baldi, *Il “cardinale tedesco”: Enea Silvio Piccolomini fra impero, papato, Europa (1442–1455)* (Milan, 2013); Daniel Luger, *Humanismus und humanistische Schrift in der Kanzlei Kaiser Friedrichs III. (1440–1493)* (Vienna–Cologne–Weimar, 2016), 49–63.
 13. On this lasting controversy, triggered chiefly by Pius II’s duplicitous policy (understandable otherwise, given also the region), see especially Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (sveta kruna ugarska i sveta kruna bosanska) 1387–1463* (Zagreb–Sarajevo, 2006), 341–350.
 14. Still, when writing to Pope Nicholas V (1449) about the disaster at Varna (1444), a battle he singled out among the misfortunes that had befallen Christendom, Piccolomini, in Frederick III’s service at that time, emphasized: *Even then, John, the vojvode, unless he had fled, would have fallen, but he sought safety in flight. And this man, a Wallachian,*

- knowledgeable about the region and quick of wits, fled without trouble the peril into which he had led others . . . *Reject Aeneas, Accept Pius: Selected Letters of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pius II)*, edited by Thomas Izbicki, Gerald Christianson, and Philip Krey (Washington, DC, 2005), no. 71, p. 289.
15. Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini, *Historia rerum Friderici III imperatoris*, in *Analecta Monumentorum Omnis Aevi Vindobonensia*, edited by Adam F. Kollar, II (Vienna, 1762), 1–476, at 475–476 (. . . *ex carcere ad regnum evolaverat* . . .).
 16. Emily O'Brien, *The Commentaries of Pope Pius II (1458–1464) and the Crisis of the Fifteenth-Century Papacy* (Toronto–Buffalo–London, 2015), 15–17. The *Commentaries* began with Piccolomini's early years (he was born in 1405). They were written and frequently revised between mid-autumn 1462 and the summer of 1464, when Pius II departed for Ancona.
 17. Barbara Baldi, *Pio II e le trasformazioni dell'Europa cristiana (1457–1464)* (Milan, 2006).
 18. Thomas Ebendorfer, *Chronica regum Romanorum*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, new ser., 18, 1–2, edited by Harald Zimmermann, II (Hannover, 2003), 860–865 (Albert and Matthias against Frederick), 917–924 (the story of Vlad).
 19. Through the Habsburg–Hunyadi treaty of Wiener Neustadt (July 1463), concluded five months prior to Albert's mysterious death, Matthias explicitly renounced his ties to Frederick's rival Austrian brother (Nehring, Appendix, 202–203).
 20. Tamás Pálosfalvi, "The Political Background in Hungary of the Campaign of Jajce in 1463," in *Stjepan Tomašević (1461–1463): Slom srednjovjekovnoga Bosanskog Kraljevstva*, edited by Ante Birin (Sarajevo, 2013), 79–88.
 21. According to Francesco Gaeta—cf. also Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and Levant (1204–1571)*, *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society*, 114, 127, 161, 162, II, *The Fifteenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA, 1978), 233, note 11—the letter must be dated after the Ottoman conquest of Trebizond (August 1461), a major historical event mentioned in the epistle. According to the same passage in the epistle (a manifesto in fact), Mehmed had conquered *some notable lands* and *defeated enemies* in Wallachia (like in Serbia), but not subdued Wallachia (ruled by *John Dragula*): . . . *Fatemur: res claras maiores tui egere, nec tua minora sunt opera, qui Constantinopolim expugnasti et Peram e regione Genuensium coloniam et Peloponnesum magna ex parte in deditionem accepisti, et in Rastia et in Valachia non parum agri adeptus es et saepe tuos hostes fudisti; et hoc anno Synopem vetustam urbem, Mithridati Eupatoris patriam, et eius tyrannum cepisti et, Trapezunte direpta, incolas eius et imperatorem in captivitatem abduxisti; et Johannem Cassanum, proelio congregi ausum, superasti. Magna haec tibi videntur, nec nos parva dicimus* . . . Luca D'Ascia, *Il corano e la tiara: L'epistola a Maometto II di Enea Silvio Piccolomini* (Bologna, 2003), 234.
 22. E.g. Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, MA, 2008); Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat 1453–1505* (Oxford, 2012); James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA, 2019).
 23. Margaret Meserve, "Italian Humanists and the Problem of the Crusade," and Nancy Bisaha, "Pope Pius II and the Crusade," in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, edited by Norman Housley (New York, 2004), 13–38, at 16–19, and 39–52, at 42–44.
 24. See also Daniel Ursprung's recent article "Propaganda și popularizarea: Povestirile despre Vlad Țepeș în contextul anului 1488," *Analele Putnei* (Suceava) 14, 1 (2018): 45–60.

25. The curious case of Antonio Bonfini, Matthias' last and best known chronicler (court historian), should be reviewed (cf. Andreescu, "En marge des rapports," 507–512). *Ad annum 1462*, Bonfini, writing at some point between late 1486 and Matthias' death (1490), distanced himself from Vlad's royal arrest and simply noted that no one knows (or understands) what happened then: . . . *Rex in Transalpinos ad liberandum Draculam e Turcorum manibus contendere dicebatur, cui mulierem suam quoque consanguineam legitimo matrimonio coniugarat. Illuc profectus, nescio, qua causa, quando id nemini satis comperitum est, Draculam in Transylvania cepit, alterum vero Draculam [Radu III] a Turco in provincia prefectum preter omnium opinionem approbavit. . . . Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, edited by József Fögel, Béla Iványi, and László Juhász, III (Leipzig, 1937), 243. Afterwards, *ad annum 1477*, Bonfini tried to defend his king, accused of attempting to usurp the emperor. He stated that Matthias had even refused the imperial offer made by the Austrian rebels, who were besieging Frederick III's residence. Matthias had received the offer while marching *adversus Draculam*: . . . *Mathiam omni suspicione in hac re liberandum esse crediderim, quandoquidem, veluti supra dictum est, si quid ipse in imperatorem moliri voluisset, nunquam profecto occasionem illam pretermisisset, cum sibi adversus Draculam agenti Viennenses obsessum in arce Cesarem et ad extremam redactum inedia una cum urbe dedere voluere et instantissime, ut condicionem et imperium acciperet, efflagitarunt . . .* Bonfini, IV (Leipzig, 1941 [Budapest, 1944]), 72. Whether *adversus*, instead of *versus* (towards), was an honest mistake or not is quite impossible to tell and in the end irrelevant. Bonfini, alike Pius II in his *Commentaries*, knew more than he wrote about the *Dracula* matter (and its relation to the Viennese rebellion).
26. Quite astonishingly, none of numerous messages sent by Wallachian voivodes, chiefly by those of Wallachia proper, to the Porte (let alone the sultan), throughout the 1400s, have survived, not even as copies. The only exception would be the translation in *Commentarii*.
27. For instance: Radu Lungu, "À propos de la campagne antiottomane de Vlad l'Empaleur au sud du Danube (Hiver 1461–1462)," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 22, 2 (1983): 147–158; Andrei Pippidi, "Noi izvoare italiene despre Vlad Ţepeş şi Ştefan cel Mare," *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* (Bucharest) 20 (2002): 15–21, at 16.
28. This was made abundantly clear by the German stories on *Dragula's* deeds; see Matei Cazacu, *L'Histoire du prince Dracula en Europe centrale et orientale (XV^e siècle)*, 2nd edition (Geneva, 1996).
29. Franz Babinger dated the Bosnian oration in Pius II's *Commentaries* to November 1461—in *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit: Weltensürmer einer Zeitenwende* (Munich, 1953), 232/*Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time*, edited by William C. Hickmann, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ, 1978), 216. Babinger's work was certainly not flawless, but his errors were due rather to interpretation than to personal neglect. He had just quoted Vlad's letter to Mehmed, under its given date, 7 November 1462 (*Mehmed* (1953), 223/(1978), 208), that preceded the Bosnian oration in the *Commentaries* (edited by 1614, 296–297 and 297–298). The reason behind the error (?) appears to have been Pius II himself (the only one to record the oration). He wrote that Tomašević had become king just prior to the Bosnian embassy to Rome, upon his father's death. Yet the latter had passed away in early July 1461.
30. The only English translation, so far, of the letter belongs to Florence A. Gragg and can be found in *The Commentaries of Pius II*, [V.] *Books X–XIII*, edited by Florence A. Gragg

and Leona C. Gabel (Northampton, MA, 1957), 739–740 (available online). The differences between translations are rather numerous: (1) *Emir*, instead of *Amurato* [*Admurato* in the Latin text], (2) *I, the servant of Your Great Empire*, instead of *I, the servant of Your Majesty*, (3) *I am setting out today for my land, with a host, and I trust in God to obtain it, unless You command me otherwise*, instead of *I am setting out this day with an army for my own land and I trust in God that I shall reach it unless I am prevented by your command*, or (4) *Therefore, I ask You to forgive my mistake and my great sin, for I, imprudently, sinned against You and did harm in Your land; and [sed in the Latin text], may Your Clemency show me mercy and forgive me, so that I can send envoys to you*, instead of *Therefore I humbly beseech Your Majesty not to have regard to my error and my great sin, since in ignorance I sinned against you and did evil in your land. But may your clemency have pity on me and grant that I may send envoys to you*. The changes are due chiefly to the differences in the knowledge of the context, limited to Franz Babinger's and N. Iorga's works in the case of the otherwise stylish and mostly accurate American edition.

31. Apparently, Vlad and Radu had fought each other (largely along the Wallachian–Hungarian border) until Matthias' arrival in Transylvania. Matthias was in his native Cluj on 11 September: Richárd Horváth, *Itineraria regis Matthiae Corvini et reginae Beatricis de Aragonia (1458–1476–1490)* (Budapest, 2011), 71. At that time, the Knights Hospitaller on Rhodes were certain that Vlad had prevailed against Radu: *Documents Concerning Rumanian History (1427–1601)*, edited by Eric D. Tappe (London, 1964), no. 2, pp. 18–19.
32. *Acta et epistolae relationum Transylvaniae Hungariaeque cum Moldavia et Valachia*, *Fontes Rerum Transylvanicarum*, IV, VI, edited by Endre Veress, I, 1468–1540 (Budapest, 1914), no. 96, p. 130. Independently from Matthias, Transylvanian Saxon and even royal authorities had come to terms with Radu as the new voivode by 15 August: Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, XV–1, *Acte și scrisori din arhivele orașelor ardelenne Bistrița, Brașov, Sibiu, 1358–1600*, edited by N. Iorga (Bucharest, 1911), no. 99, p. 58.
33. For instance, Mehmed II was confident enough to send a *Fetihname* (letter of conquest) on Wallachia to his former rival Ibrahim II of Karaman: Mihail Guboglu, “Vlad Țepeș și Mehmed al II-lea în lumina cronicilor turco-bizantine,” *Revista Arhivelor* (Bucharest) 53, 4 (1976): 381–390, at 383–386.
34. A recent balanced synopsis of the events of 1462: Tamás Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács: A History of Hungarian–Ottoman Warfare, 1389–1526* (Leiden–Boston, 2018), 204–205.
35. This was in fact the main prerequisite for accepting Vlad's treason. Unless Vlad had something to bargain with, Mehmed had no use for him. One might even suspect Pius II of keeping silent on the actual situation in Wallachia in order to “promote” Vlad's offer.
36. Irrespective of the name of the acting ruler of Wallachia, it was a matter of logic. If Vlad had halted his advance (but only after he had left Transylvania, in order not to arouse Matthias' suspicions), Radu would have remained the ruler (at least for a while). Neither Pius, nor Vlad said anything about Radu, although Pius had mentioned Vlad's brother (executed by John Hunyadi together with their *Dragula* father) and Radu's fate was furthermore clearly at stake.
37. Given Vlad's willingness to relinquish Wallachia, if his treachery succeeded, his “unholy” profit was north of the Carpathians, the most obvious and neglected of innuendos.

38. Mildly put by Pálosfalvi (*From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 211): “it is unlikely that major forces crossed the border.” Matthias’ Transylvanian orders were issued prior to 14 June 1462, according to Pietro de Tomasso, Venice’s representative in Buda. The latter feared the loss of Transylvania, . . . *che e due terzodi questo regno* (!) . . . Iván Nagy and Albert Nyáry, *Magyar diplomáciai emlékek: Mátyás király korából 1458–1490*, Monumenta Hungariae Historica, IV, 1–4, I [1458–1465] (Budapest, 1876) (hereafter cited as *MDE*), no. 91, p. 147.
39. Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, “*Sive vincitur Hungaria* . . . Das Osmanische Reich, das Königreich Ungarn und ihre Nachbarn in der Zeit des Matthias Corvinus im Machtvergleich im Urteil griechischer Quellen,” in *Matthias Corvinus und seine Zeit: Europa am Übergang vom Mittelalter zur Neuzeit zwischen Wien und Konstantinopel*, Denkschriften der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 410, edited by Christian Gastgeber, Ekaterini Mitsiou, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Mihailo Popović, Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, and Alexandu Simon (Vienna, 2011), 37–62, at 39–44.
40. *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, Fontes Rerum Austriacarum, II, 61–62, 67–68, edited by Rudolf Wolkan, I, *Briefe aus der Laienzeit 1431–1445*, 1, *Privatbriefe* (Vienna, 1909), no. 180, p. 533 (letter sent by Enea from Vienna, on 13 September 1445, to his close friend Gregorio Lolli): . . . *iterum venturos wayvode Transilvani atque Wálachi exercitum parant* . . . Cf. József Marton, “Magyarország képe és megítélése Enea Silvio Piccolomini életművében,” *Irodalomtudományi Közlemények* (Budapest) 110, 5 (2006): 457–477, at 464, note 26, with a typo: p. 523 instead of p. 533, and a confusion between Nicholas Újlaki, John’s partner and co-voivode of Transylvania, and John, *the voivode* for Enea.
41. When Byzantium fell, Hunyadi was ready to march (alone or together with his rival Ulrich von Cilly) into Italy, in the service of Milan, against Venice. F. Pall, “Byzance à la veille de sa chute et Janco de Hunedoara,” *Byzantinoslavica* (Prague) 30, 1 (1969): 119–126.
42. For Oleśnicki and his politics: Harold Segel, *Renaissance Culture in Poland: The Rise of Humanism 1470–1514* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), 22–25; Janusz Smołucha, “Kontakty Zbigniewa Oleśnickiego z Eneaszem Sylwiuszem Piccolominim,” in *Zbigniew Oleśnicki: Książę Kościoła i mąż stanu*, edited by Feliks Kiryk and Zdzisław Noga (Krakow, 2006), 205–210.
43. *Briefwechsel*, III, *Brief als Bischof von Siena*, 1, *Briefe von seiner Erhebung zum Bischof von Siena bis zum Ausgang des Regensburger Reichstages (23. September 1450–1. Juni 1454)* (Vienna, 1918), no. 137, pp. 245–253 (10 September), no. 177, pp. 315–347 (27 October 1453). On this neglected learned dispute, see in particular Nancy Bisaha, “Discourses of Power and Desire: The Letters of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1453),” in *Florence and Beyond: Culture, Society and Politics in Renaissance Italy: Essays in Honour of John M. Najemy*, edited by David S. Peterson and Daniel E. Bornstein (Toronto, 2008), 121–134, at 124–132.
44. *Briefwechsel*, III, no. 256, pp. 443–446 (14 February 1454; Enea to Cardinal Juan Carvajal). Frederick III even wanted to have John as *universal captain* of the anti-Ottoman crusade.
45. Bisaha (“Discourse of Power and Desire,” 131) rightly emphasized that Enea’s views of Hunyadi were rather ambivalent, aptly quoting also *Briefwechsel*, II, *Briefe als Priester und als Bischof von Triest 1447–1450* (Vienna, 1912), no. 23, pp. 72–77 (25 November 1448; the letter of Enea to Pope Nicholas V after John’s new major Ottoman defeat at Kossovopolje).

46. Before Frederick decided to challenge him in early 1459, Matthias' main rival had been Casimir IV Jagiello of Poland, married to Ladislas V's sister, Elisabeth. Enea's animosity towards the Jagiellonians was evident since, according not only to him, Wladislaw III (Casimir's brother and John Hunyadi's benefactor) had usurped Ladislas V's rights in 1440 (*Briefwechsel*, I-1, no. 192, pp. 563–579). Enea's personal views on Poland aided Matthias, rapidly and openly accused by Casimir of siding with Mehmed (*MDE*, I, no. 29, pp. 41–42). Earlier, Matthias had received the brief, but vital support of the late Callixtus III, whose Pontifical vassals, the Teutonic Knights, were at war with Krakow.
47. For an overview: Tamás Pálosfalvi, "V. László," in *Magyarország egyes házi királyai*, edited by Gyula Kristó (Budapest, 2002), 139–150. A monograph on Ladislas is much needed.
48. *De liberum educatione*, in *Briefwechsel*, II, no. 40, pp. 103–158 (February 1450, eight months before the Habsburg–Hunyadi arrangement on Ladislas). Last translated into English by Craig W. Kallendorf in *Humanist Educational Treatises* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 65–132. For further information: Klára T. Pajorin, "La pietà di Pio: Ladislao Postumo nella corrispondenza di Enea Silvio Piccolomini," in *Pio II nell'epistolografia del Rinascimento*, edited by Luisa Rotondi Secchi Tarugi (Florence, 2015), 23–32. With Hungarian learned support, Enea Silvio Piccolomini even created place for Ladislas in a/the virtual *gens Iulia* of the 1400s. Enea greatly admired Julius Caesar and attempted to imitate him also by writing the *Commentarii*.
49. Fabio Forner, "Enea Silvio Piccolomini e la congiura contro Ulrich von Cilli," in *Margarita amicorum: Studi di cultura europea per Agostino Sottili*, vol. 1, edited by Fabio Forner, Carla Maria Monti, and Paul Gerhard Schmidt, Bibliotheca Erudita, 26 (Milan, 2005), 351–376; Stanko Kokole, "*Multe ibi uetustatis reliquie uisuntur*: Evoking Marble Remains of Ancient *Celeia* Before and After 1400," *Zbornik za umetnostno zgodovino* (Ljubljana), new ser., 48 (2012): 35–66, at 36, 64–65.
50. Marton, 467–468, with a focus on Enea's *Historia Bohemica*, in [id.,] *Opera geographica et historica* (Helmstadt, 1699), 1–128, at 118–122, 124–127. Writing nevertheless in the first half of 1458, he certainly did not approve of Ladislas V's execution of Ladislas Hunyadi (in return, he largely supported the execution von Ulrich von Cilly) and blamed the Hungarian advisors of Ladislas V for the last year of his reign.
51. Iván Boronkai, "Matthias im Bilde der Memoiren des Pius II.," in *Matthias Corvinus and the Humanism in Central Europe*, edited by Tibor Klaniczay and József Jankovics (Budapest, 1994), 59–69 (paper submitted prior to the publication of the 1993 Bellus–Boronkai edition of the *Commentarii*), at p. 69 (based on Pius' story of the 1463 Christmas reception by Matthias, in Jajce, of the sword sent by the pope to the king of Hungary and now also of Bosnia).
52. For a neutral overview of these events: Johannes Grabmayer, "Das Opfer war der Täter: Das Attentat von Belgrad 1456: Über Sterben und Tod Ulrichs II. von Cilli," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 111 (2003): 286–316.
53. The royal charter, issued on 21 March 1457, five days after Ladislas Hunyadi's execution, was also translated into Hungarian on the occasion of the Millennium of 1896: *A Magyar nemzet története*, editor-general Sándor Szilágyi, IV, Vilmos Fraknói, *A Hunyadiak és a Jagellók kora (1440–1526)* (Budapest, 1896), 163. The main charge against John (and his family) was that he (they) had violated the natural order of things. The charter thus also focused on the documented abuses of John against voivodes of Wallachia and Moldavia, but also against George Branković, despot of Serbia. These charges were quite justified.

54. Adrian Magina, “*Universitas valachorum*: Privilege and Community in the Medieval Banat,” in *Reform and Renewal in the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary*, Minerva, III, 15; Studies in Russia and Eastern Europe, 13, edited by Éva B. Halász, Suzana Miljan, and Alexandu Simon (Cluj-Napoca–Zagreb–London, 2019), 493–502.
55. In southwestern comparison: Robert Kurelić, “The Status of the Counts of Cilli as Princes of the Holy Roman Empire,” *Annual of Medieval Studies at CEU* 12 (2006): 143–162, at 154–156, 160–162.
56. A comparison between the few contemporary records on Matthias’ early years—András Kubinyi, *Matthias Rex* (Budapest, 2008), 24—and the main lines in Enea’s educational treatise for Ladislas V (*Humanist Educational Treatises*, 65–132) might be useful. Unlike his much older brother (by twelve years), Ladislas, Matthias was raised while his father was at the height of power.
57. For an overview: Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 199–202.
58. According to Kemal-Pasha Zade (Ibn Kemal), who spoke highly of Matthias’ uncle, Michael Szilágyi, *ban Miloš* (standard Serbian for Michael was Mihajlo), *son of Szilágyi (Isviladj-oglu)*, was left at Mehmed’s mercy by the *aramini* of Severin, a Hungarian-Walachian joint-venture like Chilia (Kiliya) at the other end of the Lower Danube: *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române*, I, *Secolul XV–mijlocul secolului XVII*, edited by M. Guboglu and Mustafa Ali Mehmet (Bucharest, 1966), no. XII, p. 198. The Wallachians Stephen and Michael of Mâtnic were the Hungarian bans of Severin between 1459 and 1467: Ioan Drăgan, *Nobilimea românească din Transilvania 1440–1514* (Bucharest, 2000), 422. Ali Mihaloğlu, a Serbian convert, defeated and captured Michael. However, Ali’s brother, Iskender, sent with news of the victory to Mehmed, was trapped by the garrison of Severin. Ali paid 10,000 florins for Iskender’s release, and then only sent Michael to Mehmed.
59. Valuable information can still be found in Augustin Theiner’s *Vetera monumenta historica Hungarica sacram illustrantia*, II, *Ab Innocentio PP. VI. usque ad Clementem PP. VII. 1352–1526* (Rome, 1859) (hereafter cited ad *VMHH*), for instance: no. 499, p. 326; no. 554, p. 371, as well as in Kenneth M. Setton’s most comprehensive notes (*The Papacy and the Levant*, 2: 204–205, note 18).
60. Pius had reached none of his main objectives: Papal stability in the West and anti-Ottoman crusading, not to mention the Italian situation; e.g. Paul M. Dover, “Royal Diplomacy in Renaissance Italy: Ferrante d’Aragona (1458–1494) and his Ambassadors,” *Mediterranean Studies* 14 (2005), 57–94; Pius’ support for Ferdinand brought him on the brink of war with France and almost made Milan reconsider its Roman alliance.
61. Oliver-Jens Schmitt, *Skanderbeg: Der neue Alexander auf dem Balkan* (Regensburg, 2009), 307–309, 318–323. In addition to sending troops to Ferdinand’s aid (since the summer of 1460), Skanderbeg personally came to Italy (September 1461–January 1462), after renewing his truce with Mehmed, who left for Trebizond (June 1461).
62. Setton, 2: 204–205 (note 18), 219–220, 223–224, 237–238. For the impact of Louis XI of France and George Podiebrad of Bohemia on Pius II’s crusader designs, see Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat*, 55–56, 58–59, 211–212.
63. Though it was not a linear change, by the end of March 1462 Pius had decided to push for war against both Podiebrad and Mehmed. On the old issue of the Hussite-Ottoman relations, see also Robin Baker, “Constantine from England and the Bohemians: Hussitism, Orthodoxy and the End of Byzantium,” *Central Europe* 5, 1 (2007): 23–46.
64. Additionally, Bosnia no longer hindered the Piccolomini–Hunyadi arrangements. See Matthias’ brutal answer to Pius’ Bosnian letter from 21 January 1462, published by G.

- (V.) Fraknói, *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae Regis epistolae ad Romanos Pontifices datae et ab eis acceptae*, Monumenta Vaticana historiam Regni Hungariae illustrantia, I, 6 (Budapest, 1891) (hereafter cited as *EMC*), no. 13, pp. 17–19.
65. The sources were astonishingly quiet in this respect, except for Michael Beheim's poem: . . . *He left the city of Buda// with his army, taking the shortest path// to Kronstadt in Siebenbürgen.// He was accompanied by many counts,// barons, lords, knights, and squires.// Pagentry, abounding in sound,// was manifest in that place.// And Dracula, too, came, // bringing a large company with him.//* [line missing from the text] *Five weeks or longer // they remained together.// During this time, the king had learned// of the underhanded crime// and murderous treason// that Dracula had put in readiness in Turkey// with the heathen.// The King of Hungary pretended// that he did not know// the extent of these things . . .* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 345). Beheim's text (written between mid-1463 and mid-1465) is also consistent with Matthias' itinerary.
66. Horváth, 71–72. Matthias returned to Transylvania in 1467, because of the local rebellion and the ensuing Moldavian campaign (September 1467–January 1468), and briefly in 1471 (May), on the eve of the new rebellion, in order to meet with the envoys of Stephen III of Moldavia (Hurmuzaki, XV–1, no. 133, p. 77).
67. E.g. *MDE*, II, nos. 113–114, pp. 181–182 (11–12 October); no. 116, pp. 184–185 (31 January 1463). The dated correspondence from 1462 between Matthias and Pius has not survived.
68. Royal absences from Buda and Hungary proper, comparable to the Transylvanian stay of September–December 1462, were recorded (1) in cases of open warfare (with Mehmed, between October 1475 and February 1476, or with Frederick, between August 1477 and January 1478), or (2) when Matthias resided in his other realms, with their own pertinences (in the lands of Bohemia, starting in summer 1468 and especially afterwards, or in those of Slavonia, between fall 1480 and spring 1481), and in his still recent conquests (Austria after mid-1485). Suited matches from the early years of Matthias' reign for the king's Transylvanian expedition (in fact) of 1462 are: (1) the southern Ottoman threat to his rule (September 1458–January 1459), (2) the pro-Habsburg rebellion in Upper Hungary, largely modern day Slovakia (July–November 1461) and (3) the Bosnian campaign of 1463, with its build-up and aftermath (August 1463–January 1464) (see the *ad annum* entries in Horváth). A comparative quantitative analysis of the royal charters issued on each of the mentioned occasions would be most relevant for the nature of Matthias' Transylvanian stay of 1462.
69. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 11, 296; Langmaier, 521, 561, 601.
70. Pius neither explicitly blamed the Wallachians for his crimes, nor portrayed *Dragula* outright as a *Wallachian* (criminal). A comparative analysis of the German stories on the voivode might prove relevant. His subjects were certainly not depicted as cattle led to slaughter, to their natural fate (for the texts: Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 310–346, 364–369).
71. Original: *adiicienda est Iohannis Dragule atrox nequitia et natura immanis, cuius inter Valachos, quibus profuit, adeo nobilitata sunt scelera, ut nulla queant tragoedia superari*. An alternate translation could be: *to these we must add the atrocious infamy and the monstrous nature of John Dragula, whose crimes are so notoriously defining among the Wallachians, whom he commanded, that they are not able to overcome the tragedy*. The choice between variants depends of our understanding of Pius' aims of 1462–1463 (until, in fact, he left on his crusade) and consequently of the message the pope wanted to convey.

72. *Euxinus* (as in the *Friendly Sea*) was the Latinized and abridged Greek designation of the Black Sea, to which the Wallachians were increasingly connected in Western sources following the Ottoman expansion in the region. See also M. J. McGann, “An Exile’s Hopes: The Search for a Liberator in Michael Marullus,” *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 37, 2 (2013): 226–244, at 230, note 14.
73. The blunt mention of the *seven German-speaking cities* (*Siebenbürgen*) strengthened Pius’ already forthright tie between Albert’s Austrian action and *Dragula’s* Wallachian deeds.
74. Pius used *sermone* for the German language and *lingua* for Wallachian speech, though he then employed *sermone* also for Wallachian: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 325.
75. Original: *Válachi lingua utuntur Italica, verum imperfecta et admodum corrupta*. Alternate translation: *the Wallachians use Italian in their language, but in an imperfect, corrupted form*.
76. Pius’ Pontic connection of the Wallachians lends credibility to the hypothesis that General *Flaccus* in Ovid’s *Epistolae ex Ponto* stood behind the pope’s *Flaccus*: Adolf Armbruster, *Romanitatea românilor: Istoria unei idei*, 2nd edition (Bucharest, 1993), 59, note 34, with the literature on this hypothesis voiced since 1916.
77. It is plausible that Pius came into contact with the *Flacci* rendering of the designation of the Wallachians (who, otherwise, called themselves Rumanians/Romanians), while serving in Frederick III’s chancery, because *Flacci* was used as a name for the Wallachians north (also) of the Lower Danube in the 1440s; e.g. Mark Whelan, “Pasquale de Sorigo and the Second Battle of Belgrade: A Translation,” *Slavonic and East European Review* 94, 1 (2016): 126–145, at 138–140, for the Latin text, 142–144, English translation.
78. This change (*F* to *V* and more often vice versa) was common for German (Armbruster, 59; but without explicitly mentioning the German language). Its origins, related however to the Vlachs of Thessaly, can be traced back to the Third Crusade and to Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa’s chronicler Ansbert.
79. As already noticed (Armbruster, 59, note 36), in the news on his victory over Radu and the Ottomans that reached Rhodes in early September 1462, Vlad was named *dominus Flake* (Tappe, *Documents*, no. 2, pp. 17–19). The apparently German question of the *Flacci* is worth a Turkish review. In Ottoman sources, the Wallachians were called *Eflaki/Iflaki*. In 1474, one of the capital sins of Mahmud Angelović, grand vesir (who had saved Mehmed’s life during the sultan’s Wallachian campaign of 1462), was that he had . . . *set Eflaki free* . . . Theoharis Stavrides, *The Sultan of Vezirs: The Life and Times of Ottoman Grand Vezir Mahmud Pasha Angelović (1453–1474)* (Leiden–Boston–Cologne, 2001), 183, 342.
80. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 296–297 (translated by Gragg in *Commentaries*, V, 737). In order to avoid confusion, we have chosen *parts* over *districts* for the *regiones* of Transylvania, as *regio* was furthermore used for Transylvania in Vlad’s cited letter of Mehmed. Similarly, we have used *commanded*, instead of *governed* for Vlad’s rule over the Wallachians, because Pius resorted to the same verb (*praesum*, infinitive *praesesse*) for both the lead of *John Dragula* over the Wallachians and of *Flaccus*, over the Roman legionnaires (the ancestors of the Wallachians). Additionally, we have employed (1) *to this we must add*, instead of *we must now go on to describe*, (2) *the Wallachians use Italian in their language, but an imperfect, corrupt* <one>, instead of *the Wallachians speak Italian, but an imperfect, corrupted Italian*, (3) *their descendants, as has been said above, turned out more barbarous than the barbarians*, instead of *their descendants, as has been said above, became*

more barbarous than the barbarians (the original Latin text: *quorum posterī, ut ante relatū est, barbariores barbaris evasere*).

81. By assuming this title on the eve of Matthias' royal election, in his *Germania*; cf. Barbara Baldi, "Un umanista alla corte di Federico III: Il *Pentalogus* di Enea Silvio Piccolomini," *Cahiers d'études italiennes* 13 (2011): 161–171, at 161–162, note 1, the future pope not only expressed his gratitude towards his benefactors north of the Alps, but also defended himself against charges of stealing—as any avid *Roman—riches* (dioceses) from the *Theutonics* (as part of the ongoing conflict between the Papacy and the *German nation*).
82. Langmaier (601) noted Pius II's intention to undermine Albert VI of Habsburg by comparing him to Vlad. The comparison however went both ways. As far-fetched as it may sound, Wallachia was an Eastern Austria at the borders of the empire(s).
83. Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, *Europe (c. 1400–1458)*, translated by Robert Brown, introduced and annotated by Nancy Bisaha (Washington, DC, 2013), 9, 36–37, 67–68. He also named *Flaccus* as the Roman founding father of the Wallachians.
84. For the events: Ioan-Aurel Pop and Alexandru Simon, "Rapports italiens sur les affrontements de l'année 1456 en Europe centrale-orientale," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 51, 1–2 (2012): 3–26, at pp. 5–11.
85. Pius II's story is worth summarizing. In 1456, Hunyadi defeated and executed *Dragula* (Vlad II), *a man of fickle and inconstant character*. Pius' opinion was consistent with that of Eberhard Windecke, the chronicler of Emperor Sigismund of Luxemburg: *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte des Zeitalters Kaiser Sigmunds/Das Leben Königs Sigmunds*, edited by Wilhelm Altmann/Theodor von Hagen (Berlin, 1893/Leipzig, 1899), 294/316–317. Vlad II was put to death together with his son (Mircea), his second born according to Pius; this had occurred in fact in 1447 (Pall, "Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara," *passim*). Hunyadi enthroned *Ladislas* (Vladislav II). However, soon afterwards, *Dragula's other son, John* (Vlad III), escaped from Hunyadi's custody. In 1448, while Hunyadi, followed by Vladislav II, fought Mehmed's father, Murad II, at Kossovopolje, Vlad III apparently became ruler of Wallachia, for a short while: Matei Cazacu, "La Valachie et la bataille de Kosovo (1448)," *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 9, 1 (1971): 131–139. Vlad III *slew Ladislas and regained much of his paternal inheritance*, in 1456 (Pius II's nuance, *much of his paternal inheritance*, concerned under the circumstances the duchies of Amlaș and Făgăraș, seized by Hunyadi from Vladislav and never returned to the rulers of Wallachia, at least not in their integrity).
86. In their sequence: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220; bk. X, chap. 7, 243–244.
87. This offer might explain why Matthias did not leave Buda between mid-May and late July, when he moved south for the defence of Belgrade (Horváth, 70). The city on the Danube appeared to be Mehmed's logical target after his retreat from Wallachia.
88. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220. Pius was to pay for 1,000 horse (the monthly wage of a rider was 3 florins/ducats in Hungary), while Venice sent 20,000 gold ducats.
89. Seemingly, Pius voluntarily split the extant data between books and chapters so that he could not be accused of withholding information, while offering his desired picture(s).
90. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220. The translation in *Commentaries*, V, 633, reads: . . . *In Hungary, that year there were frequent skirmishes with the Turks in which the Hungarians were seldom victorious. In Wallachia the Turks gained the advantage, entering the province of Transylvania and carrying off considerable plunder. In the region of the Save also they ravaged the fields and caused a great deal of annoyance to the Dalmatians. They never*

ventured to put all their strength to the test though Matthias, King of Hungary, took the field and was ready to give battle. . . . In spite of all the inadvertencies in Pius' text, two perspectives are particularly interesting: (1) Transylvania (for which he used *provincia*, unlike in the chapter on *John Dragula* and the Wallachians) was viewed as an extension of Wallachia (substantiating in fact Vlad's offer to Mehmed); (2) the Sava area of the *Dalmatians* was therefore connected to the Adriatic (and not to the actual inland of the northwestern Balkans claimed by Buda).

91. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. X, chap. 7, 243–244 (Wallachia and Lesbos). Stefan Stanchev, “*Devedo*: The Venetian Response to Sultan Mehmed II in the Venetian-Ottoman Conflict of 1462–1479,” *Mediterranean Studies* 19 (2010): 43–66, at 51–52 (the fall of Lesbos in early September marked the de facto start of the Venetian-Ottoman war, which began de jure a year later). With Matthias focused on Belgrade and Vlad battling Radu in Wallachia, Mehmed salvaged his record by taking Lesbos, while also outplaying Matthias and Vlad. In theory at least, an agreement with the sultan thus became (once again) an attractive option for both of them.
92. In return, Pius paid great attention to Lesbos (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. X, chap. 8, 244–245).
93. This ending was used to establish a direct connection between Pius' description and the Hungarian report of Nicholas, bishop of Modruš, Papal legate to Hungary, in 1463 (see most recently Cazacu, *Dracula*, 170).
94. Obviously: (1) Matthias had not executed him, though *Dragula* was a murderer and a traitor; (2) some time had elapsed since *Dragula*'s arrest (November 1462) and Pius' note.
95. *Commentaries*, V, 740. The Latin original: *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297. *Adhuc delitesci* (*delitisco*; infinitive *delitescere*) was translated by *still languishes* (alternative translations revolve around the adverb *adhuc*: also *hitherto* or *until now*). Because of *John Dragula*'s physical appearance, one might presume that Pius II harboured the thought that *John* was being wasted in prison: . . . *Valachus adhuc in carcere delitescit, magno et honesto vir corpore, et cuius species imperio digna videatur; adeo sepe differt hominis ab animo facies*. . . (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297). Additionally, only on this occasion did the pope explicitly name *John Dragula* a Wallachian, disconnecting in fact *John*'s ethnicity from his crimes.
96. This should have been clear since Pius stated that the Wallachians had *turned out more barbarous than the barbarians*, and nothing detrimental on them followed (except *Dragula*'s personal deeds). The question was: were the Wallachians beyond redemption?
97. Its absence from any other *Quattrocento* texts is once more virtually incomprehensible.
98. Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, vol. 2 (Chicago–London, 1985), 89–90. For Pius II and Julius Caesar: Emily O'Brien, “Arms and Letters: Julius Caesar, the *Commentaries* of Pope Pius II, and the Politicization of Papal Imagery,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 62, 4 (2009): 1057–1097, at 1063–1065 (Caesar's art of distortion).
99. See Bojko Bojović's most relevant collection *Raguse (Dubrovnik) et l'Empire Ottoman (1430–1520): Les actes impériaux ottomans en vieux serbe de Murad II à Selim I^{er}* (Paris, 1998).
100. On Piccolomini, Szécsi and Matthias: *Europe*, p. 59; Barbara Baldi, “La scoperta dell'Europa centro-orientale nella corrispondenza di Enea Silvio Piccolomini con Dionys

- von Szech,” in *Pio II nell’epistolografia*, 33–42; Pajorin, 27–28 (Piccolomini, Szécsi and Ladislas V); Kubinyi, 70, 74. Szécsi had vacillated between Matthias and Frederick, before opting for the former. Immediately after his coronation with the Holy Crown, redeemed from Frederick, Matthias removed Szécsi from his secular office (April 1464). Already in autumn 1463, Szécsi had not accompanied Matthias on his Bosnian campaign, blessed by Pope Pius II, an absence duly noted (Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 211).
101. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. IX, chap. 6, 220 (. . . *Legatus hac sponione placatus in Hungariam rediit. Cardinalis Strigoniensis pecuniam pro pontifice dissolvit . . .*). The wording indicates that Szécsi executed Pius’ command and paid the money from his (Hungarian) treasury.
 102. The same applies for Ebendorfer († January 1464). With little sympathy towards Matthias (*rex electus*), an indication that he quite certainly wrote prior to the treaty of Wiener Neustadt (July 1463), the Viennese university professor alluded to a *trap* into which the cruel and ruthless Vlad fell, ending in Matthias’ custody (. . . *Tandem vero fraude circumventus venit in captivitatem Mathie electi Ungarie, in qua usque deget . . .*; *Chronica regum Romanorum*, II, 924; the adjacent passages in the *Chronica* covered events from April–May 1463). Vlad’s *treason* was omitted from the German stories, with one notable exception: Michael Beheim’s poem, *Von ainem wutrich der hies Trakle waida von der Wälachei* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 317–346), composed at Frederick’s court (1463–1465). In Pius’ *Commentaries*, John Dragula’s arrest predated its justification. No royal trap was mentioned. Only Beheim, well-disposed towards Matthias, wrote of both Vlad’s *treason* and Matthias’ *trap*.
 103. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297. We quote the Latin text: . . . *Cum tot flagitia perpetrasset, a Matthia rege Hungarie captus est ea hyeme, qua Pius pontifex ex Tuderto [Todi (south of Perugia and Assisi)] Romam rediit. Capture causam prebuere litterae sue, que in hunc modum ad imperatorem Turchorum cum scripte mitterentur, intercepte sunt: . . .* The translation of the letter ensued. Pius added: . . . *Fuerunt et alie bine litterae eiusdem fere sententie: une ad basam, altere ad Thoenone dominum, ut pro se intercederent apud magnum imperatorem; ee de lingua Bulgarica in Latinum conversae ad pontificem misse fuere. . . .*
 104. This pairing, much in the spirit of Pius’ famous “Epistle to Mehmed,” has drawn little or no attention at all, for the main historic focus was placed, since the 1890s, on the immediate political veracity of either Matthias’ manifest forgery or Vlad’s undeniable treason.
 105. Meaning that three different messengers had been caught without delay. Even if we presume that two letters, those for Mehmed and the *bassa* (on which see below), were entrusted to one envoy, the image of the *trap*, if real, (thus) laid for *Dragula* is quite amazing.
 106. On him: Șt. Andreescu, “Vlad Vodă Țepeș și Mahmud pașa Grecul,” *Revista istorică* (Bucharest), new ser., 15, 1–2 (2004): 81–88; Stavrides, *passim*; Cazacu, *Dracula*, 164, 237.
 107. Apparently, this ‘of’ passed unnoticed in historiography, though it should have been obvious to any scholar with some knowledge of Latin. As in a *ad Hungarie regem, Hungarie* is not the nominative form of the name.
 108. Without any explanation, N. Iorga—*Studii și documente cu privire la istoria românilor*, III, *Fragmente de cronici și știri despre cronicari* (Bucharest, 1901), XXXI—equated *Thoenone dominus* with *Moldaviae dominus*, which is rather improbable in that context. See

- Ovidiu Cristea, “The Friend of My Friend and the Enemy of My Enemy: Romanian Participation in Ottoman Campaigns,” in *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, edited by Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević, *The Ottoman Empire and Its Heritage*, 53 (Leiden–Boston, 2013), 253–274, at 262–263.
109. When writing *De Asia* (1461–1462), the pope relied heavily on Diodorus’ *Bibliotheca Historica*. Margarete Meserve, “From Samarkand to Scythia: Reinventions of Asia in Renaissance Geography and Political Thought,” in *Pius II: “El più expeditivo pontefice”: Selected Studies on Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405–1464)*, edited by z. R. W. M. von Martels and Arjo J. Vanderjagt (Leiden–Boston–Cologne, 2003), 13–39, at 17, 23.
110. *Diodori Siculi Bibliothecae historicae libri qui supersunt*, edited by Peter Wesseling, IX (Strasbourg, 1793), bk. XXII, chap. 7, 296–297 (Thoenon’s case was known in the Renaissance because of the chapter on Pyrrhus in Plutarch’s famous *Parallel Lives*, which Pius attempted to immitate). Earlier (bk. XXI, chap. 11, 269–270), Diodorus had spoken of the *Getes* (*Getae*) caught in the conflict between Dromichaetes (their *Thracian* ruler) and Lysimachus of Macedonia in the 290s B.C.: Peter Delev, “Lysimachus, the Getae and Archaeology,” *The Classical Quarterly*, new ser., 50, 2 (2000): 384–401. In 1458, the future Pope Pius II had written: . . . *Hungary . . . occupies the lands of the Gepids and Dacians . . . , and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians . . . the Getes who repulsed and shamefully routed Darius, the son of Hystaspes, captured King Lysimachus alive and inflicted many defeats upon Thrace. They were finally subjugated and destroyed by Roman arms . . .* (*Europe*, 51–52, 67).
111. Pius’ emphasis was placed in the *Commentaries* on lord of (*dominus* Thoenone in the original), on the master of *Thoenon*. *Lord of Thoenon* apparently involved two men and not one man and a place. Thoenon’s master had been Pyrrhus of Epirus. Thoenon opened Syracuse, and thus Sicily, to Pyrrhus (279–278 B.C.). Within a couple of years, Pyrrhus had Thoenon executed: P. R. Franke, “Pyrrhus,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, VII.2, *The Rise of Rome to 220 B.C.*, 2nd edition, edited by F. W. Walbank, A. E. Astin, M. W. Frederiksen, R. M. Ogilvie, and A. Drummond (Cambridge, 1989), 456–485, at 474, 481. There was obviously a moral behind Pius II’s choice of Thoenon and of his—logical—*dominus*, Pyrrhus. Thus, who was the master of Thoenon in the Papal edition of *John Dragula’s* letter? Pius II clearly did not think highly of him, given the choice of name itself, as well as Diodorus’ history. Pyrrhus had in fact betrayed Thoenon, nonetheless himself a tyrant. If, for once, Pius did not overstretch his innuendo and *Thoenon* stood only for the Szeklers, the *dominus of Thoenon* in November 1462 was whoever controlled the Szeklers, either (officially) the voivode of Transylvania or someone else (more dangerous in effect for John Hunyadi’s son), who may have even informed Matthias of Vlad’s plan (real or false). This possibility arises from the final words of Pius on the matter: *The Wallachian is still languishing in prison; he is a tall, fine-looking man who appears fit to rule, so much do men’s countenances differ from their hearts* (*Commentaries*, V, 740); *Valachus adhuc in carcere delitescit; magno et honesto vir corpore, et cuius species imperio digna videatur. Adeo sepe differt hominis ab animo facies* (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 297). Vlad was still alive and quite fit.
112. After mentioning that . . . *Wallachians <speak> corrupt Italian; the Transylvanians German*, Pius II moved on to the Szeklers. *They say the true Hungarians are the Szeklers, whose ancestors came from ancient Hungary and they have changed none of the customs,*

except their religious worship. They are a poor, decimated, defenceless nation, proud and arrogant. They think they are the only noble ones among the Hungarians and they address each other with *dominus*. Very few till the land; their wealth is in herds, on which they live. They pay not tributes except on the occasion of a royal coronation. They present the king with an ox for every head of a family. It is said that once 60,000 cattle were brought to the king. They fight within the boundaries without pay and are not compelled to go outside . . . (*Commentaries*, V, 796–797; the English translation is more favourable than the Latin text, chiefly in the case of *genus hominum pauper, lacerum ac nudum, verum superbum et arrogans*; *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, ch. 16, 325). This negative image of the Szeklers redraws attention upon the identity of the *lord of Thoenon*. Out of a variety of ancient names of men and places connected to Sicily, and furthermore out of the multitude of personalities and settlements related and relatable to the past of the lands now held by Matthias, Pius II chose the *lord* <of> *Thoenon* for a reason as the name of the recipient of *John Dragula's* infamous letter.

113. *Székely Oklevéltár*, I, 1211–1519, edited by Károly Szabó (Kolozsvár, 1872), no. 45, pp. 83–84; no. 53, p. 93. The name was much older: *Acta Ioannis PP. XXII (1317–1334)*, edited by Aloisie L. Täutu, *Fontes*, III, 7–2 (Rome, 1962), no. 92, pp. 182–183. At that time (1327), the Szeklers were stationed both south and east of the Carpathians.
114. On the basis of the work of Dominican Pietro Ransano, a native of Palermo, see for instance C. A. Macartney, *The Medieval Hungarian Historians: A Critical and Analytical Guide* (Cambridge, 1953), 46–47, 103. From the folios of Ransano, bishop of Lucera, Pius II's legate and Neapolitan ambassador to Matthias' court, we also recall the following notes on John Hunyadi: *Ioanne Huniate, Ianco vulgo cognominato*, as well as *Ioannes, qui Ianco apud Italos est cognomen*.—*Epithoma rerum Hungaricarum id est annalium omnium temporum liber primus et sexagesimus*, edited by Péter Kulcsár (Budapest, 1977), 29, 34.
115. In 1447 (when Enea was in Frederick's service), on the eve of his final campaign against *John Dragula's* father, John Hunyadi sealed a treaty with Alfonso V of Aragon, king of Naples and Sicily. Against Habsburg interests, John was to enthrone Alfonso as the king of Hungary, with the support of 10,000 Wallachians. Lajos Thallóczy and Samu Barabás, *A Frangepan Család Oklevéltára/Codex diplomaticus comitum de Frangepanibus*, I, 1133–1453, *Monumenta Hungariae Historica*, I, 35 (Budapest, 1910), no. 344, p. 350. Alfonso's illegitimate son, Ferdinand, succeeded his father in the *annus mirabilis* 1458, with the decisive aid of the new pope, Pius II. P. J. Jones, *The Malatesta of Rimini and the Papal State: A Political History* (Cambridge, 1974), 219–221.
116. In comparison, from a southern perspective: Ludwig von Thallóczy, *Studien zur Geschichte Bosniens und Serbiens im Mittelalter* (Munich–Leipzig, 1914), 426–428; Neven Isailović and Aleksandar Krstić, “Serbian Language and Cyrillic Script as Means of Diplomatic Literacy in South-Eastern Europe in the 15th and 16th Centuries,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “George Barițiu,” Series Historica* 54 (2015), suppl., 185–195, at 190–193. Serbian seems to have been the *lingua franca* for Ottoman-Hungarian border communications and possibly also for monarchic correspondence, starting with the 1480s–1490s. The number of preserved sources restricts nevertheless the validity of the otherwise prudent general assessments.
117. For an updated list of the documents issued by or ascribed to Vlad III's chancery, see *Corpus Draculianum*, general-editors Thomas M. Bohn, Adrian Gheorghe, Christof Paulus, and Albert Weber, I, *Scrisori și documente de cancelarie*, I, *Cancelarii valabe*, edited by

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

118. Marin Tadin, “L’Origine et la signification de la particule *Iω* dans le titre honorifique des princes de Bulgarie, de Serbie (méridionale), de Valachie et de Moldavie,” *Cyrrilomethodianum* 4 (1977): 172–196. The topic was last discussed in relation to Moldavia (nevertheless) by Ștefan S. Gorovei, “Titlurile lui Ștefan cel Mare: Tradiție diplomatică și vocabular politic,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 23 (2005): 41–78, at 45–48. Gorovei noted that Stephen III made majestic use of John, in Latin as well, as in *God’s anointed/chosen one*, in relation to Poland, Moscow, Brașov or Wallachian boyars, that is: in relations with adversaries (the Jagiellonians and the boyars) or in the correspondence with adaptable allies (Muscovy or Saxon Brașov). *John* was intended to impose.
119. See first and foremost the documents in *DRH*, B, I, passim, and *Corpus Draculianum*, I, I, passim.
120. In addition to the editions cited below (to which one should in this case Hurmuzaki, XV, 1, a volume consisting only of documents in Latin for the 1400s), see also *DRH*, D, I, *Relații între Țările Române*, I, 1222–1456, edited by Ștefan Pascu, Constantin Cihodaru, Konrad G. Gündisch, Damaschin Mioc, and Viorica Pervain (Bucharest, 1977), for the modern editions of some of the “foreign papers” of Vlad’s predecessors, including his father, executed by John Hunyadi (for instance: nos. 133–138, pp. 217–224; nos. 141–145, pp. 227–234; no. 154, pp. 249–250; no. 166, pp. 263–264; no. 168, pp. 265–266; no. 173, pp. 274–275; nos. 175–180, pp. 276–282; nos. 182–195, pp. 283–294; nos. 197–204, pp. 295–300; no. 213, pp. 311–312; no. 222, pp. 321–322; no. 225, pp. 324–325; nos. 229–236, pp. 328–333; nos. 238–239, pp. 334–335; nos. 243–244, pp. 340–341; no. 250, p. 347; nos. 253–254, pp. 350–351; nos. 260–265, pp. 362–366; no. 277, p. 387; nos. 306–307, pp. 421–423; no. 313, pp. 430–431; no. 315, pp. 431–432).
121. Roughly 85% of the Slavonic documents issued by rulers of Wallachia prior to the rule of Neagoe Basarab (1512–1521) and preserved in Transylvanian archives (at least in the late 19th century and in the early 20th century) are undated. In addition to Bogdan’s *Documente Brașov*, see Stoica Nicolaescu, *Documente slavo-române cu privire la relațiile Țării Românești și Moldovei cu Ardealul în secolele XV și XVI: Privilegiu comerciale, scrisori domnești și particulare din arhivele Sibiului, Brașovului și Bistriței din Transilvania* (Bucharest, 1905), Silviu Dragomir, *Documente nouă privitoare la relațiile Țării Românești*

cu Sibiul în secolii XV și XVI (offprint *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Națională* 4) (Cluj, 1927), Grigore Tocilescu, *534 documente slavo-române din Țara Românească și Moldova privitoare la legăturile cu Ardealul 1346–1603: Din arhivele orașelor Brașov și Bistrița* (Bucharest, 1931 [Vienna, 1905]), as well as the *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen* entries, available and updated online at <http://siebenbuergenurkundenbuch.uni-trier.de/>.

122. Presuming that (1) Vlad did indeed send the letter and (2) Vlad did call himself *John Vlad*, Matthias' chancery would not have omitted Vlad from its translated copy. Much rather it would have left out John. In fact, both before and after his death Hungarian sources never referred to Vlad as *John* or *John Vlad*. He was named either Ladislas/Vladislav (and variants) or *Dragula* (and variants), and even *Ladislas Dragula*; e.g. Matthias' charter of March 1479 in *Documenta ad historiam familiae Bátorii de Ecsed spectantia*, I, 1393–1540, edited by Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann, and Norbert C. Tóth (Nyíregyháza, 2011), no. 109, pp. 139–140.
123. Presuming again that (1) Vlad's letter was not a forgery and that (2) the message did have a date, someone took the time and the patience to change what was a simple *November 7* (given the common practice in Wallachia) into *the seventh day before the Ides of November*. If this was truly the case in the second half of November 1462, then the author of the translation and of the change of the style of dating was a clergyman. In Hungary, *idus* and *calendae* were used foremost by the Church in its deeds and letters (a search under item *idus* in <http://siebenbuergenurkundenbuch.uni-trier.de/> is quite telling in these matters).
124. The recently appointed voivode of Transylvania, John Pongrácz of Dengeleg, was also count of the Szeklers: *Magyarország világi archontológiája 1458–1526*, Norbert C. Tóth, Richárd Horváth, Tibor Neumann, and Tamás Pálosfalvi, I, *Főpapok és bárók* (Budapest, 2016), 85, 122. The voivode and count was Matthias' favourite and relative. John Pongrácz's mother, Clara, had been John Hunyadi's sister (Kubinyi, 12). In mid-August 1462, John Pongrácz's deputy, Albert Istenmezei, viscount of the Szeklers, had informed the Saxons of Brașov that they had done well to conclude an arrangement with the lord of Wallachia, Radu, as neither the king of Hungary, nor the voivode of Transylvania were to oppose it (Hurmuzaki, XV–1, no. 99, p. 58). The attitude in the province was certainly not hostile to the Turks before Matthias arrived in Transylvania, prior to 11 September (Horváth, 71).
125. *Székely Oklevéltár*, I, nos. 55–58, pp. 94–102 (3 May, 21 November, 15 December 1462, and 19 January 1463). The matters were rather trivial (estates, possession and succession, but also murder). Yet Matthias did spend a week (or maybe more) in the Szekler Seats in mid-October 1462 (Horváth, 71; he issued charters from Gheorgheni between October 14 and 19). Additionally, he had to bring with him, and leave behind him, Albert Vetési, bishop of Cenad (*Székely Oklevéltár*, I, no. 57, pp. 98–99; Odorhei Secuiesc, 15 December 1462). Vetési was the king's experienced diplomat, as well as his former secret chancellor (Kubinyi, 71). In order to clarify matters and calm the tensions, he had been appointed royal judge for the Odorhei and Mureș Seats, together with the Hospitaller prior of Vrana, Thomas Székely of Szentgyörgyi, former ban of Slavonia (*Magyarország világi archontológiája*, I, 58). The latter's presence makes the Székler question of 1462 worth a closer look, whether or not the question was also connected to *John Dragula*. The prior of Vrana of 1462 and Matthias were

first-degree cousins. Thomas was the son of John Székely and of an unnamed sister of John Hunyadi (Kubinyi, 29, 203).

126. Under the circumstances, we quote once more from *De Europa*: . . . *This John [Hunyadi] was a Wallachian by birth, not highly born, but a man of supple intelligence who loved virtue . . . (Europe, 59)*. Upon his ascension to the throne, the Venetian administration noted that Matthias was . . . *d'origine humile de progenie de Valacchia*: Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cods. 6214–6217, Stefano Magno, *Annali veneti et del mondo*, I–IV [1433–1478], III [1457–1468 (= Cod. 6216)], *Ad annum 1457 [More Veneto 1458]*, f. 6^r. Obviously, the Hunyadis ranked lower than the *Dragulas* in the Wallachian noble hierarchy. Yet, after sealing his arrangement with Alfonso V of Aragon, John Hunyadi claimed the Wallachian throne for himself at the end of 1447 (Pall, “Intervenția lui Iancu de Hunedoara,” 1069–1070). According to Wallachian monarchic rules, John could have done so only if real or imagined princely Basarab blood ran through his veins, via either the Dan or the Dragul branch of the Basarab family (House), both recorded by Pius II.
127. Ioan-Aurel Pop and Alexandu Simon, “The Venetian and Walachian Roots of the Ottoman–Hungarian Truce of 1468: Notes on Documents in the State Archives of Milan,” in *Italy and Europe’s Eastern Border (1204–1669)*, edited by Iulian Mihai Damian, Ioan-Aurel Pop, Mihailo St. Popovic, and Alexandu Simon, Eastern and Central European Studies, 1 (New York etc., 2012), 283–302.
128. Ioan-Aurel Pop, “The Names in the Family of King Matthias: From Old Sources to Contemporary Historiography,” in *Matthias Rex 1458–1490: Hungary at the Dawn of the Renaissance*, edited by Elek Bartha, Róbert Keményfi, and Zsófia Vincze Kata, Ethnographica et folkloristica Carpathica, 17 (Debrecen, 2012), 11–40. The rendering of the family name, by Pius as well (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chap. 12, 296), sounded Greek. Ransano however recorded it in similar manner (*Epithoma rerum Hungaricarum*, 29, 34). Yet, by then (1488/1489), word of the illustrious origin of John Hunyadi’s mother, of Greek imperial blood, had spread (Bonfini, III, 95), probably because of the alleged, and rather popular in the 1480s, family ties between the Hunyadis and the sultans (Kubinyi, 9–10).
129. See also Andrei Pippidi, “Despre Dan voievod: Rectificări cronologice și genealogice,” *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Medie* 31 (2013): 47–96 (originally written however in the mid–1980s).
130. Apparently a constant of Humanist writings, present not only throughout the works of Enea Silvio Piccolomini/Pius II (see Armbruster, 70, note 73).
131. . . . *The Wallachians also inhabit the islands of the Danube, including Peuce, which was known by some report to the ancients, and have settlements in Thrace as well . . . (Europe, 68)*. On this matter, chiefly in relation to the southern banks of the Lower Danube, see also Ioan-Aurel Pop, “A 1499 Italian Source on the Ottoman–Polish–Moldavian Rapports,” in *Laudator Temporis Acti: Studia in Memoriam Ioannis A. Božilov*, edited by Ivan Biliarsky, I, *Religio-Historia* (Sofia, 2018), 391–401. We therefore add that the royal crown of Bulgaria was promised by Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini to John Hunyadi in exchange for the eventually disastrous crusade of Varna. For the context, see Pál Engel, “János Hunyadi and the Peace ‘of Szeged,’” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, 3 (1994): 241–257, at 253.

132. We recall: . . . *Hungary . . . occupies the lands of the Gepids and Dacians . . . , and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians . . .* To this one must add: . . . *Across the Danube, the Emperor Trajan conquered Dacia, which is now part of Hungary, and created a province on barbarian soil; it was lost under Gallienus and recovered by Aurelian . . .* (*Europe*, 51–52; we have altered Vlach to Wallachian in all translations in order to avoid confusions throughout the paper, as Vlach-Wallachian is largely a modern North-South distinction that, according also to Pius II—when he pushed the Wallachians into Thrace as well—did not operate in the mid-1400s).
133. *De Europa* (1458): . . . *John Hunyadi whose name overshadows the others, enhanced the glory not so much of the Hungarians, as the Wallachians from whom he was descended. Wallachia is a very broad region which extends from Transylvania to the Black Sea . . .* Earlier, the future pope had written that Transylvania . . . *is inhabited by three races: the Germans, Szeklers and Wallachians* (*Europe*, 64, 67; for the sake of uniformity we have replaced Székelys with Szeklers). The quoted lines might support the idea that, contrary to his son’s chroniclers, John Thuróczy and Antonio Bonfini, John *Huniates* was born in Transylvania, not in Wallachia.
134. *Commentaries*, V, bk. XII, chap. 16, 796: . . . *Wallachians <speak> a corrupt Italian; the Transylvanians German . . .* (in Latin: . . . *Válachi corrupto Italico; Transilvania Theutonico . . .*). As seen above, in his *De Europa* (1458), Enea, not yet Pius, had a more inclusive perspective on Transylvania and its *races* (i.e. *nations*).
135. We draw attention to the fact that this statement was inserted by Pius after the chapter on *John Dragula*. However, the *corrupt<ed> Italian* of the Wallachians unites the passages.
136. *Europe*, 51–52: . . . *the Dalmatians, whom they call Slavs, the Illyrians known as Bosnians, the Triballians or Mysians, who are called both Serbians and Rascians, and the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians, submitted to the rule of the Hungarians . . .* For the popular theory that Transylvanian Saxons descended from *Getes*: Karl Kurt Klein, “Die Goten-Geten-Daken-Sachsengleichung in der Sprachentwicklung der Deutschen Siebenbürgens,” *Süd-Ost-Forschungen* 11 (1946–1952): 84–154.
137. The old *Gothic* theory found its Quattrocento Wallachian echoes chiefly in the works of Nicholas, bishop of Modruš, Pius’ legate to Stephen Tomašević and Matthias—Giovanni Mercati, “Notizie varie sopra Niccolò Modrussense,” in id., *Opere minore*, IV (Vatican City, 1937), 205–267—, and of Francesco Filelfo, the influential humanist settled in Milan, who violently turned against Pius right after the pope’s death; see the Piccolomini and the Wallachian entries in Filelfo, *Collected Letters*, 2nd edition, edited by Jeroen De Keyser, 4 vols. (Alessandria, 2018). The connection between the Wallachians and the Black Sea, Crimea included, conventionally named *Gothia*; e.g. Aleksandr A. Vasiliev, *The Goths in the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA, 1936), consequently also grew stronger in humanist political thought.
138. In this respect, we must emphasize that, in Pius II’s reasoning as well, both Bosnia and Wallachia had a Hungarian royal “pair”/“link”: Croatia (-Slavonia) and Transylvania.
139. Especially Flavio Biondo, *Ad Alphonsum Aragonensem serenissimum regem of expeditione in Turchos Blondus Flavius Forliviensis*, in *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio*, edited by Bartholomeo Nogara, *Studi e testi*, 48 (Rome, 1927), 25. On Biondo: Hankins, 289–304.

140. Julia Dücker, “Konstruktion einer ruhmreichen Vergangenheit: Die Abstammung des ungarischen Königs Matthias Corvinus,” in *Integration und Desintegration der Kulturen im europäischen Mittelalter*, edited by Michael Borgolte, Julia Dücker, Marcel Müllerburg, and Bernd Schneidmüller, Europa in Mittelalter, 18 (Berlin, 2011), 137–151. Given also Biondo’s case, as well as the discussed matter of the Roman roots of the Wallachians in Pius’ *Dragulian* chapter, it is plausible that John Hunyadi sponsored such a campaign, following Mehmed’s conquest of Constantinople (1453), which also largely coincided with Hunyadi’s loss of his power as regent of Hungary; see also Ubertino Posculo, *Constantinopolis* [1455–c. 1460], edited by Vincent Déroche and Thierry Ganchou, in *Constantinople 1453: Des Byzantins aux Ottomans*, edited by Vincent Déroche and Nicolas Vatin (Toulouse, 2016), 359–395, at 366.
141. Several Hungarian nobles thought the same of Matthias (if not worse). Frederick even viewed Matthias’ origins as a “genetic deformity,” *born from a Wallachian father*; see Alexandru Simon, “Antonio Bonfini’s *Valachorum regulus*,” in *Between Worlds* (= *Mélanges d’Histoire Générale*, new ser., I, 1–2), I, *Stephen the Great, Matthias Corvinus and their Time*, edited by László Koszta, Ovidiu Mureşan, and Alexandru Simon (Cluj-Napoca, 2007), 207–226, at 209.
142. Noteworthy enough, Pius II called neither Vlad, nor the Wallachians *schismatics*; see Georg Hofmann, “Pius II. und die Kircheneinheit des Ostens,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 12 (1946): 217–247.
143. This was also the command entrusted to Vlad by John Hunyadi before the battle of Belgrade. On 3 July 1456, less than three weeks before the clash with Mehmed II, Hunyadi wrote from Cuvin, on the Danube, to the city of Bistrița to urgently send him soldiers, because the safety of the city was in the care of Vlad (*DRH*, D, I, no. 333, p. 455). Vlad however had other plans.
144. Due to the histrionic nature of Pius II, with his ability to pose either as commander-in-chief or as the most humble of ignorants (see, in relation to the *Commentaries*, the analysis in O’Brien, “Arms and Letters,” 1069–1071), the “secret reports” of the age (the *dispacci*) are of particular value, especially those sent by Milanese representatives in Rome (who were often most intimate with the pope) or by the frequently neglected young Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, Pius II’s personal “creature”, to native Mantua; e.g. David S. Chambers, “Giovanni Pietro Arrivabene (1439–1504): Humanistic Secretary and Bishop,” *Aevum* 58, 3 (1984): 397–438; Marcello Simonetta, “Il duca alla Dieta: Francesco Sforza e Pio II,” in *Il sogno di Pio e il viaggio da Roma a Mantova*, edited by Arturo Calzona, Francesco Paolo Fiore, Alberto Tenenti, and Cesare Vasoli (Florence, 2003), 247–286.
145. The date is of particular importance. On 12 April, Pius held his grand reception of the head of Saint Andrew, brought by the brother of the last Byzantine emperor, Thomas Paleologous. A Roman resident since spring 1461 (he had fled Morea in fall 1460), Thomas had retained the head (Setton, 2: 228–229, notes 102–104).
146. Ion Bianu, “Ştefan cel Mare: Câteva documente din arhivul de stat de la Milano,” *Columna lui Traian* (Bucharest) 4, 1–2 (1883): 30–47, at no. 1, p. 35.
147. Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 316 (English translation of *Geschichte Dracole Waide*). According to the Russian story on Vlad’s deeds (1486/1490), upon his release from captivity, Matthias gave his *sister* to Vlad in marriage. We now know that Vlad’s second wife was the king’s maternal cousin, Justine Szilágyi. She was barren (Kubinyi, 17–18).

The unknown author of the Russian story claims to have met the children of Vlad and of Matthias' sister (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 362–363). Vlad's first Hunyadi wife may have been indeed been Matthias' sister. Yet it is doubtful that she and the king had shared Elisabeth Szilágyi's womb, known to have had only boys (Ladislas and Matthias).

148. See, in comparison to the quoted *Geschichte Dracole Waide* (1463), Matthias' positive depiction and the absence of any reference to the matrimony in Michael Beheim's later poem (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 344–346). Seemingly, the Wiener Neustadt treaty (July 1463) did help significantly better Matthias' German *Dragulian* image.
149. Andrei Corbea, "În legătură cu scrisoarea datată 11 februarie 1462: Contribuții la cunoașterea izvoarelor relației lui Vlad Țepeș cu Matia Corvin," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie și Arheologie "A. D. Xenopol"* 18 (1981): 151–166 (another copy of Vlad's report, found among documents issued by or related to Pius II).
150. Ioan-Aurel Pop, "Matthias Corvinus, *Re de Ungaria, de Dacia etc.*, in 1462," *Transylvanian Review* 29 (2020), suppl. 1: 41–52. The report, preserved in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Codices, Z 219 Sup., no. 9328, was first published by Ludwig von Pastor, *Acta inedita historiam pontificiorum romanorum praesertim saec. XV, XVI, XVII illustrantia*, 2nd edition, I, 1376–1464 (Freiburg-in-Breisgau, 1904), no. 125, pp. 150–162 (Pastor dated the document 12 March 1462).
151. Marcello Simonetta, "Pius II and Francesco Sforza: The History of Two Allies," in *Pius II*, 147–150.
152. See Pál Engel, "Hunyadi pályakezdése," in *Nobilemea românească din Transilvania/Az erdélyi román nemesség*, edited by Marius Diaconescu, introduction by Ioan Drăgan (Satu Mare, 1997), 91–109.
153. *Europe*, 59, 67 (1458): . . . *John was a Wallachian by birth, not highly born, but a man of supple intelligence who loved virtue. . . . John Hunyadi whose name overshadows the others, enhanced the glory not so much of the Hungarians, as the Wallachians from whom he was descended . . .*
154. Vlad was arrested in the second half of November 1462 (towards the end of the month). News from Hungary usually reached Italy within a month, to be more precise: between three and six/seven months depending on the event and on the part of Hungary from where the information was sent (e.g. *MDE*, I, nos. 107–108, pp. 171–172; no. 113, p. 181; no. 115, p. 183). Confirmation of an important event (such as Vlad's arrest) was generally secured approximately three months after the event had occurred, i.e. in this case: late February 1462. Venice certainly did not officially launch her investigation into the *Dragula* matter before mid–April 1463, though, alike Pius, she had been conducting inquiries since January (*MDE*, I, no. 108, p. 172; no. 126, p. 202).
155. We quote, without any changes, the translation of the final paragraph of Piccolomini's description of Hungarian politics (until spring 1458), in his *De Europa . . . Whoever you are reading this, try now to predict the future! Here is a truly remarkable proof of the fickleness of human affairs. Of two young man almost identical in age and character, one was carried from the throne to his tomb [Ladislas V of Habsburg], while preparing a bedchamber for his new bride [Magdalena, the daughter of French King Charles VII of Valois]; the other [Matthias], while anxiously awaiting a death sentence, was summoned from prison to become king. His freedom is said to have been purchased from the governor of Bohemia [George Podiebrad] by a betrothal [to George's daughter, Katarina] and other arrangements. It is*

amazing that his mother [Elisabeth Szilágyi] did not drop dead from joy, when, after suffering so many calamities, she heard that her son had been named king before she even learned of his release from captivity . . . (Europe, 63).

156. See Europe, 52: . . . the Getes, of whom some are called Wallachians and others Transylvanians . . .
157. According to the dedication letter of the work to Cardinal Antonio Cerdà i Lloscos, *De Europa* was completed by Enea by March 29 (Europe, 50). Enea made some changes to it until his election as pope. The removal of the Wallachian roots of John and Matthias from the text was not among them.
158. Of all the stories on Vlad, the one most detrimental to both Hunyadis, John and Matthias, is contained in *Geschichte Dracole Waide* (with its various versions), which is also the oldest of them all; for an overview, see the texts edited in parallel by Cazacu in “*Geschichte Dracole Waide*: Un incunable imprimé à Vienne en 1463,” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 139, 2 (1981): 209–243, at 221–243; the texts of Pius II and Thomas Ebendorfer were however not included in the 2017 appendix of Cazacu, *Dracula*, which features, in exchange, the main versions of the German and Russian stories on *John Dragula*. *Die Geschichte Dracole Waide* lists in its final paragraph both Vlad’s Hunyadi marriage and his Hunyadi arrest, deliberately confusing Matthias with his father. This information is missing from the Latin texts of Pius II’s *Commentaries* and Ebendorfer’s *Chronica* and from Michael Beheim’s German poem, the oldest accounts of Vlad’s deeds (1463–1465). The first two renderings were certainly related to the Habsburg–Hunyadi peace, at long last concluded in July 1463, while the latter was written later at Frederick’s court. Papal influence may well have been behind the omissions in the work of Ebendorfer, professor at the University of Vienna (and its rector on several occasions). He had little love lost for Matthias and otherwise recorded every possible atrocity committed by Vlad.
159. In May 1462, Matthias had coerced the Diet into accepting a new tax that was to cover the ransom of the Holy Crown from Frederick (Kubinyi, 68). The decision had to be reconfirmed by the next Diet in March 1463 (in fact, Matthias had to pass the law for a second time). The anti-Ottoman warfare became the main official reason for its levy. The tax also came at a Transylvanian cost, first military and then political. Matthias’ coronation decree of spring 1464 granted autonomy to *the Kingdom of Slavonia and to the Transylvanian Parts*; see *Decreta regni Hungariae: Gesetze und Verordnungen Ungarns 1458–1490*, edited by Ferenc Döry, György Bónis, Géza Érszegi, and Zsuzsanna Teke, Publicationes Archivi Nationalis Hungarici, II. Fontes, 19 (Budapest, 1989), 1464, April 6, art. XIII, 145; Drăgan, 93–94. It is unclear how much Pius knew of these Hungarian affairs, when he wrote of *John Dragula*. Later in the text, in relation to the crusader preparations of September 1463 (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 327; *Commentaries*, V, 801), Pius stressed out that Matthias: . . . frequently asked the Emperor for the crown, but could not obtain it. Therefore he became every day on object of greater contempt to his people . . . In November 1462, the Wallachian case of *John Dragula* hardly increased the Hungarian domestic reputation of Matthias or furthered his mastery of Transylvania.
160. Still useful is Antal Pór, “II. Pius Pápa és Hunyadi Mátyás Király,” *Budapesti Szemle* 40 (1879): 225–278. However, see chiefly Boronkai, 66–69.

161. At the same time, their authorities (of Pius and Frederick) were jointly challenged in the Roman-German Empire; see the data in Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes, from the Close of the Middle Ages, Drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and Other Original Sources*, vol. III [1458–1464], edited by Frederick Ignatius Antrobus (London, 1894), 142–143, 205–207, 223–229, 298–300.
162. *MDE*, II, no. 108, p. 173. The information was added, on 15 January 1463, as a sort of post-scriptum to the instructions of the republic to her representative in Hungary, Pietro de Tomasso . . . *Preterea notum tibi facimus, quod per litteras oratoris nostri ad Romanum Pontificem facti sumus certiores Beatitudinem Suam elegisse nuper quator ex Reverendissimis Cardinalibus, videlicet Nicenum [Bessarion], Sancti Angeli [Juan Carvajal], Rothomagensem [Guillaume d’Estouteville] et Sancti Marci [Pietro Barbo (future Paul II)], qui providere habeant rebus Hungarie, et aliis negotiis contra Turcum . . .* Her ambassador in Rome, Bernardo Giustiniani, had apparently informed her of Pius’ decision already at the end of December (27–28), according to the Venetian Senate’s instructions for Giustiniani, issued similarly on 15 January 1463; see Šime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*, Monumenta spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium, 22, X. 1453–1459 (Zagreb, 1891), no. 230, p. 231; the document was conspicuously omitted from *MDE*, I, although it featured in the Venetian register precisely between the republic’s letters to Matthias and to de Tomasso. Out of the four cardinals, Matthias could rely in fact only on Carvajal, John Hunyadi’s former associate (he was one of *the three Johns* from Enea’s story on the *miracle* of Belgrade), who had largely salvaged Matthias’ early reign (Kubinyi, 31–32, 64–65). Carvajal and Bessarion were the cardinals most interested in Hungary and in crusading, but, as Pius commented, both had failed to secure an arrangement between Matthias and Frederick (*Commentarii* (1614), bk. XII, chap. 16, 328; *Commentaries*, V, 802). Unlike during the Papal elections of August 1458, Barbo was at odds with both Pius and his native Venice, in spite of Pius’ attempts at reconciliation, whereas d’Estouteville had drawn closer to his former rival, *olim* Enea.
163. As a direct consequence of Matthias’ contested rule and because of the imminent Ottoman threat, Hungary was viewed as a new *Holy Land* at the Papal curia, a crusader realm to be governed in fact by cardinals; see Benjamin Weber, “La papauté en Hongrie (1453–1481): engagement financier ou militaire,” *Transylvanian Review* 18, 3 (2009): 21–31. Unsurprisingly, Matthias resented the prospect, though it also secured Carvajal’s unwavering support. It would be tempting to state that the *Dragula* affair forced Matthias to temporarily concede defeat.
164. A common Hungarian letter offers an insight into how widespread the word on Vlad’s deeds was. On 21 March 1462, from Nyárád (Veszprém County), Blasius (Balázs), who had just returned from Buda, informed his superior, John Szinyei, the collector of the *lucrum camerae* in Sáros County, that *vaiivoda Dragulia* (already Vlad’s common name) had slain 24,000 Turks.—Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár-Országos Levéltár, Budapest, Diplomatikai Levéltár, [no.] 70267; cf. Pálosfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 240, note 85.
165. See on these matters Giuseppe Valentini, “La Crociata di Pio II: dalla documentazione veneta d’archivio,” *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 13 (1975): 249–282; Norman Housley, “Pius II and Crusading,” *Crusades* 11 (2012): 209–247.

166. We cannot regard this as a complete surprise or novelty, considering that most of the discussed sources were known since before World War I, including the peculiar Pastor edition of Pius' "confession" of March 1462 (omitted by the pope himself from his *Commentaries*, where he otherwise included large portions of his political conversations, such as, in relation to Milanese Otto de Carretto, the one from September 1463, cited below).
167. For the "good life" the *magnifico* Vlad began to enjoy in Hungary, see the documents (July and October 1464) in *Urkundenbuch zur Geschichte der Deutschen in Siebenbürgen*, VI, 1458–1473, edited by Gustav Gündisch, Herta Gündisch, Gernot Nussbächer, and Konrad G. Gündisch (Bucharest, 1981), no. 3389, p. 192; no. 3400, p. 200.
168. Utterly hostile to the Hunyadis (he too blamed John for the crusader disaster at Varna, for which Wladyslaw III of Poland and Hungary had paid with his life), the influential Polish clergyman and diplomat, Jan Długosz, was more than benevolent towards Matthias in regard to Vlad. Długosz recorded Vlad's arrest as prelude to the expulsion, in winter 1464–1465, of the Hungarian garrison from Chilia (Kiliya), at the mouths of the Danube, by the populace eager to have peace with Mehmed, under Radu. Matthias' decision to arrest the traitorous *Moldaviae superioris Principe, Wlado nomine*, had been more than justified.—*Annales seu cronici incliti Regni Poloniae* (=Jan Długosii Senioris Canonici Cracoviensis Opera omnia, XI–XIV), edited by Alexander Przewdziecki, IV (Krakow, 1887), 408. Długosz's stand on Vlad is worth a closer inspection. Długosz, who in 1472 ordered and received a copy of *De Europa*—Hans-Jürgen Bömelburg, *Frühneuzeitliche Nationen im östlichen Europa: Das polnische Geschichtsdenken und die Reichweite einer humanistischen Nationalgeschichte (1500–1700)* (Wiesbaden, 2006), 47, note 31—advocated the highly questionable—already in the 1470s and 1480s—theory of the *Italian* origins of the Lithuanians (an eastern idea that predated the 1460s and was apparently left unrecorded in Italy).
169. The Handsome Vlad could have thus fooled anyone, including Matthias, including the Wallachians. Pius was rather forthcoming in this respect. His final words on *John Dragula* were (we recall): *so much do men's countenances differ from their hearts* (*Commentaries*, V, 740). From this perspective, Vlad was unquestionably a necessary scapegoat for the Cross.
170. Decades that witnessed several major changes (largely induced by Venice, at war with the Porte), including the creation of the first and only *Greek rite athlete* of Christendom, Stephen III of Moldavia, less than fifteen years after he had attacked Chilia, together with Mehmed II's fleet, in the summer of 1462. See Alexandru Simon, "Pellegrini ed atleti del Signore ai confini della cristianità: Skanderbeg, Stefano III di Moldavia e le loro relazioni con Roma e Venezia," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Moyen Âge* 125, 1 (2013): 71–92.
171. E.g. Vilmos Fraknói, *Mátyás Király Levelői: Küllügyi Osztály*, II, 1481–1490 (Budapest, 1895), no. 140, p. 244 (and note 3); no. 247, p. 388; N. Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XV^e siècle*, V, 1476–1500 (Bucharest, 1915), no. 73, p. 55.
172. See also Ursprung, 51–55, 58–59 (maps 1 and 2).
173. In November 1458, Frederick, recently reconciled with Podiebrad, seemed willing to grant the Holy Crown to Matthias in exchange for a substantial amount: Brigitte Haller, "Kaiser Friedrich III. und die Stephanskronen," *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 26 (1973): 94–147, at 123–125. The domestic incapacity of Matthias' and of his

remaining followers (less than ten months after the election) allowed his adversaries, led by Ladislás Garai and Nicholas Újlaki, to approach Frederick in winter 1458–1459 at the latest (Podiebrad's double-dealings did not help Matthias). Frederick asked Pius II for advice. The answer was in German a *Jein* (so-to-say). In his *Commentaries*, Pius claimed that in fact the emperor's message had not reached him in time. In April 1459, he had officially admitted differently to Frederick, nonetheless already elected king of Hungary by Matthias' enemies on 17 February. It remains however uncertain (to this day) whether Frederick was actually crowned with the Holy Crown on 4 March, or merely accepted the royal title and crown. A fully legal Hungarian royal coronation had to be performed in Székesfehérvár, and Frederick was known to be very strict on protocol.

174. Because of Vlad's betrayal in the summer of 1456, Ladislás Hunyadi sent Dan, from the rival branch of the House of Basarab, against the new voivode of Wallachia in December, after the elder brother of Matthias had family foe Ulrich von Cilly executed in Belgrade (*DRH*, D, I, no. 341, p. 461). Vlad stood his ground. Very soon after Matthias' enthronement in mid-February 1458, Vlad secured an agreement with him and his uncle and regent, Michael Szilágyi (Hurmuzaki, XV–1, nos. 84–85, pp. 48–49). Dan's claim seemed doomed to fail, until Frederick's election in February 1459. Dan turned to him and especially to his Hungarian followers. He seemed confident that the Saxons of Braşov would consequently aid him (*Documente Braşov*, no. 78, p. 100). The reconciliation between Matthias and Újlaki (July 1459) and mainly the truce between the king and his uncle, reinstated, by April 1460, as *governor* of Transylvania (Kubinyi, 62–63), turned Dan to the Hunyadis. Prior to April 5 <1460>, they welcomed him, as the conflicts between Vlad and the Saxons had escalated (*Documente Braşov*, nos. 79–80, pp. 101–103). Vlad seemed lost. Still, he prevailed and had Dan executed, after first forcing him to dig his own grave. Dan's sole historic credit, in addition to his Habsburg ties, remains his account of Vlad's atrocities, very similar to the stories on the voivode's deeds (*Documente Braşov*, no. 79, p. 102).
175. Unfortunately, the Romanian historiography on these medieval *Teutonic*-Wallachian matters is limited to the valuable, yet obviously outdated and “politically correct” study of Ion Hurdubeţiu, *Die Deutschen über die Herkunft der Rumänen: Von Johann Thunmann bis Ernst Gamillscheg* (Breslau, 1944; reprint Bucharest, 1977).
176. Tamás Fedeles, “Drakwlyahaza,” in “*Fons, skepsis, lex*”: *Ünnepi tanulmányok a 70 esztendő Makk Ferenc tiszteletére*, edited by Tibor Almási, Éva Révész, and György Szabados (Szeged, 2010), 107–114.
177. E.g. Margaret Meserve, “News from Negroponte: Politics, Popular Opinion and Information Exchange in the First Decade of the Italian Press,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 59 (2006): 440–480.
178. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Abendländische Handschriften, Cod. Lat. 14668, ff. 7^r–43^r (at ff. 23^r, 24^v). *Dracula de Molda et Walachia* had repelled Bayezid (I). Vlad III was confused, quite deliberately, with his paternal grandfather, Mircea I, overlord of Moldavia as well (as Stephen III too had to concede). Largely favourable to the Wallachians, the work was completed prior to Mehmed I's Moldavian campaign of 1476. It only mentioned the successful resistance of Venetian Scutari and Moldavia (1474–1475). Because of its anti-Hunyadi tone and its high regard of Maximilian, Frederick III's son, as the hope of Christendom, it is tempting to identify Maximilian's educator and Frederick's secretary since 1471, Thomas Prelokar of Cilly, as the author

of the treatise. A native of Celje (Luger, 117–118), Thomas was however unrelated to the by then extinct Cilly family.

179. A natural precaution for a man whose area of “expertise” certainly exceeded humanist studies. Noel Malcolm, *Agents of Empire: Knights, Corsairs, Jesuits and Spies in the Sixteenth-Century Mediterranean World* (Oxford, 2015), 5. Segono’s career was not unique.
180. Antoine-Émile Tachiaos, “Nouvelles considérations sur l’œuvre littéraire de Démétrius Cantacuzène,” *Cyrrillomethodianum* 1 (1971): 131–182, at 139; Ivan Božić, “Kolebanja Mahmud Paše Anđelovića,” *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* 41, 3–4 (1975): 159–171, at 164; Stavrides, 402–408.
181. Agostino Pertusi, *Martino Segono di Novo Brdo, vescovo di Dulcigno: Un umanista serbo dalmata del tardo Quattrocento: Vita e opere* (Rome, 1981), Appendix I, 78–146, at 137; Alexandru Simon, “Mehmed II’s Return to Moldavia in 1476 and the Death of the King of Dacia,” *Transylvanian Review* 29 (2020), suppl. 1: 53–64.
182. He was still usually called *il Transilvano*, after having served as bishop of Transylvania since autumn 1472 (*Magyarország világi archontológiája*, I, 35, 37).
183. The letter (Buda, 7 March 1476) survived in two copies: ASM, A.D.S., Potenze Estere, *Ungheria*, cart. 650. 1452–1489, fasc. 22. 1476, nn, in *Codex diplomaticus Partium Regno Hungariae adnexarum*, Monumenta Hungariae Historica, I, 31, 33, 36, 40, II, *Magyarország és Szerbia közti összeköttetések oklevéltára 1198–1526*, edited by Lajos Thallóczy and Antal Áldásy (Budapest, 1907), no. 369, pp. 265–268; ASMA, A.G., E. Affari esteri, V. *Ungheria*, busta 533, 1395–1692, nn (copy sent from Rome to Mantua by the same Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, and his entourage, who in March 1462 had announced the 21,660 fatalities of Vlad).
184. Ragoni’s report was sent at a most inauspicious time for Matthias, embroiled in a bitter struggle for crusader funds and merits with the rising *athlete* of Christendom, Stephen of Moldavia, supported by Venice; see Alexandru Simon, “The Walls of *Christendom’s Gate*: Hungary’s Matthias Corvinus and Moldavia’s Stephen the Great Politics in the Late 1400s,” *Quaderni della Casa Romana* 3 (2004), 205–224, at 212.
185. Both Saxon Braşov and Stephen of Moldavia (who later claimed otherwise) were extremely opposed to Vlad’s return to power (e.g. Hurmuzaki, XV–1, nos. 146–148, pp. 85–86).
186. Though it seems not in the desired and claimed—by both Vlad and Matthias—capacity of voivode, but only in that of royal *captain* (governor?): *MDE*, II [1466–1480] (Budapest, 1876), no. 234, pp. 339–340. Matthias’ efforts to enthrone Vlad and to present him as the ruler of Wallachia redraw attention upon *Die Geschichte Dracole Waide* (printed since 1488). This concluded with the statement that, after his release from captivity by Matthias, Vlad had done *good things* (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 369). It is resonable to presume that Matthias attempted to counteract Frederick’s propaganda by spreading his own tale, a task made easier by the emperor’s German enemies.
187. E.g. in the March 1479 royal charter for the Báthorys (*Documenta Bátori*, no. 109, p. 140).
188. According to Grigore Nandriş—“The Historical Dracula: The Theme of his Legend in the Western and in the Eastern Literatures of Europe,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 3, 4 (1966): 367–396, at 386—, the epilogue of the 1490 copy of Russian story on Vlad (first recorded in 1486) read: . . . *And he [Dracula] married, he took a princely wife* [in the

original text: *vojevodskuju zhenu*], and after that he lived a short while and was murdered by Stephen of Wallachia. According to the known version of the story, Vlad fell fighting his own (Cazacu, *Dracula*, Appendix, 363). The discrepancy between versions calls for a review of the extant sources. With Ottoman support, Vlad had enthroned Stephen (1457), who then turned against him (1459). Relations between them were never truly amicable afterwards. Nonetheless, Stephen too claimed that he had restored Vlad to power in 1476. Matthias in his turn stated that he had accomplished everything before Stephen's arrival.

189. *Stare srpske povelje pisma*, I–2, *Dubrovnik i susedi negovi*, edited by Ljubomir Stojanović (Belgrade, 1934), no. 845, p. 263 (15 November <1462>); translated by Bojović, *Raguse*, no. 29, pp. 231–232. For the charter issued in Wallachia by Mehmed II for Ragusa, see Alexandru Simon, “Soșiile ungare ale lui Vlad III Țepeș: Rolul, impactul și receptarea unor alianțe și rivalități medievale,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “A. D. Xenopol”* 48 (2011): 5–12, at 6.
190. Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku, Dubrovnik, *Acta Consiliorum, Acta Consilii Rogatorum*, [reg.] 23. 1476–1478, f. 61^v (16 November 1476). On Ragusa's embassy to Mehmed who was in *Moldavia* (in Wallachia in fact): Alexandru Simon, “A doua venire a lui Mehmed al II-lea în *Moldovia* în anul 1476,” *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie “A.D. Xenopol”* 56 (2019): 23–32.
191. For the challenges faced by Matthias at the time, see also Ioan-Aurel Pop, “Atletul Ștefan și românii ca protagoniști la Marea Neagră în epistole semnate de Papa Sixt al IV-lea și de umanistul Francesco Filelfo (1475–1476),” in *Spre pământul făgăduinței, între Balcani și Bugeac: Omagiu Doamnei Profesoare Elena Siușiuur la împlinirea vârstei de 80 de ani*, edited by Daniel Cain, Aneta Mihaylova, Roumiana L. Stantcheva, and Andrei Timotin (Brăila, 2020), 17–34.
192. For Vlad's final years (1475–1476): Ștefan Andreescu, “L'Action de Vlad Țepeș dans le sud-est de l'Europe en 1476,” *Revue des études sud-est européennes* 15, 2 (1977): 259–272.
193. It was not until spring 1477, when Stephen III of Moldavia pressured Venice to follow his (Crimean), not her (Balkan) anti-Ottoman designs, that the part of the “crusader businesses” in those parts which included trafficking Mehmed II's Christian booty was exposed. See Alexandru Simon, “The Costs and Benefits of Anti-Ottoman Warfare: Documents on the Case of Moldavia (1475–1477),” *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire* 48, 1–2 (2009): 37–53.
194. For Mehmed II's campaign in Moldavia, see Liviu Pilat and Ovidiu Cristea, *The Ottoman Threat and Crusading on the Eastern Border of Christendom during the 15th Century*, East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450, 48 (Leiden–Boston, 2017), 167–174.
195. For the events of 1484, see Ovidiu Cristea, *Acest domn de la miazănoapte*, 2nd edition (Târgoviște, 2018).
196. Alexandru Simon, *Pământurile Crucii: Românii și cruciada târzie* (Cluj-Napoca, 2012), 129–175.
197. See also Pálósfalvi, *From Nicopolis to Mohács*, 205 (1462), 257–258 (1476), 281–282 (1484). In fact, out of the three summers in question, royal troops (brought from Hungary proper) crossed the Carpathians only in 1476, with nearly fatal delay (*Acta et epistolae*, I, nos. 26–27, pp. 28–30).

198. Claudia Märrtl, “Italienische Berichte von der Kurie Pius II. (1458–1464),” in *Historiographie, Briefe und Korrespondenzen, editorische Methoden*, edited by Matthias Thumser (Toruń, 2005), 243–257, at 248–252; O’Brien, “Arms and Letters,” 1066–1069, 1074–1077.
199. Under the circumstances, one may even presume that Pius built the figure in contrast to that of the Wallachian from Transylvania, *John Huniates (Europe)*, 39, 51–52, 59, 64).
200. *Commentarii* (1614), bk. XI, chaps. 11–13, 296–298; Pop, “Matthias Corvinus,” 43.

Abstract

A Humanist’s Pontifical Playground: Pius II and Transylvania in the Days of *John Dragula*

One of the political letters deemed worthy to be cited and copied by Pope Pius II (*olim* Enea Silvio Piccolomini) in his *Commentaries* was the message allegedly sent by Vlad III *the Impaler (Dracula)*, voivode of Wallachia, to Sultan Mehmed II on 7 November 1462. The missive was the textual embryo of Book XI, chapter 12 (*Iohannis Dragule inhumanis atque nefanda crudelitas, eiusque in regem Hungarie deprehensa perfidia, et tandem captivitas*), covering over a fifth of the chapter. The *Dragula* chapter was placed between the depiction (in chapter 11) of the Viennese conspiracy against Albert VI of Habsburg, the rival brother of Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg (April 1462), and the emphatic presentation (in chapter 13) of the royal anti-Ottoman request sent by Stephen Tomašević, the new king of Bosnia, to Pius II (roughly a year earlier, in the late summer of 1461, a date the pope nevertheless failed to mention, though he extensively quoted both the oration of Tomašević’s envoys and the subsequent papal response). The case of *John Dragula* explicitly linked chapters 11 and 13. Frequently overlooked, the chapters that frame the account of the infamous deeds of the voivode of Wallachia outline its logical political context, founded on Matthias Corvinus. The son of John Hunyadi, who had executed *John Dragula’s* father, Vlad II *Dracul* (just *Dragula*, according to the pope), was (as recorded also by Pius II): (1) the overlord (i.e. suzerain) of *John Dragula*, (2) the archrival of Frederick III, and (3) the challenged suzerain of Stephen Tomašević. Prior to the *Dragula* issue of 1462, Pius II had loyally served Frederick as his secretary and envoy (from late 1442 until he was elected pope in August 1458) and had sent a crown for Stephen Tomašević’s royal coronation on Christmas Day 1461 (against the opposition of Matthias, whose Bosnian rights Pius II nevertheless claimed, in his *Commentaries*, to have defended). Based on the case of *John Dragula*, the most famous Wallachian in Enea’s/Pius’ writings, the study focuses on the actual case at hand: that of the humanist/pope and his designs for a continent and a faith in turmoil.

Keywords

Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), John Hunyadi, Matthias Corvinus, Vlad III the Impaler (Dracula), Mehmed II, crusading, humanism, state-building, identity, corruption