

# Політика

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## **MOLDOVA'S RELATIONS WITH THE GRAND DUCHY OF LITHUANIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY – BEGINNING OF THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (UNTIL THE TREATY OF LUBLAU IN 1412)**

*In the middle and second half of the 14th century, significant territorial changes took place in Central, Eastern, and Southeastern Europe. The old political structures, which by that time had outlived their usefulness, were replaced by new ones: the revived Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and the Moldavian principality. These changes took place in a fierce struggle, with confrontations on the battlefield giving way to confrontations on the diplomatic front. In addition to the above-mentioned political formations, the Hungarian king also had an important place in this struggle. Louis the Great of Anjou at one time united the Hungarian and Polish crown into his own hands, after the death of Casimir the Great Polish king who had no male offspring. The Moldovan rulers took advantage of the international political conjuncture in this space, who skillfully conducted their foreign policy based on the principle of the balance of power. First, the problem of heredity in Poland and then in the Hungarian kingdom itself undoubtedly contributed to the*

*strengthening of a still very young state that appeared in the middle of the 14th century, first as a Hungarian march, and which was tasked with moving eastward, and then as an independent state. However, at that time, every political entity had a suzerain, which gave him the right to exist. Vasal addiction varied from case to case. In turn, when such an opportunity arose, the Moldovan rulers could change their overlords based on political interest. In this, they used the strength and power of the Lithuanian princes. At first, being in allied relations with the Koriatovichs, the Moldovan rulers strengthened their state, and then, by the will of fate, they developed friendly relations with Vitovt / Alexander and tried not to spoil relations with him, participating in those planned through the Grand Duke of Lithuania. A special test for the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was the war with the Teutonic Order, which broke out in 1409. The Moldavian soldiers again took part in the Battle of Grunwald in 1410. However, the problem was that the Teutons were supported by the Hungarian king, Sigismund of Luxembourg, who wanted to return the Hungarian influence in Moldova. Thus, the Moldavian principality was drawn into the tangle of international relations in this area where the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was of great importance.*

**Keywords:** *Sigismund of Luxembourg, Kingdom of Poland, Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Moldavian principality*

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## **ВЗАЄМОСТСУНКИ МОЛДОВИ З ВЕЛИКИМ КНЯЗІВСТВОМ ЛИТОВСЬКИМ В ДРУГІЙ ПОЛОВИНІ XIV – НА ПОЧАТКУ XV ст. (ДО ЛЮБЛЯНСЬКОЇ УГОДИ 1412 р.)**

*У середині та другій половині XIV століття в Центральній, Східній і Південно – Східній Європі відбулися значні територіальні зміни. На зміну старим політичним структурам, які на цей час повністю зжили себе, з'явилися нові: відроджене Польське королівство, Велике князівство Литовське і Молдавське князівство. Ці зміни проходили у запеклій боротьбі, а протистояння на полі бою поступалися місцем протистоянь на дипломатичному фронті. Крім вище названих політичних утворень важливе місце в цій боротьбі займало і Угорське королівство. Зокрема, король Людовик Великий Анжуйський в один час одноосібно поєднав угорську і польську корону, так як у Казимира Великого не було чоловічого потомства. Міжнародною політичною кон'юнктурою на цьому просторі скористалися молдавські господарі, які вміло проводили зовнішню політику виходячи з принципу рівноваги сил. Спочатку проблема спадковості у Польщі, а потім і в Угорському королівстві безсумнівно сприяли зміцненню зовсім ще молодій держави, яке з'явилася у*

*середині XIV ст., спочатку як угорська мархія, і якій було поставлене завдання просуватися на схід, а потім як самостійна держава. Проте у той час кожне політичне утворення мало сюзерена, що давало йому право на існування. Васальна залежність варіювала від випадку до випадку. Своєю чергою, коли з'являлася така можливість, молдавські господарі могли міняти своїх сюзеренів виходячи з політичного інтересу. У цьому вони використовували силу і міць литовських князів. Будучи спочатку у союзницьких відносинах з подільськими володарями Коріатовичами, молдавські господарі зміцнили свою державу. Потім, волею долі, у них склалися дружні відносини з Вітовтом (Олександром), котрі вони намагалися не псувати. Особливим випробуванням як для Польського Королівства, та і Великого князівства Литовського стала війна з Тевтонським Орденом, яка спалахнула у 1409 р. Молдавські воїни взяли участь у Грюнвальдській битві 1410 р. у складі союзницької армії. Однак проблемою стало те, що тевтонців підтримував угорський король Сигізмунд Люксембурзький, який хотів повернути свій вплив у Молдавії. Таким чином, Молдавське князівство було втягнуто в клубок міжнародних відносин на тому просторі, де мало політичний інтерес і Велике князівство Литовське.*

**Ключові слова:** Молдавське князівство, Велике князівство Литовське, Польське королівство, Угорське королівство, міжнародні відносини, дипломатія.

The formation of Moldova in the middle of the 14th century took place in the context of complex processes in a large Central and Eastern European area. It is generally considered that after some fights against the Tatar domination in this area, a political entity was created to the east of the Carpathians – Moldova under the leadership of a voivode from Maramureş (Dragoş). The year of 1347 was proposed as the year of the formation of this entity. The first voivode of Moldavia probably ruled for 12 years, and after his death there was a first revolt against Hungarian rule<sup>1</sup>. This uprising, which took place in 1359, was suppressed. After the death of the second voivode, Sas, another revolt broke out, which was successful this time<sup>2</sup>. In his turn, the king of Hungary, Ludovic de Anjou, on February

<sup>1</sup> We consider that in the Anonymous Chronicle the statement according to which "Here came Dragoş, voivode of Maramureş after the bull to hunt and ruled for 2 years", must be corrected into "12". One of the copyists did not pass the number of tens, which in the Slavonic paleography, for the numbers from 11 to 19, is after that of the units. Then this mistake was taken over by all the copyists who instead of 12 wrote 2 years (For the Slavonic-Romanian chronicles see: SRC, 1959).

<sup>2</sup> This time the chroniclers and copyists mentioned it correctly. "And after him reigned his son, Sas voivode, for 4 years". That is, if we add to 1359/1360 four years we will have the date of a new revolt of the Moldavians against the Hungarian domination that took place in the years 1363/1364.

2, 1365, recognized himself defeated in this confrontation, confiscating Bogdan the Founder's fortunes from Maramureş and giving them to the sons of Sas, Balc and others (DRH, 1977: 80–83). The next voivode, Laţcu, faced major problems in maintaining the Moldovan state<sup>1</sup>. At that time internationally there were three potential candidates for the legacy of the Golden Horde in the area: the Kingdom of Poland, the Kingdom of Hungary and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This rivalry would eventually lead to the creation of a local political system that will establish a balance of power. In this system the rulers of Moldova will have a close collaboration with Lithuanian princes, with whom they would have a common border from the north-east.

The new lord of Moldova was in an extremely complicated situation. There was a danger of dissolving the Moldovan state and including it in the composition of its powerful neighbours. Therefore, Laţcu promised the transition to Catholicism, founded a Catholic diocese in Moldova, thus ensuring the expansionist claims of Catholic neighbours. Another component of the success was the close collaboration with the Lithuanian political circles, especially with the powerful Koriatovici family, who at that time took control of Podolia. Thus, when Kazimir the Great died in 1370, and Ludovic de Anjou ascended to the Polish throne, Laţcu was safe at least from the Lithuanians. At the same time, there were probably laid the foundations of the replacement project of Laţcu, who did not have a son, with Iurg Koriatovici to become lord of Moldavia, perhaps through his marriage to Laţcu's daughter, Anastasia (Constantinov, 2009: 145–149). Certain is that in 1374 Iurg Koriatovici was one of the candidates for the throne of Moldavia, as the Russian chronicles tell us, but in a short time he was killed, probably poisoned (PSRL, 1975: 139)<sup>2</sup>, by the locals. Even if his presence on the throne of Moldavia has aroused a whole discussion, it is certain that at least a part of the political elite in Moldavia supported the rise of Iurg Koriatovici to the throne of the country.

Despite this incident, we must mention that Moldavian-Lithuanian relations continued during Laţcu's successor on the seat of Moldavia. Petru the Muşatin was the son of Ştefan and the nephew of Bogdan I the Founder. His mother, Muşata, probably came from the Russian-Lithuanian kinsfolk with which the Moldavians were neighbours. Petru the Muşatin consolidated the Moldavian state and gave it the necessary durability to face the

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<sup>1</sup> On the founding of the Moldovan state, see (Gorovei, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> "A kniazia Jurja wziali wotochowe k sobie wojowodoiu y tarn ieho okormili".

numerous dangers that came from outside. In this regard, measures had to be taken for the political consolidation of the country in relation to the Kingdom of Hungary and the Kingdom of Poland, which at the beginning of his reign were both in the hands of Louis de Anjou. Therefore, he probably had to swear allegiance to the king. The death of Louis de Anjou, also without heirs, raised several issues in front of the two kingdoms. Vladislav Jagiello, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, ascended to the throne of Poland, while the throne of Hungary was seized on by Sigismund of Luxembourg. It was the problems he had at the beginning of his reign in Hungary that allowed Petru the Muşatin to conclude the vassalage agreement with the king of Poland, changing his status from vassal of the king of Hungary to that of the king of Poland<sup>1</sup>.

The political movements of the lord of Moldavia, in the conditions in which in Podolia was ruled by the representatives of the Koriatovici people with whom the Moldavians were in very close relations, had to consolidate the bases of the state that was still at the beginning of its existence. The fact that from the beginning he was the vassal of King Louis of Anjou, king of Hungary and Poland, of course, facilitated the passage of Peter the Muşatin in the status of vassal of the king of Poland<sup>2</sup>.

The same process was facilitated by the fact that, due to internal problems in the Kingdom of Hungary and the conflict between King Sigismund of Luxembourg and a part of the Hungarian nobility, Red Russia (Ruthenia) fell into the hands of the Poles, although until then it was ruled by a Hungarian administration. Thus, through Poland and Moldavia as its vassal, a unity of the trade route connecting the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea was ensured. This new political reality has linked more closely Moldova to Polish-Lithuanian political circles .

In 1392, the Grand Duke of Lithuania became Vitovt, who after turning to Christianity was named Alexander. From the very beginning, he held a strong position towards the decision-makers in the area, trying to occupy his own position and play the role of mediator primarily between the two kings of Poland and Hungary: Vladislav Jagiello and Sigismund of Luxembourg. Among other things, the Grand Duke became an intermediary in the Polish-Hungarian rivalry over Moldavia. In this context, the rulers of Mol-

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<sup>1</sup> "Przyiachał potym krol Jagelo do Lwowa, gdzie Piotra Hospodara Wołoskiego, gdy przy sięgę hołdownym obyczaiem z Radami swoimi pod Chorągwią koronną uczynił, w obronie przyjął, bo w ten czas Wółosi odkinown siq" (Strykowski, 1846: 448).

<sup>2</sup> On May 6, 1387, Petru Muşatinul, together with the boyars, paid homage to the Polish king (DM, 1931: 599–601).

dova knew to find the middle line to give security and stability to the lordship.

In the 90<sup>s</sup> of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a new political situation would mark the space around Moldavia and would have a direct impact on it. Then the conflict broke out between the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vitovt, and the Koriatovici people who ruled Podolia. The tendencies of duchy centralization manifested by Vitovt were struck by the natural desire of the Koriatovici people to keep their rule unhindered over Podolia. In this conflict, the lord of Moldavia, Roman I<sup>1</sup>, sided with the Koriatovici people being led by Feodor Koriatovici. The king of Hungary, Sigismund of Luxembourg, was also involved in this conflict, intending to bring Moldavia under the obedience of the kings of Hungary. He made an alliance with Feodor Koriatovici and probably obtained an oath of allegiance from Roman I. And even if we do not have information on the conclusion of such an agreement, it is very likely that there is a draft of it.

Thus, we can also explain the position towards the lord of Moldova of both the King of Poland, Vladislav Jagiello, and the Grand Duke of Lithuania Vitovt, directly involved in the conflict with Feodor Koriatovici. In the first phase, Vitovt defeated him and determined Feodor Koriatovici to flee from Podolia<sup>2</sup>. After the expulsion of Feodor Koriatovici, it was the turn of Roman I, the lord of Moldavia, who was also removed from his chair, and in his place was put Stephen I, who married Vitovt's sister, Ringala. After the ascension of Stephen I, the procedure of the oath of allegiance to the Polish king Vladislav Jagiello followed. Both the lord and the Moldavian boyars swore and promised that they would soon pay homage to vassality according to the usual procedure (DM, 1931: 609–611)<sup>3</sup>. This is an important document regarding the Polish-Lithuanian-Moldavian relations. The Mol-

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<sup>1</sup> Lord of Moldavia between 1392 and 1495. On January 5, 1393, he paid homage to the king of Poland Vladislav Jagiello (DM, 1931: 607–609).

<sup>2</sup> "Витолт на Подоле з войском литовским и руским выправился на князя Феодора Кориатовича, который з подданства и повинности великого князя литовского Витолта выбился, а скоро Витолт под Браслав Подолский притягнул, хотѣл ему Кориатовичъ з войском своим отбити его, але зараз от Витолта зостал пораженным так, же сам ледво утекл до Каменца Подолского, а Витолт з звитязством побрал замки: Браслав, Зяслав, Смотричъ, Чирвоный Городок, Бекоту, Скалу, а потым облегл Каменец Подолский, где Кориатовичъ князь подолский затворился з помощю волохов, сусѣдов своих. А гды обачили облеженци, же трудно оборонитися от Витолта, поддалися Витолтови. Там же Витолт поймал князя Феодора Кориатовича и одослал его до Вилня в вязене, а сам змѣшкал в Каменцѣ и прилучил все Подоле до князства Литовского" (PSRL, 1975: 72).

<sup>3</sup> The Moldavian boyars also promised to give up their claims on Colomeea, Snyatin, and Pocuția, leaving Jagiello the right to decide the matter on Țețina and Hmielova.

davian boyars promised to King Vladislav Jagiello that their lord, Stefan, together with his boyars would come to him and pay homage to vassalship. Probably, it is an allusion to the previous lord, Roman I, who did not go through the procedure of homage to vassality, but only promised to do so. In this case, those who did not go through the homage procedure were not considered vassals. On the other hand, probably, the worsening of the relations between Roman I and Jagiello occurred due to the latter's non-payment back the debt to Petru the Muşatin (DM, 1931: 603–606). The Moldavians promised to help against any enemy, without exception: "against the king of Hungary, against the voivode of Bessarabia<sup>1</sup>, against the Turks, against the Tartars, against the Prussians (DM, 1931: 611–615)".

Of course, the situation in Moldova confused the plans of Sigismund of Luxembourg, who was preparing for the crusade against the Turks<sup>2</sup>, and a new ally would have been very useful. Shortly after Stephen I ascended to the throne of Moldavia, Sigismund of Luxembourg organized a military campaign against the new ruler of Moldavia. The final battle took place in Ghindăuani, Neamţ county, between February 2 and 14, 1395 and ended with the defeat of the Hungarian army (Manolescu, 1965: 65–72). Historical sources are poor about the situation in the region, but the Moldovan lord probably received significant military support from Polish-Lithuanian forces, including Vitovt, who strongly strengthened his authority after the successful campaign against the Koriatovici people. According to the logic of the events, if Sigismund of Luxembourg had succeeded in the Moldavian campaign, it would follow Podolia, from where Feodor Koriatovici was expelled and found refuge with the king of Hungary and who could hardly wait to return to the chair<sup>3</sup>. Despite the success, the lord of Moldavia probably took the oath of allegiance to the king of Hungary (Tęgowski, 1993: 58), but its effect was less important, as the next year, 1396, Sigismund was defeated in the battle of Nicopolis. For his part, Vitovt understood that he could take advantage of the situation and strengthen his influence in the region by including Moldova in his own sphere of influence.

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<sup>1</sup> Mircea the Old. It is a very interesting detail from the point of view of the establishment of Sigismund of Luxembourg's allies. A few months after the battle of Vorskla in 1399, Mircea the Old dethroned Iuga and seated Alexander the Good, the son of that Roman, who was dethroned by Vitovt in 1394.

<sup>2</sup> The final battle took place on September 25, 1396, at Nicopolis and ended with the defeat of the crusading army.

<sup>3</sup> In 1415, he was still with the Hungarians and signed documents as: Dux Podoliae (Prochaska, 1914: 149).

Vitovt's success during that period led to much greater demands for the entire Eastern European space. The logic of the events leads us to the conclusion that the help and support that Vitovt gave to the lord of Moldavia in the battle of Ghindăuani was important since Stephen I sent Moldavian military contingents to participate alongside those of Vitovt and did it not only in the battle of Vorskla in 1399.

During that period, a new change of power took place in the Golden Horde, and instead of Tohtamâş, Tamerlan gave power to Timur Kutluk. Vitovt decided that he should get involved in the uprising in the Golden Horde, supporting Tohtamâş. The Russian Chronicles set out this plan as follows: "Let us go and conquer the land of the Tartars, defeat Tsar Temir Kutlui, and settle Tohtamash as tsar, and he will settle us as ruler throughout Russia" (PSRL, 1975: 75–76, 148)<sup>1</sup>. Vitovt prepared thoroughly for this war. He was also supported by the Catholic Church. Poznan's elect Wojciech Jastrzembec, sent to the pope, brought a diploma in early 1399 on the beginning of the crusade in Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Podolia and Moldavia against the Tartars who shed "so much innocent blood in these countries" (Prochaska, 1908: 120; Prochaska, 1914: 81).

The battle is known to have ended with the complete destruction of Vitovt's army. Edâghei, one of Timur Kutluk's army commanders, initially proposed to Vitovt to start negotiations to take time until Timur Kutluk himself arrived. Then they lured his army into the steppe where they surrounded it and destroyed it completely. According to further information, about a quarter of the army survived (Prochaska, 1914: 80). A detachment from Moldavia also participated on Vitovt's side, but we do not know if it was led by the Moldavian lord Stephen I himself or by someone close to him<sup>2</sup>. Of course, in the created situation, Vitovt's defeat should not be dramatized, but in the future he would have to reconsider his strategic plans, as well as to give up active politics at all levels and in all directions<sup>3</sup>.

It is assumed that the lord of Moldavia also died in the battle of Vorskla. And although it is difficult for us to comment on this issue due to the lack of accurate information, it is certain that in the same year Stephen I was replaced in the chair by Iuga, who ruled with Moldavia for several months,

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<sup>1</sup> «Poydem plenim zemlu Tatarskuiiu, pobijem cara Tymir Kutluia, posadym cara Tachtamy-sza, a on nas posadyt na wsey Ruskoy zemli».

<sup>2</sup> About the participation of the Moldavian detachment it is written, among others, in the Russian chronicles (PSRL, 1851: 251; PSRL, 1858: 72).

<sup>3</sup> "potęga Witolda urosła tak niesłychanie szybko, upadła pod jednym ciosem" (Vitovt's power increased tremendously very quickly, and fell in one swoop) (PSRL, 1851: 81).



in the second half of 1399 and the beginning of 1400<sup>1</sup>. Most likely, due to the weakening of Vitovt's positions in the region after the battle of Vorskla, the initiative was taken by Sigismund of Luxembourg, more precisely, by his vassal, Mircea the Old<sup>2</sup>. The Anonymous Chronicle of Moldavia mentions that Iuga was taken prisoner, and Alexander the Good became the new lord of Moldavia on April 23, 1400 (SRC, 1959: 5, 10).

Of course, in the new political situation, the lord of Moldavia appeared as an exponent of the policy of the king of Hungary, due to whom he came on the throne. Vitovt's defeat and the new political conjuncture were quite favorable for the king of Hungary, who could hope to regain suzerainty over Moldavia, as well as to use the Moldavian army in the fight against the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans.

However, these plans did not materialize then, and soon the situation suddenly changed. It was a natural consequence of the deadlock which both Poland and Lithuania reached after the Battle of Vorskla in 1399. In 1401, the signing ceremony of the Union between Poland and Lithuania, called the Union of Vilnius-Radom, took place in Vilnius. Vitovt was recognized as the new duke of Lithuania and received the support of Poland in the actions he would promote in the region. That was only a part of the problem. In the same year, after the revolt of the Hungarian aristocracy, Sigismund of Luxembourg was arrested. In that situation, Alexander the Good's position became extremely shaky. He could not hope for any help from his protector, and the Poles and Lithuanians could at any time take revenge and demand a change of the lord of the country.

We must keep in mind that Moldova was a relatively young state and therefore, in the absence of a political tradition, could easily be influenced by one of the powers in the region, not to mention that the very existence as a state could be endangered. For the time being, however, there was a lack of tradition of succession to the throne. These were scarcely stated in the first decades of Moldova's existence, but there was still a long way to go before they could be affirmed and confirmed. Undoubtedly, in the formation of the political tradition in the Romanian Countries, the Byzantine one (Georgescu, 1980; Pippidi, 1983). played an important role, although we

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<sup>1</sup> Several documents have been preserved from his reign. In one of them Alexandru voivod, the future lord of Moldavia, is mentioned (DRH, 1975: 11–13).

<sup>2</sup> About his reign see (Panaitescu, 1996).

must not neglect the Tartar one, which had a very important role in establishing the conception and form of power, especially in Moldavia<sup>1</sup>.

How fragile was the situation of Alexander the Good is also testified by the backstage movements that began at the same time with the defeat at Vorskla and the disappearance of Stephen I. Several contenders for the royal throne were in Poland at that time. Thus, on March 25, 1400, Petru the Muşatin's son, Ivaşco, after redeeming Roman I from captivity (DM, 1931: 617–618), promised the King of Poland, Vladislav Jagiello, and Vitovt that if he became lord of Moldavia, he would return the Country of Sipeñit to Poland<sup>2</sup> and give up the money, which his father, Petru the Muşatin, lent to Jagiello in 1388 (DM, 1931: 619–620).

It is possible that as long as King Sigismund of Luxembourg was active, no plan for the dethronement of Alexander the Good, newly seated, could be implemented. Things changed abruptly in 1401 when, after the arrest of the king of Hungary (Prochaska, 1908: 233; Kuczyński, 1987: 175; Tęgowski, 1993: 63), the situation of the lord of Moldavia worsened. It was clear that he needed to take the necessary steps to normalize relations with Poland. On March 12, 1402, in Suceava, after some preliminary preparations, of course, he swore allegiance to the King of Poland, Vladislav Jagiello. It is also interesting that if in the internal documents Alexander the Good is called "lord" (DRH, 1975: 13–16), in this document only "voivode of Moldavia". It is also suggestive that the seal attached to the act of homage is small and green, opposed to the large and red, the colour of sovereignty, which we usually get used to. The use of these elements undoubtedly sought to emphasize the Polish king's status as a subject and vassal and to convince the Poles that he was the one they should rely on at that time. All the more so as the document stated that the lord of Moldavia would "serve faithfully ... against any of his enemies, never excluding anyone" and promised "not to look for another lord besides the king of Poland" (DM, 1931: 621–622). It was not like the case of Stephen I, who enumerated all the possible enemies of the Polish king<sup>3</sup>, but the meaning, of course, remained the same. More than this, the lord of Moldova was ready to start the military campaign also against Mircea the Old, who put him in the chair. And when he stated that he would not look for another lord, the

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding the relations with the Tartars (Gonța Alexandru I., 2010).

<sup>2</sup> In all probability, this country on the border of Poland and Moldavia was a certain fief given to the lords of Moldavia to pay homage to vassalship (Tęgowski, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> See above.

reference naturally went to Sigismund of Luxembourg, king of Hungary. From the course of things, it becomes clear that Polish officials also agreed with these data on the issue. For them, it was important that the lord of Moldavia to become a vassal with "proper documents" and to pay homage to vassalship, which enshrined this status. That is why, in the created situation Alexander the Good managed to consolidate his reign and obtain recognition as a lord from the Polish king.

The status of the ruler of Moldova vis-à-vis the King of Poland gradually changed. During the ceremony of paying homage to vassalship that took place on August 1, 1404, Alexander the Great was entitled only "Pan Alexander voivode of Moldavia." Although in this case the lord of Moldavia used the big stamp and his seal was applied in red wax (DM, 1931: 625–627). Already around 1407, the relations between the lord of Moldavia and the king of Poland were very good. On October 6, 1407 (DM, 1931: 628–630), Alexander the Good once again paid homage to vassalship this time in Lviv, on which occasion negotiations were held to grant the privilege of merchants in Lviv in a year. The act of October 8, 1408, which establishes the rules of trade in Moldavia for the merchants of this city, was of enormous importance not only for the reign of Alexander the Good, but also for the entire economic history of Moldavia (DM, 1931: 630–637).

Relations with Vitovt had to be directed in the same direction, i. e. towards strengthening collaboration. We believe that it is not by chance that the homage to vassalship, in 1404, took place in Camenița. This fact had to enshrine a new political reality in which Moldavia had a well-defined place. According to the agreements signed with the both two sovereigns, the king of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, the lord of Moldavia had to give aid to both. Thus, Alexander the Good sent at Vitovt's request a military detachment to help him in a new war against the Great Prince (Cneaz) of Moscow<sup>1</sup>.

A new strain on relations between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Kingdom of Poland, on one hand, and the Teutonic Order, on the other, would also involve Moldova in this conflict. Major political forces across the European continent have been involved in this conflict in one way or another. In essence, the papacy defended the Teutons, who until recently

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<sup>1</sup> "Ouch sageten sie uns, das her czumole vil volkes habe, beide us Polen und us der Walechien und herczog Swittergail der sie der Polen hauptman, und meinen sie, das is czumole fruntlich czwischen herczog Wytowten und herczog Swittergeil stee und sie sich mit danczin trowen meinen" (CEV, 1882: 136).

fought against the last island of "paganism" on the European continent - that of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which passed to Christianity only when the issue of Vladislav Jagiello 's accession to the Polish throne arose. In the previous decades, under the slogan of the fight against the "pagans", the Teutonic Order was given the opportunity to expand its territories to the detriment of the Slavic and Lithuanian tribes. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania began rivalry with Moscow for attracting the territories inhabited by the Slavic, and the sympathies were divided sharply into two. Poland, also involved in the process of political centralization, in the first decades of the 14th century faced the rivalry of the Teutonic Order in several directions. It was the common interest in fighting the Teutonic Order that brought the two political entities closer together: the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. On the other hand, the Teutonic Order speculated on this alliance to accuse the Kingdom of Poland of collaborating with the "pagans." Thus, the Teutons obtained support from the papacy, which, although was in great crisis (the great schism in the West with the two popes) still had an important word to say in the creation of moods on the continent.

In the created situation, Sigismund of Luxembourg also spoke on the side of the Teutons, who, although he did not really intervene in the conflict, created a certain atmosphere around him, determining a certain ending that did not completely solve the existing problems . An agreement was signed between the king of Hungary and the Teutons on March 31, 1410 (Kuczyński, 1987: 175). According to it, in case of the Order's victory, Moldavia, together with Red Russia (Ruthenia) and Podolia would have passed under the authority of Sigismund of Luxembourg<sup>1</sup>. That is why the participation of the Moldavian contingents by the Polish-Lithuanian army was not only a matter of an obligation of a vassal to his suzerain, but it was also a personal interest whose stake was to maintain the throne.

On July 15, 1410, the battle of Grunwald took place. The Teutons were fighting on one side and the Polish-Lithuanian army on the other. This battle was the decisive battle of the Polish-Teutonic War of 1409–1411.

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<sup>1</sup> "Et si nos in huiusmodi litibus et gweris modo supra dicto suscitatis sew exortis aliquas terras ut sunt: terre Russie, Podolie et Moldavie, que volgari nomine minor Walachia nominatur, vel alie infidelium terre aut bona ab ipso regno Hungarie alienata aut per dictum regem Polonie ac regnum Polonie occupata et usurpata, reacquirere et reobtinere contingeret: extunc easdem terras et bona per nos taliter reacquisita et reobtentata prefato regno Hungarie restituere ac sibi de eisdem condescendere volumus et debemus et illa contra prefatum regnum Hungarie nullomodo retinere" (CES, 1891: 35–36).

Fulfilling its mission, a detachment of Moldavians fought on the side of the Poles and Lithuanians in this battle. Some researchers' opinion that the Moldavians did not take part in the Battle of Grunwald was rejected by Stefan Kuczynski (Kuczyński, 1987: 554–557). Several Prussian chronicles have been preserved mentioning the detachment of Moldavians, who fought on the Polish-Lithuanian side. There are also other sources that show the presence of Moldovans in the Polish-Lithuanian army<sup>1</sup>. Experts believe that the slowness with which Vladislav Jagiello attacked Malbork, the capital of the Teutonic Order, was the main cause of failing to obtain a complete victory over the Order. The war ended with the signing the peace at Torun on February 1, 1411, and is considered to be an advantageous peace for the Teutons due to the results of the recent war. However, as a result of the Polish-Lithuanian confrontation with the Teutonic Order, the latter lost its strategic initiative and no longer posed a danger to both the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

A new Polish-Moldavian agreement (oath of allegiance) was concluded shortly after the victory over the Teutonic Order on May 25, 1411. It was rather an anti-Hungarian treaty. The document stated that: "if the Hungarian king will go against our lord, the king of Poland ... then we will attack his country, the country of the king of Hungary ... And again if the king of Hungary would attack me, Alexander the Voievode, and my Country of Moldova, then our lord, the king of Poland is to defend us and attack the country of Hungary and do as much as he can as a lord of ours" (DM, 1931: 637–638).

This agreement strengthened even more the position of the lord of Moldova, but by the end of the year some completely unexpected things happened. Initially, on September 20, 1410, Sigismund of Luxembourg became king of Rome, which opened up special prospects for him to be elected emperor. He became a very influential person in Europe even though he had to take into account the European realities after the battle of Grunwald. The result of this battle, as well as the signing of the Peace of Torun on February 1, 1411, shaped the positions of Sigismund of Luxembourg in his relations with the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania. Vitovt tried to play a mediating role between the two kings of Poland and Hungary. Due to several field trials, an agreement, which was to end the

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<sup>1</sup> "Ouch gnediger herr meister, so hat der selbige uns gesait wie das acht hundert Walochen dem konige nochziben, und di sebbigen Walochen woren in der Mazow und czogen widdir obir Nare dem koninge von Polan nach" CEV, 1882: 1064).

open rivalry between the two, was signed between Vladislav Jagiello and Sigismund of Luxembourg in Lublau.

It seems that Sigismund of Luxembourg played an important role in diminishing the importance of victory in the Polish-Lithuanian-Teutonic War. He was interested in maintaining the Teutonic Order as an important player in the European politics, and more than this, to be in his camp. Besides this, Vitovt also benefited from the created situation. In addition to his own ambitions, the new situation gave him the opportunity to get out of his dependence on Jagiello. It seems that at the same time there appeared Vitovt's plans to obtain the crown that would have allowed him to enter the international arena as one of the equals and less as a subject of the King of Poland. Beyond the complicated situation he was in, Vitovt's ambitions and aspirations along with the traditional rivalry for Moldova of the kings of Hungary and Poland became for Alexander the Good a good reason to consolidate his status and offered him much more room for maneuver.

The meeting between the King of Poland, Vladislav Jagiello, and the King of Hungary, Sigismund of Luxembourg, in Lublau took place in unfavorable conditions for the Polish king. The last advances of the Hungarian king that have taken place recently gave Sigismund of Luxembourg much more room for maneuver. The agreement was signed on March 15, 1412, and some provisions of the treaty were in contradiction with Jagiello's interests. Two points were very important: Ruthenia and Podolia<sup>1</sup> remained in Jagiello's possession until the death of one of the signatories, and after 5 years a Polish-Hungarian commission had to decide the further destiny of this territory. As for Moldova, Sigismund recognized the Moldavian lord as vassal of Poland, but left himself the right to call him to help in the war against the Turks. If the lord of Moldova had avoided this obligation, the division of the country would have had to follow so that the Hungarians would occupy Chilia, and the Poles the Cetatea Albă. These two points in the agreement prejudiced the position of the Polish king as long as they questioned issues that had long since been definitively resolved: both the affiliation of Ruthenia and Podolia and the issue of the Polish vassal – in the case of the lord of Moldavia. The provisions of this agreement, even if they were discussed in the future, would not be implemented. On

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<sup>1</sup> Red Russia (Ruthenia) was annexed by Louis de Anjou as king of Poland to the Hungarian Crown. Queen Jadviga, as heiress of Louis de Anjou, in 1387, rejoined Red Russia to the Polish Crown. Podolia and Volynia, until the Union of Lublin in 1569, will remain part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

the other hand, these points from the treaty show once again how fragile was the political situation of Moldavia when the neighboring kingdoms were in full political expansion.

Thus, in the first decades of state existence of Moldavia there were several obstacles in its assertion in the international political arena. There was no alternative to the vassal status of one of the two powerful kingdoms of Hungary and then of Poland. Throughout this period, since the beginning of Moldavia's existence, the local Lithuanian leaders have been along with its sovereigns. Their presence in the region, the dynastic alliances with them offered the Moldavian lords the opportunity to maneuver on the international political arena. And although sometimes alliances with Lithuanian princes and the Grand Duke of Lithuania did not contribute to political stability, the vicinity of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was an important element in the balance of power in the area and contributed to the political stability and consolidation of Moldavia.

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