



Research Article

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Relations between Albanians and Hungarians during the Middle Ages

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Abstract

In this paper, I am trying to provide some important information about the relations between Albanians and Hungarians during the Middle Ages. My research on this topic had many difficulties because in Albania there is a marked lack of either sources or studies. However, the temptation to research these relationships was not small, and I am summarizing the results of this research below. Relations between Albanians and Hungarians during the Middle Ages were mainly of two types; religious and secular (political and diplomatic). I have divided this article into three parts. In the first part it is about relations in the ecclesiastical world, while in the second part I'll bring data about political and diplomatic relations in general. And the third part will be devoted to the relationship between Scanderbeg and the Hungarian princes, especially his relationship with John Hunyadi

Keywords: Albanians, Hungarians, Medieval Monasteries, Anti-Ottoman War, Skanderbeg, Johannes Hunyadi, Diplomatic and Cultural relations

1. Introduction

Relations between Albanians and Hungarians are old and have a duration from the Middle Age until the present days. In this paper, I am trying to give a general panorama of the Albania-Hungarian relation during the Middle Age. during the Middle Ages. These relations were mainly of two types: of religious nature and secular one (political and diplomatic). Regarding religious relations, we will focus mainly on historical data from the Catholic Church and will highlight several aspects related to the ties between Albanians and Hungarians, starting from the way monasteries were built, especially Benedictine ones, and ending with common church figures such as the Hungarian dominican priest Antonius, who was bishop of Shkodra in the second half of the 14th century. In the second part of the article, we will focus on political and diplomatic relations, especially in the 13th century, which had the House of Anjou as a key factor. The Hungarian Anjou played a special political role in 13th century Albania. The third chapter of this article deals with the relationship between Skanderbeg, the national hero of the Albanians, and the Hunyadi House, focusing on Skanderbeg's relationship with John Hunyadi. After the death of Skanderbeg and Hunyadi, relations between the two peoples became rarer and with the Ottoman conquest of Albania these relations were completely interrupted.

2. Methodology

For the creation of this article, I have used archival documents, but also research of scholars, who are significant for the history of the Medieval Balkans. I have given special importance to archival documents because as primary sources, they provide us with first-hand information and are closer to the historical event. The documents that are cited in this paper belong mainly to the Archives of Ragusa, and are published by Gelcich, Talloczy, Jirecek, Sufflay and Radonic etc. I have divided my research into three main themes, the events of which are presented chronologically. So, methodologically, I have used both the thematic criterion and the chronological one for the presentation of the historical events.

3. Ecclesiastical Relations

Regarding ecclesiastical relations, I must first mention the common elements in the construction of monasteries. The medievalist Milan Šufflay means that, the monasteries of medieval Albania belonged to the type of high assembly with extensive properties, similar to the great abbeys of Hungary and Italy.¹ Here we see exchange in the culture of building² Catholic churches and monasteries. In terms of clerical relations, I mention the former in the late twelfth century. During this period is first documented the benefit of the archbishop's pallium in 1177 by Gregory, the prelate of the Church of Antibari with the help of the archbishop of Split, Lampredius (1141 / 1154-1178)³, who intervened specifically for this work in Pope Alexander III.⁴ Daniele Farlati moves this event earlier, mentioning Peter as the first archbishop of Antibari ordained by Pope Alexander II in 1162.⁵

The Dalmatian cities of Split, Zadar and Trogir were during this time under the rule of the Hungarian king Bela III, and the archdiocese of Split was also within the Hungarian kingdom.⁶ The transformation of the Church of Antibari from a bishopric to an archbishopric was a significant development for the Catholic Church in the Albanian lands because the Albanian Churches were separated from the Archbishopric of Ragusa and organized under an "Albanian Archbishopric". Antibari was in the middle of a Catholic area inhabited mainly by Albanians, and around this city were the Albanian dioceses of Dulcigno, Saucium, Shkodra, Balecium, Drivasto, Dagno, Pulatum, etc. This change was important for the Albanian Catholic dioceses because, being directly connected with Rome and being independent of Ragusa, brought them more incomes, more freedom and a stronger position in the ecclesiastical world of the Western Balkans. Hungary must have played a role in the Bishopric's independence of Antibari from Ragusa, and perhaps Hungary's intention in the independence of Antibari as archbishop was to weaken Ragusa, which was not under the Hungarian royal crown.⁷ Hungary sometimes served as a place where they found the protection of clergy from Albania and, as an example, we can mention here the bishop of Saucium, who fled because of the

¹ Milan Šufflay, 1916. "Kirchenzustände im vortürkischen Albanien", in: *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen. Unter Mitwirkung von Professor Dr. Konstantin Jireček [u. a.]. Zusammengestellt von Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy. I. Band. München/Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot 1916, 267. (Cited as: Šufflay 1916, "Kirchenzustände")*

² Idem, 217.

³ Daniele Farlati, *Illyrici Sacri. Tomus Septimus. Auctore Daniele Farlato, Presbytero Societatis Jesu, et Jacobo Coletto olim ejusdem Societatis alumno. Venetiis, MDCCCXVII. Aput Sebastianum Coleti. Superiorem permissu ac privilegio*, 17 (Cited as: Farlati 1817.)

⁴ Milan Šufflay: "Ungarisch-Albanische Berührungen im Mittelalter", in: *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen. Unter Mitwirkung von Professor Dr. Konstantin Jireček [u. a.]. Zusammengestellt von Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy. I. Band. München/Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot 1916, 296. (Cited as: Šufflay 1916: "Ungarisch-Albanische Berührungen"),*

⁵ Farlati 1817, 17.

⁶ Muhamet Mala, *Shqiptarët dhe Evropa Qendrore gjatë shekujve XII-XVII. Zagreb: Unioni i Bashkësive Shqiptare në Republikën e Kroacisë 2010, 191. (Cited as: Mala 2010.)*

⁷ Idem, 200.

Serbian king and went and found refuge in Hungary. This bishop of Saucium must have been Dominicus⁸, who was responsible for this diocese in 1199, when the king of Serbia, Stephan Dušan, was not friendly with the Catholic Church. Dominic had escaped because he was suspected of committing a murder.⁹

As a further contribution of Hungary to the Catholic Church in the Albanian lands, we can mention here the missions of the Hungarian Dominicans. In the middle of the 13th century there were many problems with schismatics and so in 1250, by Pope Innocent IV were sent Hungarian Dominicans, who were active perpetrators in the provinces of *Pulatum*, *Arbanum* and *Kunavia*.¹⁰ Their mission was to strengthen the Roman rite in these provinces, and the exact time when they set out on a mission from the Hungarian Dominican Provinces was August 8, 1250.¹¹ The Hungarian Dominicans took care of many regions of Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Albania and besides their work against schismatics; they were also active against various heresies such as the Bogomilism, who during that period had a considerable spread in those provinces.¹²

In 1278, these Dominicans built in Durazzo a convent, which was their first monastery in Albanian lands. This order also established ties with the Thopia, an important noble local family throughout central Albania. The Dominicans later settled in Shkodra and had important positions occasionally in this diocese. For example, we can mention Antonius, bishop of Shkodra in 1367 and Emanuel, bishop of this diocese in 1451, both clerics belonged to the Dominican order.¹³ In this city, in the 15th century, they had their church of St. Elijah.¹⁴

As another example of these Albanian-Hungarian ecclesiastical relations, I can further mention the case of the bishop of Shkodra, who was also vicar in Bacs, Hungary.¹⁵ Perhaps this bishop was the Dominican Father Antonius himself, who became bishop of Shkodra in 1367.¹⁶

4. Political and Diplomatic Relations

Before starting the part, which deals with the political and diplomatic events between the Albanians and the Hungarians, we want to emphasize first that the existence of the Hungarian people in the northern Balkans was of great importance in relation to the survival of the Albanians against the Slavic invasions in the early Middle Ages and later. We entirely agree with the opinion of the historian Muhamet Mala, when he concludes that;

*"The formation of Hungary as a state had a great political impact on the Balkan Peninsula because the Hungarians as a non-Slavic people, by settling in the Danube valley made impossible the unit of the southern Slavs with the northern ones (Czechs and Poles), preventing the unification of the two Slavic groups in a single one, which would surely have influenced the definitive slavization of the whole Balkans, changing the ethnic structure in favor of the Slavs and harming the Albanians, Greeks, and Romanians."*¹⁷

⁸ Farlati 1817, 292.

⁹ *Idem*.

¹⁰ Šufflay 1916, "Ungarisch-Albanische Berührungen", 296.

¹¹ Ign Lamatsch, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Dominikaner- oder Prediger-Ordens in allen Ordens-Provizen. Erstes Heft*. Znaim: Martin Hoffman 1854, 211; Mala 2010, 191.

¹² Juliane Schiel, *Mongolensturm und Fall Konstantinopels: Dominikanische Erzählungen im diachronen Vergleich*. Berlin: Akademie 2011, 61.

¹³ Farlati 1817, 310, 313.

¹⁴ Oliver Jens, *Das venezianische Albanien (1392-1479)*. München: Oldenbourg 2001, 136. (Cited as: Schmitt 2001)

¹⁵ M. Shuflaj, *Situata të Kishës në Shqipërinë paraturke. Zona e depërtimit ortodoks në "digën" katolike*. Përktheu Edmond Malaj. Shkodër: Botime Françeskane 2013, 65. (Cited as: Shuflaj 2013)

¹⁶ Farlati does not give any information, until when Antony was Bishop of this bishopric. Farlati 1817, 310.

¹⁷ "[...] formimi i Hungarisë si shtet pati ndikim të madh politik në Gadishullin Ballkanik në faktin se ata si popull joslav, me vendosjen e tyre në luginën e Danubit e bënë të pamundur bashkimin e sllavëve të jugut me ata të veriut (çekët dhe polakët), duke penguar unifikimin e dy grupeve sllave me një masë të vetme, e cila me siguri do të

In connection with political and diplomatic events, there were frequent relations in the fourteenth century, which became more intense, as the power in Hungary was taken by Anjou with Charles I.¹⁸ The city of Durazzo, which was under the rule of the Neapolitan Anjou since 1272, fell under Serbian rule in 1296, but it was conquered again by the Anjou, and this happened when Ludwig the Great (* 1326ß-†1382) was in power in Hungary.¹⁹ The citizens of Durazzo and almost all the Albanian tribes rose against the Serbian occupation, and our opinion is, that Philip of Tarentum, who held the title *despotus Romaniae et dominus Albaniae* and Count Bobincs from Vodica, also took part in these uprisings. Exactly in 1304, they were in Albania.

Philip of Tarentum, after landing in Durazzo, he was trying to restore once again the Anjouin Kingdom of Albania, which had a break from the uprisings against the Anjou at the end of the 13th century.²⁰ So the Anjous re-established their power in the Albanian territories, and they were forced again to consider the interests and the role of the local feudal lords, providing them with privileges they had enjoyed in the times of Charles's I.²¹ Philip held the title "king and chieftain of Albania".²²

As another further development of the Albanian-Hungarian relations, I can mention here the events in the "Kingdom of Arbanum (Albania)" (*Regnum Albanie*) between Durazzo and Valona.²³ These events coincide exactly at this time, and take place between the prince of Tarentum (belonging to a branch of the Anjou house) and King Ludwig. We can mention John of Gravina, prince of Achaia (1294-1336), whose principality was located exactly in the city of Durazzo. He called himself Duke of Durazzo, and in the sources he is also called John of Durazzo (*Johannes di Durazzo*), who exchanged his principality of Achaia, giving up any right over it, with the principality in the Kingdom of Albania (*Regnum Albanie*) including an amount of 5000 gold ounces.²⁴

John passed all rights to his son Charles of Durazzo (1329-1348), who later was executed (beheaded) in Aversa, by order of his cousin, the Hungarian king Ludwig the Great²⁵ because he was trying to become king of Albania, but apparently Ludwig was hindered for this by Robert Anjou, king of Sicily because he also claimed something like that.²⁶ Charles of Durazzo was married to Margaret of Naples and from this marriage, he had five children. But here I am mentioning only his youngest daughter, Margaret of Durazzo²⁷ (the same name as her mother), who in 1371 married her cousin Charles of Durazzo²⁸ and that both later became the royal couple on the throne of Hungary.

Let us go back a few years earlier to follow another development regarding the Albanian-Hungarian relations. In 1358 was made the Peace of Zadar, by which the Republic of Venice had to give up the entire eastern Adriatic coast in favor of the Anjou.²⁹ Thus, the Hungarian Anjous became

kishte ndikuar në sllavizmin definitiv të Ballkanit, duke ndryshuar strukturën etnike në favor të sllavëve dhe në dëm të shqiptarëve, grekëve dhe rumunëve." Mala 2010, 193.

¹⁸ Idem, 191.

¹⁹ Foundation for Medieval Genealogy/ Hungary Kings Genealogy. URL:http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/HUNGARY.htm#LajosI_died1382B (20. 7. 2014)

²⁰ Mala 2010, 195.

²¹ Idem. See Also: Andreas Kiesewetter, "I principi di Taranto e la Grecia (1294-1373/83)", in: *Archivio Storico Pugliese*. a. LIX, 2006, 68. (Cited as: Kiesewetter 2006)

²² Mala 2010, 195.

²³ Kiesewetter 2006, 61.

²⁴ Idem, 74.

²⁵ *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyclopädie für die gebildeten Stände*. 5. Band. Leipzig: Brockhaus 1834, 774.

²⁶ *Burime të zgjellura për historinë e Shqipërisë*. Tiranë 1969, Vol 2, nr. 69. (Cited as: Burime 1926) See also: Etleva Lala, *Regnum Albaniae, the Papal Curia, and the Western Visions of Borderline Nobility*. Central European University Department of Medieval Studies. Budapest 2008, 27. (Cited as: Lala 2008,)

²⁷ Margaret of Durazzo: 1381-1386 Queen of Naples, and 1385-1386 Queen e Hungary. See also: *The dictionary historical and critical of Mr. Peter Bayle*. Second edition. Volume 4. London 1737, 305.

²⁸ Charles II of Durazzo, King Charles III of Naples, since 1385 King Charles II of Hungary. (†1386). Mala 2010, 195.

²⁹ Milan Shuftaj, *Serbët dhe shqiptarët*. Përktheu Hasan Çipuri. Tiranë: Toena 2004, 150. (Cited as: Shuftaj 2004,)

the bearers of the Neapolitan tradition in Albania.³⁰ Ludwig the Great, on the one hand, is presented as the protector of the Catholic Church against the schismatics and as a supporter and benefactor of the noble Albanian house of the Thopia, who were experiencing an empowerment.³¹ Regarding this noble family, I can mention Dominik Thopia, who served King Ludwig I as a mediator with Ragusa.

Dominic Thopia had close ties to the Anjou family because he had been their court chaplain in Naples.³² Ludwig I rewarded Dominic for his services. He helped him to become Bishop of Korčula and later also the archbishop of Zadar.³³ Durazzo, in 1373, was under the rule of the Hungarian king. Karl Thopia, whose mother was an Anjou, had taken the city from them in 1363³⁴, but apparently, he returned it to them again.³⁵ In all these diplomatic relations with the Hungarians, Karl Thopia was assisted by his uncle, the priest Dominic Thopia.³⁶ Sometime later, in 1381 was made the Peace of Turin, by which the Republic of Venice was forced to give up the eastern Adriatic coast to the Hungarian Kingdom.³⁷ This agreement ended when George II Balsha offered to the Republic of Venice the cities of Shkodra and Drivasto in 1396. This happened after the death of Ludwig on 10th September 1382 in Trnovo.

George Thopia also handed the city of Durazzo over to the Venetians four years before the handover of Shkodra and Drivasto. These events, the surrender of Albanian cities to the Venetians, the death of Ludwig the Great, and the Ottoman threats, had just disrupted Albanian-Hungarian relations for some time. At the end of the 14th century, the other Hungarian king, Sigismund, who came to power after the death of Ludwig I, tried to restore these relations. He tried to maintain ties with Thopia Family and strengthened them with Balsha. As an example, we can mention here Sigismund corresponded with Andrea Thopia in the 30s of the 15th Century, which was held in the Slavic language.³⁸

Regarding the relations between Sigismund and the Balsha, I can mention here Sigismund efforts to make George II Balsha a prefect of the Islands Korcula and Hvar, who also obtained the title "Prince of Albania" (*Princeps Albaniae*).³⁹ But these efforts of Sigismund encountered the superiority of his rivals, the Venetians, who had already besieged Central Albania. Regarding the relations between the Balshas and Hungary, mainly limited between George II Balsha and Sigismund, several factors dictated them. First, these ties were about strengthening the alliance against the common enemies, such as Venice and the Ottoman Empire; second, the Balshas were in direct contact with the Bans of Dalmatia and Croatia, who were also under the sovereignty of the Hungarian kingdom.⁴⁰

5. Albanian-Hungarian Relations the Anti-Ottoman Resistance

Regarding the anti-Ottoman resistance, we can mention first the Battle of Kosovo on June 15, 1389. The knight who fatally wounded Sultan Murat I, is sometimes held as an Albanian named Millosh Kopili (according to Serbian historiography, a Serb named Miloš Obilić), or as a nobleman of

³⁰ Mala 2010, 196.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² Shufllaj 2004, 150; Mala 2010, 197.

³³ Shufllaj 2004, 150.

³⁴ Lala 2008, 28.

³⁵ Shufllaj 2004, 150.

³⁶ Mala 2010, 196.

³⁷ Ludwig von Thallóczy, 1916. "Die albanische Diaspora", in: *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschung. Unter Mitwirkung von Professor Dr. Konstantin Jireček [u. a.]. Zusammengestellt von Dr. Ludwig von Thallóczy. I. Band. München/Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot 1916, 303.*

³⁸ Mala 2010, 196, 209.

³⁹ Shufllaj 2004, 152-153.

⁴⁰ Mala 2010, 197.

Hungarian origin called Bilesh or Milos Kobyla.⁴¹ But the question about the origin of this person has not yet been clear, and we consider these traditions about Milosh more like legendary sources, rather than facts.

Regarding the anti-Ottoman front and the further relations between Sigismund and the Albanians, to be mentioned are here the events of 1435. Sigismund sent to the Albanian leaders Fruzhin, the son of the last Bulgarian king Shishman and a year later he sent to them an Ottoman prince named Daut Çelebi who pretended the Ottoman throne. Daut Çelebi would help the Albanians with much cavalry in their fight against the Ottomans.⁴² But all this failed because the Ottoman viceroy in Skopje, Isak Evrenos in the autumn of 1436 broke the anti-Ottoman resistance.⁴³

As another phase of Albanian-Hungarian medieval relations, I want to mention here Scanderbeg's alliance with John Hunyadi for the war against the Ottomans. They had the first contact, perhaps in 1443, when Scanderbeg was still an officer of the Ottoman Military. Scanderbeg abandoned the ottoman army in the Battle of Niš and fled with a group of 300 cavalries, most of them Albanians⁴⁴, and came to Dibra. This event must have taken place on November 3, 1443.⁴⁵ The Ottomans were defeated. After taking the castle of Kruja from the Ottomans on 28th November 1443, he openly separated from the sultan.⁴⁶ Skanderbeg's behavior in the first days of November at the Battle of Niš was not a spontaneous decision, but the result of a well-thought-out plan. We assume that Scanderbeg already knew the plans of Hunyadi and Branković; therefore, his maneuvers were quick and accurate.⁴⁷ However, some historians have reserves for the participation of Skanderbeg in the Battle of Niš. The Albanian historian Kristo Frashëri means, that Skanderbeg should not have taken part in that battle because he was the governor in Dibra and was there during that battle.⁴⁸

As a second moment of relations between Skanderbeg and the Hungarians, I can mention here further an event in 1443, when King Vladislav and John Hunyadi were getting ready to undertake a crusade against the Ottomans. An intense diplomatic activity took place, and we assume that all these developments must have been known to Skanderbeg, and he certainly must have given his contribution there.⁴⁹ The second attack wave of this crusade took place in 1444 but failed because the Serbian despot George Branković became an obstacle by not giving his military contribution to this battle⁵⁰. He made it difficult for Scanderbeg's forces to march through Serbia, as he had destroyed the passageways. As a consequence, the Christian army was severely defeated on November 10, 1444, in Varna, and the Hungarian king Vladislav was killed, while Hunyadi withdrew with his army through the steppes of Dobruđa and through Wallachia and arrived in Hungary.⁵¹

Scanderbeg had relations with John Hunyadi during the period 1448-1456, too. In Kosovo, they wanted to organize together another joint front against the Ottomans⁵². Hunyadi set out with an army of 24,000 men comprising Hungarians, Croats, Romanians, Czechs and Germans, to meet in the

⁴¹ *Idem*, 205.

⁴² *Idem*, 209.

⁴³ *Idem*.

⁴⁴ Oliver Jens Schmitt, 2008. *Skënderbeu. Shqip nga Ardjan Klosi*. Tiranë: K&B, 68. (Cited as: Schmitt 2008)

⁴⁵ *Historina e popullit Shqiptar. Vëllimi I. Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë*. Tiranë: Toena 2002, 742.

⁴⁶ Klaus-Peter Todt, 1995. "Skanderbeg", in: *Biographisch-Bibliographische Kirchenlexikon. Begr. und hrsg. von Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz. Fortgef. von Traugott Bautz. Bd X. Herzberg: Bautz*, 616. (Cited as: Klaus-Peter Todt, 1995,

⁴⁷ Schmitt 2008, 68.

⁴⁸ Kristo Frashëri, 2002. *Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu. Jeta dhe Vepra (1405-1468)*. Tiranë: Toena, 122-124. (Cited as: Frashëri 2002,)

⁴⁹ *Fjalor Enciklopedik Shqiptar*. 1985. Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave 964. (Cited as: Fjalor Encik.1985)

⁵⁰ Schmitt 2001, 296.

⁵¹ Mala 2010, 214.

⁵² Frashëri 2002, 156.

Kosovo Plain with Skanderbeg, and together they would attack the armies of Murat II.⁵³ According to a letter from Pascual de Sorigo sent to Gjergj Branković, Hunyadi's army should have been approximately 72,000 troops.⁵⁴ But the Serbian Despot Đurađ Branković did not allow Skanderbeg's troops to cross.⁵⁵ One reason that made Branković behave in this way was the close relationship he had established with the Ottoman house. Branković had become the father-in-law of Sultan Murad II. He had given Murad II his daughter Mara (or Hierina.⁵⁶) as wife.⁵⁷ Skanderbeg crossed by force through Branković's territories, and so progressed slowly and when he was near Priština, news came to him that the Christian army had lost the battle.⁵⁸ About 20 miles (ca. 32 km) from Kosovo-Field, Skanderbeg encountered the remnants of the defeated army Hunyadi's, who had fled the battlefield.⁵⁹ Hunyadi escaped through the lands of the Serbian despot, who took him prisoner, but later released him⁶⁰, after he paid a sum of 100,000 ducats.⁶¹ Until this owed compensation was settled, Hunyadi had to leave his son Ladislav, as a hostage to the despot, but then, after a solemn oath, George released him again on Christmas 1448.⁶² The Austrian orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall means that Hunyadi wouldn't have lost that battle of Kosovo if he would receive the promised help of Scanderbeg.⁶³

After this battle, the communication between these two men continued. Ragusa informs Hunyadi in a letter dated 13 August 1450 about the protection that Skanderbeg made to Kruja⁶⁴. The ties between Hunyadi and Skanderbeg did not cease until Hunyadi died of the plague on August 11, 1456, shortly after the defense of Belgrade, where he was infected.⁶⁵

After the death of the Hungarian-Croatian king Ladislav V in November 1457, Matthias Korvin, son of Janos Hunyadi, became king of Hungary. He tried several times to harmonize his anti-Ottoman actions with those of Skanderbeg.

Relations between Korvin and Skanderbeg continued because Pope Calixtus III in a letter on March 14, 1458, admonished the king Mathias to continue Hunyadi's work, expressly pointing him to Scanderbeg in Albania.⁶⁶ So, on Corvinus' orders, the Senate of Ragusa on February 24, 1459, sent an envoy to Scanderbeg, named Stupco de Nondaralba⁶⁷, and provided a ship for this purpose and the costs of this journey were taken over by the Republic.⁶⁸ However, Stupco de Nondaralba never arrived in Albania because he was stabbed during his voyage in that same Ragusan ship.⁶⁹ Another document from 18th February (1459) informs about the request to the Albanian Magister Johannes Gazulus to

⁵³ Mala 2010, 216.

⁵⁴ Idem, 217.

⁵⁵ Fan Noli, 1967. Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu 1405-1468. Tiranë: Naim Frashëri, 96. (Cited as: Noli 1967).

⁵⁶ Julius Ernest Pisko 1894, Skanderbeg, Historische Studie. Wien: Wilhelm Frick, 27. (Cited as: Pisko 1894)

⁵⁷ Frashëri 2002, 144.

⁵⁸ Idem, 161.

⁵⁹ Mala 2010, 219.

⁶⁰ Frashëri 2002, 161.

⁶¹ Mala 2010, 225, 219.

⁶² Kostandin Jireček, 2010. Historia e Serbëve. Pjesa e dytë. Shqipëroi: Elda Gjana-Boriçi. Tiranë: Shtëpia botuese "55", 226. (Cited as: Jireček 2010).

⁶³ Joseph v. Hammer-Purgstall: Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches. Band 1. Graz: Akademischer Druck und Verlagsanstalt 1963, 480.

⁶⁴ Mala 2010, 220; Burime 1926, 297.

⁶⁵ Mala 2010, 222.

⁶⁶ Schmitt 2011, 10.

⁶⁷ József Gelcich/ Lajos Thallóczy, 1887. Diplomatarium Relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum Regno Hungariae. Budapest: Kiadja A. M. Tud. Akadémia Tört. Bizottsága 1887, nr. 364 (p. 612-613.) (Cited as: Gelcich/ Thallóczy 1887)

⁶⁸ Jovan Radonić, 1942. Đurađ Kastriot Skenderbeg i Abanija u XV Beku. Beograd: Srpska Kraljevska Akademia, nr. 175, (p.106.)

⁶⁹ Schmitt 2011, 10.

make a trip to the Hungarian King Matias Korvin at the expense of the republic,⁷⁰ but we do not know how the mission of Johannes Gazulus ended. A month later, his name is mentioned again, this time as Skanderbeg's ambassador.⁷¹ But we don't learn more from this document.

On 3rd April of the same year (1459) a document of the Small Council of Ragusa talks about another ambassador of the Hungarian King who traveled to Skanderbeg and returned to Ragusa. The document mentions a sum of 10 ducats that should be handed over to this ambassador.⁷² From these documents, we do not learn what the mission of this envoy was, what messages he brought and what conversations took place.

Mathias Corvinus tried several times to coordinate his anti-Ottoman attacks with those of Skanderbeg. However, these attempts were unsuccessful.⁷³ As a significant example of these anti-Ottoman attempts by Corvinus, we can mention the planned crusade of Pope Pius II, Mathias Corvinus and Venice in 1463/64, in which Skanderbeg would also play an important role. This planned crusade against the Ottomans failed. The sudden death of the Pope on August 14, 1464, in Ancona⁷⁴, as well as the western policy of the young Hungarian king⁷⁵, can be mentioned as one of the main reasons for this failure. This was the third major attempt by Skanderbeg, in collaboration with the two Hunyadis, to launch a pincer attack against the Ottomans. According to O. Schmitt:

*"When Matthias Corvinus turned to the West after his failure in Bosnia (1464), his feud with Emperor Friedrich, receded the pressure that had always weighed on the Ottomans from the Danube: their way to the Adriatic was paved free. So, Skanderbeg paid the price for Corvin's Austrian and Bohemian dreams."*⁷⁶

However, the relationship between Scanderbeg and Matthias Corvinus does not seem to end here. After 1464, there are several sources that also prove later contacts between them. Junius Resti in his Raguzan Chronicle reports that in the summer of 1465, Sultan Mehmed II tried to invade Hungary with two powerful armies, and after setting fire to this country and destroying it with iron, he wanted to besiege Belgrade and to occupy it.⁷⁷ One of his pashas had already approached Smederevo, and not far from him, Mehmet was on his way with his eldest son. The Sultan's intention was to conquer Serbia and Jaice and to reoccupy Bosnia. He could then more easily invade Hungary, Bohemia and Dalmatia, and then advance into Italy and Germany.

Under these circumstances, Matthias Corvinus sent ambassadors to the Pope and to Scanderbeg. The friar Alexander traveled to Scanderbeg, passing through Ragusa, which commissioned the nobleman Nicoló Bona to send an envoy with him.⁷⁸ According to a document dated August 12, a certain Paladinus Lucaris was appointed to accompany Brother Alexander⁷⁹, but he

⁷⁰ Gelcich/ Thallóczy 1887, nr. 16. (p. 745).

⁷¹ Idem. (p. 746)

⁷² Idem.

⁷³ Mala 2010, 224-225.

⁷⁴ Pisko 1894, 100.

⁷⁵ Schmitt 2009, 329.

⁷⁶ "Als sich Matthias Corvinus nach seinem Scheitern in Bosnien (1464) dem Westen, seiner Fehde mit Kaiser Friedrich, zuwandte, wich der Druck, der von der Donau stets auf die Osmanen gelastet hatte: Ihr Weg an die Adria stand frei. So zahlte Skanderbeg den Preis für die österreichischen und böhmischen Träume des Corvinen." Schmitt 2009, 329.

⁷⁷ Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (Ab origine urbis usque ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae (1451-1484), digessit Speratus Nodilo. In: Monumenta spectantia Historiam, Slavorum Meridionalium. Volumen XXV. Zagabriae: Ex officinal Societatis Typographicae, 1893, 372. (Cited as: Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii 1451)

⁷⁸ Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii 1451, 372.

⁷⁹ Gjon Berisha 2018, Gjergj Kastrioti-Skënderbeu në fondet e Arkivit Shtetëror të Dubrovnikut. Dokumente. Prishtinë: Instituti i Historisë "Ali Hadri", Prishtinë 2018, nr. CCIX.

declined this task and was replaced by Marinus VI de Bona.⁸⁰

A final document regarding Skanderbeg's relations with Matthias Corvinus dates from November 13, 1466, and is about a Ragusan nobleman named Ser Paladino de Gondola, who had expressed the desire or willingness to go to the Hungarian king as Scanderbeg's ambassador. However, the Council of Rogates (*consilium rogatorum*) decides not to entrust him with this task.⁸¹ With these last contacts, not only the friendly relations between the two houses of Castrioti and Hunyadi, but also a twenty-year tradition of regional war plans slowly came to an end.⁸²

Skanderbeg's death on 17th January 1468 brought another devastating shock to the anti-Ottoman war. After Skanderbeg's death, relations between the two peoples became increasingly weak and with the Ottoman occupation of Albanian lands they were finally interrupted. According to Šufflay:

*"when in 1479 Albania completely fell into the hands of the Turks; this event had an enormous echo in Hungary. For example, in the archives of the city of Brassó are still preserved two Slavic letters addressed to the two citizens of Brassó and the council of this city. In these two letters, the Hungarian-Wallachian duke accurately announces the fall of the high Albanian castles of Kruja, Drivasto, Lissus and the complete siege of Shkodra, and he keeps this news as significant."*⁸³

The occupation of Albania by the Ottomans brought about the final interruption of all relations between the two countries and peoples.

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⁸⁰ Gelcich/ Thallóczy 1887, nr. 16. (p. 746)

⁸¹ Ibid, 780.

⁸² Schmitt 2009, 329.

⁸³ "[...]als aber im Jahre 1479 Albanien endgültig in die Hände der Türken fiel, gab es auch in Ungarn einen gewaltigen Widerhall. Im Archiv der Stadt Brassó zum Beispiel werden zwei slawische Briefe, an zwei Brassóer Bürger und an den Stadtrat gerichtet, aufbewahrt. In diesen meldet der ungarwalachische Woiwode als besonders wichtig und sehr genau den Fall der albanischen Hochburgen Kroja, Drivast, Alessio und die vollständige Zernierung Skutaris." Šufflay 1916, "Ungarisch-Albanische Berührungen", 298.

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