

WALLACHIAN DIPLOMACY DURING THE LONG WAR: MICHAEL THE BRAVE'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE KHANATE OF CRIMEA*

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I. In his memorial to the Grande Duke of Tuscany, drawn up in Vienna during February 1601, Michael the Brave devotes a whole paragraph to his relations with the Khan of the Crimean Tatars, Gazi Giray “Bora” (The Storm). Focus is here being laid on a diplomatic move of huge importance which had been rendered possible by the outbreak of a crisis between the Khan and the Porte in the autumn of 1596. The aforementioned paragraph explicitly begins with this specific moment: “And when the Sultan eventually took Agria (Eger, Erlau, Egri), his intentions were to drive the Tatar away from his lands, for the Khan had failed to come to his relief at Agria. When having returned <from Eger>, the Sultan sent the Tatar's brother to the Tatar lands, well assisted, so that he might force his brother to leave his lands...”. Quite understandably, the Romanian voivode had to squeeze into a few phrases events having taken place over almost two years. Thereby, we shall merely quote for the time being the closing section of the paragraph, in which Michael discloses the actual purpose of his efforts to approach Gazi Giray: “...and they <Khan's letters> shall speak for the sincerity of my efforts to settle such an important agreement and for the service I thus did to the whole Christianity by submitting a tyrant, the Allglorious and Almighty Khan of the Tatar lands, by making him come into obedience to the invincible Emperor of the Romans, sparing no expenditure, no money, though nurturing the hope that I shall be well repaid by the Christianity and that my expenses shall be more than doubly covered”¹. The service referred to had actually been nothing else than the luring of Gazi Giray into the coalition of the Christian powers headed by Rudolph II... The assuming of such a daring project undoubtedly deserves our full attention.

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¹ See Angelo Pernice, *Un episodio del valore toscano nelle guerre di Valacchia alla fine del secolo XVI*, in “Archivio Storico Italiano”, Series VII, t. III-2, 1925, pp. 287-288; the latest edition of the document: *Mihai Viteazul în conștiința europeană*, vol. I, *Documente externe*, București, 1982, no. 228, p. 629 (to be further abbreviated: *MVCE*). For the involvement of the Grand Duke Ferdinando I de Medici in the “Long War” (a financial contribution of 100,000 ducats in 1593; 2,300 soldiers in 1594 and 2,000 more in 1601), see Jan Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte und der “Lange Türkenkrieg” Rudolfs II. (1593–1606)*, Vienna, 1993, pp. 400-401.

Michael the Brave got wind of Gazi Giray's deposition and replacement with Feth Giray, his brother, in Alba Julia (Bălgrad, Gyulafehérvár, Karlsburg), on the occasion of his visit at the court of Sigismund Báthory which began on 29 December 1596². About the same time, to be more precise on 20 December, the news reached Jeremia Movilă, the voivode of Moldavia, as delivered to him by the two envoys he had sent to the Khan. As a matter of fact, the two were the carriers of an additional and quite meaningful verbal message. To begin with, the Khan was stating his unwillingness to further submit to the Sultan: "I shall submit instead to Poland or to Muscovy". He had also summoned to him all the Tatar leaders who had sworn an oath of loyalty to him and declared themselves well determined not to ever accept any other khan. "Now", he, the Khan, was sending messengers "to Poland and to Germany and to Hungary and to Wallachia", urging "the Christians not to make peace with them <the Turks>, for when I have sided with the Christians we shall put the fear of us into them!" On the other hand, the Moldavian voivode was being given – very naturally, in exchange for assisting the Khan – the perspective "to claim <the fortresses of> Tighina (Tehine, Bender), Cetatea Albă (Akerman) and Chilia (Kilia), for he would presently and peacefully obtain them as his own"³.

We happen very fortunately to have Gazi Giray's letter to Michael the Brave delivered by his "servant" Huseyin who had been further instructed to set out to the "King's" court in the company of a "man" of the Wallachian voivode's. The Khan begins by pointing out that in 1596 he had been ordered by the Porte to launch an attack on Wallachia and, subsequently, on Transylvania, after which he was supposed to fight his way into Hungary so as to join forces with the Ottoman troops. But he appears to have gotten wind – thanks to his friends – of a plan according to which once he had joined the Sultan's camp in Hungary, he would have been put to death, while Feth Giray would have been appointed Khan in his stead. The scheme had seemingly originated in the Sultan's strong discontent aroused by the so-called "agreement of Țuțora (Cecora)" signed during the previous autumn (22 October 1595) when he, the Khan, instead of invading

² *Monumenta Antiquae Hungariae*, IV (1593–1600), ed. Ladislaus Lukács, Rome, 1987, no. 285, pp. 255 and 257; *MVCE*, IV, București, 1986, no. 56, p. 91 and no. 61, p. 96. Concerning Michael the Brave's marching into Alba Julia on 19/29 December 1596, see *Istoria Țării Românești (1290–1690). Letopisețul Cantacuzinesc*, ed. C. Grecescu and D. Simonescu, București, 1960, p. 66. The visit ended in the morning of 6 January 1597 (*MVCE*, IV, no. 58, p. 94).

³ Ilie Corfus, *Luptele lui Mihai Viteazul cu turcii în lumina unor noi surse polone*, in the collection of studies *Mihai Viteazul*, ed. P. Cernovodeanu and C. Rezachevici, București, 1975, pp. 157-158; also see P.P. Panaitescu, *Documente privitoare la Mihai Viteazul*, București, 1936, no. 12, pp. 37-38 (Gazi Giray was still in Cetatea Albă, where he was waiting for "the frost" to come).

Moldavia, “I made an alliance with the Chancellor <Jan Zamoyski> and with the Moldavian principality”. He further explains, “For this reason I beat a retreat from your lands”. Here reference is being made to the calling off of his march into Hungary during the recently ended campaign, after the looting of the eastern parts of Wallachia by his troops and their repulsing by the voivode's army. While throwing Jeremia Movilă as a bait the possible recovery of the Moldavian fortresses the Turks had occupied, he had no hesitation as to also approaching Michael the Brave: ”And on this shores of the Danube my wish is that the land be yours”. The Khan's letter closes on a listing of the would-be allies he had already contacted or simply intended to: “I trust the voivode of Transylvania, the German King and the Tsar of Muscovy shall be on my side. There is a town or a fort which goes by the name of Azak <Azov>: from there the Russian troops shall fall upon the Turks”. The ending words of the letter, as a matter of fact, inform us that Huseyin was to continue his journey “with no further delay to the voivode of Transylvania”, - so much for the aforesaid “King” – after which he was to hastily return to the Khan⁴.

The Porte would revoke Gazi Giray's deposition soon, that is before 5/15 January 1597, when the news had already spread with the diplomatic circles in Constantinople. The swift countermand of the measure taken against Gazi Giray was attributable to the high anxiety the information concerning his preparations to front out the situation had aroused: “Which the Grand Signor hearing and fearing it would be cause of greater ‘scandalo’ and revolts, especially in this troublesome thyme, revoked his commandment”. The English ambassador Edward Barton, who had accompanied Sultan Mehemmed III during his campaign in Hungary in the autumn of 1596, cunningly remarked that the whole manoeuver – the deposition of Gazi Giray followed by his almost immediate reappointment in the leadership of the Khanate – had been little more than a “subtill solution, with hopely to bring the Prince to former dutiful obedience”⁵. In spite of the new orders issued by the Porte,

⁴ I. Corfus, *Mihai Viteazul și polonii*, București, 1938, no. XVIII, pp. 229-230 (document reprinted in *MVCE*, I, no. 39, pp. 148-149).

⁵ E.D. Tappe, *Documents concerning Rumanian History (1427–1601)*, collected from *British Archives*, London, The Hague, Paris, 1964, no. 146, p. 109; Paul Cernovodeanu, *An English Diplomat at War: Edward Barton's Attendance of the Ottoman Campaign in Central Europe (1596)*, in “Revue Roumaine d'Histoire”, t. XXVIII, 1989, no 4, p. 442. There have actually been some Polish – Tatar negotiations immediately after the agreement of Cecora (22 October 1595), mentioned in a note from Cracow dated 20 January 1596. The Holy Siege had already known about these secret negotiations on 3 April 1596, indicating that the Tatars “si mostrino malissimi contenti della tirannide turchesca”, and that they might either rebel against the Porte or refuse to further take part in the Ottoman campaigns (Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *Korespondencja Sebastiana i Valeria Montelupich*, Wrocław, Warszawa etc., 1986, no. 87, p. 103; Jan Władisław Woś, *Istruzione al cardinale Enrico*

the conflict opposing the two brothers will continue to seethe until August 1597, when Gazi Giray, through a stratagem, would eventually manage to capture Feth Giray and have him executed.

It is the context in which, during the first half of the year 1597, Gazi Giray's negotiations with Poland took place, an issue we happen to be better informed on. Therefore, as early as the first half of the month of January, the Khan's envoy – Giovanni Antonio Spinola, the scion of some ancient Genoese colonists in Crimea – was reaching Zamosć, the residence of Chancellor Jan Zamoyski. He had several talks there with a Scotsman from the Chancellor's retinue, named William Bruce. Following these discussions Bruce drew up an opuscle entitled *De Tartaris Diarium*, subsequently printed in Frankfurt in 1598. Beside confirming Gazi Giray's determination to resist the Porte, the aforementioned emissary – one of the most distinguished diplomats and counselors at the Khan's court⁶ – also pointed out the major reason which spurred his master to abandon the orbit of the Ottoman empire: their interference with the right of succession by the pushing aside of the first-born (*neglectis maioribus natu, ad quos iure successio pertinebat*) which led to unending conflicts and discord within the Khanate⁷. Clear reference is being made here to the long crisis preceding the very reign of Gazi Giray. These internal struggles (1577–1588) had actually opposed two dynastic approaches: a successoral rule deriving from the Mongol law, according to which age determined who was to replace the deceased khan, which effectively meant that the throne was devolved upon the elder among the khan's living brothers, and, on the other hand, the custom in use with the sedentary states, the Ottoman Empire included, along

Caetani per la sua missione in Polonia negli anni 1596–1597, in “Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa”, Classe di Lettere e Filosofia, Series III, t. VI-3, 1976, pp. 949-950).

⁶ For further information on him, see Ștefan Andreescu, *Génois sur les côtes de la mer Noire à la fin du XVI^e siècle*, in “Revue Roumaine d'Histoire”, t. XXVI, 1987, nos 1-2, pp. 129-131. On 24 December 1596, prince Jeremia Movilă was still waiting in Suceava for “Dzeniasko” – actually a cover name for Spinola! – “of Catholic faith, who several years ago was messenger in Sweden”. The latter had set off from the Khan – that is from Cetatea Albă, together with his men, and the Prince was wondering why he had not yet arrived (P.P. Panaitescu, *op. cit.*, loc. cit.). He is very likely to have headed directly for Zamosć.

⁷ Guilielmi Brussi Scoti, *De Tartaris Diarium*, Frankfurt, 1598, p.4. Actually the first to pinpoint this source was Carl Max Kortepeter, *Ottoman Imperialism During the Reformation: Europe and the Caucasus*, New York – London, 1972, p. 230. The same author devoted a whole paragraph in the aforementioned work to the diplomatic steps taken by Gazi Giray in 1597–1600, along the correct assumption that the Tatars, at this stage of the war, had played their “own game” (pp. 163-173). But the chronology of the various contacts and steps is blurred at times, if not even incorrect. It is actually what determined us, among other things, to rediscuss the issue in the present paper.

which the legitimate heir to the throne would necessarily be the first-born son of the departed sovereign. It was a seeming paradox that the Porte should have consistently abode by the Mongol rule of succession, which in fact served well its unabated tendency for interfering with the internal affairs of the Khanate of Crimea⁸. The 1596 episode, when the Sultan had dismissed Gazi Giray and appointed in his stead *kalgay*, that is Feth Giray, the brother of the deposed khan, dramatically brought into focus the necessity for renouncing the successoral system of nomadic extraction. In doing so, there was no other way for the Khanate than to shake off the sovereignty of the Porte and side with the Christian powers...

The offers of alliance coming from Crimea were met by the Poles with little more than coldness. Actually, the Polish Kingdom was on the verge of renewing the peace with the Ottoman Empire, in spite of all efforts energetically displayed by the pontifical diplomacy toward luring Poland into an alliance with the Holy League. For this very reason, the solemn embassy which came before the Polish Diet assembled in Warsaw between 10 February – 25 March 1597, comprising the same Giovanni Antonio Spinola and another Genoese from Crimea who claimed to be the descendent of the no less famous “House of Doria”, met with little success⁹. The only thing agreed upon was that the Polish emissary which would be subsequently sent to the Porte – Stanislaw Gulski – “should intercede” to the Sultan for Gazi Giray, “so that he <the Khan> get into his <the Sultan's> graces, being understood that he <the Khan> would treat the Emperor properly”¹⁰. No less true is the fact that at the very moment when these instructions were being issued,

⁸ See for this the discussion of Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay, *La Moscovie, l'Empire ottoman et la crise successorale de 1577–1588 dans le Khanat de Crimée*, in “Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique”, t. XIV, 1973, no. 4, pp. 454-457.

⁹ See *Elementa ad fontium editiones*, vol. XIX, Rome, 1968, no. 88, p. 96. On 1 March 1597, it was known in Cracow that, to the Diet, “oltre al primo ambasciatore del Tartaro, vi era venuto il Signor Tartaro principale con 2 senatori e con 30 gentilhuomi adomandando a'Polacchi aiuto per andar contro il Turco” (Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *op. cit.*, no. 128, p. 137). The arrival of the first messenger the aforementioned document refers to was signaled on 22 February (*ibidem*, no. 127, pp. 136-137). Cardinal Caetani, the legate, was dealing at length from Warsaw, on 15 March 1597, on the request for assistance and the offers by Gazi Giray, letting it known that, given the hesitations of the Diet, he would personally contact the leading messenger (Arhivele Statului București, *Microfilme Vatican*, Reel 12, frames 434-435). While on 21 March, at the closing of the works of the Diet, he wrote with considerable disappointment: “Del Tartaro hanno li Polacchi tenuto conto alcuno”, and the Kingdom would never decide on backing up the Khanate torn by internal conflicts against the Turks (*ibidem*, f. 440).

¹⁰ Ilie Corfus, *Documente privitoare la istoria României culese din arhivele polone (secolul al XVI-lea)*, București, 1979, no. 199, p. 385.

that is in May 1597¹¹, one of the Khan's envoys, namely Spinola, was concurrently carrying secret and apparently fruitful negotiations with nuncio Germanico Malaspina Bishop of San Severo, and this precisely in the town of Warsaw. We are well entitled to assume that he must have warranted against Gazi Giray's joining the Ottomans in their campaign due that year¹².

The Imperial Court in Prague was being informed as for the Khan's requests for assistance which had been disclosed in Warsaw on the eve of 20 March 1597¹³. The final decision reached by the Polish Diet, unfavorable to the Christian League, spurred Benedetto Mandina, Bishop of Caserta, to venture into urgently obtaining at least the “30/m scudi da dare alli Tartari per farli rimanere alle Case loro”¹⁴. All attempts by the Imperials at directly contacting the Khan Gazi Giray failed. And this was largely due to the fact that the Imperial ambassadors who happened to be in Transylvania in May 1597 and who were supposed to send off emissaries in Crimea simply found out that all the roads passing through Moldavia had been blocked by the order of Jeremia Movilă¹⁵. The latter, as it was made known in Prague on 12 May, “...non lasci passare huomo alcuno al Tartaro, ritenendo tutti quelli che ci ha mandato il Valacco”¹⁶. We should bear in mind that Michael the Brave, as the text indicates, had tried before that date to establish a direct contact with Gazi Giray, undoubtedly in answer to the letter he had received from him, that is the document we have already dealt with above.

¹¹ On 17 May it was reported in Cracow that “l'ambasciatore pollacco destinato al Granturco, era arrivato in Leopoli città di Russia <Lwów>, dove si andava mettendo all'ordine con gran pompa per sequitar'il camino alla sua ambasciata” (Danuta Quirini-Popławska, *op. cit.*, no. 134, p. 145). He would nevertheless cross the Danube, after having made his way through Moldavia, only on 4 August 1597 (Eudoxiu de Hurmuzaki, *Documente privitoare la istoria românilor*, Supplement II-1, București, 1893, no. CCXIX, p. 423).

¹² *La nunziatura din Praga di Cesare Speciano (1592–1598) nelle carte inedite vaticane e ambrosiane*, a cura di Natale Mosconi Arcivescovo di Ferrara, t. IV, Brescia, 1966, no. 91, p. 206; Claudiu Isopescu, *Documenti inediti della fine del Cinquecento*, in “Analele Academiei Române”, *Memoriile secțiunii istorice*, Series III, t. X, Bucharest, 1929, no. XCVI, p. 78. Another messenger of Gazi Giray's was about to set out to the Polish Royal Court by the end of May, after Feth Giray, defeated, had taken refuge in the Circassian lands (*ibidem*, no. XCVIII, p. 79). Cf. C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

¹³ Hurmuzaki, *Documente III-I*, București, 1880, no. CCXII, p. 280. As early as 2 March, it was known in Warsaw that in the Tatar issue, “Si pratica che vadino al servitto del Imperatore contro'l Turcho” (D. Quirini-Popławska, *op. cit.*, no. 129, pp. 138-139).

¹⁴ *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano*, IV, no. 71, p. 169 (16 April 1597).

¹⁵ Veress Endre, *Relationes nuntiorum apostolicorum in Transsilvaniam missorum a Clemente VIII (1592–1600)*, Budapest, 1900, no. 322, p. 424.

¹⁶ *La nunziatura di Praga di Cesare Speciano*, IV, no. 87, p. 198.

Nevertheless, at the beginning of July 1597, the voivode of Wallachia was quite confident that he would manage to negotiate with the Khan – despite the fact that his men had been held back in Moldavia so far – “so that the Tatars shall never leave their homes as long as this war may last”. But, he added, they would have to receive good payment for it, and he offered to cover half the sum provided, the other half was to be covered by Pope Clement VIII, Emperor Rudolph II and Sigismund Báthory of Transylvania¹⁷. It is the first clue to Michael the Brave's decision to fully assume this project. And it is to be noticed that he unabatedly pursued it not only in 1597–1598 but also later, in 1599–1600, when he took the helm of Transylvania and Moldavia. It was actually to be the only diplomatic “channel” to remain as such in the carrying on of relations between the Court in Prague and the Khanate of Crimea. For the Poles, as we shall presently see, would try to use Gazi Giray against the interests of the House of Austria within the Carpatho-Danubian space.

Emissaries of Michael the Brave's managed indeed to finally reach the Khan in the summer of 1597. Though the latter wouldn't give them permission to head back until during the second half of the month of August, that is immediately after Gazi Giray had successfully trapped Feth Giray at Caffa and had him strangled to death together with “seven others of his nephews”¹⁸. On their way back, Michael messengers were passing through Suceava on 29 August 1597. Together with them, there was also a high ranking ambassador of the Khan carrying a letter for the voivode of Wallachia whose contents happen to be known to us¹⁹. The document in question indicates that Michael had approached the Khan in order to make sure that the latter would launch no attack on Wallachia. He was also advising him to neither “pass” through Transylvania... “for the roads being so narrow”! In other words, at that very stage, the Wallachian voivode was merely trying to protect both Wallachia and Transylvania from a sudden invasion. While being well aware of the fact that the Khan had received firm orders from the Porte to give assistance to the Ottoman army which had resumed the campaign against the Habsburgs in Hungary. Gazi Giray answered that, “in a few days”, he would reach Tighina at the head of his army. He made promise to choose the road from across the Danube – through Bulgaria and Serbia, that is through the Ottoman territory! – if Michael “had sworn an oath of fidelity” to the Sultan and provided he

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, V, Brescia, 1967, no. 50, pp. 151-152; also see Ștefan Andreescu, *Michael the Brave's Relations With Poland: The Mission Undertaken by Spatharus Constantin Vorsi*, in “Revue Roumaine d'Histoire”, t. XXXII, 1993, nos 3-4, pp. 212-213.

¹⁸ They were Feth Giray's children (Angelo Pernice, *op. cit.*, p. 287).

¹⁹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, Suppl. II-1, no. CCXX, pp. 424-425. News about Gazi Giray's triumph reached Alba Iulia, coming from Moldavia, on 6 September 1597 (Radu Constantinescu, *Lupta pentru unitate națională a Țărilor Române (1590–1630). Documente externe*, București, 1981, no. 109, p. 51).

sent to Tighina an embassy supplied “with gifts”. The Transylvanian prince, Sigismund Báthory, was also to act accordingly. The “key” to the Khan's message seems to lay in the closing section of the text, where the offer for a durable peace is being made, “provided you shall look up to me”²⁰. Having successfully overcome the crisis aroused by his authority challenged internally by Feth Giray, the Khan was trying to weave his own “sphere of influence”, with the attraction of the three states from the Carpatho-Danubian area. And he was doing so under cover of re-entering the orbit of the Porte²¹...The Tatar messenger left Târgoviște well supplied with gifts by the voivode – money, sable furs and “horses which are not vicious, as well as carriages”, – on 14 September 1597²².

To get a better understanding of what followed, we shall have to dwell a little longer on the stage of the relations between Michael the Brave and the Porte during the summer and autumn of 1597. From the very beginning of that year, the Porte, while resorting to the services of Meletius Pigas, Patriarch of Alexandria and deputy of the one in Constantinople, had strived to employ Michael the Brave as a mediator for starting off peace negotiations with the Christian Emperor and his allies²³. On the other hand, both Michael the Brave and the Khan had been

²⁰ For the Latin version of the letter, see *MVCE*, V, București, 1990, no. 68, pp. 144-145; for the German one, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, București, 1903, no. CCCXXVIII, p. 287. The Tatar messenger reached Târgoviște on 4 September (*ibidem*, no. CCCCLXXVI, p. 316). Michael informed Prince Sigismund Báthory on the Khan's message on 9 September (Virginia Vasilie, *Miscellanea di piccole notizie riguardanti la storia romena dei secoli XVI-XVII*, in “Diplomatarium Italicum”, I, 1925, pp. 237-238); while the latter reported on this to Prague, where the message was received on 1 October: in answer to the Khan's summons, who had let it known that he would be arriving in Tighina on “new moon” (11 September) and required that two Wallachian boyards come before him with “gifts”, the Imperial Court advised Sigismund and Michael to keep being “neutral” as long as possible and, anyway, to mutually coordinate their actions, according to the circumstances (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-2, București, 1888, no. CCXCV, p. 259). Also see Ion Sârbu, *Istoria lui Mihai Vodă Viteazul domnul Țării Românești*, ed. D. Mioc, Timișoara, 1976, pp. 272-273.

²¹ Actually, as early as 1595 when Wallachia and Moldavia had rebelled against the Porte, Gazi Giray tried, unsuccessfully though, to persuade the Turks into allowing him to bring at least the second principality under his direct authority (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-I, Appendix, no. XXX, p. 463; E.D. Tappe, *op. cit.*, no. 130, pp. 95-96; *Cronici turcești privind Țările Române (Extrase)*, II, ed. by Mihai Guboglu, București, 1974, p. 45; III, ed. by Mustafa A. Mehmet, București, 1980, pp. 17-18). Also see C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

²² *MVCE*, I, no. 50, pp. 167-168; V, no. 70, p. 148; Radu Constantinescu, *op. cit.*, no. 111, p. 52.

²³ See E.D. Tappe, *op. cit.*, no. 151, p. 113 and, especially, no. 149, pp. 110-112 (Michael's first answer to this offer, dated 11/21 February 1597). Also see Niculae I.

summoned to take part, with their military forces, in the new expedition in Hungary headed by Saturji Mehemmed Pasha. In both cases, the orders were undoubtedly of the nature of a “test” aiming to put into light their genuine attitude toward the Porte beyond any platonic declarations of submission! Moreover, in spite of all the assurances given to Sigismund Báthory's and Michael the Brave's emissaries, the order directed to Crimea on 16 June 1597 stipulated that not only would the Tatars head for Hungary, but they would make their way precisely through both Wallachia and Transylvania²⁴... Nothing of that kind happened eventually. And here is why.

In the conflict opposing at the Porte the “hawks” to the “pigeons”, that is the adepts of pursuing the war against the League to the partisans of presently putting an end to it, the Grand Vezir Damad Ibrahim Pasha definitely sided with the second faction, a thing which made him suffer deposition and exile (3 November 1597). Insights into the episode may instruct us as to Michael the Brave's deeper game, who under cover of mediating a global Ottoman-Habsburg peace was actually laying ground for a secret agreement between himself and the Khan Gazi Giray. On 2 November 1597, three galleys returned to Constantinople bringing along letters through which the Khan was informing that he had been prevented from embarking on the campaign by counter-orders from Ibrahim who had forbidden him to “pass” through Wallachia and “go” to Transylvania (*non debba passer de Vallachia et che non debba andar in Transylvania*). Another order possibly issued by Saturji Mehemmed Pasha (*il general del campo*) was instructing him to neither lay his touch on Moldavia. Subsequently, Gazi Giray refused to further embark on the expedition, for with the going orders he did not see much use in getting his horde moved on... The Sultan's ire was aroused by the fact that Ibrahim Pasha had firmly assured him, on the other hand, that the Transylvanian prince would make peace and that Wallachian voivode would pay the tribute – neither of these things actually happened! – and so he concluded that the nonintervening of the Tatars in the two countries during that year was putting Greece and Bulgaria at risk (*a gran risigo della Grecia et Bulgaria*)²⁵. Accordingly, he immediately dismissed the Grand Vezir and appointed Hasan Pasha Hadîm (The Eunuch) in his stead.

Șerbănescu, *Legăturile patriarhului Meletie Pigas cu Țările Române*, in “Biserica Ortodoxă Română”, t. LXIV, 1946, nos 7-9, pp. 357-361.

²⁴ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, Appendix, no. XV, p. 1260; cf. Dan Simonescu, *Cronica lui Baltasar Walther despre Mihai Viteazul în raport cu cronicile interne contemporane*, in “Studii și materiale de istorie medie”, t. III, 1959, pp. 93-94.

²⁵ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. CCCCXC, pp. 325-326; also see Barton's report dated 24 Oct./3 November 1597, in which Ibrahim's dismissal is stated to have occurred on that very day (E.D. Tappe, *op. cit.*, no. 161, pp. 118-119).

The inquiry which followed, according to further news received from the Porte (5 November), seemingly indicated that “Michael the voivode bribed the Vezir”, and persuaded him to send messengers to the Khan with orders falsely attributed to the Sultan stating that the former wasn't supposed any more to head for Hungary²⁶. One thing to be held for certain is the deep implication of the Patriarch Meletius Pigas in this affair which nearly cost him his life after his own words²⁷. We have letters by Meletius Pigas addressed to Michael the Brave, dated 5 and 25 August 1597 (old style), which clearly indicate that on the request of the Wallachian voivode he had interceded to Ibrahim Pasha, who promised him that “he shall not allow the Tatars to cross your borders”²⁸. And indeed, two *kapuci* from the Porte are reported in Ploiești on 29 September 1597. They further set out to the Khan, while accompanied by the Greek “Chendir Bali” – the voivode's man –, and returned to Wallachia with a “man” of Gazi Giray's. The latter would continue his journey to Transylvania, accompanied by a *kapuci* and a few representatives of Michael, with the purpose to meet with Sigismund Báthory and negotiate with him “le cose di pace”²⁹. Quite naturally, once the Porte had sent the Khan the order “di non passare” – these are the exact words employed by the voivode in a letter to Meletius Pigas the latter would receive before 9/19 December 1593³⁰ – favorable conditions for secret negotiations with Gazi Giray were created. These are the very circumstances which actually made possible the setting out around 11 November 1597 (*circa festum divi Martini*) of a joined Wallachian-Transylvanian embassy meant to reach the “Tatar lands”. We shall presently deal with it below.

Saxon chroniclers from Transylvania, quite watchful of events taking place eastward and southward of the Carpathians and which were prone to affect their community at any time, had little to record during the year 1597 as far as Wallachia was concerned: “Valachia toto hoc anno pacata et tranquilla fuit”³¹. The respite had been created by quite an ample and intricate diplomatic game in which peace negotiations – with the involvement of both Michael the Brave and Sigismund

²⁶ C. Isopescu, *op. cit.*, no. CXXI, p. 103.

²⁷ N. Șerbănescu, *op. cit.*, p. 364.

²⁸ Its latest edition: *MVCE*, I, nos. 48-49, pp. 163 and 165. We should add that on 28 August (old style) letters arrived at the Porte from the Transylvanian prince and from Michael, with the plainspoken request that the Khan should not be permitted to enter their countries (E.D. Tappe, *op. cit.*, no. 159, p. 117).

²⁹ *MVCE*, I, no. 51, p. 170; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-I, no. LXXVI, p. 519.

³⁰ Concerning the date when the letter arrived at Constantinople, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. LXXV, p. 518 (also the note right above). For this stage of the negotiations, see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, ed. cit., p. 293.

³¹ Adolf Armbruster, *Dacoromano-Saxonica (Cronicari români despre sași – Români în cronică săsească)*, București, 1980, p. 218.

Báthory – overlapped or interfered with the separate “opening” toward the Khan Gazi Giray, which had an additional target³².

II. The joined embassy sent by Michael the Brave and Sigismund Báthory which headed for Crimea on 11 November 1597 counted Giurgiu Raț (George Rácz) and John Bernárdffy. In order to avoid crossing Moldavia they stalled at Chilia (Kilia), at the mouth of the Danube, while waiting “for a galley which would sail to the Tatar lands”. As “ships do not sail in winter”, they eventually had to rent “a galley from Chilia”. Having sailed off at last, they had to “struggle with a terrible tempest which washed us back on the very shore we had sailed from”. We are provided full details about this in a first report addressed to Michael by Raț and Bernárdffy, dated 3 April 1598, as soon as the envoys had reached Tecuci in the south of Moldavia. As an answer by the Khan, they were accompanied by a Tatar embassy headed by Hasan Aga. They were asking for an intercession to Jeremia Movilă, so that they should not be held back in Moldavia over a too long period³³. They were forced nevertheless to advance as far as Suceava, in order to reach the Moldavian voivode, and this further delay is the explanation for the fact that they only managed to be at Gherghița, in Wallachia, on 19-20 May. The news about Sigismund Báthory's abdication in favor of the Imperials they had gotten wind of in the meantime nearly made the Tatar messengers give up their mission and turn back home³⁴.

The arrival of the Tatar embassy was made known by Michael the Brave to the Imperial commissaries in Transylvania, Stephan Szuhay and Nicholas Istvánffy. This actually made them reach the decision to both head for the Court in

³² On 12 April 1598, Michael would reassert, for the use of the Imperial representatives arrived in Alba Julia, that he had the means to create a break between the Khan and the Sultan: “. . . vnnnd werde ich gelegenheit haben, so will ich den Tattarischen Cham mit dem Thurkischen Khaiser zu vnfrieden machen” (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-I, no. CCXIV, p. 284; also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, pp. 308 and 312). It was, undoubtedly a means to highlight his political profile at the beginning of his relations with the new rulers of Transylvania.

³³ Radu Constantinescu, *op. cit.*, no. 113, p. 54-55 and no. 126, pp. 59-60. Ion Sârbu pinpointed to the fact that shortly before 16 October, another emissary sent by the khan arrived in Târgoviște, bearing the title of “emir” and insisting on peace (*op. cit.*, p. 273). It had undoubtedly been the signal which determined the sending of the joint Transylvania-Wallachian embassy.

³⁴ On 18 May they were in Focșani (R. Constantinescu, *op. cit.*, no. 121, p. 58); see, especially, the documents published by N. Iorga, in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, nos. DXXXV-DXXXVIII, pp. 352-354 (Bernárdffy's letter dated 21 May confirms that he had been on his mission, together with Michael's messenger, for half a year). Michael the Brave informed the Imperial commissaries in Transylvania about the Tatar embassy through a special emissary and a letter dated 19 May (*ibidem*, no. DXXXIII, p. 351). Also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, pp. 312-315.

Târgoviște, and not only one of them as initially planned³⁵. The correspondence they carried out informs us on the commission of the embassy sent to Crimea half a year before: should peace be concluded with the Porte, Sigismund Báthory had asked that the Khan intervene to the Sultan so that he be given back the fortresses of Gyula and Timișoara (Temesvar) and the ancient borderline on the Tisa (Tisza, Theiss) and Danube be restored. But the main purpose of the embassy – “scopus totius legationis” – was to persuade the Khan to abandon the alliance with the Ottoman Empire and side with the Christian powers (*ut, si fieri posset, Tartarum ipsum a societate turcica avellere ac ad partes Christianorum deducere possent*)³⁶. We are thus provided with two versions, one of which – the talks for a would-be global peace – shall always cover up for the other...

It is exactly what Szuhay and Istvánffy would report in Prague, after the secret talks carried out on 7 June 1598 in the garden of the Metropolitan Church of Târgoviște with “the leading emissary of the Tatars”, that is with Hasan Aga. Therefore, they indicated that the public pretext for their contacts had to be the “conclusion of peace” between the Emperor and the Sultan, but their real objective was that “the Tatars remain with us”³⁷. We also happen to have the text of Gazi Giray's letter to Michael the Brave, sent on the aforementioned occasion. The Khan begins by declaring that he was accepting and appreciating the “brotherly” friendship, further adding that the only hindering obstacle to acting “according to the wish and the will of the Christians”, was a younger brother of his, held as a hostage at the Porte, whom he had twice attempted to take over, though unsuccessfully. In this matter, he requested that the Wallachian voivode “help” him with a certain amount of money, while letting him know that he would be waiting for another emissary of his, “...upon your hearing that I have reached to townlet of Silistria”³⁸. It was about the same thing Hasan Aga had said in Târgoviște to the Imperial commissaries: as long as the Khan's brother was alive and in the hands of the Turks, a mortal danger was looming over his master; for the time being, the Khan was willing to conclude the “agreement with the Christians” with Michael as a gobetween; but only when “he has seen his brother caught in his very hands, and as nothing is ever certain when it comes to the Turks, will he decide on effectively and decisively launching it”, that is the war against the Porte!³⁹ The awe the Porte was inspiring Gazi Giray, as a chief reason for which he “deliberately strives to

³⁵ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. DXLI, p. 355.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *MVCE*, I, no. 63, pp. 197-198.

³⁸ The latest edition of the Latin version: *MVCE*, V, no. 82, pp. 167-168; an Italian version, in Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. CCCXXXIV, p. 421.

³⁹ *MVCE*, I, p. 197. Cf. C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 164, who considers that the talks of June 1598 were carried out not by Hasan Aga, but by Sefer Aga and Alexander Paleologus (in Alba Julia!).

befriend the Christians and to win their favor”, was generously underlined in reports drawn up by the Imperial commissaries following the last talks they had with the Tatar emissaries in Târgoviște on 11 June, on the occasion of the farewell feast organized by the voivode in their honor⁴⁰.

The commissaries Szuhay and Istvánffy agreed together with Michael the Brave that they should begin by sending the Khan the sum of 10,000 ducats, as a gift from Rudolph II, but it was actually the Wallachian voivode who put by the due money. Well supplied with this money but “also with other gifts“, the Tatar emissaries left the princely court of Wallachia. They were accompanied by John of Pojon and – once again – by Giurgiu Raț⁴¹. In the meantime, Gazi Giray had advanced toward the Danube at the head of his army. Thereby, in the evening of 25 July 1598 John of Pojon had already reached Alba Julia. What he was saying was that Giurgiu Raț together with Tatar emissaries who were supposed to reach the Transylvanian court would be arriving soon⁴². The Khan was seizing this opportunity to let know that he would be waiting for Rudolph II's answer in Belgrade. On the other hand, here is Michael's version on the preliminary agreement with the Khan under the circumstances created by the possible appointment in the voivodeship of Transylvania of Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg whom the Tatars had to approach directly: “...the Tatar asked for a certain amount of money, pledging to wait as long as 40 days for the answer, and so he waited for 40 days in Turkish territory, for the Khan had a brother in the hands of the Sultan for whom he wanted a large amount of money, and he was eager to free him so as to have him strangled to death; and this is why he asked for

⁴⁰ *MVCE*, V, nos. 75-76, pp. 156-161 (The Khan was “fearful of losing his authority and his country”!).

⁴¹ *MVCE*, I, p. 198. The commissaries' instructions to the messengers, drawn up in Târgoviște on 10 June 1598, mainly focused on the idea that, “ut Tartaros cum christianis conglutinent ita videlicet quod vel contra Turcas insurgant, vel si id temporis huius ratio non admitteret, neque nunc neque in posterum chanus in auxilium Turcharum regno suo se moueat” (“Történelmi tár”, 1879, p. 57; also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, p. 57). But in their letter to the Khan, which must have been drawn also at that time, the commissaries were only referring to the part the Khan had assumed as mediator of a global peace. We learn from this document the full name borne by the Tatar messenger: *Hasan Celebi* (when published, the Hungarian version of this document – the only one to be left, as a matter of fact – was wrongly dated “6 December 1600”, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, IV-I, Bucharest, 1882, no. CLXXI, pp. 199-200; C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 173, without further questioning this inaccurate dating would subsequently write that by the end of 1600 “The Khan was still receiving letters from representatives of the Habsburg Emperor asking him to persist in his approaches to the Porte for the purpose of bringing a peace in Hungary”).

⁴² *MVCE*, V, no. 81, p. 166; on 11 July in Târgoviște, Michael the Brave had not yet received any reliable news from Giurgiu Raț (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. CCXXIX, p. 296).

that amount of money promised I would put by; and after having waited for 40 days, he waited for 20 more and odd. Upon seeing that the promise hadn't been kept, he set off with his men and headed for Oradea (Varad, Grosswardein) to the relief of Saturji Mehemmed Pasha⁴³. Therefore, the only thing Michael had obtained at that stage was to postpone Gazi Giray's embarking on the campaign.

In Prague though, the agreement concerning the possible nonintervening of the Tatar forces in the new Ottoman expedition aroused much suspicion and disbelief. It was feared that the Khan was merely trying to extort money without having the slightest intention to live up to his words. On 17 August news spread there that upon hearing that Archduke Maximilian of Habsburg had not yet arrived in Transylvania, the Tatar embassy recently arrived in Wallachia and counting Safer Aga and Alexander Paleologus – “natione et religione Graecus”⁴⁴ – informed Michael the Brave that, under the given circumstances, would have to follow the journey to the Imperial Court⁴⁵. By the middle of the month of August, the Khan's messengers, whom Michael the Brave's own emissary – Giurgiu Raț – had joined once more, were in Alba Julia. From there, the Imperial commissaries would subsequently send Safer Aga back to the Khan, accompanied by John Bernárdffy⁴⁶. While on 17 August, that is three days before the political turmoil aroused by the unexpected return in Transylvania of the ex-Prince Sigismund Báthory, the Tatar-Wallachian embassy was just about to leave Alba Julia and head for the Imperial lands⁴⁷. Having not managed though to do so in good time, their progress was hindered by the order of the restored prince and so it happened that they reportedly reached Vienna as late as 26 September 1598⁴⁸. They would continue their journey

⁴³ Angelo Pernice, *op. cit.*, p.288; also see Ioachim Crăciun, *Cronicarul Szamosközy și însemnările lui privitoare la români (1566–1608)*, Cluj, 1928, p. 109.

⁴⁴ N. Istvánffy, *Historiarum de rebus Ungarici libri XXXIV*, Coloniae Agrippine, 1622, p. 725.

⁴⁵ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-2, no. CCCXXV, p. 290; also see the reports dated 10 August, from Prague, which indicate that the disbelief in a possible agreement with the Khan originated in the news about the firm orders he had received to “passar a danni della Vallachia et Transilvania”, on his way to Hungary, orders he had pledged to obey (*ibidem*, no. CCCXXXII-CCCXXXIII, pp. 288-289).

⁴⁶ Concerning the instructions to John Bernárdffy, dated 13 August, see *ibidem*, III-1, no. CCXXXIII, p. 298; also see C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, XII, no. DLXXXIII, p. 379. For the date when Sigismund entered Cluj – 20 August –, see P.P. Panătescu, *op. cit.*, no. 22, pp. 57-58. On 15 August, the commissaries were signaling that Alexander Paleologus had a younger brother living at the Court of Moldavia (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. DLXXXII, p. 379). Concerning the whole family: N. Iorga, *Byzance après Byzance*, Bucarest, 1971, pp. 124-125.

⁴⁸ *Monumenta Comitalia Regni Transylvaniae*, IV, Budapest, 1878, p. 217; A. Decei, “Avvisi” riguardanti i paesi romeni negli anni 1596-1598, in “Diplomatarium Italicum”, IV, 1939, no. CCIV, p. 71.

heading to Poděbrad, where the Emperor Rudolph was to be found, reaching then Prague on 10 October 1598, while still waiting for an answer from the Imperials⁴⁹. Alexander Paleologus's interview with the Emperor had been strictly confidential, not even the Wallachian emissary, Giurgiu Raț, being allowed to attend it. It seems to us quite interesting that beside offering to mediate the global peace between the Sultan and the Emperor – a thing he had not actually been commissioned by the Porte to do! – the Khan's emissary carried out secret negotiations with the Imperial Counsellor Bartholomeus Pezzen, concerning the possibility of an open break between the Khanate of Crimea and the Ottomans and a tipping of the former into the camp of the Christian powers⁵⁰.

A chronology of the Ottoman expedition of 1598 which ended in the frustrating siege of the Fortress of Oradea – 2 October to 3 November – clearly indicates that only reluctantly and following a considerable delay did the Khan Gazi Giray join forces with the Ottoman army headed by the *serdar* Saturji Mehmed Pasha. As recorded by Ottoman chroniclers, from the moment when the army “left Belgrade”, that is on 18 June, “and until arrival of the Khan, two months passed and the expedition had run half its course”. The two armies joined hands on the plain of Beckserek (Zrenjanin), and the two commanders agreed upon a plan of action after having consulted...on 30 August 1598!⁵¹ To be only remembered that Gazi Giray had already reached the mouths of the Danube by the mouths of June⁵². It should be added that after having failed to take Oradea, Saturji

⁴⁹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-2, no. CCCXLI, p. 297.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, no. CCCXLII, pp. 297-298. On 17 October, the Archduke Maximilian was writing to the Khan from Cașovia (Kaschau, Kassa), asking him to part with the Ottomans and to beat a retreat from Hungary under the pretence of the cold weather (*ibidem*, III-1, no. CCXXXV, p. 303). The Imperial permits for Alexander Paleologus and Giurgiu Raț bear the date of 18 November 1598 (*ibidem*, no. CCXLI-CCXLII, p. 314). Also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-352, 375 and 401-405.

⁵¹ *Cronici turcești privind Țările române*, II, pp. 50-52; Mihail Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă. Izvoare narative privind istoria Europei Orientale și Centrale (1263-1683)*, București, 1977 (on the front cover: 1978), pp. 443, 445 and 447 (“A halt was made at Beckserek of 55 days and little time is left”!) Cf. C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 165, who states that “The Khan was moving quickly”...

⁵² According to chronicler Mustafa Selaniki, the Khan declared that he would embark on an expedition against Transylvania on 10 May 1598 (*Cronici turcești*, vol. I, ed. by M. Guboglu and M. Mehmet, București, 1966, p. 387). For the news about the Tatars' moves Jeremia Movilă learned of and reported from Suceava on 25 and 29 June, see Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. DLIII, p. 364 and no. DLVII, p. 368. News known to Michael is enclosed in his letters dated 30 June, 6 and 11 July (the latest edition: *MVCE*, I, nos. 64-65, pp. 205-208; V, no. 79, p. 164). From the last letter he appears to have been informed that the Tatars “are... with boats at the ford called Oblucița” and he subsequently makes it

Mehemmed would be subsequently reproached by the Porte with having lost precious time, in spite of repeated summons to make his way into Transylvania, and with having “stalled 55 days ... waiting for His Highness the Khan”⁵³.

It is quite obvious that the initial target of the Ottoman campaign of 1598 had actually been Transylvania, which had just fallen into the hands of the Habsburgs through the abdication of Sigismund Báthory (10 April). The idea along which the Porte had set the objective of the campaign is clearly pinpointed in the Ottoman chronicles. During the talks held at the Imperial Divan it had been stated that: “there is much need for embarking on an expedition against Transylvania, for until the Transylvanian lands are invaded and attacked, Wallachia and Moldavia are unlikely to be well mastered”. Accordingly, “they all agreed upon this”. Thereby, when Saturji Mehemmed left Belgrade on 18 June he was supplied with a “*hatt-i hümâyûn*” in this respect⁵⁴. The issue at stake was actually to re-establish the Ottoman control over the three states northward of the Danube, on a clear understanding that the fall of Transylvania under the authority of the Habsburgs would be likely to trigger the losing of the aforementioned territories once and for all. Only in the very last moment, that is after the war conference of 30 August which followed the long-delayed arrival of Gazi Giray was the decision reached to advance on the road which led to the fortress of Oradea and not on those leading to the fortress of Lipova (Lippa) or to the fortresses of Lugoj (Lugos, Lugosch) and Sebeș (Szászszebes, Mühlbach)⁵⁵. On the other hand, as it was being recorded in Istanbul as early as 8 August 1598, “instead of making their way through Wallachia and Moldavia”, on the scene of operations – as they surely must have been instructed to! – the Tatars “entered the lands of the Sultan, where they have been wreaking much havoc”⁵⁶.

Therefore, not only did the secret negotiations carried out with the Khan alter the route he had been instructed by the Porte to take, but, most of all, they made him stall over as long a period as two months, before joining hands with the Ottoman expeditionary troops. We should presently pinpoint the fact that Ottoman sources tally with the Romanian voivode's statement on the excessive delay of the Khan, which actually *made the whole Ottoman campaign of 1598 fall through*. For the besieging of the fortress of Oradea – for which even the Turks themselves were

known that he would lay his camp at Gherghița, to begin with 14 July (also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, pp. 344 and 346-347).

⁵³ M. Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă*, p. 455. Cf. Aurel Decei, *Istoria Imperiului otoman (până la 1656)*, București, 1978, p. 285, who inadvertently writes that it was the Tatars who waited for the Ottomans at Becskerek “for a month”.

⁵⁴ M. Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă*, p. 443; *Cronici turcești*, II, p. 50. Also see A. Decei, *Istoria Imperiului otoman*, pp. 286-287.

⁵⁵ M. Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă*, pp. 445-446; *Cronici turcești*, II, pp. 50-51.

⁵⁶ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, IV-2, no. CXLIV, p. 228.

little prepared (they were only provided with three cannons!) – took place during an inauspicious season, when “it kept raining for over 40 days”, which impeded on the operations and made the beleaguers' spirits plummet⁵⁷. To put it more clearly, one is entitled to assume that the check the Turks met with in the siege of Oradea had been an indirect consequence of the negotiations we have dealt with above. Whereas the same negotiations covering the interval 1597-1598 had sheltered the Carpatho-Danubian area from any Tatar raid, despite the orders of the Porte. Effectively, this striking force neighboring the three states, Moldavia, Wallachia and Transylvania, had been temporarily prevented to take action or at least persuaded in taking a roundabout route.

III. Shortly after the frustrating defeat at Oradea, the Khan Gazi Giray, who was still in Hungary, attempted to resume the peace talks in the name of the Sultan. On 20 December 1598, two of his emissaries, “Balgiel Maumet Aga” and “Anthonio” – or *alter vero Antho-Aga!* – who cannot but be identified with Giovanni Antonio Spinola, were arriving in Cașovia, where they nevertheless suffered a delay of one month before being permitted by Archduke Matthias to head for Vienna⁵⁸. In his answer dated 8 February, the latter stated that he would consent to the opening of negotiations with the Khan as a go-between provided a written authorization by Mehemed III was issued⁵⁹. Steps continued to be taken, as it is, during the spring and the summer of 1599, when Alexander Paleologus was twice sent by the Khan to the Imperial Court. Only on his last mission – he reached Prague on 9 August 1599 – would he be able to exhibit the document required by the Imperials. Along it, the Khan was to conclude the peace treaty with the proviso that all territories the Ottoman had conquered during the war remain as such. Tradition was being invoked for this – “*li nostri antenati non hanno mai restituito uno brazo di terra, di quello aueuano presso a forza di spada!*” – and also Islam, which forbade the Muslims to hand over places where they had previously erected houses for prayer⁶⁰. Observers in Prague noticed though that chance were slim for peace to be concluded, especially if the military operations of the Imperials continued to run a successful course, as they had until then. According to the same

⁵⁷ M. Guboglu, *Crestomație turcă*, pp. 450-451.

⁵⁸ Veress Endre, *Epistolae et acta Generalis Georgii Basta (1597–1607)*, I, Budapest, 1909, no. 147, p. 157 and no. 153, p. 161. Previously, on 15 December, they had been at Szekelyhid (= Săcuieni), where they had been interrogated by George Basta (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, Appendix, no. XXV, p. 1272).

⁵⁹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. CCLIII, pp. 327-328.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, no. CCLVIII, p. 333. On 17 April 1599, Alexander Paleologus was making it known from Pesta that he would set out the following day to Vác (Waitzen), heading for the Imperial Court (*ibidem*, VIII, București, 1894, no. CCCVI, p. 210).

observers, the military weakness the Ottomans had exhibited could hardly incite the Imperials to make peace⁶¹.

One may get an idea of how genuinely eager the Porte was so swiftly put an end to the war when also taking under consideration the additional steps it took toward obtaining the mediation of the Poles. From a letter by Sigismund III Vasa dated 24 May 1599 and addressed to Jeremia Movilă, the voivode of Moldavia, we learn that the latter had informed both the King and Chancellor Jan Zamoyski that “not only is the Sultan willing to let us reconcile him with the Christian emperor, but he had even sent a permit for the Imperial messengers”. The King wasn't though giving much credit to the Habsburgs as for their intentions: “we know little about his <Rudolph II's> plans”. And quite entitled was he to be apprehensive of his good services being refused owing to the recent political change operated in Transylvania when the enthronement of Cardinal Andrew Báthory (29 March) had practically forced the authority of the Polish Crown upon the principality. The king wrote accordingly: “following the changes which took place in Transylvania, I fear a certain amount of suspicion”⁶². Chancellor Zamoyski adopted a more straightforward position, which discouraged the Moldavian voivode in taking any such steps: “There haven't been any clues yet as for what His Majesty the Christian Emperor would have to do for this peace <to be concluded>. Therefore, I pray Your Highness to further take no decisive steps in the issue as for informing His Majesty the King”⁶³. There is but one conclusion to be reached, namely that the ending of the conflict opposing the Porte to the Christian League was for the time being detrimental to the Poles' interests... Indeed, a Habsburg-Ottoman peace at that very moment would have seriously jeopardized Chancellor Jan Zamoyski's projects and interests as for the extension of the Polish influence over the Carpatho-Danubian area which were directly drawing on a unilateral agreement with the Porte.

External preparations for appointing Cardinal Andrew Báthory – who was a Polish senator – to the voivodeship of Transylvania did not limit themselves to the renewing of the peace with the Porte and the obtaining of its consent in the

⁶¹ *Avvisi ne'quali si da Ragguaglio della rotta che ha hauto il Bassa di Tieffenpac della citta di Tergamesta, con la prigionia del Bassa, e la morte di cinque mila Turchi et la presa di 45 pezzi d'Artigliaria...*, Rome, 1599, p. 6 (it is also indicated here the date of 9 August for the return of Gazi Giray's messenger to Prague). Also see I. Sârbu, *op. cit.*, pp. 421-422 and 438-440.

⁶² I. Corfus, *Mihai Viteazul și polonii*, no. XXVIII, pp. 246-247; as a reinforcing argument, the King also adds that: “rumours have it that he <Emperor Rudolph II> is treating on this issue through the intermediary of the Tatar Khan”.

⁶³ *Idem, Luptele lui Mihai Viteazul cu turcii*, p. 162.

matter⁶⁴. The relations between Poland and the Khanate of Crimea had also a part to play, as we shall presently see. Stanislaw Gulski had requested in 1597 that the Porte intercedes to the Khan Gazi Giray so that the latter should end the Tatar raiding of the kingdom. In the letter he addressed on 6-10 November 1597 to King Sigismund, the Sultan was mentioning “Your <the Poles’> gift” which was to be sent “as before” to the Khan⁶⁵. In other words, the amount of money, referred to as a “gift” had not been paid for some time. The fact is confirmed by an excerpt from the instructions dated 8 May 1598 which had been given to the new Polish envoy at the Porte, John Felix Herburt, the very person who was to actually conclude the Polish-Ottoman treaty of 4 August 1598⁶⁶. The King was declaring on the occasion that he would “guard” the peace with the Khan, “and we shall send him the yearly gifts, provided he doesn’t raise any claims for the period which has passed, for the damage he has caused us would deserve ire and retribution rather than gifts”⁶⁷. Thereby, one cannot speak of an actual diplomatic settlement of the relations between the Royal Court in Warsaw and the Khanate of Crimea prior to the return of John Felix Herburt from the Porte⁶⁸. It may be quite profitable to dwell a little longer on this issue and make an attempt at circumscribing the date of a document

⁶⁴ Through his letter of 11 February 1599, the Sultan explicitly gave his consent for the Poles to either place in the voivodeship of Transylvania Andrew Báthory, or Ladislas Bekes who was a Polish aristocrat himself. The document also points to the fact that this agreement was rooted in the defeat the Ottomans had suffered during the previous year, a defeat the Sultan was blaming on Saturji Mehemmed Pasha, on the ground that the latter had stalled near Belgrade, waiting for Gazi Giray, and, which is more, in spite of the received orders, he had begun the besieging of Oradea instead of marching “straight into Transylvania” (idem, *Intervenția polonă în Moldova și consecințele ei asupra războiului lui Mihai Viteazul cu turcii*, in “Revista de Istorie”, t. 28, 1975, no. 4, pp. 536-538).

⁶⁵ Mustafa A. Mehmed, *Documente turcești privind istoria României*, vol. I (1455–1774), București, 1974, no. 147, p. 138; for a discussion on the date of the document, see Ștefan Andreescu, *op. cit.*, p. 209, n. 24.

⁶⁶ For the text, partially translated into Romanian, of the *Ahd-name* of Sultan Mehemmed III, dated 4 August 1598, through which he renewed the peace with Poland, *ibidem*, no. 150, pp. 142-143.

⁶⁷ I. Corfus, *Documente*, no. 200, p. 388: the Tatars claimed these “gifts” soon after the “agreement of Cecora” of 1595, but were denied them for having caused great damage to the Kingdom with their raiding, and this “on three occasions”.

⁶⁸ King Sigismund III, after the return of the messenger, informed the Polish high officials on the main clauses of the treaty, among which the ninth said: “The Khan of the Tatars will assist Poland and never harm or raid her. *He shall be given gifts*” (*ibidem*, no. 201, p. 390; underlined by us – St.A.) The decision on sending the aristocrat Kossakowski on an embassy to the Khan was reached around the date of 22 September 1598 (idem, *Mihail Viteazul și polonii*, no. XXIV, p. 238).

which is likely to provide a relevant piece of information concerning Michael the Brave.

While in Jassy on 1 January 1599, the Polish messenger Nikodim Kossakowski who had been commissioned to treat with the Khan was forced to return to Kamieniec, for a passing-by Turkish *çavus* had told his translator that Gazi Giray “wouldn't be home throughout the winter”, having received order from the Sultan to pass the winter at Beckserek, “in Hungarian lands”⁶⁹. Indeed, the siege of Oradea once lifted the Khan would only return to Crimea by the beginning of the following summer⁷⁰. Therefore, Prince Jeremia Movilă, who had managed to arrange a primary meeting between the representatives of the Tatars and the messenger Kossakowski at his palace in Suceava on 25 February 1599, was forced to admit the next day that no decision could be reached “in the absence of the Khan himself”⁷¹. We now come to the undated document we have mentioned above, which actually happens to be a letter by the Khan Gazi Giray to King Sigismund III, drawn up at “his residence of Bağçe-Saray”, that is obviously *after his return to Crimea*.

The text of the document encloses the commonly used formula of enforcing the peace: “... so that you shall know our part <to be> friendly to your friends and inimical to your enemies, as it is <stipulated> in the pre-existing oath and agreement”. And which is even more important, the document also confirms the existence of a definite Polish request for assistance, which had accompanied the

⁶⁹ P.P. Panaitescu, *op. cit.*, no. 27, p. 66.

⁷⁰ Before his deposition and replacement in his position of Grand Vezir with Damad Ibrahim Pasha (6 January 1599), Satırji Mehmed Pasha granted Gazi Giray the province Silistra as an “arpalik” (A. Decei, *Istoria Imperiului otoman*, p. 287). There is an undated letter of the Khan to Michael, in which the former informs him that he has received the Sanjak of Silistra “for passing the winter” and that he has sent there Ahmed Aga to “govern” it; but when still in his camp (*nel Campo*), he heard that the voivode has attacked the Ottoman territory on several occasions; he subsequently asks him to put an end to those actions, under the threat that otherwise he will attack him in his turn (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. CCCXXXVI, p. 422). The letter is likely to have been drawn up by the end of the spring of 1599, when the Khan had not yet returned to Crimea (see also C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169).

⁷¹ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, Suppl. II-I, no. CCLXV, p. 522. Jeremia Movilă would subsequently inform Zamoyski from Suceava on 6 May 1599 that an emissary had reached him from *kalgay-sultan*, invested with full powers to negotiate and sign the treaty with Kossakowski. But, on the other hand, another emissary had reached the Moldavian Court coming directly from Gazi Giray who, after the talks carried out in the very apartment of the Prince, was set off to *kalgay-sultan*, in Crimea (*ibidem*, no. CLXXIV, p. 527). Subsequently, on 2 June 1599, the same prince Jeremia was letting known that some 15,000 Nogay Tatars had showed up on his borders to welcome their Khan who was coming back home (*ibidem*, no. CCLXXVII, p. 532).

main approach toward settling the relations with the Khanate. Let us quote again: “Therefore, being once more, as before, unswerving and persevering in friendship and attachment and brotherly affection, we are about to come – if Allah permits – with a sufficient number of Tatar warriors, who are as swift as the morning wind in hounding the enemy. With the help of Allah, it *shall be marched upon Michael the wrong-doer, whether he goes elsewhere or makes his way into the Transylvanian lands*; the destroying and laying waste of his lands, the pillaging and the looting of his goods and provisions, the plundering and harming of his people, the unfolding of the existent power are sure to inflict on him the punishment the rightfully deserves”⁷². It is beyond doubt that the Poles had pressed for a Tatar expedition in Wallachia especially meant to paralyze Michael the Brave in his alleged prospect of marching upon Transylvania. The efforts were supposed to protect Cardinal Andrew Báthory against the reaction of the Wallachian voivode whom the Court in Warsaw had termed the Habsburgs' last “pawn” in the Carpatho-Danubian area. The closing section of Gazi Giray's letter even implies that a joint campaign for deposing Michael the Brave was under way. Prince Jeremia Movilă, said the Khan, “is as much our protégé as yours also; the defending and guarding of his honor are incumbent on us”. Moreover, “If so be it, you should instruct your servant the Chancellor <Jan Zamoyski> not to part with him and *have them both to come*” (underlined by us – Şt. A.)⁷³. To put it differently, the Tatars hadn't been alone summoned to make their way into Wallachia: the Polish-Moldavian forces were supposed to join in!

Our only clue to a more exact dating of the document is a note on its margin whose object is the “gift” in money due to close the Polish-Tatar agreement. The Poles had announced that they would send it “as soon as the roads are safe”. While the Khan now wanted it delivered “in Kameniec”, to “Djananton Ispinola the silk mercer, for he is my quick-stepped messenger”⁷⁴. There is no doubt as for the identity of the messenger himself. It is the same Giovanni Antonio Spinola, already mentioned above on several occasions, whom Gazi Giray mainly employed for diplomatically approaching Poland. He obviously seems to have also borne a Tatar

⁷² *MVCE*, I, no. 92, p. 250. The editor of the document, the Turcologist Tahsin Gemil, placed it “before October 1599”, on the ground that the words underlined by us point out that Michael had not yet embarked on his campaign in Transylvania. He thereby dated it merely *ante quem*.

⁷³ *Ibidem*. This document emitted in Bağçe-Saray, among other cues (see n. 71 above), formally pinpoints to the fact the Khan actually did return to Crimea in the summer of 1599 (Cf. C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-170, who believes that “the Khan remained in Hungary that year”).

⁷⁴ Reference made to the unsafety of the roads seems to indicate that the message might have been sent by the end of the spring, probably in May, when the talks had taken place in Suceava (see n. 71 above).

name: “Dziantimir Aga”⁷⁵. It pays to pinpoint the fact, as we happen several times on this name in two letters by Jeremia Movilă, sent from Suceava to Poland at the beginning of September 1599. The two documents inform us that on the eve of 3 September the Khan's emissaries, Dziantimir Aga and Mustafa Celebi, had arrived there with a view to exchanging the instruments for the ratification of the treaty and collecting the “gifts”. Nonetheless, the main emissary insisted, in good accordance to the received instructions, to personally carry Gazi Giray's message to the Polish Royal Court and refused to hand it over to ambassador Kossakowski⁷⁶. We are consequently entitled to chronologically place the Khan's message somewhere during the month of August 1599, while the Polish request for setting off an attack on Michael the Brave must have been made previously, during the summer of the same year. Though from the very beginning, as early as the autumn of 1598, when the Poles had first attempted to resume their relations with the Khanate of Crimea – in the spirit of the new treaty with Porte! –, it might have dawned on Chancellor Zamoycki to cooperate with the Tatar forces in order to fulfill his plans in the area of the Lower Danube.

Khan Gazi Giray did not live up to the promise he had made the Poles in August 1599, namely to march upon Michael the Brave. Having embarked once again on the campaign in Hungary, he turned about the borders of Wallachia one more time. This new refraining of his from any encroachment can be put down to the precautionary measures of the Romanian voivode who at this precise moment – so as his Transylvania project be under no restraint – had succeeded to improve his relations with the Porte. Indeed, highly reliable sources inform us that on 27 August/6 September 1599 Michael the Brave had received from the Turks a new flag appointing him in the voivodship which heralded peace on the line of the Danube. We should also add that the end of August or the beginning of September had actually been the deadline of the expedition in Transylvania aimed at Cardinal Andrew Báthory⁷⁷.

We shall not dwell any longer on the Ottoman-Tatar-Imperial peace talks held in Hungary on 11-13 October 1599. As already known, they failed largely

⁷⁵ We dealt with the issue in the paper: *Giovanni Antonio Spinola et les survivances génoises en Crimée au XVI^e siècle*, delivered in Toulouse in May 1991.

⁷⁶ Only one of these two letters is dated (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, Suppl. II-I, no. CCLXXXV, p. 544). The other one, which must be from the same period, was incorrectly dated by its publisher: “before 22 April 1599” (I. Corfus, *Documente*, no. 207, pp. 296-297). Spinola set out from Suceava heading for Poland, to see the King, on 16 September (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, Suppl. II-I, no. CCLXXXVII-CCLXXXVIII, pp. 546-547). For Gazi Giray's letter to Jeremia Movilă, see P.P. Panaitescu, *op. cit.*, no. 40, pp. 101-102.

⁷⁷ Aurel Decei and Valeriu Veliman, *Izvoare turcești despre Mihail Viteazul*, in “Revista Arhivelor”, an. LII, t. XXXVII, 1975, no. 2, pp. 24 and 34; Ștefan Andreescu, *Alți soli ai lui Mihai Viteazul*, in “Revista istorică”, t. III, 1992, nos 3-4, pp. 389-390.

through the Ottoman delegates' refusal to retrocede several fortresses previously conquered such as Eger and Hatvan⁷⁸. The Tatar-Ottoman army would advance as far as Ujvár (16 October), but the commander of the expedition (*serdar-i ekrem*), Damad Ibrahim Pasha, also Grand Vezir at that time, ordered the retreat and the siege to be lifted. An aspect we are highly interested in is that during one of the stages on the way back, that is “at the place called the swamps of Egri” – near Eger – reached on 14 November 1599, in the Ottoman camp “news spread about the invasion of Transylvania by the accursed Michael”. Several days later, on 18 November, when a halt was made at Zombor, Damad Ibrahim Pasha was delivered “a letter by a man of the aforesaid Michael, who was informing that he had conquered Transylvania and that he was unswerving in his obedience”⁷⁹.

Michael is likely to have re-established his contacts with Gazi Giray through the intermediary of the same messenger sent to Hungary. By that time, the Khan and Damad Ibrahim Pasha had split up while the former was beating a retreat to Crimea on his own. It is the only possible explanation for the fact that as early as 29 November 1599, in a letter addressed from Alba Julia to Emperor Rudolph II, Michael the Brave was exclusively dealing with the likelihood of resuming negotiations with Gazi Giray, for which he was asking the Imperial permission. After a brief survey of the previous approach which had aimed at talking the Tatars into “perting with the Turks <and> either remaining in their lands or breaking up with the Turks during the developments and the turmoil of the war and turning against them”, Michael the Brave pointed out that the “whole matter” was just about to be settled save for “the lack of a certain amount of money”. While “the forgoing of this set-off treaty” had caused much trouble, a thing the Emperor must have been well aware of when having witnessed the subsequent looting and devastating the Tatars had taken up on the scene of operations in Hungary. Now, “things being as they are, future lying ahead of us is ripe with promise as for fruitfully treating and successfully carrying out the negotiations, so that even if they <the Tatars> cannot be convinced to side with the Christians and take up arms against the blood of the common enemy”, they could at least be “bridled at home”. The Emperor was undoubtedly to take into account “the expenses and the sacrifice this incurred”, and the voivode was asking him to send the necessary money through a person invested with due authority who would not attend the negotiation in a passive way, but would also “usefully” step in his name⁸⁰.

⁷⁸ A. Decei, *Istoria Imperiului Ottoman*, pp. 287-288; C.M. Kortepeter, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁷⁹ A. Decei, *Ultimul an al lui Mihai Viteazul în viziunea documentației turcești*, in the collection of studies: *Mihai Viteazul și Sălajul (Guruslău 375)*, Zalău, 1976, p. 483.

⁸⁰ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-1, no. CCLXXXIII, pp. 363-364; *MVCE*, V, no. 118, pp. 201-202.

Political factors at the Imperial Court were actually consulted during the month of December 1599 on the Romanian voivode's proposal, but opinions were varied and grossly divergent, going as far as to pinpoint that sending the money to the Khan under the shape of a "gift" was prone to turn into a tribute-paying⁸¹. Anyway, on 3 January 1600, Michael the Brave was receiving at Alba Julia a Tatar embassy. It had been sent by Gazi Giray while "nelle Campagne di Silistra", as indicated in his only letter whose contents we happen to know of⁸². In a long letter to the Emperor in which he screens over more the negotiations of 1597–1598, Michael the Brave openly pinpointed the fact that the Khan's purposeful delay in joining hands with Saturji Mehemmed Pasha, who did not dare to further advance without this relief, had explicitly saved the fortress of Oradea in 1598: "Vade factum fuit, ut Mehemet Bassa Vezerius, qui aduentum chami expectabat, et qui sine huius viribus nihil praeclari audebat, sub initium fere autumnii et iam iam hybernii temporis seueritate ingruente Varadinum frustra obsedit". After which he seems to blame the failure of those negotiations on the Imperial representatives in Transylvania: "Quod nescio an negligentia mea, qui omnem artem et industriam quam maxima potui ad hanc rem feliciter conficiendam declaravi, aut cunctatione et imperita dominorum commissarios factum fuit". But now, having once learned the political change in Transylvania, the Khan thought it fit to send him a high-ranking messenger – *supremum suum agazonum praefectum* – to not only congratulate him and assure him of his friendship, but also secretly reiterate his previous conditions for becoming Emperor Rudolph II's ally. Michael requested that the Emperor send him with no further delay a messenger fully instructed and invested with powers who would continue his journey from Transylvania to the Khan, accompanied by a man of his⁸³.

Once again, the Imperial Court displayed indecision and slowness in taking action, a fact which laid its imprint on the developments. On 3 February 1600, answer was being given that the Emperor "would team somebody with those who

⁸¹ *MCRT*, IV, p. 457; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, pp. 523 and 538-539. This approach was actually due to the first embassy of Michael after he had conquered Transylvania, who, among others, also inquired on the position adopted in the Tatar issue.

⁸² Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, III-I, no. CCCXXXV, p. 422; the Khan was asking Michael to free Ali Pasha, Hajdar Pasha's son, captured during the autumn of 1595 on the occasion of the battle for reconquering the fortress Târgoviște and subsequently transported to Transylvania (also see *Letopiseful Cantacuzinesc*, ed. cit., pp. 62-63).

⁸³ *MCRT*, IV, no. XXX/a, pp. 469-472; Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. CMXXVIII, pp. 578-579. During the same day, through a special letter, Michael was asking Rudolph II to intercede for the setting free of Ali Pasha, who now was locked up in the fortress Hust (Huszt) (*MCRT*, IV, no. XXX/b, p. 472). And, there is another report by the imperial emissary Giovanni de'Marini Poli who deals at length with the Tatar embassy also dated 3 January (*MVCE*, I, no. 127, pp. 355-356).

are sent by His Highness the Voivode” to the Khan Gazi Giray, and who were supposed to treat with the latter “under specific terms”, for “not fighting against His Holy Majesty”⁸⁴. As it can be seen, no firm commitment as for the sum of money which, undoubtedly, had to be thrown into the game. While the responsibility for the negotiations was actually devolved upon the voivode... Under the given circumstances, on 28 April 1600 in Făgăraș (Fogaras, Fogarasch), the Romanian Prince was writing to counselor Bartholomeus Pezzen whom he was expecting for starting off the negotiations which were to acknowledge his authority over Transylvania: “..The Tatars' messenger reached us these days with letters, and he is still here and he talks and makes proposals favorable in all respects, may the faithfulness he should have be unwavering. In order to win the Tatar Khan over with some gift, we assiduously entreat Your Illustrious and Magnificent Highness to bring along ten or even twenty thousand gold ducats that we might offer him”⁸⁵.

Nevertheless, Bartholomeus Pezzen did not show up in Transylvania any earlier than at the beginning of July 1600. In the meantime, Michael the Brave had already taken the next step, embarking on his successful expedition in Moldavia. News recorded in Vienna on 12 July 1600 informs us that in his newly acquired quality of concomitant ruler over the third state in the area of the Lower Danube he “has sent an embassy to the Tatars supplied with a great deal of money, with sheep, honey, butter and horses, as well as with the tribute Prince Jeremia Movilă had put by”, (for the Khan)⁸⁶. This seems to be the last contact between the Romanian voivode and the Khan Gazi Giray. For further news from 6 August 1600 confirms that “the messenger sent by the voivode Michael to the Khan of the Tatars in order to maintain peace was captured by the Poles on his way back from the Khan of the Tatars and was sent to the Emperor of the Turks”. Additionally, it is the very time when an Imperial messenger is mentioned to have been ready to set out to Crimea⁸⁷... Events which came tumbling rapidly one upon another over the weeks and months to follow and during which the Khan Gazi Giray officially sided with the Polish-Ottoman “axis”, quite understandably, brought the dialogue to an abrupt stop.

⁸⁴ *MVCE*, I, no. 142, pp. 389 and 393 (translation into Old Romanian).

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, no. 168, p. 475; another edition: Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, IV-I, no. XXIV, p. 44.

⁸⁶ A. Veress, *Documente privitoare la istoria Ardealului, Moldovei și Țării Românești*, VI, București, 1933, no. 137, p. 144.

⁸⁷ Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. MCCCXII, p. 991; *MVCE*, V, no. 206, p. 296. The messenger who was to set out to Crimea was Aloisio Radibrat from Ragusa. He reached the Court in Alba Julia by the end of July and reported subsequently Michael the Brave's great discontent at his ... only carrying six silver goblets as a “gift” for the Khan! (Hurmuzaki, *Documente*, XII, no. MCCCXV, pp. 982-983).

It should be nevertheless noticed that although having declared that he would march his hords upon Michael the Brave, the Khan stalled. He postponed his move until late in the autumn, under the cover of waiting until “the earth will freeze and ice will form” on the rivers⁸⁸. He actually wanted – in our opinion – to make sure that the Romanian voivode would be able to front out the situation by himself, and withstand the conjoint attack by the Polish and Ottoman forces. This leads us to the assumption that a certain phrasing in the summon King Sigismund III Vasa sent Gazy Giray from Warsaw on 10 July 1600, in order to make his position clear, was verified by the developments to follow. We quote: Michael the Brave “took the Lands of Bogdania <Moldavia> under his rulership, occupying the country, forced its inhabitants into submission, and is about to also invade our lands, deluding everybody, pretending that in doing all this he confides in Your favor and support, that he is receiving your messengers and sending you his, so that he may reach an agreement with you on the issue”⁸⁹. Gazi Giray's absence from the Polish-Ottoman war effort in the Carpatho-Danubian area during the autumn of 1600 bears out *a posteriori* the existence of close bonds between him and Michael the Brave. Practically, they were on their way to settling a separate alliance, profitable to them both.

⁸⁸ I. Corfus, *Mihai Viteazul și polonii*, no. CXI, pp. 366-367. In the opinion of the same historian (pp. 137 and 149-150), the Khan had seemingly come to the Poles' relief, but they turned him down.

⁸⁹ A. Veress, *Documente*, VI, no. 135, pp. 141-143.