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**TERRITORIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF
MOLDAVIA (MID-14TH - MID-16TH CENTURIES)**

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The PhD thesis and its summary can be consulted in the National Library of the Republic of Moldova, Central Library of the Moldova State University and on the website of ANACEC.

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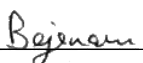
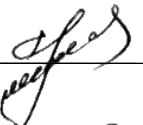
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CONCEPTUAL REFERENCES OF THE RESEARCH

The actuality and importance of the research. The issue of the origins and evolution of the territorial establishment of the Principality of Moldavia is a rather important subject for the history of the East-Carpathian region between the mid-14th and mid-16th centuries. The multiple questions that have been formulated during the studies previously carried out in historiography about the nature and particular features of the territorial control exercised by the voivodes of Suceava in that period are also reflected on the concretization of the aspects regarding the formation of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia. From this point of view, the proposed research topic in this study becomes relevant, especially in the context in which contemporary historiography is increasingly aware of more and more works devoted to the political status of the territories between the Carpathians and the Dniester during the Late Middle Ages. The study in question can serve as a contribution to clarifying the details of the early history of the medieval Romanian East-Carpathian state in the discussed period and to outlining some directions of analysis of the given subject, especially using the tools and visions formulated within the framework of border studies in contemporary world historiography - a field of auxiliary scientific research, which draws attention to the history of border areas and the communities that created and populated them in various periods.

The presented material follows this trend of border studies, aiming to systematize the known data with reference to the state of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia between the mid-14th and mid-16th centuries. The analysis of the proposed question in the following study will be based on the geographical criteria, each border segment being discussed in separate chapters, and not chronologically. This decision is motivated by the intention of an in-depth analysis of the different border segments of the Principality of Moldavia and to avoid difficulties in the narrative presentation of historical events and processes that took place at the same time on several border regions of the East-Carpathian principality.

The placement of the research within international, national and regional historiographical concerns. The topic of the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia between the middle of the 14th century and the middle of the 16th century has been addressed from a tangential point of view, depending on the interest of the national historical schools towards certain segments of the East-Carpathian principality.

While the southern and western borders of the Principality of Moldavia have received particular attention from the representatives of Romanian historiography, Polish and Ukrainian scholars have addressed the genesis and evolution of the northern borders of the Principality of Moldavia in the context of the dissolution of the Halici-Volania and the establishment of the Polish

Crown's authority over the territories of present-day western Ukraine. In this regard we can highlight the studies carried out within the Ukrainian historical school before World War I by M. M. Korduba, in the post-WWII period by B. Timoșciuc, A. Jukovskii and I. Novosivskii, and in recent years by O. Masan, I. Voznâi and O. Balukh. As for Polish historiography, important contributions in elucidating aspects of the past of the northern borders of the Principality of Moldavia were made by A. Czołowski and A. Borzemski before World War I, O. Górka, H. Paszkiewicz and P. Dąbkowski in the interwar period, K. Myśliński and Z. Spieralski in the post-WWII period, I. Czamańska, J. Sperka, J. Kurtyka, A. Marzec and K. Niemczyk in the recent period.

Most of the studies dedicated to the subject of the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia belong to representatives of Romanian historiography, who were concerned with all border segments of the medieval East-Carpathian principality. Some of these works dealt simultaneously with problems related to several segments of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia, such as those of C. C. Giurescu, V. Spinei, Șt. S. Gorovei, C. Burac, I. Eremia and L. Rădvan. The prevailing tendency in Romanian historiography, however, has been to deal only with certain narrow segments or particular episodes. The case of the Moldavian-Polish border was discussed by I. I. Nistor, I. Minea, R. Rosetti, T. Bălan, C. Racoviță etc. The period of the presence of the Moldavian administration in Cetatea Albă and Chilia was analyzed by N. Iorga, P. P. Panaitescu, Gh. I. Brătianu, V. Ciocâltan, Șt. Andreescu, O. Iliescu etc. The demarcation and evolution of the Moldavian-Ottoman border until the mid-16th century was studied by M. Maxim, T. Gemil, N. Beldiceanu-Nădejde, E. Denize, I. Chirtoagă, V. Pâslariuc etc. The problems related to the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier have been investigated by B. P. Hasdeu, C. S. Mironescu, Ș. Papacostea, P. Parasca, A. Paragină, S. Iosipescu etc. Finally, the case of the western frontier of the Principality of Moldavia and the domains held by Stephen the Great and his successors in the interior of Transylvania has received attention in the studies conducted by A. Bunea, V. Pârvan, V. Motogna, I. Ursu, I. Marțian, I. Rusu, F. Kiss, I.-A. Pop etc.

Research aim and objectives. The purpose of this study is to clarify the process of formation of the Moldavian frontiers and the degree of territorial power exercised by its rulers in the mid-14th – mid-16th century. The main objectives of this work, which will contribute to the fulfillment of the proposed purpose, include:

- establishing the chronological succession of the territories, which came under the control of the Moldavian administration between the mid-14th and mid-16th centuries;
- characterization of the evolution of the Moldavian voivodes' authority on the peripheries of their principality;

- determining the degree of influence of the regional powers in Eastern Europe and local communities on the process of constitution and evolution of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia;
- analyzing the positions occupied by territorial dignitaries within the Council of the Reign to determine the status of the county centers under their jurisdiction;
- identifying the location of some settlements located in the frontier areas (Chilia, Licostomo, Crăciuna, Putna, etc.), which were contested by the rulers of Moldavia or their neighbors;
- to determine the symptoms of the transition from the medieval concept of a fluid and diffuse frontier to the strict administrative boundaries, typical for early modern states, in the relations of Principality of Moldavia with its neighbors.

Research hypothesis. The territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia between the mid-14th century – mid-16th century was strongly influenced by internal factors, such as the decisions of the political center represented by the Prince of Moldavia and his inner circle, the specific demographic and socio-economic evolution of the Moldavian settlements during this time; external factors, such as the changes in the balance of power in the Eastern European powers between the mid-14th century – mid-16th century, and geographical factors, such as the topographical and hydronymic differences present in different segments of the Moldavian borders. These trends stimulated the long transition from the concept of the medieval frontier, fluid and permeable by its nature from the perspective of medieval political centers and local communities, to the idea of an increasingly strict administrative boundary typical for modern European states, often abandoning the old conventional delimitations existing in the Middle Ages. This phenomenon in its transitional period was accompanied by the renewal or amendment of the border treaties, which stipulated not only its boundaries, but also the way it operated and was managed by the authorities of the two neighboring countries, becoming more similar to the rules of modern border crossing and prevention of actions prohibited by law, such as coordinating the extradition of criminals and the punishment for unsanctioned border crossing, smuggling of goods etc.

The methodology. Given the fact that the perception of medieval frontiers in the world historiography is multilateral, the following six distinct research methods have been utilized in the current study: *the historical-comparative method, the analytical method, the geographical method, the philological method, the regressive method* and *the systemic method*. Among them, the historical-comparative method plays a pivotal role, having been applied to assess the attitude of the Moldavian voivodes towards the frontiers of their realm with the Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the Crimean Khanate, the Ottoman Empire, Wallachia and

Transylvania. This approach allows us to compare and formulate a complex synthesis regarding the evolution of the status and the configuration of the different border segments of the medieval East-Carpathian principality with its neighbors between the mid-14th and mid-16th centuries.

The time frame. The choice of the middle of the 14th century as the lower chronological limit is motivated by the impact of major events for the lands between the Carpathians, Dniester and Black Sea, which took place even before the establishment of Bogdan I's voivodeship in 1365 and influenced the genesis of the future Moldavian frontiers: the war of the Golden Horde against the Kingdom of Poland and the Kingdom of Hungary for the inheritance of Halych-Volhynia (1340-1354), which signaled the vulnerability of the former and the beginning of the struggle for the peripheral territories of this fragment of the Mongol Empire; the beginning of the internal political crisis of the Golden Horde; the battle of the Plonini between the Polish and Romanian forces during the reign of Casimir III the Great. The upper chronological limit within this thesis represented a turning point for both Moldavian frontiers with Poland (marked by the outcome of the Pocuția issue in Moldavian-Polish relations), Transylvania (most of the Transylvanian domains of the Moldavian voivodes being lost after 1538) and the Ottoman Empire, which expanded its territories here as a result of Suleiman I the Magnificent's 1538 campaign against Petru Rareș. The enthronement of Alexandru Lăpușneanu in Moldavia in 1552 marked the end of this transitional period, when the nature of Moldavian-Ottoman and Moldavian-Polish relations underwent substantial changes, reflecting the beginning of a new stage in the political history of Moldavia.

Scientific novelty and originality. The innovative element of the subject addressed represents the very advancement of the idea of complementary analysis of several initially separate topics within the historiographic discourse – the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia and its borders with major regional powers, such as the Kingdom of Poland or the Ottoman Empire, but also with other political entities with varied economic and demographic potential, such as Wallachia, Transylvania or the Crimean Khanate. Such a synthesis has not been previously carried out within the framework of national or world historiography. This argument represents the main justification for the proposed study on these pages – a study of this type could become a valuable contribution to contemporary historiography, offering new details and contributions to the research of the history of the Moldavian frontiers and the evolution of the territorial power held by the Moldavian rulers from the mid-14th to the mid-16th century.

Keywords: the Principality of Moldavia, Cetatea Albă, Chilia, Vrancea, the county of Putna, Moldavian-Wallachian frontier, Licostomo, Bucovina, Pocuția, Podolia, Moldavian-Polish frontier, Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier

CONTENT OF THE THESIS

Thesis structure and volume. The following study consists of 150 pages of the main text, divided into several parts: annotations in Romanian, English and Russian; a list of abbreviations; the introduction; 4 chapters with several sub-chapters; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography of 432 titles; 24 appendices; author's declaration of responsibility and CV. The introduction of the dissertation presents the relevance and importance of the subject; the placement of the topic in the national and international historiographical concerns, as well as in the inter- and transdisciplinary context; the chronological and geographical framework of the research; the aim and objectives of the thesis; the research hypothesis; the presentation and argumentation of the chosen methodology; the scientific novelty and originality of the proposed topic; the solved scientific problem and the summary of the chapters of the thesis.

Chapter I. The sources and historiography of the problem. The subject of the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia between the mid-14th and the mid-16th centuries has received particular attention in historiography. The specific approach to this issue can be summarized into several major aspects: the fragmentary approach to research topics; the episodic interaction between national historiographies on some questions depending on the segment of the analyzed frontier; the internal influences on the evolution of concepts and paradigms of approaching some topics related to the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia; the external context in which the representatives of national historiographies carried out their work.

In the first case, the very nature of the segmented approach to the evolution of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia with its neighbors contributed to the low degree of synthesis based on the phenomena observed at the peripheries of the territorial power of the Moldavian rulers. The discussions launched within the national historiographies had only a few intersections on narrow themes, such as the battle of Plonini and the history of the Sipei Land, addressed by Romanian, Polish and Ukrainian historians. In addition, the segmented approach to these issues generated the emergence of generally accepted views, which substantially influenced the historiographical discourse – major examples became the case of the battle of Plonini in Polish historiography or the appreciation of the essence of the Moldovan-Wallachian frontier in Romanian historiography. Last but not least, a major factor is the external context of the evolution of national historiographies in the discussion of the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia, which introduced specific tendencies of the pre-World War II, post-World War II and the recent years, in latter of which the influence of the discourse of the world historiography on medieval and modern border studies grew significantly.

Within the Romanian historiography the main dilemma regarding the evolution of the Moldavian-Polish frontier was the acceptance or rejection of I. I. Nistor's thesis on the theory of a stable border between the Principality of Moldavia and the Kingdom of Poland from its beginnings to the last years of the reign of Stephen the Great along the Prut and Dniester rivers, as well as their tributaries, Colacin and Serafineț [15, pp. 31-32], discussing in particular the issues related to the battle of Plonini, the status of the Șipeniț Land and its main centers (Hotin, Țetina/Cernăuți, Hmeliov) and the problem of Pocuția. In the case of Polish historiography, a special attention was paid to the first and the third topics listed above, while Ukrainian historiography focused more on the past of the Șipeniț Land before and after the foundation of the East-Carpathian principality [19, p. 97, 99; 25, p. 110].

Regarding the south-eastern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia during the time period discussed in this paper, Romanian historians have tackled the issues related to the moment of the extension of the princely authority to the Black Sea, the political status of Cetatea Albă in the East-Carpathian principality, the origins and dynamics of the Moldavian-Wallachian rivalry for the fortress of Chilia, etc. As for the period after the Ottoman campaign of 1484, which resulted in the conquest of the two ports by the forces of Bayazid II, the Romanian historiography discussed the first delimitation of the Moldavian-Ottoman boundary, the emergence and resolution of problems arising in the first years of the new border and the impact of Suleiman I the Magnificent's campaign of 1538 on the configuration of the border between the Principality of Moldavia and the Ottoman Empire.

The main focus of the historiographical discourse concerning the history of the frontier between the Principality of Moldavia and the Principality of Wallachia was the discussion of the thesis formulated by B. P. Hasdeu on the initial configuration of the their common border along the course of the Trotuș and Siret rivers [13, p. 69, 74]. The reaction to this hypothesis led to the emergence of two camps in the Romanian historical school - one which supported Hasdeu's thesis and another one which defended the idea of an unchanged Moldovan-Wallachian border from the very beginning and until the Union of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 [3, doc. 132, pp. 402-406].

Finally, the research on the history of the Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier has been concentrated on two major problems addressed within Romanian historiography – that of the immediate border between Moldavia and Transylvania in the Eastern Carpathians and that of the Transylvanian domains held by Stephen the Great and his successors between the late 15th and the middle of the 16th century. If the first aspect was summarized by describing the configuration of the Carpathian frontier and the territorial disputes that broke out at the turn of the 16th-17th centuries

[27; 28], then the other topic focused on dating the gift of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă to Stephen the Great, describing the status of these two domains in the relations between the voivodes of Suceava and the Transylvanian elites and the objectives pursued by Petru Rareș during his first reign (1527-1538) in his Transylvanian campaigns between 1529-1530. This latter issue was studied not without certain excesses during the Ceaușescu regime - an example is Nicolae Grigoraș's interpretation of the figure of Stephen the Great's son as a "precursor of Michael the Brave" in the process of forming the "Romanian unitary state" through his campaigns in the Transylvanian region in both his reigns [22, p. 108].

As for the sources available for researching the territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia, we can observe the small number of documentary and narrative sources, which reflect unevenly both chronologically and geographically the different stages of this process. An example that combines these two factors is the Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier, where the mountainous terrain determined the lower population density at the western border of Moldavia and a smaller number of royal charters mentioning this region, which in turn slowed down the process of territorial disputes recorded in the sources of that period until the end of the 16th century. Another case of inconsistency may be the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier, which contains a much smaller number of written sources for the 14th-15th centuries compared to the following century.

In the current study, a major role is played by the *internal documentary sources* of this period, issued within the chancellery of the Moldavian princes and found in the collections edited by I. Bogdan [2] and Mihai Costăchescu [3], the volumes of *Documenta Romaniae Historica. A. Moldova* [4; 5] and the volume *Relațiile externe ale Țării Moldovei în documente și materiale (1360-1858)* edited by I. Eremia [8]. Appealing to the acts issued under the auspices of the Suceava voivodes is a necessary precondition for identifying the earliest mentions of the border settlements, territorial dignitaries and the position held by them in the Princely Council, treaties regarding the delimitation and management of the common border, references to the concepts of border and demarcation of territories with the neighbors of the East-Carpathian principality.

In addition, *external documentary sources*, such as those published in other series of *Documenta Romaniae Historica* volumes [6; 7] and in Polish document collections [1], were consulted in this thesis. The Moldavian, Polish, Ottoman and other narrative sources are of significant utility for the research of the topic proposed in the current study. Another category of written sources are *the testimonies of foreign travelers* who passed through the Principality of Moldavia, providing valuable information about the important border settlements or the centers of the borderlands. In order to elucidate some aspects related to the evolution of the boundaries of the Principality of Moldavia, several cartographic records from the 14th-16th centuries were

analyzed, such as the Italian portolans or the maps of Eastern Europe, but also those from the 18th-19th centuries, which retroactively reveal the configuration of the Danube delta and mention some settlements in the border areas that were not recorded in earlier sources.

Chapter II. The Northern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia. The history of the establishment of the northern border of Moldavia with the lands of the Polish Crown went through several stages. Its uncertain beginnings are linked to a Romanian state entity, which encompassed Pocuția and the Șipeniț Land and resisted the first attempt of Polish expansion here during the battle of Plonini. Taking into consideration the information about this fight, we can suggest that the end of the Șipeniț voivodeship occurred in the circumstances of Casimir III the Great's (1333-1370) campaign against the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1366, which ended with the complete victory of Poland and the submission of the Lithuanian dukes of Volhynia and Podolia to the Polish Crown. This resulted in the establishment of the first Moldavian-Polish border between Pocuția and the Șipeniț Land, which was subject to later attempts to change it, provoked by the expedition of Władysław Opolczyk in combination with the hostile military actions of Louis I of Anjou (1342-1382) against the Romanian Principalities in 1374-1375 [17, pp. 129-130]. The outcome of these confrontations was the decision of the King of Hungary and Poland to offer Pocuția and the Șipeniț Land to Peter I Mușat (1375-1391) after 1377, judging by the mention of Kołomyja, Țețina and Hotin among the “Bulgarian and Wallachian” settlements in the *List of Russian Cities, Far and Near* [47, p. 223]. The presence of the Moldavian administration in these regions between 1378-1382 constituted the main source of the rights of the Suceava voivodes over them, which would generate many disputes and conflicts between Moldavia and Poland in the 15th-16th centuries [37, p. 344].

One of them was related to the loan given to the king of Poland by Peter I Mușat in 1388. The lack of documentary testimonies does not give us the possibility of reconstructing exactly the events on the northern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia for the years 1387-1395, making viable the offering of Pocuția as a pawn and Țețina and Hmeliov as a fief, of Pocuția together with Țețina and Hmeliov as a pawn or only of Pocuția, while the Șipeniț Land could have been initially under the control of the Principality of Podolia and only later offered by the king of Poland to Stephen I in 1395 [42, p. 233]. The agreement of that same year, reached between Stephen I (1395-1399) and Władysław II Jagiełło (1386-1434), fixed the new boundary between Pocuția and the Șipeniț Land, whose status and configuration would be slightly modified in favor of Principality of Moldavia in the Polish-Moldavian treaty of December 13, 1433 [8, doc. 38, pp. 178-179].

The alignment fixed in 1433 remained unchanged in the early years of the struggle for the throne between Iliăș I and Stephen II, but on September 23, 1436 an unexpected decision of the

former, who after his reinstatement on the throne issued a declaration of cession of the Șipeniț Land to the king of Poland [8, doc. 50, pp. 188-189]. The documentary testimonies do not confirm the change of the existing status-quo after 1436 at the Moldavian-Polish border - its main cities, Hotin, Țețina and Hmeliov, were later offered by Iliăș I's wife, Maria Holszańska, to Polish dignitaries on February 29, 1444, and by then among the members of the Princely Council were mentioned Manoil Grecul, the pârcălab of Hotin, and Șteful Jumătate, the pârcălab of Țețina [4, doc. 184, pp. 260-261; doc. 205, pp. 290-291].

The 1440s and 1450s were marked by a substantial increase in the status of the Hotin, Țețina/Cernăuți, Kamieniec and Śniatyn dignitaries. The rise of Manoil Grecul's and Șteful Jumătate's political positions as the pârcălabs of Hotin and Țețina respectively [20, p. 12] was paralleled by Teodoryk Buczacki and his family on the other side of the Moldavian-Polish frontier in Podolia and Pocuția, who became "true 'kings' of the border" [24, p. 69]. The central authorities had to take the new developments into account during the active power struggles, the pretenders to the throne even co-opted the pârcălabs of Hotin and Țețina among the ranks of their supporters. The growing importance of the peripheral dignitaries laid the groundwork for the regulation of the frontier justice between the two countries in the second half of the 15th – first half of the 16th century, which evolved uninterruptedly throughout the entire period despite the worsening conflict over Pocuția in the last years of Stephen the Great's reign [2, doc. 133, pp. 296-299; 8, doc. 107, pp. 244-249, doc. 119, pp. 265-273, doc. 124, pp. 273-276, doc. 126, pp. 277-280, doc. 129, pp. 281-284, doc. 135, pp. 288-289, doc. 138, pp. 290-292]. The more and more active collaboration between the Moldavian and Polish governors resulted in the emergence of a pattern of cooperation, marking a new stage in the transition of the Moldavian-Polish border from the medieval paradigm to the one much closer to the concept of modern state borders, which was directly related to the consolidation of the peripheral county centers and the concept of border justice.

This period of peaceful cooperation between the two sides came to an end after the conclusion of military hostilities with the Ottoman Empire in 1486 and the sudden decline of Moldavian-Polish relations in the last years of Stephen the Great's reign (1457-1504). After the failed expedition of the Polish king Jan Olbracht (1492-1501) in 1497 in Moldavia, this sovereign, on the occasion of the peace concluded in 1499, donated 11 villages on the left bank of the Ceremuș river to the logothete Ioan Tăutu [33, p. 347], marking the modification of the old border between Pocuția and Principality of Moldavia in favor of the Moldavian prince. At the same time, the postponement of the discussion on the future status of Pocuția in the following years and the military vulnerability of the Polish Crown during its conflicts with the Teutonic Order and the Grand Duchy of Moscow motivated Stephen the Great to occupy Pocuția unilaterally in September 1502 [45,

pp. 83, 88, 90]. The new state of affairs was based on the unfavorable balance of forces against Poland and the Moldovan-Hungarian cooperation in the Pocuției issue, lasting until 1505, when Bogdan III (1504-1517) decided to retrocede these territories in the hope of completing his matrimonial project of kinship with the royal house of Jagiełłon through marriage with Elisabeta, the sister of the king of Poland [8, doc. 112, pp. 252-254], being strongly influenced by Stanisław Chodecki, another important Polish dignitary at the borders with the Principality of Moldavia [39, pp. 34-35].

The failure of the marriage to Princess Elisabeth and the subsequent war between Moldavia and Poland over Pocuția in 1506-1509 resulted in the reoccupation of Pocuția by the Polish crown forces and the conclusion of the peace treaties of 1510, according to which the fate of the province was left to the mediation of the representatives of Vladislav II, the king of Hungary (1490-1516). The date for convening the joint Moldavian-Polish-Hungarian commission could be fixed only by the king of Hungary, and in the absence of a Moldavian or Polish delegation, the territorial dispute would be automatically arbitrated in favor of the other country, except in cases of force majeure [8, doc. 118, p. 262, doc. 119, p. 266].

The increasingly strict management of the northern border of the Principality of Moldavia was accelerated by the new Moldavian-Polish military conflicts, culminating in Petru Rareș's renunciation of all claims to Pocuția in 1538, the tacit abandonment of the issue of the "donation" of the villages on Ceremuș by the Polish Crown and the emergence of new restrictions on the ownership of private property by the Moldavians and the right to settle in the border regions of the Kingdom of Poland. Further agreements concluded by Stephen Lăcustă in 1539 [8, doc. 137, p. 290, doc. 138, pp. 290-292, doc. 139, p. 293], Iliș II Rareș in 1546 and 1547 [8, doc. 160, pp. 325-326, doc. 167, pp. 335-338] and Alexander Lăpușneanu in 1553 [8, doc. 171, pp. 342-347, doc. 173, pp. 348-350] reiterated the Polish ownership of Pocuția and the inalienability of the existing borders.

Chapter III. The South-Eastern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia. The genesis of the south-eastern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia took place between 1369-1374, when the political crisis and centrifugal tendencies of the Golden Horde led to the advance of Lithuanian and Moldavian forces during the reign of Lațcu towards the Black Sea coast at Cetatea Albă at the expense of the "land" of the Tatar emir Demetrius, resulting in the destruction of the Tatar centers at Orheiul Vechi and Costești by the second half of 1369 and the disappearance of any memory of the "Tatar prince" [10, p. 239]. The conversion of Lațcu I to Catholicism and the founding of the Catholic bishopric of Siret in 1370 [18, p. 444] could be linked to the rapprochement between Louis I of Anjou and the Tatar chieftain, attested by the commercial diploma issued by the King

of Hungary on June 22, 1368 to the citizens of Brasov, which mentioned the privileges offered to the merchants of “prince Demetrius” [7, doc. 49, p. 90]. The cooperation between the Angevin Crown and the Tatar emir could result both in the political-military isolation of Moldavia and in Hungary's interference in the trade routes to the Black Sea to the disadvantage of the Kraków Royal court, provoking the tacit support of the prince of Moldavia from Poland against Demetrius.

In the context of the clashes between the forces of Lațcu I and the Tatars, the short-lived expansion of Moldavian possessions beyond the Dniester took place at the fortress of Cern, mentioned for the first time in the *List of Russian Cities, Far and Near* among the Bulgarian and Wallachian settlements, between Cetatea Albă and Iași [47, p. 228]. The location of this center is an unresolved issue in the Romanian and Ukrainian historiography; there are several proposed variants, such as the left bank of the Dniester, in the neighborhood of Maiaki or near Ovidiopol in today's Ukraine. The fortress of Cern could have been lost by the voivodes of Suceava towards the end of the 14th century - either after 1394, when the Duchy of Podolia was divided between Poland and Lithuania, or after the battle of Vorskla in 1399, when the Tatar counterattacks resulted in terrible devastation throughout the territories of Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia [21, p. 69].

Different views on the status of Cetatea Albă in Moldavia have been formulated by historians - the main versions propose the existence of an autonomous “government” in the city with “its jupans and its elders” and a strong Genoese influence or the absence of a special position of this port in its relations with the princely authorities. At the present stage of research, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the degree of autonomy of Cetatea Albă, because such episodes as the mention of a dominus Moncastro negotiating in 1435 with the representatives of Venice about the opening of a vice-consulate in this port or the conflict between the inhabitants of Cetatea Albă and the Genoese colonies in Crimea over the settlement of Illice at the mouth of the Dnieper River during the reign of Peter Aron, can be interpreted both in favor and against the idea of a special autonomous regime granted to the inhabitants of Cetatea Albă [30, pp. 9-10].

In the case of the dignitaries appointed to Cetatea Albă, at first glance there is a gap in the mentions of any officials appointed here until March 6, 1443, when Iurghici was attested for the first time in the internal sources as a pârcălab of Cetatea Albă [4, doc. 225, pp. 314-316]. After analyzing the mentions of the other known dignitaries in the princely charters issued at the end of the 14th century – first half of the 15th century in a recent study [31, pp. 80-101], we were able to identify the names of four officials, who held the position of starosta or captain between 1387-1439, by excluding the other known pârcălabs with their listed fortresses in the internal sources: Giula capitaneus, Mihail capitaneus, Dragoș the Brave and Giurgiu of Frătăuți. These four officials at the head of the main port of the Principality of Moldavia can explain the leading positions of

the dregorship of this governorship among the members of the Princely Council of Peter I Mușat, Stephen I, Alexander the Good, Iliăș I and Stephen II for the years 1387-1439 by the outstanding commercial and economic value of Cetatea Albă in the eyes of the Moldavian rulers.

From the middle of the 15th century, the princely authority here increased due to the threat of Ottoman expansion in the Black Sea area. During Stephen the Great's reign, the phenomenon of doubling the number of pârcălabs responsible for Cetatea Albă and the surrounding countryside was observed - a trend that was most probably inspired by the case of Chilia, which after its recapture by the Moldavian forces in 1465 was managed by two officials [5, doc. 129, pp. 185-186]. If initially we can talk about a special role played by the Genoese and Greek communities in the main port of the Principality of Moldavia on the Black Sea, towards the beginning of Stephen the Great's reign there was a decline in the privileged positions of these two communities in relation to the princely representatives.

The Danubian sector of the Moldavian frontier was closely linked to the problem of the relationship between the fortress of Chilia and Licostomo, whose localization was actively discussed in the Romanian historiography. In this regard, we adhere to P. P. Panaitescu's theory [16, pp. 297-303] regarding the existence since the 14th century of two Chilias (Old Chilia under the initial Byzantine control and New Chilia built by the Genoese and originally called Licostomo) on both banks of the Danube for two reasons. The first one is the geographical advantage offered by the location on the north bank: although Byzantine Chilia had a longer history [12, pp. 215-216], P. P. Panaitescu emphasized that this fair in the Danube delta remained “without possibilities of development, without links to the land routes of the baize and grain trade” [40, p. 112]. Another argument is C. C. Giurescu's observation on the possibility of storing grain from the northern hinterland on the left bank of the Danube because of the high cost of transportation and storage in the Delta [12, pp. 218-219].

Another major problem in the history of Moldavian rule on the Danube is the exact moment of the beginning of Moldavian control over Chilia. After the last mentions of the Genoese administration at Licostomo at the end of the 14th – beginning of the 15th century, the Romanian historiography presented three different versions regarding the establishment of the Principality of Moldavia's control over this Danubian port: the first hypothesis suggested that Chilia passed from the Genoese to the Principality of Wallachia between 1403-1408 and was conquered later by Alexander the Good (1400-1432) between 1424-1426 [12, p. 221; 14, pp. 71-72, 77, 84; 16, pp. 297, 301-302, 342]; the second scenario proposed the same transfer of Chilia from the Genoese to the Wallachians and later to the Moldavian prince, dating the latter event between 1408-1412 [26, pp. 226-227, 229-230, 232], while the third hypothesis postulated the takeover of the Danube city

by the voivode of Suceava directly from the Genoese [34, p. 1139]. The lack of documentary sources amplifies the uncertainties about the fate of Chilia, but it can be stated that it fell under the Moldavian authority by the time of the Treaty of Lubowla from March 15, 1412.

The presence of the Moldavian administration at the mouth of the Danube persisted until 1448, when following the enthronement due to the intervention of Hungarian troops under the leadership of Csutor de Monoszló [18, p. 505], the Moldavian prince Peter II voluntarily ceded Chilia in favor of his protector, Iancu de Hunedoara. The second period of the princely administration in this city (1465-1484) after its recapture by Stephen the Great's forces was marked by efforts to strengthen the southern border against the Ottoman Porte by doubling the number of the *pârcălabși* and fully relocating Chilia on the left bank of the Danube. These measures were accompanied by the creation of new wooden and earthen fortresses at Giurgiulești, Tatarbunar, Kale and Tintiul, built along the Southern Trajan's Wall [46, pp. 340, 342, 345-346], as well as by the projection of Moldavian military power beyond the Danube in northern Dobrogea during the military confrontations with the Ottoman forces [23, p. 317].

After 1484, Cetatea Albă and Chilia were reorganized into kazas, while the delimitation of the new Moldavian-Ottoman border showcased a certain pragmatism on the part of the representatives of the Porte, who justified and legitimized their own territorial claims to the Principality of Moldavia by appealing to the old boundaries of the two ports' circumscriptions. The same constructive attitude can also be observed in the cases of settling various settlements in the area of the Moldavian-Ottoman border in the first third of the 16th century [32, pp. 107-111]. The peaceful process of settling the rights of Moldavian princes and Ottoman subjects was succeeded by the border crisis of 1538-1541, when the plans for the expansion of the Porte in the lands between Prut and Dniester were met with resistance by the Moldavian boyars during the reign of Alexander Cornea (1540-1541). After the return of Peter Rareș to the throne (1541-1546), a new status-quo was created on the south-eastern borders of the Principality of Moldavia: the Ottomans gave up the construction of a fortress in Fâlcui, while the Moldavian voivode reacquired 26 villages near Tighina between 1541-1552.

The case of Bugeac remains the last major problem regarding the new configuration of the Moldovan-Ottoman border. Romanian historians claimed that the Principality of Moldavia lost this region after 1538 [12, pp. 287-289; 14, pp. 7-8, 188-189] and that the Nogai Tatars later settled here [38, pp. 112, 123]. Given the low population density of Bugeac and the small number of attested settlements from the time of Stephen the Great, it is more likely there was no direct control either from the princely authorities or from the Porte, which is indirectly confirmed by the fact that all previous disputes were centered only in the Danube and lower Dniester areas. This south-

eastern Moldavian border, which was not colonized and exploited by Moldavian or Ottoman subjects, cannot be appreciated as a modern border system with effective control and presence of the central authority, remaining a “white spot” of the Moldavian-Ottoman frontier.

Chapter IV. The Moldavian-Wallachian and Moldavian-Transylvanian frontiers. The origins of the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier were determined by the short-lived existence of the Hungarian “corridor” between the Curvature Carpathians and the Lower Danube during the reign of Louis I of Anjou and by the specific attitude of the elites from this region towards the attempts of external forces to consolidate their territorial control in the 13th-15th centuries. Discussions within Romanian historiography on the establishment of a Hungarian presence in the area of the future Moldavian-Wallachian frontier have not reached a common ground due to the questionable nature of the known documentary sources, which can be interpreted both in favor and against the theory of the Hungarian control (the act of Louis I of Anjou of June 28, 1358 guaranteeing free access for the merchants of Braşov in the lands between Ialomiţa, Danube and Siret [7, doc. 39, p. 72]; the same king's privilege of January 20, 1368 to the Braşov traders concerning the commerce with the country of “Dimitrie, prince of the Tatars” [7, doc. 49, p. 90] and the mentions of the Catholic bishopric of Milcovia between 1332-1375 [6, doc. 406, p. 554; 7, doc. 22, pp. 45-47]).

Although some parallels have been drawn in Romanian historiography with other cases of medieval territorial “corridors” in Europe [41, pp. 16-18], the evidence for the existence of a direct political control of Hungary over the given territories remains rather weak, and the area of the future Moldavian-Wallachian frontier after the decline of the Golden Horde's influence in the second half of the 14th century did not experience a stable external political and military domination. The causes of this phenomenon lie in the uniqueness of the area claimed by the kings of Hungary and, later, by the princes of Moldavia and Wallachia - the local Romanian communities were self-sufficient in their relations with the Hungarian Crown in the 13th-14th centuries, although they remained atomized and lacked a pre-state mode of political self-organization with a distinct centre. The end of the Hungarian king's efforts to impose his authority in the area between the Curvature Carpathians and the Danube might have occurred after the conflict that broke out against Wallachia and Moldavia in 1374 [17, pp. 127-128, 130], which coincides with the lack of any further mention of the Catholic bishopric of Milcovia between 1375-1438 [43, pp. 289, 316].

Another problem of the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier represents the details of the agreements regarding the delimitation of the borders between the two Carpathian principalities. The texts of these conventions are not known, and their very existence is evident only from the content of the peace treaty between Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great signed in Buda on August 15, 1475, in which the king of Hungary stipulated that “...we reaffirm the old frontiers and

customs which have been controlled and maintained by the previous voivodes of both voivodes, that is, by Stephen of Moldavia and Vlad of Wallachia, and the second privilege of Alexander and Mircea, the voivodes of both countries" [2, doc. 146, pp. 334-336; 8, doc. 95, pp. 236-237], referring to the treaties signed between Stephen I and Vlad I the Usurper (1395-1396), Alexander the Good and Mircea the Elder (1386-1418). However, Romanian historians have formulated two major views on the original configuration of the first border between Moldavia and Wallachia – that of the initial Wallachian control over the lands between Trotuș, Siret and Milcov rivers and that of unchanging Moldavian-Wallachian border along Milcov, Putna and Siret until 1859.

We believe that the act signed by Matthias Corvinus at Buda equated the configuration of the borders according to the two agreements between Stephen I and Vlad I, Alexander the Good and Mircea the Elder and presented the intention of the King of Hungary to see the same situation in the case of Stephen the Great. The absence of any mention of the preceding treaties in the Moldavian version of the treaty signed in Iași on July 12, 1475 [2, doc. 146, pp. 330-333] suggests the disinterest of the voivode of Suceava to respect the wishes of Matthias Corvinus and to preserve the configuration of the border existing at the turn of the 14th-15th centuries. If Stephen I and Vlad I had reached a common understanding in 1395, then the treaty could reconfirm the existing boundary, in the context of the Sigismund I of Luxembourg's failed campaign in Moldavia and the establishment of Vlad I's contacts with the Polish Crown, which resulted in his homage to the King of Poland the following year [18, p. 82]. However, if the same agreement was concluded in 1396 in the context of the Crusade of Nicopolis and the intervention of the Transylvanian voivode in Wallachia at the end of the same year, which led to the dethronement of Vlad I [18, pp. 82-84], its conditions could have been more favorable for the Moldavian prince, who could take advantage of his neighbor's vulnerability to move the border south. The differences between these two versions lead in turn to diverging interpretations of Mircea the Elder's actions: either we are dealing with a reconfirmation of the treaty of 1395-1396, or the Wallachian voivode moved the boundary in his favor as a reward for his support of Alexander the Good, or the Wallachian prince only sought to restore the old border previously modified by Stephen I (his efforts being later offset by another treaty signed on favorable terms to Alexander the Good).

The social-political nature of the region between the Carpathian Curvature and the Danube, which did not allow the Kingdom of Hungary to consolidate its authority here in the 14th century, also had a major impact on the way the voivodes of the Romanian Principalities projected their territorial power over the common frontier area in the 15th century. This "border area" was sufficiently populated for the emergence of self-conscious political elites around Brăila, Buzău and Râmnic in the Eastern Wallachia and the "Gioseni" in the Southern Moldavia, who would

assert themselves by actively participating in the political life of the two medieval principalities in the 16th century and in the second half of the 15th century, respectively. These communities also determined the nature of the Vrancea region as a “white spot” in the history of the Moldavian-Muntenian frontier, signaling divergences between the *de jure* status of the claimed territory by the rulers of the two countries and the degree of real control exercised over it. This is consistent with the realities of the time, because, according to M. Coman, the medieval state was, from a cartographic point of view, “a territory in which the colored patches bordered the white spaces, regions in which the reigning power was weak, inefficient or even not exercised at all” [11, p. 211].

Stephen the Great's military conflicts with Wallachia, caused by the efforts of the Moldavian princes to strengthen their presence on the Moldavian-Wallachian border in the first half of the 15th century and Radu the Handsome's attempt to raise the fortress of Crăciuna, resulted in the establishment of a new solid demarcation line on the courses of the Milcov, Putna and Siret rivers. At the same time, the violent devastation inflicted by the Moldavians in the eastern Wallachia during Stephen the Great's battles with the Wallachian rulers provoked a harsh reaction from the boyars of the frontier. O. Cristea and M. Coman note the very active involvement of these boyar families in the political life of Wallachia only a few decades after the proclamations of Stephen the Great addressed to them, considering the pressure exerted by the prince of Moldavia as a possible factor that played in favor of the integration of Brăila, Buzău and Râmnic elites into the South Carpathian principality [35, pp. 34-35].

On the other hand, the failure of Radu the Handsome and his successors in maintaining authority in the region by constructing the fortress of Crăciuna can be explained not only by the military victories of the voivode of Suceava, but also by the absence of solid local support, which predetermined the short Wallachian presence in Crăciuna. This important fortress during Stephen the Great's conflicts with the Wallachian rulers experienced three periods of Moldavian administration. Considering the dynamics of the battles on the Moldavian-Wallachian border between 1470-1474, it is hard to believe that a fortification built in rapid tempo from earth and wood could have resisted for long, falling under Moldavian rule until the Ottoman expedition of 1474. Although this attack was repulsed, the Wallachian forces reoccupied the fortress of Crăciuna, being driven out after the defeat of the Ottomans in the Battle of Podul Înalt on January 10, 1475. This event is also described in the interpolation of Misail Călugărul as the episode of a new clash with Radu the Handsome's loyal forces at the beginning of 1475, followed by the conquest of Crăciuna and the shifting of Milcov's course; however, the author erroneously mentioned Siret's shifting in 1471 in another space and time, equating Crăciuna with the town of Putna [29, p. 134].

This scenario explains why Stephen the Great ignored Matthias Corvinus' proposal in the peace treaty of 1475 to return to the old Moldavian-Wallachian border, because it contradicted the real state of affairs and the Moldavian prince's plans to entrench himself in Crăciuna. The second period of the Moldavian presence in this fortress, led by the pârcălabs Vâlcea and Ivanco, lasted until the Ottoman campaign of Mehmed II in 1476, when the voivode of Wallachia could again reoccupy this fortress and control it until March-June 1481, it was mentioned the only time in Wallachian sources as being under the control of the Wallachia. Finally, at the time of Vlad Călugărul's enthronement by the forces of Stephen the Great between March 23 and July 13, 1482 [18, p. 128], this fortress came for the third time under the control of the Moldavian prince, who named Mihul as a pârcălab, attested in the charter from May 13, 1484 [5, doc. 260, pp. 398-399; 29, pp. 134-135]. This is how the Moldavian-Wallachian border was fixed along the course of the Milcov, Putna and Siret [11, p. 221] - a configuration that was broadly maintained until the Union of the Romanian Principalities in 1859.

In the case of the western frontier of the Principality of Moldavia, two circumstances influenced its genesis and evolution: the nature of the medieval mountain frontiers and the case of the domains of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă, offered to Stephen the Great by Matthias Corvinus and reconfirmed by Vladislav II in 1492. Due to the complications of monitoring the Eastern Carpathians beyond the main mountain passes and the initially lower economic exploitation of this area, the process of demarcation between Moldavia and Transylvania proceeded more slowly than in other segments of the borders of the East-Carpathian principality, accelerating only after the first disputes between the Moldavian rulers and the authorities of Bistrița at the end of the 16th century. Another reason for such a late development of the common border delimitation lies in the achievement of a sufficient degree of colonization and economic exploitation of the Eastern Carpathians for them to finally become contested by the inhabitants of Bistrița and the Moldavians. The principles of the border demarcation preferred by the two sides demonstrate that initially from the second half of the 14th century (if not even before the foundation of the Principality of Moldavia) the Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier was defined by the watershed of the important rivers in this area. Amid the tendencies to monopolize the mountainous areas, the representatives of Bistrița tried to challenge this rule, arguing in the first half of the 17th century for the establishment of a common border along the courses of the contested rivers [9, doc. 1759, p. 890].

As for the Transylvanian fiefs offered to the Moldavian rulers, this tradition could be traced back to the offer of the district of Rodna as a place of asylum for Peter Aron after his dethronement in 1457 and his departure from Poland [44, pp. 103-104]. The rare mentions of this settlement make it difficult to determine exactly when the Hungarian Crown took such a step, but, judging

by the mention of the customs at Rodna in 1412 and the change of Rodna's status between 1469-1475 with its subordination to Bistrița, this decision could have been made by Matthias Corvinus when he offered political asylum to Peter Aron on the eve of his campaign against Moldavia in 1467. Peter Aron's execution in 1469 coincides with the transfer of Rodna to the Saxon leaders of Bistrița, which is proven indirectly by the later conflicts over the status of the Romanians in the Rodna valley. The status of Rodna as an ancient residence offered to Moldavian princes by the kings of Hungary may explain how this fair came under the rule of Stephen IV, as shown in the letter of the citizens of Bistrița to the magistrates of Brașov on April 23, 1521 [9, p. XL].

Following the negotiations in 1482 between Matthias Corvinus and Stephen the Great, the voivode of Suceava received Cetatea de Baltă as a place of refuge during his lifetime, while Rodna was no longer an option at that time because of its subordination to Bistrița [36, pp. 101-102, 106]. The lack of testimonies from the royal chancellery about the status of Cetatea de Baltă after Stephen the Great paid homage to the king of Poland in 1485 opens the possibility of its confiscation in the same year by Matthias Corvinus (with its subsequent return to the Moldavian prince after his rapprochement with the king of Hungary in 1489), as well as the preservation of Moldavian rule here until the lifetime donation of Ciceu, which took place in exchange of Stephen the Great's acceptance of the Hungarian suzerainty in 1489 and his oath to support John Corvin's succession to the royal throne [36, pp. 99-100, 102-103]. With Vladislav II's rise to power, the Moldavian prince and his son Alexander received another act from the new monarch, which already guaranteed the perpetual rights of ownership over Cetatea de Baltă and Ciceu, followed by the mandate of introduction into possession on April 18, 1492. However, the two domains were not modern-type enclaves under the jurisdiction of the Principality of Moldavia, but special dominions of the voivodes of Suceava, closely connected with the interests of the local nobility.

The opportunity to integrate Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă closer with Moldavia presented itself to Peter Rareș, who intervened during his first reign in the Hungarian power struggle that broke out after the Battle of Mohács in 1526, holding simultaneous negotiations between 1527-1528 with Ferdinand I von Habsburg and John Zápolya. The military interventions of Stephen the Great's son in Transylvania in 1529-1530 were aimed at consolidating his domains there by seizing the fortress of Unguraș and subduing Bistrița. The resistance of this Saxon city and the inopportune diplomatic decisions of the Moldavian prince towards his neighbors led to the loss of the gains obtained by him and his predecessors [28, p. 48]. Peter Rareș's attempts to recover his lost positions after 1538 were not very successful, resulting in the demolition of the fortifications of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă, which eventually foreshadowing the return of all princely domains back to Transylvania during the reign of Alexander Lăpușneanu [27, p. 324].

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMENDATIONS

After accomplishing the aims and objectives proposed in the introduction of this study, it is possible to talk about a general outline of the process of territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia between the mid-14th and mid-16th centuries. Having presented the history of each border segment analyzed in this thesis, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Within this period, we can talk about the proliferation of the tendency towards consolidation and increasingly strict delimitation of the boundaries of the East-Carpathian principality in the majority of analyzed segments. The old configurations of the medieval boundaries fixed around the fortresses and regional centers are gradually modified in favor of stricter demarcation lines, fixed as a result of the territorial gains or losses of the voivodes of Suceava. This transition, however, was not homogeneous for the border segments of the Principality of Moldavia and did not reach completion by the middle of the 16th century, with the greatest progress being recorded in the case of the Moldavian-Polish border and the poorest results - in the case of the Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier.

2. The origins of the Pocuția and Șipeniț Land problem in the relations between the voivodes of Suceava and the kings of Poland stem from the acquisition of these two regions by Peter I Mușat between 1378-1382 from the king of Hungary and Poland, Louis I of Anjou. This precedent may have influenced Władysław II Jagiełło much later to pledge the Land of Halych in exchange for the loan taken from the Moldavian prince in 1388. The lack of documentary mentions of the main settlements in Pocuția and Șipeniț Land complicates reconstructing the exact sequence of events on the northern border of the Principality of Moldavia for the years 1387-1395, the only certain thing being the renegotiation of the mortgage due to the smaller amount of the loan offered by Peter I Mușat, which was limited only to the districts of Kołomyja and Sniatyn.

3. The subject of the Polish king's debt was abandoned in the bilateral diplomatic discourse in the following years, while the common border was settled between Pocuția and the Șipeniț Land, which remained unchanged from the time of Alexander the Good until the last years of Stephen the Great's reign, despite sporadic Moldavian-Polish conflicts during the 15th century. The specific features of this period were the appearance of the first Moldavian-Polish border treaties, the increased status of the territorial dignitaries from Hotin and Țețina/Cernăuți and their collaboration with the Polish starostas of Podolia and Pocuția in the enforcement of the frontier law and justice. The worsening of Moldavian-Polish relations after 1486 and the outbreak of conflicts over Pocuția accelerated the increasingly strict delimitation of the common borders, reducing their permeability by limiting the right of ownership and resettlement of Moldavian

subjects in the lands of Halych and Podolia and prohibiting the settlement of Moldavians in Poland without the consent of the frontier starostas or the Polish nobility.

4. The same stricter regulation can be observed in the southern sectors of the border between Moldavia, Wallachia and, after 1484, the Ottoman Empire. In the case of the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier, it was strongly influenced by the precedent of the Hungarian “corridor” and the social-political nature of the area between the Curvature Carpathians and the Danube, characterized by highly independent local elites and population in their relations with the neighboring medieval states. The Principality of Moldavia was confronted with the latter phenomenon in the entire Low Country, which in the 15th century denoted only the counties adjacent to the lower course of the Siret. The frontier conflicts catalyzed the tightening of the Moldavian-Wallachian border during the times of Stephen the Great, resulting in the much closer integration of the boyars from Buzău, Râmnic and Brăila into the political structures of Wallachia.

5. The southeastern frontier of the Principality of Moldavia was inherited by Bogdan I and his successors from the status-quo formed in the early 1350s between Poland, Hungary, Lithuania and the Golden Horde on the middle course of the Dniester, and in 1369-1374 the Moldavian forces extended their territorial control to the Black Sea coast, establishing the princely authority over Cetatea Albă and briefly at the fortress of Cern on the left bank of the Dniester. The connection of Giula capitaneus, Mihail capitaneus, Dragoș the Brave and Giurgiu of Frătăuți with Cetatea Albă reveals the special status of this port’s starostas in the Princely Council. After Stephen the Great’s rise to power, the princely authority in Cetatea Albă increased due to external factors, such as the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the growing dependence of the Genoese Pontic colonies on their contacts with the Principality of Moldavia and the increasing importance of the local pârcălabs, who regularly appeared among the members of the Princely Council.

6. The main centers at the mouth of the Danube in the 14th century were Byzantine Chilia in the Delta and Genoese Licostomo on the left bank. The Moldavian administration is attested here much later, between 1411-1448, ending with the enthronement of Peter II and the cession of the Danubian port to Iancu de Hunedoara. The second period of the princely administration of Chilia (1465-1484) featured the rebuilding of the fortress on the left and the completion of the defensive system with wooden and earth forts at the Southern Trajan’s Wall and Giurgiulești, while the projection of Moldavian military power expanded in northern Dobrogea.

7. After Baiazid II’s campaign in the summer of 1484, Cetatea Albă and Chilia were reorganized into kazas, while the new boundaries were drawn in 1486, marking the beginning of the new frontier north of the Danube, gradually completed with new charters from the Porte and compromises reached on the spot between the two sides. However, Suleiman I the Magnificent’s

campaign of 1538 launched a real crisis on the Moldavian-Ottoman border between 1538 and 1541, when the Porte sought to extend its dominion between the Prut and the Dniester. These intentions were abandoned after the anti-Ottoman revolt of Alexander Cornea, and Peter Rareș in his second reign managed to recover 26 villages along with the fortress of Cioburciu in exchange for financial compensation paid to the Turks between 1541-1552. Bugeac became a “white spot” in the Moldavian-Ottoman frontier after 1538 due to the low population density of this steppe region, which was not being colonized and exploited by the Moldavian or Ottoman subjects.

8. The Moldavian-Transylvanian frontier stretched unchanged through the Eastern Carpathians until the end of the 16th century, when the first disputes between Moldavian subjects and Saxons from the city of Bistrița were recorded. The domains of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă obtained by Stephen the Great from the kings of Hungary at the end of the 15th century were not modern-type enclaves under the jurisdiction of the Principality of Moldavia, but personal estates of the voivodes of Suceava which remained under the laws of the Hungarian Crown. Peter Rareș's active Transylvanian policy in 1529-1530 resulted in the consolidated rule over Ciceu, Cetatea de Baltă, Rodna and Unguraș, while failing to subdue Bistrița. After his loss of the throne in 1538, most of the Transylvanian domains came under the control of John Zápolya. In his second reign Peter Rareș returned his old fiefs of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă, but their fortifications were demolished at the request of the Transylvanian authorities, foreshadowing the later decisions of Alexander Lăpușneanu to return them to the Principality of Transylvania.

At the same time, on the basis of conducted research, we can make the following recommendations on the subject of territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia:

1. Firstly, the limitations around sources can be overcome by expanding their variety and number - the inclusion of a larger number of Ottoman, Transylvanian and Lithuanian documentary sources, as well as cartographic records from the 16th-18th centuries, could provide new clues and details regarding the eastern, south-eastern and western frontiers of Moldavia.

2. Further analysis of the mentions and positions held by the territorial dignitaries in the Princely Council in the 15th-16th centuries may reveal new details about their status in the political system of the East-Carpathian principality. The results obtained so far in the cases of Hotin and Cetatea Albă prove the viability of similar studies about other officials.

3. Another research direction could be the creation of maps of the border settlements in the Principality of Moldavia and neighboring regions. Determining the number of mentions of these settlements may reveal new details about the level of attention devoted to different border segments from the perspective of the princely power and may allow to identify a higher or lower density of documented settlements in different time periods.

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ADNOTARE

Autor: Alexandru Bejenaru.

Tema: Constituirea teritorială a Țării Moldovei (mijlocul secolului XIV – mijlocul secolului XVI). Teză de doctor în istorie, Chișinău, 2025.

Domeniul de studiu: specialitatea 611.02 – Istoria Românilor (pe perioade).

Cuvinte-cheie: Țara Moldovei, Regatul Poloniei, Uniunea polono-lituaniană, Hoarda de Aur, Republica Genoveză, Imperiul Otoman, Țara Românească, Transilvania, frontieră, hotar, dregători teritoriali.

Structura tezei: Adnotare; lista abrevierilor; introducere; 4 capitole, divizate în paragrafe; concluzii generale și recomandări; bibliografie din 414 titluri; 149 pagini text de bază; declarația privind asumarea răspunderii și CV-ul candidatului.

Scopul tezei: cercetarea procesului de formare teritorială a Țării Moldovei în mijlocul secolului XIV – mijlocul secolului XVI și gradului puterii teritoriale exercitate de domnii săi în raport cu propriile regiuni de frontieră și cu entitățile social-politice de cealaltă parte a hotarelor atât în perioadele pașnice, cât și în episoadele de crize, soldate cu litigii și conflicte între domnii Moldovei și vecinii lor pe diverse segmente de frontieră comună.

Obiectivele tezei: stabilirea succesiunii cronologice a teritoriilor, care au ajuns treptat în diferite etape sub controlul exercitat de către administrația moldovenească între mijlocul secolului XIV – mijlocul secolului XVI; caracterizarea evoluției puterii teritoriale a voievozilor de la Suceava la periferiile Țării Moldovei; determinarea gradului de influență a puterilor regionale din spațiul Europei Răsăritene și a comunităților locale asupra procesului constituirii și evoluției hotarelor Țării Moldovei; identificarea pozițiilor ocupate de dregătorii teritoriali în cadrul Sfatului domnesc pentru a determina evoluția statutului centrelor ținutale pe care aceștia le gestionau în numele voievozilor de la Suceava; precizarea locației anumitor localități amplasate în zonele de frontieră (Chilia, Licostomo, Crăciuna, Putna etc.), care au fost contestate în diferite perioade de domnii Moldovei sau de vecinii lor; determinarea apariției anumitor trăsături în raporturile bilaterale dintre Țara Moldovei și vecinii săi, care ar sugera o tranziție de la conceptul medieval al frontierei spre delimitările tot mai stricte sub formă de tratate și înțelegeri, tipice pentru hotarele statelor din epoca modernă timpurie.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică: teza reprezintă o sinteză complexă a genezei evoluției teritoriale a Țării Moldovei de la întemeierea sa la mijlocul secolului XIV și până la stabilizarea hotarelor și zonelor frontaliere cu vecinii săi către mijlocul secolului XVI. În cadrul său au fost aduse precizări și contribuții oferite în evoluția frontierei moldo-polon (problemele bătăliei de la Plonini și a Țării Șipenițului, creșterea importanței Hotinului și a dregătorilor săi în ochii domniei, tranziția de la frontiera medievală spre modificarea hotarelor vechi a Pocuției în raporturile moldo-polone), istoria administrației domnești a Cetății Albe, problema Chilie și Licostomului, evoluția frontierei moldo-muntene și specificul frontierei montane cu Transilvania.

Rezultatele obținute: sinteza procesului constituirii teritoriale a Țării Moldovei la nivelul actual al izvoarelor documentare și narative interne și externe cunoscute și al discursului prezent în cadrul istoriografiei române, polone și ucrainene.

Semnificația teoretică: lucrarea de față a fost elaborat cu luarea în cont a domeniului studiilor frontaliere din istoriografia universală contemporană. În același timp, sunt oferite noi contribuții privind istoria zonelor frontaliere a Țării Moldovei cu vecinii săi, care pot servi ca bază teoretică în viitor pentru continuarea cercetării acestui subiect.

Valoarea aplicativă: rezultatele atinse oferă posibilitatea reconstituirii mai exacte a specificului evoluției teritoriale a Țării Moldovei în evul mediu târziu, care pot sta la baza reînnoirii cursurilor universitare și preuniversitare despre istoria medievală a Moldovei. Totodată, contribuțiile aduse pot fi aplicate în scopuri de popularizare în masă a trecutului regiunilor de frontieră a Țării Moldovei sub forme de materiale ilustrative, infografice, video etc.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: rezultatele teoretice și practice au fost aprobate prin publicarea a 4 articole în reviste științifice acreditate, 4 teze și 6 materiale la manifestări științifice naționale și internaționale.

ANNOTATION

Author: Alexandru Bejenaru.

Theme: Territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia (mid-14th - mid-16th centuries). PhD thesis in history, Chişinău, 2025.

Field of study: specialty 611.02 – History of the Romanians (by periods).

Keywords: the Principality of Moldavia, the Kingdom of Poland, Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Golden Horde, the Republic of Genova, the Ottoman Empire, the Principality of Wallachia, Transylvania, the Kingdom of Hungary, frontier, border, territorial officials.

Structure of the thesis: Annotation; list of abbreviations; introduction; 4 chapters, divided into paragraphs; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography from 414 titles; 149 basic text pages; the statement of responsibility and the candidate's CV.

The aim of the thesis: investigating the process of territorial formation of the Principality of Moldavia in the mid-14th – mid-16th centuries and the degree of territorial power exercised by its princes over their own border regions and the socio-political entities on the other side of the frontier, both in peaceful periods and in episodes of crisis, which resulted in disputes and conflicts between the rulers of Moldavia and their neighbors in the various segments of the common frontiers.

The objectives of the thesis: to establish the chronological succession of the territories, which gradually ended up at various stages under the control of the Moldavian administration between mid-14th - mid-16th centuries; to characterize the evolution of the territorial power of the voivodes of Suceava to the peripheries of the Principality of Moldavia; to determine the degree of influence exerted by the regional powers of Eastern Europe and local communities on the process of constitution and evolution of the borders of the Principality of Moldavia; identifying the positions occupied by territorial officials within the Council of the Voivode to determine the evolution of the status of the county centers that they managed on behalf of the voivodes of Suceava; to determine the location of certain towns located in border areas (Chilia, Licostomo, Crăciuna, Putna, etc.), which were contested at different times by the Moldavian rulers or their neighbors; determining the emergence of certain features in the bilateral relations between the Principality of Moldavia and its neighbors, which would suggest a transition from the medieval concept of the frontier to the more strict delimitations in the form of treaties and agreements, typical for the borders between the states in the early modern period.

Scientific novelty and originality: the thesis represents a complex synthesis regarding the origins of the territorial evolution of the Principality of Moldavia from its foundation in the mid-14th century until the stabilization of its borders and frontier areas with its neighbors in the mid-16th century. There can be found clarifications and contributions to the evolution of the Moldavian-Polish frontier (the problems of the battle of Plonini and of the Sipei Land, the growing importance of Hotin and its dignitaries in the eyes of the ruling prince, the transition from the medieval frontier to the changes of the old borders of Pokuttia in the Moldavian-Polish relations), the history of the princely rule in Cetatea Albă, the problem of Chilia and Licostomo, the evolution of the Moldavian-Wallachian frontier and the specifics of the mountainous frontier with Transylvania.

The results obtained: synthesis of the process of territorial constitution of the Principality of Moldavia on the current level of the known internal and external documentary and narrative sources and of the present discourse in Romanian, Polish and Ukrainian historiography.

Theoretical significance: the following study has been elaborated with consideration of the field of border studies in contemporary world historiography. At the same time, new contributions on the history of the frontier areas of the Principality of Moldavia with its neighbors are provided, which can serve as a theoretical basis for further research on this topic in the future.

Application value: the accomplished results offer an opportunity to recreate more accurately the specifics of the territorial evolution of the Principality of Moldavia in the late Middle Ages, which can serve as a basis for the renewal of university and pre-university courses on the medieval history of Moldavia. At the same time, the contributions made can be applied for mass popularization of the past of the border regions of the Principality of Moldavia in the form of illustrative materials, infographics, videos, etc.

Implementation of scientific results: theoretical and practical results were approved by publishing 4 articles in accredited scientific journals, 4 thesis and 6 materials at national and international scientific events.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Автор: Александру Беженару.

Тема: Территориальное образование Молдавского княжества (середина XIV в. – середина XVI в.).
Докторская диссертация по истории, Кишинэу, 2025.

Область обучения: специальность 611.02 – История румын (по периодам).

Ключевые слова: Молдавское княжество, Королевство Польши, Польско-литовское государство, Золотая Орда, Генуэзская республика, Османская империя, Валашское княжество, Трансильвания, Королевство Венгрии, фронтир, граница, территориальные чиновники.

Структура и объем диссертации: Аннотация; список сокращений; введение; 4 главы, разделенные на параграфы; общие выводы и рекомендации; библиография из 414 названий; 149 основные текстовые страницы; сведения об ответственности и резюме кандидата.

Цель исследования: исследование процесса образования границ Молдавского княжества в середине XIV в. - середине XVI в. и степени территориальной власти его господарей по отношению к собственным пограничным регионам и социально-политическим образованиям по ту сторону границ, как в мирные периоды, так и в кризисные моменты, приводящие к спорам и конфликтам между правителями Молдовы и их соседями на различных участках общего фронта.

Задачи исследования: установление хронологической последовательности территорий, которые постепенно, на разных этапах, переходили под контроль молдавской администрации в период между серединой XIV в. – серединой XVI в.; охарактеризовать эволюцию территориальной власти воевод Сучавы на окраинах Молдавского княжества; определить степень влияния региональных восточноевропейских держав и местных сообществ на процесс формирования и эволюции границ Молдавского княжества; выявить позиции, занимаемые территориальными чиновниками в Господарском совете, с целью определения эволюции статуса центров цинутов, которыми они управляли от имени воевод из Сучавы; уточнить местоположение некоторых населенных пунктов в приграничных районах (Килия, Ликостомо, Крэчуна, Путна и др.), которые в разные периоды оспаривались молдавскими правителями или их соседями; определить появление некоторых признаков в двусторонних отношениях Молдавского княжества с его соседями, свидетельствующих о переходе от средневекового представления о фронтире ко все более строгим разграничениям в форме договоров и соглашений, характерных для границ государств раннего Нового времени.

Научная новизна и оригинальность исследования: диссертация содержит комплексный синтез истоков территориальной эволюции Молдавского княжества с момента его основания в середине XIV века и до стабилизации его границ и фронтирных областей со своими соседями в середине XVI века. В рамках данного исследования автор внес уточнения и дополнения в эволюцию молдавско-польской границы (проблемы битвы при Плонинах и Шипеницкой земли, рост значения Хотина и его наместников в глазах господарской власти, переход от средневекового пограничья к перекройке старых границ Покутья в рамках молдавско-польских отношений), историю господарской администрации в Белгороде, проблему Килии и Ликостомо, эволюцию молдавско-валашской границы и специфику горного фронта с Трансильванией.

Полученные результаты: Синтез процесса территориального оформления Молдавского княжества на основе известных внутренних и внешних документальных и повествовательных источников, а также на основе современного дискурса в румынской, польской и украинской историографии.

Теоретическая значимость исследования: данная работа была подготовлена с учетом области фронтирных исследований в современной мировой историографии. В то же время представлен новые подходы к истории пограничных районов Молдавского княжества с его соседями, которые могут послужить теоретической основой для дальнейших исследований по этой теме в будущем.

Прикладная ценность полученных результатов: Полученные результаты дают возможность более точно воссоздать специфику территориальной эволюции Молдавского княжества в позднем средневековье, что может стать основой для обновления университетских и предвуниверситетских курсов по средневековой истории Молдавии. В то же самое время, внесенный вклад может быть использован для широкой популяризации прошлого приграничных регионов Молдавского княжества в виде иллюстративных материалов, инфографик, видеороликов и пр.

Результаты исследования: теоретические и практические результаты подтверждены публикацией 4 статей в аккредитованных научных журналах, 4 резюме и 6 материалов на республиканских и международных научных мероприятиях.

BEJENARU ALEXANDRU

**TERRITORIAL CONSTITUTION OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF
MOLDAVIA (MID-14TH - MID-16TH CENTURIES)**

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