

Italian Reports Concerning the 1462 Wallachian Campaign of Sultan Mehmed II

IOAN-AUREL POP

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Ioan-Aurel Pop

Member of the Romanian Academy, director of the Center for Transylvanian Studies, rector of Babeş-Bolyai University. Author, among other titles, of the vol. **“Din mâinile valahilor schismatici...” Românii și puterea în Regatul Ungariei medievale (secolele XIII–XIV)** (“From the hands of schismatic Wallachians...” Romanians and the central power in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary (13th–14th centuries) (2011).

THE YEAR 1462 marked a turning point in the history of Wallachia, and its repercussions were felt not only in the area of the Danube and of the Carpathians, but also in Hungary and in Western Europe. The events of that year were particularly relevant for the relations between Christendom and the Ottoman world, increasingly strained after the fall of Constantinople (1453) and the Christian victory at Belgrade (1456),¹ which had saved Hungary.

In late January 1462, Prince Vlad III Drăgulea² (mostly known as Vlad Țepeș/Vlad the Impaler) retook from the Turks the fortress of Giurgiu, located on the northern bank of the Danube, a strategic point of utmost significance for the defense of his realm. Shortly after this victory, the Romanian ruler ordered his captains to lay waste to the entire southern bank of the Danube, from the town of Orșova (on the border between Banat and Oltenia) to the point “where the Danube flows into the

sea.”³ Among the settlements ravaged on this occasion and situated on the Ottoman bank of the river (in present-day Bulgaria) we find Obluchitsa, Novoselskoye, Drasta, Tutrakan, Marotin, Rusciuk (Novigrad), Svishtov, Samovit, and Rahovo. On the northern bank, in Wallachia, his men destroyed two other settlements controlled by the Turks, Orșova and Turnu (today Turnu-Măgurele).⁴ All these are mentioned in a “record of the places and of the men and women . . . killed . . . in the Turkish lands by His Lordship Vlad of Wallachia,” appended to the war bulletin the Romanian prince sent from Giurgiu on 11 February 1462 to King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary. The message indicated the total number of people (Turks and Bulgarian) killed during the aforementioned inroads (23,884 in all), broken down by settlement, and specified that the tally had been kept using the severed heads and other proofs brought to the Romanian officials found “in various locations.” The same message contained a reference to “those whose deaths were not reported or who burned together with their homes, whose number we do not know but who were very many indeed.”⁵ One narrative source also indicates the fact that a part of the Bulgarian Christian population had been relocated to Wallachia and had been thus spared from the devastation that followed. Besides, it is a known fact that in 1445 Prince Vlad II Drăgulea, Vlad the Impaler’s father, had also welcomed into his country 12,000 Bulgarians who “no longer wanted to live under Turkish rule.”⁶

After this large-scale attack, Vlad the Impaler warned the Hungarian king and the other forces involved in the anti-Ottoman struggle of the impending Turkish retaliation against Wallachia, which would have also endangered Hungary and the entire Christendom. Vizier Mahmud Pasha the Greek was ordered to keep watch at the mouths of the Danube and prevent any other inroads south of the river. The pasha did a lot more than that, entering the Wallachian territory in search of loot and captives. In late May 1462, as he was making his way back, his army of 18,000 Turks was attacked by the forces of Vlad the Impaler and completely defeated. In June 1462, the Ottomans, assisted by Moldavian ruler Stephen the Great, unsuccessfully tried to seize the fortress of Kilia.⁷ It was in the summer of 1462, however, that the Ottomans tried to strike a final blow against Wallachia with the help of an impressive army, roughly 100,000 strong and supported by a fleet of 25 galleons and 150 smaller vessels. This impressive force was personally led by Sultan Mehmed II, the conqueror of Constantinople, who wanted to turn Wallachian into a province of the Ottoman Empire and gain full control over the Lower Danube. Clearly outmatched, Vlad the Impaler—whose army numbered approximately 22,000—ordered the population to flee to the mountains and employed a tactics of scorched earth and constant harassment. In the night of June 17–18, at the head of 7,000–10,000 men, the Romanian ruler mounted a surprise attack against the sultan’s encampment, creating con-

siderable chaos and confusion.⁸ Unable to take Vlad's capital, Târgoviște, the Turks turned towards Buzău and then, hungry and thirsty, exhausted and under constant harassment, and also fearing a possible Hungarian attack, they withdrew towards Brăila, intending to reach the southern bank the Danube.⁹ At the border, the sultan left behind his favorite, Radu the Fair (Vlad the Impaler's brother), who eventually managed to seize the throne and ruled, with some interruptions, between 1462 and 1475.¹⁰

This complex Ottoman campaign stirred considerable echoes, during the events proper and also after its completion.¹¹ Of course, the Ottoman chroniclers presented it as a Turkish victory, while the Christian narrative sources usually refer to the victory scored by the forces of Vlad the Impaler. In military, strategic, or political terms, however, the issue is considerably more complicated than that. Let us therefore examine the news on the aftermath of the campaign sent to Milan, mostly by Antonio Guidobono (Latinized as Antonius Guidobonus), the envoy of this duchy present in Venice.¹²

As a rule, he reported on anything he could learn, officially or not, about the actions of the Ottomans, from the data available to the Venetian authorities. The latter had set up an excellent information network, including ambassadors and also spies and informants. Thus, Guidobono informed Milan that "in the penultimate day of June," around eight in the evening, news had reached Venice that "the Ottomans had been defeated and 40,000 Turks had been captured or killed by the Romanians and the Hungarians."¹³ The cautious Milanese also added that the news was still uncertain, but he would send a messenger to the duke once the rumor was confirmed. On August 10 the same ambassador wrote that "As indicated in other [letters], the Turk has withdrawn considerably, driven by hunger and upon seeing that the Romanian had scorched the earth in his path. He had also seen that the Hungarians were determined and unflinching in their desire to confront him. Little else is known about his actions. In utmost secrecy, this Signoria pays the king of Hungary five thousand ducats a month until the end of the war as subsidies against the Turk. They say the Hungarian army is 100,000 strong."¹⁴

Quite rich in detail is another report, sent to Milan on 13 August 1462, drawn up in the same spirit but not by Antonio Guidobono. We are referring to the copy of a letter signed by Aloisio Gabriel, rector of the Cania, and addressed to "His Lordship Antonio Loredan, captain of Modon." The document relates how, on August 13, a young Albanian reached Modon coming from Nepanto. He declared that for the past three years he had been a slave in Adrianople but that he had fled and reached Nepanto after a voyage of 16 days. From Nepanto he had gone to Modon, reaching it 18 days after his escape from Adrianople. This former slave said that eight days prior to his flight the sultan had returned to

Adrianople, his huge army in disarray and without any victory celebrations. Besides, most of the army withdrawn via the Black Sea had made the rest of the voyage on foot, as the horses had died of hunger and thirst. Thus, the sultan was desperately short on horses and could not mount a campaign until the following season. The witness also added that

In Adrianople they say that the aforementioned Ruler [the sultan] had taken with him the brother of the Romanian Ruler. When they neared a place where the Romanian army was sheltered by the surrounding marshland, they were attacked at night by the Romanian forces. In the part of the camp occupied by the pasha and the vizier nearly 30,000 soldiers and other men to a total of 50,000 Turks were killed. Upon seeing that he could not strike at the Romanian Ruler, who held a strong position defended by the marshes, and fearing the Hungarian army, which was expected to come and help the Romanians, the Turkish Ruler withdrew via the Black Sea and, greatly lacking in food for the men and the horses, returned to Adrianople in disarray, as stated before. Also, [he claimed] that the said Ruler did not wish to disband the army he had at Adrianople, fearing that the Hungarians might move towards Greece. He also said that the aforementioned Ruler had to ride to Constantinople as quickly as possible.¹⁵

The copy of this document was accompanied by another which said that

His letters from Candia sent as early as last [month] spoke of [news] from Constantinople [arrived] on the 25 [of last month], brought by a Romanian ship that had escaped alongside others that had been held [by the Turks] and which confirms that the Turk suffered a great defeat and that his army was in disarray, and that the [Turkish] Ruler had been practically forced to walk back to Adrianople and disband his army, and says that order had been sent to the bailiff of Constantinople to outfit some ships and prepare others for outfitting, to equip the foists and the galleons, without saying anything of their intended destination, so our people believe this is just as stratagem meant to increase their prestige.¹⁶

After this point the news regarding the Wallachian expedition becomes more scarce and brief. Thus, on August 13, the same Guidobono reported from Venice that letters had been received from the rhetors of Corfu according to which the Turk had been defeated by the Romanians and that the sultan had been seen in person in Adrianople. However, he also indicated that no such news had come from Pietro de Thomasij (Thomaxi), secretary of the Signoria dispatched at the court of the king of Hungary.¹⁷ Therefore, the letters from Corfu were somewhat doubted by the Venetian leaders, and a message from the afore-

mentioned Pietro was eagerly awaited. On August 20, the same Milanese envoy to Venice provided additional details: it was presently known that the Turk has suffered a major defeat, news to that affect having arrived from Morea and Romania (an area whose name the Turks would pronounce as Rumelia), where Venice had trusted officials; everybody was talking about this, some believing that the Turk had left Wallachia and gone to Bulgaria, others stating that he had returned to his country, after having taken some damage from the Romanians, others arguing that he had been driven back by hunger, or had returned to gather more men before returning to battle, so that the truth was hard to find and understand.¹⁸ Once again it is indicated that Pietro de Thomaxi, Venetian representative at the court of Hungary, had written nothing in connection to that event, mentioning only the great army mustered by the king with a view to attacking the Turk and encouraging all to share the king's belief in victory, given the large number of soldiers he had and the tremendous courage that animated all of his companions.

On August 25 the same Antonio Guidobono wrote that in what Hungary was concerned, the only thing known about the Turk were the rumors circulating everywhere in Romania and Morea whereby he had ended the campaign against the Romanian.¹⁹ On 28 August, Guidobono reported along similar lines: the Venetian Signoria had received news of the Turk from all places but Hungary, stating that he had ended the Wallachian campaign and returned to his country "with little honor."²⁰ The aforementioned Venetian secretary present at the Hungarian court continued to remain silent. Three days later (on the last day of August), Guidobono sent to "His Highness" (the duke of Milan) a copy of the letter sent by the Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, which indicated that several sources agreed that the Turks had suspended the campaign against the Romanians "with great loss and shame." He also added that the Venetian Signoria believed that the king of Hungary would begin his campaign against the Turk once the circumstances were favorable.²¹ On September 2, the Milanese envoy sent another copy of a letter signed by the same Venetian ambassador in Constantinople, which talked about the withdrawal of the Turk from Wallachia after having suffered great losses and injury. In this message Guidobono finally provides the long-awaited news: Pietro de Thomaxi, Venetian envoy to Hungary, had fully corroborated the information on the Ottoman defeat provided by the aforementioned Venetian ambassador. Still, the Milanese envoy also indicated that the Venetians had not given him a copy of the letter sent from Hungary (although he had demanded it "with great humility and in keeping with the established custom"). The possible reason for the refusal had to do with the fact that the letter in question (which could not be shown to another in part, but only entirely) may have also contained references to the Venetian subsidies extended to the Hungarian king, which the Venetians wanted to remain a secret.²²

Finally, on September 11 the last piece of news sent by the same Guidobono came to confirm beyond any doubt the fact that the Turk had returned to Adrianople from the Wallachian expedition “with great loss and shame.”²²³

SUMMING UP, we could say that in the summer and early autumn of 1462 (July-September), authentic and verified news regarding the consequences of the sultan’s campaign in Wallachia had reached Milan, usually via Venice and originally coming from Constantinople and the Levant in general. While some elements may have differed, all reports agreed on the fact that the Ottoman army led by the conqueror of Constantinople returned in disgrace to its base south of the Danube. From sketchy and sometimes inaccurate reports (on 30 July there was talk about the sultan’s defeat, capture and execution) we come to increasingly precise details, confirmed by several sources. The main ideas in the accounts are: the Ottomans withdrew from Wallachia as they lacked provisions following the implementation of a scorched earth strategy by the Romanians; the Venetians granted subsidies to the king of Hungary for defensive purposes and for a campaign against the Turk; the Ottoman army reached Adrianople in disarray, partly via the Black Sea, as the horses had died or were too weak for want of food and water; the sultan was unable to mount another campaign forthwith, precisely because he lacked horses; Vlad the Impaler’s brother (who would eventually become ruler of Wallachia) was present alongside the sultan; the Romanian army effected a successful night attack on the Ottomans after finding shelter in a well-protected marshland; the attack in question killed tens of thousands of Turks; the sultan turned back, as he could not strike at the Romanian ruler and feared an intervention by the Hungarian king; the Ottoman army withdrew in disarray, desperately lacking in food or water for the men and for the horses; the Ottoman army’s anything but triumphant entry into Adrianople, in a poor state after the “great defeat” and considerable hardship; the army and the sultan returned with little honor, after having suffered significant losses and loss of face, a fact eventually confirmed by the Venetian ambassador at the Hungarian court.

We see therefore that the information that reached Western Europe concurred on the shameful outcome of the sultan’s campaign in Wallachia, a country he had hoped to turn into a conquered and subjected territory, just like the lands south of the Danube. The failure of this campaign ensured the future freedom of Wallachia which, despite having to pay an annual tribute to the sultan, remained a Christian country with a ruler appointed by the country’s council (and confirmed by the Porte), with a Romanian ruling elite, with its traditional institutions, a country where the Turks were not allowed to take up residence, own real estate, convert the population to the Muslim religion, build mosques, etc. The Christian accounts recognize this freedom of Wallachia by referring to both the sultan and the Romanian prince as “rulers” (*Signor Turcho* and *Signor Valacho*) or sim-

ply as “the Turk” and “the Romanian” (*il Turcho* and *il Valacho*). In a broader context, these Italian accounts indicate that the actions taken by Vlad the Impaler were part of a Christian European agenda, namely, the defensive crusade mounted by the Holy See and the leading European political powers. The letter of 30 July 1462 mentions the arrival in Vienna of ambassadors sent by the pope and by Hungary, who were to receive subsidies amounting to 12,000–20,000 ducats. They were accompanied by the ambassadors of Poland and of Bohemia, who intended to persuade Venice and other Christian powers such as France to stand against the Turks. In this respect, the financial assistance offered to Hungary by Venice is mentioned explicitly, and the same holds true for the military assistance that the king of Hungary was to lend to the Romanian ruler. Also mentioned is a possible Hungarian anti-Ottoman inroad south of the Danube.

In conclusion, these sources indicate that, while the general outcome of the sultan’s campaign north of the Danube did not prevent the reign of Vlad the Impaler from coming to an end, the actual expedition failed to achieve its original military and political goals, as Wallachia managed to remain a free Christian state, paying an annual tribute to the sultan but avoiding an Ottoman occupation and remaining outside the actual borders of the Ottoman Empire. □

Appendix

1. Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 7, senza numero, [30 luglio 1462].

Venice, 30 July 1462

Signore . . .

Questi ambasciatori del papa et de Re d’Ungaria da questa Signoria sono stati bene raccolti,/ questa Signoria non volle fare demonstrazione alcuna de subsidio gli vogla dare,/ pur io credo gli dara oltra li ducati XII milia, forse fine in XX milia, per quanto sento./ Sono venuti qua uno ambasciatore de Re de Pollana et uno altro de Re de/ Boemia, quali vengano per excitare l’altre potentie cristiane contra el Turcho,/ et dichano loro Signori volere fare de facti asay contra Turchi, et che fano/ una dreta de presente, per fare queste provixione dimostrano questi ambasciatori/ volere vignire da Vostra Excellentia, et volere andare in Franza et in/ quelli altri regni cristiani. Questa Signoria gli ha facto grande honore. . . .

De Constantinopoli sono venute dua fusta et lettere de quello bayllo ch’el Turcho ha/ honestamente susstenuto alchune nave veneziane, et fa havere l’ochio ali marcha/danti, anchora dicendo che senteno qua se armano XL gallee contra/ Turchi, et che hano intelligentia cum Re d’Ungaria, et gli dano/ adiuto et ali Valachi. Pur questa S<ignoria> tene secrete queste cosse,/ a me nulla dice, quantumque de continuo la domanda de le novelle/ del Turcho, pur l’ho de bono locho. . . .

In questa hora XX è venuto novella el Turcho esser roto et preso et morto cum XL milia Turchi/ dal Valacho et Ungari. Fine mo non ho la certeza, ma per messo proprio la mendero,/ se vera sera. . . .

Ex Venetijs, die penultimo Iulij 1462.

Fidelissimus Servus Antonius Guidobonus.

2. Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [10 agosto 1462].

Venice, 10 August 1462

Signore . . .

Como per piu altre ho scripto, el Turcho s'è retracto forte indreto, per la fame per haver/ trovato ch'el Vallacho haveva bruxato ognia cossa in le sue pianure. Etiam perche/ vide che Ungari l'andavano cum grande animo in contra, et tene molto la brigla in/ mane. Piu oltra non se ha de luy. Questa Signoria da al Re d'Ungaria ducati V milia/ el mexe a guerra finita per sussidio contra el Turcho pur el fano cum quella/ piu secreteza gli sia possibile. Se dice l'Ungari esser persone C milia in campo. . . .

Ex/ Venetijs, X Augusti 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

3. Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [13 agosto 1462].

Modon, 3 and 13 August 1462

In questo di XIII de Augusto, zonsse qui in Modon, per la via de Nepanto, un zovene Albanese/ de la Catuna de Grisumpsa del casal de Scarvinga, iurisdiction del vescovado/ de Modon, el qual narra come za tre anni el fo menado schiavo in An/drinopolli, donde luy fuza, et in zorni 16 per terra zonsse a Nepanto. Et da Nepanto, vene qui che vegneria a mancar de Andrinopolli giorni XVIII^o;/ et dice come el Signor Turco, zorni VIII avanti el fugir del dicto/ schiavo, era gionto in Andrinopolli cum copioso exercito mal in ordine,/ senza alcuna demonstration de victoria. Et che la piu parte del dicto exercito, passato per la via de Mare Maggiore, era venuto a pie per che/ per el grandissimo manchamento havuto de victualie et aqua, el forzo de soy/ cavalli de fame et sete crepono. Et quelli cavalli se pote sostegnir/ sonno menati a man cum grandissima difficulta, in modo ch'el dicto/ signore per manchamento de cavalli non poria usir in campo fin/ a tempo novo. In Andrinopoli se diceva come el dicto Signor,/ andato per longo camin dentro la Valachia, meno cum luy el fratello/ del Signor Vlacho. Et aprosimando a certo luogo dove l'exercito/ de Vlachi era reducto in certa fortezza de paludi, una nocte fu/ arsaltato per l'exercito de Vlachi. Et sono morti da la parte dove/ era

acampato el Bassa et el Bazaro de l'exercito circha XXX milia axapi,/ et altra zente per la summa de L milia Turchi, in modo che, vedendo el/ dicto Signor Turcho non haver el modo de offender el dicto Signor²⁴/ Vlacho, per esser reduto in locho forte circondato de palude, et dubitando/ de l'exercito de Hungari, el qual se aspectava in subsidio de Vlachi, fece la/ volta de Mar Magior et, cum grandissima incomodita de victualie per lo/ exercito et cavalli, loro ritorno in Andrinopoli mal in ordine, come/ è dicto. Item ch'el dicto Signor non deliberava de licentiar el dicto/ exercito suo de Andrinopoli, dubitando che Hungari non passino in Grecia./ Item dice ch'el dicto Signore dovea cavalchar per esser a Constantinopoli/ al piu presto . . .

Copia de littere del Sp<ectabile> Misser Aloysio Gabriel, rector de la Cania/ al Magnifico d<omino> Antonio Loredan, capitano in Modon, datis a 3 Augusto/ 1462 et in Modon a 13 del dicto.

Per littere de Candia de za del passato dice haver da Constantinopoli,/ de 25 del passato, per la nave del Vlacho, che era sta licenciata/ cum tute le altre che erano state retenute, dice et conferma/ esser stata grande la rotta del Turcho, et el simile esser/ gionta tuta la sua armata mal condicionata, el qual Signor/ piu che de passo era ritornato in Andrinopoli et licentiatoto tuto lo/ exercito suo, et dice havea mandato comandamento al subbassa/ de Constantinopoli armasse et aparichiasse per armare nave/ arente le fuste et galie, non dicendo per qual loco, teneno nostri/ tuti sieno zange, ma fano questo per farsse reputatione./ Atendevasse el Signore de zorno in zorno in Constantinopoli,/ a Ser Giacomo Michel havea messo li alumi aspri 30. De piu/ altro non dice che de conto sia, ne piu altro sanemo salvo/ d<on> Victore Capitano esser retornado de Levante attendeva atendo/ per veder el castello era sta facto ala bocha in Candia. La/ peste del tuto era cessata, Idio laudato.

4. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero [13 agosto 1462].*

Venice, 13 August 1462

Signore . . .

Del Turcho ce sono lettere de Corfu da quelli rectori ch'el Turcho è stato/ roto da Vallachi, et che è stata veduta la persona sua in Andrinopoli;/ pur da Petro de Thomaxi, secretario de questa Signoria, quale è presso el Re/ d'Ungaria, non se ha avixo alchuno, per il che a queste lettere de Corfu/ non se da fede maxime per questa I<llustrissima> Signoria de di in di se aspecta lettere/ dal predetto Petro. . . .

Ex Venetijs,/ XIII Augusti 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

5. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [20 agosto 1462].*

Venice, 20 August 1462

Signore . . .

Pur qua se tene la rota sia stata grande e grossa.// Del Turcho qua venano da questi lochi de la Morea et de Romania, dove questa/ I<llustrissima> S<ignoria> ha officiali de grande boxie, perche tuti parlano a voce per questi talli/ ad una voce se scrive el Turcho essere partito de la Vallachia, et andato in la Borgaria,/ e altri dice in suo paexe, et cum qualche dano havuto da Valachi, che dice che/ la fame l'a cazato, altri dice che è andato a fare piu zente cum pensare de/ retornare ala imprexa, male se intende el vero. Petro de Thomaxi, cancellario de/ questa I<llustrissima> Signoria, quale sta presso al Re de Ungaria, de questa partita non scrive/ cossa veruna, sollo scrive de la grande adunanza fa del predetto Re/ per andare contra el Turcho, et molto conforta la brigata ch'el Re spera/ de victoria per la grande zente che hara insemo, et per lo bono et grande/ animo che trova in ognuno. Pur oltra al presente qua non se ha. . . .

Ex Venecijs,/ XX augusti 1462

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

6. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [25 agosto 1462].*

Venice, 25 August 1462

Signore . . .

Del Turcho de verso Ungaria non se ha altro, ma da tuti questi altri lochi/ de Romania et de la Morea se ha ch'el s'è levato da l'imprexa contra el/ Vallacho. . . .

Ex Venecijs, XXV Augusti 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

7. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [28 agosto 1462].*

Venice, 28 August 1462

Signore . . .

Del Turcho, questa Signoria ha da ognia locho, salvo che da Ungaria, che è levato/ dal imprexa de Vallachia, e ritornato in suo paexe cum pocho honore./ Pur da Petro de Thomaxi de cio nulla se ha. . . .

Ex Venetijs XXVIII Augusti 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

8. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 8, senza numero, [31 agosto 1462].*

Venice, 31 August 1462

Signore . . .

Del Turcho intendera Vostra Sublimitate, per la incluxa copia de lettera venuta dal Baylo de/ Constantinopoli, como è levato dal imprexa del Vallacho, cum danno et cum vergogna./ El medesimo se intende da molti lochi. Questa Signoria tene ch'el Re d'Ungaria seguira/ l'imprexa per qualche tempo in le sue circostantie contra detto Turcho.

. . .

Ex Venetijs, ultimo Augusti 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

9. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 9, senza numero, [2 settembre 1462].*

Venice, 2 September 1462

Signore . . .

Mando alligata cum la presente una copia de lettera del Baylo de Constantinopoli, venuta/ a questa I<llustrissima> Signoria et quella me l'a facta dare. Intendera per essa la partita del/ Turcho et lo dano patito et l'altre conditione. La Signoria me ha dicto che/ hano el medesimo da Petro de Thomaxi, loro canzelaro presso al Re d'Ungaria,/ dice se accorda in tuto cum questa altra lettera de Constantinopoli. Non li è/ parso farmi dare copia de quella quantumque cum grande modestia/ et secondo l'uxanza la domandasse. Credo ch'el sia perche debe fare qualche/ mentione de li subsidij che dano al predetto Re, quali vogliano che siano/ secreti, perche sollevano farmelle dare tute. . . .

Ex/ Venecijs, die II Septembris 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

10. *Archivio di Stato di Milano, Archivio Ducale Sforzesco, Potenze Estere, Venezia, fascicolo 9, senza numero, [21 settembre 1462].*

Venice, 21 September 1462

Signore . . .

Del Turcho non c'è altro, salvo confirmatione de la retornata sua in Andrinopoli/ cum danno e vergogna. . . .

Ex Venetijs, die XI Septembris 1462.

Fidelissimus servus Antonius Guidobonus.

Notes

1. Ștefan Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș (Dracula): Între legendă și adevăr istoric* (Bucharest, 1976), 100–123; id., *Vlad the Impaler (Dracula)* (Bucharest, 1999), 106–127; Nicolae Stoicescu, *Vlad Țepeș* (Bucharest, 1976), 85–119; Matei Cazacu, *Dracula, suivi du Capitaine Vampire, une nouvelle roumaine per Marie Nizet (1979)* (Paris, 2004), 180–196.
2. Aurel Răduțiu, “Sur le nom de Drakula,” *Transylvanian Review* 5, 1 (1996): 101–113.
3. Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, 102.
4. Ibid.
5. Ioan Bogdan, *Vlad Țepeș și narațiunile germane și rusești asupra lui* (Bucharest, 1896), 76–82; Nicolae Iorga, *Scrisori de boieri, scrisori de domni*, 2nd edition (Vălenii de Munte, 1925), 166–170; Kurt W. Treptow, *Vlad III Dracula: The Life and Times of the Historical Dracula* (Iași–Oxford–Portland, 2000), 183–186.
6. Andreescu, *Vlad Țepeș*, 103.
7. For the general context, see Șerban Papacostea, *Geneza statului în Evul Mediu Românesc: Studii critice*, revised edition (Bucharest, 1999), 263–277.
8. Stoicescu, 107–113.
9. For the events of the entire campaign, see Eric D. Tappe, “Vlad Țepeș and the Campaign of Mehmed II,” in *Dracula: Essays on the Life and Times of Vlad Țepeș*, ed. Kurt W. Treptow (New York, 1991), 117–122.
10. Constantin Rezachevici, *Cronologia critică a domnilor din Țara Românească și Moldova a. 1324–1881*, vol. 1, *Secolele XIV–XVI* (Bucharest, 2001), 104–110.
11. Andreescu, *Vlad the Impaler*, 109–127; Stoicescu, 91–118.
12. Most of the reports (*dispacci*) he sent from Venice can be found in the Archivio di Stato di Milano (Milan State Archives, hereafter cited as ASM), Archivio Ducale Sforzesco (Sforza Ducal Archives, hereafter cited as ADS), Potenze Estere (Foreign Powers, hereafter cited as PE), Venice.
13. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 7, unnumbered, 30 July 1462; Barbu Cămpina, “Complotul turcilor și ‘răscoala’ din Țara Românească din iulie–noiembrie 1462,” in *Studii și referate privind istoria României*, pt. 1 (Bucharest, 1954), 550.
14. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 10 August 1462.
15. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 13 August 1462. *Columna lui Traian* (Bucharest) (1883): 40–41.
16. *Columna lui Traian* (1883): 39; Cămpina, 549–550; Stoicescu, 117 (with certain errors caused by the lack of access to the original document).
17. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 13 August 1462.
18. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 20 August 1462.
19. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 25 August 1462.
20. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 28 August 1462.
21. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 8, unnumbered, 31 August 1462.
22. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 9, unnumbered, 2 September 1462.
23. ASM, ADS, PE, Venice, fasc. 9, unnumbered, 21 September 1462.
24. Followed by the word Turcho, effaced.

Abstract**Italian Reports Concerning the 1462 Wallachian Campaign of Sultan Mehmed II**

The year 1462 marked a turning point in the history of Wallachia, and its repercussions were felt not only in the area of the Danube and of the Carpathians, but also in Hungary and in Western Europe. The Ottomans tried to strike a final blow against Wallachia with the help of an impressive army, roughly 100,000 strong and supported by a fleet of 25 galleons and 150 smaller vessels. In the summer and early autumn of 1462, authentic and verified news regarding the consequences of the sultan's campaign in Wallachia reached Milan, usually via Venice and originally coming from Constantinople and the Levant in general. While some elements may have differed, all reports agreed on the fact that the Ottoman army led by the conqueror of Constantinople returned in disgrace to its base south of the Danube. These sources indicate that, while the general outcome of the sultan's campaign north of the Danube did not prevent the reign of Vlad the Impaler from coming to an end, the actual expedition failed to achieve its original military and political goals, as Wallachia managed to remain a free Christian state, paying an annual tribute to the sultan but avoiding an Ottoman occupation and remaining outside the actual borders of the Ottoman Empire.

Keywords

Vlad the Impaler, Mehmed II, Antonio Guidobono, Aloisio Gabriel, Venice