The reign, culture and legacy of Ştefan cel Mare, voivode of Moldova:

a case study of ethnosymbolism in the Romanian societies

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis seeks to explain the nature and strength of the latter-day status of Ştefan cel Mare in the republics of Romania and Moldova, and the history of his legacy. The regime and posthumous career of Ştefan cel Mare is examined through studies of history, politics and archaeology, set within the conceptual approach to nationalism that is known as "ethnosymbolism".

At the heart of this thesis lie the questions why does Ştefan cel Mare play a key role as a national symbol and how does this work in practice? These questions are addressed within an ethnosymbolist framework, which allows for the ethnosymbolist approach itself to be subjected to a critical study.

There is a lacuna in many ethnosymbolist works, a space for a more detailed consideration of the place of archaeology in the development of nationalism. This thesis contends that the results of archaeological research can be included in a rounded ethnosymbolist study. First, the history of archaeological sites and monuments may contribute to understanding the way in which historically attested cultural symbols are adopted by communities over time. Secondly, if studied carefully, archaeological evidence may have the potential to trace the evolution of identity characteristics, in line with ethnosymbolism's attempt to account for the formation of national identity in the pre-modern era.

The warlike days are over. Blood is too
precious a thing in these days of dishonourable
peace; and the glories of the great races are as
a tale that is told.

Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897), 37

"Blood is too precious a thing in these times.
The warlike days are over.
The victories of my great race are but a tale to be told.
I am the last of my kind."

Gary Oldman as Count Dracula, in *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992),
screenplay by James V. Hart,
directed by Francis Ford Coppola

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The screenplay for Francis Ford Coppola's film of *Dracula* skillfully adapts Bram Stoker's original prose, to make a wistful joke of the vampire count's need for fresh blood and to give an air of elegy to his quest for his long lost bride. A cinema audience need take no more from Gary Oldman's rasping delivery of these lines. And yet, in both Stoker's original words and those of the Hollywood screenplay nearly a century later, there are ideas which resonate for students of nationalism and which imbue *Dracula* with a seriousness and profundity which is quite unrelated to the themes of immortality, evil and desperate love that seem to inspire vampire literature.

Talk of "the great races" and "my great race"; of peace and war; and of history preserved in "tales" contrasting with a sense of the end of history itself – "I am the last of my kind": these are themes which underly the study of nations and nationalism. The identification of peoples with nations; the means by which peoples coalesce to form polities; the histories which define as well as record these "processes"; the personalities, mythical, legendary and historical, which populate national histories: these components are to be found in the study which follows, a study which focuses on the cousin of the historical Dracula.

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My wife Laura accompanied me on field trips to Romania and Moldova, serving as translator and negotiator in the hotels, restaurants, taxi ranks and car hire firms of Bessarabia and Bucovina. My mother took the photograph of Joan of Arc.

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INTRODUCTION: The framework of ethnosymbolism

The public legacy of Ştefan cel Mare (Stephen the Great), voivode of Moldova in the second half of the 15th century, is powerful and multi-faceted within the two Romanian nation states of modern Southeastern Europe. As an icon, Ştefan is ever-present: statues of his image abound; politicians cite him as an exemplar; schools and a university bear his name; villages and the main thoroughfares of towns and cities are named after him; there is a Ştefan cel Mare metro station in central Bucharest and his crowned head has adorned *every* Moldovan banknote.

This thesis seeks to explain the nature and strength of the latter-day status of Ştefan cel Mare in the republics of Romania and Moldova, and the history of his legacy. The regime and posthumous career of Ştefan cel Mare is examined through studies of history, politics and archaeology, set within the conceptual approach to nationalism that is known as "ethnosymbolism".

At the heart of this thesis lie the questions why does Ştefan cel Mare play a key role as a national symbol and how does this work in practice? These questions are addressed within an ethnosymbolist framework, which allows for the ethnosymbolist approach itself to be subjected to a critical study.

1 An explanation of ethnosymbolism

2004 marked the 500th anniversary of the death of Ştefan cel Mare and was celebrated in Southeastern Europe, like several anniversaries before it, with an outburst of commemorative public events and academic publications. These events went beyond mere ceremony and represented important statements in the separate political development of Romania and Moldova as post-communist nation states. They brought into relief the importance of symbols of national identity as way markers in the process of political change.

"Ethnosymbolism" is Professor Anthony D. Smith's influential contribution to the study of nationalism and national identity, by reference to the symbols, myths, traditions and values by which national communities are brought together (ethnosymbolism is defined and summarised in Smith 2009). Although it may be overstating the case to describe ethnosymbolism as a "school" – the approach is associated with Smith himself, and is a variant of other approaches to nationalism – Smith and a number of his contemporaries and students (including Athena Leoussi, Steven Grosby, John Hutchinson and Gabriela Elgenius) have created a body of work that addresses issues of identity and the role of the past in the present that is insightful in terms of bridging public and private expressions of belonging in contemporary societies: ethnosymbolism concentrates on the human elements of nationalism.[1]

1.1   Concepts of nationalism

Smith has defined "nationalism" as "an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population, some of whose members deem it to constitute a 'nation'" (Smith 2001, 442). Ethnosymbolism seeks to account for the origins of nations, and for their persistence and transformation over time.

Smith's approach is in part a response to the multitude of concepts and theories of nationalism which have achieved academic prominence, and in part a synthesis of some of those theories. However, he has been at pains to emphasise that ethnosymbolism itself is a cultural approach, *not* a theory: "... it offers no theory in the scientific sense, it seeks to provide some conceptual tools for an alternative approach and research programme for the study of nations and nationalism" (Smith 2009, 13; see also 125, 131).

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[1] The language of ethnosymbolism is attuned to that of anthropology. For example, the anthropologist Katherine Verdery's approach to political nationalism is reflected in ethnosymbolism, as she seeks to identify and explain the emotional and imaginative elements that bind people in political unions: "... instead of seeing nationalism, for instance, in the usual way – as a matter of territorial borders, state-making, "constructionism," or resource competition – I see it as part of kinship, spirits, ancestor worship, and the circulation of cultural treasures." (Verdery 1999, 26; 40-1.) Verdery has specialised in the study of Romania and former communist countries of Eastern Europe.

From among the most significant interpretations of nationalism, Smith has sought to improve upon the "instrumentalist" or "modernist" approach. One of the leading proponents of modernism is the distinguished Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm, who has interpreted nationalism in the context of the growth of capitalism, the unification of European nation states in the 19th century, the manipulations of the 20th-century dictators and the anti-fascist reaction of the European Left. Hobsbawm's persuasive analyses include the observation that while fascists such as Hitler in Germany (1933-45) and Mussolini in Italy (1922-43) abused notions of "patriotism" for the sole purpose of maintaining their power within their respective imperialist states, their socialist and communist opponents were also successful in promoting "patriotic sentiments" among those groups who worked against fascism (see Hobsbawm 1990, 141-50; Hutchinson 1994, 29-30).

However, Hobsbawm has set nationalism as a phenomenon within a restricted modern timeframe. His famous concept of the "invention of tradition" suggests that the governing elites of nascent European nation states constructed national ceremonies, monuments and imagery using historical allusions and spurious suggestions of authenticity to inspire popular support for the state; and that this practice was concentrated in the period 1870-1914, with the interwar era then featuring the "apogee" of nationalism (see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Introduction and chapter 7; Hobsbawm 1990, chapters 4 and 5; for a summary and critique of the concept, see Elgenius 2005, 265-9).[2] Smith takes a longer view than the modernists and refines Hobsbawm's dictum that tradition can be "invented" by those who seek to hold political power – although ethnosymbolism "does not deny that ethnicity, as an independent variable, can be *abused* and *manipulated*" (Conversi 2007, 17, my italics; Smith 2009, 20).

Similarly, whilst accepting to a degree the argument of his mentor, Ernest Gellner, that nationalism has created a form of societal organisation deriving from industrialisation in the modern age, Smith's approach is less dogmatic. Smith suggests that "nations" are malleable and subject to unpredictable change, and he argues that nationalism does not *depend* on

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[2] References in this thesis to the "age of nationalism" are to the period from the mid-19th century (from the 1848 revolutions) up to the end of the First World War, roughly in line with Hobsbawm's timeframe.

industrialisation, that some nationalist movements are known to have long predated the industrial revolution (Leoussi and Grosby 2007, 1-3; Conversi 2007, 19; Smith 2009, 4-5, 13-14):

> Ethnosymbolism underlines the continuity between premodern and modern forms of social cohesion, without overlooking the changes brought about by modernity. The persisting features in the formation and continuity of national identities are myths, memories, values, traditions and symbols. (Conversi 2007, 21)

For Smith, a nation is defined in ideal form as "a named and self-defining human community whose members cultivate shared memories, symbols, myths, traditions and values, inhabit and are attached to historic territories or 'homelands', create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and standardised laws" (Smith 2009, 29).

Conceptually, a nation is distinct from a "state", which Smith defines as "a set of autonomous institutions exercising a monopoly of coercion and extraction in a given territory" (ibid., 61-2). In contemporary experience, these concepts have become conflated – the nation state being a direct product of 19th-century European nationalism (Díaz-Andreu 2001, 435).

Ethnosymbolism is essentially a development or extension of modernism. The ethnosymbolist approach accepts the historical parameters of the formation of nation states (especially in Europe) as a matter of record; but it looks for the origins of nationalism and the causes of nation and state formation across a longer timeline (*la longue durée*) and also considers the persistence of nationalist phenomena into the 21st century. This characteristic of ethnosymbolism – the long view – makes it relevant and accessible as a method of study for students of medieval history and archaeology, whereas modernist (and post-modernist) interpretations, by definition, exclude pre-modern historical phenomena – conceptually and in fact – from analyses of nationalism.

1.1.1 "National consciousness" in medieval Europe

In this "long view", there is a danger for students of imposing anachronistic ideas of national identity and state formation onto groups of people in the past, for whom 20th- and 21st-century notions of nationalism would have been meaningless. However, while acknowledging the risks of applying "retrospective nationalism", there is still a discussion within medieval history about the presence of "national consciousness" in medieval Europe.

Communal identification was certainly given intellectual consideration by medieval writers. After all, the most famous work by the Northumbrian monk Bede (d. 735) goes by the title *Historia Ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* – the "Ecclesiastical History of the *English* People". Similarly, four centuries later, William, a benedictine monk of Malmesbury, wrote the *Gesta regum Anglorum* (Deeds of the Kings of the English), in which the English as a whole *and* the constituent peoples of the English are termed *gens*, *gentes* (Bartlett 2001, 42-3).

However, the boundaries which might define peoples were not quite the same as those in contemporary Europe: geographical boundaries were different; languages were different; the greatest institution of medieval Western Europe, the Church, acknowledged no boundaries at all – it was universal. Edwin Jones, who writes of "a distinctive quality of 'Englishry' in English culture" in the middle ages but who emphasises that Bede wrote in Latin, also declares the "English" to have been "European", "in terms of religion, language and culture", prior to the Reformation in the mid 16th century – which represented a break with a European heritage as much as a break with the Church in Rome (Jones 2000, 5-6, 10-11; cf. Bartlett 2001, 53).

Patrick Geary, who looks to the first millennium after Christ as the "formative period of European identity", warns of the fluidity and complexity of "Europe's peoples" throughout history, and certainly in the medieval period, while also allowing for forms of communal identity, "forms of imagining nations", long before the age of nationalism. In the high middle ages, "'nation' – along

with religion, kindred, lordship, and social stratum – provided one of the overlapping ways by which politically active elites identified themselves and organized collaborative action. However, a sense of belonging to a nation did not constitute the most important of these bonds. Nor did a common national identity unite the high and low, lord and peasant, into a deeply felt community of interest" (Geary 2002, 13, 15, 17, 19).

Anthony D. Smith, who has asserted the presence of national consciousness in the later middle ages – in England, Scotland, France and the Spanish kingdoms – explains the phenomenon of elite identity in ethnic terms, "lateral ethnicity" being an exclusive form of communal identification as opposed to "vertical ethnicity", by which communal identity spreads regardless of social status (Smith 1992, 55 and 2004, 187-8; see Chapter 5, Section 4, clause 2.2).

One geographical area in which an elitist sense of "national consciousness" has been identified is late medieval Poland. Here, the social elite claimed to be ethnically distinct from the Slav peasantry, claiming descent from the Sarmatian people of the Steppes (Geary 2002, 19, 21). But Polish identity may have had more sophisticated bases than elaborate claims of ethnic differentiation. Paul Knoll has identified several factors in late medieval Polish society and culture which may have contributed to a burgeoning national consciousness: hostility to German settlers; defence of territory, in particular in confrontation with the Teutonic Knights[3]; and the development of literary Polish and history-writing at Cracow University. The work of the chronicler John Długosz (1415-80) – whose wide-ranging history drew attention to national symbols and traditions – influenced a burgeoning national consciousness within the Polish nobility which carried on into the early modern era, defining Poland as a "political nation" (Knoll 2004, esp. 172-6).

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[3] The Knights of the Teutonic Order were originally a crusading order but between the 14th and 16th centuries the Order controlled a military principality in northern Europe, centred on Marienburg (Malbork) in Prussia (now in the City and County of Malbork, Pomeranian Voivodship, Poland).

The presence or otherwise of a medieval *Romanian* "national consciousness" is an important subject of discussion within Romanian historiography. For example, Alexandru Andreescu suggested that Ştefan cel Mare's support for the return of his cousin Vlad III Dracula to the throne of Wallachia in 1475/6 and their combined stance against the Ottomans "represents a fine example of the ideal of unity in medieval Romanian society" (Andreescu 1991, 148; cf. Treptow 2002, 18-19). But, while early modern chroniclers of Moldova, such as Grigore Ureche (c.1590-1647), affirm the ethnic unity of the Romanian peoples, Lucian Boia is generally dismissive of the idea of *political* national consciousness in the middle ages: "such thinking was foreign to the spirit of the age". Boia is particularly critical of the work of Ioan-Aurel Pop, whom he accuses of confusing *ethnicity* with *nation* (Boia 2001(a), 15, 39, 129, 134).

In terms of an ethnosymbolist analysis, ethnic community does not necessitate the establishment of a nation or state, but ethnic identity or identities do contribute to the formalisation of a nation. The strong ties between Moldova and Wallachia in the 15th century, whether symbolised by political marriage or manifested in joint defence against a common enemy, might suggest a common identity to go with a common purpose. In contrast, economic rivalry and frequent military confrontations between the "Romanian" principalities served to keep a dividing line between the inhabitants of these territories (see Chapter 2, clause 2.1.3).

Chapter 5 of this thesis looks in detail at the role of archaeology in this debate.

1.2   The connection between ethnicity and national identity

For ethnosymbolists, attributions of "ethnicity" lie at the heart of a nation. Ethnicity is understood in terms of cultural inheritance rather than "biological ties" – that is why varieties of common memories and symbols play such a central role in the revelation of national identity (Roshwald 2009, 166; Smith 2004, 186-7 and 2009, 25, 113).

In this thesis, ethnicity is understood to be a description of communal social identification, which finds expression in physical and artistic symbols, as well as through habitual behaviour.

Ethnicity is a contributing factor to national consciousness, and by definition ethnicity and the composition of ethnic groups is dynamic and changeable. Ethnic self-identification is reinforced through perceived opposition to "the other": when people of diverse cultural traditions interact or come into conflict. This is an important characteristic in a study of the development of medieval Moldova, which emerged in conflict with Tatar and Ottoman invaders and in competition with more powerful Christian states (see Jones 1997, 84, 108, 120, 126).

Concerning the development of nations in the modern era, Smith's approach ascribes particular importance to "intellectuals" as interpreters of the past of *ethnies* – the peoples of a nation[4]: "They [*intellectuals*] ... act as 'chroniclers' of the ethnic past, elaborating those memories which can link the modern nation back to its 'golden age'. Philosophers, archeologists, poets, literati and, most of all, historians are the key players in the ethnonational game" (Conversi 2007, 22). Intellectuals bring the past alive: "Scholars, artists and poets help the modern nation to draw sustenance from a re-lived ancient past, providing the linkage with earlier *ethnies* or ethnic communities" (ibid.; see Smith 2009, 55-6, 84-6). Stefan Ihrig emphasises this point in relation to transition countries:

> The historian plays a pivotal role in all forms of nationalism. In the case of transition countries, the historian assumes the role of archaeologist of the nation... The historian in these societies is expected to "rediscover" the "truth" from the rubbles [*sic*] of history in a process of "renovation", "reconstruction" and ultimately "nationalisation" of history. (Ihrig 2008, 151; see also Smith 2001, 443, 446 and 2009, 64-5, 68)[5]

In addition to intellectuals, a nation's identity is dependent on a group of intermediaries, defined as the "professionals", who act as a conduit to the masses for the ideas of the

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[4] A "nation" is not necessarily composed of a single people (Greek: *ethnos*) but can be a collection of peoples (French: *ethnie(s)*, there being no suitable English equivalent term, according to Smith), although the language of political nationalism is often far more simplistic than this. Smith is very open about the difficulty of distinguishing between concepts of *ethnie* and nation, Özkırımlı having been critical of the confusion of terminologies in the ethnosymbolist approach (Özkırımlı 2003, 345; Smith 2004, 185 and 2009, 112-13).
[5] A "Transition Country" in this context is a post-communist state of Central and Eastern Europe engaged in massive economic and societal reform. Discussion of this concept is developed in the case of Romania and Moldova in Chapter 3.

intellectuals. Together, these groups form the "intelligentsia". "Once the intelligentsia begins to challenge officialdom by exploiting its strategic position, it becomes a key protagonist of expanding mass movements" (Conversi 2007, 22; cf. Geary 2000, 17-18, 40).

1.3   Critiques of ethnosymbolism

Ethnosymbolism attracts a range of conceptual criticisms (which Smith confronts in the sixth chapter of his 2009 synthesis). More strikingly, ethnosymbolists are criticised for being, at best, politically naïve, for downplaying the role of nationalism in the origins of conflict, and even for providing a means to legitimate extremism (Özkırımlı 2003, 352-3). While ethnosymbolism is "limited in its power to explain how ethnic conflicts emerge and how nations are mobilised", the approach is also criticised for being "neo-romantic" and lacking contemporary political nuance: by attributing influence to the ideas of intellectuals in the formation of national consciousness in an age of mass media. To a greater or lesser extent, mass media is influenced by political elites which "are now key agents in nationalist movements". An example of disastrous political nationalism is provided by the break-up of Yugoslavia and its subsequent civil war: "The country collapsed mostly because of the extreme distortion of pre-existing ethnonational myths blazed abroad by state-controlled media" (Conversi 2007, 24-5; cf. Hosking 2007, 737).

Nevertheless, despite its weaknesses when set against aggressive politicking, ethnosymbolism is a powerful concept in having emphasised the importance of the transmission of ethnicity through signs and symbols in the process of nation-building. Furthermore, Smith has a sympathetic view of the nature of a nation – "a community of history and destiny" – and ethnosymbolism draws particular attention to the role of representative symbols *and/or* individuals in the expression of collective, national consciousness (Smith 2001, 442; Leoussi and Grosby 2007, 2, 5-6).

Ethnosymbolism is not a theory to be tested. Rather, Smith offers a dispassionate means for understanding the manifestation of national identity or nationalism within societies: "...a research strategy and programme for understanding the widespread popular appeal of nationalism, leaving aside, as far as possible, value preferences in favour of rigorous analysis" (Smith 2009, 106). Accordingly, this thesis does not offer a direct critique of ethnosymbolism but accepts and follows its principles as a means of better understanding the importance of the imagery of medieval princes in particular contemporary societies – those societies which have been subject to reformation, or at least redefinition, following the breakdown of communism.

It is as a sign or symbol of national identity that Ştefan cel Mare and the material remains of his regime – in particular, architecture and public art – have been accorded a continuing role in the Romanian societies.[6] But ethnosymbolism also promotes study of the origins and progression of symbols of identity. Therefore, in this thesis, Ştefan and the history and archaeology of his time is set within the long term, to attempt to account for Ştefan's status in the age of nationalism and beyond, and the characteristics of his legacy which made it possible for him to become a national icon.

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The principles of ethnosymbolism *do* need to be examined in detail. Umut Özkırımlı is largely dismissive of ethnosymbolism as a "theory" on intellectual and, seemingly, moral grounds. Somewhat uncharitably, he accurately points out inconsistencies over time in Smith's explanation of ethnosymbolism. But Özkırımlı's strident criticisms actually highlight the areas in which ethnosymbolism can work as an approach, as an intellectual framework. Ethnosymbolism allows for necessary questions to be posed concerning the *selection* of ethnic signs and symbols at any given period in a nation's history, and their *resonance* within the *ethnies* of a nation – the variety of responses to nationalist phenomena within a community or communities. Taken together, the

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[6] Following Durkheim and in accordance with the ethnosymbolist approach, Gabriella Elgenius explains that people, whether real or mythical, can become symbols just like objects, if "collective sentiments" – the revelation to a group of people of the symbolic meanings that are attached to objects of identity – become "incarnate" in those individuals (Elgenius 2005, 104; see also Chapter 4, clause 1).

investigation of these issues allows for the general principles of ethnosymbolism to be applied to case studies of national identity (see Özkırımlı 2003, 344-351; Smith 2009, 21).

This thesis studies how and why ethnic signs and symbols have been used and transmitted in practice within the complex societies of the Romanian space. The reception of ethnic symbolism by the *ethnies* of this area cannot be assumed to be passive, monoline or unchanging. Medieval archaeological sites and monuments are accorded prominence in this thesis as signs, symbols and agents which may have appeared in the revelation of national identity, and as a means to consider more generally the contribution of archaeology to the ethnosymbolist approach.

2   Archaeology and nationalism

The "archaeology" which provides the data for this research is late medieval archaeology – in this case the archaeology of buildings associated with a governing elite, attested by documentary sources. The evidence derived from medieval archaeology is apposite for an ethnosymbolist study: historically, medieval archaeology has been significant in the development of concepts of nationalism, although it has played second fiddle to classical archaeology (Díaz-Andreu 2001, 433).

The practice of archaeology and the character of archaeological evidence were explained admirably by Philip Barker. While there is a broad dividing line between prehistory and historic periods, the guiding principles of archaeological research are constant:

> Excavation recovers from the earth archaeological evidence obtainable in no other way. The soil is an historical document which, like a written record, must be deciphered, translated, and interpreted before it can be used. For the very long prehistoric periods of man's history excavation is almost the only source of information and for the protohistoric and historic periods it provides evidence where the documents are silent or missing.

... The whole of our landscape, rural and urban, is a vast historical document. On its surface has accumulated a continuous accretion of hundreds of thousands of small acts of change, both natural and human. The purpose of excavation is to sample the sequence and effect of these surface changes at a chosen point.

... Every archaeological site is itself a document. It can be read by a skilled excavator, but it is destroyed by the very process which enables us to read it. Unlike the study of an ancient [*sic*] document, the study of a site by excavation is an unrepeatable experiment. (Barker 1982, 11-12)

Barker's explanation is taken as a definition of the archaeology of sites, monuments and buildings for the purposes of this thesis.[7] His analogy of soil and landscape being an historical document neatly sums up the value of archaeology to historians: the material record of the past that may co-exist with documentary sources and which can be read in a complementary manner. The relationship need not be straightforward: it cannot simply be the case that archaeology "fills in the gaps" left by partial documentary records any more than that archaeology serves to corroborate documentary sources. But taken together, the historical and the archaeological records (incorporating finds and art historical materials) can provide an inclusive body of evidence for the study of the past.

The relationship between archaeology and nationalism in the public sphere – interpreted through ethnosymbolism – is an important component of this research. The practice and interpretation of archaeology has had a long association with nationalism: scholars have argued that the development of archaeology as a discipline has gone hand-in-glove with the evolution of forms of nationalism in modern Europe (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996, 3-5).[8]

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[7] The choice of Barker is a purely personal one, as I trained in field techniques under his direction at Wroxeter Roman City in Shropshire.
[8] This thesis cannot provide a review of all the concepts of "nationalism", but two analyses are of particular relevance to the practice of history and archaeology and can be summarised here.

Hutchinson argues for two basic categories – "cultural nationalism" and "political nationalism". These forms are by no means mutually exclusive. The latter has as its aim the establishment of an autonomous nation state; the former category discovers national identity in common culture and history (whether real or mythologised) and does not require the creation of state institutions – instead, a national community is bound together by its culture. Archaeologists and historians can be identified as "cultural nationalists" (see clause 3 below). In practice, cultural

Professional archaeology often owes its very existence to the support of a nation state. The institutionalisation of archaeology by a state government or elite – by the creation of museums, research centres and the like – together with the protection and preservation of sites and monuments through legislation, represent the core components upon which careers in archaeology can be built. In extremis, archaeologists may find their ability to work conditioned further by the state – say, in an authoritarian regime that imposes overtly political interpretations on national history, or in a laissez faire economy that submits archaeological research to the dictates of the market. Some archaeologists submit willingly to such constraints, some oppose ideological interference, but all archaeology takes place within a socio-political context (see Díaz-Andreu 2001, 429 and 431-4; Silberman 2001, 502; Dietler 2008, 218, 221; Evans 2008, 232; Fowler 2008, 95-6, 118-119; Stefanou 2010, 192).

Allowing for occasional crises of interference, archaeology has played a role in the *construction* of myriad national identities, amongst ethnic communities and within nation states (Kaiser 1995, 99). Archaeological sites and monuments can acquire significance in the public eye that makes archaeology, landscape and territory important to communal self-identification: the royal coronation site at Székesfehérvár and the infamous battle ground at Mohács in Hungary are focal points of contemporary Hungarian national consciousness, for example (Engel 2001, 370-1; Molnár, 2001, 85; see Díaz-Andreu 2001, 437).

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nationalism can serve as the progenitor of political nationalism (see Hutchinson 1994, ch. 2; Smith 2009, 66-7).

Díaz-Andreu distinguishes "civic nationalism" and "ethnic nationalism". In Europe, the former grew out of the ideas of the Enlightenment and revolution, most notably the French Revolution of 1789. The classical past and ancient civilisations served as exemplars for new concepts of governance and citizenship, as well as of empire, and archaeological investigation of the ancient past was bound up with the propagation of the concept of the nation. However, archaeology and nationalism did not develop along fixed lines and "parallel discourses" are apparent in the 19th and 20th centuries relating to investigation of both antiquity and indigenous history by emerging nation states. The unification movements in Italy and Germany (which ran parallel to the process of unification in the Romanian principalities) signified the succession of "ethnic nationalism", based on a concept of the common descent of a people forming a nation state: "History – and therefore archaeology – had, more than ever, a fundamental legitimating role in the justification of the common features that made up an ethnic nation" (Díaz-Andreu 2001, 435). Ethnic nationalism brought prehistory to the fore, embedding archaeology within the nationalist discourse, because prehistory was interpreted as being the source of a nation.

Formal education in history and archaeology can promote or reinforce concepts of identity. At its worst, this process can be used to foster ethnic, religious or racial separatism. Archaeology can be used to justify enforced territorial or social boundaries – even apartheid and the suppression of minorities. The Ceauşescu regime promoted ethnic Romanian superiority to the detriment of Hungarians, Roma and other minorities settled in the territory of post-war Romania (Kaiser 1995, 115-6; Niculescu warns that the politicisation of Romanian archaeology has continued into the 21st century: Niculescu 2007, 154).

What are the qualities that make archaeology susceptible to the promotion of nationalism? According to Díaz-Andreu and Champion, archaeological evidence is versatile. Archaeological material is "old" and can impose the eminence of age on a claim to land. Artefacts, sites and monuments can be used to differentiate peoples and legitimate expressions of ownership and identity. As physical evidence, archaeology can supply a more accessible and stimulating connection with the past than the written word, while sites and monuments provide foci for communities and economic opportunities through tourism (Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996, 19-21; Champion 2001, 463; Díaz-Andreu 2001, 438).

However, archaeology can be popular, iconic and topical without being used or understood as an agent of identity by an ethnic or national group, or by a nation state. In crude terms, although Stonehenge is the poster child of English Heritage (properly, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England), in the 21st century it is not a focal point for an *ethnos* or *ethnies* seeking to identify themselves as a nation; it holds a more opaque status as an enigmatic site of world renown that is located within the borders of England (see Fowler 1992, 101-3 and passim; cf. Smith 1986, 207 and 2004, 198).[9]

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[9] For examples of English Heritage's promotion of Stonehenge as an attraction, see http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/stonehenge/.
    The historiography of the site is certainly complex: Smith notes Stonehenge's status as a symbol of the antiquity of Britain in the "ethnic consciousness of the nation" in the 18th and 19th centuries (Smith 2004, 198). From amongst the myriad analyses of Stonehenge, Don D. Fowler's suggestion that Stonehenge has elicited a British national chauvinism – through Romantic ideas of British Druidical genius and the diffusion of "higher knowledge", which appealed to the colonial

The wider social and political context is crucial to the role of archaeology as an identifier. In a relatively stable and settled social environment, historic sites and monuments can serve as tokens of pride and interest to a community, without acquiring more contentious attributes relating to cultural, ethnic or territorial significance. In subject or unstable societies, archaeology can take on more complex and sometimes malign properties.

A curious example can be cited from communist Hungary in the 1950s. Political interference in academic research threatened the lives of historians and archaeologists, while "ideologically forced, but academically excellent research projects" were undertaken. One such project, the "History of the Material Culture of the Hungarian People", an unfinished programme with a nationalist and Marxist bent, sought to establish a database of all aspects of Hungarian material culture. Though constrained by the politics of the era, useful work resulted which has retained its value today (Laszlovszky 1999, 432-3).

The break-up of Yugoslavia in the 1990s placed archaeology in a tragic context. The end of Yugoslavia was characterised by savage civil warfare on the land of three of the federal states – Croatia, Bosnia-Hercegovina, and the province of Kosovo in Serbia – warfare that owed much to long-standing ethnic tensions. Evil campaigns of "ethnic cleansing" were conducted, which were intended to bring about new territorial entities populated by inhabitants of supposedly common ethnicity and culture. Archaeological sites and historic buildings therefore achieved great prominence in the Yugoslav wars. Taken as representations of cultural, ethnic and religious identity, mosques were destroyed, churchyards and cemeteries were mined, medieval walls and mansion houses were bombarded, and museum artefacts were stolen, all in the interests of combatants who looked to erase the physical traces of their opponents' cultural heritage (Chapman 1994; Šulc 2001, 162). There has been no clearer example in Europe in recent decades of the powerful influence of the past in the present, nor of the importance of the material remains of the past in public life.

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mindset in the age of empire – imbues the popular interpretation of Stonehenge with a gravitas which seems to be at odds with the site's current exploitation as a tourist attraction. See Fowler 2008, 108-111.

In Chapter 5, this thesis surveys the work of archaeologists in Romania, Moldova and the borderlands of Ukraine. Antiquarians, historians, excavators and professional archaeologists in the late 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries have worked in this area at the behest of, or in the shadow of, imperial authorities (notably, the Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Hapsburgs), dictatorships (the Ceauşescu regime in Romania, amongst others) and reform governments engaged in economic transition. The practice of archaeology has been conditioned by events and politics. As will be seen, the relationship between archaeology and nationalism which is summarised in this introduction is all too apparent in the history of archaeological research in the Romanian space.

3   The treatment of archaeology by ethnosymbolists

The principles of ethnosymbolism suggest that its students should pay particular attention to archaeological artefacts, sites and monuments as symbols and identifiers, but this is not always the case. For example, archaeology receives only the briefest acknowledgement in Gabriella Elgenius' fluent survey of theories of nationalism at the head of her doctoral thesis, and that in a footnote (Elgenius 2005, 31 n.47): indeed, that is the only mention in her thesis of archaeology *per se*, notwithstanding her treatment of national monuments and symbolic artefacts.

A student of Smith, Elgenius' subject of study is national symbolism expressed through flags and public ceremonies. As will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis, the Moldovan flag established during the independence process of 1989-91 incorporates an auroch's head symbol that derives from the insignia of the medieval voivodes of the Principality of Moldova, a symbol that has been preserved in medieval buildings and inscriptions and recovered on epigraphic fragments at archaeological sites across the former territory ruled by Ştefan cel Mare. The practice of archaeology has been central to the recent preservation of such insignia, making their transmission in the public arena possible [photograph 23].[10]

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[10] Elgenius, who argues that flags have become the national symbol *par excellence* in the nation states of Europe, categorises flags that contain heraldic elements (medieval colours and/or symbols) as "new" flags, largely the products of socio-political developments post-1918. Heraldic elements feature prominently in the flags of post-communist nations in Central and Eastern

Archaeology receives no direct treatment in the collection of essays published in Anthony D. Smith's honour by Leoussi and Grosby in 2007. Instead, there are tangental references through Armstrong's study of the contest between Islamic and Christian architecture; Gal's references to the Biblical and classical origins of prominent Israeli national emblems; and Leoussi's survey of the Arms of post-communist European nation states (all in Leoussi and Grosby 2007). Elsewhere, Grosby cites the potential of anthropology, social philosophy and religious studies to contribute to nationalism studies, but makes no mention of archaeology (Özkırımlı and Grosby 2007, 535).

In contrast, John Hutchinson – another of Smith's students and colleagues – has surveyed the relationship between archaeology and the development of Irish nationalism in the 19th and 20th centuries, and has asked directly how the material remains of the past function as symbols and bearers of meaning to national communities (Hutchinson 2001). According to Hutchinson, the Celtic revival in 19th-century Ireland, which was initiated by George Petrie, an antiquarian-cum-archaeologist, was at first a movement of cultural rather than political nationalism, in which archaeological sites and monuments were adopted as images to revive "the Irish collective conscience". As a "populariser and propagandist", Petrie and fellow artists sought to transmit images of Ireland's early medieval "golden age" through illustrated guidebooks and romanticised paintings (ibid., 508-10). The antiquarian movement which Petrie inspired provided a "stock of national symbols", "a repertoire of national expression for the proliferating and often competing institutions of a society becoming increasingly urbanised and middle class, and yet seeking roots in an 'authentic' past" (ibid., 510).

Hutchinson's qualification of the word "authentic" is necessary, as he emphasises how the various national symbols of Ireland's Celtic past were interpreted in different ways by the religious and political communities of later 19th-century Ireland: common symbols are capable of bearing multiple meanings and interpretations (ibid., 512-16). But despite the socio-political complexities that overwhelmed Irish history in the late 19th and 20th centuries – as political nationalism grew

Europe, asserting both national independence and continuity through association with historically attested symbols. (Elgenius 2005, 57, 79, 83, 101, 132, 135, 138.)

and ethno-religious divides were exacerbated – the Celtic revival still offers insights into aspects of the adoption, transmission and continuity of artefacts and archaeological sites and monuments as symbols that are fundamental to the ethnosymbolist approach. Hutchinson describes the use of Hiberno-Romanesque styles (including round towers and Celtic crosses) in Protestant and Catholic church architecture, and the prominence of Celtic designs in funerary sculptures, as a prominent example of the incorporation of archaeological symbols into "the texture of everyday life". Rather than being an example of "banal nationalism", which is how Michael Billig defines the phenomenon of the ubiquity of symbols in the contemporary world of nation states, for Hutchinson this is "the process through which nationalism is transformed into national identity" (ibid., 510).[11]

Hutchinson argues that the contribution of archaeology to Irish culture needs to be set within a broad context. The Celtic revival found expression in pictorial art, which in turn influenced Irish literature. The artistic and literary movements of 19th- and 20th-century Ireland drew on European influences as well as on concepts of indigenous culture. Archaeology had a clear role in the creation of a repertoire of images, styles and heroic tales, but archaeology and the symbolism that archaeology presented to Irish nationalists was diffused within the wider culture (ibid., 516-17).[12]

Ultimately, Hutchinson's review is that of an historian rather than an archaeologist, and his knowledge of archaeology is second-hand. The unusual degree of attention that he gives to archaeology is a reminder of the prominence of cultural historians in the field of nationalism studies.

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[11] See Billig 1996, 6: "...the term **banal nationalism** is introduced to cover the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced ...Nationalism ...is the endemic condition." (*original emphasis*)

[12] While the artistic interpretation of archaeological artefacts and symbols is a serious contributor to the dissemination of ideas about the past, Michael Dietler rightly warns that artistic representations can be comically misleading if artists incorporate anachronistic materials into a single image, or embellish representations of artefacts (Dietler 2008, 218-9).

John A. Armstrong, one of Professor Smith's direct contemporaries and a major influence on his work, can be seen as one such cultural historian (Smith 2004, 9-10). Armstrong's major contribution to nationalism studies, *Nations before Nationalism*, is a thematic work of historical analysis that often takes an anthropological approach (Armstrong 1982). Concerned with the history of identity and ethnicity before the age of nationalism, Armstrong compares the progression of Christian and Islamic polities through case studies. In these, he discusses conceptual approaches to the formation of communal identities, such as the "boundary properties" of ethnicity (expressed by language, lifestyle and territory, but not necessarily by discrete material culture); civic identity as a progenitor of national identity; and the importance of myths and symbols in the communication of identity across generations (chapters one, two and four). Armstrong brings to the fore the idea of the "mythomateur", the conglomeration of myths by which a polity sustains its identity and which can in time promote national consciousness (see ibid., 8-9 and 297).

While Armstrong studies ideas and beliefs, contextualising his work through the confrontation of religions (Christanity and Islam) and variants of religious belief (competition between Christian denominations) in Europe in the medieval period, he does make reference to material evidence too, for example in relation to Magyar weaponry (ibid., 49), and he cites archaeological evidence in relation to town morphology (ibid., 100). Armstrong sees regular town plans as a symbolic expression of civic consciousness, promoting social order, and key buildings like cathedrals and municipal palaces as symbols of unity as well as of power. However, this is as close as he comes to a discussion of archaeology.

Anthony D. Smith does address the techniques of archaeological investigation directly and shows an appreciation for the detail of archaeological research, but he doesn't follow this up with case studies (see Smith 1986, 171-2; also see below, Chapter 6, clause 1). Instead, for Smith archaeology actually serves as a metaphor for the activities of political nationalists. He suggests that nationalists *rediscover* the nation, contextualise the past and forge the shape of the community, becoming "political archaeologists". Adapting notions of stratigraphy, context, and

attribution, Smith posits political nationalists as the interpreters of communal pasts and shapers of communal identity and destiny (Smith 2004, 23 and 2009, 65-6).

Smith's metaphor reappears in an interesting survey by Christopher Wilson of the design and history of the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the Anıtkabir in Ankara, Turkey. Wilson draws attention to the important role that state-sponsored archaeology played in the creation of an "imagined history" of the Turks in the newly independent Republic of Turkey from 1923. Atatürk's new republic sought to dissociate its history from that of the recently departed Ottoman Empire and used archaeology and art historical research, together with linguistic studies, to build up a corpus of national imagery and a narrative history that was designed to bring together the "Turkish people" in a collective identity that "bypassed" centuries of Ottoman history. The architectural and decorative features of Atatürk's mausoleum embodied this approach, perpetuating the state's "storytelling" of a manipulated, invented national history (Wilson 2007, 93-6, 98-9, 103).[13]

Imagery derived from archaeological material is incorporated into the mausoleum complex, most dramatically in the "Street of Lions" – a ceremonial approach to the mausoleum which is flanked by stone lions that are "blatantly reminiscent of the Hittite lions found in archaeological digs sponsored by the early Republic of Turkey" (ibid., 99). More generally, motifs derived from so-called "National Excavations" in the 1930s became commmonplace in Turkish architecture and sculpture of the period (ibid., 96).

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[13] The rejection of the Ottoman past was encapsulated in the mausoleum architects' explanation of their design. Associating the Ottoman era with "the Middle Ages", the architects set out a design vision that embraced a longer view and the Republic's constructed origin myth; the vision also sought to differentiate Atatürk as a national icon from examples available from the Ottoman era: "Atatürk, rescuing us from the Middle Ages, widened our horizons and showed us that our real history resides not in the Middle Ages but in the common sources of the classical world. In a monument for the leader of our revolution and our savior from the Middle Ages, we wanted to reflect this new consciousness. Hence, we decided to construct our design philosophy along the rational lines of a seven-thousand-year-old classical civilization rather than associating it with the tomb of a sultan or a saint." (Quoted in Wilson 2007, 97.) Such sentiments serve as a direct contrast with the prominence of medieval luminaries in the nation-building projects of former communist states: see Chapter 4 below.

However, despite the strong presence of archaeology in the conceptual and structural history of Atatürk's mausoleum, Wilson's focus is more anthropological and he offers a surprising one-line disclaimer on the subject of archaeology: "Such a reliance and dependence on archaeology should not be overlooked." Rather than continue with the archaeological theme, instead Wilson then refers the reader to Anthony D. Smith's suggestion that a nationalist "is a sort of archaeologist" (ibid.).

It appears that archaeology is important as a metaphor in ethnosymbolism; but, as the studies by Hutchinson and Wilson both show, the potential function of archaeological sites and monuments as symbols in themselves, and as contributors to the development of narratives of national identity, is handled more obliquely by ethnosymbolists.

4   Aims of this thesis

There is a *lacuna* in many ethnosymbolist studies, a space for a more detailed consideration of the place of archaeology in the development of nationalism. This thesis contends that the results of archaeological research can be included in a rounded ethnosymbolist study. First, study of the history of archaeological sites and monuments may contribute to understanding the way in which historically attested cultural symbols are adopted by communities over time. Secondly, if studied carefully, archaeological evidence may have the potential to trace the evolution of identity characteristics, in line with ethnosymbolism's attempt to account for the formation of national identity in the pre-modern era.[14]

The person and times of Ştefan cel Mare are examined in detail as a case study of ethnosymbolism. The reign of Ştefan cel Mare has been the subject of numerous historical studies

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[14] This controversial and difficult area of study is addressed directly at the beginning and end of Chapter 5 and at the beginning of Chapter 6.

for more than a century, particularly by historians in Central and Eastern Europe ("CEE").[15] Ştefan's importance as a national symbol in the post-communist Romanian nation states has also attracted academic attention in the West, most notably in Germany (see Iijima and Dumbrava (eds.), 2005). This thesis considers Ştefan cel Mare from both these perspectives but adds a further dimension to analysis of his legacy by means of a survey of the archaeology of his reign and the contribution that archaeological research may have made to Ştefan's public record.

For a processualist and/or post-processualist audience, archaeology might seem to be an inappropriate addition to an ethnosymbolist study: as has been described in clause 3 above, ethnosymbolists are essentially cultural historians and when archaeology is discussed in ethnosymbolist works, it is in culture-historical terms (see Díaz-Andreu 2001, 436 and 438; Smith 2009, 65-6). However, issues of national identity and national consciousness in medieval Europe link the concerns of medieval historians with the principles of ethnosymbolism and medieval archaeology is of itself a significant component of medieval studies. Furthermore, while traditionally the spread of Ştefan cel Mare's reputation has been due to historians and writers, the contemporary era of heritage suggests that material evidence is important too. The physical remains of the medieval Romanian principalities are now being used to provide tangible symbols of past glories to the general public, for political and economic ends. Therefore, this thesis investigates how artefacts, sites and monuments relate to the status of Ştefan cel Mare as an ethno-national symbol.

The components of ethnosymbolism by which the influence of archaeology on the continuation of Ştefan's legacy can be judged are emphasised by Özkırımlı (see clause 1.3 above): *selection* and *resonance*. This thesis discusses the various mechanisms of selection by which Ştefan cel Mare became, and continues to be, an ethno-national symbol, and the manner in which the legacy of Ştefan's reign may be seen to resonate in the Romanian societies.

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[15] For details of the historiography of Ştefan cel Mare, see Chapter 2, clause 3 and Chapter 4, clause 4.

Mechanisms of Selection: Chapter 2, which brings to the reader's attention the enduring importance of Ştefan's building works, concludes with a description of the way in which his memory has been preserved through folklore, chronicle-writing and literature, and the importance which these acquired in the era of national awakening in the late 19th century. Chapters 3 and 4 consider the political narratives within which Ştefan cel Mare has served as a symbol of national identity. Following these themes, Chapter 5 surveys not just the archaeological research which has been carried out at key sites associated with Ştefan, but also the cultural and political drivers behind the work.

Resonance: In keeping with the principle of ethnosymbolism that the "intelligentsia" plays a central role in the interpretation of a nation's history for the peoples of the nation, each chapter of this thesis relies on the published work of scholars. Chapter 4 deals with issues of commemoration and manipulation in the age of nationalism and beyond, assessing the presentation of Ştefan as a national hero by political elites and intellectuals, and the reception of this image by the Romanian societies. Chapters 5 and 6 seek to contextualise the work of medieval archaeologists in relation to scholarly, political and general audiences. Chapter 6 focuses on the contemporary reception and use of buildings, sites and monuments in Romania and Moldova, as places of tourism and entertainment, and as examples of conservation.

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In reviewing Ştefan cel Mare's political afterlife as a hero of the nation state, this thesis focuses on the period between 1989 and 2007 – from the overthrow of the Ceauşescu regime in Romania and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, which brought independence to Moldova, through to Romania's accession to the European Union. While Ştefan's long career in the pantheon of Romanian heroes is referenced throughout, this thesis is intended to throw light on recent socio-economic and political realities in Romania and Moldova, in which Romania's accession to the European Union appears as a watershed in the post-communist development of both nation states.

This thesis was written during the global economic crisis, which erupted with the collapse of the international investment bank Lehman Brothers in the autumn of 2008. Although the Moldovan elections of 2009 are highlighted as marking a potentially important change of political direction, the onset of the global economic crisis reinforces the temporal parameters of this study, for while the worldwide economic difficulties are referenced occasionally herein, the course and long-term effects of the crisis are still unknown.

5   Structure of this thesis

This thesis is made up of six interlocking essays, set within three elements ("Parts") that comprise an ethnosymbolist framework. Part One establishes the historical context. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the emergence and development of Romania and Moldova as two separate states, in accordance with the principle of ethnosymbolism that the study of nationalism should be set within a deep historical context – *la longue durée*. Chapter 2 then looks in detail at the history and characteristics of the reign of Ştefan cel Mare, providing the necessary historical backcloth for the studies of politics and archaeology that follow.

Part Two considers how Ştefan cel Mare's history was revealed as a legacy to the Romanian people in the 19th, 20th and early 21st centuries, and addresses central tenets of ethnosymbolism – the persistence and transformation of nations – in the context of the development of Romania and Moldova as nation states. Chapter 3 encompasses a general study of the socio-political features of contemporary Romania and Moldova and reviews the tensions that have existed between the two countries before and following the fall of communism in Southeastern Europe. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the role of national symbols in the process of establishing identity in post-communist states, and studies the example of Ştefan cel Mare as an ethno-national symbol in detail.

Part Two also serves as a bridge between the interpretative history of Chapter 2 and the synthesis of the archaeology of major buildings and sites asssociated with Ştefan cel Mare, which is set out in Part Three. In Chapter 5, a selection of these key buildings, sites and monuments is described in depth, providing the first English-language overview of archaeology from the era of Ştefan cel Mare. This survey is then used to consider the extent to which material remains have contributed to the preservation of Ştefan's memory, in the pre-modern era, in the age of nationalism, and after. Chapter 6 then assesses the function of archaeological sites and monuments as identifiers and socio-economic resources in contemporary Romania and Moldova. Overall, Part Three is intended to clarify the manner in which archaeology can contribute to ethnosymbolism, so that the Conclusion addresses the question "What does the case of Ştefan cel Mare reveal about ethnosymbolism (and vice versa)?" with a focus on the role of medieval archaeology in the continuation of Ştefan's legacy.

The thesis is supplemented by Volume 2. This contains illustrations – reproductions of photographs, drawings and plans of the sites and monuments discussed in Chapter 5; photographs of significant statuary and images of Ştefan cel Mare and his contemporaries; photographs of sites and monuments in Romania, Moldova and Hungary which are described in the text; and a selection of maps.

PART ONE: LA LONGUE DUREE

CHAPTER ONE: Romania and Moldova: an historical overview

This chapter summarises the history of the lands which were ruled in the second half of the 15th century by Ştefan cel Mare. In this thesis, the *reign* of Ştefan cel Mare is placed within the wider context of Romanian political history, to explain his importance as an historical and cultural figure and the many and varied interpretations of his status. Study of the *legacy* of Ştefan cel Mare must acknowledge a general context of territorial fluidity and political complexity: his lands overlap the borders of contemporary nation states, within which the medieval heritage is understood according to diverse and changing perspectives.

This approach, establishing a deep context within which to view Ştefan as a national icon, accords with the principles of Smith's "historical ethno-symbolism", which is concerned "with the way in which the various cultural legacies and traditions of previous generations of ethnic and national communities provide essential frames of reference for subsequent generations whose members adapt them to changing conditions and new challenges" (Smith 2009, 134; see also 39 and Smith 1986, 207). This long view applies the conceptual approach of the French "Annales" school of history, analysis across *la longue durée*.

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State formation occurred at a late stage within the Romanian lands, in comparison with neighbouring European kingdoms and principalities, and the history of Romania from the middle ages onwards is one of complex changes to borders and government. The medieval Principality of Moldova reached its fullest territorial extent during the reigns of Alexandru cel Bun (Alexander the Good, reigned 1400-32) ("Alexandru"), Ştefan cel Mare (1457-1504, "Ştefan") and Petru Rareş (1527-38, 1541-46).[1] In the early modern era, the Principality became a battleground between the Russian and Ottoman empires and all but disappeared as a recognisable political entity during the process of Romanian unification in the late 19th century.

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[1] The river Nistru formed the eastern and northern boundaries of the Principality of Moldova ("Nistru" in Romanian, "Dniestr" (Днестр) in Russian; the Romanian-language term is used in this thesis); the Black Sea formed the southeastern boundary and the arc of the Carpathian mountains formed the western boundary (Maps 1, 5 and 6). During Ştefan's reign, the border with Wallachia was set on the rivers Siret and Milcov. See Rădvan 2010, 325.

Today, the lands of Ştefan cel Mare are represented by the Republic of Moldova and the Romanian provincial region of Moldavia (incorporating Southern Bucovina), while other historical Moldovan land – in particular, Northern Bucovina – is incorporated within Ukraine [see Maps 1, 2 and 5].

1   An outline history of the Moldovan lands

The lands of the future Principality of Moldova (the "Principality")[2] bordered the territories of the Roman provinces of Dacia and Moesia Inferior: the province of Dacia extended beyond the Carpathian mountains and the province of Moesia Inferior reached the Danube delta (Hanson and Haynes 2004, 12). Remnants of defensive earthworks, known collectively as the "Valul lui Traian" ("the Waves of Trajan"), are to be found in southern Romania and in the south of the Republic of Moldova (the "Republic"), vestiges of supposedly 2nd-century border defences for Moesia Inferior (Brezianu 2000, xlv; Haynes 2003, 5).

The Roman legacy has been key to concepts of Romanian identity. The contentious theory of Daco-Roman ethnic continuity, which envisages the emergence of the Romanian people from the interaction of Roman settlers and native Geto-Dacians, is prevalent in Romanian historiography and is relevant to the history of Moldova (Florescu 1999, 13-14; Haynes 2003, 5-6; Hanson and Haynes 2004, 27-9; Niculescu 2007, 147). Early Moldovan histories set down theories of Daco-Roman and Latin descent of the Moldovan people (Verdery 1991, 31-2). Metropolitan Dosoftei's "Chronological poem regarding the Princes of Moldova" of 1681, the first printed historical work in the Romanian language, suggested that the Moldovans were of both Dacian and Roman descent (Haynes 2003, 43).[3] In the early 18th century, Moldova's most celebrated historian, Prince Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723), claimed that the Wallachian and Moldovan peoples were of Roman origin,

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[2] For ease of reference, in this thesis the term "Moldova" is used to describe both the current Republic of Moldova and its antecedents, including the Principality of Moldova. "Moldavia" is used to refer to the region of northeastern Romania, which is made up of eight counties, described in detail in Chapter 3, notwithstanding that "Moldavia" is the Latin term adopted in the Romanian language by which the historic Moldovan lands are most commonly known.

[3] Dosoftei (1624-93) was Metropolitan of Moldova between 1671 and 1686.

and argued for their continuous presence in the territory of the Roman province of Dacia following the departure of the legions in the 3rd century, seeking to downplay the influence of early medieval Slav migration and settlement (Beza 1930, 131; Haynes 2003, 43-44).

In general, 20th-century Romanian historiography and archaeology were dominated by concepts of the ethnogenesis of the Romanian people, and their continuity of occupation in the Romanian lands (Boia 2001(a), 122-3; 125-6; Niculescu 2007, 136-8, 152-3). Interpretations of the influence of "barbarian" migrations on the ethnic, linguistic and cultural development of Romania in the early medieval period were an integral part of the polemic. Theories of Dacian descent and of Daco-Roman continuity were taken to extremes by the communist regime of Nicolae Ceauşescu (head of state from 1967 to 1989), becoming indigenist "Dacomania", which sought to promote anti-Western, as well as anti-Slav, Romanian nationalism in the context of internal ethnic politics and independence from the Soviet Union (Verdery 1991, 249; van Meurs 1994, 234; Kaiser 1995, 115; Haynes 2003, 120; Hanson and Haynes 2004, 28; cf. Treptow and Popa 1996, 7-8).

In reality, the lands and populations of the medieval principalities of Wallachia and Moldova were subject to settlement and incursion by numerous nomadic groups in the post-Roman era, amongst whom the most significant settlers were the Slavs and Bulgars during the 6th and 7th centuries and the Magyars (Hungarians) in the 9th century. The last great invasion from the east was that of the Tatars[4] in 1241, who occupied most of the lands east of the arc of the Carpathian mountains, as far south as the river Argeş in future Wallachia, for over a century. The Principality of Moldova emerged as a consequence of the Tatar occupation.

The major regional power in Transylvania and the Danube basin in the high middle ages was the Hungarian crown. In the mid-1340s, an army of the Hungarian king, Louis I (1342-82), succeeded in defeating the Tatars east of the Carpathians. One of Louis' Transylvanian vassals,

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[4] The term "Tatar" applies to just one of the constituent tribes of the Mongol Empire, a conglomeration of Asiatic tribes which were first united by Jenghiz Khan (d.1227). However, "Tatar" became the general term by which the Mongols were known in the Rus lands and in Europe – a scourge sent by God, invaders from "Tatarus" (that is, from Hell itself). The term "Tatar" is used throughout this thesis to refer generally to the Mongols and the people of the Mongol polity, the Golden Horde, who continued to exercise influence in Moldova's borderlands during the reign of Ştefan cel Mare. See Hingley 1991, 23-31; Sedlar 1994, 210-215, and Chapter 5, Section 2, clause 1.

Dragoş of Maramureş, was subsequently installed as ruler of a new boundary province – "Moldavia" – which had been formed from an amalgamation of smaller territorial units – *voivodates* and *knyazates*[5] (Deletant 1996, 53; Papacostea 1996, 7-9; King 2000, xxviii; Rădvan 2010, 320-2). The following sequence of events is confused and uncertain, but it appears that in the 1360s either Dragoş or one of his sons, Sas, was thrown out of the province by Bogdan, a former voivode of Maramureş, who rejected Hungarian vassalage and ruled in Moldova as an independent prince (Deletant 1991(b), 54-55, 58-59). Bogdan's motivation for this action may have been to create an enclave of Orthodoxy, in opposition to the Roman Catholicism of the Hungarian crown (Haynes 2003, 8). However, a Catholic bishopric was created at Siret, the early "capital" of Moldova, in the 1370s: competition between the Roman Catholic Church and Byzantine Orthodox Christianity was a feature of the early years of the Principality.

Orthodoxy was established as the dominant Christian denomination within the Principality by the early 15th century, notwithstanding the influence of the Catholic powers of Poland and Hungary on its borders. Moldova acknowledged the Patriarchate of Constantinople and the reign of Alexandru cel Bun saw the creation of a Moldovan metropolitanate in Suceava.[6] Byzantine Orthodoxy took root more or less in tandem in Moldova's southwestern neighbour, Wallachia, and in both principalities the language of the liturgy was Old Church Slavonic, following Byzantine practice, which gradually reinforced Slav influences on the Romanian-speaking peoples (Treptow and Popa 1996, 7-8; Haynes 2003, 13-15; Pop and Bolovan 2006, 290-1).

Alexandru achieved significant expansion of the Principality's border along the river Nistru, at the expense of the Tatars, as well as consolidating royal institutions (Haynes 2003, 16-20). The promotion of trade to and from the Black Sea littoral brought Moldova firmly within the sphere of the Byzantine world, a legacy which was to be particularly important following the fall of

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[5] A *voivodate* was a parcel of territory with a single warrior ruler – *voivode*. *Knyazate* is also a word of Slavonic origin, referring similarly to a parcel of territory ruled by a *Kneaz*.

[6] Nevertheless, religious diversity remained a feature of Alexandru's reign and of the Moldovan polity as it developed in the 15th century. Alexandru's ties with Poland strengthened the Roman Catholic Church within Moldova, and commercial ties with Armenia necessitated the establishment of an Armenian bishopric in Suceava. Hussite refugees from Bohemia were permitted to settle in the Principality (Treptow 2002, 10-11). See Rădvan's town maps of Iaşi, Roman and Suceava for an indication of the diversity of churches in urban communities in the 14th and 15th centuries (Rădvan 2010, xxvii-xxix).

Constantinople to the Ottomans[7] in 1453. The conquest of Constantinople also had an important impact on the ethnic composition of the Principality. Refugees from the Byzantine Empire flooded the Romanian principalities, with Greeks being the most prominent. Writing in the early 18th century, Prince Dimitrie Cantemir actually celebrated the ethnic and cultural diversity of the peoples in Moldova, despite his belief in Daco-Roman continuity, listing Bulgarians, Serbs, Albanians, Greeks, Germans, Poles, Cossacks, Jews and Gypsies (ibid., 40; cf. Mansel 1995, 7. For urban ethnic diversity, see Rădvan 2010, 349-54 and 395-6).

The reign of Alexandru's grandson, Ştefan cel Mare, was one of persistent warfare and uncertainty, but Ştefan was able to build upon his inheritance to become a major influence in Southeastern Europe. Ştefan's political skills were matched by outstanding military ability and, although Moldova was invaded on numerous occasions, he recorded major victories in battles against Hungarian, Polish, Ottoman and Tatar armies. In the latter part of his reign, Ştefan accepted his status as a tributary to the Sublime Porte[8], having lost Moldova's seaboard to the Ottomans. But he also negotiated lasting pledges by the Ottoman Empire not to interfere in the framework of Church and State in the Principality.

Moldova was seen by the Ottomans as the "gateway" to the Hungarian lands of Central Europe and the Polish lands to the north, through access to the northwest coast of the Black Sea. Like its southwestern neighbour, Wallachia, the Principality was a key economic and strategic area: major trade routes passed through the Romanian principalities, linking Europe with Asia (Treptow and Popa, 1996, 9). Ştefan's dogged defence of Moldova's territory and independence against the overwhelming force of the Ottoman Empire marked the highpoint of the Principality's history. The reign is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

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[7] "Ottoman" is the name of the dynasty which ruled the Turkish tribes, pastoral nomads of Central Asia who moved into Anatolia in the high middle ages to challenge the weak Byzantine Empire and Seljuk Sultanate. The founder of the dynasty, Osman, established an independent principality in northwest Anatolia in the early 14th century. By 1453, the Ottoman Empire encompassed Anatolia and the Balkans (Mansel 1995, 4-5).

[8] A slightly anachronistic reference, "Sublime Porte" is the English-language term that describes the seat of Ottoman governance and authority. Literally, the porte was a high gate within the sultan's palace complex at Constantinople, beneath which the sultan would sit enthroned on ceremonial occasions (Mansel 1995, 58-9).

In 1600, Moldova was united briefly, by force, with Wallachia and Transylvania by Prince Michael the Brave of Wallachia ("Mihai Viteazul", 1593-1601). This short-lived union of the Romanian principalities, which was unacceptable to the empires at the borders of the Romanian lands, anticipated the emergence of the Romanian state in the 1860s (ibid., 10-11; Florescu 1999, 139).

The early modern period was characterised by political weakness within the Principality, which was dominated by Greek "Phanariot" princes appointed directly by the Sultan (Mansel 1995, 152-8; Treptow 1996, 203-211).[9] The rise of the Hapsburg Empire in Central Europe as a counterweight to the Ottomans did little to improve Moldova's position, and increasingly the Principality became caught between the movements of three empires, as Russia expanded its territory from the east.

In 1711, as Prince of Moldova, Dimitrie Cantemir established Russian interests in the Principality by signing the Treaty of Lutsk with Tsar Peter the Great (1682-1725), accepting a Russian protectorate in return for guarantees of Moldova's integrity. However, the Russo-Turkish wars of the 18th century turned Moldova into a battleground once again. The weakening of the Ottoman Empire led directly to the dismemberment of the Principality. In 1775, the northwest of Moldova – Bucovina – was surrendered by the Ottomans to Hapsburg Austria, a symbolic blow as this land included Suceava, the historic capital of the Principality, and Putna, the burial place of Ştefan cel Mare. In 1792, Russia advanced its border to the Nistru, and in 1812 the Treaty of Bucharest secured the partition of Moldova along the axis of the river Prut. The capital of the Principality remained at Iaşi (to which it had been moved in the mid 16th century), with a Moldovan prince subject to Turkish suzerainty. To the east of the Prut, the former territory of the Principality became an *oblast* (province) of the Russian Empire under the name of Bessarabia.

The turbulent history of Bessarabia in the 19th and 20th centuries is one of political and social strife and internal economic decline. The borders and governance of the territory were

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[9] The Phanariots were Greek aristocrats, most of whom lived in the district of Constantinople known as the Phanar (Treptow 2002, 21; for a recent description of the district, see Dalrymple 1997, 29-33).

subject to persistent, violent change. As early as 1856, three Danubian districts of Bessarabia were returned to the remains of the Principality as part of the settlement following Russia's defeat in the Crimean War; but these lands were subsequently returned to Bessarabia in 1878, following the Russo-Turkish war of the previous year (Deletant 1991(d), 285; King 2000, 22-3; Haynes 2003, 71-3). Wallachia and the remains of the Principality of Moldova were united in 1859-62, setting the course for the development of the independent Romanian state, whereas Bessarabia was subject to a century of Russian acculturation and colonisation: language, government, education and church life all became subject to Russification, although this process met with mixed success (King 2000, 25-6; see Chapter 3, clause 3.1).

Bessarabia became an increasingly fractured entity, with a complex ethnic population mix which was torn between loyalties to Romania and Russia. Territorial complexity followed the First World War settlement. Soviet Russia refused to recognise the acquisitions of the Kingdom of Greater Romania and in 1924 the Soviet Union ("USSR") established the Moldavian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic ("MASSR") on the east bank of the Nistru. The forerunner of the Transdniestrian Moldavian Republic ("Transnistria" – see Chapter 3, clause 2), this artificial territory was carved out of southern Soviet Ukraine to serve as a bridgehead for the future invasion of Romanian Bessarabia (Deletant 1996, 56; King 2000, 52-54).

The territory of the current Republic of Moldova was defined as a consequence of the events of the Second World War. In 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Bessarabia, only to be ejected by Romanian and Nazi German troops the following year. Fascist occupation of Bessarabia between 1941 and 1944 witnessed the holocaust of the local Jewish population, such that the Jewish community in contemporary Moldova represents only 1.5% of the total population, in comparison with approximately 7% before the war (King 1995, 15; Haynes 2003, 103). The Soviet Red Army reoccupied Bessarabia in 1944 and continued into Romania, which in consequence joined with the Soviet Union and declared war on its erstwhile German partner. At the end of the war, the USSR was able to redraw the map of Bessarabia from a position of considerable strength.

The new entity, the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic ("MSSR"), incorporated Bessarabia together with part of the MASSR on the east bank of the Nistru. The traditional Moldovan seaboard was given to Ukraine, which also encompassed Northern Bucovina, on the northeast side of the Nistru. The MSSR was thus a landlocked, artificial creation, still with a diverse ethnic population but divested of some of its historic lands and including territory to the east of the Nistru which had never been part of the Principality. Moldavia and Southern Bucovina remained within the borders of Romania as a legacy of the former Principality.

Romania became a communist People's Republic – *Republica Populară Romînă* ("RPR") – at the end of 1947 (later to be known as the Socialist Republic of Romania – *Republica Socialistă România*), a repressive state, loosely allied to the USSR within the Warsaw Pact. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej was the First Secretary of the Romanian Worker's Party until his death in 1965, when he was succeeded by Nicolae Ceauşescu, who built a brutal dictatorship that was eventually overthrown in December 1989. The history of the MSSR between 1944 and 1991 is one of forced Sovietisation and state-sponsored manipulation of Moldovan national identity, mass deportations of indigenous Moldovans to Central Asia and Siberia, economic mismanagement compounding the hardships of the war years, and a separate course of development from the idiosyncratic communist regime of post-war Romania. In common with events in the other Central and Eastern European communist states, the revolution of 1989-1991 in the MSSR can be seen as an inevitable consequence of the failure of Soviet imperialism.

2   Unification and partition

The violent revolution in the Socialist Republic of Romania in December 1989, which saw the execution of the dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu, and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which secured the independence of the MSSR (renamed the "Republic of Moldova"), rekindled the historic cause of the unification of the Romanian lands. Western observers expected Romanian "reunification" to follow as a consequence of the momentous changes in Eastern Europe at the turn of the 1990s, anticipating that Moldova would be absorbed within its larger neighbour (King 1996, 125; King 2000, 4). In the event, although political groups in both countries did espouse unification, the internal politics of Romania and Moldova proved to be too complicated to allow for the rebirth of

a "Greater Romania" (Treptow and Popa 1996, 15, xxix; Library of Congress 2006, 4). Indeed, by the end of the 1990s, the idea of uniting Romania and Moldova had become widely unpopular within the populations of both countries (King 2000, 166-7).

"Greater Romania"

The modern Romanian nation state developed in the wake of the 1848 Revolutions, first by the unification between 1859 and 1862 of two of the medieval Romanian principalities, Wallachia and Moldova. Transylvania, the Banat and further territories were added in the aftermath of the First World War (Treptow and Popa 1996, 12-13, 15; Library of Congress 2006, 4). "Greater Romania", the first state to encompass all the historic Romanian lands, was proclaimed in December 1918 (Treptow 1996, 388-9, 394; Pop and Bolovan 2006, 532-3).

The issue of reunifying the Romanian lands in the 1990s stemmed from the partition of the Principality of Moldova in 1812 – the seminal event in the history of the Republic of Moldova and one of the most notorious events in Romanian history (Deletant 1991(d), 284; Brezianu 2000, xlvii; King 2000, 18-21; Casu 2005, 16). The division of the lands of the Principality of Moldova between the Ottoman and Russian empires, by the Treaty of Bucharest, brought into being what may be termed a "false" country: Bessarabia, the territory which morphed into the present-day Republic of Moldova, had no known history as a distinct unit before 1812; it was created by virtue of the river Prut serving as a convenient geographical division between the interests of the Ottomans and the Russians (King 2000, 18-21).

The partition was reversed when the Kingdom of Greater Romania (1918-40) formally incorporated most of what is now the Republic of Moldova within its boundaries in 1918. The aggrandisement of Romania was subsequently ratified as part of the Paris peace settlement. However, Bessarabia was annexed by the USSR in 1940, and although the territory was invaded by Romanian and Nazi German forces in 1941, pushing the Soviet Red Army of occupation back

beyond the river Nistru, the USSR reoccupied Bessarabia in 1944. For nearly half a century after that, Romania and Moldova followed separate paths, notwithstanding the Warsaw Pact alliance to which both "republics" came to belong during the Cold War era.

"Greater Moldova"

Moldovan partition occurred three centuries after the death of Ştefan cel Mare, as the culmination of a turbulent history of decline. Inevitably, the partition acquired great significance in the context of Romanian national awakening in the modern era. The Romanian perception of a division of national territory was heightened by the outcomes of the Paris peace treaties: whereas the terms of the Treaty of Trianon (1920) – which confirmed Transylvania as Romanian territory and not as part of Hungary – have largely held firm over time[10], the incorporation of Bessarabia within the territory of the Kingdom of Greater Romania under the Treaty of Paris (1920) was subsequently undone by the territorial aspirations and military superiority of the USSR (Deletant 1991(d), 290-298). The controversial separation of Bessarabia/Moldova from Romania created a threatening undercurrent in relations between communist Romania and the USSR up until the

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[10] The Treaty of Trianon recognised the border between the new Romanian and Hungarian states which had been brought about by the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Romania's acquisition of the territory of Transylvania, in which the majority of the inhabitants claimed Romanian ethnicity, marked the culmination of a sustained campaign for self-determination in Transylvania, but it was a military process as much as a result of political and social change: Romanian forces occupied Budapest in the summer of 1919, following attacks on Romanian positions on the east bank of the river Tisa by Hungarian forces.

Romania's acquisition of the territory of Transylvania, in which the majority of the inhabitants claimed Romanian ethnicity, marked the culmination of a sustained campaign for self-determination in

The post-war settlement was ever-contentious, and Hungarian claims to Transylvania were recognised by Nazi Germany when, in August 1940, the Diktat of Vienna granted northwestern Transylvania to Hungary. This situation was reversed towards the end of the Second World War when, having joined the Allies against its erstwhile Nazi overlord, Romania was able to liberate its Transylvanian lands (Treptow and Popa 1996, xxvi-xxix, xxxiii-xxxv).

Hungarian claims to Transylvania have persisted to the present day. Although the rise in importance of the European Union since the break-up of communist states in Eastern Europe has helped to suppress diplomatic strains between Romania and Hungary over possession of Transylvania, the issue was contentious even in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see White 2004, 337). Verdery cites the publication in 1986 of a Hungarian *History of Transylvania*, which set out the traditional Hungarian view that Transylvania was "empty" of inhabitants when Magyar settlers first arrived there in the 10th and 11th centuries. The traditional Romanian counter-argument states that ethnic Romanians were already present in the foothills of Transylvania, seeking refuge from nomadic invaders. The Romanian response to the 1986 Hungarian *History* was aggressive, with Ceauşescu denouncing its "lies and calumnies", a phrase which was repeated in other Romanian outlets (Verdery 1991, 219-20).

Geary provides a précis of rival Romanian and Hungarian archaeological arguments concerning early settlement in Transylvania: "...the debate about political legitimacy is couched in terms of ninth-century history and carried on in part by professional historians and archaeologists" (see Geary 2000, 8).

disintegration of communist states in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s (van Meurs 1994, 215, 243, 252-7; King 2000, 103-106; cf. Almond 1992, 210).

As a sign of the complexity of the political relationships which developed between the independent countries of Romania and Moldova during the 1990s, the possibility of unifying the historical lands ruled by Ştefan cel Mare came to be used as a rallying call not only by Romanian nationalists in both countries, who sought to re-establish the full extent of Greater Romania, but also, tentatively, as a tool for Moldovan politicians who were interested in extending the influence of the Republic of Moldova (King 2000, 149-150; see Chapter 3, clause 3.2). "Greater Moldova" – standing for the reunification of the Principality of Moldova as an independent nation state – was raised as a political concept to rank alongside the traditional notion of "Greater Romania" (King 1996, 126; King 2000, 150). The legacy of the wars and territorial conquests of Ştefan cel Mare is reflected in both these concepts – political concepts which indicate that the 15th century is a reference point for modern politics and the example of a prince such as Ştefan still carries significance for a modern nation state.

Chapter 2 considers the reign and achievements of Ştefan cel Mare.

CHAPTER TWO: The reign of Ştefan cel Mare

1   A chronology of the reign

Ştefan's accession

1432 - 1457   The death of Alexandru cel Bun provokes a series of succession crises in Moldova within the ruling house of Muşat.

1451   Ştefan, joint ruler of Moldova with his father, Bogdan II (1449-51), is forced to flee to Transylvania following his father's assassination at Reuseni by Peter III Aron (1451-2, 1454-5, 1455-7). Ştefan is given asylum first by John Hunyadi, the regent of the Kingdom of Hungary (1446-56), and later in Wallachia at the court of Vlad III Dracula (1448, 1456-62, 1476), Ştefan's cousin.

1453   The conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks. Black Sea states, including Moldova, are required to recognise Ottoman sovereignty and pay tribute to the Sultan.

1456   The "Submission of Vaslui" confirms Moldova's status as a tributary to the Ottoman Empire.

1457   With a combined Moldovan and Wallachian army, Ştefan defeats Peter III Aron at Doljeşti. Ştefan is acclaimed on the Direptate Plain (the "Plain of Justice"), near Suceava, by an assembly of boyars and clergy and is anointed Prince of Moldova by Metropolitan Teoctist. Ştefan takes the throne at the age of about 20.[1]

Moldova a part of the Polish-Ottoman alliance

1458   Ştefan campaigns in southern Poland, where Peter III Aron is a refugee.

1459   Ştefan signs a treaty with the Poles at Overchelăuţi on the Nistru river, acknowledging the King of Poland as his sovereign. Peter III Aron's movements are restricted within Poland and King Casimir IV of Poland (1447-92) commits himself to giving Ştefan protection when this is needed. The treaty implicitly places Moldova within the Polish-Ottoman alliance, in opposition to the Kingdom of Hungary and its vassal, Wallachia.

1461   Ştefan campaigns in the area of Transylvania occupied by Szecklers (ethnic Hungarians), as a challenge to Hunyadi's son, Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary (1458-90), who responds by receiving Peter III Aron at his court in Buda in the following year.

1462   Ştefan signs a further treaty with Poland at Suceava, gaining greater protection in return for ceding much of his sovereignty. The Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed II ("the Conqueror", 1451-81), invades Wallachia and drives Vlad III Dracula into exile, preventing Matthias Corvinus from campaigning against Ştefan. Vlad III Dracula is replaced by one of his brothers, Radu cel Frumos ("the Handsome") (1462-73, 1473-74, 1474-75), who reigns as a vassal of the Ottomans. Ştefan colludes in the Ottoman campaign but is unsuccessful in his attempt to seize the key southern Moldovan port of Chilia from its Hungarian garrison.

1465   Ştefan succeeds in realising his long-term aim of taking Chilia. The northern Moldovan town of Hotin is ceded back to the Principality by the Poles, thus

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[1] Nicolae Iorga stated that Ştefan was "in his twenty-first year" in 1457 (Iorga 1925, 80); according to Grigoraş, Ştefan became prince at the age of 17-18 years (Grigoraş 1982, 206); Ilie estimates that Ştefan was 13 years old at the time of his father's murder, meaning that he would have been about 19 years old in 1457 (Ilie 2004, 69-70).

re-establishing the Principality's borders as they had been during the reign of Alexandru cel Bun.

1466 - 1469 Construction of the votive church at Putna monastery, which will become the necropolis for Ştefan and his family.

1467 Ştefan supports a revolt against Matthias Corvinus by a group of landowners and officials in Transylvania. Corvinus crushes the revolt and then campaigns in Moldova, seizing Baia, Bacău, Roman and Târgu Neamţ. In December 1467, Ştefan defeats Matthias Corvinus at the Battle of Baia and expels the Hungarian army from Moldova. Corvinus is badly wounded but escapes with the help of a group of renegade Moldovan boyars. Ştefan conducts reprisals, executing 20 boyars and impaling 40 other lesser landowners.

1468 Matthias Corvinus prosecutes a war for the Bohemian crown and is diverted away from his interests in Transylvania and Moldova. Ştefan concludes a further treaty with Poland and pledges to pay homage to the Polish king.

1468 - 1471 Ştefan campaigns in Transylvania. In 1469, a Tatar invasion (probably ordered by the Sultan) is crushed by Ştefan at the Battle of Lipnic. In December 1470, Peter III Aron raises a Szeckler army and enters Moldova. Aron is defeated in battle near Neamţ and subsequently he and his Moldovan supporters – *marele vornic* (chief justice and military commander) Isaia, cup-bearer Negrilă and chancellor Alexa – are executed.

Rapprochement with Hungary and conflict with the Ottomans

1470 - 1475 Ştefan's policy gradually turns away from conflict with Hungary as he prepares to confront the expansion of Ottoman interests in the Black Sea region. His relationship with Radu cel Frumos of Wallachia deteriorates on account of Radu's vassalage to the Ottomans. In 1469, a Wallachian army attempts to recover the port of Chilia. Ştefan responds in February 1470 by destroying Wallachia's most important port, Brăila. This is followed by Radu's defeat in battle at Soci in March 1471.

1473 In an act of calculated defiance, Ştefan ceases to pay tribute to the Ottomans. In November 1473, Ştefan invades Wallachia and having defeated Radu cel Frumos and conquered Bucharest, he enthrones his own candidate – Basarab the Elder – as prince of Wallachia. The Ottomans are engaged in continuing warfare, in the West with Venice and in the East with the Turkmen state of Uzun Hasan (1453-78), but in December 1473 Sultan Mehmed II is able to respond to events in Wallachia by driving out Basarab and reinstalling Radu. However, the Ottomans prefer to seek a diplomatic accord with Moldova.

1474 Radu is dethroned twice, and replaced briefly on each occasion by Basarab the Elder. Ştefan campaigns in Wallachia in October. The Sultan responds by sending Suleiman Pasha to attack Moldova in the winter of 1474-5, despite the latter's troops having been engaged in the unsuccessful seige of Scutari in Albania throughout the summer of 1474.

1475 Ottoman invasion of Moldova. Ştefan receives limited support from Poland and Hungary. Nevertheless, the Ottoman army, joined by Radu cel Frumos, is defeated by Ştefan near Vaslui on 10 January. Ştefan proclaims the victory to all Christian princes, but warns that Moldova is a "gate to all Christendom"[2]; he calls upon a Christian alliance to face the Turks. Ştefan invades Wallachia and dethrones Radu for the final time.

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[2] See Denize 2004, 84-5.

Neither the Papacy nor the Venetian Republic is able to offer concrete support to Moldova. The Ottomans conquer the Crimean city of Kaffa, subjugating the Genoese Black Sea colonies, leaving Moldova as the last independent Christian state with outlets to the Black Sea. Moldova's closest alliance at this time is with Hungary, sealed by the grant of trading privileges to Hungarian merchants and a treaty in which Hungary becomes sovereign protector of Moldova.

1476   Vlad III Dracula, a prisoner of Matthias Corvinus since 1462, is released to lead an anti-Ottoman campaign in Wallachia, with Ştefan's backing. After early success, Vlad III Dracula is killed in an ambush in December 1476 and Wallachia reverts to Ottoman vassalage. In the summer of 1476, Ottoman and Tatar armies invade Moldova. The Tatars are dispersed but Ştefan is defeated at the battle of Valea Albă (Războieni). For the only time in his reign, Ştefan is forced into exile in Poland. However, Moldovan fortresses at Suceava and Neamţ, together with new forts along the west bank of the Nistru, hold firm. The Ottoman army is forced to retreat having expended its supplies and following an outbreak of cholera. Ştefan returns to Moldova within the year.

Chaos in Wallachia

1477 - 1482   Despite a lack of support from the Catholic kingdoms of the West, Ştefan intervenes again in Wallachia, installing Basarab the Younger (known as "the little impaler") as prince in 1477. However, this Basarab declares for the Ottomans. Ştefan responds by invading Wallachia in 1480, deposing Basarab and replacing him with Mircea. Basarab then deposes Mircea and with an Ottoman army attacks Moldova in the spring of 1481. Ştefan counterattacks, defeating Basarab at Râmnic in July 1481 and installing Vlad the Monk as prince. The Moldovan prince intervenes in Wallachia for the last time in 1482, following the deposition of Vlad by Basarab, securing the throne for Vlad following the death of Basarab at Glagova. Vlad the Monk then sides with the Ottomans. Ştefan concedes Ottoman control of Wallachia and Vlad reigns there without interval until 1495.

Consolidation of Ottoman power in Southern Europe

1479   Venice signs a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire which gives the Turks hegemony in the Aegean Sea. The Ottomans also consolidate control in the Crimea. Ştefan rejoins the Polish-Ottoman alliance, signing a treaty with the Poles in which he promises (not for the first time) to take the oath of fealty to the king in person. Ştefan also signs a peace treaty with the Ottomans, by which the tribute he is expected to pay to the Sultan is doubled.

1483   A peace treaty between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, repeated in 1488, specifies that Moldova and Wallachia fall within Hungary's sphere of influence, but excludes the fortified ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă, implicitly granting the new Sultan, Bayezid II (1481-1512), an opportunity to attack Moldova.

1484   The key southern Moldovan ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă fall to the Ottomans. Moldova's Black Sea littoral is controlled by the Ottomans.

1485 - 1487   Ştefan is granted the Transylvanian towns of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă by Matthias Corvinus, in compensation for the loss of the Black Sea ports. However, Ştefan finally pays homage to Casimir IV of Poland, in an attempt to secure a military alliance against the Ottomans. An Ottoman army invades Moldova in Ştefan's absence and sacks his capital, Suceava. With Polish help, Ştefan defeats the Ottomans in Moldova, but fails to recover Chilia and Cetatea Albă. He makes peace with the Sultan, acknowledging the permanent loss of the Black Sea ports.

The rise of the Jagiełło dynasty

1489	Poland recognises the Ottoman capture of Chilia and Cetatea Albă. Moldova is confirmed as a tributary to the Sublime Porte; in return, the Ottomans pledge not to interfere in the framework of Church and State in Moldova (the pledges are known as *ahdnames* or "confirmations", misleadingly referred to as "capitulations").[3] However, Ştefan reneges on his treaty with Poland and once again acknowledges Matthias Corvinus as his sovereign.
1490	Following the sudden death of Matthias Corvinus, Ştefan enters the succession crisis in Hungary, ultimately siding with the successful candidate, Vladislav Jagiełło (1490-1516) (who is also King of Bohemia). Ştefan rejects requests for assistance from Vladislav's rival, John Albert Jagiełło, the heir to the Polish crown, and instead campaigns in southern Poland, in the region of Pocuţia, which Ştefan claims for Moldova. His aim is to prevent a union of Poland and Hungary that would threaten Moldova. The Ottomans seek to take advantage of Hungary's weakness, campaigning in the south of the kingdom between 1490 and 1492.
1492 - 1493	The Ottoman threat to the Kingdom of Hungary succeeds in temporarily joining the rulers of Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania in defence of Vladislav Jagiełło. However, Ştefan's attempts to establish a wider anti-Ottoman alliance, incorporating Lithuania and Muscovy, are unsuccessful.
1494	The Congress of Lewocza, attended by representatives of the Jagiełło dynasty, including Vladislav Jagiełło, John Albert, now King of Poland (1492-1501) and Alexander, Grand Duke of Lithuania (King of Poland 1501-1506). An anti-Ottoman alliance is proposed, but John Albert also seeks to subordinate Moldova to the Polish crown by replacing Ştefan with Sigismund Jagiełło. Vladislav Jagiełło opposes this, renewing historic tensions between Hungary and Poland.

Ştefan's final years: warfare on several fronts

1497	John Albert of Poland campaigns for the recovery of Chilia and Cetatea Albă, invading Moldova with a view to subjugating the Moldovan prince to Polish authority as well as challenging the Turks on the Black Sea coast. Caught between the Poles and the Ottomans, Ştefan receives token military assistance from the Ottomans and more substantial support from the King of Hungary. The Polish army fails to take Suceava and retreats from Moldova. The Poles are defeated in battle three times during their retreat.
1498	Ştefan campaigns in southern Poland, following on from a joint Turkish-Tatar attack there, but he adheres to a Polish-Hungarian treaty in July which stipulates the creation of an anti-Ottoman league.
1499	A treaty between Moldova and Poland frees Ştefan from vassalage to the Polish crown and establishes the Moldovan prince as an equal partner in the Jagiełłonian anti-Ottoman coalition, which includes Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Bohemia.
1499 - 1503	Sultan Bayezid II focuses on conflict with the Venetian Republic, as the weak link in the anti-Ottoman bloc. Venice concludes a treaty with the Ottomans in 1503 which establishes Ottoman hegemony in the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. Of the Jagiełłonian states, only Hungary engages the Ottomans in battle, but it also concludes a treaty with the Ottomans in 1503. War

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[3] Ibid., 199.

	between Lithuania and Muscovy, combined with the threat of attack by the Crimean Tatars, prevents Poland from engaging the Ottomans.
1500 - 1501	Ştefan stops paying tribute to the Ottomans, campaigns in southern Moldova in an attempt to regain Chilia and Cetatea Albă, and retains an army through 1501.
1502	Moldovan forces ally with the Crimean Tatars against the Tatars of the Great Horde on the Volga, who had been summoned to southern Moldova by the Sultan. Moldovan forces also fight as part of a Hungarian army that attacks the Ottomans in Serbia. Ştefan occupies the region of Pocuţia in southern Poland. Poland is unable to respond and Ştefan holds the territory until his death in 1504.
1503	The peace between Hungary and the Ottomans is mediated by the Wallachian prince, Radu cel Mare ("the Great", 1495-1508). Moldova is included within the peace, signalling the final loss of Chilia and Cetatea Albă. Ştefan resumes paying tribute to the Ottomans.
1504	As Ştefan's health declines, preparations are made in Hungary and Transylvania for a possible Ottoman invasion. Shortly before his death on 2 July 1504, Ştefan suppresses a rebellion by one of the boyar factions. He is succeeded by his son, Bogdan III ("the Blind", 1504-17), who is crowned in despite of a supposed Ottoman plot to install a rival candidate. Bogdan follows his father's last instructions to continue paying tribute to the Sultan, as the price of peace and security for the Principality, but loses the region of Pocuţia to the Kingdom of Poland.

After Ştefan

1504 - 1541	The stability of Ştefan's personal rule is continued for a time as members of his dynasty reign in Moldova. Ştefan is succeeded by his eldest surviving son, Bogdan, whose son, Ştefăniță, reigns as prince between 1517 and 1527. Ştefan cel Mare's illegitimate son, Petru Rareş, succeeds Ştefăniță in 1527, but he is ousted by the Ottomans, who install another supposed son of Ştefan cel Mare, Ştefan Lăcustă ("the Locust", 1538-40); he in turn is replaced by Alexander Cornea (1540-41), before Petru Rareş is returned as a subject of the Ottomans in 1541.
1526	The Hungarian kingdom is overrun by the Ottomans following the devastating defeat of King Louis II (1516-26) at the Battle of Mohács. The Ottoman Empire is now dominant in Southeastern Europe.
1529	The army of Sultan Suleiman I ("the Magnificent", 1520-66) beseiges Vienna, but the city holds and the Ottomans are forced to withdraw from their furthest advance into Europe.
1538	The first reign of Petru Rareş concludes with defeat at the hands of Suleiman I. Suceava is occupied by the Ottomans, who then hold the south of Moldova between the Nistru and the Danube.

2   The character of Ştefan's *voivodeship*

"Voivodeship" is a clumsy term, but it is a necessary one, giving a sense in the English language of the junior status of the medieval Romanian rulers in comparison with their near rivals, the Byzantine Emperors, the Ottoman Sultans (whose modest epithets included "the King of the World"), the Kings of Hungary and Poland, the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, the Grand Princes of Muscovy and the Tatar Khans (Mansel 1995, 6-7). The title "Prince", which is ascribed to the Romanians in the late middle ages, is an honorific that depends on a particular English translation of the term "domn", from the Latin "dominus".

"Prince" was not the only title used by the 15th-century Moldovan rulers. Ştefan's grandfather, Alexandru, was styled *domn* but also appropriated the description *autocrat*, a term usually reserved for the Byzantine Emperor (Haynes 2003, 16-17). The ceremonial at the court of Alexandru and, even more so, of Ştefan, reflected Byzantine traditions and ritual, emphasising the strength of the legacy of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Moldovans' status as the last Orthodox rulers in Southeastern Europe, would-be inheritors of the imperial dignity after the fall of Constantinople (ibid., 24).[4] However, the princes of Moldova were almost always in a state of vassalage to one of their more powerful neighbours, and a grand title such as "autocrat" reflects the aspirations of the ruling house of Muşat rather than its actual power. Ştefan took the Byzantine title himself and, among other titles, there are even records of him being termed "Tsar" (given in Romanian as "*împărat*"); but he was not above receiving Ottoman insignia – it was expedient to do so in the late 1490s, when he was under threat from Poland (Denize 2004, 74, 169; Bedros 2005, 66-7; Gorovei 2005, 73).

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[4] "Byzantium is short for the Byzantine Empire, which may be defined as the Christian empire ruled from Constantinople... Byzantium had one further essential feature, namely its claim to be the direct continuation of the Roman Empire, a claim it maintained to the very end, long after it had lost all semblance of Roman identity." (Cyril Mango, "Byzantium: A Historical Introduction", in Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 26).

Maria M. Székely cites a manuscript containing a list of Easter dates (*Pascalia*), copied at Putna monastery, which begins in the year 1493 – the year following that in which Orthodox belief stated the world would end. According to Székely, the manuscript is evidence of the Moldovan voivode's belief that the Principality was the inheritor of the Byzantine Empire – Constantinople (the "Second Rome") having fallen, the year 1492 having passed and the mantle of Orthodox leadership having been assumed in Moldova (Székely 2003, 278).

Throughout his reign, Ştefan styled himself as *voivode*. This is a term of Slavonic origin which was used in both Moldova and Wallachia, designating a leader of warriors with military and judicial authority. It derived from the integration of Slav immigrants with the native Romanian population in the early medieval period and reflected the need for a common defence against incursions by steppe horsemen, in particular, the Tatars. The Hungarian governors of Transylvania also used the local title *voivode*, acknowledging their status as military governors and appointees of the Hungarian crown rather than independent rulers (Sedlar 1994, 46-7; Haynes 2003, 9).

The term *voivode* was used in a very specific manner in Moldova, and it was actually appended to an individual's name, thus "Bogdan voivode" or "Ştefan voivode". Ştefan cel Mare acquired the title "voivode" during his father's brief reign: where his father was *voivode* and *domn*, Ştefan occupied a junior status – his title expressed that he was the designated heir.[5] Ştefan's relative youth – he may have been little more than 11 years old at the time of his father's accession – was not a bar to his assuming authority within Moldova, albeit on an honorary basis. Indeed, given the political instability of the times, Ştefan's early designation as heir may have been an attempt by Bogdan II to stabilise his own hold on the throne and the claim of his immediate family to the succession (Ilie 2004, 70). During his reign as *voivode* and *domn*, Ştefan in turn would raise his legitimate sons, first, Alexandru (who predeceased him), and then his eventual heir, Bogdan, to the status of "associate prince" (in Romanian *asociere*): both sons bore the title *voivode* but were subservient to their father, who remained *voivode* and *domn* until shortly before his death, when Bodgan III became ruler in his own right (ibid., 82; see clause 2.1.3 below).

From the earliest days of his reign, through moments of glory to his assertion of full independence in his later years, Ştefan's titles appear on his documents using the essential components *voivode* and *domn*, in a variety of languages – including vernacular, Slavonic, Latin – according to political and diplomatic conventions (Gorovei 2005, 43). A letter of safe conduct

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[5] Gorovei cites Emil Vîrtosu in suggesting that the dual title *voivode* and *domn* was a formula which expressed, respectively, the ruler's *maiestas* and his sovereignty (Gorovei 2005, 48-9).

written in Slavonic on behalf of a boyar Mihail, given at Bacău on 13 September 1457, begins "By the grace of God, *We Ştefan voivode, lord of the Moldovan lands*..." (Мы Стефан Воевода, Господаръ Земли Молдавскои) (Bogdan 1913 II, 257-9). "Господаръ" (in Latin characters, *Hospodar*) can be translated loosely as "lord" or "master" just as it may be "prince", and being another Slavonic term, it does not carry quite the same connotations of royalty that pertained to the Christian rulers of the West. Similar wording appears on a letter of safe conduct given at Iaşi on 25 January 1463: "By the grace of God, We Ştefan, *voivode and lord of the Moldovan lands*..." (Воевода и Господаръ Земли Молдавскои) (ibid., 294-5).

A letter to the citizens of Brasov from October or November 1457, in Latin, begins "Nos Sthephanus, Dei adiutorio waivoda terre Moldoviensis" (We Ştefan, the servant of God, voivode of the Moldovan lands) (ibid., 259). It is notable that Ştefan tends to refer to the Moldovan lands in plural form, referencing Byzantine terminology and perhaps allowing for an extension of his authority into disputed areas such as Pocuţia (Gorovei 2005, 59, 61-3; cf. Rădvan 2010, 358 for a translation of "terr[a]e" as "Country").

Writing to Pope Sixtus IV (1471-84) in November 1474, Ştefan signed himself "fidelissimus Stefanus vaivoda, dominus terrarum Moldavie etc." (most faithful, Stephen voivode, prince of the Moldovan lands) (Bogdan 1913 II, 318-9). The term "dominus" has been added to that of voivode, and although it compares with the Slavonic "Господаръ", this is a statement of Ştefan's superior status to that of a mere voivode. In copies of his letter to all Christian princes announcing his victory over the Turks at Vaslui, given at Suceava on 25 January 1475, Ştefan used the enhanced formula: printed in the Romanian language, "Voevod, domnul ţării Moldovei". "Domnul" is a clear indication of royalty and translates as "prince of the Moldovan lands" (ibid., 319-21). This assertion of his status was fitting, given his recent triumph over an infidel army and his appeal to brother Christian princes for aid against renewed Ottoman attacks.[6] Ştefan's consistent citing of divine

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[6] Ştefan is reported to have received popular acclamation as "Tsar" following the victory at Vaslui, a Slavonic title which proclaimed his status to rulers in the East (Bedros 2005, 66-7; Gorovei 2005, 73).

favour – "by the grace of God", "the servant of God" – was also in keeping with notions of sacral kingship, following on from his anointing by the Orthodox Metropolitan in 1457, just as Byzantine rulers had been anointed by the Patriarch of Constantinople and Western rulers sought Papal authority.

The dedication inscriptions on Ştefan's numerous church and monastic foundations follow a remarkably consistent formula in citing Ştefan as *voivode* and *domn*. From the dedication of the fortified walls at the monastic complex at Putna in 1481 to his last independent church foundation at Dobrovăţ monastery in 1503/4, Ştefan's titles regularly appear in the form *voivode* and *domn*, son of Bogdan *voivode* (Catalogue 1958, 49, 190).[7]

Having freed himself from vassal status after his final dispute with Poland, Ştefan augmented his titles. Writing to the Venetian Doge from Suceava in December 1502, Ştefan styled himself "divina favente gratia dominus, heres[8] et vayvoda Moldaviae" (by the favour of divine grace, prince, master and voivode of Moldova) (Bogdan 1913 II, 465-6). Here, the concept of "voivode" has been subordinated to that of "prince" in the formula; the styling is far grander than the Slavonic titles which Ştefan claimed at the beginning of his reign.

Nevertheless, "voivode" is a constant and, in the context of the whole of Ştefan's reign, it best describes his authority – the military leader of his state but a vassal of powerful overlords.

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[7] The inscriptions at Ştefan's foundations usually give his name as "John Stephen". This convention appears only occasionally on documents issued in his name. Presented in Slavonic characters, the name "John" is "Ivan" or its contracted form "Iw", a convention that was also used by Ştefan's heirs, Voivode Alexandru and Bogdan III. In Romanian, "John" is presented as "Ioan" or "Io". John is likely to have been Ştefan's saint's name. Gorovei, citing D. Ciurea, suggests that this appellation had a "quasi religious" meaning, and was intended to give a solemn character to the name of the prince (Gorovei 2005, 48).

[8] "Heres" ("master") also conveys a sense of "hereditary ruler", and is an expression of Ştefan's dynastic and territorial policy. By this title, he sought legitimation for his son Bogdan as successor, and for his claims to disputed territories such as Pocuţia (Gorovei 2005, 50-1, 57).

2.1   Longevity and stability

Ştefan's reign lasted 47 years. By any standards, this was a long reign. Although his grandfather, Alexandru, had reigned for 32 years, Ştefan's unbroken occupation of the Moldovan throne was in itself an outstanding achievement in the context of the political and territorial fragility of the Romanian principalities.

Ştefan's seizure of the throne came as the culmination of a period of turbulence within Moldova which has been described variously as "the times of trouble" (Papacostea 1996, 21)[9] and "civil war" (Haynes 2003, 20). At the time of Ştefan's accession, there was little to suggest that the period of instability in Moldova was at an end: his father's murderer, Peter III Aron, was still at large and under the protection of Moldova's traditional overlord, the King of Poland, while Ştefan's coup had been dependent on the military support of his cousin, Vlad III of Wallachia ("Dracula")[10], who was a vassal of the Hungarians. The port of Chilia was ceded to Wallachia as the price of Hungarian support; the fortress of Hotin was ceded to the Poles in an attempt to win over the sponsor of Ştefan's rival.

At the outset of his reign, therefore, Ştefan's authority was compromised by Moldova's legacy of foreign overlordship and the immediate reality of an inherently weak throne. There was no clear system of succession in either Moldova or Wallachia. Instead, an inadequate combination of hereditary and elective principles had developed, whereby any male of the ruling family could present himself for election by an assembly of the greater boyars. Primogeniture was not observed

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[9] The phrase is more commonly ascribed to the struggle for the throne of Muscovy which followed the death of Tsar Boris Godunov (1598-1605).

[10] Although the name "Dracula" has become popularised as that of the vampire count created by Bram Stoker, glamorised by filmmakers the world over, there is a good historical basis for applying this name to Vlad III of Wallachia. The son of Vlad II "Dracul" (1436-1442 and 1443-1447), Vlad III referred to himself as "Dragkulya" in a letter of 13 October 1457 and as "Drakulya" in a letter of 1476 – that is to say, "Drăculea", "the son of Dracul". His father's monniker is thought to have derived from his membership of the crusading Order of the Dragon, an honour which was conferred on him by Sigismund of Luxembourg (Holy Roman Emperor, 1433-37) (Giurescu 1991, 14-15, 24 n.7; Nandris 1991, 231; Hentea 2007, 56-7).

and nor was illegitimacy a bar to candidature, which meant that on the death or overthrow of the ruling voivode, a host of claimants might appear; in practice, a voivode need only be weak or at odds with one of the great powers on the borders of his principality for a contender to put himself forward as the new prince (Sedlar 1994, 282; Haynes 2003, 20-1). Poland and Hungary frequently sponsored claimants to the throne of Moldova, and the growing influence of the Ottoman Empire in Southeastern Europe meant that by the 15th century, the Sultans also played a significant role in supporting potential voivodes, especially in Wallachia.

Despite the strengthening of royal institutions and the expansion of Moldovan territory under Alexandru cel Bun, the quarter century between his death and Ştefan's accession witnessed 16 "reigns" in Moldova by eight voivodes. The situation in Wallachia was even worse, where 48 rulers occupied the throne between 1418 and 1600 (Sedlar 1994, 32). Ştefan's reign in Moldova thus appears almost as an anomaly of longevity in a political system that was otherwise subject to continual churn.

Instability in the institutions of government was by no means the preserve of the medieval Romanian principalities. In Northern Europe, for example, the 15th-century Kingdom of England witnessed the several decades of civil war known as the "Wars of the Roses". The reigns of Ştefan's contemporaries in England, Henry VI (1422-61 and 1470-1), Edward IV (1461-70 and 1471-83), Edward V (1483) and Richard III (1483-85) witnessed dynastic strife, regal deposition, regicide and foreign military intervention, events that were just as dramatic as those which often wracked the Romanian principalities.

Ştefan's achievement lies in having established his personal rule in a relatively small, febrile polity that was encircled by great powers. But this success should not disguise the fact that Ştefan's rule was never totally secure: not only was his realm under constant threat of military invasion, but pretenders to his throne never disappeared entirely. Peter III Aron – who had lost and then regained the Moldovan throne twice to Voivode Alexăndrel (1449, 1452-4 and 1455) before

his defeat by Ştefan in 1457 – remained a potent threat with major allies in Poland and Hungary, until his final defeat and death in 1470. Other pretenders also put themselves forward: Berindei in 1467, Alexandru, who claimed to be Ştefan's brother, in 1476, Peter Hronoda (or "Hroiot"/"Hruet") in 1485-6, and Sigismund, the Jagiełłonian candidate in the 1490s (Boldur 1970, 6). The Ottomans supported several pretenders, including a son of Peter III Aron in 1476, and even Radu cel Mare of Wallachia attempted to intervene in the Moldovan succession on Ştefan's death in 1504 (Iorga 1925, 90, 94). A lesser voivode would have succumbed to the threats of rival candidates; Ştefan cel Mare withstood all the challenges to his throne, and such obduracy is one of the abiding characteristics of his voivodeship.

2.1.1   Centralised government

Ştefan's longevity as voivode, and the relative stability in royal government which he achieved, were brought about by his personal control of Moldovan social and political institutions. Ştefan would appear to have been born several years after Alexandru's death, but despite having no direct experience of his grandfather's personality and governance, Ştefan seems to have modelled his domestic policies on the legacy of Alexandru cel Bun. Ştefan did experience the brief reign of his father, Bogdan II, and it is possible that Bogdan's voivodeship derived from that of *his* father; furthermore, Peter III Aron was a brother of Bogdan II (or maybe a half-brother), and he too may have utilised the institutions of government after Alexandru's example. These possibilities notwithstanding, the 25 years of turmoil which separated Alexandru's death from the accession of Ştefan did much to weaken the authority of the Moldovan voivode and the exercise of domestic government, so it was only logical for Ştefan to seek to emulate the rule of his distinguished forebear. According to Iorga, the resumption of good government after 1457 derived from the similar personalities of Alexandru and Ştefan: "Alexander the Kind seemed to be alive again, equally moderate, steadfast and wise, but with a stronger arm directed at anyone who barred his way" (quoted in Ştefănescu 1976, 81).

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Ştefan's "strong arm" may, at times, have had more in common with the behaviour of his cousin, Dracula, than with his revered grandfather. The 17th-century chronicler Miron Costin commented that Ştefan's venerable qualities were offset by a violent nature: "...he [*Ştefan*] was irascible, cruel, prone to shed innocent blood, often at meals he would order people to be put to death, without legal sentence" (quoted in Seton-Watson 1934, 48). There are echoes here of "The Feast of the Impaler", the oft-reproduced woodcut by Matthias Hupnuff, published at Strasbourg in 1500, which depicts Dracula banqueting *al fresco* beside a close-packed collection of impaled victims, with a butcher in close attendance (see Trow 2003, cover page and within). In mitigation, the propaganda stories of extra-judicial cruelty which attach to the more successful Romanian voivodes illustrate the underlying truth that a voivode required an oustanding, authoritative personality, and that good government required ruthlessness on the part of the ruler.

If Alexandru provided the template for Ştefan's style of government, Dracula may have served as a cautionary model (Treptow 1991(a), 74). Audacious but ultimately unsuccessful in his campaigns against the Ottomans, Dracula was so ruthless in his attempts to secure his authority over the Wallachian boyars and powerful Saxon merchants in Transylvania that his bloody personal rule actually bred opposition rather than quelling it (ibid., 77; cf. Ştefănescu 1976, 80). Dracula spent part of his childhood as a hostage of the Sultan and presumably acquired his propensity for tough justice from his Ottoman captors – although the practice of impalement as a form of public execution, for which Vlad III is best remembered, was in widespread use across Central and Southeastern Europe in his era and before (Sedlar 1994, 253-4, 394-5; Hentea 2007, 58). Indeed, Ştefan practised impalement and the details of his executions, recounted in the chronicles, are as grisly as some of the tales arising from Dracula's reign (Giurescu 1991, 25 n.17).

In the 1450s, Dracula and Ştefan were refugees together at the court of John Hunyadi, following the assassination of Ştefan's father, and they probably learned about military tactics and leadership in war from him (notwithstanding that Hunyadi had been responsible for the deposition and execution of Dracula's father in 1447 – such were the vicissitudes of political and familial

relationships in the Romanian principalities) (Grigoraş 1982, 305; Rezachevici 1991, 254). Dracula's influence on Stefan's military strategies is discussed at clause 2.2.1 below.

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The reign of Alexandru cel Bun witnessed the consolidation of royal institutions within Moldova as well as the expansion of Moldova's borders, to the extent that Alexandru can be considered to have been properly the "founder" of the Moldovan principality. His posthumous reputation may have been outstripped by that of Ştefan, but the achievements of Alexandru's reign – in particular, the international recognition which Moldova received as a result of his military conquests – were the foundations upon which Ştefan's success as voivode was built (Haynes 2003, 18-20).

The strength of Alexandru's personal rule derived from his ability to control the boyars – the landowners from amongst whom court officials were drawn and who sat on the Prince's Council, the *Sfatul Domnesc* (Seton-Watson 1934, 30; Haynes 2003, 16). It was the inability of Alexandru's successors to manage the boyars which created and prolonged "the times of trouble" (Papacostea 1996, 23). The economic development of Moldova which followed on from Alexandru's military successes enhanced the wealth and standing of the voivode – especially once the ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă had been secured, making Moldova a territorial link in the trade routes which ran to and from the Baltic and Hanseatic ports in Northern Europe and the Black Sea and Asia; his patronage towards the boyars in terms of land-giving and office-giving lent stability to the state.

Alexandru's government was not without its weaknesses. Most importantly, Alexandru was a vassal of the King of Poland and paid homage in person five times during the course of his reign (Haynes 2003, 17). (This was a precedent which Ştefan cel Mare went out of his way to avoid, only succumbing in 1485.) Moldova's unfortunate geographical location and political fragility were exposed by the treaty between Poland-Lithuania and Hungary of 1412, by which Moldova was obliged to lend military assistance to the Hungarian crown and was threatened with partition

between the Catholic kingdoms should it fail to meet its obligations (Deletant 1991(d), 284; Haynes 2003, 17).

By 1457, the influence of leading boyars and the intervention of foreign powers in the numerous succession contests had combined to undermine royal government in Moldova. Ştefan's style of government was characterised by a determination to remove foreign interests and to neutralise the leading boyars. At first, these joint aims were pursued through military action in Poland, where he established his credentials as a military commander of stature, undermining Poland's support for his rival, Peter III Aron, and depriving the Moldovan boyars of a credible candidate for the throne. Internal threats to Ştefan's rule, with foreign backing, continued well into his reign, as Peter III Aron's final revolt in 1470 demonstrates; but Ştefan's ability to suppress each revolt is a testimony to his long-term success in building sufficient strength and support within the Principality to withstand all efforts to dislodge him from the throne.

Over time, like his grandfather before him, Ştefan centralised power within the person of the voivode. As a military leader and patron, he developed networks of support amongst the lesser boyars, who owed military service in return for the land which only the voivode could grant to them (Iorga 1925, 132). Ştefan also worked to restore royal lands, which had been expropriated by boyars during the succession contests, increasing the prince's estate and underlining the voivode's mastery of Moldovan land rights (Haynes 2003, 20).

Ştefan cultivated close ties with the Orthodox Church, which was one of the main beneficiaries of his land grants, and founded or expanded numerous churches and monasteries (see clause 2.3 below). Whilst encouraging the regime's aura of sacral kingship, Ştefan's patronage of the Church also allowed for the development of learning and a culture of writing in Moldova, which went hand in hand with the development of the central bureaucracy: the documents issued in his name by the chancery made manifest the voivode's legal and economic authority as a patron (Papacostea 1996, 25-7).

An important element in the exercise of the voivode's authority was the peripatetic nature of his court. Although Suceava was the voivode's principal residence and notionally the seat of the *Sfatul Domnesc,* in practice Ştefan moved around his territory on a regular basis and could hold court in a number of the strongholds and fortified residences which were developed during his reign (see Chapter 5, Section 3) – to dispense justice, receive taxation and raise levies (Iorga 1925, 131). The voivode's itinerant lifestyle is apparent from the instructions given by the Venetian government to its ambassador accredited to the Moldovan court in the 1470s:

> "...if you stay permanently in Suceava or in the neighbourhood, it will be difficult to fulfil your duties and you will be able to learn about the events only from hearsay... Go to those places where you will be able to be at all times in the retine of that illustrious Stephen" (Papacostea 1976, 56).

The *Sfatul Domnesc* became a vehicle for the advancement of the voivode's supporters. Court officials which had been introduced by Alexandru cel Bun, such as the *logofät* (chancellor), *paharnic* (cup-bearer), and *stolnic* (high steward or master of the bed chamber), grew in importance: the office-holders were the personal servants and dependants of the voivode. Leading boyars who were not given one of the court offices lost influence in the *Sfatul Domnesc* and their names appeared less and less as witnesses to royal decrees, dropping to "nearly zero" at the end of the reign (Boldur 1970, 8; Papacostea 1996, 26-7). The nomenclature of Ştefan's court was filtered through the Bulgarian and Serbian royal courts and had thus acquired Slavonic components; but the main Moldovan officials held titles which ultimately derived from the imperial court at Constantinople. These Byzantine antecedents complemented the ritual of the voivode's court (Seton-Watson 1934, 30; Haynes 2003, 16; Herrin 2008, 29-32, ch.16).

The personal relationships at the heart of the voivode's court are illustrated by the fact that the *marele vornic* Isaia (the chief justice and one of the leading boyars) was married to one of Ştefan's sisters (Boldur 1970, 352). Isaia's execution as a traitor in 1471, along with the cup-bearer Negrilă and chancellor Alexa, following the final defeat of Peter III Aron, reveals the gravity of the danger which Ştefan faced at that time (Denize 2004, 53-4). However, in the militarised state which

he had created, not even betrayals within his court and his family could negate Ştefan's personal rule, as long as the landowners and free peasants who owed the voivode military service remained loyal. Similarly, although the loss of Chilia and Cetatea Albă in 1484 threatened the economic prosperity of the Principality, these losses occurred after nearly 30 years of Ştefan's personal rule and his network of patronage and service was sufficiently strong to preserve his control over the Principality.

2.1.2   A militarised state

The Romanian principalities existed on a war footing throughout the era of the Ottoman advance into Southern Europe. In both Wallachia and Moldova, the basic structure of society reflected the need to raise mass armies on a regular basis, and although Romanian military forces were always outnumbered by the Ottoman armies which advanced against them, it is a testimony to the organisation and readiness of the Romanian populations that the Wallachian "great army" may have numbered 30-40,000 men from a total population of about half a million people, while Ştefan's Moldovan forces could number up to 60,000 men from a relatively small population of about a quarter of a million (Rosetti 1927, 92; Sedlar 1994, 255).

The princes of Wallachia and Moldova retained smaller peacetime armies, made up of *curteni* or "courtiers", essentially boyars and their retinues. Ştefan's *curteni* may have numbered 10-12,000 men and, in keeping with his campaign to limit the powers of the greater boyars, the *curteni* tended to be lesser landowners whose obligation to do military service brought them tax exemptions (Denize 2004, 31). As he consolidated his authority, Ştefan's standing army became ever less dependent on boyars: he retained a personal guard of 3,000 footmen (akin to the Sultan's janissaries[11]), together with mercenaries to guard his fortresses and troops raised on Moldova's borders under the command of the *marele vornic* (Hentea 2007, 52, 64).

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[11] An elite force of "slaves", the janissaries numbered 15-20,000 men and were the spearhead of the Ottoman army as well as the Sultan's personal guard (Mansel 1995, 4, 17).

In time of war, the standing army became the elite of the great army, which was raised from the peasant population of Moldova. Mass mobilisation was due largely to the free status of most of the peasantry: their land rights entailed an obligation to do military service for the voivode. The peasants were therefore motivated to meet the call to arms in defence of their own property, and not just out of loyalty to their prince or the hope of spoils in victory – although there could be further benefits for peasants and lesser boyars, as Ştefan would invest those who distinguished themselves in battle with land and privileges as a means of curtailing the power of the greater boyars (Sedlar 1994, 255; Papacostea 1996, 30; Hentea 2007, 64).

Moldova's great army was well-organised and disciplined. Peasants could be summoned to an annual inspection of their horses and arms and the penalties for appearing without the correct armaments were severe: those who did not supply their own swords, bows and arrows would be beheaded (Iorga 1925, 137; Rosetti 1927, 93; Papacostea 1996, 28). Mobilisation in time of war was effected by couriers, *ocălari*, who rode through the country giving notice of the voivode's call to arms. The ringing of church bells and the lighting of beacons were signals to the peasant warriors to gather at prearranged meeting points, under the command of *pârcălabi*, the regional governors of Moldova's castles and fortresses (Hentea 2007, 64).

The fortresses were key to Moldova's defences, as well as being a physical expression of Ştefan's authority within the Principality and the nature of his government. Alexandru had been responsible for developing fortifications on the Nistru, at Hotin in the northwest and at Cetatea Albă in the southwest of Moldova, as well as at Chilia on the mouth of the Danube and inland at the strategic towns of Suceava and Neamţ (Haynes 2003, 18). Ştefan gradually extended the network of defences and fortified places considerably, while augmenting Alexandru's principal fortresses. The defences on and near the Nistru, which were designed to withstand Polish and Tatar incursions, were added to at Tetina, Soroca, Orhei and Tighina. A new fortress was built near Chilia in 1479, while the disputed Wallachian fortified town of Crăciuna was annexed in 1482 in an attempt to enhance Moldova's southeastern defences (this fortress was subsequently destroyed by the Ottomans in 1485). The castles at Suceava and Neamţ, extended during the 1470s, together

with Ştefan's new-build at Cetatea Nouă near Roman (1460s), formed an internal line of defence (Iorga 1925, 85; Rosetti 1927, 93; Papacostea 1996, 31; Denize 2004, 34-5, 116; Hentea 2007, 65).

Several Moldovan fortresses were occupied or destroyed during Ştefan's reign, the most prominent being the strategic ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă. Notwithstanding their vast defences – in Ştefan's era the stone walls at Cetatea Albă were over 4m thick, protected by a ditch or moat which was up to 12m wide – the ports sought to protect their commercial interests when confronted by the Ottoman navy (Sedlar 1994, 254). Cetatea Nouă was damaged in 1476 (and renovated by 1484). But the Ottoman army failed to take Suceava and Neamţ in 1476, and the Polish siege of Suceava in 1497 was unsuccessful. This was due in part to Ştefan's modernisation of the defences at his major castles. Following developments elsewhere in Europe, he incorporated cannon into castle walls, and protected the heart of these complexes with rounded bastions and brick and stone walls to resist artillery fire, as well as moats and earthworks to hinder siege works (Sedlar 1994, 234; Denize 2004, 34-5; Hentea 2007, 65). The architecture of selected Moldovan fortresses is described in detail in Chapter 5, Section 2.

Ştefan also constructed wooden forts, sometimes to serve as temporary defences, and throughout Moldova small towns, estates and even monasteries were fortified (Rosetti 1927, 94; Denize 2004, 34). Building in stone was a significant advance and represents a signature of Ştefan's work at castles and monasteries. In addition, there are several examples of fortified churches in Ştefan's lands in Transylvania, a convention which was adopted from the Saxon tradition of urban defence there, and which indicates the general principle of preparedness for attack which Ştefan raised throughout his lands (Iorga 1925, 140; Porumb 2004, 42 and ill. 74, 76, 77).

The system of defences allowed Ştefan to enhance his personal authority through the office of the *pârcălab*. The governors of the fortresses served as regional administrators on the

voivode's behalf, with legal powers to act as Ştefan's local representatives. In combination with the peripatetic nature of the court, the presence of permanent local officials throughout Moldova extended the reach of the voivode within the Principality, emphasised his authority over the leading boyars, and contributed to the functioning of an efficient government under his direct control (Papacostea 1996, 27).

2.1.3   Family ties and dynastic policy

Despite the near continuous struggle for the survival of the Moldovan polity, Ştefan's voivodeship was never inward-looking or merely defensive. He had an international aspect, with the vision to seek alliances not only throughout the Christian states of Europe but also in the Islamic world. When the situation required, he could do business with the Ottomans, and his diplomacy extended to the various Tatar groupings in the Crimea and the Steppes as well.

Just as Ştefan employed close, familial relationships within Moldova to develop his regime and exercise his authority, so his foreign policy was expressed through the exploitation of family ties and the strategic use of marriage alliances. This was a risky approach: in the twisting, uncertain world of South-European diplomacy in the second half of the 15th century, family relationships often counted for little; after all, the times of trouble within Moldova were a series of bloody dynastic disputes between the senior members of the house of Muşat. Indeed, the picture could be more complicated than this, as Ştefan's relationship with his cousin, Dracula, demonstrates.

Ştefan achieved the Moldovan throne in 1457 with Dracula's military support (the two had grown up together, often in exile, so it can be assumed that they had a close relationship). But when Dracula needed Ştefan's aid against the Ottomans in 1462, Ştefan's interests were better served by actually co-operating with the Ottomans in an attempt to regain Chilia (Treptow 1991(b), 128-9). Ştefan's lack of support for Dracula at this time may have cost Vlad the Wallachian throne.

By 1476, when Dracula had become useful again to Matthias Corvinus, Ştefan was obliged by his Hungarian overlord to offer support to his cousin once again when Dracula re-entered Wallachia. Dracula's campaign in Wallachia suited Ştefan, who had been betrayed by Basarab the Elder's defection to the Ottomans: Ştefan's ambassador to Venice reported him as requesting that "the voievod Basarab be booted out of the other Romanian country and that another Christian prince, namely Dracula, be enthroned, so as to have someone there with whom we could have a good relationship" (Andreescu 1991, 148). Ştefan campaigned with Dracula and may have witnessed Vlad's formal coronation in Wallachia in November 1476. At Dracula's request, Ştefan left behind 200 men to act as a personal guard for the Wallachian voivode. However, the Moldovan support was to no avail and Ştefan was moved to express regret at his cousin's death soon after – although it is a moot point whether Ştefan's sorrow was of a personal or a political nature: "the disloyal Bassarab [*sic*] returned, and finding Vlad Ţepeş alone, killed him along with all my men; only ten of them escaped with their lives" (quoted in ibid. 147).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

In his marriages, and in those of his children, Ştefan sought to assert his status as the leading Orthodox ruler of Southeastern Europe, the inheritor of the Byzantine Emperor's mantle. This was the case in particular with his marriage to Maria of Mangop, whose Byzantine ancestry enhanced Ştefan's claim to be an *autocrat*. Beyond this, although Ştefan's political marriages were always to Orthodox princesses, they were also intended to achieve secular political goals within his sphere of influence.

Ştefan's first-born son and presumed heir, Voivode Alexandru, may have been the child of an early marriage, which is reputed to have taken place between 1457 and 1463, to a woman called Mary – "Măruşca" or "Mărica". There is some doubt as to the legitimacy of any marriage to "Măruşca". If Voivode Alexandru was an illegitimate child, this may explain why, having predeceased his father, Alexandru was buried in the monastery of Bistriţa, rather than in the family

vault at Putna (Boldur 1970, 352; Ilie 2004, 71).[12] It is also possible that Ştefan had *two* early sons called Alexandru, one of whom died at a young age, as there is documentary evidence that Voivode Alexandru was in fact the son of Ştefan's first recognised wife, Evdochia of Kiev (d. 1467).

Ştefan's marriage in 1463 to Evdochia of Kiev, who was a sister of the Kievan Prince Simeon (1454-70) (also designated *Kneaz* and *Tsar*), a cousin of Grand Prince Ivan III of Muscovy ("the Great", 1462-1505), and related through her father to King Casimir IV of Poland, was a much more significant political union than the doubtful first marriage. The Kievan marriage sought to bind Ştefan to the great ruling houses of Central and Eastern Europe, and it was also a manifestation of Moldova's potential as a mediator between the Orthodox Christians of the Balkans – many of whom were historically the subjects of the Byzantine Emperor – and the Orthodox East Slavs. The marriage in 1483 of Ştefan's daughter by Evdochia, Elena, to the heir of Ivan III of Muscovy reinforced this aspect of Moldova's international relations, even if hoped-for military assistance from Muscovy failed to materialise.

In the 1470s, Ştefan's eastward-looking alliances formed part of a wider set of unions designed to counter the Ottoman threat. Uzun Hasan accepted a Christian wife, the daughter of the dethroned "emperor" of the Black Sea city-state of Trebizond, while in 1472 Ivan III of Muscovy himself married Sofia Palaeologa, a daughter of one of the great Byzantine imperial families (Rezachevici 2004, 51, 70-1).

The Moldovan prince's claim to be *autocrat* in Southeastern Europe was placed in the shade by the growing power of Muscovy. Ivan III's marriage reinforced the assumption by Muscovy of its status as the "Third Rome", the successor to the spiritual and temporal authority of Constantinople (Mansel 1995, 50). The papacy's ongoing project for a union of the Western and

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[12] Burial in Bistriţa monastery was prestigious, nonetheless: Bistriţa was one of the inspirations for the necropolis at Putna and the monastery church was the burial place of Alexandru cel Bun. See Chapter 5, Section 1, clauses 1.2 and 1.3.5.

Eastern churches (first proclaimed by the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-9 and encouraged by Byzantium's need for Western support in its final years) was hindered by the Palaeologan marriage; instead, the Russian Orthodox Church established itself as autocephalous – estranged from the Patriarchate of Constantinople – and the Grand Prince looked to be a new emperor – *Tsar*.

Nevertheless, despite such strains between East and West, the complex of marriage alliances between the major powers of Southern and Eastern Europe at this time did represent a kind of Christian union, within which Ştefan of Moldova played an important part (Iorga 1925, 86, 94; Boldur 1970, 352; Crummey 1987, 133-4; Hingley 1991, 36-7; Haynes 2003, 23-4; Denize 2004, 74, 117; Herrin 2008, 306-9).

In the same year that Ivan III married Sofia Palaeologa, Ştefan married Maria of Mangop (d.1477). Maria was also a member of a former Byzantine imperial family, now the rulers of a Black Sea state in the Crimea – Theodor-Mangop. Through this marriage, Ştefan acquired territory and influence in the Crimea, as a direct challenge to the Ottomans (Iorga 1925, 86; Haynes 2003, 24). Ştefan's extension of his interests in the Black Sea, augmenting his possession of Chilia and Cetatea Albă, brought tensions with the Ottomans to a head.

Following his great victory at Vaslui in early 1475, Ştefan tried to prepare for the Sultan's likely retaliation by consolidating the Christian states of the Black Sea region. He sent a Moldovan force to Mangop to dethrone his brother-in-law, Isac, who was supported by the Ottomans, and impose another brother-in-law, Alexander, as Prince of Theodor-Mangop. This policy was of short duration, as in June of the same year, the Ottomans captured the key Genoese port in the Crimea, Kaffa, and then turned against Mangop. The principality of Theodor-Mangop fell in December 1475: Alexander, like Dracula in Wallachia, had a personal Moldovan guard, but he and all of Ştefan's men were killed. Ştefan executed his Turkish prisoners in revenge, paving the way for the Ottoman attack on Moldova in 1476 which briefly threatened Ştefan's hold on power in his own

land (Ascherson 1995, 25-6; Papacostea 1996, 50-1; Denize 2004, 85, 89, 93-4, 98). Allied with the earlier defeat of Uzun Hasan by Mehmet II at Otlukbeli (1473), the fall of the Black Sea states – which culminated in the loss of Chilia and Cetatea Albă in 1484 – demonstrates that the wide reach of Ştefan's diplomacy could not be matched by his, or any other Christian state's, military strength.

Ştefan cel Mare's final marriage highlights the apparent fickleness of his relationships with his Wallachian cousins. Maria Voichiţa (d.1511) was the daughter of Radu cel Frumos, one of Dracula's brothers. If Ştefan's political relationship with Dracula had been inconsistent, his relations with Radu were permanently hostile. Ştefan invaded Wallachia on several occasions during Radu's reign, dethroning him four times, in response to Radu's Ottoman vassalage. Nevertheless, marriage to Radu's daughter "was inspired in the hope, which was not fulfilled, of uniting the thrones of Moldova and Wallachia and thereby launching an anti-Ottoman crusade from the principalities" (Haynes 2003, 24). It seems that Ştefan's marriage to Maria Voichiţa was a restatement of his intention – demonstrated by his warfare on Wallachian soil – that the Romanian principalities should effect a united front against the Ottoman threat; his status as a "unifier" of the Romanian lands *per se* should not be overstated (Treptow 1991(b), 131).[13]

All of Ştefan's recognised marriages were associated with his campaigns against the Ottomans and formed an element of the international diplomacy by which he tried, with varying degrees of success, to build Christian alliances against the Islamic power. Ştefan's several marriages also served to extend his immediate family. Although a number of legitimate sons predeceased him, he promoted his dynasty within Moldova, seeking to consolidate his and his successors' hold on power: one illustration of this is the painting of elaborate votive frescoes within Ştefan's churches, on which the prince, his wife and children often appear in hierarchical

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[13] Rather surprisingly, in the dedication inscription of the Church of the Holy Cross at Volovăţ, built between 1500 and 1502, Radu cel Frumos is mentioned as the father of Maria Voichiţa. The foundation was made in the names of Ştefan, son of Voivode Bogdan, Ştefan's wife Maria, daughter of Voivode Radu, and their son, Voivode Bogdan (Catalogue 1958, 183). While the dedication is notable principally for including Ştefan's immediate family and ascribing authority to the heir apparent, Bogdan, there might be an element of conciliation in the mention of Radu, the former Wallachian voivode.

procession (see clause 2.3 below). Ştefan deliberately attempted to establish a public legacy for his branch of the house of Muşat. This was a shrewd and necessary policy, given the history of internecine conflict which preceded Ştefan's rule.

One of the methods which he employed to popularise and legitimise his family's claim to the throne was the creation of public memorials to the dead of his house. The votive church at Putna monastery was built to serve as Ştefan's family mausoleum. This complex was accorded added importance by Ştefan's translation to the grounds of the monastery of a wooden church, supposedly erected at Volovăț by Dragoş, the first Moldovan voivode. The buildings at Putna thereby demonstrated a continuity in Moldovan voivodal heritage, acting as a physical statement of the legitimacy of the ruling family; the complex also served to contrast the modesty of the older wooden building with the magnificence of Ştefan's modern stone church. Ştefan enhanced his policy of honouring the dead – and himself – by commissioning decorated tombstones at the burial places of his princely forebears, notably at Rădăuţi; the inscriptions on these stones testified "to his connection with the entire past of Moldavia" (Iorga 1925, 140; quotation from Papacostea 1996, 72-3. See Chapter 5, Section 1, clauses 1.2 and 1.3.2).

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Although he was not given burial in the family vault at Putna – which, by 1496, already housed the bodies of Maria of Mangop and two of Ştefan's young sons – Voivode Alexandru, Ştefan's initial heir, *was* accorded both honour and real power in his lifetime, revealing a further aspect to Ştefan's dynastic policy.[14] Alexandru did not attain the status of "associate prince" until relatively late in Ştefan's reign – it was only in the 1490s that Alexandru was described as "voivode" in inscriptions and documents, and this formal relationship with his father was of short duration, as Alexandru died on 26 July 1496 (Ilie 2004, 73, 76). In letters issued by Alexandru in the 1480s, he described himself only as the son of Ştefan, and emphasised his father's superiority: "Alexander, filius domini Stephani Dei gracia waywode regni Moldavie" (Alexandru, son of prince

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[14] Alexandru's burial at Bistriţa monastery may have been the inspiration for Ştefan to build a grand bell tower there, which was dedicated in 1498 – although there is no mention of Alexandru in the dedication itself. Catalogue 1958, 155-9.

Ştefan, by the grace of God voivode of the "kingdom" of Moldova); "Sandrinus, Dei gracia filius ilustrissimi principis Stephani waywode Moldaviensis" (Alexandru, by the grace of God son of the illustrious prince Ştefan, voivode of Moldova) (ibid., 72). However, from c.1481 Alexandru *was* given his own court at Bacău, at a strategic point in southwestern Moldova, and from there he appears to have been responsible for regional government in an area of the Principality known as Ţara de Jos – "the southern (lower) land" (ibid., 75).[15]

From the commemorative inscription erected at the Church of St. Michael in Războieni, which Ştefan built in 1496 to honour the Moldovan dead from the battle of Valea Albă (Războieni) in 1476, it appears that Alexandru fought alongside his father from an early age: "Şi noi, Ştefan voievod, şi cu fiul nostru, Alexandru, am ieşit înaintea lor aci şi am făcut mare război cu ei, în luna iulie, 26..." ("And we, Ştefan voivode and our son Alexander, came to meet them [*the Ottomans*] here and made great war with them on July 26") (Catalogue 1958, 143; Papacostea 1996, 55). Alexandru also played a role in the defeat of Basarab the Younger of Wallachia, at Râmnic in 1481. Ştefan recorded this victory in the dedication stone of a church built at Milişăuţi, near Suceava, in 1487: "Io Ştefan voievod, din mila lui Dumnezeu domn al ţării Moldovei, fiul lui Bogdan voievod, şi cu preaiubitul său fiu Alexandru, a făcut război la Rîmnic cu Basarab voievod..." (Ioan Ştefan voivode, by the grace of God prince of the Moldovan lands, son of Bogdan voivode, together with his beloved son Alexandru, made war at Râmnic with Basarab voivode...) (Catalogue 1958, 57-8).

Alexandru's court was established at Bacău at about the time of the battle of Râmnic. His presence there appears to have been part of a defensive strategy to counter the threat from the Ottomans – and Wallachia – on Moldova's southern borders, as well as to reinforce Moldovan

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[15] A legacy of the fraught competition for territory on the Black Sea littoral in the second half of the 14th century, as the principalities of Wallachia and Moldova gained strength and the Mongol presence waned, the Ţara de Jos is difficult to plot on a map even in Ştefan's reign: it may have extended east of the Prut to Orhei and Soroca in the northwest of the Principality. The extent of the territory of the Ţara de Jos is not, however, representative of the power of the associate prince relative to that of his father. See Rădvan 2010, 337-341.

control over the trade routes which headed northwards to central and northern Europe. Additionally, the creation of a permanent court for the southern region made Ştefan's itinerant court more efficient: although he developed numerous courtly residences of his own – at Suceava, Iaşi, Vaslui, Hârlău, Cotnari, Huşi, Dorohoi, Botoşani and Piatra Neamţ – the voivode's responsibilities were shared and any ambitions harboured by his eldest son might be answered; Alexandru was clearly more than a *pârcălab* ([Patzinakia [1]](#)) (see Chapter 5, Section 3).

Alexandru was able to assert his status as associate prince and heir to the Moldovan throne on the dedication stone of the church at Bacău, which he built as a part of the complex of court buildings there. Dedicated on 1 January 1491 to the Dormition of the Mother of God, the inscription is one of the few records that ranks Alexandru clearly as the "associate prince": "Io Alexandru voievod, fiul lui Ştefan voievod, domn al Ţării Moldovei..." (Ioan Alexandru voivode, son of Ştefan voivode, prince of the Moldovan lands) (Catalogue 1958, 90). Alexandru's elevation to this status shows that Ştefan was looking firmly to the succession, perhaps rather belatedly, after over 30 years on the throne.

Ştefan's caution is understandable: although there were precedents for the division of the government of the Principality – two of Alexandru cel Bun's many sons shared the Principality for a time in the 1430s – a division of the Principality also recalled the terms of the treaty between Poland-Lithuania and Hungary of 1412, which threatened partition (Ilie 2004, 75). Nevertheless, as Ştefan aged, it was clearly necessary to assert the authority of his successor. Following Voivode Alexandru's death, Bogdan, the son of Maria Voichiţa, quickly attained the status of associate prince, although Alexandru himself was not forgotten: Ştefan made grants to the Bistriţa monastery in his memory, on each occasion describing Alexandru as "voivode" – an honour which was not extended to Ştefan's young sons buried at Putna monastery, indicating the significance of the status of associate prince, even after death (ibid., 76).

Bogdan III may have become *voivode* almost immediately following the death of Voivode Alexandru. He is described as such in documents issued by Ştefan in 1498 and he and his mother are mentioned in the dedication inscription on the new bell tower built by Ştefan at the church of St. John in Piatra Neamţ in 1499: "Io Ştefan voievod, din mila lui Dumnezeu, domn al ţării Moldovei… împreună cu doamna sa Maria şi cu preiubitul fiul lor, Bogdan voievod..." (Ioan Ştefan voivode, by the grace of God, prince of the Moldovan lands... together with his wife Maria and their beloved son, Bogdan voivode) (ibid., 78, 80).

Voivode Bogdan appears to have achieved a superior status to that of his brother, Voivode Alexandru. Rather than acting as the governor of part of the Principality, Bogdan attained almost equal status with his father as Ştefan's health declined, particularly in the last couple of years of Ştefan's life. Bogdan was engaged in diplomatic negotiations with Poland and Lithuania in 1499, and by 1502 his character and appearance were worthy of report to the Signoria (the governing council of Venice) by the Venetian doctor, Matteo Muriano, who had been sent to treat Ştefan by the Doge of Venice. Ilie suggests that the unsuccessful boyar revolt which occurred shortly before Ştefan's death may have been in response to Bogdan assuming full governance of the Principality, even though Ştefan was still alive (ibid., 79-81).

The practice of raising the designated heir to the status of regional governor and even, in Bogdan's case, "co-regent", may not have quelled all dissent within the Principality or guaranteed the succession. But it was a clear exposition of dynastic policy and, even though Ştefan waited until relatively late in his reign to give his sons formal status and power, it was a prudent response to the legacy of the times of trouble.

2.2 Military and diplomatic prowess

In 1502, Ştefan is reported to have told Matteo Muriano – perhaps half as a boast and half as a complaint – "I am surrounded by enemies on all sides, and have fought 36 battles since I was

lord of this country, and of these won 34 and lost two" (quoted in Seton-Watson 1934, 47). His most prominent defeat came at the battle of Valea Albă (Războieni) in 1476, but such was Ştefan's outstanding record as a military commander that it is difficult to identify the other battle that he claimed to have "lost": this may have been a reference to his failure to take Chilia in 1462. It was certainly not an idle boast to assert a near perfect record in the battles which he fought, and Ştefan even had some grounds to bemoan the fact that he had had to fight so many: "His whole attitude and his sometimes equivocal policy, is dominated by Moldavia's geographical plight – condemned to a triangular game between Turkey, Hungary and Poland" (Seton-Watson quoted in Rosetti 1927, 87).

Ştefan's great victories – against Matthias Corvinus at Baia in 1467, against the Ottomans at Vaslui in 1475, and against the Poles at Codrii Cosminului in 1497 – won him international recognition and respect. Matthias Corvinus and John Albert of Poland never fought the Moldovans again, while praise for Ştefan's victory at Vaslui came from Pope Sixtus IV in effusive terms: "Your deeds, so wise and brave against the unfaithful Turks – our common enemies – have made your name so famous that it is in the mouth of everybody and you enjoy unanimous appreciation" (quoted in Ştefănescu 1976, 90). However, the range of his opponents – Christian and Muslim – and Moldova's encirclement by great powers, emphasise that Ştefan was, for the greater part of his reign, under threat from the needs and machinations of more powerful opponents.

It was the misfortune of the smaller Christian states of Southeastern Europe – Serbia, Albania, Bulgaria, Wallachia and Moldova – to be the battleground for the confrontation between East and West as the Ottoman Empire expanded. However, the 15th-century wars in Southeastern Europe cannot be characterised as being just a confrontation between East and West: divisions within Christian Europe were rife – between Catholicism and Orthodoxy, and between the ruling families of the major polities, such as Hungary, Poland, Lithuania and Muscovy. In this context, Ştefan stands out as a master of military tactics and the diplomatic game.

2.2.1 Military tactics

As an attacker, Ştefan undertook rapid, targetted actions and would, when necessary, challenge his opponents to open battle. This was the case in particular with his invasions of Wallachia in the 1470s and early 1480s. In defence – and much of his military career was spent tackling invasions of the Principality by armies which greatly outnumbered his own forces – Ştefan practised guerrilla warfare and employed a range of tactics that were designed to wear down his enemies; he avoided committing to battle until an invading army had been reduced by sickness and lack of supplies or been lured into unfavourable terrain. Ştefan's military strategies borrowed from the great Christian commanders of recent wars against the Ottomans: Mircea the Old of Wallachia (1386-1418), John Hunyadi, and Dracula; but Ştefan's military career lasted far longer than any of these predecessors and he enjoyed greater success.

In the mid-1450s, John Hunyadi was the unrivalled hero of Christian Europe. Hunyadi had been one of the commanders in the disastrous Varna campaign of 1444 – when a Christian army headed by King Vladislav of Hungary (1439-44; also King of Poland 1434-44) was routed by a superior force led by Sultan Murad II (1421-51) (the turning point came when the young king was killed and his head was mounted on a lance by the Ottomans to terrify his army) (Herrin 2008, 307-8). However, Hunyadi's reputation was secured by his defence of the key Hungarian fortress of Belgrade in 1456. Hunyadi achieved a kind of martyrdom when he died of plague – which had spread through the Ottoman army and contributed to their retreat – shortly after the siege had been lifted.

In the early 1440s, as voivode of Transylvania, Hunyadi enjoyed considerable success against the Ottomans by adapting tactics first employed on the battlefield by Hussite rebels, who had fought against Catholic armies in Bohemia. The most important of these stratagems was the use of the "Hussite wagon fort". Essentially a defensive device, the wagon fort was developed in the 1420s by the Hussite commander, John Žižka: farm wagons and carts were chained together to form an enclosure that repulsed cavalry attack; the enclosures could be moved around the

battlefield, as required, and served as a defence from which foot soldiers could sally forth to attack the enemy, once it had been worn down by attacking the wagon forts. The system was ideal for peasant-based armies which lacked sophisticated weapons and, by providing mobile defences on the battlefield, it was also an answer to the challenge posed by superior enemy numbers: if a commander chose the right terrain for battle, natural defences could combine with the improvised defences of the wagon forts to stymie the enemy and allow for the possibility of defeating a demoralised and exhausted army (Sedlar 1994, 231, 233, 236-7).

Hunyadi combined victories on the battlefield – his victory in Wallachia against the Turks in 1442 was the first occasion on which a large Ottoman army suffered a significant defeat in Europe – with brave incursions into enemy territory. In his "Long Campaign" of 1443, Hunyadi penetrated deep into Ottoman territory in the Balkans at a time when the Sultan was in Asia Minor and the army in Europe had dispersed for the winter. The Long Campaign raised the hopes of Christian Europe that the Ottomans could in fact be driven back. Those hopes were dashed by defeat at Varna in the following year, but Hunyadi's legacy was a demonstration both that victory could be secured against superior numbers on the field of battle and that carefully executed manoeuvres in Ottoman territory could bring the Sultan to battle (ibid., 236-7, 247; Hentea 2007, 55-6).

The Romanian principalities became a focus for Ottoman incursions in Europe in the 1450s in large part because of the Ottomans' desire to secure control of the trade routes that linked Europe to the Black Sea (Rosetti 1927, 89). The intricate "Moldovan Road" linked Lvov – the major entrepôt for trade between Northern Europe and Asia – with Suceava, Iaşi and the port at Cetatea Albă; the rival "Danube Route" – a complex of roadways which connected Central Europe with Constantinople as well as the Black Sea – ran through Wallachia and terminated at Chilia, while the older "Tatar" or Mongol Road" bypassed Moldova, connecting Poland with the Italian colonies of the Crimea (Sedlar 1994, 340; Andreescu 2000, 76; Rădvan 2010, 327-332, 431). After the fall of Constantinople, Wallachia and Moldova formed the frontline in Europe's defence against the Ottomans and found themselves engaged in so-called "asymmetric war":

In this type of war... the defensive side, which is militarily inferior, cannot win a decisive victory through armed confrontation in open areas... and opposes a long resistance to the offensive, superior side. This way a political victory is obtained in the end..." (Hentea 2007, 51)

The first Romanian voivode to accept the challenge posed by the *asymmetric* war with the Ottomans was Dracula. Taking on Hunyadi's mantle, Dracula sought to combine the boldness of the Long Campaign with the caution required of asymmetric warfare.

Like his cousin in Moldova, Dracula baulked at paying tribute to the Sultan and, having established his personal rule within Wallachia, he provoked conflict with the Ottomans in 1461 when he executed Turkish emissaries with a rare brutality and insolence (Treptow 1991(b), 124; Rezachevici 1991, 258). In the winter of 1461-2, Dracula prosecuted a roving campaign against Turkish positions along the Danube, in the style of Hunyadi. Familiar with Ottoman warfare from his time spent as a hostage at the Porte with his brother, Radu cel Frumos, Dracula plundered Ottoman defences along the Danube and penetrated into Bulgaria (Treptow 1991(b), 124; Hentea 2007, 57). In a letter to Matthias Corvinus, in which Dracula sought in vain for Hungarian support, Dracula claimed to have killed *and catalogued* thousands of victims: "23,884 Turks and Bulgarians in all, not including those [who] were burned in their houses and whose heads were not presented to our officials" (Treptow 1991(b), 124).

Dracula's campaign on the Danube brought a swift response from Sultan Mehmed II. The Sultan led a large Ottoman army of perhaps 60-70,000 men across the Danube at Nicopolis in June 1462. Dracula raised an army of all able-bodied Wallachian men, but could not match the Sultan's numbers, so he withdrew from open battle and allowed the Ottomans to advance towards Târgovişte, harrying them along the way and employing a scorched earth policy to deny provisions to the invaders. These tactics were "traditional" in the Romanian principalities: Mircea the Old, Dracula's grandfather, had won a great victory at Rovine in 1394 against Sultan Bayezid I ("the Thunderbolt", 1389-1402) by wearing down a superior Ottoman force with guerrilla warfare,

disrupting the Ottomans' supplies by scorched earth and drawing the enemy to a battleground of Mircea's choosing.[16]

However, Dracula appears to have been a more adventurous commander than Mircea the Old, and he incorporated a daring – if somewhat desperate – night attack on the Sultan's camp into his otherwise traditional campaign of harrassment. The night attack occurred sometime during the Ottomans' march to Târgovişte, and may have been an attempt to target and kill the Sultan himself. Dracula's 'commando' raid succeeded in spreading fear and confusion within the Ottoman ranks, but it failed to turn back the Turkish advance. When Dracula was finally forced into open battle, it may not have been in his preferred location and he was defeated. Dracula fled to Transylvania, where he became a captive of Matthias Corvinus, while Radu cel Frumos was placed on the Wallachian throne by the Ottomans (Treptow 1991(b), 124-5; Rezachevici 1991, 258-9; Hentea 2007, 52-3, 57).

Despite his defeat, Dracula was nevertheless an influential commander, as his combination of traditional tactics and personal daring can be seen in the far more successful warfare prosecuted by Ştefan cel Mare. Ştefan even employed a night attack in his defeat of Matthias Corvinus at Baia in 1467, surprising the Hungarian army in a manner that recalled the terror inflicted on the Ottomans by Dracula (Rosetti 1927, 95-6; Hentea 2007, 66).

The years 1475 and 1476 were definitive in establishing Ştefan's rule and his reputation in an international context. The campaign which culminated in his victory over an invading Ottoman army at Vaslui was characterised by classic Romanian guerrilla warfare leading to a battle in which local knowledge and innovative tactics overwhelmed the enemy's superior numbers. Ştefan had

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[16] These tactics recall the patience of the ancient Scythian armies, which confounded Persian and Greek opponents in the Steppes neighbouring the future Romanian lands by withdrawing from open battle until the enemy had been exhausted by the rigours of the march (see Ascherson 1995, 54).

luck on his side too – the weather conditions leading up to and during the battle of Vaslui were appalling and contributed to the Ottomans' inability to fight effectively; snow and fog made it easier for the Moldovans to exploit their choice of territory for the battle. But there was an extreme ruthlessness in Ştefan's defensive tactics which overwhelmed the Ottoman army. His "scorched earth" policy required the absolute desolation of settlements, farmland and supplies in the areas of the enemy's advance – to such an extent that it is a testimony to Moldova's general prosperity during his rule that the indigenous population was able to withstand and recover from the numerous occasions on which such defence was required (Grigoraş 1970, 309-11; Ştefănescu 1976, 86-7).

The victory at Vaslui highlighted Ştefan's acumen for choosing the right territory in which to resist and overwhelm a larger army, rather like John Žižka in Bohemia 40 years earlier. The Ottomans were drawn into the swampy Bârlad valley, where they encountered a Moldovan defensive position. Trapped by Ştefan's cannon on the flanks, the Ottomans were subsequently thrown into disarray by an attack from the majority of Ştefan's forces, which had been kept in reserve. Driven into flight, the Ottomans were chased back to the Danube by mounted Moldovan forces for three days, suffering thousands of casualties (Rosetti 1927, 98-9; Grigoraş 1970, 309; Hentea 2007, 66).

In the summer of 1476, Ştefan was outmanoeuvred by Sultan Mehmed II, who led the Ottoman campaign in Moldova in person, seeking to avenge the defeat at Vaslui. Not only did the Ottomans cross the Danube and advance into Moldova with an even larger army than that of the 1475 campaign, the Sultan also arranged for a co-ordinated attack by a Tatar force in northwestern Moldova, stretching Ştefan's resources by obliging him to defend two fronts at one time. The Wallachian voivode, Basarab the Elder, was also required to attack Moldova on the Sultan's behalf. Even under this pressure, Ştefan was able to defeat the Tatar force and drive it back over the Nistru. However, weakened by this effort, Ştefan was forced into a strategic error. Having established a defensive position in the Albă valley, near Războieni, Ştefan sallied forth to attack the Ottoman vanguard. Without the advantages of bad weather, and despite the effects of

scorched earth in wearing down the Ottoman army, the attack on the vanguard was insufficient to turn back the enemy, and when the Ottoman force engaged the Moldovans in battle, on this occasion it was the Moldovans who were dispersed, with Ştefan being driven from the Principality (Rosetti 1927, 101-2; Grigoraş 1970, 310-11; Hentea 2007, 66).

The defeat at Războieni proved to be only a temporary setback. Ştefan was soon able to return to his lands, as the Ottomans failed to capitalise on victory in battle. The Moldovan fortresses held out against Ottoman sieges, while disease and hunger spread through the Ottoman forces in consequence of the Moldovan scorched earth policy. Furthermore, Ştefan's diplomatic activity bore fruit: rapprochement with Matthias Corvinus in the previous year prompted the arrival of a Hungarian army led by the voivode of Transylvania, threatening the Ottoman line of retreat. In these circumstances, the Sultan opted to abandon Moldova at the end of the summer: the retreat gave Ştefan an opportunity to re-establish his authority, and his forces were able to pursue and harrass the Ottomans back to the Danube. The campaign of 1476 was the last occasion in Ştefan's lifetime on which a grand Ottoman army attempted to invade Moldova (Rosetti 1927, 102; Grigoraş 1970, 310-11).

Tactically, the main factor which secured Moldova's overall victory in the campaigns of 1475 and 1476 was the enforcement of scorched earth. Destroying land and provisions, and abandoning settlements – including, in 1476, the capital at Suceava – was not an easy option for the inhabitants of Moldova. Indeed, although scorched earth was a feature of Wallachian resistance to the Ottomans, it may have been an innovation by Ştefan within Moldova itself. If the voivode deserves credit for the successful application of this policy, then the people of Moldova deserve credit as well for overcoming the privations which it must have brought about.

On the battlefield, there seems to have been little in Ştefan's tactics against the Ottomans to compare with the daring exhibited by Dracula in 1462 and by Ştefan himself in 1467. Ştefan's use of defensive positions and the lie of the land may instead have owed something to Hunyadi's

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style of warfare. There has been some dispute as to whether the Moldovans used the Hussite wagon fort but the establishment of field defences such as "ditches, upturned trees, earth mounds, palisades, and carts that were tied to one another" (Denize 2004, 33) within terrain that restricted the movement and fighting style of the enemy exhibited similar principles to those followed by Žižka (Grigoraş 1970, 305; cf. Rosetti 1927, 93).

The final defensive campaign of Ştefan's reign, when the army of John Albert of Poland was driven out of Moldova, occasioned some remarkable actions by Ştefan's forces. Withdrawing from the unsuccessful seige of Suceava, the Polish army was required by the terms of an armistice to retrace its steps back to Poland – across territory that had been laid waste. Threatened with starvation, the Poles deviated from the agreed route only to fall into a trap laid by Ştefan and his commanders in the forests of Bucovina. The decisive battle occurred on 26 October 1497 in the forest outside Cosmin:

> When the rich barons, with their numerous followers, and the Teutonic knights turned to the fresh districts of northern Moldavia, and lost themselves in the great beech forests of Bukovina, where a corps of Polish auxiliaries had been destroyed by Peter I in the fourteenth century, the Moldavians, hiding in the depths, flung down the trees, which had been half sawn through in advance, upon the heavy mass, encumbered with its war-carts and maddened by the flight of the terrified horses. There was a terrible massacre, and an engagement at Lentesti, on the fringe of the forest region, completed the rout of the army. (Iorga 1925, 93)

The defeat of the Polish army was concluded in similar style to Ştefan's earlier victories against the Ottomans, with the Poles being harrassed all the way back to the border and beyond (Grigoraş 1970, 314-5; Denize 2004, 169; Hentea 2007, 67).

By 1497, Ştefan was an old man and it is clear that by this stage, at least, he was to some extent dependent on his subordinate commanders: the *mare spătar* ("great sword bearer" and leader of the cavalry), Boldur, was responsible for "wiping out" a detachment of Polish knights in the victory at Lenţeşti (Denize 2004, 34, 169). Denize states that Ştefan only led his troops in battle on three occasions in his entire career, portraying Ştefan as a supreme tactician who conducted

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campaigns rather than as a participant in most battles (ibid., 34). However, this portrait is at odds with the received image of Ştefan as a fighter as well as a strategist, in the tradition of heroes like Hunyadi and Dracula. Rosetti suggested that Ştefan knew "how to set an example of hard work and courage on the battlefield" (Rosetti 1927, 90).

2.2.2   Diplomacy

Bayezid II's capture of Chilia and Cetatea Albă in 1484 represented a severe blow for Moldova on several levels. In economic terms, Moldova lost control of two ports which were of crucial significance to trade between Europe and Asia. The Ottomans held the mouths of the Danube and the Nistru and access to the trade routes which led away into Europe. The Moldovan littoral was lost; indeed, the Black Sea was now a "Turkish Lake". Politically, the voivode's independence was curtailed, as Ştefan was confirmed as a tributary to the Sublime Porte. In military terms, the damage to Moldova's borders and international reputation was perhaps of less significance than the heightened threat now posed by the Ottomans, who were established on Moldovan land and able to attack Ştefan's surviving territory from a far more secure position than had been the case during the long advances through Wallachia during the campaigns of the 1470s. This was demonstrated when an Ottoman army burned Ştefan's capital at Suceava in September 1485. Bayezid II exalted that by his capture of Chilia and Cetatea Albă, he had "won the key of the door to all Moldavia and Hungary, the whole region of the Danube, Poland, Russia and Tatary and the entire coast of the Black Sea" (quotation in Seton-Watson 1934, 46).

The Ottoman attack on the two port-fortresses had been brought about by Bayezid's treaty with Matthias Corvinus in 1483, by which Hungary had given tacit approval to the Ottomans' claims on Chilia and Cetatea Albă. Betrayed by one former ally, Ştefan was forced to turn to another for aid, the King of Poland, but in circumstances which necessitated Ştefan's personal humiliation. In previous treaties agreed with Poland, it had been expected that Ştefan would do personal homage to Casimir IV, but he had, by various devices, always avoided this indignity. The situation in 1484-5 was too grave for him to be able to prevaricate any longer. On 15 September 1485, at Kolomyya

(in the Polish region of Pocuţia that Ştefan claimed as Moldovan territory), the voivode took part in a ritual of allegiance to the King of Poland – "the curtains of the tent being drawn aside at the very moment when he was on his knees!" (ibid., 47). The ritual oath of allegiance at Kolomyya represented the nadir in Ştefan's career. His grandfather, Alexandru, had paid homage in Poland on several occasions but still built a strong polity around his personal authority. It was a sign of Ştefan's outstanding leadership that he withstood the need to pay homage to Poland for so long.

With Polish military support secured, Ştefan once again demonstrated military prowess in driving the Ottomans out of his lands, with victories at Cătlăbuga in November 1485 and Şcheia in March 1486. He failed in the campaigns of 1485 and 1486 to retake Chilia and Cetatea Albă, but Ştefan recovered enough of his authority and reputation to secure his throne: the pretender, Peter Hronoda, was driven out with the Ottomans.

The events of 1484-6 determined the course of Ştefan's international policy for the rest of his reign, and illustrate the conundrum with which he was faced throughout his career. Caught between three great powers, each of which had designs on Moldova and two of which – Poland and Hungary – had historic claims to overlordship of the Moldovan voivode, Ştefan was obliged to engage in a continuous game of manoeuvring between the various interests of his great neighbours. He avoided isolation "at any cost" and "was never in open conflict with more than one of his potential enemies" at any given time (Denize 2004, 29). It is a matter of debate whether Ştefan's prosecution of his campaigns against the Ottomans was inspired more by secular considerations than by religious conviction, but it is clear that Ştefan attempted to use the possibilities of international crusade to unite his potential European enemies against a common Islamic foe, in keeping with his overall goals of securing his borders and enhancing the prestige of Moldova within Southeastern Europe.

The need to recover Chilia and Cetatea Albă placed these aims within a different context to the international situation of the 1470s. Ottoman control of the Black Sea ports was damaging to

Moldova's neighbours, not just to the Principality. Whereas in the 1470s Southeastern Europe had been under threat of Ottoman territorial conquests – which had been achieved in Wallachia and the Balkans – in the 1480s the Ottomans had full control of the Black Sea and a potential stranglehold over much of Europe's trade (Rosetti 1927, 89).

Ştefan's neighbours were equally involved in the tortuous manoeuvrings which characterised his international relations. Matthias Corvinus acknowledged the harm done to Moldova by the loss of the Black Sea ports by granting two Transylvanian strongholds to Ştefan in recompense. This arrangement presaged Ştefan's rapid withdrawal from the allegiance he gave to Poland at Kolomyya, such that when the Poles concluded a treaty with the Ottomans in 1489, Ştefan reconfirmed his status as a vassal of Hungary. Matthias Corvinus' unexpected death in 1490 then opened up a succession crisis in Hungary that pitched Jagiełłonian candidates in competition with one another, presented opportunities for the Ottomans to expand their interests in Hungary and, ironically, gave Ştefan an opportunity to enhance his position as an independent ruler.

At first, Ştefan supported the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian of Hapsburg (1493-1519) as candidate to the Hungarian throne, hoping to avert a dynastic union between Poland and Hungary through the accession of a king from outside the Jagiełło dynasty. This goal was not achieved, but by supporting Vladislav Jagiełło as candidate, rather than the heir to the Polish throne, John Albert Jagiełło, Ştefan did acquire a strong ally and was witness to a fissure within the Jagiełło dynasty, as Vladislav and John Albert confronted one another in a continuation of the traditional competition between Hungary and Poland. John Albert's failure to win the Hungarian crown was due in part to Ştefan's annexation of Pocuţia in 1490, together with co-ordinated diplomatic and military activity against Poland by Moldova, Muscovy and the Crimean Tatars (Papacostea 1996, 62-4; Denize 2004, 155-6; Rădvan 2010, 366).

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Ştefan reinforced his relations with Vladislav Jagiełło when, in 1492, he co-ordinated military action by Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania in defence of Hungary against a planned Ottoman invasion. In return, Vladislav confirmed Moldovan possessions in Transylvania – the fortresses of Ciceu and Cetatea de Baltă that had been granted by Matthias Corvinus – and demonstrated his loyalty in a decisive manner at the Congress of Lewocza in April 1494.

The Congress, which brought together five members of the Jagiełło dynasty, had two objectives: the establishment of an anti-Ottoman campaign and the subjugation of Moldova to Polish control. The new "crusade" would have been pan-European, as it was hoped to combine Jagiełłonian forces with those of Charles VIII, King of France (1483-98), the occupier of territory in southern Italy who, together with the Sultan's brother, planned to take Ottoman lands in the Balkans. John Albert Jagiełło's intention to replace Ştefan as Moldovan voivode with Sigismund Jagiełło was ostensibly a stage in the Polish king's plan to recover Chilia and Cetatea Albă from the Ottomans, thus re-establishing Christian control over the Moldovan Black Sea littoral and the crucial trade routes.

John Albert was Ştefan's confirmed enemy, following the latter's intervention on behalf of Vladislav Jagiełło during the Hungarian succession crisis. Vladislav, for his part, reverted to the traditional Hungarian policy of opposing Polish hegemony over Moldova, rather than endorsing an expansion in Jagiełłonian power. The divisions within the Jagiełło camp assured Ştefan of temporary support from one of his traditional allies. However, at the same time, the stand-off between Hungary and Poland also served to weaken Moldova's position. John Albert determined to confront the Ottomans on Moldovan territory: the heightened tensions between Poland and the Ottoman Empire threatened to undermine Ştefan's key strategic principle of never being in conflict with more than one neighbour at any given time. By 1497, Moldova faced becoming the theatre of war in a conflict between Poland and the Ottomans (Papacostea 1996, 64-6; Denize 2004, 158-161).

That potential conflict was averted when John Albert's invasion of Moldova ended in disaster. The Polish army's failure to take Suceava, and its defeat in battle during its ignominious retreat from Moldova, aborted John Albert's grandiose plans to challenge the Ottomans having first gained control of Moldova. The defeat in Moldova was both a military and a diplomatic disaster for John Albert: humiliated by a supposedly inferior foe – an opponent, who, ironically, had been prepared to join with the Poles in a direct attack on the Ottomans, if only the Polish army had circumvented Moldova rather than try to occupy it – John Albert also witnessed Ştefan's superior diplomatic skills. The Moldovan voivode secured significant military support from Hungary – the arrival of a 12,000-strong Transylvanian force convinced the Poles to raise the siege of Suceava – and established Ottoman neutrality while the conflict between Poland and Moldova played out (Denize 2004, 162-9).

Ştefan's international authority reached its height following his defeat of John Albert of Poland. The subsequent treaty between Moldova and Poland, which Ştefan ratified at Hârlău in 1499, banished the memories of his humiliation at Kolomyya in 1485. By the provisions of the treaty, Ştefan entered into peace with Poland and alliance with the Jagiełłonian bloc against the Ottomans on terms of equality: Ştefan was no longer a vassal of either Poland or Hungary.

> The great Jagiellonian union... was the greatest political edifice in Europe at this time. Still, it had to accept a treaty with Stephen the Great's Moldavia, a treaty concluded under terms of equality, and to recognise her key role in international affairs, not as a favour to a subordinate state but as a real necessity... (ibid., 172)

By 1504, Moldova's position in relation to the Ottomans had weakened once more, to the extent that Ştefan's deathbed instructions to his successor to pay homage to the Turks have been a cause of dispute among historians as to the precise nature of this final "surrender" (Rosetti 1927, 103; Seton-Watson 1934, 47; Denize 2004, 198-200). However, the paying of tribute to the Ottomans should not mask Ştefan's extraordinary achievement in establishing himself as a partner in the great Christian alliance of the late 15th-century – a status gained through a combination of repeated military success over the course of many years and energetic international diplomacy that

placed Moldova at the heart of the relationships between the great powers of the era, as a player in the diplomatic game and not a pawn.

2.3   Church-building: faith and the expression of power

Aspects of the architecture and archaeology of the numerous churches and monasteries which Ştefan either founded or extended are studied in Chapter 5 (Section 1). In the present context of the political, military and diplomatic features of the reign, Ştefan's energetic patronage of the Church – expressed most clearly in the development of the ecclesiastical architecture of the "Moldavian Style" – is a key element to appreciating the nature of his regime. Church-building in the Moldavian Style was not confined to Moldova: the voivode founded churches in his lands in Transylvania, as well as in Wallachia, and, in common with other Romanian princes, Ştefan was a significant patron of monasteries in the Mount Athos complex, reinforcing the international outlook of his voivodeship (Haynes 2003, 25).[17]

Ştefan's promotion of the Orthodox Church served political ends which have already been referenced, not least his desire to be an *autocrat* in the Byzantine tradition. His generous support for the Church as a political entity within the Principality also offset some of the power of the greater boyars, providing Ştefan with a dependable and influential ally; the voivode's land grants to the Church went hand in hand with his scheme to re-establish princely lands and his control of land rights. However, patronage of the Church was not reserved to the voivode, a sign of the eventual maturity and strength of Ştefan's regime. His first designated successor, Voivode Alexandru, was able to found a church at his court in Bacău. Among the greater boyars, the *hetman*[18] and *pârcălab*

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[17] The complex of Orthodox monasteries located around Mount Athos on the Chalcidice peninsula, in the Macedonia Region of Greece, is the spiritual centre of Orthodoxy. Mount Athos is a "monastic republic" that has enjoyed exceptional status since the 10th century according to grants made by a succession of Byzantine emperors, which have been upheld by modern Greek governments (Herrin 2008, ch.18). See the 1998 UNESCO* Advisory Body Evaluation for the designation of Mount Athos as a World Heritage Site at http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/454. *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

[18] "Hetman" is a Polish term, meaning literally "commander".

of Suceava, Luca Arbore, founded a great church in the village of Arbore.[19] The votive mural depicts Luca and his family in a manner which imitates the votives in his master's foundations (Catalogue 185, 188-9; Ogden 2002, 102).[20]

Although Ştefan's building work at the monastic complex at Putna was initiated in the 1460s, with the erection of the votive church that was to be his mausoleum, the majority of his foundations date to the final two decades of the reign. This is likely to have been due in major part to Ştefan's priorities in the early years of his reign – establishing the security of his regime and withstanding the threats to the territory of Moldova posed first by Hungary and then by the Ottoman advance. However, even in his final years, Ştefan faced invasion from Poland and the economic consequences of the loss of Chilia and Cetatea Albă, so it is possible that the relatively late flowering of church-building in Moldova, like the apparently late elevation of Voivode Alexandru to the status of designated heir, reveals that Ştefan only began to consider his wider legacy as the years advanced upon him and age took its toll.[21] That said, a number of monasteries served as places of refuge, becoming integrated within Moldova's defensive network, and their importance to the regime was a constant throughout the reign.

After the church at Putna, the earliest stone churches founded by Ştefan in Moldova were those at Milişăuţi and Pătrăuţi, where the dedication inscriptions are dated to 1487. One of Ştefan's *hetmen*, Sendrea, was able to build a church at Dolheşti prior to 1481 and Ştefan himself was

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[19] The boyars required the permission of the voivode to found churches. See Boldura 2006, 69.

[20] The Arbore church was conceived as a family mausoleum: "...it was to become a family tomb almost immediately, for on the death of Stephen, his successor ordered the execution of both Luca and his two sons" (Ogden 2002, 102). The paintings in the church, including the votive, date to the reign of Petru Rareş, but were commissioned by Luca Arbore's daughter to complete her father's vision. Luca Arbore's elaborate Gothic tomb, decorated with enamelled bricks, was a colourful monument which rivalled those at Putna (ibid.; see also Székely 2004, 87). The Muşat tombs at Putna are described in Chapter 5, Section 1, clause 1.3.

[21] The discovery of a wooden church dating to the beginning of Ştefan's reign beneath the stone Church of St. George at Voroneţ monastery (1488) indicates that churches *were* founded from early on, but building in stone would not be undertaken until much later (Petrescu-Dîmboviţa 1981, 653).

forced to rebuild Putna in the 1480s (see Chapter 5, Section 1, clause 1.1). But the period of "great architectural upsurge" which followed at the end of Ştefan's reign was characterised by a continuous building programme throughout the voivode's lands which expressed Ştefan's reach, the material wealth of the Principality, and a level of artistic sophistication that was to have a lasting impact after Ştefan's death (Papacostea 1996, 70-2).

The exteriors of Ştefan's churches tended to be plain, unlike the Moldovan churches of the 16th and 17th centuries, which were richly decorated with elaborate frescoes both inside and out – the exterior mural paintings of the monastic church at Moldoviţa are among the most important survivals from this era (Treptow 1996, 129; Ogden 2002, 156).[22] The interiors of Ştefan's churches *did* feature important painted decorations, not least the votive murals which can be seen to have formed a major element of Ştefan's dynastic propaganda. In some cases, these murals also point to the regime's spiritual ideology.

Not all of Ştefan's foundations boast votive frescoes featuring the founder and his family, and not all of the extant votive murals date to Ştefan's lifetime: the decoration of Ştefan's churches continued after his death, with the reign of Petru Rareş in particular giving rise to some of the greatest artistic achievements of the medieval era in Moldova. However, amongst those frescoes which can be dated to Ştefan's reign, the votive mural at the Church of the Holy Cross at Pătrăuţi, dating to 1497-99, is significant. Ştefan is shown presenting the church to Christ, dressed in a colourful, bejewelled, full-length robe of Byzantine style and wearing a richly decorated crown. His heir, Bogdan, stands beside him, dressed in similar garb and wearing his own crown, replicating his father's gesture of donating the church. Other members of the royal family follow, as if in procession – Ştefan's consort, Maria Voichiţa, and two of their younger children. The fresco is a family scene, emphasising dynasty and, especially, the status of the heir to the throne, "associate

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[22] For details of the most important later monasteries in Bucovina, see the 1993 UNESCO Advisory Body Evaluation for the designation of a group of monasteries and churches as a World Heritage Site (WHL).

prince" Voivode Bogdan, who had recently succeeded his deceased half-brother, Voivode Alexandru (Catalogue 1958, 65; Ilie 2004, 81) [photograph 16].

There is a similar scene in the votive mural of the Church of St. George at Voroneț monastery, founded by Ştefan in 1488, though elaborated in the 16th century, when exceptional exterior murals were created. The votive tablet shows Ştefan being presented by St. George to Christ enthroned; again, Ştefan holds a model of the church while family members mimic his action of presenting the new foundation to Christ. Ştefan, Maria Voichița and Voivode Bogdan all wear crowns and robes decorated with oriental motifs (Catalogue 1958, 85; Ogden 2002, 246). The one difference of note between this scene and that at Pătrăuți is that Bogdan appears in the procession behind his mother and a young sibling, rather than at his father's shoulder: this is likely to be due to the slightly earlier date of the mural, which may have been completed in 1496 – probably predating Bogdan's elevation to the status of associate prince (WHL).

Over and above the dynastic nature of these portraits, the decoration of Ştefan's churches illustrates the confluence of politics and spirituality. This is apparent in the case of the murals at the Church of the Holy Cross at Pătrăuți, where Ştefan is associated with the patron of Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337). In the *pronaos* of the church there is a mural known as "The Cavalcade of Constantine". This depicts, in Byzantine style, the story of Constantine's vision of a fiery cross in the sky, which appeared to him as an omen of victory before his battle for Rome against Maxentius, at the Milvian Bridge, in 312 (Ogden 2002, 99, 182) [photograph 15].[23] This was one of the seminal moments in the development of the Christian Church: Constantine adopted the sign of the cross as his personal battle standard and the favour which he showed to the Church was made concrete by the Edict of Milan of 313, which granted religious toleration throughout the Roman Empire. The Council of Nicaea of 325, over

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[23] The Cavalcade of Constantine or the Holy Cross became an important theme within Moldovan church painting, symbolising the Principality's struggle against the Ottomans. It was incorporated in the frescoes at the churches of two of Ştefan's leading boyars – that of Ioan Tăutu at Bălineşti (1494) and, posthumously, at the Arbore church (Ogden 2002, 102, 110; Sinigalia 2005, 54).

which Constantine presided, established the spiritual authority of the Pope and the theological resolutions of the Council remain at the heart of Christian observance.[24] The subject of the fresco illustrates the dedication of the Pătrăuţi church to the Holy Cross.

The outstanding quality of the Pătrăuţi fresco – in terms of the balance of the composition, the detail and plasticity of the figures – is matched by its political symbolism (Catalogue 1958, 61, 67). Ştefan is, in effect, a new Constantine, emperor and guardian and evangelist of the faith. Indeed, Ştefan's association with Constantine went beyond symbolism – Ştefan sought to acquire imperial dignity through his actions as a Christian patron. Constantine was not only a seer of visions and the cross was not just a symbol to be borne by his soldiers: Constantine's mother, St. Helena, reputedly discovered the remains of the True Cross itself in Jerusalem and Constantine was the founder of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre there, which was dedicated to the Resurrection.[25] Ştefan, in his turn, was a patron of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, while the collection of holy relics at Putna monastery included a fragment of the True Cross (Haynes 2003, 25).[26]

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[24] Writing of Constantine's vision before the battle with Maxentius, Constantine's hagiographer, Eusebius of Caesarea, described the appearance of the "trophy" of the cross in the sky: "He stated that at midday, the sun already starting to wane, he saw with his own eyes the trophy of a cross of blazing light in the heavens, set over the sun, with the following inscription: 'Conquer by this'". Eusebius *Vita Constantini* I XXVIII (see Migne, J.P., 1857 (1997) *Eusebius/Opera Omnia. Patrologia Graeca, t.20-24.* Facsimile reprint. Athens: Centre for Patristic Publications, 943).

For the Edict of Milan, see: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/edict-milan.html. For a commentary on the Council of Nicaea, see: http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11044a.htm. For both, see also Herrin 2008, chs.1 and 4.

[25] For the activities of St. Helena and Constantine in Jerusalem, see Eusebius *Vita Constantini* III XXV-XL.

[26] Seton-Watson mentioned "...a relic sent to him [*Ştefan*]... as a talisman of victory, from one of the monasteries of Mount Athos. This relic – a carved ivory cross supposed to contain a fragment of the true Cross – had originally been presented to the monks by the Emperor Romanus I, who described it as having been jealously preserved in the imperial treasury since the days of Helena..." (Seton-Watson 1934, 45-6).

Iorga saw a desire to emulate Constantine on the part of all the 15th-century Romanian voivodes:

> When he [*the voivode*] builds a monastery or a church, the painter will reproduce on the walls his features and those of members of his family, in the costume of the Caesars, as it had been worn by Constantine the Great, patron of the official religion; and the heads, with long curly locks, will be decorated with the royal crown. (Iorga 1925, 132)

The iconography of imperial Christianity was also applied to the funerary monuments in Ştefan's churches. Funerary chambers and crypts appear in a number of Ştefan's churches, not just in the necropolis at Putna. Known in Romanian as a *gropniţa* (a word of Bulgarian origin), the funerary space in a church between the *naos* (the space where the liturgy was performed) and the *pronaos* or narthex developed as a specific architectural feature of the Moldavian Style. It was a spatial solution that allowed for the pre-eminence of the princely family to be incorporated physically within the fabric of a church (Bedros 2005, 61-2). The burial of members of the princely family, marked by decorated tombs in this space, reinforced the doctrine of sacral kingship that was such a feature of the political and spiritual propaganda of Ştefan's reign: drawing upon Byzantine ideology, transmitted through the Serbian kingdom, the presence of royal, sanctified remains in a designated space within a church offered protection to the building and to the worshippers within (ibid., 65-6). It also established the divine origin of the voivode's power, challenging the customary right of the boyars to elect a voivode when his authority in fact derived directly from God.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the idea for a specific burial space between the *naos* and the *pronaos* first appeared in Moldova in the church at Bistriţa monastery during the reign of Alexandru cel Bun. Use of this space went through an evolutionary process at Ştefan's foundations, drawing not only upon ecclesiastical architectural models but also on military architecture in which, of necessity, the Moldovans were well-practised by the middle of Ştefan's reign (Ogden 2002, 24; Bedros 2005, 62) (see Chapter 5, Section 1, clause 1.2).

The connection between Ştefan's foundations and his military career went beyond the practical application of architectural solutions to the Moldavian Style. Several of Ştefan's churches were instituted as memorials to the fallen in his great battles with the Wallachians, Hungarians, and Ottomans. The church at Baia was built in thanks for Ştefan's victory over Matthias Corvinus in 1467 (Iorga 1929, 33-4; Ogden 2002, 108); the church at Milişăuţi was built in honour of the victory over Basarab the Younger at Râmnic, while the Church of St. Michael at Războieni was built in honour of the fallen in the battle of Valea Albă (1476): archaeological work in the church has uncovered an ossuary containing the bones of Ştefan's war dead there (Petrescu-Dîmboviţa 1981, 653).

The Moldavian Style itself symbolised the character and strength of Ştefan's voivodeship. A fusion of traditional Byzantine church decoration, a ground plan found in the monastic churches of Mount Athos, and elevation in the Gothic style imported from Transylvania and Poland, the Moldavian Style also presented unique features – the development of the *gropniţa*, elaborate vaulting and a distinctive tower resting upon "a double support of inscribed polygons, one upon the other" (Iorga 1925, 141-2; Iorga 1929, 34-6; Ogden 2002, 24-29; Haynes 2003, 24-5).

> ... what was uniquely Moldavian in concept and execution was the system of vaulting used to support the drum and octagonal tower above the naos. The geometric problem facing the architects was how to reduce the rectangular plan of the naos to a square. By throwing two equidistant sets of two or even three arches along the shorter sides of the rectangle, they created the critical square design. On top was another arrangement of four arches, this time at 45 degrees, that is, the base of the pillars sat on the apex of the arch beneath it. On top of this was the square base of the drum, again at 45 degrees. Thus the weight was perfectly distributed, no one arch being exposed to more than a single load. (Ogden 2002, 29)[27]

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[27] See illustration 4, which shows the elevation of the church at Putna, a classic example of the Moldavian tower and broken roof line on either side of it (a high roof covering the western part of the church, and a smaller roof above the eastern apse or sanctuary).

In the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople, the Romanian principalities provided a haven for numerous groups of Orthodox refugees, especially Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians, who contributed to the joining together of indigenous Romanian artistic styles with those of Byzantium. The development of art and architecture ran in tandem with the elaboration of the voivode's power according to Byzantine imperial ideology; although the complex nature of the Principality's ethnic and political composition is demonstrated by the influences from Northern Europe which merged with those of Byzantium, in particular through the exchange of artists and merchants between Transylvania and Moldova (Iorga 1929, chapter 3; Haynes 2003, 24-5; Porumb 2004, 40-1, 46-7; Bedros 2005, 65-7).

Denize characterises Ştefan as having been a secular, pragmatic ruler, driven in his wars with the Ottomans by the need to protect the integrity of his lands rather than by the fervent "medieval" faith of a crusading idealist (Denize 2004, 92). Although he affirms that Ştefan was "a very good Orthodox Christian, a great founder and a true protector of the Holy Mountain of Athos" (ibid., 74), Denize argues that Ştefan, other "Romanian rulers who fought against the Turks" and the princes of Catholic European states were crusaders in name only, who followed the secular interests of their individual polities rather than earlier ideals of a common religious purpose (ibid., 92-3, 176, 202):

> Stephen the Great did not fight against the Turks as a crusader, but as a representative of the monarchic, unifying tendencies which were the new, modern tendencies that became more and more manifest throughout Europe. (ibid., 177)

However, Ştefan's patronage of the Church, the number of his church foundations, and the promotion of art and learning within the Moldovan monasteries that ran alongside an intense military career, suggest greater complexity in Ştefan's make-up. Ştefan was certainly a consummate politician and military commander but, allowing for the politics of spirituality, there was an intensity to the culture of church-building and the flowering of ecclesiastical art and architecture in the second half of Ştefan's reign which argues that Ştefan was a spiritual man and that his voivodeship had a spiritual aspect, as a counterpoint to the largely secular nature of the

reign. Indeed, Denize allows for this feature of Ştefan's character by describing a man who bridged the beliefs of the "medieval" and "modern" ages: "Obviously, while being a man of the modern age, Stephen the Great continued to remain a man of the middle ages, with a profound faith in God..." (ibid.).

Ştefan's reputation as a spiritual leader and protector of his people received posthumous recognition when the voivode was canonised by the Romanian Orthodox Church in 1992. Ştefan's dual modern titles, "the Great and Saint", tell of a popular status which is often reflected in historical judgements of his character and achievements. Romanian historiography abounds with flattering portraits of Ştefan. The comments by Nicolescu and Porumb quoted below bear a typical flourish, although there is also a justified expression of the complex context in which Ştefan ruled and the diverse aspects of his voivodeship:

> ... Stephen the Great "inherited from his ancestors the respect and the admiration
> for the entire Byzantine tradition, including the idea of the divine right of
> monarchies, the pomp and the ceremonial of the court, the religious outlook and
> the organization of the church, legislation, culture, and art." This entire mentality,
> a continuity of the Roman idea, in its eastern form, combined with the new spirit
> of humanism brought by the Renaissance, was fully turned to account in
> Moldavia, Transylvania, and Wallachia. (Porumb 2004, 56)[28]

3   The memorialisation of Ştefan's reign: chronicles and historiography

How did Ştefan cel Mare come to be remembered as a "great" ruler? According to Papacostea, Ştefan acquired the epithet "Great" in political discourse quite soon after his death: Sigismund I Jagiełło of Poland (1506-48) described Ştefan as "Stephanus ille magnus" (that great Stephen), and the Polish chronicler Martin Cromer (1512-89) referred to Ştefan as "the great Prince of the Moldavians" (Papacostea 1996, 76-77). Ştefan was also referred to as "great" within his lifetime, the epithet "Mare" being a commonplace amongst earlier Moldovan rulers; it was used,

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[28] Porumb quotes Corina Nicolescu, "Arta epocii lui Ştefan cel Mare. Relaţii cu lumea occidentală" [*Art in the time of Stephen the Great. Relations with the West*]. In *Studii şi Materiale de Istorie Medie* VIII 1975, 66.

not least, in the dedication inscription on the gate tower at Putna monastery: "*Binecinstitorul domn a toată Ţara Moldovei, marele Io Ştefan voievod, fiul marelui Bogdan voievod*" [*Most estimable lord of the Moldovan lands, the great John Stephen voivode, son of the great Bogdan voivode*] (although the authenticity of the form of words on this inscription has been disputed) (Gorovei 2005, 69-71).

Few writers have sought to contest the popular attribution of Ştefan's greatness. Recently, M.J. Trow has stood out for suggesting that Ştefan's abandonment of Dracula in 1462 "casts doubt on most historians' assertions that Stefan was truly a 'great' ruler in the accepted sense of the term. It also makes nonsense of the title *Athleta Christi* (Christ's Champion) given to him by the Pope" (Trow 2003, 206). This argument is offset by Treptow's assessment of the 1462 campaign, when Ştefan colluded with the Ottomans and took advantage of the Sultan's invasion of Wallachia to attempt to reclaim Chilia: "...it was his diplomatic skill and political adroitness that made Ştefan cel Mare the greatest prince in Moldavian history" (Treptow 1991(b), 131). Treptow's comment recalls the words of Miron Costin (1633-91), one of the first Moldovan chroniclers: "The Moldavians think of him [*Ştefan*] in political respects, with that veneration with which one holds a saint in religious honour" (quoted in Seton-Watson 1934, 48).

Early records apply a variety of terms to Ştefan's name – conventionally, he is known as "cel Bun" (the Good, like his grandfather) and, as Petru Rareş termed Ştefan, "cel Batran" (the Old) (this is how Ştefan is referenced in the dedication inscription on the Church of St. Demetrius in Suceava, built by Rareş in the 1530s [photograph 23]). However, it as "the Great and Saint" that Ştefan has come to be known throughout the Romanian lands. The explosion of books and articles which were published under this title in Romania and Moldova on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Ştefan's death in 2004 served as a testament to traditions in historiography and folklore, as well as to the abiding political importance of Ştefan's legacy (see Chapter 4, clause 4).

The attribution of saintliness to this warrior prince was formalised in 1992 when Ştefan was canonised as a saint of the Romanian Orthodox Church. His status as a *popular* saint seems to have been established from the moment of Ştefan's death in July 1504. While royal saints and dynastic cults were a feature of the medieval polities of Central Europe, and Ştefan's acquired status as a saint reflects strong Byzantine traditions as well, the famous account of Ştefan's death and burial written by the first Moldovan chronicler, Grigore Ureche, tells of popular acclamation and a "secular" form of sainthood:

> He was buried at the Monastery of Putna amid the sorrow and tears of all the inhabitants, who deplored him as a father. They knew they were losing a benefactor and a leader. After his death, they called him Stephen the Saint, not on account of his soul which is in the hands of God – for he was a man with sins – but on account of the great deeds he accomplished. (Beza 1930, 124)

> *Iară pre Ştefan vodă l-au îngropat țara cu multă jale şi plîngere în mănăstire în Putna, care era sidită de dînsul. Atîta jale era, de plîngea toți ca după un părinte al său, că cunoştiia toți că s-au scăpatu de mult bine si de multă apărătură. Ce după moartea lui, până astăzi îi zicu sveti Ştefan vodă, nu pentru sufletu, ce ieste în mîna lui Dumnezeu, că el încă au fostu om cu păcate, ci pentru lucrurile lui céle vitejeşti, carile niminea din domni, nici mai nainte, nici după acéia l-au ajunsu.* (The original text published by Panaitescu, 120-1)

The declaration of Ştefan's canonisation in 1992 by Metropolitan Teoctist, the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church (1987-2007), recalled the somewhat equivocal judgement offered by Ureche (which was echoed by Miron Costin). Metropolitan Teoctist emphasised Ştefan's record as a founder of churches and tapped into the strength of the legend of Ştefan as the defender of his people, the good ruler who might be thought of as a saint for the way in which he upheld Christianity and protected the borders of his lands (Cimbru 2005, 264-6; Stefan cel Mare). Allying his church with one of the historical champions of Orthodoxy in the Romanian space, the Metropolitan was also underlining his church's mission to be the representative of Romanian national identity (see Verdery 1999, 79-84 and Chapter 3, clause 3).

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As Ureche's account of Ştefan's funeral indicates, the Moldovan chroniclers interweaved the information contained in historical records produced in Ştefan's monasteries with a tradition of oral history that persisted within the Romanian principalities (Lăudat 1982, 268). The characterisation of Ştefan cel Mare within recent academic and popular history reflects source material that was in part state-sponsored, but in large part was unregulated – the spontaneous creation of popular imaginings.

Ştefan is closely associated with the promotion of chronicle writing at his monastic foundations in Bucovina, most particularly at Putna monastery. The early Moldovan chronicles were not literary works but rather chronologies and lists, written by monks but described as "court" chronicles, which focused on the deeds of the voivodes. The earliest extant Moldovan chronicle, written in Slavonic, is known as the Anonymous Chronicle (*Letopisețul anonim al Moldovei*) and covers the history of the Principality between 1359 and 1507. The Putna Chronicle (*Letopisețul de la Putna*), also written in Slavonic, exists in two versions, together covering the period between 1359 and 1526. The "court" chronicles spawned adaptations in Polish, Russian and German, reflecting the Principality's political relationships; the German version dates from Ştefan's lifetime, having been copied in April 1502, whereas the Polish and Russian chronicles, which are based on the Putna chronicle, were compiled later in the 16th century. By contrast, there are few contemporary chronicle sources from Wallachia, although an early Slavonic account of the career of Vlad III Dracula – *Skazanije o Draculea voievodea* [*The story of voivode Dracula*] – survives in Russian copies, the earliest dating from 1490 (Deletant 1980, 8-10).

The Slavonic chronicles of Moldova served as reference sources for later, more literary chroniclers, starting with Ureche (the son of a leading boyar) and Costin (a senior courtier) in the 17th century (ibid., 10). These works were written in the Romanian language, not necessarily so as to be more accessible to the literate inhabitants of the Principality, but as a statement of the "Roman" origins of the populace. Grigore Ureche's chronicle followed a chronological structure and concentrated on the careers of the Moldovan voivodes, from the establishment of the Principality up to 1595, but it also contained embellished accounts of key events based on popular legend and

folklore, of which his work was the written record. Costin served as continuator of Ureche's chronicle, extending the history up to 1661, but including the history of Wallachia and other Romanian lands. The first great historian of Moldova was the exiled prince Dimitrie Cantemir, whose works in the early 18th century encompassed geography, customs and folklore as well as political history. Cantemir's adviser Ion Neculce (1672 - c.1744), the *hetman* of the Moldovan army in 1711, wrote a chronicle extending to the 17th and early 18th centuries that incorporated Moldovan popular legends (Beza 1930, 124-5, 127-131; van Meurs 1994, 318).

These literary chronicles – usually written in the vernacular and containing the fantasies of legend and popular superstition, as well as historical details adapted from the official annals that were commissioned by Ştefan and his successors – formed the material inspiration for nationalist writers in the 19th century. Young intellectuals such as Ion Creangă (1837-89) and Mihai Eminescu (1850-89) were the progenitors of renewed interest in Ştefan cel Mare as one of the heroes of *Romanian* history, the icon characterised today as "Stephen the Great and Saint".[29]

The *Junimea* ("Youth") movement led the way in the forging of a modern Romanian intellectual national consciousness. Junimea began as a cultural society in Iaşi in the 1860s, following the union of Wallachia and Moldova. The founders moved to Bucharest in the 1870s, by which time the aims and membership of Junimea had diversified to incorporate political theorists and activists as well as writers and critics. Many of the Junimists were educated in Western Europe and were witnesses to the social and national movements in Germany, France and Italy which followed on from the 1848 revolutions.

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[29] According to Lucian Boia, "It might be said that it [*Romania*] is a country created by men of letters: writers, historians, teachers and so on. It was they who gave shape to a common history and a spiritual space, and through them the Romanians acquired an identity." (Boia 2001(b), 242.) Hutchinson warns that the development of historiography in Romania and elsewhere in the 19th century was bound up with (and tainted by) the development of nationalism; he cites Nicolae Iorga as having been a prominent cultural nationalist (Hutchinson 1994, 3, 44-5; in similar vein, see Verdery 1991, 216).

One of the best remembered Junimists is Mihai Eminescu, the Romantic poet and Romanian nationalist who has been lauded since his early death as the national poet of the Romanian people. He was in a state of mental decline by the time the Junimists established themselves in the upper echelons of academia in Bucharest; nevertheless, he is associated with their political activism. In his brief career, Eminescu produced poetical works and journalism which made him a notable artist and polemicist. His posthumous reputation developed rapidly at the turn of the 20th century (Boia 2001(b), 243).

In the 1890s, under the editorship of Ioan Bogdan (1864-1919)[30], the Junimists' journal, *Convorbiri Literare* ("Literary Conversations"), became a leader in the development of critical historiography in Romania. The Junimea movement came to espouse a philosophical view of Romanian social and cultural development, first associated with the literary critic and politician Titu Maiorescu (1840-1917), that was detached from pro-Western historical precedents such as "Latinism"/"Romanism", favouring a forward-looking concept of indigenous "national essence". The past was to be left *in the past*, allowing the Romanian people to follow the course of its own "evolution" (Verdery 1991, 38-40; Boia 2001(a), 54).

Nevertheless, Mihai Eminescu also used the past to inspire his fellow countrymen. Hailing from Bucovina, Eminescu seems to have had a natural affiliation with Ştefan cel Mare. Eminescu was one of the organisers of a series of celebrations at Putna in August 1871, commemorating the foundation of the monastery and the person of Ştefan as a national hero (Moraru 2002, 6; see Chapter 3, clause 3). Lines attributed to Eminescu from this time conclude with the tearful exclamation: "O Ştefan! tu eşti mare şi la mormântul tău!" (O Stephen, you are great and the tomb is yours!) (Opere 1939, 502). As a political journalist, Eminescu condemned the 1812 partition of the Principality, stating in 1878 that "Bessarabia has been ours since the fourteenth century" (van Meurs 1994, 324). As a poet, Eminescu drew upon the early chroniclers in his 1881 paean to

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[30] Bogdan was the editor of *Documentele lui Ştefan cel Mare* [*The Documents of Stephen the Great*] in two volumes (1913) (see Chapter 4, clause 4).

Ştefan, "Doina" (a traditional Romanian song). The poem calls on Ştefan to rise from the grave, to leave Putna monastery in the care of its priests, to once again toll the bell calling his men to arms and to lead the historic land of Moldova (indeed, all Romania "From the Nistru to the Tisa") against the threats of Turks and Russians (Opere 1939, 182-3; van Meurs 1994, 324; Boia 2001(a), 194-5). "Doina" remains one of the most famous Romanian poems (if not one of Eminescu's most *estimable* works), and a popular reference point for the ideal of Stephen the Great and Saint.

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The strong tradition of history writing in the Moldovan lands, from the late medieval period through the early modern era, represents a corpus of "Moldovan" historical literature. In the age of nationalism, the focus changes to one of *Romanian* national unification – a nationalist scheme that would likely have been incomprehensible to the elite of the medieval Principality. Nevertheless, the person and legend of Ştefan cel Mare bridges the divide between the history of a late medieval polity and the creation of a modern nation state. In this, Eminescu's work exemplifies the harmonisation of regional history and folklore while at the same time building the identity of a new nation state.

PART TWO:

THE PERSISTENCE AND TRANSFORMATION OF NATIONS AND NATION STATES

CHAPTER THREE:
  Romania and the Republic of Moldova: the legacy of partition

What has become of the lands of Ştefan cel Mare? This Chapter 3 provides an overview of the recent socio-economic condition of Romania and Moldova, and focuses on the post-1989 political context in which the legacy of the reign of Ştefan cel Mare has gained renewed currency. The economic environment and political developments are essential components for a study of nationalism within modern states; they also provide a necessary backcloth for the studies of archaeology and public archaeology which follow in Part Three.[1]

This chapter leads on to a discussion in Chapter 4 of the symbolic role that medieval princes play in contemporary nation-building programmes in countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The example of Ştefan cel Mare is analysed in relation to the heavily politicised historiography that has engulfed the image of this voivode, exploring this theme within the framework of ethnosymbolism.

1   A profile of Romania

Romania is one of the largest territories in Southeastern Europe. It is bordered by Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, as well as having over 200km of Black Sea coastline in the southeast of the country [Map 1]. Romania comprises three principal historic regions – Wallachia in the south, Transylvania in the west and north, and Moldavia in the northeast (that part of the Principality which was retained by the Ottoman Empire at partition in 1812). Moldavia is represented today by eight counties (see clause 1.1 below).

The country has varied natural resources but the economy has several inherent weaknesses. Romania's reserves of petroleum and gas are declining, and the country has a legacy of industrial and environmental pollution from the Ceauşescu era. While the Republic of Moldova is energy-dependent on the Russian Federation, Romania is also dependent on Russia

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[1] In general, the practice and interpretation of archaeology is often conditioned by the economic situation in which research takes place and archaeology can easily be subverted by political influences (Kaiser 1995, 113; Díaz-Andreu 2001, 429; Stefanou 2010, 191-2). With this in mind, the history of medieval archaeology in Romania and Moldova is outlined at the beginning of Chapter 5.

for much of its natural gas supply (Library of Congress 2006, 14).[2] Nevertheless, Romania does exploit its hydropower resources as well as timber, coal, iron ore and salt. Traditionally, Romania has been a rural society, with vast expanses of arable land: the Transylvanian Plateau is a tableland within the loop of the Carpathian mountains, while south of the Carpathians there is an extensive plain, stretching towards the river Danube through historical Wallachia.

In 2006, Romania had an estimated population of 22.3 million (ibid., 9). Officially, Romania is not as ethnically diverse as the Republic of Moldova: although there is a range of minority groups, including Germans and Russians, nearly 90% of the population is classed as being ethnically Romanian. However, there is a significant minority population of ethnic Hungarians (7%), mostly in Transylvania, and while Roma officially account for just 2.5% of the total population, their actual percentage share is likely to be substantially greater (ibid., 10). There is still "routine" discrimination against Roma throughout Romanian society, despite recent anti-discrimination legislation (FCO Romania).[3] Amongst other social problems, Romania – like the Republic of Moldova – is a hub for people-traffickers (Library of Congress 2006, 25; FCO Romania). Relations with Hungary, which have been extremely tense historically, have improved significantly in the era of European Union ("EU") accession, with the governments of both countries working to converge their National Development Plans and to improve the treatment of ethnic Romanians and Hungarians who live on the "wrong" side of their respective borders (FCO Romania).

Romania's constitutional status has changed significantly on several occasions since the late 19th-century. The united principalities proclaimed their independence from the Ottoman Empire in July 1878, and Romania was proclaimed a kingdom in March 1881, when King Carol I (prince 1866-1881, king 1881-1914) was crowned as the country's first constitutional monarch. His great nephew, King Michael I (1927-30 and 1940-47), abdicated in 1947, when a Communist People's Republic was proclaimed, which progressed to the dictatorship of Ceauşescu. Following

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[2] Romania and Bulgaria, in particular, were severely affected by the disruption of gas supplies to Europe through Ukraine when the Russian monopoly supplier, Gazprom, turned off its supply to the Ukrainian state gas company, Naftogaz, in early 2009 (BBC News [19]).
[3] There is a general problem of discrimination against Roma across Europe. The EU sought to address this at a special meeting in Brussels in September 2008, called to encourage EU member states to give Roma the same access to education and welfare as other EU citizens (BBC News [15]). In 2010, France provoked widespread criticism within the EU for embarking on a programme of "repatriating" Roma.

the overthrow of the Ceauşescu regime in December 1989, a new constitution establishing Romania as a parliamentary democracy was adopted in December 1991.

A four-party, centre-right coalition government was formed following the general election of 2004, but this arrangement broke down in 2006, eventually leaving a "super-minority" government, shared between the National Liberal Party and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, under the leadership of Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tăriceanu (this minority government was defeated in elections in December 2008, which saw the creation of a coalition government led by the Liberal Democrat Party. This coalition subsequently broke up acrimoniously at the end of September 2009). The fragility of the super-minority government was offset somewhat by the popularity of the President, Traian Basescu (2004–), a former mayor of Bucharest. Despite being suspended from office by parliament in April 2007, for alleged breach of his constitutional powers, Basescu won significant backing in a subsequent referendum called to endorse parliament's decision, when 74% voted for his return to power (albeit on a 44% turnout) (FCO Romania).

Turbulence within Romania's political leadership has been a feature of the development of democracy in the post-communist era; throughout the 1990s, power remained largely in the hands of former communists, dominated by President Ion Iliescu (1990-96 and 2000-04), a sometime acolyte of Nicolae Ceauşescu. The unsteady path to a functioning parliamentary democracy made Romania's achievement of EU accession all the more significant.

Romania was admitted to the EU on 1 January 2007, together with Bulgaria. For both countries, the process of accession had been drawn out and uncertain, as they had missed the principal wave of EU enlargement in May 2005, when 10 countries, many former communist nations, including Hungary and Poland, were admitted. Romania and Bulgaria's delayed accession was due in large part to their retarded political, economic and social condition in comparison with other erstwhile members of the Warsaw Pact.

Romania submitted its application for EU membership on 22 June 1995. Accession negotiations were not commenced by the EU until December 1999 (and then, notwithstanding a major financial crisis in Romania in 1998-99); it was not until October 2004 that the EU Commission recognised Romania as a "functioning market economy" – one of the prerequisites for any acceding country (World Bank OED 2005, 1-2). Accession was in doubt as late as 2006 – after the treaty of accession had been signed – and when the EU Commission President finally announced in September 2006 that both Romania and Bulgaria had made enough progress to join the EU as planned, it was with the caveats that they would continue to be monitored in terms of tackling organised crime and corruption, and in the proper use of EU funds (Pop and Bolovan 2006, 691-2; BBC News [5]).[4]

If celebrations of Romanian accession to the EU were muted by the universal acknowledgement that the country had struggled to satisfy accession criteria, the event nevertheless represented a major achievement for one of the poorest of the post-communist societies. Romania had formally passed through two phases of transition – first, from the centrally planned economy of the Ceauşescu regime to a free market economy and, secondly, from the imperfect state of a fledgling market economy to one which satisfied the EU's definition of a "functioning market economy" (World Bank OED 2005, i).

This process – from the overthrow of Ceauşescu in December 1989, through weak government in a transition state in the 1990s and a major financial crisis at the turn of the century, succeeded by political and economic reform to achieve EU accession – commenced from a low starting point. From the outset, Romania faced problems common to many of the former communist countries in trying to adapt to the prevalent free market economies of the West: a legacy of poor organisation and inadequate infrastructure as a result of a command economy. But over and above this, Nicolae Ceauşescu's dictatorship had been so personalised and corrupt that the state bureaucracy was particularly inefficient and ill-suited to rebuild Romania in the aftermath of Ceauşescu's downfall. In addition, the wider population was "poor and weary" following a decade of austerity measures in the 1980s (ibid., v).

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[4] In 2008, Bulgaria was censured by EU monitors over continuing corruption and mafia killings (BBC News [12]).

In the 2000s, Romania remained exceptionally poor in European terms. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's ("EBRD") performance index of economic reform in transition countries[5] placed Romania last of all countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltics in 2004 (notwithstanding a positive assessment of Romania's commitment to privatisation measures and to the creation of a favourable investment environment in the run up to EU accession) (ibid., 2-3; EBRD 2005, 5-6). One of the major factors which inhibited economic development in Romania was its large agricultural base, with a rural labour force of some 40% of the total working population. Agriculture represented little more than 10% of Romanian GDP, so rural employment was disproportionate and was an indicator of deep-rooted poverty in the Romanian population (although the World Bank judged that the rural sector acted as a "safety net, keeping large numbers of people out of extreme poverty"). In the aftermath of 1989, land reform took the form of "restitution", with numerous smallholdings being reclaimed from the state; this compounded the backward nature of subsistence farming, which came to dominate Romanian agriculture, while urban unemployment led to migration from the cities by workers who worsened the labour/land ratio (World Bank OED 2005, 1, 16; FCO Romania).

Poverty, especially in rural Romania, was reflected in poor infrastructure and social services, such as health and education. The austerity of the final years of the Ceauşescu regime led to a major decline in health provision, and the scandal of under-funded children's institutions provoked international outrage (Pop and Bolovan 2006, 682). State control of education distorted curricula for several generations, but in the 2000s the World Bank claimed real success in funding projects to improve all levels of Romanian educational provision, through the development of new curricula, the updating of textbooks, and the establishment of assessment systems. The infrastructure of health provision also benefited from World Bank funding, although the administration of health provision was slow to show improvements (World Bank OED 2005, 21-22). As an indication of the scale of the task required to rebuild the Romanian economy and society after the failures of the Ceauşescu regime, the World Bank alone committed US$4 billion to the country in assistance between 1991 and 2004 (ibid., v).

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[5] A "Transition Country" is a post-communist state which is in the process of establishing a market economy. Although "Transition Country" is an economic term, it implies political and social change taking place in tandem with economic development. See the European Economic Association transition countries list at http://www.eeassoc.org/index.php?page=143.

Romania's economic performance and prospects following EU accession were mixed. Growth in the economy in the early 2000s, reaching a record rate of 8.4% in 2004, reflected an increase in private consumption, but wage growth and a weak local currency (the Romanian Leu – reformed in 2005) affected competitiveness (EBRD 2007). According to official figures, unemployment was relatively low in regional terms in 2005, at 5.9%; however, unemployment was distributed unevenly across the country and the overall figure masked the problem of the migration of workers to the countryside and abroad (Library of Congress, 15).

Like the World Bank, the EBRD had a strategy for Romania aimed at broadening privatisation, including foreign direct investment in private sector projects. In 2006, the EBRD's cumulative business volume with Romania was in excess of EUR3 billion. This included support to selected Romanian banks, the sale of carbon credits from the Netherlands to Romania (as part of a project to improve emissions in Timişoara), and a loan to a steel company to establish a plant in southeastern Romania (EBRD 2007).

Like the Republic of Hungary and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Romania was badly affected by the global financial crisis of 2008 and the subsequent worldwide recession. In November 2008, two of the credit ratings agencies – Fitch and Standard and Poor's – cut Romania's rating to "junk", reflecting concerns about the country's current account deficit and high borrowing; the Romanian Leu fell in value against the Euro (BBC News [17]). In March 2009, as the crisis continued, Romania received an emergency loan from the International Monetary Fund and other lenders totalling EUR20 billion (BBC News [20]).

1.1   Socio-economic conditions in Moldavia

The historical area of Moldavia is represented in contemporary Romania by eight counties [Map 4]. Starting in the northeast corner of Romania and moving southwards along the border with the Republic of Moldova, these are the counties of Botoşani, Iaşi, Vaslui and Galaţi; on the western border of each of these in turn are the counties of Suceava, Neamţ, Bacău and Vrancea. Galaţi and Vrancea overlap with the area adjacent to historical Wallachia which is known as Dobrogea. Suceava County encompasses that area of Moldavia which is known as Southern

Bucovina; the territory of Northern Bucovina, centred on the town of Černivci (Cernăuți), now lies in Ukraine, having been annexed to the Hapsburg Empire in 1775, next incorporated within Greater Romania in 1918, and then included within the territory of the USSR in 1947.

Moldavia has natural borders: on its western side, the arc of the Carpathian mountains divides Moldavia from the territory of Transylvania; to the east, the river Prut, which flows into the Danube, forms the international border with the Republic of Moldova. The Danube forms the southeastern border between Romania and Ukraine, flowing into the Black Sea through a trident-shaped delta.

The area of Suceava, Botoşani, Neamț and Iaşi formed the heartland of Ştefan cel Mare's principality. Ştefan had his principal residence in the town of Suceava, and numerous sites associated with his reign are located within the region, including Putna monastery. The city of Iaşi is Romania's second city and has been the scene of significant events in the formation of the Romanian state: Mihai Viteazul achieved the first union of the Romanian principalities at Iaşi in 1600, and in 1859 Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected Prince of Moldova there as the first stage of effecting union with Wallachia [photographs 42 and 43].

The northeastern region of Romania is the poorest part of the country; in 2005, the northeastern region had the country's highest poverty rate, whereas Bucharest had the lowest (Library of Congress 2006, 11). However, the economic and social characteristics of each county in Moldavia differ. The following details are taken from the Portrait of the Regions in Eurostat, the EU's online statistical information portal; the data relate to the year 2000 but were published in final form in 2004, providing a strong indication of the character of the eight counties during Romania's candidacy for EU accession.

Suceava is the second-largest county in Romania and despite its economy being dominated by agriculture, its economic performance was relatively strong in regional terms: an unemployment rate of around 12% in the year 2000 was a better rate than elsewhere in the northeast, and agricultural production for that period was significant in national terms, with the

county's potato crop representing 14% of total Romanian potato production. The infant mortality rate of 16.7 deaths per 1000 live births was below the national average of 18.6 and a better rate than elsewhere in the northeast. (Infant mortality rates in Romania compare with a figure of 6 deaths per 1000 live births in England and Wales between 1996 and 2000 (Office for National Statistics 2007, 5).) Suceava County has considerable tourism potential – particularly the monasteries of Southern Bucovina – although in 2000 the county's road network was in need of modernisation.

Observed in 2008, the town of Suceava was a colourful, vibrant tourist centre. It was not quaint – the outskirts were industrialised and although the historical centre of the town was punctuated by open spaces, numerous churches and restored historic buildings, these were outnumbered by shabby 20th-century apartment blocks and shops. Nevertheless, there were some signs of investment by EU agencies. The many tourist agencies offering monastery tours in Southern Bucovina were evidence of the importance of medieval heritage to the modern economy.

The highways leading out of town into Suceava County were of good quality but were not suitable for high volumes of traffic. The countryside is a vast expanse of rolling hills, punctuated by small villages: the horse and cart was still a prominent mode of transport and, as in rural Moldova, many smallholders were engaged in subsistence farming that had changed little since the 19th century.

A large number of the medieval sites of importance are located in Neamț County to the south of Suceava, where by 2000 the tourist industry was better developed, even though the transport infrastructure was likewise in need of modernisation. Neamț had a more varied economy than its northern neighbour, with prominent heavy industry offsetting the role of agriculture. However, with a relatively low urbanisation rate of 40% of the population there was still a high unemployment rate – over 16%. The infant mortality rate was particularly high, at 23.9 deaths per 1000 live births, indicating failures in the health and welfare system. There was a similarly high infant mortality rate in Botoşani County, where the rural population was over 60% and agriculture

dominated the local economy. As in Neamţ, unemployment was over 16% in 2000 and the average salary in Botoşani County was worth 20% less than the national average.

Iaşi County is one of the most densely populated counties in Romania, with an equal division between urban and rural inhabitants. The county has the potential to benefit from the status of Iaşi city, which should serve as a transport hub for road and rail traffic from within Romania and internationally, being located close to the border with the Republic of Moldova; there is also an international airport located within 10km of the city centre. Nevertheless, in 2000, local salaries were still below the national average and unemployment was increasing, at 10%.

In the summer of 2008, the city of Iaşi appeared to be only at the verge of recovering from the Ceauşescu regime's legacy of failure. Although a number of public buildings were undergoing state-sponsored renovation – the National Theatre, the Moldavian Metropolitan Cathedral and the Palace of Culture – the general ambience within town was one of decay and degradation; stray dogs roamed the streets and at night howled in packs in the central square, Piaţa Unirii (Unity Square). Only the impressive university district recalled Iaşi's relative affluence during the era of monarchy.

The infrastructure was basic, at best. Roads in Iaşi were little better than the many cracked and dusty streets in towns and villages just over the border in Moldova. The international railway station was small, with the appearance of a delapidated branch line station. The international airport was comically small: although it was set for major redevelopment and expansion, in 2008 the airport facilities consisted of a dual purpose arrivals and departures structure set beside a run-down military airfield. There was some light industry and new business parks on the perimeter of the city, while two large shopping malls served as attractions for locals with disposable income. But although the multi-lane highway which led from Iaşi to the pleasant little town of Târgu Frumos was a good quality road surface, even it was punctuated by unmarked level crossings. There were alarming signs erected along the roadsides in Iaşi County which bore

the legend "Life takes Priority", suggesting that there was a high incidence of road traffic accidents. Single-lane roads of variable quality led over the hills beyond Târgu Frumos.[6]

Iaşi may be Romania's second city but in 2008 it had a ramshackle air of barely concealed poverty. Although major churches, such as the Church of the Three Hierarchs (1637-9) [photograph 26], were being renovated (with the help of international funding), the streets were populated by grim kiosks selling cheap goods: the scene was reminiscent of many post-communist cities a generation earlier. There was a fledgling tourist industry in the city, with several quality hotels offering Western European-style accommodation, and there was evidence of foreign investment by mobile phone companies and car manufacturers. However, the most notable sign of the transition economy in action was the plethora of local tourist agencies which offered international coach trips to the capital cities of Western Europe. It is possible that local disposable income was being spent on vacations in the increasingly accessible West; but while the market for air travel supported just two international carriers (Tarom and Austrian Airlines), the sheer number of companies offering road transport through the open borders of the EU raised a suspicion that many citizens of Iaşi were looking for one-way passage out of Romania.[7]

To the south of Iaşi County, Vaslui County had economic data in 2000 which were as poor as those of Botoşani. Over 75% of the county's territory comprised agricultural land and 60% of employees worked in agriculture; salaries were more than 15% below the national average; only one-fifth of the county's roads were classed as "modernised" in 2000; and infant mortality was 21.2 deaths per 1000 live births. In contrast, Bacău County to the west of Vaslui had a comparatively successful industrial base, with strong oil extraction and coal mining activities. Processing industries were particularly important, and agricultural land accounted for just under half of the county's total area. The road network was mostly modernised and, as at Iaşi and Suceava, there was also a small airport. The infant mortality rate in 2000 was extremely poor, at 28.3 deaths per 1000 live births, but the unemployment rate was comparable to the national average.

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[6] The BBC reported a tragic incident in August 2009 when a passenger minibus was struck by a train on one of the unmarked level crossings outside Iaşi. There were 11 fatalities. This was one of an estimated 30 incidents on level crossings in Romania to that date in 2009 (BBC News [21]).
[7] These impressions of Iaşi contrast with a contemporaneous report on the condition of Târgu Mureş in Transylvania and its passage from a grim communist-era town to one which had benefitted from economic and political transition (see BBC News [13]).

The varied character of the Moldavian counties was reflected in the two southernmost counties which border Dobrogea – Vrancea and Galați. Vrancea County incorporates the high ground of the Carpathian Arc and the flatlands of the Siret Plain. The area is also the location of seismic activity: southern Romania suffered a major earthquake in 1977, with the epicentre in Vrancea, when 1570 people were killed. In economic terms, Vrancea was a strong regional performer in 2000, with viticulture playing an important role. The unemployment rate of 6.1% was one of the lowest in Romania as a whole; but even here, as an indicator of deep-rooted problems in the provision of healthcare and social services, the infant mortality rate was startling, at 22 deaths per 1000 live births.

Galați County, bordering the Republic of Moldova, encompasses the confluence of the major Moldavian rivers with the Danube, and Galați has a history as a significant intersection of trade routes; the city of Galați was a major international market in the 19th century. Heavy industry in the county includes steel production and shipbuilding. Although agriculture is a dominant feature of the economy, Galați is also an international maritime transport hub. The Galați Free Zone, established in 1993, is a mixed-use area on the Danube shore which incorporates access to the Rhine-Danube Canal, quay and port installations, and a railway junction. Socio-economic statistics were contradictory. Whilst average salaries were relatively high in 2000, the unemployment rate stood at 12.6%. The infant mortality rate in Galați County was comparable to Suceava County, at 16.9 deaths per 1000 live births.

2   A description of the Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova (the "Republic") is bordered by Romania to the west and on all other sides by Ukraine. The Republic's territory is defined in the west chiefly by the river Prut, an affluent of the Danube, and in the east by the river Nistru, which, like the Danube, is a tributary to the Black Sea. The Republic is landlocked, save for a narrow strip of the Danube shore at the intersection of the borders of Romania, Moldova and Ukraine, which was ceded to Moldova by a treaty with Ukraine in 1999 (King 2000, xxvii).

The Republic gained independence on 27 August 1991, having previously been the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic, one of the 15 republics of the USSR. The independence process coincided with the decline of communist states in Central and Eastern Europe in the late 1980s, and Moldova's declaration of independence occurred little more than a week after the failed coup in Moscow which signalled the end of Mikhail Gorbachev's time as leader of the USSR (1985-91). Moldova's declaration of independence anticipated the formal disbanding of the USSR on 26 December 1991 (Hingley 1991, 216).

Despite being a small territory (33,700 sq km), the Republic has a relatively large population of approximately 4.5 million inhabitants (Fedor 1995, 115; BBC News [16]) and is ethnically and culturally diverse. Population figures from the late Soviet period and the 2004 census show that the majority of the population is of Moldovan/Romanian descent and speaks "Moldovan", often with Russian as a second language. "Moldovan" is a dialect which is very similar to modern Romanian, notwithstanding a concerted campaign carried out during the Soviet era to exaggerate the differences between the two languages as part of a broader political campaign to divide the people of the USSR from the inhabitants of Romania (Bruchis 1996, 7-8; Deletant 1996, 53-54; Dyer 1996, 89; King 1996, 125; King 2000, 64, 112-114; Ciscel 2007, 2-3, 19-20). Ethnic Ukrainians and Russians account for 27% of the total population; Bulgarians represent 2% (King 1995, 15).

In the southwest of Moldova there is an enclave of Gagauzi – Orthodox Christian Turks who probably settled there as refugees in the early 19th century (ibid., 18; Florescu 1999, 56; King 2000, 211). The Gagauzi represent 3.5% of the total population (King 1995, 15). The Gagauz region has autonomous status, granted by the Moldovan parliament following a separatist campaign (ibid., 20), and has independent control over its own political and economic affairs.

In the east of Moldova, on the east bank of the Nistru bordering Ukraine, there is a Russian-speaking breakaway 'republic' – the Transdniestrian Moldavian Republic (Transnistria) – which seeks complete independence from the Republic of Moldova (ibid., 22). Transnistria is a sliver of former Ukrainian territory, which was given autonomous status within Soviet Russia in the

1920s, and then redrawn and incorporated within the MSSR in the 1940s. Comprising 16% of contemporary Moldovan territory, Transnistria accounts for approximately 14% of the Moldovan population (Brezianu 2000, lviii). This industrial area is home to an overall majority of people of Ukrainian and Russian descent, many of whom were relocated to the area in Soviet times as a workforce and to counteract the Moldovan/Romanian cultural identity of the majority population of the Soviet republic.

The self-declared Transnistrian leadership preserves the legacy of Stalinism in the region, seeking to maintain Soviet-style government and alliance with Moscow. To date (*winter 2010*), Transnistria has not received any international recognition as an independent state, save for unofficial recognition by the Russian Federation (BBC News [7, 11, 14, 23]).

Relations between Moldova proper and Transnistria have always been extremely tense: there was a brief but bloody civil war in 1992 and there has been persistent failure to reach political settlement ever since. Face to face talks between the leaders of Moldova and Transnistria in April 2008 represented the first real indication of a thaw in relations, but a solution to the "frozen conflict" remained illusive (BBC News [7, 11]). Industrial Transnistria's relative economic power has acted as a significant brake on economic development in the Republic as a whole.

The Transnistrian problem has not only threatened the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, but has also been the major factor hampering Moldova's relations with both the West (in particular, with the EU) and with the Russian Federation, which has maintained troops and ammunition stocks in the area throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The impasse over Transnistria's status after the fall of the USSR became known as one of the four "frozen conflicts" in the former territories of the Soviet Union: South Ossetia and Abkhazia attempted to break away from Georgia in the early 1990s; fierce fighting also occurred in Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan (Ascherson 1995, 244-7; Protsyk 2007, 186; Judah 2008, 4).

The imposition in 2006 of a new customs regime on the border of Transnistria and Ukraine, by which Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities acted in conjunction with a team of EU

officials to prevent smuggling and human trafficking, worsened relations between Moldova and Transnistria. Furthermore, the Russian Federation claimed that the new regime amounted to a "blockade" and responded with its own embargo on Moldovan wine imports as well as increasing prices on gas exports (BBC News [4, 23]). The renewed outbreak of war between Russian and Georgian armies in South Ossetia in August 2008 revived the spectre of armed Russian intervention in the Transnistrian dispute as well. Hundreds of EU monitors were sent to the porous border between Transnistria and the Republic, in part to assist in a crackdown on smuggling and organised crime (BBC News [14]).

In the context of tense relations with the Russian Federation and an inability to find accord with the Stalinist leadership of Transnistria, it is a seeming paradox that for most of the 2000s the government of Moldova was formed by the Communist Party. First returned as a significant force in parliamentary elections in 1998, and successful again in elections in 2001 and 2005, the reformed communists, led by Vladimir Voronin (a Transnistrian by birth, President of Moldova between 2001 and 2009), took electoral advantage of a divided opposition and public dissatisfaction with reformist governments which failed to manage Moldova's fragile economy during the 1990s (Protsyk 2007, 191-5).[8]

Despite early good relations with the Russian government of President Vladimir Putin (president 2000-2008, thereafter prime minister in the government of President Dmitrii Medvedev, 2008–), Voronin's relations with Moscow soured as a consequence of the Russian Federation's persistent interest in Transnistria, and the Moldovan government switched its attention towards achieving greater integration with Europe instead, with the hope of achieving membership of the EU eventually, following the example of Romania. A programme of political and economic support from the EU in a Partnership and Co-operation Agreement was established, and Moldova became a member of the European Neighbourhood Policy (Europa; FCO Moldova).

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[8] Voronin's term as president ended in April 2009, following his party's victory in parliamentary elections. However, the aftermath of the vote saw the worst rioting in Chişinău since independence and a drawn out political crisis. See "Postscript" below.

However, the situation on the border between Transnistria and Ukraine and then the conflict in Georgia in 2008 emphasised the economic and security problems caused to the EU by enlargement, as Romanian accession in 2007 had pushed the EU's frontier eastwards towards the volatile Transnistrian zone (BBC News [4]). Moldova was obliged to renounce any intention of joining NATO, as a concession to Russian sensitivities (BBC News [14]).

Voronin's government brought about only limited improvements in the Moldovan economy. The World Bank reported an increase in GDP of 30% between 2000 and 2004, and a substantial reduction in poverty (World Bank PEMU 2005, i). However, the basis for economic improvements was a temporary increase in consumption-driven growth, and government reform together with investment in productivity was required to sustain improvements in the medium term (ibid., i, iii, viii). Although there were signs in the mid 2000s of increasing prosperity in the capital city, Chişinău, with developments in the infrastructure of the banking and telecommunications sectors being most apparent, Moldova is a largely rural country – like Romania – with an economy dominated by agriculture and food processing industries. Moldova's fine vineyards have continued to produce good wines, but the country's capacity to export was very limited in the late 1990s and during the 2000s (despite early predictions of success – see King 1995, 1, 33). The Russian Federation and countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States ("CIS")[9] remained the chief market for Moldovan produce (World Bank PEMU 2005, vi), but Moldova was badly affected by the Russian financial crash of 1998 and economic problems were compounded by poor political relations in the mid 2000s.

Over 50% of the population of Moldova lives in the countryside and the imbalance between rural production and manufacturing was exacerbated by the fact that during Soviet rule industrialisation was concentrated in the Transnistrian area, a legacy which has come to be particularly troublesome given the Transnistrian secession. Moldova remains energy-dependent on the Russian Federation, a situation which was exemplified by the disputes concerning gas-supply to Ukraine and Moldova at the turn of 2006 and 2009 (King 1995, 24, 32; Brezianu 2000, lviii; BBC: Moldova).

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[9] The CIS, an economic union, was formed by 11 former states of the USSR in December 1991.

By the 2000s, Moldova was heavily indebted and had had chequered relations with the International Monetary Fund. GDP per capita was significantly lower than in other Commonwealth of Independent States countries, and estimates for the average monthly wage in Chişinău varied from little more than US$100 (ADEPT) to US$250 (BBC News [23]). Throughout the decade, Moldova was classified as "the poorest country in Europe" (FCO Moldova; Haynes 2003, 124; Protsyk 2007, 183; BBC News [16]). This poverty was given physical representation in the suburbs of the capital and beyond by a crumbling infrastructure of inadequate roads and a largely Soviet-era housing stock that was barely fit for purpose.

As in many former communist states, the Moldovan black market and the operations of mafia gangs were indistinguishable from activity in the legitimate economy. Nothing better illustrates the poverty of the Moldovan economy than the migration of Moldovan workers (legally and illegally) looking for work abroad. The World Bank reported that 600,000 Moldovans worked abroad at some point in 2003-2004, representing 40% of the "economically active population" (World Bank PEMU 2005, iv). Although their remittances were significant, contributing to economic growth within the Republic, one notable downside was that much of the money earned was used to invest in property in Chişinău, artificially inflating the value of Soviet-era property (Tartakovsky 2005, 4; World Bank PEMU 2005, v). By the time of the parliamentary elections in 2009, at a time of global economic crisis, the World Bank estimated that nearly one-third of Moldovan GDP depended on the remittances of Moldovans working abroad, "the highest proportion anywhere in the world" (BBC News [23]).

The social consequences of mass economic migration were a source of growing concern. The worst form of migration involved the widespread trafficking of Moldovan women into the sex trade in Central Europe and EU member states:

> "In terms of corruption as well as human trafficking, there is no discussion Moldavia [*sic.*] ranks in the top at a world scale." (Caşu 2005, 14)

3   The two states solution

When Romanian and Nazi forces allied to invade the territory of the USSR in June 1941, as part of Operation Barbarossa[10], King Michael I of Romania sent a telegram of support to the Romanian military dictator, Marshal Ion Antonescu (1940-44), which expressed clearly Romania's intent to recover territories which had been "lost" over the centuries as a consequence of partition and international machinations:

> At this moment when our troops are crossing the Prut and the forests of Bukovina to restore the sacred land of Moldavia of Stephen the Great, my thoughts go out to you, General Antonescu, and to our country's soldiers. I am grateful to you, General, that thanks solely to your work, steadfastness and efforts, the entire nation and myself are living the joyful days of ancestral glory. (quoted in Deletant 1991(d), 296)

The nationalistic rhetoric of this message was crafted carefully by the young king, who only a few years later would accede in the downfall of the Antonescu regime. Nevertheless, it reveals that Ştefan cel Mare occupies an important place within Romanian national consciousness and that the land of Bessarabia/Moldova to the east of the Prut is understood in the Romanian nationalist discourse to be 'sacred', 'ancestral' land.

At Easter 1992, Michael I was granted another opportunity to identify with Ştefan, albeit in very different circumstances. Returning to Romania after over 40 years in exile, the former king attended the Romanian Orthodox Church service of canonisation for Ştefan at Putna monastery, in the church where the voivode is buried. Michael's presence carried religious significance, for in the Orthodox rite canonisation can only take place in the presence of the anointed king. In the aftermath of the 1989 revolution, Michael I was regarded with suspicion – even hostility – by the new Romanian government, but he was allowed to take his place at Putna to oversee what was a significant event in the development of post-communist Romania (Porter 2005, 253-4).

The canonisation process was not without controversy. The Romanian Orthodox Church has a long history of collusion with Romanian political elites and an uncomfortable predilection for

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[10] Intended to overrun and control the USSR, Operation Barbarossa commenced on the weekend of 21/22 June 1941, involving 146 Nazi German army divisions, 14 Romanian divisions in Bessarabia, and Finnish forces supporting the encirclement of Leningrad (Overy 1997, 64, 71-2, 75).

an ethnically exclusive form of Romanian nationalism (see Verdery 1999, 83-4; Stan and Turcescu 2007, 49-51; Ciobanu 2009, 329). The establishment of saintly national symbols (Ştefan was one of over 40 Romanian heroes to be canonised at this time) aroused some public and political opposition for being both outdated and a reflection of the type of personality cult and distortion of history perpetrated during the Ceauşescu regime (Klaniczay 2002, 410-11; ICCEES [3]). [11] Notwithstanding this, the ceremony brought together politicians and clerics from across Ştefan's former lands – Ukraine and the Republic, as well as Romania – in a manner that recalled earlier exhibitions of reverence towards Ştefan and which set out a powerful political case for Romanian unity: [12]

> The year 1871 also marked an important moment in the development of national consciousness among the Romanians of Bucovina. Cultural feasts were organized on the occasion of the four hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Monastery of Putna by Stephen the Great. This event attracted leaders from all the territories inhabited by Romanians... (Treptow 1996, 334; see Chapter 2, clause 3)

However, despite Ştefan's potential to act as a bond between Romanians, and the importance of the monastery at Putna as a sacral place for Romanian people, the current reality is that *two* Romanian nation states occupy the territory of the former Principality of Moldova (not to mention that some of Ştefan's lands are incorporated within Ukraine). The political aspiration to restore historical Romanian lands to a single Romanian state, expressed by King Michael I in 1941, has not been realised. To a large degree, this is a consequence of the influence of Russia and the USSR on the people of Bessarabia/Moldova.

3.1   Russian and Soviet influences on Moldovan identity

The legacy of the partition of the Principality of Moldova has been long-lasting and deep-rooted. The period between 1918 and 1940, when Bessarabia was incorporated within Greater Romania, was an insufficient period of time in which to overturn the cumulative effects of Russian

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[11] Verdery indicates that the canonisation of Ştefan cel Mare, which had been mooted in the later years of the Ceauşescu regime, actually represented an attempt by the Romanian Orthodox Church to contest the appropriation of national symbols by politicians (Verdery 1991, 338 n.38).
[12] The occasion also provided an opportunity for a show of solidarity between the Romanian President, Ion Iliescu, and the Moldovan President, Mircea Snegur, at the time of the Transnistrian conflict (van Meurs 2005, 90).

governance from 1812 onwards. Indeed, the Bessarabian National Council (*Sfatul Ţării*) which proclaimed the union of Bessarabia with Romania in 1918, during the chaotic aftermath of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, was made up of several competing interest groups and was criticised as being an unrepresentative assembly, a charge which has persisted over time (Deletant 1991(d), 285-6; King 2000, 32-5; cf. van Meurs 1994, 71). Soviet control of the MSSR, in terms of governance and social engineering, between 1944 and 1991, compounded the history of Russian dominance over Bessarabia/Moldova in the modern era.

In this context, it is unsurprising that the heterogenous population of the newly independent Republic of Moldova should have baulked at the possibility of union with Romania in the 1990s. But, as the Transnistrian secession, Gagauz autonomy, and the resurgence of the Communist Party in Moldova illustrate, the Moldovan state which emerged in the post-Soviet period also had an ambivalent relationship with its Russian past and the reasons for Moldova (apart from Transnistria) choosing the path of independence were complex.

Both the Russian state (in its various guises during the 19th and 20th centuries) and the Romanian state between 1918 and 1940 attempted "nation-building" projects in the territory of Bessarabia/Moldova, but all of these projects failed. The case of Soviet nation-building is the most discredited. The creation of the MASSR in 1924, an artificial territory which was intended "to give credibility to the Soviet government's claim to Bessarabia..." (Deletant 1991(d), 287), was accompanied by a series of politically motivated programmes intended to manipulate the language and literary culture of the population of the MASSR, as part of an attempt to create a sense of a distinct Moldovan nationality (Bruchis 1996, 3, 6-7; Deletant 1996, 56-7; Dyer 1996, 91-2; King 2000, 63-4). This work continued in the MSSR after the Second World War – although Soviet policy did fluctuate (Bruchis 1996, 8-10) – and the effects of such programmes were felt throughout political and intellectual life in the MSSR, including in the fields of history and archaeology (Dergacev 1994, 18; Musteaţă, 2005, 194).

The intellectual inconsistencies inherent in the Soviet authorities' attempts to manufacture a Moldovan nationality, distinct from that of the Romanians east of the Prut, were exemplified by

the persecution by the Soviets during the purges of the 1930s of some of the main architects of state-sponsored "Moldovanism" (Bruchis 1996, 7; Deletant 1996, 59; King 2000, 86-8). Writing in the late 1980s, Deletant was scathing of the USSR's continued "pretence" that 2.4 million Romanians then living in the MSSR were a distinct "Moldavian" national group (Deletant 1991(d), 283).

Despite the shortcomings of Soviet "Moldovanisation", the policy does appear to have played a role in keeping the people of Bessarabia/Moldova and Romania apart, not least by alienating the inhabitants of Romania (Ciscel 2007, 6-7). While a majority of the population of the Republic have backed the cause of independence, conversely there has seemingly been little pressure from ordinary Romanians east of the Prut to effect reunification:

> ...in Romania proper, the overwhelming majority of the population is almost indifferent to [the] desire of the Moldovans to live in a separate state, considering them as being "second-class" Romanians, whose memories, as well as mentalities, have been heavily affected by several decades of Soviet rule. (Petrescu 2007, 1)

Cristina Petrescu has looked beyond the influence of Soviet rule in Moldova to consider the ambivalent legacy of the Russian Empire in the region. While acknowledging that ethnic Romanians in Moldova share a common language with Romanians east of the Prut, Petrescu argues that language is not sufficient to create a bond of national identity in the case of the majority populations of Romania and Bessarabia/Moldova (ibid., 3, 12). 19th-century Bessarabia was a peasant society in which the population was mostly illiterate and poorly educated and by 1918 there was no collective memory amongst the Bessarabians of being "Romanian". Ironically, intellectual "Russification" in Church and State had also passed the peasantry by. Between 1918 and 1940, the Romanian government's attempts to introduce a sense of Romanian identity to the peasantry through education were doomed to failure, given that education had had virtually no role in peasant life during the previous century of Russian control (ibid. 3-4, 9).

In addition to perpetuating a peasant society, Russian governance in the 19th century actually devolved authority to the localities, particularly through the *zemstvo*[13] system, which was introduced by Tsar Alexander II (1855-81). Romanian government between 1918 and 1940, by contrast, was centralised and afforded less authority to local officials; this, together with the perception that the Romanian state demanded higher taxation than the previous Russian administration, instilled resentment against Romania in the population of Bessarabia/Moldova (ibid., 2, 10). Bessarabia thus had an ingrained regional identity, being neither Romanian nor Russian, upon which it was possible for Soviet authorities to try to build after the Second World War (ibid, 13; King 2000, 31-2).

3.2   The failure of the reunification movements in the 1990s

Bessarabia/Moldova's separation from Romania in the modern era served as the backcloth to the confused situation which pertained during the early 1990s, when all the former communist states of Eastern Europe sought to achieve new national settlements. The drive for independence in the MSSR was led by a coalition of nationalists and pan-Romanianists[14], at the forefront of which was the Popular Front of Moldova. Uniting around the issue of language – demanding use of the Latin alphabet and the establishment of "Moldovan" rather than Russian as the official language of the MSSR – this coalition of intellectuals, urban Moldovans and pan-Romanian revolutionaries aroused significant public support within the MSSR in the late 1980s on the back of reforms within the USSR, and then the 1989 revolution in Romania (King 2000, 120-121; Crowther 2004, 27-8).

The coalition appeared to represent an awakening of Romanian nationalism within the MSSR – a rejection of the forced "Moldovanisation" of the Soviet era. However, in the political turbulence that accompanied the break-up of the USSR, the coalition was exposed as a relatively fragile alliance of competing ethnic and political interests, such that by the time the Republic of Moldova declared its independence from the USSR in August 1991, the actual text of the

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[13] The *zemstvo* system was a form of rural local self-government, based on elected assemblies, introduced as part of Alexander II's policies of social liberalisation across the Russian Empire.
[14] "Pan-Romanianism" is a catch-all phrase that describes those nationalists, both in Romania and in Moldova, whose understanding of the Romanian nation state is based upon the ideal of unification of those lands in which Romanian speakers form the majority population – the ultimate historical expression of this having been the Kingdom of Greater Romania.

declaration made by the Moldovan parliament represented a vague amalgam of Moldovanist and pan-Romanian views (King 2000, 150-151). The separation of Moldova from its historical Russian overlord was not clear-cut and within a year Moldova would be the scene of violent civil conflict, with the initiation of the Transnistrian secession.

The difficult political situation within Moldova also derived from the ambivalent approach adopted by the post-Ceauşescu government in Romania. Between the Romanian revolution of Christmas 1989 and the declaration of Moldovan independence in August 1991, relations between Romania and the MSSR, and between Romania and the ailing USSR, fluctuated in a manner which exposed the near impossibility of consistent foreign policy in a climate of such profound change.

Early in 1990, the new Romanian leader, Ion Iliescu, met with the Soviet foreign minister to reaffirm the existing borders between Romania and the USSR – in effect, guaranteeing the MSSR as Soviet territory. However, almost simultaneously, seven transit points were opened across the Prut river between Romania and the MSSR and a security zone that had previously flanked the river was dissolved (ibid., 148). In December 1990, Iliescu denounced the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact of 1939 (which had acknowledged the USSR's claims to Bessarabia), effectively making claim to the territory of the MSSR. When Iliescu's party, the National Salvation Front, held its convention in Bucharest in 1991, the stage backdrop was of a map showing the MSSR incorporated within a new "Greater Romania". The Romanian foreign minister, Adrian Năstase, argued publicly for eventual union between Romania and Moldova "on the German model" (ibid., 150; Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 193). But even this ambition did not prevent Romania signing a treaty on good neighbourly relations with the USSR in April 1991 (King 2000, 150).

The cause of Romanian reunification did not remain strong within Romania. The expectations aroused by the 1989 revolution were soon replaced by the harsh realities of living in a transition economy: the prospect of integrating a state that was arguably poorer than Romania itself within its borders did not appeal to the Romanian populace. Furthermore, in the early 1990s, Romanian government policy turned towards gaining the support of the EU and NATO rather than

shoring up relations with the doomed USSR (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 194). By the end of the decade, Romania had become fully oriented towards Western Europe and was set on the path of EU accession.

The curious course of Romanian-Moldovan relations during the painful years of the 1990s, when economic weakness brought misery to both countries, can be seen through the opportunistic career of the Republic's first president, Mircea Snegur. Prior to 1991, Snegur enjoyed a prominent career within the Soviet apparatus, rising to become President of the Supreme Soviet of the MSSR by 1989. A Moldovan by birth (when many leading Communist Party functionaries were Transnistrian), in the late 1980s Snegur allied himself with the Moldovan Popular Front as a means of strengthening his influence within the structure of the MSSR (King 2000, 135-8). Then, with the achievement of independence and the rapid decline of the Popular Front, Snegur positioned himself as a Moldovan nationalist rather than as a pan-Romanian, in effect, as the embodiment of the two states solution.

Elected unopposed as Moldovan president in December 1991, he travelled to Bucharest to address a joint session of the Romanian parliament: while speaking of Romania as "our sister country", Snegur underlined the sovereignty of Moldova. His speech even introduced the possibility of uniting historical Moldovan territory in a "Greater Moldova", laying claim to land in Romania and Ukraine, to counter the argument for the creation of a "Greater Romania", which still had intellectual force in Bucharest (ibid., 150; Crowther 2004, 28-30). In this respect, Snegur was treading a crooked path between various interest groups. Although his principal aim was to uphold Moldova's status as an independent new nation, by alluding to the possibility of a larger Moldovan territory based upon historical borders (the lands of Ştefan cel Mare) Snegur was also paying lip service at least to some members of the discredited Popular Front, who had publicly espoused "the resurrection of the medieval principality of Moldova" (King 1996, 126).

At the time of parliamentary elections in February 1994, Snegur articulated a concept of Moldova as an independent state that rejected the pan-Romanianism prevalent within the Popular Front, which he had once appeared to support. Arguing that Moldovans were a separate people

from Romanians, and that Moldova had a historical right to be an independent nation state, Snegur and his allies established the two states solution as a post-communist political reality, angering Bucharest, which still espoused some form of unity between Romania and Moldova, at least at a cultural level (King 2000, 155-7; Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 195-6). The Agrarian Democratic Party's ("ADP") victory in the Moldovan parliamentary elections appeared to consolidate the President's position, as the ADP represented the form of Moldovan nationalism espoused by Snegur.

A referendum on Moldovan independence, held in March 1994, produced an overwhelming rejection of unification with Romania. Based on a 75% turnout of voters, 95% voted for the Republic's sovereign independence (Protsyk 2007, 184, 189). The new Moldovan constitution, published in July 1994, seemed to resolve the language issue within Moldovan politics, proclaiming the national language to be the "Moldovan" language, rather than "Romanian", establishing the country as a de facto bilingual state, with Russian still predominating in the Soviet-era cities (King 2000, 160).

In the event, demonstrations by students and intellectuals in Chişinău against the wording of the Moldovan constitution led to backtracking by Snegur, who accepted a revision to the constitution which stated that the "scientific name" for the national language was "Romanian" (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 195; cf. Ciscel 2007, 9). Furthermore, there was to be another turn in Snegur's career. Having lost the 1996 presidential election to Petru Lucinski, a former high-ranking communist official whose instincts were to maintain ties between Moldova and Russia, Snegur reverted to the arguments of pan-Romanianism with which he had been associated in the 1980s. Bucharest was keen to agree a "special" treaty between the two countries. In 1997, Snegur advanced the idea that this treaty would propose cultural and economic integration between Moldova and Romania. In 1998, Snegur even stood for election to parliament in an alliance with members of the old Popular Front. His faction, the Democratic Convention of Moldova, came second overall to the reformed Communist Party and entered into an alliance with other non-communist deputies to try to keep the communists out of government (King 2000, 160; Crowther 2004, 38-9; Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 196).

3.3 The consolidation of the two states solution

The text of the basic political treaty between Moldova and Romania eventually set out the concepts of common culture, civilization and language, but also confirmed the inviolability of the common border between Romania and Moldova; the treaty remained unratified at the time of Romania's accession to the EU in 2007 (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 196). The coming to power in Moldova of the reformed Communist Party, at first in the parliamentary elections of 1998, and then through the election of the communists' leader, Vladimir Voronin, as president in 2001, compounded the divisions between the two states. While the communist government in Moldova focused initially on ties with Russia as a solution to the country's dire economic problems – and the ongoing Transnistrian crisis – Romania entered the phase of preparation for EU accession.

3.3.1 The Republic of Moldova

The communist government in Moldova worked throughout the 2000s to consolidate the integrity of the nation state by reinvigorating the cause of "Moldovanism" – the project to create an independent Moldovan identity and history that has its origins in the Stalinist nation-building policies of the 1920s and 1930s.[15] This was evident in the government's attempts to revise the teaching of history in secondary schools and universities.

The history curriculum in Moldova was the cause of ongoing political disputes following independence. In the mid-1990s, the re-emergence of Moldovanism, promoted by the Agrarian Democratic Party, led to the government attempting to exclude the "History of the Romanians" course from schools.[16] This provoked street demonstrations in Chişinău by parents and teachers and in 1995 the government was obliged to approve the teaching of two established courses – "World History" and the "History of the Romanians" (Ihrig 2008, 151; Musteaţă 2008, 129-30). In

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[15] This was demonstrated by the passing of a law known as the "Nationality Concept" in December 2003. Amongst other provisions, the law recognised the "Moldovan" language: "...strengthening Moldovanist identity and highlighting the value of Moldovan statehood were seen as important objectives of the bill". (Protsyk 2007, 190)

[16] "Starting in the early 1990s the "History of Romanians" became the official version of history taught in Moldovan schools. Textbooks on the "History of Romanians" used the term "Romanian" to describe Moldova's titular group and its language. The textbooks also typically presented a narrative that encompassed all the Romanian lands and devoted much space to the history of the other Romanian political units, such as Transylvania, Bucovina, as well as the old kingdom." (Protsyk 2007, 189-90)

the context of the recent Transnistrian civil war, the teaching of history and languages within the Republic was a topic of central importance to the development of the nation state at that time.[17]

From 2001 onwards, the communist government sought to undermine the settlement of the mid-1990s by creating a new history course, the "History of Moldova", which was interpreted by pan-Romanianists as being a return to the "counterfeit" historiography of the Soviet period (Musteață 2008, 131); relations with the Romanian government were soured by this perceived "return to Russification" (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 196). The Moldovan government's interference in the history curriculum was complemented by an attempt to introduce the study of Russian as a compulsory subject in schools from the second grade onwards. This measure provoked protests on the streets of the capital in 2002, organised by the opposition Christian Democratic People's Party (the successors to the Popular Front) (Crowther 2004, 38, 44; Serebrian 2004, 151). The protests stretched over several years, as groupings of intellectuals – notably, the Congress of the Historians of Moldova – came together to oppose the government's proposals for the history curriculum: the Congress issued the stark declaration "For the Defence of National Dignity: Cessation of Romanophobia and Vilification of the History of Romanians" on 1 July 2001 (republished in 2003) (Musteață 2008, 131-2).

The internal dispute concerning the teaching of Moldovan history was complicated further by the involvement of the Council of Europe and EUROCLIO (the European Standing Conference of History Teachers' Associations), which supported the development of a middle-way "Integrated History" curriculum (ibid., 135-6; Protsyk 2007, 190). European involvement in the debate prompted a combination of resentment and suspicion amongst pan-Romanianist historians in Moldova, who viewed the Integrated History course as an opportunity for the communists to establish a Moldovanist history curriculum by other means (Protsyk 2007, 188-90; Ihrig 2008, 151, 162).[18]

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[17] In Romania, a similar process was at work in the 1990s, particularly between 1996 and 2000 when a reformist government sought to introduce alternative history textbooks in Romanian high schools. This provoked a reaction from nationalist political parties and the Romanian Academy, which rushed through its four-volume "The History of the Romanians" as a definitive synthesis intended to reinforce long-standing concepts of Romanian identity (Niculescu 2007, 129-32).

[18] Incidentally, the communist government's willingness to adopt European recommendations for the structure of history teaching indicated a shift in its focus away from Russia and towards

Intellectual reservations were prevalent amongst the younger generation of Moldovan scholars, concerning the potential jump from a history curriculum based on two courses, which set the Republic's history within the context of its ethnic and cultural affiliation with Romania, to a curriculum based on one course, which placed the Republic's development within an overall European context:

> In the majority of Western European countries, history education is being pushed beyond an exclusively national framework toward a common European history. Moldova has not yet embraced this approach. Now, the Republic of Moldova has an opportunity to cast off what remains of the falsified Soviet version of history by reclaiming its own history and developing a comprehensive, accurate narrative that incorporates regional and European elements. More importantly, as the community of Moldovan historians stated, this process of creating a single history course for Moldovan schools should naturally evolve according to democratic principles and through public debates. (Musteață 2008, 141-2)

3.3.2 Romania

Even as a candidate for EU membership, Romania exhibited a degree of ambiguity in its policy towards Moldova. The Republic of Moldova still has little prospect of becoming a candidate for EU membership – indeed, the EU did not establish diplomatic representation in Chişinău until 2005 – and the Transnistrian issue remains a major impediment to developing a relationship between Moldova and the West (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 207). Notwithstanding this, shortly after his election in 2004, President Basescu made a point of declaring Romania's continued interest in Moldovan affairs. On a visit to Chişinău in January 2005, he even suggested that Moldova's European future "was to be assumed as a moral obligation of the Romanian nation" (ibid., 197). Basescu followed this up in July 2006 with an ambiguous communication to the authorities and people of the Republic, appealing to Moldova "to join together with Romania the European Union" (Protsyk 2007, 184).

At the time of EU accession, reunification between Romania and Moldova continued to be regarded in the West as being an "eventual goal" of Romanian foreign policy (Library of Congress 2006, 22; Protsyk 2007, 184-5), a possibility which Petrescu thought might be achieved in a "post-

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co-operation with the EU. For its part, the EU had significant concerns about border security and the fragility of the Moldovan state; this meant that Romania was expected to meet stringent standards of border control as one of its accession criteria (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 205, 210).

modern" version of Greater Romania: "The re-unification project... is a sleeping beauty. It might resurrect... once the process of European enlargement reaches this area" (Petrescu 2007, 13).

Within Romania, the concept of "Greater Romania" ceased to play a significant role in public political discourse. Charles King suggests that a consensus emerged in the early 1990s that Moldova belongs within the borders of Romania, but matched by a pragmatic acceptance that this cannot be easily achieved. Therefore, the major political parties within Romania had nothing to gain from pressing the "Bessarabian question" (King 2000, 166). Only one ultra-nationalist party – aptly called the Greater Romania Party – made reunification a manifesto issue. Associated with former members of the *Securitate* (the feared secret police of the Ceauşescu regime), the party fared badly in the parliamentary elections of 1992 and 1996 (Ciobanu 2009, 320).

Nevertheless, despite its history of poor electoral performance, the Greater Romania Party ("GRP") survived into the 2000s to play a notable cameo role in the European Parliament. As part of its accession to the EU in January 2007, Romania was granted 35 seats in the European Parliament, of which five went to the GRP. The GRP joined a parliamentary grouping of far-right European parties known as the Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty group ("ITS"), a grouping which only gained official status within the European Parliament because the accession of Romania and Bulgaria boosted the number of far-right members in the parliament, allowing ITS to claim the requisite minimum of 20 members from at least six countries. Comically, by November 2007, the ITS faced collapsed, first as the GRP members walked out in a dispute with Italy over the treatment of Romanian immigrants there, and then when the GRP lost all its seats in Romanian elections for the European Parliament (BBC News [8], [10]).

The Romanian and Italian governments faced a genuine crisis at this time, as a perceived upsurge in violent criminality in Rome was blamed on Romanian immigrants; new powers were introduced to allow Italian police authorities to deport Romanian suspects summarily, and to destroy the shanty structures on the banks of the river Tiber in which many Romanians were found to be living (BBC News [9]). The strength of feeling in Italy was such that the comments made in the European Parliament by MEP Alessandra Mussolini (the fascist dictator's granddaughter) –

that Romanians were "habitual law-breakers" – which provoked the GRP to leave the ITS, were not particularly extreme in context. It is notable that the GRP's stand did not strengthen its electoral performance. Despite its populist anti-Roma agenda, the GRP and the extreme politics of racism and Romanian irredentism appear to have become largely a sideshow in mainstream Romanian political activity at that time.[19]

3.4 Summary of clause 3: underlying problems

The contemporary reality of two states occupying the Romanian space is not a clear-cut solution to the awkward historical evolution of borders and polities in this part of Southeastern Europe. Romania's incorporation within the wider boundaries of the EU, to the notable exclusion of the Republic of Moldova, complicates the issue (and following the 2009 elections in Moldova, this exclusion has been exposed as a major economic grievance for the Republic). Furthermore, the concept of "two states" is interpreted in conflicting ways (Tomescu-Hatto 2008, 196). "Moldovanism" has meant that amongst a significant proportion of Moldovan society (including rural ethnic Romanians as well as the Slav minorities who predominate in Moldova's cities), the Republic's independence stands as a demonstration of multi-cultural Moldova's innate difference from its neighbour in the West. Romanian understanding of the two states solution – reflected in the "pan-Romanian" view that has influenced the Moldovan intellectual elite – is rather that one historic nation has been divided into two nation states (see Protsyk 2007, 188-9).

The lands of the medieval principality of Moldova cross this uncomfortable modern political reality. United by a common history from before the modern age, and by majority ethnic and cultural ties, the contemporary inhabitants of the lands of the Principality have divergent political allegiances and international perspectives. The knowledge of a shared history, expressed in political ideals which laud the interwar achievement of Greater Romania, can be important to public life in both Romania and Moldova, but has been refined in the context of recent international relations.

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[19] In August 2008, the GRP's offices in Iaşi were tucked away in a side street, adjoining a crêche, whereas the offices of the National Liberal Party – the lead party in the governing coalition – formed part of the municipal buildings fronting Blvd Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt.

As will be explored in Chapter 4, Ştefan cel Mare occupies a notable position in the cultural life of both northeastern Romania and Moldova, and his legacy has touched politics in the post-communist era in an emotional, visceral manner. This legacy might not influence the routine practice of government, any more than the memory of Wallachian medieval heroes such as Vlad III Dracula and Mihai Viteazul; but that does not diminish the political importance of medieval princes as emblems of ethnic character and symbols of nationhood.

CHAPTER FOUR:
How is Ştefan cel Mare revealed as an ethno-national symbol in Romania and the Republic of Moldova?

1   The prince as a national symbol

Ethnosymbolism addresses the origins and formation of nations, and it also accounts for the "persistence" and "transformation" of nations: a study of Ştefan cel Mare's legacy in the modern (and post-modern) era belongs chiefly to these latter categories. This chapter will explore how the establishment of Ştefan cel Mare as a national hero is anchored within the temporal parameters of modernism, and how his image has been revived by various interest groups in the post-communist era.

Chapter 3 has set out how the states of Romania and Moldova have experienced profound political and social change since 1989; this change following on from the social pressures brought about by competing visions of communism and the manner in which communism affected the understanding of ethnicity within the constituent nations of these states. In the context of this recent history, ethnosymbolism can illustrate the way in which long-standing ethnic and national identifiers have been employed and re-employed by proponents of nationalism. These "identifiers" are termed by Smith the "symbolic resources of the nation", amongst which the most significant for the following study are territory ("sacred homelands"); the expression in art and culture of "golden ages"; and the individuals associated with both (Smith 2009, 40 and ch. 5, from p. 90; for national heroes, see Smith 1986, 193, 200).

In his critique of John Hutchinson's book *Nations as Zones of Conflict* (2005), Umut Özkırımlı has raised in colourful style a particular objection to the study of heroic figures as national symbols in the ethnosymbolist discourse (see Delanty et al., 2008, 7-8). Özkırımlı takes issue with Hutchinson's use of Joan of Arc (d.1431) as a "concrete example" of a symbol of national unity. Appropriated by different interest groups in France at different times, Özkırımlı emphasises that this figure is given *retrospective* importance by nationalists and that Joan's supposed appeal in the age of nationalism says nothing about whether she "mattered" to previous generations. Arguing that ethnosymbolism requires the persistence (continuity, it seems) of symbols throughout history, Özkırımlı seeks to debunk the enthnosymbolist approach:

If Joan of Arc did not exist, nationalists would have found another symbol, and in fact, there are many symbols that are not taken up by nationalists, and condemned to oblivion. To put the point more rhetorically, if Joan of Arc did not exist, she had to be invented! (ibid., 8)

This is surely a form of *reductio ad absurdum*. While Özkırımlı is right to point to the process of *selection* of signs and symbols by nationalists, he says nothing here about how Joan could be invented. It would be fairer to argue that if Joan of Arc had not existed (or had been thought not to have existed), there could be no discussion of such a figure as a national symbol; but there might be discussion based on some other character instead (say, Vercingetorix in the context of 'French' history[1]). But the point is, Joan of Arc *did* exist – she is an historically attested figure. As such, the study of Joan of Arc is necessary within academic discourse, as an historical character with a prominent modern and contemporary reputation. Furthermore, ethnosymbolism is nuanced enough to accept the rediscovery of symbols and their fluctuating significance over time (see Hutchinson 2007, 49).

In terms of this study of Ştefan cel Mare, Özkırımlı's misplaced critique of Hutchinson is raised to emphasise the *legitimacy* of studying an historical charcter as a national symbol, within the conceptual approach encouraged by ethnosymbolism. As a student of Anthony D. Smith, John Hutchinson has developed the ethnosymbolist approach, illustrating, among other things, the varied and conflicting receptions that ethnic symbols can elicit within nations – which, as has already been touched on, is a feature of the status of Ştefan cel Mare in the Romanian societies:

> [Hutchinson's work] is a pointed riposte to a fashionable postmodernism which claims that divergent discourses of national identity reflect the meaninglessness of the entire concept and its fragmentation in the present day. Hutchinson accepts multiplicity, but contends that multiple discourses, by orienting themselves toward a common fund of symbols and the same referent, wind up reinforcing the nation. (Gerard Delanty in ibid., 2)

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[1] Vercingetorix, the Gallic leader defeated by the army of Julius Caesar at Alésia in 52 BC, is known solely through Caesar's own written account, but was the subject of propagandising by the French state in its various forms through the second half of the 19th century. As a cult hero of the French people, he has been memorialised in dramatic statues, works of art and literature. An 1872 statue even depicts Vercingetorix "advancing hand in hand" with Joan of Arc. For a modernist analysis of the development of "Celticism" in France, the "invented tradition of national identity", and the place of Vercingetorix in this phenomenon, see Dietler 2008, in particular 203-7.

The case for Romanian heroes as a feature of nationalism has been made by the anthropologist Katherine Verdery. Although the biography of Ştefan cel Mare is radically different from the themes of failure and betrayal that she describes, Verdery touches upon the characteristics of ethnosymbolism by indicating the role of personal feelings – emotional connections – in the identification of individuals as bearers of meaning by wider populations:

> ... in my research in Romania over three decades I have been struck by the importance of "exemplary biographies" of "remarkable men" in shaping Romanian national sentiment. (I believe this is true of other nationalisms as well.) Just as medieval Christians absorbed the exemplary lives of saints, so twentieth-century Romanians learn to identify with exemplary national heroes. (Verdery 1999, 77-8)

2 Ethnosymbolism in Central and Eastern Europe

The significance ascribed to royal heroes, and the symbols of their power, in the construction of national identities in the post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe has been demonstrated by Romania's neighbour, the Republic of Hungary. In January 2000, St. Stephen's Crown – the medieval crown of Byzantine origin which bears the name of the founder of the Hungarian kingdom – was paraded through the streets of Budapest to its new home inside the Hungarian parliament building, amidst state ceremonial that was witnessed by thousands of onlookers. Parliament had recently passed a law to restore the crown to its former position as the symbol of the Hungarian state. The Prime Minister, Viktor Orban (1998-2002 and 2010–), declared the crown to be "a living symbol of the Hungarian state, manifesting the unity of the nation" (Klaniczay 2002, 409-10; BBC News [1]).

Opposition politicians criticised the ceremony, arguing that the elevation of a medieval crown to such status undermined Hungary's claim to be a forward-looking nation which could anticipate EU membership (their complaints echoed Romanian opponents of the canonisation of Ştefan cel Mare – see Chapter 3, clause 3). However, the prominence given to St. Stephen's Crown was not a particularly new initiative on the part of the young prime minister's centre-right government. An Act of 1990 had already established that "the Holy Crown of St. Stephen" was a feature of the Coat of Arms of the Republic:

The Hungarian state emblem affirms the ethnic, medieval and Christian foundations of the post-communist state. The crucial motif here is the 'Holy Crown of St Stephen'. This invokes the foundation of the Hungarian Kingdom by St Stephen. (Leoussi 2007, 166)

The prominence of King/Saint Stephen himself in the nationalist discourse in post-communist Hungary was demonstrated later in 2000, when traditional celebrations of St. Stephen's Day, 20 August, were augmented by the king's canonisation by the Eastern Orthodox Church – to complement Stephen's canonisation by the Roman Catholic Church in 1081.[2] The king's relics – fragments of his skull and his celebrated right hand (which is usually displayed in the cathedral in Pest that is named after him) – were taken in procession to parliament (BBC News [2]). Although the celebrations incorporated more secular diversions, such as air shows and street parties, the religious character of the events was underlined by the size of the crowd, in excess of 25,000 people, who attended a mass conducted by the Patriarch of Constantinople, at which Stephen's canonisation was proclaimed. A message of Christian unity from Pope John-Paul II (1978-2005) was also read to the crowd.

The underlying religious character of the national symbols of the Republic of Hungary is matched by similar symbolism in the coats of arms of Slovakia and Lithuania, both of which incorporate the two-barred Cyrillo-Methodian cross. In arms of the post-communist countries which have acceded to the EU, "The most common Christian motif is the Cyrillo-Methodian cross, associated with the evangelising activities, among the Slavs as well as the Hungarians, of Eastern, Byzantine Christianity" (Leoussi 2007, 183).

King/Saint Stephen (997-1038) is regarded as the ruler whose development of Christian institutions and royal authority paved the way for Hungary's expansion under the Árpád dynasty. He played a vibrant, if complex role in national self-definition in Hungary in the modern era. In the later years of communism, for example, a rock opera telling the story of St. Stephen achieved considerable popularity in Hungary, as a nationalist rallying call and as an oblique comment on the

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[2] For details of the history of St. Stephen's Day, see Elgenius 2005, 160.

communist government's submission to the Soviet Union. The show is still popular in Hungary today (Klaniczay 2002, 409; ICCEES [1]).

The 19th-century statue of Stephen on the Fisherman's Bastion in Pest, overlooking the Danube from the centre of the medieval royal settlement, is an important landmark [photographs 49 and 50]. In August 2009, an attempt to dedicate a new statue of Stephen in a town in Slovakia which is home to ethnic Hungarians, lying just across the current border with Hungary, led to a diplomatic incident between the two countries (see BBC News [22]).

Ironically, St. Stephen's Crown itself post-dates Stephen's reign and none of its components is likely to have been worn by him: "the first undisputed reference to the Holy Crown comes from as late as 1304" (Engel 2001, 28).

As a further indication of the fickleness of national myths and the superficiality which can attend programmes of nation-building, Stephen's posthumous fame owes much to the political acumen of one of his successors – King Ladislaus I (1077-95). Even though Ladislaus' father had been blinded by Stephen, Ladislaus recognised the importance of Stephen's reputation to the process of consolidating the Hungarian kingdom. Ladislaus was instrumental in persuading Pope Gregory VII (1073-85) to canonise Stephen, and in 1083 Ladislaus arranged for the translation of Stephen's body to a place of veneration at Székesfehérvár (the burial place of the Árpádians). There is a further irony in that Ladislaus' own posthumous reputation for a time outstripped that of Stephen, and having been canonised in 1192, it was Ladislaus who became "the most popular Hungarian saint" in the later middle ages (ibid., 32-3; Klaniczay 2002, 399). Nevertheless, Stephen was the "founder of the nation", and it is the legacy of his rule, rather than that of Ladislaus, which has found recent political currency.

The contemporary political significance of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen offers a prime case study for Anthony D. Smith's conceptual account of nationalism. In essence, the use of the Holy Crown of St. Stephen in 2000 as a national symbol harked back to the medieval cult of the

Saint King and required the participation of intellectuals (historians) to communicate the symbol to the masses.

This was an overt political initiative, carried out by an elected government seeking to define the new, democratic nation, and with the backing of Church authorities who were themselves engaged in a campaign of evangelisation in the relative freedom of a post-communist society. In other words, it was the political and religious elites which inspired and controlled the celebration of the nation's symbol. It was a contrived process, not an organic revelation of ethnic or national identity; but it did seem to strike a chord with large numbers of the population. This combination of elite control and mass appeal reflects ethnosymbolism's variegated approach to contemporary nationalism.

3 Ethnosymbolism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova

Although there is no crown, sceptre, orb, nor any physical relic to quite compare with the symbols of King/Saint Stephen in Hungary[3], the public image of Ştefan cel Mare does provide plenty of evidence for an ethnosymbolist discussion of nationalism in Romania and the Republic of Moldova. Quite apart from the statue of Ştefan which stands at the head of the Blvd-dul Ştefan cel Mare in central Chişinău – a focal point for the city's residents, at the feet of which floral tributes are usually to be found – the crowned head of Ştefan cel Mare has adorned Moldovan banknotes of every denomination and the Republic's flag bears Ştefan's personal symbol, the auroch's head.

In the final stages of the MSSR, as Moldova moved towards independence, the Supreme Soviet adopted a version of the blue-yellow-red Romanian tricolour as the "national" flag, featuring in its centre the auroch's head seal of the Muşat dynasty. This was a response to demands made by the Popular Front at a so-called "Grand National Assembly", a mass rally staged outside the Supreme Soviet building in Chişinău in August 1989: the final document adopted by this assembly,

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[3] The closest item is Ştefan cel Mare's sword, which is held by the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul. The sword was sent on temporary loan to the National Art Museum in Bucharest in 2004. Ştefan cel Mare's tomb is discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Section 1.

"On State Sovereignty and Our Right to the Future", included the demand that the "national symbols of our people" be reinstated (King 1996, 126-7; King 2000, 129, 148).[4]

The adoption of the tricolour featuring the auroch's head symbol was a statement made by the political elite in Moldova, just as the use of St. Stephen's Crown as a national symbol was a political act in Hungary, rather than an intellectual initiative. Further, the pro-Romanian Popular Front, who pressed for the adoption of the symbols of "our people", can hardly be categorised as dispassionate intellectuals interpreting Moldova's past on behalf of the masses. However, the expression of Moldova's burgeoning independence from the USSR in a new flag, adapted from that of its Romanian neighbour by the addition of the personal symbol of the greatest Moldovan voivode, links closely to Smith's argument that national consciousness can be transmitted to the public through the medium of ethnically-specific images.

In Romania, one of the symbols of the 1989 revolution was the adaptation of the national flag by cutting the communist emblem out of the middle of the tricolour – leaving a hole to represent the overthrow of the regime. (The tricolour itself was a symbol of revolution in the 19th century, adopted throughout Europe in 1848 in emulation of the French tricolour and the example of 1789.) The imagery of the new Moldovan flag at the turn of the 1990s was therefore multi-layered: a rejection of communism and an embracing of the Romanian neighbour, with its own history of popular revolution; but also a distinctive assertion of cultural identity which harked back to the "golden age" of the Moldovan polity in the late middle ages.[5]

3.1   Statuary

(a)   Chişinău

The statue of Ştefan cel Mare in Chişinău poses greater problems of interpretation, for its history is rather like the inconsistent and opportunistic political career of Mircea Snegur. Ştefan's statue has come to represent the divisions between Moldova and Romania as much as their

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[4] The auroch's head symbol has its origin in the Moldovan foundation myth, being the symbol adopted by the 14th-century voivode Dragoş following his "dismounting" in the hitherto unknown Moldovan lands during a hunt for wild aurochs (see Haynes 2003, 8).

[5] See Elgenius 2005, 68-70, 76. Elgenius mistakenly attributes the auroch (or bison's) head symbol to "the old province of Bessarabia": ibid., 139, n.90.

shared history, but the Chişinău statue dates to 1927/8, to the period of union between Bessarabia and Romania (1918-1940). A monument which for many stands today as a symbol of the traditional independence of Moldova in fact has its origins in Greater Romania – the ultimate expression of Romanian territorial unity [photographs 1 and 2].

The statue's history since its first unveiling reflects the complicated recent history of Moldova. Cast in Bucharest by the sculptor Alexandru Plămădeală (1888-1940), though taking as its model *Russian* medieval iconography, the statue of Ştefan cel Mare was first erected outside the park which now bears his name, at the point where a statue of the Russian Tsar Alexander II had stood until it was dismantled in 1918, when Bessarabia was joined with Romania; a statue of Tsar Alexander I (1801-25) in Chişinău was actually destroyed by a member of the *Sfatul Ţării* at that time.

Ştefan's statue was removed to Vaslui in Romania in 1940, during the Soviet occupation of Bessarabia; a statue of Stalin was erected in Chişinău instead. However, the statue of Stalin lasted only a year, it being destroyed during the Nazi occupation. Ştefan's statue returned with great pomp to Chişinău in 1942, where it was given a more prominent central location, opposite the Arc de Triomphe, facing Cathedral Park, where previously the statue of Tsar Alexander I had stood. Two years later, with the Soviet reoccupation of Bessarabia, Ştefan's statue was again evacuated to Romania, where it was abandoned in a forest. However, at the instigation of one of Plămădeală's students, the Soviet army soon arranged for its return to Chişinău and thereafter it stood in the capital on an improvised pedestal until 1972 (it was overshadowed by a larger nearby statue of Lenin, which occupied the former site of the statue of Alexander I).[6]

In the intervening years, Plămădeală's widow interceded with the Soviet leader Nikita Khruschev (1955-64) to prevent the statue from being removed (it is hardly an example of Socialist Realist monumental sculpture but was under threat anyway). Instead, restoration was carried out

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[6] The improvised pedestal for Plămădeală's statue bore the name of Ştefan cel Mare in Cyrillic script and was largely devoid of decoration, displaying merely angular motifs. A laconic quote from the Russian historian Nicolai Karamzin (1766-1826) was carved on to the side of the pedestal: "Courageous when in danger, steadfast when faced with disaster, modest in good fortune... he amazed rulers and peoples by creating what was great with very little means..." (Shukhat 1986, 90).

in the early 1970s, and the statue was placed within the park which is now called the "Public Garden of Stephen the Great and Saint" (previously, Pushkin Park). On 31 August 1989, as Moldova's independence from the USSR beckoned, the statue was returned to its original position at the entrance to the park, at the head of Blvd-dul Ştefan cel Mare,[7] with the renovated pedestal bearing the sculptor's original iconography – the auroch's head and Byzantine acanthus leaves (see Chisinau; Dumbrava 2005, 105-7; Ciscel 2007, 28).

The story of the statue of Ştefan cel Mare in Chişinău encapsulates the competing ideologies and policies which have shaped the recent history of Moldova and Romania, albeit that the statue was conceived as a symbol of Romanian-Bessarabian unification, a prominent monument for Chişinău to replace those of Russian tsars – Russian dominion in the former oblast of Bessarabia having been replaced by Romanian government. Ştefan cel Mare was chosen as the subject for a populist statue on account of his virtuous reputation for *good* government; he was also a symbol of cultural unity between the Romanian peoples, and a brave ancestor as well as a just ruler. In origin, the statue bore a propaganda message, representing an assurance of good governance by the new Romanian authorities and emphasising the historical basis for unification within Greater Romania (Dumbrava 2005, 102-5).

(b)   Iaşi

The raising of the Chişinău statue echoed the inspiration behind the erection of an equestrian statue of Ştefan in Iaşi in 1883 [photograph 6], set up close by one of Ştefan's foundations, the Church of St. Nicholas, and the site of the medieval princes' court (see Chapter 5, Section 3, clause 1) Planned for several decades, the Iaşi statue was conceived as a symbol of Romanian independence and national unity, building on the unification of Wallachia and Moldova in the 1860s and in the context of the Russo-Turkish wars of the 1870s, which recalled the Ottoman threat that Ştefan had withstood.

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[7] The name of this street, the central thoroughfare in Chişinău, in itself tells the history of change in Moldova. When first laid out in the early 19th century, it was called Moskovskaya Ulitsa (Moscow Street). Renamed Alexandrovskaya in honour of the tsar, in the 20th century it became Prospekt Lenina before being renamed in honour of Ştefan cel Mare with the fall of communism. Ştefan was memorialised in the 1980s in a street name – Ulitsa Stefana Velikovo, the thoroughfare which runs parallel to Blvd-dul Ştefan cel Mare on its northern side, now called Str. Alexandru cel Bun (see Shukhat 1986, 59).

Interest in Ştefan as a figure of Romanian unity found expression in the celebrations at Putna in 1871 and the Iaşi statue reflected Romania's ambitions in the late 19th century to achieve territorial aggrandisement in the traditional "Romanian" lands of Transylvania, Bucovina and Bessarabia (ibid., 102 n.41). A Romanian senator, Petre Gradisteanu, used the occasion of the unveiling of the statue in Iaşi to call for the reintegration of Bucovina within Romania, prompting a diplomatic exchange between the Austro-Hungarian and Romanian governments (Iorga 1904, 241-3; Damian 2004).

Stylistically, the statues in Iaşi and Chişinău are very different. Although separated in time by just 40 years and raised within 100km of each other, they represent contrasting forms of public sculpture. Emmanuel Frémiet's equestrian statue in Iaşi, which depicts Ştefan in a commanding pose astride his horse, decked in regalia, bearded and middle aged, is militaristic, and the side panels on the plinth show scenes from Ştefan's great victories. Frémiet (1824-1910), a distinguished sculptor of animals and of images of the Napoleonic dynasty in France, was a sculptor of the heroic and gained renown for his golden equestrian statue of Joan of Arc, raised in Paris in 1889.[8]

By contrast, Plămădeală's statue of Stephen is more grave. A pensive figure stands holding a crucifix towards the horizon. The face of Plămădeală's statue is supposedly modelled on the image of Stephen found on a contemporary miniature painted at the monastery of Humor [photograph 3]; the drooping moustache and wide eyes of Plămădeală's Stephen accord with depictions of the voivode found in the votive portraits in his church foundations. Similarly, the relatively slight stature of the Chişinău Stephen accords with chronicle descriptions of the man.[9]

(c) *Lieux de mémoire*

While Frémiet's triumphant Stephen represents the ambitions of nationalism in the late 19th century, Plămădeală's realistic image, sculpted in the inter-war era, seeks to convey gravitas.

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[8] Hutchinson refers to "a statue mania" in France and Germany in the late 19th century, citing Joan of Arc as one prominent subject, the celebrated defender of the French against the English (Hutchinson 1994, 18).
[9] There is a settled opinion amongst artists about what Ştefan looked like. See, for example, photograph 4 – a range of images of Ştefan created for the commemorative events of 2004; the voivode's physiognomy is remarkably similar in these images.

In the late 20th century, the dissolution of the USSR and the Republic's declaration of independence led to the Chişinău statue being claimed both by proponents of Romanian unification and by Moldovanists.

During the upheavals of 1989-91, the Chişinău statue became a meeting point for pan-Romanianists, who were attracted to the statue as a symbol of Romanian nationhood – a "Lieu de mémoire" (*place of memory*).[10] Unsurprisingly, newly-elected President Mircea Snegur went to the statue on 4 July 1991, to lay flowers on the otherwise unremarkable 487th anniversary of the voivode's death, declaring Ştefan to be an "eternal ruler" (Dumbrava 2005, 107).

At this time a series of statues and busts of Romanian worthies appeared in Chişinău, such as the national poet Mihai Eminescu and the nationalist historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), and even a statue of the Capitoline wolf suckling Romulus and Remus was installed in front of the National History Museum, all of which represented the tide of pro-Romanian feeling within the MSSR (ibid., 99-100).

In contrast, in the 2000s, the reformed communists led by President Vladimir Voronin seized upon Ştefan as a national symbol, but adopted the Moldovanist interpretation of the voivode as an exclusively Moldovan hero. The independent Republic required new signs and symbols of its independent status, to replace both Soviet iconography and vestiges of Moldova's Romanian past.[11] Several public monuments were set up to portray Moldovan independence to the population, not least the "People's Monument" or "Candle of Gratitude" dedicated to the

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[10] In contrast, in 1988, student demonstrators in Iaşi gathered at the statue of Prince Alexandru Ioan Cuza in Piaţa Unirii (see photographs 42 and 43), rather than at Ştefan's statue in front of the Palace of Culture (Verdery 1991, 132). However, their choice of a *statue* as a focal point reinforces the nationalist sentiment implied by behaviour in Chişinău.

[11] Soviet iconography persists in breakaway Transnistria, where statues of Lenin (1870-1924) still stand, but some Soviet-era monuments have been retained in central Chişinău too, including the "Monument to the Heroic Komsomols" near the Hotel Tourist. In the Republic of Hungary, many of the examples of communist political art were removed after 1989 (and, in the case of Budapest, resited in an open air museum called the "Statue Park"). In Russia, the end of communism was symbolised by the toppling of the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky (the founder of the Soviet secret police) from its plinth in front of the Lubjanka in central Moscow, and many other statues in the capital were torn down and hauled to an improvised museum space near Gorky Park. But in Moldova, transition has not entailed the wholesale destruction of communist iconography.

Moldovan literary character "Badea Mior", which was erected in Soroca in 2004 after a long campaign waged by supporters of Moldova's cultural independence (ibid., 97-8).

Notwithstanding the fact that dignitaries from Ukraine and Romania played a prominent role in public celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Ştefan's death in 2004, Ştefan cel Mare was elevated by the reformed communist government in the Republic to be the most important political symbol of Moldovan nationhood, and by the mid 2000s the statue in Chişinău had become the most important national monument of its kind.[12] For example, in August 2004, Prime Minister Tarlev and the Speaker of the Moldovan parliament laid flowers at Ştefan's statue on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Moldova from Nazi/Romanian occupation, effectively turning the statue into a national war memorial, as well as emphasising Moldova's separation from the Romanian state (Ursprung 2005, 17-18, 50).

This seeming *volte face* by communists, who in the Soviet era had propagandised using heroes of socialism, was controversial: their political interpretation of Ştefan cel Mare highlighted the divisions which existed within the Republic, between the extremes of Moldovanism and pan-Romanianism, over and above the divisions between the two nation states of Moldova and Romania. But it was consistent with previous appropriations of the statue of Ştefan, which had taken it to be a national memorial.

3.2   Pan-Romanianism vs Moldovanism

Tension in the symbolic status of Ştefan cel Mare was also evident in the debate about the teaching of history that raged in the Republic from the early 1990s onwards. Faultlines were revealed within the Moldovan academic community in response to successive governments' attempts to replace the "History of the Romanians" courses at secondary and tertiary levels with

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[12] "This statue is the site of many state and civil ceremonies. Government bureaucrats, military officers, church officials, and newlyweds all have certain responsibilities at times to lay flowers at the feet of the statue. Not coincidentally, the city's main flower market ... is less than a block away" (Ciscel 2007, 28). The laying of flowers at a national monument to celebrate a marriage or to mark a state occasion is an inheritance of Soviet practice, when it was carried out at statues of Lenin or at a city's Eternal Flame memorial to the dead of the Great Patriotic War. For a discussion of the role of monuments and statuary as sites of rituals and agents of national identity, see Elgenius 2005, chapter 5: "National monuments are therefore central ceremonial instruments reinforcing a permanent feeling of belonging since history is used as a mediator between the past, the present and the future" (ibid., 283; see also Smith 1986, 192).

courses which reflected a Moldovanist interpretation of the Republic's past. The older generation of Moldovan scholars, who were trained in the Soviet era, tended to align with Moldovanist concepts of the Republic, whereas younger scholars tended to be pan-Romanianists (King 1995, 7; Casu 2005, 15-16). The battleground in the history debate could be found in academic works, in school textbooks, and even on the streets of the capital.

Pan-Romanianism remained the governing concept reflected in the books available to Moldovan students in schools and universities in the 2000s (Ihrig 2008, 151, 153). Unfortunately, the nature and quality of history writing and teaching was compromised by political interference. At its worst, history writing could be inflammatory and near-racist. Ihrig cites the example of two rival biographies of Ştefan cel Mare which were published in 2004 as part of commemorations of his 500th anniversary, by Vlad Zbârciog and Vasile Stati:

> Both books again offer a restatement of the two ... positions in the historiographic debate. Yet, the tone has grown increasingly aggressive. The Romanianist author [Vlad Zbârciog] asks himself if Moldovanists deserve to be called humans at all. (ibid., 162)[13]

In general, the reign of Ştefan cel Mare is seen in positive terms by pan-Romanianism, but his era does not quite represent a "golden age" in the sense of the nationalist ideal discussed by Anthony D. Smith.[14] The reign of Mihai Viteazul, the first unifier of the Romanian lands, is of greater importance: "[Viteazul] is the seminal figure in this narrative because he embodies the most basic characteristic ascribed to all Romanians (throughout time and space): their inherent drive to unify with all the other Romanians in one body politic" (ibid., 154). However, the true golden age in the pan-Romanian discourse is much closer in time to the contemporary situation, being the period of Greater Romania between 1918 and 1940: "Unity in the all-encompassing nation-state is the goal of history" (ibid.).

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[13] Ihrig is referring to an acerbic aside in Zbârciog's review of Ştefan's posthumous reputation, in which the author also refers to Moldovanists as agents of the Kremlin who have compromised the ideals of Romanian unity. See Zbârciog 2004, 71-2 and page 122 below.

[14] "...the 'golden age' of communal splendour, with its sages, saints and heroes, the era in which the community achieved its classical form, and which bequeathed a legacy of glorious memories and cultural achievements." (Smith 1986, 191.) The reign of Ştefan cel Mare might be said to have been _a_ golden age, rather than _the_ golden age aspired to by nationalists.

Ştefan cel Mare attains far more significance in the Moldovanist view of history. Although the golden age is again placed within relatively recent history – when Moldova was incorporated within the Tsarist Empire and then within the Soviet Union, emphasising its separation from Romanian influence – Ştefan has a special place in the narrative: "He symbolises the Moldovan people's struggle for independence. Stati goes as far as to call him 'Stefan the Moldovan'" (ibid., 155).

Historical interpretations of Ştefan's status use him as a broad symbol of Moldovan identity and destiny, but just as the statue in Chişinău symbolises conflicting understanding of what that Moldovan identity might be, so the practice of history within the Republic has been fractured according to the distinct political concepts of Moldovanism and pan-Romanianism. An objection to the ethnosymbolist approach to nationalism emerges from Ştefan's example, in that it is clear that ethnic symbols – however widely they may be transmitted in a nation state – are subject to varying interpretations. In a multi-cultural society such as the Republic, symbols mean different things to different groups. Even within the Romanian/Moldovan *ethnies*, Ştefan stands for conflicting interpretations of Moldovan identity. It is important to note that Ştefan seems to offer relatively little as a national symbol to the numerous ethnic *minority* groups within the Republic, such as the Turkic Gagauzi.

As a counterpoint to the argument that Ştefan has played a role in recent Moldovan politics, Matthew Ciscel is, perhaps uniquely, rather downbeat about public perceptions of Ştefan cel Mare. Based on observations made in the mid 1990s and early 2000s, he ascribes significance to a common error made by his students in English-language classes: "The students ... often mistranslated the name of [Blvd-dul Ştefan cel Mare] into English as *Big Stephen*. The familiarity and lack of awe unintentionally implied by this mistake reflect the genuine ambivalence that many people seem to have toward the ancient historical figure and the identity he represents" (Ciscel 2007, 24).

Ciscel's study of social identity through language in Moldova is profound, but his choice of language here is at fault: "ancient" is not an appropriate term by which to refer to a person of the

late middle ages. Furthermore, Ciscel's objection to the quaint mistranslation of "cel Mare" as "Big" – which can also be found in tourist guides in Romania – seems to be a misjudgement, as if there are comic undertones in the monniker "Big Stephen".[15]

Ambivalence is more apparent in Transnistria, where Ştefan plays a muted role within the educational curriculum. In a territory in which Marx and Lenin retain the iconic status they were once afforded by communist states across Central and Eastern Europe, histories largely follow the old Soviet line in which Ştefan is acknowledged as a great military leader against the Ottomans, but as a voivode he also fulfils the role of "class enemy". The Principality's links with Muscovy tend to be exaggerated, while the major events of Ştefan's reign are deemed to have taken place beyond the Nistru and therefore outside of Transnistrian territory (Ojog and Şarov 2005, 131-6).

3.3   Ştefan cel Mare and the Romanian public

All told, Ştefan cel Mare's status as a Moldovan national symbol in the 2000s is more complicated than the revered statue at the head of Blvd-dul Ştefan cel Mare in Chişinău might at first suggest. Similarly, the contemporary Romanian perspective of Ştefan's significance is equivocal.

The religious and political symbolism of the canonisation ceremony held for Ştefan at Putna in 1992 links him very closely to St. Stephen of Hungary. The Hungarian saint's relics are on display whereas Ştefan's mortal remains are entombed, but the tomb is a focal point and place of worship (see Chapter 5, Section 1). Ştefan's prominence within northeastern Romania – Moldavia – is akin to that within the Republic. The Putna monastery's own website includes a remarkable image of the name "Ştefan" carved into the nearby hillside in monumental letters.[16] Great statues and memorials to Ştefan cel Mare, many of which were raised during the Ceauşescu years, abound within the towns and cities of the region, and there are several villages that bear Ştefan's name. The majority of his monastic foundations are located in the region: monasteries and nunneries have found new life in post-communist Romania, although even during

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[15] See "Mistery [*sic*] of Transylvania – Vlad the Impaler Dracula Between Legend and Reality", a tourist pamphlet on sale in Sighişoara, for references to "Ştefan the Big".
[16] See http://www.putna.ro/album-foto-eng.htm.

the Ceauşescu years, the historic churches of Bucovina were appreciated as great monuments and were the subjects of extensive restoration projects (Curry 2007).

In the aftermath of the 2004 commemorations, Ştefan's reputation in Romania was at its height: in 2006, "the public voted Stefan the 'greatest Romanian of all time' in a Televiziurea Română poll" (Ogden 2007, 82 n.32)[17]:

> It is hard to describe the awe and reverence that Stefan is still held in Romania today; the English equivalent of Stefan merges the legendary exploits of Elizabeth I, Essex, Cecil, Raleigh and Drake into one person, producing a national hero of massive stature. (ibid., 82)

Ogden's choice of analogy is questionable, for Ştefan was no pirate, but his portrayal of Ştefan as a larger-than-life character who was equally a statesman, a diplomat and a daring war hero is apt. (Within the Republic, Ştefan has a legendary status that can better be compared to that of Sir Winston Churchill in Great Britain – the war leader who saved his country from invasion: both men are popular icons of military leadership and national independence.)

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[17] The vote to which Ogden refers was a phone vote for a programme called "Great Romanians", in a format trialled by the BBC in Britain in 2002 as "100 Greatest Britons" and then sold as a franchise to broadcasters around the world. (Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965) was the winner of the British poll.) The basic format is for a series of programmes to be made by celebrity sponsors of great individuals from a nation state's past, canvassing for public votes to discover who holds pride of place in the nation's consciousness as its greatest-ever citizen. The voting system is unscientific, as phone voting allows for multiple votes, and the eastern European franchises produced some controversies.

A number of the competitions were won by medieval "heroes". The declaration of Yaroslav the Wise (c.978-1054) as the victor in the Ukrainian poll was challenged by supporters of his rivals, and suggestions were made that this relatively neutral figure had received organised bloc votes in order to defeat a more nationalist candidate, Stepan Bandera. The vote in Russia, conducted for a programme titled "The Name of Russia", symbolised the federation's crisis of identity: initially, the vote pitted the last Romanov autocrat, Tsar Nicholas II (r.1894-1917) – who had recently been canonised by the Russian Orthodox Church – against Joseph Stalin (1879-1953), the Georgian-born dictator whose reputation within parts of the former Soviet Union remains as strong today as in his lifetime. However, the eventual winner of the competition was Prince Alexander Nevsky (c.1220-63), a figure lauded by the Russian government as a national hero; supporters of Stalin's candidacy accused the Kremlin of having manipulated the vote.

In the Romanian vote, Ştefan cel Mare defeated several figures from the recent past as well as Mihai Viteazul, who came fourth; Vlad Ţepeş came a respectable twelfth. Ştefan's victory was an improvement on his position in an opinion poll carried out in June 1999, in which Romanians were asked to name "the most important historical personalities who have influenced the destiny of the Romanians for the better": 24.6% of respondent votes were for Alexandru Ioan Cuza and 17.7% for Mihai Viteazul; Ştefan achieved only 13.4% (Boia 2001(b), 232-3).

The commemorations were long-lasting, as, for example, in 2007 the National Bank of Romania dedicated a special issue of gold, silver and copper coins to the 550th anniversary of Ştefan's "enthronement in Moldavia" (NBR Press release). However, Ştefan cel Mare is just one of several Romanian medieval heroes. Writing during the Ceauşescu era, Michael Bruchis contrasted Romanian sentiments towards Ştefan with those expressed in the state-sponsored Moldavian Soviet Encyclopedia, published in seven volumes between 1970 and 1977. Noting that Ştefan received unusual attention within the encyclopedia in comparison with other Moldavian voivides and Russian Tsars, Bruchis claimed that Mihai Viteazul, the unifier of the Romanian lands, was "belittled" by his entry in the encyclopedia. Referring to a general history of Romania published in Bucharest in 1975, Bruchis stated:

> Rumanian [*sic*] historians ... write that 'together with the Rumanian voivode Ştefan the Great, Michael the Brave represents for the Rumanian nation the personification of heroism, a source of strength, faith and pride.' The [*encyclopedia*], however, belittles him and his achievement: Michael the Brave 'occupied Transylvania in 1599 and Moldavia in 1600,' and in September 1600 his forces 'were expelled from Moldavia'. (Bruchis 1991, 5)

Here, Ştefan is adopted as a Romanian rather than as a Moldovan, but although he is praised, the chief point to note is the implied primacy of Mihai Viteazul as the leader who first brought the Romanian lands together in a political union, contrasting with the Soviet propaganda of Moldovan separateness to which Ştefan was associated.[18]

More recently, Radu Florescu heaped praise upon Mihai, in terms of his character and achievements, and also in relation to his legacy. Linking him, again, with Ştefan, Florescu also likened Mihai Viteazul to Dracula, as a nationalist and a crusader whose military accomplishments made him one of the outstanding princes of the age:

> I see Michael, as Dracula and Stephen, as among those who by rekindling the Christian crusade saved the Romanian lands from the obvious peril of being transformed into a Turkish province... most importantly, I see Michael as a great

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[18] It is interesting to note that both Mihai Viteazul and Ştefan cel Mare are represented in the Coat of Arms of Romania: the imperial eagle which dominates the Arms holds in its left claw the sceptre of Mihai and in its right claw, the sword of Ştefan, symbolising unity and just war, respectively (Hentea 2007, 91-2).

national figure whose career, romanticized by Bălcescu[19] and others, had a role to play and still plays a role as a great symbol of Romanian national determination to defend the territory bounded by the Carpathians and the Danube which includes Hungarians, Szecklers, and Germans who fought with Michael as part of his national entity. In that respect, Michael the Brave, the symbol of national unity, is far more important than the historic reality of Michael the Man. (Florescu 1999, 147)[20]

Florescu emphasised the several ethnic groups who joined to fight with Mihai, giving a sense of a multi-ethnic Romanian nationalism. But his argument is close to the pan-Romanianist view of history, for the destiny of the Romanian lands is unification and Mihai Viteazul's brief reign represents its first achievement.

However, although Mihai outshines Ştefan cel Mare and Dracula in this respect, his reputation is perhaps greater amongst intellectuals than with the masses. This may be reflected culturally by the fact that Mihai is rarely mentioned in Romanian folklore songs and ballads, as Florescu acknowledged.[21] Dracula, on the other hand, is "a kind of Robin Hood of Romania" (ibid., 127; 144-5) [photographs 44 and 45].

The legacy of Vlad III of Wallachia in chronicles, history, folklore, literature and film is an international cultural phenomenon which outstrips the posthumous careers of most medieval princes, not just those of Mihai Viteazul and Ştefan cel Mare. Prominent within oral Romanian folklore as a heroic figure dispensing tough social justice, as well as within 15th-century German pamphlets and chronicles as a blood-thirsty maniac, Dracula was reinvented as the vampire of Bram Stoker's eponymous 1897 novel, but had already been adopted by some of the Romanian 1848 revolutionaries as a nationalist hero (ibid., 115, 125; Boia 2001(a), 199).

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[19] Nicolae Bălcescu (1819-1852), Romanian revolutionary of 1848 and author of *Romanians under Mihai Viteazul* (1852). "Thanks to Bălcescu, Michael the Brave was set up decisively and definitively as the first founder of modern Romania" (Boia 2001(a), 42; see Verdery 1991, 216-7).
[20] Cf. Denize's secular arguments (Chapter 2, clause 2.3).
[21] Boia rightly characterises Mihai Viteazul's popular status as being unequivocally *Romanian*, whereas Ştefan is "... in a somewhat contradictory fashion, a symbol of Moldavian particularity..." (Boia 2001(b), 231-2). Some measure of Mihai Viteazul's political status may be seen in the recent reconstruction of his coronation church in Alba Iulia (White 2004, 330).

In recent times, Dracula's image within Romania has been exploited for commercial gain. The Ceauşescu regime was wary of associating the image of Romania with that of the "vampire" count (in his later years, Nicolae Ceauşescu would himself be caricatured by opponents as a vampire); but in response to renewed interest in the West, the regime did try to exploit sites of tourism potential and 1975 was proclaimed "Dracula Year" (Florescu 1999, 76-8).[22]

In post-communist Romania, the possibilities of revenue-generation through tourism have been taken to extremes, with successive governments giving backing to the development of plans for a "Dracula Land" theme park. In 2001, the Romanian Minister for Tourism, Matei Dan, declared that the proposed theme park would be a tribute to "the image of a great Romanian hero" (BBC News [3]). The project has yet to be realised, but it suggests that in contemporary Romania, the portrait of Dracula in the media and in public imagination – though twisted beyond recognition in historical terms – surpasses that of his cousin, Ştefan, and that of Mihai Viteazul, the unifier of the Romanian lands. Dracula is prominent as a commercial opportunity, whereas Ştefan and Mihai are historical heroes with a political dimension.[23]

Summary of clause 3

In both Romania and Moldova, the "symbolic resources of the nation" have been marshalled by governments, political activists and intellectuals to provide images and icons by which to express ideas, galvanise mass support, and, as necessary, generate revenue. The fraught transition from the MSSR to the Republic of Moldova provides good examples of how

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[22] The house in Sighişoara in which Dracula is reputed to have been born has for many years operated as a popular restaurant. It is decorated with mementos of the voivode, but also boasts the remains of a fresco that is thought to be a depiction of members of the Dracul family, possibly dating to the 15th century [photograph 46].

[23] A disturbing twist on Dracula's fame was occasioned in January 2007, when the distinguished American historian of Romania, Kurt W. Treptow, was granted early release from Iaşi prison on the grounds of having penned a book about the Draculs during his incarceration. The former director of the Centre for Romanian Studies in Iaşi had received a seven-year jail sentence in 2002 for having sex with minors and possession of child pornography. His release in 2007 was brought about, according to Treptow's lawyer, because his authorship of *The Life and Times of Vlad Dracul* was deemed to count as work and community service. On leaving jail, Treptow was mobbed by journalists in an undignified scuffle and headlines adopted by numerous agencies followed the BBC's model: "Paedophile freed for Dracula book" (BBC News [6]) (notwithstanding that Treptow's book on the subject of Vlad Ţepeş was published in 2000 and the new book in question concerned Dracula's father).

medieval imagery, and the ideal figure of Ştefan cel Mare, have been used by interest groups and, ultimately, the state to represent political change to the citizenry.

The idea of the persistence of the Moldovan nation has emerged through near revolutionary events. The complicated symbolism of the statue of Ştefan cel Mare in Chişinău shows how identity can be far from clear-cut and that ethnic imagery can promote competing visions of a nation.

4   Ştefan cel Mare in 2004: how and why did Ştefan become a contemporary national symbol in Romania *and* Moldova?

In contrast to Bruchis' portrayal of Ştefan as being a relatively prominent figure in the Moldavian Soviet Encyclopedia, Vasile Dumbrava has suggested that Ştefan cel Mare received little attention from historians in the MSSR: "As a national hero... Stefan was so clearly Romanian that Soviet historians and Moldovan politicians did not have the courage to claim him as their own and popularize him" (ICCEES [2]).

The situation was different in the RPR, where the early communist regime in the 1950s was willing to celebrate Ştefan. Despite a general move towards internationalisation in Romanian historiography, as the state allied itself with the demands of the Communist International (Comintern), there was still a place for figures such as Ştefan, even though he was part and parcel of 19th-century Romanian historiography (van Meurs 1994, 188-9, 243; Boia 2001(a), 72-3, 215; Ciobanu 2009, 319). The 500th anniversary of Ştefan's accession to the throne in 1957 occasioned the publication by the Institute of Art History of the catalogue of monuments and artefacts from Ştefan's times (Catalogue 1958), following on from a publication by the Institute of History in 1956 of a collection of essays concerning Ştefan, in commemoration of the 450th anniversary of his death (Constantinescu 1956). In the latter, Ştefan is praised as a national hero who held back Ottoman imperialists and fought for the independence of the Romanian lands, anticipating victory over the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and paving the way for the creation of a Socialist Romanian state; dutiful citations of Marx and Gheorghiu-Dej support this

argument (ibid., 4, 6, 9, 10). Indeed, the wars against the Turks were elevated by writers at this time into a form of class struggle (van Meurs 2005, 86).

The anniversary in 1957 also occasioned a demonstration of the repressive nature of the Romanian communist state. While officially-sanctioned commemorations implied an alliance between the communist authorities and Romanian academia, an attempt made by a group of students to stage a celebration at Putna led to their arrest and imprisonment on grounds of attempted rebellion and agitation against the state. Prominent among this group of students was Alexandru Zub, who served six years in jail but who nevertheless was able to build an academic career in Iaşi following his release. Appointed Director of the A.D. Xenopol Institute of History in 1990, Professor Zub also served on the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship – the so-called "Romanian Truth Commission" – which reported in 2007 (Ciobanu 2009, 322-5).[24]

In 1966, shortly after Ceauşescu's assumption of power, Nicolae Iorga's history of Ştefan cel Mare – first published in 1904 as part of the commemorations of the 400th anniversary of the voivode's death – was issued in a new edition with the subtitle "Pentru Poporul Român" – "For the Romanian people". The communist regime sanctioned a general upsurge in the 1960s of populist publications in praise of Ştefan (van Meurs 2005, 86). Iorga's "rehabilitation" during this period was one among many flagrant exercises in aligning the work of a right-wing nationalist with the cultural politics of the Romanian communists (van Meurs 1994, 231; Boia 2001(a), 76). Nevertheless, Iorga's work has achieved particular longevity and several editions of *Istoria lui Ştefan cel Mare* were issued once again in 2004.

Ştefan has long been a significant figure in the "pantheon" of Romanian heroes, although his status within the group of legendary figures who have played an important part in national identification has fluctuated according to the type of regime in place and the type of politics in ascendancy (Boia 2001(a), 189-95). For example, during the reign of the first constitutional monarch, Carol I, the king himself and the Roman Emperor Trajan (98-117) came to be the

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[24] Outline details of Professor Zub's detention are included in his CV, published on the Romanian president's website at http://cpcadcr.presidency.ro/upload/Alexandru_Zub.pdf.

dominant "heroes of the Romanian people" in state propaganda: "The *imperial parallel* and the association with a founding act as important as that of Trajan raised Carol I far above the Romanian voivodes of the Middle Ages" (ibid., 201). In contrast, the extreme right revolutionary movement of the 1930s, the Legionaries, assigned particular prominence to Ştefan: "The voivodes... are valorized more according to how they express the ancestral, somehow atemporal, sense of Romanian purity and solidarity among Romanians: this is what explains the exceptional position of Stephen the Great in Legionary historical invocations..." (ibid., 213). The Ceauşescu era witnessed outlandish attempts by the dictator to represent himself both as a Dacian king and as a medieval voivode, in the style of Ştefan and Mihai Viteazul (ibid., 220-2).

Although Ştefan's stock as a national hero has risen and fallen over the years, great attention has been given to key anniversaries over the past century and a half. These anniversaries have served as signposts of Ştefan's importance to generations of Romanians. The commemorations of 1904 – celebrations, in fact – were the inspiration of Spiru Haret, the Romanian government minister of "Public Education and Cults" [*sic*] (*Ministerul Cultelor şi Instrucţiunii*), notwithstanding that Putna still lay at that time within Hapsburg territory. In addition to publication projects – the most notable of which was Bogdan's two-volume edition of Ştefan's chancery documents, which was eventually published in 1913 – Haret organised two days' of public activities:

> The participants brought together students, professors, teachers, army men, administrative and church officials, as well as many inhabitants of the respective towns. The festivities included reciting and singing, drama, and speeches devoted to Stephen the Great, as well as parades in historical costumes. The events marked the awakening of the patriotic spirit, and fired the desire for union of all the Romanians. (Adăniloaie 2004, 24)

Not for the first time, the legend of Ştefan cel Mare was appropriated for nationalistic purposes – the celebrations at Putna in 1871 have been credited similarly with an awakening of Romanian sentiment in Bucovina. A century after Haret's programme, in 2004, in very different political circumstances to those which preceded the creation of Greater Romania, Ştefan's name was again used for nationalistic purposes, but this time in two countries – Romania and Moldova.

In the Republic of Moldova, there was a concerted effort by the reformed communist government to celebrate the life and image of Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt as a means of promoting the broad themes of national identity, independence and inter-ethnic harmony. Indeed, the Department for Inter-ethnic Relations was in the forefront of the government's programme of commemorative activities.

2004 was declared by Presidential Decree to be a year of commemoration in Moldova in Ştefan's honour. The voivode was commended as the "pre-eminent man of the state", a great commander, diplomat and crusader, "lord of the Moldovan lands" (the latter being a provocatively vague phrase in the modern context). On 25 June 2004, the Department for Inter-ethnic Relations launched a publication in Moldovan, Russian and English entitled "Stephen the Great and Saint – symbol of the independence of the Republic of Moldova" (see Departmentul Relatii Interetnice). In addition to providing background historical information and opinion about Ştefan's reign and legacy, this booklet included commentaries by representatives of some of the various ethnic groupings in Moldova, which were intended to display Ştefan's potential as a unifying symbol for all inhabitants of the Republic, and not just ethnic Moldovans and Romanians

However, although the central article in praise of Ştefan was presented in three languages, prominence was given across the booklet to the Russian language, presented in Cyrillic script. The government seems to have been expressing its general public policy of maintaining Russian as a language of the state. Even Moldovan dignitaries and artists were referenced using the Russian language. Furthermore, there was a backward-looking citation of Karl Marx as an authority on the Battle of Vaslui (Departmentul 2004, 3)[25], and a provocative reference to Ştefan's churches having been constructed for the most part in "Moldova de Vest" – i.e., in the Romanian province of Moldavia, a fleeting echo of the concept of "Greater Moldova" that had appeared in political discourse in the early 1990s (ibid.).

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[25] This citation may well be standard in communist historiography: a guidebook to the archaeology of Suceava Castle published in the mid 1960s contains the same reference. See Matei and Andronic 1965, 28.

Notwithstanding these biases, the unambiguous purpose of the booklet was to present Ştefan as a symbol of the modern Republic's independence. The booklet's title made this clear, and the theme of Moldova as an independent nation state, protected by the outstanding voivode, appeared regularly in the text: "Today, Steven's figure is an eloquent symbol of Moldova's independence"; "Moldova's multinational society piously keeps in its people's hearts their hero, the one who shielded the independence of the country" (ibid., 1).

The testimonials by representatives of various ethnic groups were largely made up of platitudes. Here too there was something of a Slav bias – there were no contributions from Romanians or Gagauzi. The representatives themselves were in fact the chairmen of political and academic associations, and revealed a Christian bias as well as a Slavic one. The spokesman for the Bulgarian scientific association within the Republic, for example, Nikolai Chervenkov, emphasised Ştefan's patronage of Mount Athos and the artistic ties between Moldova and the Bulgarian people ("Болгарский народ"). The inclusion of a quotation from a member of such a small ethnic grouping in the Republic was admirable in one respect, but seems pointed given the exclusion of comments from Turkic or Islamic representatives, and more so given that no space was afforded to commentary from a representative of the surviving Jewish community in Moldova. There was a clear sense of selectivity in the government's understanding of "inter-ethnic relations".

Perhaps surprisingly, it was the chairman of the Coordination Committee for the Solidarity of the Russian Community with the Republic of Moldova, Mikhail Sidorov, who emphasised Ştefan's credentials as a *European* statesman, one who sought to bring European states together in the fight against the Ottomans, reflecting the Moldovan government's leaning towards the EU. The overt political nature of the booklet was also demonstrated by the comments attributed to Galina Rogovayar, the chair of the "Prosvita" Ukrainian community association, who related the story of how Ştefan would greet the owner of any household that he entered in the owner's own language, underlining the Moldovan government's policy of a bilingual state as well as Moldova's long history of ethnic diversity (ibid., 5).[26]

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[26] A critical approach to the state-sponsored cult of Ştefan cel Mare appeared in the March-April issue of the Chişinău literary journal, *Contrafort*. A number of prominent Moldovan and Romanian historians were asked to respond to four questions set by the journal, including the raw final

President Voronin identified himself closely with the programme of commemoration. In May 2004, he visited one of the monasteries on Mount Athos in Greece which had been patronised by Ştefan, declaring that there was a direct link between the Moldovan Principality and the modern Moldovan Republic.[27] In November, he visited Putna monastery in Romania – having pointedly declined an invitation from President Iliescu to attend celebrations there on the actual anniversary of Ştefan's death in July. Prominent members of the Moldovan government also played a part in consolidating Ştefan's status as the Moldovan national symbol, with the laying of flowers at Ştefan's statue in Chişinău on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Moldova in August (see clause 3.1 (c) above).

There was evidently a degree of tension between Moldova and Romania over the commemorations of 2004. It appeared in May, when Voronin and Iliescu met in Mamaia on the Black Sea coast for bilateral discussions during a summit of Central European state leaders. The two were in dispute over a claim that there was an "anti-Romanian" campaign underway in Moldova, not least in relation to language. The meeting coincided with the publication in Chişinău of Vasile Stati's history of Ştefan cel Mare – "Ştefan cel Mare – Voivodul Moldovaniei", a forceful Moldovanist interpretation which had the support of the Ministry of Education. Stati's book included attacks on Iliescu, claiming that the Romanian president had perpetuated falsehoods about Ştefan cel Mare, in particular, which had been concocted by the Ceauşescu regime (BBC Romanian).

Voronin's failure to join Iliescu at Putna in July was compensated for by his later visit, as Iliescu's guest, in November, although the visit was a private affair rather than the state occasion that it would have been in July. For his part, President Iliescu argued that Ştefan was more than a Moldovan, that he was in fact a Romanian. After all, Ştefan's chief residence had been at

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question: "There are voices that consider the cult of founding heroes and events exaggerated and attribute these cults to small, undeveloped peoples who lost their battle with the modern world. Do you find these reproaches to be fair?" See Contrafort.

[27] As a patron, Ştefan is associated in particular with the Monastery of St. George (called Zographou) at Mount Athos. An embroidered banner or battle standard, featuring an image of St. George enthroned, was presented to the monastery in 1500/1 and is now kept in the National History Museum of Romania in Bucharest. This embroidery is of a kind with the remarkable tombcover of Maria of Mangop (Cormack and Vassilaki, 316, 448-9; see Chapter 5, Section 1, clause 1.3.2).

Suceava, on Romanian territory; Chişinău was a settlement of little importance during Ştefan's lifetime (Ursprung 2005, 17-18).

In general, the Romanian response to Ştefan's quincentenary seems to have been less political than that in the Republic. Iliescu did take the opportunity to reinforce foreign relations – the Turkish president brought Ştefan's sword from the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul to the National Art Museum in Bucharest for a short loan in July 2004 – but the celebrations in Romania had a predominantly cultural feel. A veritable mini-industry of historical publishing was initiated under the auspices of the monastery at Putna. From 2003 onwards, academics (mostly from Romania) congregated at the monastery to hold annual symposia on the subject of Ştefan's life and legacy. With the support of the Romanian Orthodox Church, enormous collections of documents, research articles and folklore began to be published to reinforce the reputation of the voivode and saint.[28] This activity was certainly not without political overtones, nor was the Romanian Orthodox Church divorced from political life. The Church's investment in its new saint served more than a spiritual purpose, albeit that this provided tremendous opportunities for academics to record and codify materials relating to the reign and legacy of Ştefan cel Mare (see Ştefan cel Mare; Stan and Turcescu 2007, 51).

Summary of Chapter 4

The tensions between Moldova and Romania in 2004 encapsulated the debates about identity which have been commonplace in the Romanian societies as a legacy of the partition of 1812. On this occasion, Ştefan was used as a means to conduct a profound political argument. The Moldovan government seems to have tried to shift the focus of the cult of Ştefan cel Mare from Southern Bucovina to Chişinău – at least within the mind of the Moldovan populace. However, ever since Ştefan's canonisation at Putna in 1992, the monastic complex set in the heart of his former lands has served as the natural centre for latter-day reverence of the voivode-saint and propagation of his legend.

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[28] Following the 2004 commemoration of Ştefan's death, a "Centre of Research and Documentation" was opened in his memory, with the blessing of H. E. the Archbishop Pimen of Suceava and Rădăuţi and with the support of the Archimandrite Melchisedec, abbot of Putna monastery.

The Moldovanist interpretation of Ştefan cel Mare adopted by the communist government of the Republic served an inward-looking political logic. The communists selected an icon for the nation state that is distinct from the imagery associated with the Soviet era – which persists in breakaway Transnistria – and which might invest the state with the resonance of historical legitmacy. However, there were several inconsistencies in this state image. It conflicted with the Romanian nationalist view – an interpretation of the voivode's significance which was manifested in the demonstrations in Chişinău in the late 1980s – which legitimately focuses on the heartland territory of Ştefan's polity beyond the Prut. It was also a secular appropriation of an individual whose recent history and status has been dominated by his canonisation by the Romanian Orthodox Church. This canonisation was accepted and celebrated by a Moldovan government that was unable to separate Ştefan cel Mare from the ties of Romanian nationalism, and yet which persisted in upholding the voivode as a Moldovan national icon.

Postscript: The Moldovan election crisis of 2009

Vladimir Voronin served two full terms as President of Moldova and was required to stand down under the terms of the constitution after the parliamentary elections of April 2009. The elections were won once again by his reformed Communist Party, which, according to official figures, achieved 50% of the popular vote despite the prevailing national and global economic crises. However, although international observers – including representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe ("OSCE") – declared the election process to be satisfactory, the announcement of the communists' victory led to several days of large-scale protests on the streets of Chişinău. At the height of the trouble, on Tuesday 7 April, the parliament building and the president's official residence were besieged and then ransacked by thousands of protestors. Riot police were deployed but took some time to regain control of the buildings and the city centre. These were the most significant popular demonstrations in Moldova since the independence campaign and the Transnistrian conflict of the early 1990s.

Tensions had been building in the run-up to the election on 5 April. On 27 March, representatives of two opposition parties had joined a gathering of academics and historians at a commemoration of the anniversary of the declaration of union with Romania by the *Sfatul Ţării* in 1918. Events included laying flowers at the graves of some of the members of the *Sfatul Ţării* and laying flowers at the statue of Ştefan cel Mare – the monument again serving as a public memorial, not just as a memorial to the man. A rally staged in central Chişinău by a collective known as "Romanian Spirit" was disrupted by the police and there were claims that Romanians wishing to participate had been stopped at the Moldovan border, prompting exchanges between the Moldovan and Romanian foreign ministries (Moldova Azi [1]).

Initially dubbed the "Twitter Revolution" by some media outlets[1], the violent demonstrations of 7 April were reportedly led by students and young people drawn together by a campaign organised on mobile phone networks and the internet. Some of the protestors carried Romanian flags and chanted "We are Romanians": commentators suggested that this was an expression of the "pan-Romanianism" which pervades Moldovan academia, a call for Romanian

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[1] This label was later applied to the mass protest movement which erupted in Iran in June 2009 following its disputed presidential elections.

reunification, and an expression of frustration at Moldova's exclusion from the perceived benefits of EU membership that were being enjoyed to the west of the Prut (see BBC News [23-27]).

Many demonstrators claimed that the results of the election had been rigged. Fraudulent practices were cited, such as the registration of dead people to vote, along with the intimidation of voters. The protestors received some support from Baroness Emma Nicholson, a British MEP who had been part of the OSCE election monitoring team: she dissociated herself from the official OSCE statement, implying that the statement was biased because the OSCE group included Russian members.[2]

To an extent, the crisis in Chişinău appeared to represent a generational split within Moldovan society, whereby elderly voters and the rural poor were identified as communist supporters, whereas educated urban dwellers were identified with the "liberal" (centre-right and nationalist) opposition parties. While even the opposition was distrusted, much of the protest focused on the actions of President Voronin who, following the example of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in Russia, had expressed an intention to remain active in politics after his presidential term – a development which smacked of manipulating the democratic political process.[3]

Voronin denounced the demonstrations as an attempted coup. Together with the Russian authorities, with whom Voronin and the Moldovan communists found a renewed accord, the Moldovan government blamed agitators from Romania for organising the riots in Chişinău. (For their part, opponents of the Moldovan government claimed that the violence had been instigated by *agents provocateurs* and elements in the police, infiltrators whose purpose was to discredit the previously peaceful protest movement.) In the immediate aftermath of the storming of the parliament building, the Romanian ambassador to Moldova was expelled, amid new claims of

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[2]   See   http://emmanicholson.info/european-parliament/%e2%80%9cregrettable-post-election-violence-highlights-the-imperative-of-european-union-investment-and-engagement-with-moldova%e2%80%9d.html;   and   http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/emma-nicholson-these-are-the-voices-of-despair-deprived-of-the-right-to-vote-1666120.html.
[3] Blogs on this turbulent week in Moldova and summaries of internet commentaries and media reports can be found at: http://globalvoicesonline.org/-/world/eastern-central-europe/moldova/ and http://www.scrapsofmoscow.org/search/label/Grape%20Revolution.

Romanian irredentism towards Moldova, and it was announced that a visa regime between Romania and Moldova would be reintroduced.

> Voronin was quoted by Russian agency Interfax saying: "We know that certain political forces in Romania are behind this unrest. The Romanian flags fixed on the government buildings in Chisinau attest to this."[...]
> Russia's foreign ministry said there was a plot aimed at undermining "the sovereignty of Moldova"[...]
> But Romania's foreign ministry said: "This accusation is a provocation aimed at the Romanian state." It is "unacceptable that the Communists in power in Chisinau shift the blame for internal problems in Moldova onto Romania and the Romanian people", the statement added. (BBC News [27, 28])[4]

The affair was a graphic illustration of the fragility of Moldova's internal political settlement and of the fractious relationship between Voronin's government and its neighbour to the west, notwithstanding Moldova's aspirations for closer ties with the EU. Occurring at the same time as renewed political unrest in Georgia, the instability in Moldova highlighted the EU's problems in Southeastern Europe in general and the continuing significance of Moldovan territory in the balance of power in the region.

The events of April 2009 were another reminder of the legacies of Moldovan partition in 1812 and Soviet policy in the region. The Republic of Moldova remained an ill-defined territory trapped between the competing interests of the European powers and Russia. The Transnistrian issue formed a threatening undercurrent once again: most registered voters in the breakaway territory were reported to have ignored the election while the Russian government's support for Voronin emphasised its abiding presence, not just as an active supporter of Transnistria's act of "self-determination" but also as a potential prop to the party of power in Chişinău. While some observers called for greater engagement in Moldova by the EU, Voronin appeared to turn his back

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[4] The full text of the Romanian Foreign Ministry's response can be viewed at http://www.mae.ro/index.php?unde=doc&id=13290&idlnk=2&cat=4, in which Romania states its support for the independence and territorial integrity of the Republic and its commitment to EU policy in the region.

on Europe, placing the blame for the demonstrations on the Romanian authorities; by doing so, he in effect accused the EU of undermining Moldova's sovereignty.[5]

The immediate crisis was relatively short-lived. While the Romanian government and human rights groups called for investigations into police tactics in Chişinău and the "repression" of protestors and journalists, the Moldovan Constitutional Court ordered a recount of the votes, at Voronin's request. This had the effect of difusing some of the tension inside Moldova, although the opposition parties refused to participate in the process and continued to accuse the communists of having carried out serious electoral fraud. As the election entered its enquiry stage, observers suspected that behind-the-scenes political horsetrading between the government and the opposition was taking place to secure a settlement (BBC News [29-33]).

The international dimension of the stand-off was further illustrated by the decision of the Czech President, the holder of the rotating presidency of the EU, to visit Chişinău in response to Romanian concerns and in view of an upcoming EU summit on the development of an "Eastern Partnership" with six former Soviet states, including Moldova. The OSCE, despite containing Russian representatives, began to turn against the Moldovan government in the light of emerging evidence of the deaths in custody of several protestors and the torture of others by police.[6] At the same time, the Ukrainian authorities prepared to extradite two wealthy Moldovan nationals, accused of fomenting the riots in Chişinău, at the request of the Moldovan government.

On 15 April, the historical profession in Moldova took a stand against the government and the police. The Board of the Association of Historians issued a declaration which contained a series of allegations against the authorities that chimed with those being reported in various media outlets. In addition, the Association's declaration included a statement of pan-Romanian nationalism set in the context of the aspiration for EU membership for Moldova, the new context in which Romanian unity could be expressed:

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[5] For an opinion piece and comments about the role of the EU in Moldova, see http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/apr/09/moldova-eu. For a review of the protests on 7 April and opinion about the disengagement of Western governments in the crisis, see http://www.azi.md/en/print-story/2356 and http://vlad-lupan.blogspot.com/.
[6] See report in the leading English-language daily in Russia, *The Moscow Times*, 16 April 2009 at http://www.themoscowtimes.com/article/1010/42/376255.htm and BBC News [33].

… Association of Historians of Moldova, which represents the view of the majority of history school teachers, university professors and researchers in the domain, declares:

The condemnation of irresponsible and illegal actions of Moldovan communist authorities, such as encouraging the street violence on the 7th of April through infiltration of provocateurs, including from the ranks of police, amidst the peaceful protesters, using indiscriminate beating, operating arrests and torture against peaceful protesters; […]
[*Cessation of*] the use of intimidation toward the youth, high school pupils, students, journalists as well as all those expressing anti-Communist, pro-Western and pro-Romanian attitudes;

Moldovan Communist authorities should give up searching for scapegoats for the deplorable situation in the society, of which they bear the main responsibility, ceasing to make responsible higher education institutions' professors and schools teachers for the violent street clashes of April 7;

Condemnation as unfounded, illegal and in contradiction to national interests of the Republic of Moldova, its European and international obligations the expulsion of Romanian ambassador in Moldova, introduction of visa requirements for Romanian citizens, prohibition of broadcasting certain TV channels and accusations that Romania supposedly organized and fueled the events of April 7;
[…]

Association of Historians of Moldova asks professors of history, its members and sympathizers to try to be informed correctly and persuade citizens not to be involved in the propagandistic campaign initiated by the Communist regime against political opposition, civil society, Romania, as well as national values and European future of Republic Moldova. (AIRM Declaration 2009)

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In May, Voronin was elected Speaker of the parliament but, without a decisive majority in the assembly, the communists were unable to secure the election of a new president, so Voronin continued in that post as well. The impasse with the opposition parties led to the dissolution of parliament in June and, in an atmosphere of recrimination and tension, a new election was called for 29 July (BBC News [34, 35]).

During the hiatus which followed the April election, Ştefan's statue continued to serve as a symbol of the Republic. On 9 May, it was the venue for coincidental celebrations. Voronin and other government officials, together with veterans, laid flowers at the statue to mark "Victory Day", the day on which victory in the Great Patriotic War (the Second World War) was celebrated within the Soviet Union – a tradition that continues in Russia and other former Soviet countries. This commemoration was followed by a rival ceremony staged by members of the European Action Movement, marking the anniversary of 9 May 1950, the day on which the French foreign minister

had proposed the formation of a united Europe. The leader of the European Action Movement was quoted as saying "Stephen the Great defended Europe from eastern invasions" (Moldova Azi [2]).

The July election was hailed by Western media commentators as a surprise defeat for the Communist Party.[7] Although the Communist Party secured 45% of the votes on a 59% turnout, this gave the party just 48 seats in the new parliament, representing a loss of 12 seats from the April result and denying the communists a majority in parliament for the first time since 2001. Victory in the election was declared for a proposed coalition of four pro-Western opposition parties – the Liberal Democratic Party, which gained 16% of the votes, the Liberal Party (14%), Our Moldova Alliance (7%) and the Democratic Party (12.5%): the latter, which was led by a former communist, effectively held the balance of power. The opposition "victory" was by no means decisive: dependent on coalition and without the 61 seats in parliament required to control the election of a new president, the opposition parties faced the prospect of governing without full control of state institutions. Moldova faced a political stalemate (BBC News [36]).

Nevertheless, by late August the coalition appeared to be ready to govern. On 26 August, the communist government resigned and on the following day, "Independence Day" in the Republic, Ştefan's statue was the focus for contrasting ceremonies which symbolised the transition of power. Voronin and outgoing prime minister Zinaida Grecianyi were the first to lay flowers at Ştefan's feet, but it was a brief ceremony and they made no speeches before heading off to a similarly muted ceremony at the Eternal Flame in the national cemetery. They were followed at Ştefan's statue by a group of opposition politicians, representatives from Moldova's first independent parliament, and "people of culture", who staged a noisy celebration of Moldova's independence, laying flowers, proclaiming a new beginning in Moldova's sovereign, democratic history, and extolling the virtues of "European values". One member of the 1991 parliament, Nicolae Dabija, was quoted as stating "Moldova belongs to the successors of Stephan the Great, not to the governing Communists who want to betray us" (Moldova Azi [3] and [4]).

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[7] For example, see reporting by Reuters (http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE56T0A320090730) and reporting by The Associated Press published in *The Moscow Times* (http://www.moscowtimes.ru/article/1010/42/379986.htm).

On the same day, 27 August, President Basescu of Romania issued a mischievous statement of friendship to the Republic, celebrating its independence and its Romanian language, identifying Romanian values with European values. Declaring that Moldova had reached a crossroads in its history, he offered Romania's constant support for the integration of Moldova within the EU (Moldova Azi [5]). In the context of a disputed election result, the prospect of the formation of a coalition government within the Republic, and the interests of the Russian Federation being maintained on Moldovan territory, this was a provocative statement, notwithstanding the pro-European stance of the incoming government in Chişinău.

Ironically, the presidential elections held in Romania in the autumn of 2009 also took place in an atmosphere of political and economic crisis. When in December 2009, Basescu was declared the winner of the election by the narrowest of margins, the Social Democrat Party contested the result of the vote at the Constitutional Court, alleging widespread electoral fraud (BBC News [37]).

PART THREE:

ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOSYMBOLISM

What are the key sites and monuments dating from the reign of Ştefan cel Mare and how does medieval archaeology contribute to a study of ethnosymbolism?

CHAPTER FIVE: Archaeology of the reign of Ştefan cel Mare

Chapter 2 has shown how Ştefan's voivodeship was based upon peripatetic government, the concentration of power in the hands of the voivode and his family, the defence of the Principality by the elaboration of a network of fortresses, and the glorification of the reign through the founding of monasteries and churches. This Chapter 5 presents a thematic survey of the archaeology that illustrates the reign of Ştefan cel Mare.

Drawing upon the historical background explored in Chapter 2 and the re-adoption of Ştefan as a political figure in the modern age, which is discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, this chapter comprises an overview of three major subjects of published archaeological research – monasteries and churches, fortresses, and princes' courts. These provide a portrait of the grandest elements of the built environment of the Principality of Moldova during the later middle ages, elements which are fundamental to an understanding of both Ştefan's regime and its legacy.

INTRODUCTION

1   "Perennialism"

This Chapter 5 follows an ethnosymbolist approach, first setting out the history of sites in each category, then followed by detailed reporting of work carried out and its interpretation by researchers. This overview considers the archaeology of Ştefan's reign within the academic and political contexts which have influenced research in Romania and Moldova and leads into an analysis of the contribution of archaeology to an ethnosymbolist study.

Chapter 4 has revealed the persistence of Ştefan cel Mare's legacy throughout the troubled history of the modern Romanian states and the latter-day prevalence of symbols of his voivodeship. The fourth section of this Chapter 5 assesses how the corpus of archaeological material dating from Ştefan's reign might be added to the catalogue of symbols representing Ştefan cel Mare. Furthermore, like the chronicles described in Chapter 2, sites and monuments

may illustrate that Ştefan's legacy is not just a product of the modern era but, as mooted by the ethnosymbolist approach, was revealed before the emergence of 19th-century nationalism. Thus, archaeology brings a study of Ştefan cel Mare into the orbit of the "perennialist" approach in nationalism studies.

Perennialist and neo-perennialist arguments would have nations being either "eternal" (at least exhibiting continuity over extended periods of time) or "recurrent" (Smith 2004, 4, 8-11 and 2009, 9-11; for the Romanian case, see Niculescu 2007, 132-3). Anthony D. Smith is cautious on the subject of "perennialism". While accepting that some nations are pre-modern (Smith cites the English and the French), he argues that rather than a nation being identifiable in the pre-modern era and that nation exhibiting continuity into the modern era, instead ethnosymbolists may be able to identify cultural continuity within ethnic populations which carries on into the age of nationalism and forms "the social and cultural basis" for a nation (Smith 1992, 55; Smith 2004, 19-21, 187-8; Smith 2009, 37-8).

Archaeology should have a part to play in this identification. In attempting to counter Walker Connor's arguments that it is difficult to find evidence of popular awareness of national identity before the 19th century, John Hutchinson has suggested that "if used with caution, linguistic usage, folklore and archaeological data may, in many contexts, hint at the existence of a popular ethnic consciousness" (Hutchinson 1994, 12). However, this is an extremely contentious area, exemplified by the debate between Umut Özkırımlı and Steven Grosby in the journal *Nations and Nationalism* (Özkırımlı and Grosby 2007).

Özkırımlı rounds on ideas of perennialism (and ethnosymbolism), arguing that perceived continuities between pre-modern and modern nations, which are unlikely anyway, do not add to an understanding of the modern nation (ibid., 523-9). Like Lucian Boia's dismissive observations concerning the debate in Romanian historiography about the presence of a "Romanian national consciousness" in the medieval period (see the Introduction, clause 1.1.1), Özkırımlı doubts that

such phenomena existed, or are identifiable, in pre-modern societies. Grosby counters with a nuanced argument, seeking to define how pre-modern societies might exhibit characteristics of nationhood, and how collective self-consciousness might be manifested. His characteristics of nationhood – such as "a self-designating name", "legal codes", "an authoritative center" and "a conception of bounded territory" – mirror Smith's definition of a nation. They invite criticism for being the fundamentals of any polity (Özkırımlı and Grosby 2007, 534). However, Grosby does make useful suggestions based on his general criteria, not least for medievalists that "collective self-consciousness" might come into being through "the phenomenon of *representation* – for example, the king as your king" (my italics; ibid., 533). The archaeological data set out in this Chapter 5 can be considered with this suggestion in mind.

2 The practice of medieval archaeology in Romania and Moldova

Archaeology has a long history in Romania and Moldova as both an academic subject and as an amateur pursuit. Although archaeology did not develop as a recognisable professional discipline until the communist era, courses in archaeology were introduced at the University of Bucharest from the mid 1870s and, in the person of Vasile Pârvan (1882-1927), Romanian archaeology had a scholar of comparable public stature to the historian Nicolae Iorga (who was actually Pârvan's student). Trained in Vienna and Berlin, the early Romanian archaeologists contributed to the development of the nationalist narrative in Romanian culture in the era of unification before the Second World War (Kaiser 1995, 101, 107-9).

In northeast Romania, academic archaeologists succeeded 19th-century Austro-Hungarian architectural conservators, who were responsible for the first investigation and restoration of medieval structures in the region. There was an antiquarian element too, for in towns such as Siret and Suceava, excavation and conservation projects were supported by the members of local amateur societies (Batariuc 2004, 23-4).

Archaeological practice developed in Moldova through the influence of Russian, later Soviet, authorities. In the 19th century, the work of local antiquarians was supported by Russian archaeologists, led by staff and members of the Odessa Archaeological Museum and the Odessa Society of History and Antiquities. In the 1870s, Ion Casian Suruceanu (1851-97), arguably the first Bessarabian archaeologist, founded the first historical museum in Chişinău (Chetraru 1994, 27, 46, 59-60; Dergacev 1994, 13).

Bessarabia having been incorporated within the Kingdom of Greater Romania, Moldovan archaeology came under the auspices of several Romanian institutions, primarily the Academia Româna (Romanian Academy). Diverse archaeological work was carried out at prehistoric sites but later periods were also researched. The Academia Româna produced studies of the medieval castles, monasteries and churches in the region and in 1918 Vasile Pârvan commissioned work at the antique and medieval sites of Tyras/Cetatea Albă, which led to several important campaigns up to 1930. The Bessarabian branch of the Societatea Geografică Română (Romanian Geographical Society), founded in Chişinău in 1922, produced reports on Orheiul Vechi and the Valul lui Traian (Chetraru 1994, 116-19).

After the Second World War, archaeological practice in Moldova reverted to Russian and Ukrainian influence. Archaeology gained in stature and professionalism through the involvement of the Institutes of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences (Chetraru 1994, 120, 132; Dergacev 1994, 14). Several long-term projects were initiated in the 1940s, bringing experienced archaeologists from the Soviet Union into the MSSR to promote the training of local scholars. In 1961, an Archaeology Section was created in the Institute of History in the MSSR Academy of Sciences. The Archaeological Map of the Moldavian SSR series, published in the 1970s in eight issues, contained the results of a quarter of a century of state-backed, ideologically-skewed archaeological research (Dergacev 1994, 14-16).[1]

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[1] See commentary in "The index of the early medieval archaeological monuments", Orheiul Vechi.

By the 1980s, the role of the Institutes in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev had become more advisory, with archaeology in Moldova being conducted by a generation of local researchers who had been trained under the Soviet system. The Archaeology Section in the Institute of History gained the status of an independent department, and a Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography was established in Chişinău. Rescue archaeology was advanced by the creation of a "Department for monument preservation in the area of building sites" (ibid., 18).

The communist era represented a "golden age" of sponsorship for professional archaeology in Romania and the MSSR – as is apparent from the case studies which are set out in this chapter. However, there were serious drawbacks in terms of academic independence and the presentation of results. In Romania, ideological and practical limitations were imposed. From a practical angle, there were restrictions on aerial photography and the dissemination of accurate maps. It was therefore difficult to plot sites and to carry-out meaningful surveys or fieldwalking exercises.

Intellectually, state control was equally severe. Mihail Roller (1908-58), a notorious Romanian Marxist historian, Party functionary and indoctrinator, the head of the Party Institute of History, denounced the study of Greek and Roman archaeology as "bourgeois". Instead, Roller promoted study of the Dacian "kingdom" of Burebista (82-44BC) and Decebalus (85-106). Roller fell from grace and suicided in 1958 but the importance of Dacian studies persisted into the Ceauşescu era. Eventually, "Dacomania" was taken too far even for the Ceauşescu regime, with the theory of Daco-Roman continuity superseding that of reverence for an independent Dacian state, by which Romanian distinctiveness and independence had been asserted by the regime (see Niculescu 2007, 130). Nevertheless, for decades there was a clear bias in Romania towards the study of Iron Age archaeology, to the exclusion of other periods (Hanson and Haynes 2004, 28-9). Excavation of late medieval voievodal sites was a notable exception to this trend.

Romanian archaeology after 1989 was affected by funding crises, like so many elements of society, yet has since developed a sophisticated structure at national and regional levels. While the Secţia de Ştiinţe Istorice şi Arheologie (History and Archaeology Section) of the Romanian Academy represents the professional elite, research and publication is carried out by numerous organisations brought together by the Institute of Cultural Memory (cIMeC) – a national umbrella organisation concerned with research, conservation and public participation in the national heritage. The Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Pârvan" in Bucharest is the leading Romanian archaeology institution; the Institute of Archaeology in Iaşi is one of the oldest such institutes, prominent in work in northeast Romania and influential across the Prut, not least as the publisher of the periodical *Arheologia Moldovei*.

However, Niculescu has sounded a cautionary note, describing the teaching and practice of archaeology in Romania as being subsidiary to that of history:

> Archaeology as a provider of historical information when better sources are missing is an outcome of a long local tradition: in Romania all the archaeological teaching at university level is done in history departments. Archaeology is not taught as an autonomous discipline. Even though after 1989 the number of archaeology courses has increased in many old and new Romanian universities, this increase has brought no visible change in the status of the discipline: archaeology is an auxiliary discipline to history. (Niculescu 2007, 133)

The case studies which follow, in particular in relation to urban archaeology, testify to this traditional imbalance between the two disciplines.

In Moldova, independence brought about major changes in professional archaeology. While the state support to which archaeologists had grown accustomed disappeared, the democratisation of Moldovan society gave young archaeologists the freedom to question Soviet practice and theory. In the MSSR, work had been dominated by a "pan-Slavist" approach to history, based on a distorted interpretation of the status of early medieval Slav migrants in relation to other groups occupying Moldovan territory (Musteaţă 2005, 193-4). In the 1990s, a new Institute of Archaeology and Ancient History of the Moldovan Academy of Sciences was created, with a

wide-ranging brief to study the sites and monuments "of all the prehistoric and mediaeval communities that formerly inhabited the territory of Moldavia", with particular reference to the Thracian and Romanian peoples who had been overlooked by Soviet historiography (Dergacev 1994, 18).

During the 1990s, professional archaeology diversified, attempting to adapt to the introduction of a market-based economy. The Archaeological Research Centre of the Republic of Moldova ("CCARM") was established in the mid-1990s under the direction of Gheorghe Postică. A not-for-profit NGO, it worked with the Ministry of Culture in an advisory capacity and obtained funding from a variety of sources, most notably the Soros Foundation in Moldova and the Free International University of Moldova, which was founded in Chişinău in 1992 (Postică 1999, 71). The CCARM has maintained its influence while other research and heritage organisations, such as ICOMOS Moldova, have been established.

<p align="center">***</p>

In terms of working methods and philosophy, contemporary professional archaeology in Romania and Moldova, as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, bears the dual legacies of the so-called "culture-historical paradigm", associated with 19th-century nationalism, and Marxist dialectical materialism, the philosophy of history imposed by communist regimes.

The extent to which Marxism has influenced the work of scholars is disputed. Florin Curta has argued that across communist states, the tradition of culture-history – whereby archaeological interpretation is governed by the chronological structures of narrative history – was far stronger than Marxism (Curta 2009). Culture-history is tainted by association with the legacy of the notorious German archaeologist Gustaf Kossinna (1858-1931), the founder of the "settlement school" in archaeology. Building upon the political influence of Romanticism – which was particularly strong in Central and Eastern Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, where the pronounced ethnic mix of peoples promoted ideas of distinct ethno-cultural identities – Kossinna's work sought to trace the antecedents of the German "volker" (peoples) through "sharply defined

archaeological culture areas". Essentially, Kossinna argued that a "people" and its "territory" could be identified through the distribution of archaeological artefacts. After his death, his ideas were incorporated within Nazi ideology (Trigger 1989, 163-7; Jones 1997, 15-16, 126; Geary 2000, 34-5; Curta 2007, 161; Klejn 2008, 312, 318-9, 325; Link 2009, 339-40; Smith 2009, 67-8).

The Nazi connection did not prevent culture-history from being adopted by Soviet archaeology: the emphasis in settlement archaeology on tracing the ethnic markers of groups or peoples (now largely discredited as an archaeological approach) was used in tracing the movements of Slavs (Klejn 2008, 326). Furthermore, the nationalistic overtones of culture-history actually fitted in with some of the economic and social priorities of dialectical materialism. Culture-history and Marxism became inter-related rather than mutually exclusive. The development of archaeology in the CEE was driven by support from the communist governments, so in this respect alone, Marxism-Leninism in its various manifestations played a defining role in the development of archaeological practice (Trigger 1989, 242-3; Kaiser 1995, 106-10; Curta 2007, 160-2; Curta 2009).

The persistence of the culture-history tradition is apparent within Romanian and Moldovan archaeology, both of which have tended to follow the dictates of historical enquiry – archaeology often being used as a supplement to, or as supporting evidence for, documentary history (Kaiser 1995, 111; Curta 2009). Archaeological theory in communist Central and Eastern Europe was isolated from developments in Western Europe and North America – the functionalist and processualist approaches of the post-War era – and has been slow to deal with these since the fall of communism. (Niculescu sees a direct link with the work of Kossinna in some of the worst aspects of Romanian nationalist archaeology: Niculescu 2007, 133, 154.) However, although the argumentation of Romanian and Moldovan archaeological interpretation might appear somewhat antiquated to a Western audience, this does not necessarily invalidate the data or indeed the contribution that archaeology has made to the historical record.

In medieval studies, where the relationship between documentary and material sources is inevitable, the communist era saw a focus in Romania on the excavation of late medieval sites associated with the development of the Romanian principalities, attested by the Romanian chronicles, offsetting the dominance of Iron Age studies. In Moldova, work on the early medieval migration era by Slavists was offset by excavation work at multi-period sites which included significant late medieval elements. These areas of research continued to be followed in the 1990s and 2000s.

SECTION ONE: Monasteries and churches

This review looks at the sacred building works that defined Ştefan's dynastic project, pre-eminent among which was Putna monastery. It also considers the role that archaeology has played in Romania and Moldova in complementing documentary history and studies of art and architecture.

1   Putna and the tombs of princes

The monastic and church foundations made by Ştefan cel Mare provided a spiritual, artistic and political legacy to his immediate successors, and also made a significant contribution to the landscape of the Principality. This would have been most apparent in Ştefan's heartland, Southern Bucovina: at least 10 churches and monasteries were founded or extended by Ştefan in modern Suceava County alone, and there were also concentrations around Piatra Neamţ and in Bacău County to the south (where Ştefan's son, Voivode Alexandru, was also an influential builder). In contrast, the Republic of Moldova boasts relatively few of Ştefan's church-building projects, with the notable exception of Căpriana monastery, some 35km northwest of Chişinău.

Putna monastery was Ştefan's first foundation. Although today the monastery is somewhat isolated, being located in the northwest of Suceava County, near the border with Ukraine, in Ştefan's era it was positioned within his main area of influence, bordering Pocuţia [Map 3]. While

Putna remains several hours' journey from Suceava, its contemporary status as the centre of the religious and political cult of Stephen the Great and Saint reflects its original position as a burial place for the house of Muşat, a mausoleum which was intended to be a lasting dynastic monument.

1.1   Putna monastery: historical timeline

The monastery at Putna was commenced in an area of cleared forest in 1466 by the construction of the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God (*Adormirea Maicii Domnului*).[2] Like a number of Ştefan's later foundations, Putna was built in commemoration of battle, in this case his defeat of the Turks and capture of Chilia in 1465. The church at Putna was a much larger building than previous foundations in Moldova, reflecting its intended role as a family mausoleum – the final dimensions were c.37m in length by 11m in width, with a steeple reaching c.33m in height (Constantinescu 1965, 16; Moisescu et al. 1982, 14). The architect was a Greek, by the name of Theodor (Reli 1937, 3). The church was consecrated in 1470 and a fortified monastery was constructed around it over the course of the next decade, including a prince's residence. However, Putna has been subject to a number of disasters throughout its history, and these began when the monastery was sacked by Tatar raiders in 1484: Ştefan was forced to rebuild the monastery from its foundations.

From the beginning, Putna was a cultural and artistic centre. The first abbot and monks were transferred there from the monastery at Neamţ, which was already a centre of writing, calligraphy and miniature painting (the master copyist and painter at Neamţ was Gavril Uric, whose work exhibits the influence of the Italian Renaissance as well as Byzantine tradition (Deletant 1980, 11-13; Ogden 2002, 36, 172)). Putna became a leading scriptorium and crafts centre, producing

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[2] Previously, Alexandru cel Bun built a wooden church on the site (Ogden 2002, 188). "*Adormirea*" is properly translated as "Dormition" – "the falling asleep of the Mother of God". However, it is common to find "Assumption" used in English-language translations, reflecting an important distinction in the theology of the churches of West and East concerning the nature of the 'death' of Mary and her translation into Heaven. See for example McGuckin 2008, 218-9.

icons and sacred objects in metal and wood as well as outstanding embroidery (Constantinescu 1965, 6-7; Moisescu et al. 1982, 66).

The complex was seriously damaged by fire in 1536, necessitating a campaign of restoration by Prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu (1552-61 and 1564-68); he was the first of several notables who became patrons of the monastery, extending Ştefan's legacy [photograph 41]. Subsequently, Putna was damaged by earthquakes, landslides and deliberate vandalism. A notorious episode occurred during the struggle for the Moldovan throne between Prince Vasile Lupu (1634-53) and a rebellious boyar, *logofăt* Gheorghe Ştefan.

Between 1646 and 1650, the Principality was subject to serious raids by Tatar and Cossack bands, following on from Vasile Lupu's joining with Poland in yet another anti-Ottoman alliance of Christian states. Moldova remained weak and, in 1652, the Cossack leader, *hetman* Bogdan Hmelniţki (1595-1657)[3], obliged Lupu to arrange a marriage between Lupu's daughter and Hmelniţki's son, Timuş. Lupu then overreached himself, failing in an attempt to remove the Wallachian prince from his throne. In response, Gheorghe Ştefan occupied the Moldovan capital, Iaşi, with a Wallachian and Transylvanian army and proclaimed himself prince. Lupu took refuge in Poland and called upon Timuş Hmelniţki for aid. Timuş led a Cossack raid against Moldova and, in the course of this, ransacked Putna monastery: his troops are reported to have melted down lead from the church roof for use as bullets (Constantinescu 1965, 8). Lupu was restored briefly as prince, but in November 1653 he and Timuş were defeated at the battle of Finta in Wallachia; Gheorghe Ştefan ruled as prince in Moldova until 1658 (Treptow 2002, 21).

According to the chronicler Ion Neculce, Ştefan cel Mare's church had been all but destroyed – by the effects of war and by subsequent vandalism by Vasile Lupu. In fact, Lupu had initiated a campaign of rebuilding at Putna before his final removal from the throne, allowing

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[3] Hmelniţki is a hero of the Ukrainian nation state; see Wolczuk 2000, 680.

Gheorghe Ştefan to erect a new fabric upon the old foundations, keeping the plan of the founder's church;[4] the rest of the monastic complex was also renovated and extended. The work was completed by Prince Eustratie Dabija (1661-1665) in 1662, as is recorded by an inscription in the *pronaos* of the church (Paradais 1982, 253-4, 259).

A devastating earthquake in 1739 severely damaged Gheorghe Ştefan's monastery and the next restoration project was led by the Metropolitan of Suceava, Iacov Putneanul, between 1757 and 1761. The Metropolitan established a seminary at Putna, modelled on an influential theological academy in Kiev, only for this to be closed down by the Austrian imperial government after Bucovina passed into the territory of the Hapsburg Empire in 1775 (Curry 2007).

In the mid-1850s, the Hapsburg authorities initiated a programme of restoration and new building works at Putna that saw the precincts enlarged, the walls rebuilt and extended, and the monastic buildings augmented, although at the cost of the princes' residence, which was demolished. Investigations were also carried out in the crypts of the church – see clause 1.3.3 below. Extensive renovation work was subsequently carried out on the church and monastic buildings in 1902, under the direction of the Austrian architect K.A. Romstorfer (appointed by the Central Commission for Arts and Historic Monuments in Austria-Hungary).[5]

King Carol II of Romania (1930-40) also took an interest in Putna monastery, declaring himself in 1935 to be "the second founder of the monastery and patron of the tomb of Stephen the Great (one of the heroes of Christianity)" (Reli 1937, 32). Carol II instigated restoration work on the

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[4] Illustration 3 shows the composite results of archaeological work at the church, revealing the ground plan of Ştefan's building. It is apparent from this that rebuilding of the church fabric from the 1650s onwards followed the founder's church quite closely, particularly in the line of the south wall. From the investigations of 1969-70, archaeologists concluded that the interior space of the church remained largely the same through the rebuilding campaigns, so that fixtures such as the princely monuments have remained in the same positions from their first construction (Székely 2004, 19).

[5] Illustrations 1 and 2 show general views of the monastery, published by Romstorfer in 1903 and 1904, following the renovation campaign.

tombs of Ştefan cel Mare and his family, as well as arranging for the recasting of one of the monastery's bells – "Buga" – which had been donated by Ştefan in 1482.

Putna later received considerable attention from the Ceauşescu regime. Following on from celebrations in 1966 of the 500th anniversary of the foundation of the monastery, a programme of archaeological research was initiated in 1969, leading to demolition of some of the 19th-century additions to the monastic complex and the construction of a museum on the western side, opened in 1976. The monastic buildings of the 1850s on the northern side were demolished and replaced in 1978 by a building in traditional style containing the monks' cells, the kitchen and the refectory. Between 1983 and 1987, the prince's residence was rebuilt on the southern side, on the foundations of Ştefan's building (ibid., 3-8, 30-32; Moisescu et al. 1982, 13, 65; see The Holy Monastery of Putna).

1.2   The concept of a royal necropolis

The most prestigious necropolis of a ruling caste in Southeastern Europe was located in the complex of the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, the seat of Orthodoxy. The church precincts were the site of the imperial mausolea of the emperors Constantine and Justinian I (527-65). The rotunda mausoleum of Constantine, founded in the early 4th century, served as the principal burial place of Byzantine emperors until 1028. An additional, cruciform mausoleum attributed to Justinian I was built in the 6th century. Both mausolea stood in close proximity to the large, cruciform Church of the Holy Apostles, which was built during the reign of Constantius II (337-61) and consecrated in 370; the church was rebuilt by Justinian I.

> There are not many comparable series of royal burials, and the presence of these
> tombs, as a visible record of the greatness of Byzantium, was one reason why the
> Church of the Holy Apostles enjoyed a celebrity only second to that of St. Sophia.
> (Downey 1959, 27)

The imperial sarcophagi were plundered and robbed during the sack of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, an event which at least provides a record of the magnificence of the

burials. Although fiercely proud of his city and appalled by the Westerners who had ransacked it, the Byzantine chronicler Niketas Choniates may not have been exaggerating when he described the opening of the imperial tombs:

> They broke open the sepulchers of the emperors which were located within the Heroon erected next to the great temple of the Disciples of Christ and plundered them all in the night, taking with utter lawlessness whatever gold ornament, or round pearls, or radiant, precious, and incorruptible gems that were still preserved within. Finding that the corpse of Emperor Justinian had not decomposed through the long centuries, they looked upon the spectacle as a miracle, but this in no way prevented them from keeping their hands off the tomb's valuables. In other words, the Western nations spared neither the living nor the dead, but beginning with God and his servants, they displayed complete indifference and irreverence to all.[6]

The Church of the Holy Apostles and its precincts were destroyed in the 1460s by Sultan Mehmet II, the conqueror of Constantinople, and replaced by a mosque and Mehmet's own mausoleum. The destruction of the church overlapped with Ştefan's foundation of Putna. This was largely a coincidence, but it is a telling one: Ştefan's establishment of a royal mausoleum in Moldova was a statement of his authority as an Orthodox ruler, filling the vacuum created by the fall of the Byzantine Empire.

The Church of the Holy Apostles is thought to have influenced the architecture of prominent churches in the Eastern Mediterranean and in the West – St. John's at Ephesus and the Basilica of St. Mark in Venice; its symbolic importance was equally widespread. The church did not influence directly the plan of the church at Putna, which is triconch[7] rather than cruciform, but this does not diminish the importance of the Byzantine church complex as an exemplar of imperial dignity, not least because the mausolea housed the remains of members of the emperors' families, as well as the emperors themselves, just as Putna was built to be a family mausoleum. The sarcophagi of the emperors *did* survive the demolition process of the 1460s, and these

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[6] Magoulias 1984, 347 (Choniates X, 648). See Phillips 2005, ch.14.

[7] "Triconch" describes a plan with three apses at the east end of the church, one behind the altar and one each on the adjoining north and south walls. Ogden 2002, 24.

represented a tradition of royal burial that was continued in the tombs at Putna (Dark and Özgümüş 2002, 393-5).[8]

Putna was not the first Moldovan necropolis. Most of the early voivodes of Moldova were buried in the Church of St. Nicholas in the Bogdana monastery at Rădăuți, which was founded by Voivode Bogdan I (1359-73) and rebuilt in 1468 (Ogden 2002, 118). This relatively small church (which was extended by the prolific patron Prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu in the 1550s) was superseded by Alexandru cel Bun's foundation at Bistriţa monastery, where the *gropniţa* first appears as a feature of Moldovan architecture.

Archaeological work at the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin at Bistriţa[9], between 1969 and 1977, established that the founder's tomb was located in a separate space between the *pronaos* and the *naos*, whereas the princely burials at Rădăuți began within the *naos* itself. Though smaller than Putna, the tomb room at Bistriţa was a family burial vault and it is the clear precursor for Ştefan's foundation (Moisescu et al. 1982, 14-15; Cereteu 2004, 107; Bedros 2005, 61-3).[10]

The *gropniţa* at Putna formed part of the ground plan of the church from the beginning, reinforcing its status as a place of princely burial (churchmen and boyars were to be buried in the porch). The church at Putna was built according to a triconch plan, just like Alexandru's church at Bistriţa, following the convention of the churches of Mount Athos, but with an enlarged *pronaos* and porch to serve as additional burial spaces. The necropolis at Putna monastery thus appears as a

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[8] Several of the best imperial sarcophagi can be seen in the Istanbul Archaeological Museums complex. This burial tradition was also present in the decorated sarcophagi of medieval Serbian princely tombs, which served to transfer Byzantine practices to the Romanian principalities by the early 15th century (Bedros 2005, 64). The dynastic cult in Serbia – initiated by Stefan the First Crowned (1196-1227), who honoured the remains of his father, St. Stefan-Simeon – represented a fusion of Byzantine and Western influences. In terms of iconography, "...the use of a holy body as a focus for a new state ideology owes much more to Western, especially Venetian, art" (Antony Eastmond, "Beyond Byzantium", in Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 311-2).

[9] The church was founded by Alexandru but rebuilt in the 1550s by Lăpuşneanu. The dedication of the church to the Assumption/Dormition was repeated by Ştefan at Putna.

[10] The princely burials at Bistriţa: Alexandru cel Bun and his wife, Ann, "and their children"; two of Ştefan's children (including Voivode Alexandru); the wife of Voivode Ştefan Lăcustă (Ogden 2002, 114; Székely 2004, 2-3).

personal statement by Ştefan cel Mare, although, typically, it followed the precedents set by his grandfather: Putna was a foundation that built upon a tradition of royal burial in Moldova and that referenced Byzantine culture and imperial memorial practices.

There is no contemporary equivalent of a royal necropolis in the principality of Wallachia. The cathedral at Curtea de Argeş, founded by Voivode Neagoe Basarab (1512-21), became the most important church in Wallachia, but it is associated principally with royal burials in the modern era, following extensive rebuilding of the cathedral in the late 19th century. The Royal Church of St. Nicholas in the town of Curtea de Argeş, dating from the 14th century, houses the grave of at least one early Wallachian voivode, but did not acquire the prominence of the Church of St. Nicholas at Rădăuţi.

Wallachia's greatest early voivode, Mircea the Old, founded a fortified monastery at Cozia in the 1380s, which was also the site of his burial in an elaborate tomb that survived until the First World War. However, this monument was destroyed some time between 1916 and 1918, to be replaced by a simple memorial stone in 1938.

The chronic instability that plagued the Wallachian throne in the 15th century accounts in large part for the lack of a recognisable royal necropolis. There could be no family burial place for the Draculs, for example. Vlad Dracul was killed and butchered by forces of the rival Dâneşti family at Bălteni, near Bucharest, and his grave is lost. Mircea Dracula, his eldest son, died horribly at the hands of the Dâneşti at Târgovişte: he was buried alive after being tortured and blinded (Trow 2004, 154).[11] It is recorded that Vlad Dracula's head was taken to the sultan in Constantinople as a trophy (Florescu and McNally 1989, 174-5; Andreescu 1991, 147); but Dracula's headless body was supposedly given burial in Wallachia. His grave is reputed to have been in the Church of the Annunciation at the fortified island monastery of Snagov, 40km north of Bucharest.

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[11] Popular tradition holds that the bodies of Vlad Dracul and his eldest son were reburied at the "Monastery of the Hill" near Dracula's court at Târgovişte (McNally and Florescu 1995, 42).

The Snagov monastic complex provides the closest analogy with the royal churches of Moldova, having long been a princely residence as well as a monastery. Snagov's history is more terrible than that of Putna: it frequently exchanged hands and was the site of executions; it was used as a prison by Russian authorities in the mid-19th century and was thereafter subject to neglect in addition to suffering damage during numerous earthquakes (Florescu and McNally 1989, 179-83). Nevertheless, the Draculs were patrons of the monastery and members of the family resided there long after Dracula's death (ibid., 178). Folklore holds Dracula's grave to have been close to the church altar, in front of the iconostasis. A tombstone in this location was raised in 1931 by investigators from a Romanian commission for historic monuments, but the grave was found to contain only animal bones and pottery sherds. A second grave excavated at that time, beneath an unmarked tombstone inside the entrance to the church, in the *pronaos*, was found to contain a rotted wooden coffin that had been covered by an embroidered purple[12] pall, lying within a brick-lined crypt. The coffin contained the headless skeleton of a high-status individual, dressed in the remains of a brocaded shirt with crimson sleeves and silver buttons, and with a gold ring sewn into a sleeve that has been interpreted as being the insignia of the Order of the Dragon (ibid., 179-82).

Given Snagov's long association with Wallachian voivodes, and the fact that the items recovered during the archaeological investigations of 1931 were subsequently lost by the History Museum of Bucharest, there is little of substance to be said about the two graves that were investigated at Snagov in terms of the Dracula legend. However, popular tradition maintains that Dracula was buried in the church and he is still commemorated at the tombstone in front of the iconostasis. The headless corpse of a significant individual in the *pronaos* could well be that of a voivode, and if so, why not that of Dracula? Unfortunately, the evidence for this is circumstantial and anecdotal.

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[12] Purple was the traditional colour worn by Roman emperors. In Byzantium, heirs to the throne were expected to have been born in the "purple chamber" within the imperial palace; hence Constantine VII (sole ruler 945-59) was known as *Porphyrogennetos* – "born in the purple room" (Herrin 2008, ch.17).

1.3　The history of the princely tombs at Putna

In the context of the turbulent history of Putna monastery and the extensive rebuilding works that have taken place at the church and in the monastic precincts, it should come as little surprise to discover that the princely tombs located in the *gropniţa* and *pronaos* of the church have been damaged and renovated on several occasions, and the graves themselves have been disturbed. However, unlike the graves of prominent Wallachian voivodes such as Mircea the Old and Dracula, the Muşatin[13] tombs at Putna – and their contents – have remained in reasonably good condition down the centuries, and there is a detailed documentary record both of the actual burials in the church and the later history of investigation and maintenance.

1.3.1　The configuration of the Muşatin monuments

A visitor to the Church of the Assumption today will observe the same configuration of major funerary monuments that existed at the time of the last known princely burial at Putna in 1529.

The tomb room – *gropniţa* – is entered from the *pronaos* through an ornamental doorway, which preserves original elements despite the reconstruction of the late 1650s. The *gropniţa* is a relatively small space that houses the monuments of Ştefan and some of his immediate family but which also serves as a ceremonial link between the *pronaos* and the *naos.* The memorials are grouped on either side of the *gropniţa*, with the result that clergy and worshippers would have had an uninhibited passage through the church [see illustration 4].

Ştefan's sarcophagus is located in a niche in the south wall, and at its foot lies the tombstone of his third wife, Maria Voichiţa (d.1511). On the opposite side of the *gropniţa*, in a niche in the north wall of the church, stands the sarcophagus of Ştefan's second wife, Maria of Mangop

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[13] "Muşatin" or "Muşatini", i.e., members of the house of Muşat.

(d.1477) – the first of the Muşatini to have been buried in the necropolis.[14] The setting of a tomb within a niche (Romanian: *arcosoliu*) follows the early Christian tradition of burial in catacombs, and reflects the development of Byzantine funerary architecture in medieval Serbia. The positioning of Ştefan's monument on the south side of the church also reflects a code exhibited in the burials of Serbian kings and Bulgarian tsars, whereby the right-hand side of a church was considered to be the "place of honour"; the application of this convention at Putna was a new feature of Moldovan princely burial practice (Székely 2004, 13-16, 20-1, 24).

At the foot of Maria of Mangop's tomb lies the tombstone of two of Ştefan's young sons, possibly by his first wife, Evdochia of Kiev – Bogdan and Petru, who were buried in 1479 and 1480 respectively. There is thus a symmetry to the arrangement of the monuments in the *gropniţa* that is likely to have formed part of the original plan for the church. (Bogdan and Petru's tombstone is distinguished for being the only surviving tombstone at Putna to incorporate the Muşatin coat of arms in the carving ([The Holy Monastery of Putna]).)

The *gropniţa* is separated from the *naos* by two octagonal columns, which date from the 17th century. Archaeological work in the church has shown that the *gropniţa* was at first divided from the *naos* by a solid wall, pierced in the centre by a doorway directly opposite the entrance to the *gropniţa* from the *pronaos* (see Moisescu et al. 1982, 14-17).

The *pronaos* houses later princely burials, while in the porch there are the monuments of notable priests associated with Putna – Metropolitan Teoctist (d.1477), who anointed Ştefan as prince in 1457, and Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul (d.1778), the patron who instituted a campaign of restoration at Putna before Bucovina was ceded to the Hapsburg Empire in 1775. There are also numerous graves of "bishops and boyars" (Cimbru 2005, 85).

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[14] This burial space may have been intended originally for Ştefan's first wife, Evdochia of Kiev. However, when she died in 1467, the building work at Putna was in its early stages. Evdochia was actually buried in the coronation church in Suceava (see clause 1.3.5 below).

The arrangement of monuments in the *pronaos* follows that in the *gropniţa*, although the *pronaos* is a larger space. The most prestigious tombs are those of Voivode Bogdan III (d.1517), Ştefan's son and successor, and Voivode Ştefaniţa (d.1527), Bogdan's son and successor. Bogdan III's sarcophagus is positioned in a niche in the south wall and is of broadly comparable style and size to the tombs of Ştefan and Maria of Mangop in the *gropniţa*. At the foot of Bogdan's tomb lies the tombstone of Maria Cneajna (d.1518), his sister. In a niche in the opposite wall, the tombstones of Voivode Ştefaniţa and Princess Maria (d.1529), the first wife of Voivode Petru Rareş, are arranged to mirror the tomb of Bogdan, although the base of Maria's "sarcophagus" – a tombstone on a plinth – is plain and undecorated. Maria's burial was the last recorded princely burial at Putna.[15]

On the south side of the *pronaos*, near Bogdan's tomb, there is a burial of a high-status individual without attribution. This fifth grave has been wrongly assigned to Ştefan's first heir, Voivode Alexandru, who died in 1496 and was in fact buried in Bistriţa monastery (Cimbru 2005, 104; see Chapter 2, clause 2.1.3). The investigators on the Austrian Commission that opened the Muşatin tombs in 1856 thought that the unknown grave was that of a man (see clause 1.3.3 below), and the recent discovery of fragments of the tombstone of Iuga, Ştefan cel Mare's treasurer (*mare vistier*) from 1458-79, who died in 1490, suggests that the fifth grave was that of this court official (Gorovei 2003, 254). Like Metropolitan Teoctist, Iuga was closely associated with Ştefan and may even have been part of his family, thus deserving an honoured burial in the princely necropolis; Iuga was also permitted to be a patron of the monastery and made gifts to it in 1476 (ibid., 243, 247).

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[15] There has been some discussion concerning the configuration of the monuments of Voivode Ştefaniţa and Princess Maria – the voivode might be expected to have had a grander monument than the princess, and yet Maria's tomb takes the form of a sarcophagus while Ştefaniţa's grave is marked by a tombstone. Székely argues that the configuration of the monuments reflects the order of burial, proceeding in a line across the *pronaos* from Bogdan III (1517) on the right-hand side of the church to Princess Maria (1529) on the far left-hand side of the church (Székely 2004, 11). The comparatively modest monument to Voivode Ştefaniţa may also reflect the comparative modesty of his burial, as it appears that the voivode was buried wearing the habit of a monk (Paradais 1982, 265, 267).

The fifth grave has also been attributed to Maria Despina (d.1500), wife of Radu cel Frumos of Wallachia. References in Moldovan chronicles state that she was buried at Putna. If the unknown grave *is* that of Maria Despina, the mother of Maria Voichiţa, her resting place at Putna may have been provided by Ştefan cel Mare to honour his third wife (Moisescu et al. 1982, 16; Paradais 1982, 256, 264). Székely argues that the survival of Maria Despina's worn embroidered tombcover in the museum at Putna demonstrates that her tombstone was once a relatively prominent feature among the memorials arranged in the *pronaos* (Székely 2004, 13, 23).

The four main monuments in the *gropniţa* and *pronaos* – the sarcophagi of Ştefan, Maria of Mangop, Voivode Bogdan III and Princess Maria – are set beneath canopies of white marble. These canopies – R: *baldachine* – recall the traditional *ciborium*, a canopy supported by columns placed over a church altar or the relics of a saint, adapted to cover Byzantine tombs as well (ibid., 16, 24). That over Ştefan's tomb at least was "restored" for King Carol II in 1934-5, although the original shape and components of the canopy are not known (Reli 1937, 7; Paradais 1982, 256; Székely 2004, 19-20) [illustrations 5-7].

More recently, Ştefan's tomb has also been decorated with a colourful votive mural, depicting Ştefan presenting the monastery church to the Virgin and Child – added to the back wall of the fabric, in the niche beneath the canopy – together with the legend, "Binecredinciosul Voievod Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt" (*The most devout, Prince Stephen the Great and Saint*) [illustration 6]. This modern painting is designed to restore some of the original colour of the monument, as it is likely that the niche in the fabric of Ştefan's church would have been decorated with a votive tablet, in keeping with practice in the Byzantine Empire and other Orthodox lands; traces of a similar arrangement survive in the boyar church at Arbore (Ogden 2002, 102; Székely 2004, 15-16).

1.3.2   The style and decoration of the sarcophagi

Ştefan cel Mare's sarcophagus is made of white marble from Carrara in Tuscany, decorated with vegetal-style carvings that are particular to late medieval Moldovan funerary architecture, of

which Ştefan was the most prolific patron. The tombs of Maria of Mangop and Voivode Bogdan III are of similar design and quality, although only Ştefan's sarcophagus is made of marble.[16] The other Muşatin monuments at Putna are rectangular or trapezoidal tombstones which exhibit relief carvings. The tombstones are made up of a variety of materials, being found in granite, limestone and gritstone.

The Muşatin monuments belong to a local "school" of funerary architecture with Byzantine, Western and Oriental influences, initiated by Ştefan cel Mare in the late 1470s and early 1480s, both at Putna and at the episcopal church at Rădăuţi, where Ştefan commissioned new tombstones for each voivode's grave from "Master Jan".[17] Ştefan's own monument has been dated to c.1492 (Constantinescu 1965, 5; Moisescu et al. 1982, 53).

Ştefan's tomb is the largest of the Putna monuments. The topstone of Ştefan's sarcophagus is 1.8m in length and 78cm in width, with a thickness of 15cm, resting on a plinth (socle) that is 43cm[18] in height. (The tombstones of Maria of Mangop and Voivode Bogdan III are both approximately 1.7m in length.) The plinth and the topstone display relief carving of the highest quality. The principal feature of the decorations is intertwined palmette and semi-palmette leaves, an adaptation of the Byzantine acanthus leaf. The acanthus was a motif adopted in Byzantine art from ancient Oriental forms – it appears in Egyptian and Greek art – and it also spread in the art of the Kievan Rus and the Slav kingdoms of Serbia and Bulgaria. Symbolising regeneration and

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[16] Carrara marble was used for the sarcophagi of high-status individuals from the earliest period of Roman Christianity in the 4th century (Thomas F. Mathews, "The Beginnings of Christian Art", in Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 49). Székely argues that by the late middle ages, marble had acquired political connotations; in this case, it was an assertion of Ştefan's credentials as the inheritor of Byzantine imperial dignity (Székely 2004, 9).

[17] Gheorghe Balş thought that this master was likely a Czech, and cautioned that the concept of a "school" of fellow carvers is not proven – Master Jan's name is the only one that has survived: Balş 1926, 310, 315; Catalogue 1958, 244, 249-55; Ogden 2002, 118. According to Ogden, "It was here [*Rădăuţi*] that Stephen decided to build a tomb for his parents, thus initiating the formalization of his princely dynasty" – reinforcing the sense of family and dynastic heritage (Ogden 2002, 118). However, Ştefan's parents actually seem to have been buried at Probota: see ibid. 186; Catalogue 1958, 246 and clause 1.3.5 below. See also footnote 31 below.

[18] Székely measures the total height of the plinth at 70cm, from floor to crest (Székely 2004, 9).

vigour, the acanthus became the decorative signature of Moldovan ornamental carving, embroidery, fresco painting and manuscript illumination during Ştefan's reign and up to the end of the 16th century (Catalogue 1958, 242; Constantinescu 1965, 24; Moisescu et al. 1982, 51; see also The Holy Monastery of Putna).

The tombstone atop Ştefan's sarcophagus has a rectangular border of carved oak leaves, within which runs an immaculately proportioned inscription in Slavonic letters. The carving on the central panel consists of two intertwined stems, forming three ellipsoidal medallions, within which palmettes, semi-palmettes, oak leaves and acorns combine to form an intricate, organic composition [illustrations 8 and 9]. This imagery is not overtly Christian to modern eyes – although the inscription does include a Slavonic cross – but artistically it is a clear statement of the Moldovan ruler's inheritance from the Byzantine emperors. The panels on the plinth of the sarcophagus display stems that bend to form inverted heart-shaped medallions, populated with leaves, flowers and bunches of grapes.[19] The medallions are intertwined with trees that also incorporate the auroch's head, Ştefan's personal seal (Constantinescu 1965, 25; see Moisescu et al. 1982; [illustration 10]).

The decoration on the plinth of Maria of Mangop's sarcophagus, which may predate that on Ştefan's tomb by perhaps a decade, reinforces the Oriental influences on Moldovan carving that are exemplified in Ştefan's monument, but also has strong links to contemporary Gothic styles. Although the floral decoration is far less stylised than on later Moldovan funerary sculpture, the vegetal scheme on Maria's tomb prefigures the Oriental motifs that came to dominate on the Muşatin tombstones (Catalogue 1958, 247-8; see The Holy Monastery of Putna). At the same time, parallels have been observed between the "swallow tail" style of the stems and examples from across the Romanian lands: the carving on a balustrade at the boyar church in Bălineşti (dating to

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[19] The decoration on Ştefan's monument can be placed within a long tradition of Christian art that references selected pagan motifs. Early Roman Christian funerary art adapted pagan imagery such as the depiction of vines and fruit associated with Dionysus/Bacchus, the Roman god of fertility and protector of the dead (Thomas F. Mathews, "The Beginnings of Christian Art", in Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 48).

1494-9), and architectural elements at Suceava Castle, the chapel in the Transylvanian castle of Hunedoara and a Franciscan monastery at Cluj (Ogden 2002, 110; Székely 2004, 7-8; see clause 2.1 and Section 2, clause 3.1 below) [illustration 11]. Maria of Mangop's sarcophagus is a visual expression of Moldova's territorial and cultural position between East and West, and perhaps of trans-border ethnic affiliations in the Romanian principalities.

Ştefan's monument is thought to date from his lifetime in part because the inscription on the tombstone is incomplete – both the date of death and the number of years reigned by the deceased (who is named as Ştefan) are missing. (This section of the inscription appears on the rim of the tombstone, where it meets the plinth, facing north [see illustration 10].) The omissions in the inscription on Ştefan's tombstone were redressed by his successor, Voivode Bogdan III, in whose name a full text was included on the embroidered tombcover made for the sarcophagus: this wording contains the eventual number of years reigned and the day, month, year and hour of Ştefan's death – 2 July 1504, Tuesday, at the fourth hour of the day (Paradais 1982, 257).

Several explanations have been put forward regarding the incomplete inscription on Ştefan's tombstone, from the prosaic, hinting at human error or the death of the master carver himself before that of Ştefan, to the suggestion that the omission of the date of death and number of years ruled was deliberate, a symbolic gesture representing that Ştefan is an eternal presence, an eternal ruler. This idea was put forward in 1966 by Metropolitan Justin of Moldova and Suceava (1957-77), who suggested that visitors to the tomb would even have averted their eyes from the inscription, as they would have averted their eyes from the voivode himself in life (cited in ibid., 257).

The concept of an "immortal sovereign" was a component of the medieval ideal (prominent in the Christian West) of a ruler who was a divine representative on earth and a bridge, through the Church, to God Himself. The king's *maiestas* could not die in the earthly sense. Indeed, the king himself could not die: his eternal life as a divine was given physical expression in his funerary monument, on which an effigy or image of the king represented his "second" body (his mortal

remains having been buried, his soul being in Heaven awaiting the resurrection of the body) (see Székely 2004, 5-7, 23).

This medieval concept found a modern echo in Moldova in 1991, when President Mircea Snegur declared Ştefan cel Mare to be an "eternal ruler". Snegur may have been referencing the communist-era personality cults, exemplified by the Stalinist propaganda that created the "Cult of Lenin" in the USSR. Lenin's mortal remains were preserved in a glass sarcophgus in his mausoleum in Red Square, in the heart of medieval Moscow, and the slogan for the state-sponsored celebrations commemorating the centenary of Lenin's birth in 1970 was "Lenin is always with us" (Hingley 1991; 167-8; Tumarkin 1997, 262; see Chapter 4, clause 3.1).[20]

The inscription on Ştefan's tombstone was likely *hidden* from regular view because Ştefan's monument, like those of the other prominent family members buried in the church, was covered by a richly embroidered "tombcover" – a fabric shaped to protect the decorated components of the sarcophagus, made of silk and gold thread, with an acanthus-style design that is similar to the relief carving on the marble sarcophagus itself. The ensemble of funerary monuments in the *gropniţa* and the *pronaos* would have been very colourful, for not only were the sarcophagi and topstones protected by embroidered tombcovers, but it is also possible that the canopies were painted, augmenting the mural paintings in the niches. Traces of frescoes survive on the tomb canopy of Bogdan III; there is also evidence that the plinth of Maria of Mangop's sarcophagus was painted (Székely 2004, 8, 24).

The most remarkable of the surviving tombcovers is that of Maria of Mangop. Though worn out through long use, it depicts in vivid colour a full-length image of the dead princess, rather than

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[20] Although it is often thought that the preservation and display of the bodies of dead communist leaders in some way represented their substitution for saints by an aetheist state, this macabre practice was at variance with Orthodox tradition. See Zbarsky and Hutchinson, 1998, 11; Verdery 1999, 45; and clause 1.3.4 below.

vegetal decoration. Wearing a bejewelled crown from which hang strings of beads and pearls, together with heavy triangular earrings[21], she is shown dressed in a sumptuous Byzantine robe, in a recumbent pose that recalls sculpted funeral effigies that were common in the West as well as funerary portraiture that appears throughout the Byzantine lands – known by the French term *gisant*. The imperial character of the tombcover is also expressed by the representation of Maria within an arcade (*ciborium*), like a Byzantine empress or an Orthodox saint (Moisescu et. al. 1982, 41; Székely 2004, 3-7, 23) [see illustration 12]. The combination of the exquisite embroidery of the tombcover and the painted carving on the socle of Maria's monument was a demonstration of great honour and a prestige that complemented Ştefan's monument on the opposite side of the *gropniţa*.

The eventual suite of monuments and decorations in the church at Putna gave elaborate expression to the founder's intention to create a dynastic monument. Adapting Byzantine imperial funerary art and architecture and referencing a catalogue of monarchical ideals and symbols, the Muşatin tombs formed a colourful statement of the pedigree and power of the ruling family.

1.3.3 The opening of the Muşatin tombs

Ştefan cel Mare's grave may have been disturbed during the various raids and restoration projects that affected the fabric of the church over the course of the 16th and 17th centuries; Nicolae Iorga was of the opinion that the tomb was thoroughly robbed during a cossack raid in 1691 (Paradais 1982, 254). However, the correspondence of Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul indicates that Ştefan's grave was not opened until the middle of the 18th century, and then in the name of restoring the monastery. In a letter of 1758 to the Abbot of Putna, Putneanul described two crowns that had been fashioned for icons of the Virgin and Child using gold, pearls, precious stones and jewels taken from the garments in which Ştefan was buried, while other finds were "put

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[21] This is the classic headress and jewellery of a Byzantine empress. See, for example, the mosaic of Empress Theodora and her retinue (c.547) at the Church of San Vitale, Ravenna (Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 165 and catalogue entries 153-158; Herrin 2008, ch.6).

towards" the restoration of the monastery (ibid., 258-60; two crowns that fit the Metropolitan's description are now displayed in the monastery's museum: see Cimbru 2005, figure II).

The Muşatin tombs were investigated formally in 1856 by a Commission appointed by the provincial authority in Bucovina of the Austrian imperial government. The process was initiated in 1851, when the Abbot of Putna at the time, Artimon Bortnic, wrote a report to the episcopal authority in Cernăuți, drawing attention to the numerous tombs of "important personalities and remarkable historical figures" in the Putna church and the fact that there was considerable public interest in seeing the remains of these notables, not just their monuments. The abbot seems to have been keen to re-establish Putna as a pilgrimage centre, citing monasteries in Kiev and at Neamț as places where the faithful venerated relics (Paradais 1982, 261). To this end, the monks had raised the floor of the church and revealed an access corridor leading to Ştefan's tomb:

> "... which walled tunnel is furnished with a transverse wall of tiles, through the cracks of which there is a strong, cold draught. This subterranean tunnel is not vaulted over, but covered with large, flat stones and goes from this ... opening to Prince Stephen's tomb, a distance of nine fathoms [*approx.16 metres*]" (Romstorfer 1904, 29; see also Paradais 1982, 261; Cimbru 2005, 85-6).[22]

Recognising the need for a professional investigation, and mindful of the controversial removal of valuables from the princely burials in the 1750s, the abbot requested the help of the authorities (Cimbru 2005, 86). The Austrian imperial government's Commission was made up of Anton Schönbach, the head of the investigating team (he held the title "*concepist imperial guvernamental*"); Teoctist Blaezewicz, who represented the Consistory court of the bishopric in Cernăuți; Andreas Röll, an engineer; and Vicenţiu Szymonowicz, a doctor (ibid., 84). However, the opening of the burial vaults was something of a public event, witnessed by Iraclie Porumbescu (1823-95) – a local priest, journalist and folklorist[23] – who published an emotive account of the

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[22] I am grateful to the late Ms S.E. Soulsby for help with reading the German text of this letter. Unfortunately, plans of the church based on archaeological investigations do not show the line of this tunnel [see illustration 3].

[23] He was the father of the well-known nationalist composer, Ciprian Porumbescu (1853-83).

opening of Ştefan's grave, first in a short article in Romanian in 1857, entitled "The exhumation of Moldovan princes: In the catacombs of Putna monastery", and then in another edition in 1865 with the new subtitle "The holy bones of Putna". Porumbescu's account tied in with Abbot Artimon Bortnic's awareness of Putna's potential as a place of pilgrimage, although the story probably ran counter to imperial interests: it used the revelation of Ştefan's remains as an opportunity to evoke Moldova's great past and as an appeal to its future greatness – this in the context of the Romanian unification movement (Cârlan 1979/80, 352-6; Paradais 1982, 261).[24]

The Commission's official report was delivered in December 1856 in the form of "minutes" – *Protokoll* in German, *Proces Verbal* in Romanian. These were published in edited form, in German, by F.A. Wickenhauser in 1886 and then more fully in 1903 and 1904 by K.A. Romstorfer as part of his general account of the renovation work at Putna (Romstorfer 1904). An edited translation of Romstorfer's material was published in Romanian in 2003, in one of the celebratory collections about Ştefan issued by the Putna Centre of Research and Documentation, and this was subsequently included in Cimbru's "Anthology" of 2005 (Székely 2004, 3, n.16; Cimbru 2005, 82-118). The commentary that follows is based on Romstorfer's material and the later Romanian translation.

The investigators examined the burial vaults of the *pronaos* and the *gropniţa*. The basic working method was to attempt to match the remains found in the vaults with the inscriptions on the tombstones and monuments above floor level in the church. The Commission was generally successful in this respect, although the minutes are confusing at certain points, particularly in relation to the somewhat hurried observation of the burials found beneath the *gropniţa* after Ştefan's grave had been examined, in which the Commission failed to distinguish the remains of Maria of Mangop and Maria Voichiţa (Cimbru 2005, 109-10). There are further problems with the

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[24] Another account of the opening of Ştefan's grave was published in the "Iaşi Courier" in April 1877 – over 20 years after the event. This article confirms that the body was buried without a coffin, wrapped in princely garments (see p.161 below), and refers to "glimpses" of the relics and witnesses exclaiming "Behold, our father!". Mihai Eminescu was one of the editors of the paper (*Curierul de Iassi*, Anul X, No. 40; Lăudat 1982, 269).

record of the Commission's work. As well as wrongly attributing the "unknown" fifth grave in the *pronaos* to Voivode Alexandru, the report contains factual errors and omissions – for example, Maria of Mangop is confused with Evdochia of Kiev (ibid., 84-5, 105).

Nevertheless, the minutes provide the best available record of the nature of the princely burials at Putna. Beneath the flagstones of both the *pronaos* and the *gropniţa*, the members of the Commission uncovered cramped vaults or crypts. The burial area beneath the *pronaos* appeared to be relatively undisturbed, judging by the filling of sand that had to be removed in order to access the graves – and the fact that the richly attired princely remains had not been robbed of jewels and decorations (Paradais 1982, 262); but even in the *gropniţa*, which had almost certainly been entered during the 1750s, there was a considerable amount of sand and soil filling to be removed before access to the graves was obtained. The general concentration of packing soil and debris beneath the floor of the church is also a reflection of the history of rebuilding work that had been carried out on the fabric over the centuries (not least in the late 1750s).

The Commission examined the *gropniţa* only after opening five graves in the *pronaos*, which were attributed to Voivode Bogdan III, Maria Cneaja, Maria, wife of Voivode Petru Rareş, and Voivode Ştefaniţa; the fifth grave was wrongly attributed to Voivode Alexandru. Access to the grave of Ştefan cel Mare was achieved by raising four sizeable floor stones in the centre of the *gropniţa*, each one being four inches thick, and by then clearing sand and earth from underneath. Eighteen inches beneath floor level, three stone slabs were revealed, 22 inches square, which covered an opening to the crypt. These stones and further filling were removed. At a depth of 3 feet, a tombstone of gritstone was discovered, 6 feet in length and 3 feet wide, which had been broken by force in one corner. This gritsone topped a stone (*Sandstein* – sandstone) tomb that was of far greater quality, and which had been constructed with greater care, than those discovered by the Commission in the crypt of the *pronaos*. The Commissioners reported that the quality of the workmanship, and the near proximity of Ştefan's sarcophagus in the church above, meant that this was certainly the tomb of Ştefan cel Mare (Cimbru 2005, 105-6) – a reasonable supposition given the circumstances.

Having removed the stone cover from Ştefan's tomb, the Commissioners found that his body was completely decomposed, although traces of his clothing – garments of rich purple material, the mantle (cloak or robe) of a prince (*Fürstenmantel* / R: *mantie domnească*) – remained.[25] The skeleton was covered in brick dust, but it was clear that Ştefan's body had been lowered into the tomb, rather than placed in a coffin. Beneath his bones were 13 "iron rods" (*eisernen Flachstäben/bare de fier*), lying laterally across the bottom of the tomb, which formed the framework of a bier or formed part of the structure of the tomb itself (the latter is more likely, given the weight of these rods or "bars"). This form of burial was also observed at two of the burials in the *pronaos*, including that in the "unattributed" grave.

The Commissioners decided that Ştefan's remains had been wrapped in princely raiments (*fürstlichen Gewänder/straie*), as if in a shroud. The Commissioners seem to have puzzled over the incongruity of the well-built tomb and the lack of a coffin, as if this indicated a lack of care for the body itself. They noted that contemporary Orthodox practice involved the wrapping of a corpse in a linen shroud and that the speedy decomposition of a body was preferred. The superior construction of Ştefan's tomb might have restricted the levels of humidity within and thus helped preserve the corpse, but small openings were observed in this and other tombs, either at the head or the foot of each tomb, which were deemed to result from the custom of observers checking on the rate of decomposition and also of allowing the soul of the departed to fly from the remains of the body (see Fedwick 1976, 153-4, 161); in this respect, it is possible that Ştefan's tomb had been opened before the robbers of the 1750s broke into it (Romstorfer 1904, 27; Cimbru 2005, 115-6).[26]

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[25] See the votive fresco at the Church of the Holy Cross, Pătrăuți [photograph 16] for an example of the style of a voivode's robe, encrusted with pearls and jewels.

[26] Concerning the lack of a coffin, it may be noted that imperial burials appear to have been relatively simple, without coffins, like Ştefan's interment, albeit that the bodies of Byzantine emperors were enclosed within magnificent sarcophagi. "It should perhaps be said that there is no evidence for the fairly widespread belief that Byzantine emperors were buried seated; nor was embalming a regular practice, though we hear of it occasionally when an emperor died away from the capital." Grierson 1962, 37, n.138.

The investigators' observations focused on the fact that Ştefan's body had clearly been disturbed by an earlier, violent opening of the tomb. The damage to the gritstone cover meant that the tomb was no longer properly sealed, which had contributed to the degradation of the contents and the build-up of debris. The level of force applied to opening the tomb appeared to have had an impact on the skeleton itself. Originally, Ştefan's head had been raised, resting or propped against a compact headstone built up in brick or lined with tiles – (there is an ambiguity here between the language of the original German report and the Romanian translation: the German text suggests a tiled area – *Ziegelgemäuer*)[27] – 12 inches thick, but only the crown of the skull remained in position there. The rest of the skull had become separated from the skeleton by a distance of 5 inches and mould had built up in the gap between the bones. The facial bones were also twisted at an unnatural angle, in a manner which did not belong to the normal process of decomposition.

The Commissioners thought that the raising of Ştefan's head on a headstone/tiled base might have been intended to better preserve the features of the face, and hence the body's identity, while the rest of the body rotted, even though the head would likely have been covered by a kerchief or liturgical cloth (Romstorfer 1904, 20-1, 27-8; Paradais 1982, 264; Cimbru 2005, 91, 107-8, 116-7).[28]

The disturbance was attributed to the "plunder" of the grave in the 1750s. The Commission's minutes include extracts from Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul's correspondence as evidence of the nature of the opening of Ştefan's tomb at that time, paying particular attention to the fact that jewels and precious stones, absent from the remains observed by the Commissioners, had been acquired from Ştefan's grave. Unlike the remains in the graves in the *pronaos*, which

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[27] Enamelled bricks were a common and distinctive decorative feature in Moldovan churches of this era, reflecting the ostentatious decoration of Byzantine churches – see clause 1.3.5 below.

[28] The head of the body in the fifth grave in the *pronaos,* which likewise rested on a bed of brick/tile, was discovered wearing a fur cap (in Romanian, *căciulă de blană*) (Gorovei 2003, 245; Cimbru 2005, 100-101).

appeared to be undisturbed, the only jewellery of note discovered on Ştefan's skeleton in 1856 was a gold pectoral cross.

The members of the Commission were, however, keen to emphasise that the evidence of the remains reinforced their attribution of the tomb: the skeleton belonged to a man who had been "small in stature", which was in keeping with chronicle descriptions of the voivode; and although there was no crown or other ornamental headress found with the body – the removal of which might also account for the break-up of the skull – the quality of the princely garments and the gold pectoral cross demonstrated that this was the grave of a high-status individual (Cimbru 2005, 107-8, 111-113).

The Commissioners went on to uncover three further graves in the crypt of the *gropniţa*, which were situated close together beneath an arch. Having satisfied themselves that Ştefan's remains had been examined thoroughly, the Commissioners were less attentive towards the remaining burials. The first tomb to be uncovered was just 41/2 feet in length and was deemed to be the shared burial site of Ştefan's two young sons, Bogdan and Petru. The two remaining tombs were of similar size and construction to each other, being between 61/2 and 7 feet in length and 30 inches in width, save that one was covered by an irregular stone and there was a small gap in the stonework that meant that not only was the body within totally decomposed but the remains were also seen to be covered in a layer of white mould; the minutes record a particularly strong stench in this tomb. These two tombs belonged to Ştefan's wives, but the Commissioners' report does not make clear which tomb belonged to which wife (ibid., 106, 109-10).

The opening of the Muşatin tombs in 1856 suggests the strength of Ştefan's fame as a "Romanian" hero in the context of moves towards unification in the mid-19th century; however, the principal focus seems to have been the religious importance of the remains at Putna, as the monastic community hoped to meet the needs of pilgrims to the princely necropolis.

1.3.4   Burial practice and the iconography of death and resurrection

If the Commissioners were correct in their assessment that the bodies buried in the vaults of the church were expected to decompose quickly, there is no inconsistency between the veneration of a prince and the condition of the skeletal remains in the *gropniţa* – an "incorrupt" corpse was not a prerequisite for a holy relic.

> Sometimes the bodies of the saints are found incorrupt many years after their repose. This is always taken as a sign of the special favour of the Lord, showing that their Christian lives were indeed 'incorruptible'. Physical incorruptibility of the relics, however, is not an invariable sign of great sanctity. (McGuckin 2008, 233)

Unfortunately, the access tunnel to the tombs at Putna, supposedly revealed by Abbot Bortnic, does not seem to have remained open following the completion of the Commission's work, so presumably there was no opportunity for subsequent pilgrims to get close to the venerable remains.

In Orthodox liturgy, death is viewed as a translation: the departure of the soul from the body, which must corrupt and decompose before soul and transfigured body can eventually be reunited through final resurrection:

> The material condition for resurrection is the physical death and decomposition of the body. While in the Western Middle Ages 'on various occasions attempts were made to retard decomposition', the Byzantines, but especially the Russians, looked with apprehension at the bodies that failed to decompose. (Fedwick 1976, 159, quoting Jan Huizinga) [29]

While death is viewed as a mystery and the liturgy does not provide a coherent view of human death, Orthodox belief is governed by the hope of the entry of soul and body in new life into the Kingdom of God (Fedwick 1976, 154-5, 160-1; McGuckin 2008, 198).

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[29] This comment references, albeit obliquely, the cult of vampirism in the Balkans and Southeastern Europe. In vampirism, an incorrupt corpse is taken to be that of a sinner who is "undead", a revenant who will prey on the living, the direct opposite of a saint!

There does appear to have been a marked contrast between the manner of the opening of Ştefan's grave in 1856 and previous investigations of the tomb: if the jewels and precious stones which once adorned Ştefan's cadaver were removed in the 1750s and acquired by the Metropolitan of Suceava, it seems that the process was violent and disrespectful – the gritstone tomb cover was smashed and the voivode's skull was dismembered.[30] Unfortunately, there is only the anecdotal evidence of the Metropolitan's correspondence and the minutes of the Austrian Commission, so it is not possible to reconstruct the sequence of events which led to the condition of the grave and the remains observed in 1856 with any precision. The damage to the gritstone tombstone raises the possibility that the tomb was actually disturbed during one of the raids suffered by the monastery during the 17th century (cf. Paradais 1982, 260, 265).

Judging by the Commissioners' observations, there was a differentiation in burial practice at Putna between the burial of Ştefan cel Mare in 1504 and that of his son Bogdan III in 1517. Bogdan was buried within a wooden coffin, in which his princely clothes were reasonably well preserved although his body decomposed. In contrast, Ştefan's uncoffined burial would have led to the relatively swift putrefaction of his corpse and the degradation of the clothes in which his body was "wrapped", like those of the two burials without coffins discovered in the *pronaos*.

Ştefan's head, and ultimately the bones of his skull, may have been better preserved, given that it was propped up on a bed of brick/tile (Paradais 192, 265). This apparent custom of raising the head of a body that is wrapped in shroud-like clothes, as if sleeping, rather than sealed within a coffin, recalls the iconography of the Dormition of the Mother of God and even of the placing of the body of Christ in his stone tomb, iconography which could be adapted to depictions of the death of kings and princes. For example, one of the paintings in the narthex of the church at Sopoćani in Serbia depicts the death of Queen Anna Dandolo in the style of the Dormition (in Greek, *Koimesis*).

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[30] There is a surprising echo here of the account by Niketas Choniates of the robbing of the imperial sarcophagi in Byzantium in 1204.

The body is laid out on a bier in the foreground, clothed in a full-length jewelled gown, Anna appearing to be "asleep in death" while she is surrounded by mourners. Christ and the Mother of God are present to transport Anna's soul – shown as a small child dressed in white – to Heaven. These elements are essential to the icongraphy of the Dormition, when Christ receives the soul of his mother (although Mary's clothing is typically more modest than that of earthly rulers) (Walter 1976, 122; Eastmond 2008, 311-12; McGuckin 2008, 218-9).

This artistic tradition has received a contemporary adaptation at Putna. The website of the Putna Centre of Research and Documentation, which is hosted by the monastery, displays a number of modern icons of Ştefan, one of which is a Dormition – "*Adormirea Sfăntului Voievod Ştefan cel Mare*". This painting was processed in public to the monastery as part of the 2004 celebrations [illustrations 13 and 14 and photograph 10].

In the Putna icon, Ştefan acquires the characteristics of the Mother of God. The image of a "sleeping" body on a bier replicates the depiction of Mary's Dormition; furthermore, Ştefan's soul is seen being transported to the Pantocrator ("the Ruler of All"), symbolising that Ştefan has achieved eternal life in advance of the Day of Judgement. No saint can equal the status of the Mother of God, but it seems that Ştefan has entered paradise. The exceptional saintly status accorded to him by the Church is a development of the medieval concept of the "eternal ruler".

The theme of the Dormition has a strong tradition at Putna, in keeping with the dedication of the monastery church. Several of the embroideries that are preserved in the monastery museum or which hail from the Putna school, and which date to Ştefan's reign, depict the Dormition of the Mother of God and, incidentally, reinforce the connection between the iconography of Mary's falling asleep and the manner of Ştefan's burial. A key feature is the prominence given to Mary's head, which is shown raised on a pillow (Catalogue 295-7, 315). Moreover, in depictions of the entombment of Christ, the body is shown laid out on a bier or slab, with the head raised and cupped in the hands of his mother (Catalogue 298, 311-2). The treatment of Ştefan's body in burial

seems to have followed this scheme – the body laid out in fine clothes, the head raised: the iconography of death in the holy family and the practice of princely burial seem to have been aligned.

1.3.5   Princely tombs across the Principality

The Church of the Assumption at Putna and the Church of St. Nicholas in the Bogdana monastery at Rădăuți formed the nucleus of the Muşatin mausolea in the heartland of Ştefan's territory. While the princely graves at Rădăuți were almost certainly marked prior to the commissioning of new tombstones there, the stylistic harmony between the later tombstones and the monuments erected at Putna symbolised the longevity of Muşatin rule in Moldova. In effect, Putna superseded Alexandru cel Bun's necropolis in the Church of the Assumption at Bistriţa; as has been seen, the burial of Ştefan's son Voivode Alexandru in Bistriţa in the 1490s, at a time when other high-status burials were taking place in the church at Putna, appears to have been an anomaly.

Voivode Alexandru's burial in the church of his great grandfather may be an indication of the particular status he had attained by the time of his death, as associate prince and sole ruler in the southern territory of the Principality. Voivode Alexandru's burial differentiated him in death from the regime of his father, the *voivode* and *domn*. Ştefan's authority undoubtedly spread throughout his lands, as his numerous residences, even in close proximity to Bacău, illustrate. Nevertheless, Voivode Alexandru was accorded a level of formal independence. (See Chapter 2, clause 2.1.3 and Section 3, clause 1 below.).

Additionally, Ştefan's family was extensive and princely burials could not be confined to the monastery at Putna: it would surely have been impractical and impolitic to concentrate the memorials of the ruling house in a relatively small area to the north of Suceava, given that the

monuments to princes that Ştefan sponsored were symbols of the prestige and power of the regime as a whole. (Putna and Rădăuţi are only 30km apart.)

Another significant princely burial site was to be found at Probota monastery, 40km south of Suceava. In the mid-16th century, Probota was rebuilt by Petru Rareş to serve as his mausoleum. His first wife, Princess Maria, was interred in the *pronaos* at Putna in 1529, but Rareş was forced to look for another site for his own memorial, one where he would not be overshadowed by Ştefan cel Mare. Ironically, at Probota, Rareş built on the site of a stone church dated to the 1440s (the foundations of the original church were revealed during archaeological excavations in the 1990s) (Ogden 2002, 186): the 15th-century church contained several Muşatin monuments and was certainly patronised by Ştefan.[31]

Although the fragment of one tombstone, dated by the remains of its inscription to 1467, has been wrongly attributed to the grave of Ştefan's first wife, Evdochia of Kiev, there is another carved tombstone of white marble in the Probota monastery, discovered in 1904, which bears an inscription stating "this is the tomb of the servant of God Oltea, mother of Prince John Stephen voivode..." (Catalogue 1958, 246-7; Ogden 2002, 186). Maria Oltea died in 1465 but the relief carving on the tombstone, while featuring a relatively simple form of palmette leaves, is likely to belong to the period of Ştefan's patronage of the school of carvers who produced the Rădăuţi tombstones in the 1470s and 1480s.

The choice of Probota as the burial place for Ştefan's mother indicates that the monastery was a significant place of Muşatin burials. While Evdochia of Kiev was interred elsewhere, there is

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[31] There is documentary evidence to suggest that Ştefan granted privileges to Probota monastery in the early years of his reign, possibly because initially he intended Probota to be a family necropolis, before his attention turned to Putna. Ştefan's father may have been buried at Probota. See Maleon 2006, 149-50.

another trapezoidal tombstone, dated to 1500, which marked the grave of Dumşa Postelnicul, the son of one of Ştefan's sisters (Catalogue 1958, 265).

Evdochia's burial was still being assigned to Probota in 2002 (Ogden 2002, 186), but recent archaeological work has uncovered the remains of her monument at the Mirăuți coronation church in Suceava, providing a further location of Muşatin burial, in the heart of Ştefan's "capital".

The Church of St. George or the Mirăuți Church is located on a plateau roughly equidistant between the prince's residence in Suceava and the citadel which overlooks the old town from a higher promontory (see Section 2, clause 3.1) [illustration 35]. The church has a distinguished history, although its origins are obscure and even the dedication of the church to St. George is questionable. Better known as the Mirăuți Church, this name may have derived from the family name of a local founder or patron in the mid-14th century (Matei 2003, 20-1; Rădvan 2010, 534) [photographs 17-20].

The first stone church on the site is thought to have dated to the second half of the 14th century and has been attributed to the reign of Petru I Muşat (1375-91) – coins of Petru I were discovered in graves excavated in the churchyard in the 1890s (Matei 2003, 21-2).[32] This church was probably renovated during the reign of Ştefan cel Mare before being seriously damaged in a Tatar raid in 1513. It was rebuilt by Bogdan III, but further rebuilding was necessary in the 17th century (Cereteu 2004, 56-8).[33] Mirăuți was the Metropolitan cathedral church in the Principality from the early 15th century and was also known as the place of coronation of the Moldovan

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[32] Though commonly referred to as the first of the Muşatin voivodes, there is some question as to whether Petru I should bear that family name: see Rădvan 2010, 326, fn 90.

[33] Sion's ground plan of the Mirăuți Church, published by Matei [see illustration 15], shows that the Muşatin church was smaller than the current structure. Although the breadth of the *naos* and *pronaos* matched that of the later fabric, the *naos* of the Muşatin church was considerably foreshortened – the apse of this earlier stone church terminated at the line of the iconostasis in the developed church (Matei 2003, 24).

voivodes in the 14th and 15th centuries, as distinct from the place of acclamation on the Plain of Justice outside Suceava. For a long time, the Mirăuți Church was the resting place of the relics of St. John the New, upon whom Alexandru cel Bun built a significant cult.[34]

The contemporary fabric, which was subject to renovation in the 1990s, was earlier extensively restored and remodelled by K.A. Romstorfer and E. Hurmuzaki, between 1898 and 1903, at the same time as work was carried out on the monastery church at Putna and excavations were conducted at Suceava Castle. Balş published a photograph of the Mirăuți Church (reproduced by Matei in 2003) which almost certainly dates to the period before Romstorfer's work there: the exterior of the church, which is crowded by low-rise buildings, is almost unrecognisable, for the roof over the *naos* is shown to have been in disrepair with beams open to the skies while the roofless porch is clearly delapidated (Balş 1926, 164; Matei 2003, 20; [photograph 21]). (A report in the 1890s described the church as being in a state of collapse (Matei 2003, 21).) A plaque in the contemporary church porch records Romstorfer's restoration programme, carried out in the name of Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph I (1848-1916).

Archaeological work in the Mirăuți Church in 1976 uncovered numerous graves. One of the most notable burials – examined in the mid-1990s – was in the centre of the *naos*, near the original altar, and has been assigned controversially to Petru I. The monument was particular in that rather than being covered by a tombstone, the grave was situated beneath a "brick vault" (*un cavou de cărămidă*). The remains of a trapezoidal coffin were found within this vault, containing the bones of

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[34] The relics of St. John the New, a Greek trader and preacher who was martyred by a Tatar mob at Cetatea Albă in 1330, were transferred to Suceava by Alexandru in 1402 and deposited in the Mirăuți Church in c.1415. St. John became a symbol of Moldovan resistance against the Ottomans. His relics may have remained in the Mirăuți Church until 1589, although Bogdan III founded the Church of St. George in Suceava – now the church of the monastery of St. John the New – in 1514, where today the relics are preserved in a silver coffin. (St. John's relics were taken to Poland in 1686 but were returned to Suceava in 1783, following several appeals by Metropolitan Iacov Putneanul.) The Church of St. George in the monastery of St. John the New is regarded as one of the best examples of the mature Moldavian Style of church architecture (Balş 1926, 170; Ogden 2002, 94, 214; Matei 2003, 23; Cereteu 2004, 57).

a mature man and the remains of fine textiles, which were still being analysed in 2003 (ibid., 24; Patzinakia [2]).

Evdochia of Kiev's tombstone was not revealed until further archaeological work was carried out during the renovation programme of the 1990s: discovered in 1996, the details of the tombstone fragment were not published until 2003.

The archaeological investigations carried out within the church between 1991 and 1998 revealed further interesting details about the character of medieval burials there. The floor of the Muşatin church was made up of enamelled bricks or tiles, which recall the tiles observed by Artimon Bortnic in the crypt at Putna, and the area on which Ştefan's head rested in his tomb.[35] Beneath the tiled floor, the earliest burials (from the second half of the 14th century) were in vaults lined with enamelled bricks, whereas later graves were more simple: the excavator commented that it would have been privilege-enough to be buried within the Metropolitan Church and therefore an elaborate grave or tomb would have been inappropriate (Matei 2003, 24).

The fragment of Evdochia's tombstone was a surprising discovery [photograph 20]. Little is known about her death and burial, which coincided with Matthias Corvinus' campaign in Moldova in the winter of 1467, the event which dominates chronicle records for that time. However, a document has been discovered, dated to 15 February 1469, in which Ştefan cel Mare grants 100 beehives, a vineyard and a pond to the Metropolitan Church of Suceava (Mirăuţi) in recognition that this is the resting place of his wife, Evdochia (ibid., 25).

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[35] Enamelled or coloured bricks are also a common feature in the external decoration of Ştefan's churches: the doorway at Neamţ is a good example of this (Ogden 2002, 27). Plenty of similar examples were discovered in excavations at Suceava Castle and in associated buildings in the "Field of Ditches" nearby (see Section 2, clauses 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Her burial appears to have been in the *pronaos*, set in a longitudinal position and flanked by other graves, in which the bodies were furnished with rich clothes – fragments with gold and silver thread survived. The excavator suggested that the *pronaos* was reserved for burials of members of the voivode's family (ibid.). Despite being the Metropolitan Church, the voivode appears to have had rights there too and the princely burials in Mirăuți seem to be an illustration of the strong relationship between the Orthodox Church and Ştefan's regime.

The attribution of another grave in the church, uncovered in 1997, to an unidentified voivode reinforces the status of the Mirăuți coronation church as a place of princely burial. Although the church today is outshone by the magnificent monastery of St. John the New in Suceava, as well as by the great monasteries of Bucovina, it is apparent that Mirăuți was one of the focal points of the Muşatin principality.

2   Archaeological work at monasteries and churches

In the communist era and in the era of transition, the restoration and preservation of the frescoes of the Moldavian churches has been the main focus for national and international conservation agencies – see the reports of work at the Arbore church (Sinigalia 2005, Boldura 2007) and the Church of St. Nicholas in Popăuți (Solomonea 2006), and the Unesco project at Probota monastery (Chapter 6, clause 3). A combination of neglect, inexpert restoration in the 19th century (and later), and inclement weather conditions has put at risk the extraordinary artistic achievement of the painted churches of the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries (Curry 2007). In this situation, archaeology has formed a significant component in the various programmes of investigation, stabilisation and renewal which have been carried out at many of the monasteries and churches of Bucovina over the past four decades.

2.1 Putna and Bălineşti

At Putna, work carried out in the church in the late 1960s and through the 1970s consolidated the historical timeline of the development of the complex, as well as providing evidence of the character of the first churches on the site, now largely obscured by subsequent rebuilding and renovation schemes. (There has been no attempt, however, to re-examine the graves in the crypts.) Archaeological investigations within the monastery's precincts demonstrated Putna's other functions, as a residence and as a fortified place of refuge.

There is evidence of the campaign of deforestation that marked the earliest phase of Putna's development by Ştefan cel Mare, when the site was cleared for building works: a layer of ash and carbonised tree stumps beneath the building levels (Moisescu et al. 1982, 5-6). The complex of the 1460s and 1470s was built partly in stone – the church, the prince's residence and the entrance gateway (dedicated in 1481 – a dedication stone survives in the current structure) – but other buildings were wooden, possibly including the early perimeter defences. The destruction of the monastery in 1484 is evidenced by a burnt layer in the building levels of the prince's residence and around the perimeter (the extent of which has been established as 95m x 105m – considerably smaller than the contemporary perimeter, which was extended in the 19th century). The amount of damage to the church in 1484, however, is not clear from the archaeology (ibid., 7).

There is also archaeological evidence for Ştefan's campaign of rebuilding after 1484. At the church, it is apparent that the porch was added to the earlier ground plan. The stonework of the church was built upon a network of wooden beams, laid transversally and horizontally in a grid at foundation level, except for the porch, where the stone walls were instead supported by a new system of wooden piles. In terms of decoration, the walls of the first church were lined with plaster, decorated with geometric motifs, but after 1484, the interior of the church was painted with frescoes.[36] Unlike the floor of enamelled bricks at Mirăuţi, the floor of Ştefan's church at Putna was made up of stone slabs laid on a bed of mortar (ibid., 16). However, the exterior walls were

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[36] A similar sequence has been observed at the Bălineşti church (Boldura 2006, 70).

decorated with ceramic polychrome discs – a feature that was common to the decoration of churches of the Moldavian Style: good examples can be seen around windows in the north and south walls of the church at Neamṭ monastery and beneath the cornice of the boyar church at Bălineşti (Ogden 2002, 28, 110).[37]

The precincts of the monastery revealed that Putna was probably an older site of habitation than the campaign of deforestation in the 1460s might suggest. Adjacent to the prince's residence, in the southeast corner of the complex, a series of stone annexes was excavated – comprising five or six rooms described as "*anexelor gospodăreşti*" (household annexes) – which are thought to have predated Ştefan's era. Although documentary evidence dated to August 1471 indicates that a residential element formed part of the earliest plans for Ştefan's monastery, historical evidence that Alexandru cel Bun built a wooden church at Putna combines with the archaeology of the annexes to suggest that some form of early monastic community existed at Putna prior to the 1460s (Moisescu et al. 1982, 23-4; Ogden 2002, 188). This would consolidate the interpretation given elsewhere that Ştefan followed closely the precedents set by Alexandru.

The prince's residence itself, thought to date from the period of rebuilding in the mid-1480s, was made up of two grand spaces, separated by a corridor 3m in width. With stone walls and flooring comparable to that found in the church, both spaces would have been covered by vaulted brick ceilings. The east room, measuring 12m x 7.5m, was deemed to be a ceremonial and administrative space. Divided into two longitudinal corridors by three columns, which carried the vault, forming an arcade, at the east end of the space a transverse arcade divided the room again, forming two smaller rooms, which have been interpreted as private spaces for the conduct of chancery business and private meetings. The western room, measuring 11m x 9m, also had a vaulted ceiling carried by three columns. This was thought to be the voivode's residential space, and it appears to have included a cellar. Numerous decorated tiles evidenced "sumptuous"

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[37] The coloured discs on the exterior wall of the Bălineşti church were later painted over (Boldura 2006, 71).

decoration in this area (Moisescu et al. 1982, 6, 23-4). While there is no other known prince's residence of this type in a Moldovan monastic precinct of the period, the arrangement of secular buildings at Putna can be compared with other known residences – court buildings – from across the Principality (see Section 3, clause 1 below). The presence of administrative and residential buildings of this nature at Putna is a further testimony to the monastery's special status within Ştefan's regime.

While the walls of the monastery have been rebuilt on several occasions over the centuries, and the original line of the northern perimeter has been obscured by the extension of the monastery precincts by a distance of 23m in the 19th century, there is still evidence of the defensive nature of Ştefan's foundation. It is debatable whether Putna can be described as a "fortress" – part of the network of fortified defences that Ştefan established across the Principality – or if the monastery rather incorporated places of "refuge". The prince's residence indicates that the voivode and members of the court would have spent time at Putna, and would have needed protection while in residence; however, the evidence of actual fortifications – and of facilities for harbouring a defensive force at Putna – is more limited. The best surviving evidence for defensive measures at Putna is the so-called "Treasury Tower", the only element of the perimeter walls that remains from the monastery of the 1480s.

Although subject to modifications and renovations over the years, not least following the earthquake of 1739, the Treasury Tower is still an example of medieval Moldovan fortified architecture, and of the cross-over between military and church architecture: two narrow, rectangular windows in the upper storeys of the tower have decorated stonework jambs in the Gothic "baguettes croisées" style that became a common feature in churches of the Moldavian Style (Ogden 2002, 26) [photograph 14]. Approximately 20m in height, with a rectangular plan at ground floor level but an octagonal plan on the upper floors, the tower was constructed with two-metre-thick stone walls designed to provide security through sheer strength and, by means of the multi-faceted upper storeys, by sleight of design, to minimise the impact of gunfire on the superstructure. There was a crenelated parapet at the top of the tower, beneath the eaves of a

pointed roof, from which defenders might fire down upon attackers [see photograph 40 and illustrations 1 and 2].

Regular access to the tower was difficult. There was no direct entrance to the vaulted space on the ground floor but rather a spiral staircase, built within an adjunct of the east wall, provided an internal connection between the three floors of the tower. Today, a wooden staircase leads to an entrance on the first floor of the building, some 10m above the ground; originally there appears to have been a system involving a wooden platform at this point, connected to the west wall of the monastery precincts.

The Treasury Tower was a self-contained defensive unit, a place of refuge rather than an integral part of a grand fortress. Putna was certainly a defended place, and defensible; but it does not appear to have been comparable to a castle or citadel: it was a monastery and voivodal residence, not a garrison (Moisescu et al. 1982, 21-2).

"Baguettes croisées" decoration can be seen around the windows of the *naos* at the boyar church of St. Nicholas at Bălineşti, near Siret, in modern Suceava County. The ornamentation of the porch balustrade – and of the windows in the north and south walls of the *pronaos* – has been linked to examples of Transylvanian Gothic and the socle of Maria of Mangop's sarcophagus at Putna (see clause 1.3.2 above). The "Cavalcade of the Holy Cross" fresco (1490s) in the *pronaos* also links the church to the style and symbolism of Ştefan's own foundations (Chapter 2, clause 2.3). Founded in c.1494 by *logofăt* Ioan Tăutu, who served both Ştefan and Bogdan III,[38] Bălineşti became the necropolis for Tăutu's family; located near his manor house (R: *curte*), the church offers an example in microcosm of the grander schemes effected by Ştefan in complexes such as

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[38] Ioan was more fortunate than Luca Arbore, the founder of the Church of St. John the Baptist in Arbore, who was executed early in Bogdan's reign despite having been one of the leading courtiers in Ştefan's regime (see Chapter 2, clause 2.3).

Putna, where spiritual and secular authority were combined in the church and courtly buildings (Ogden 2002, 110).

Bălineşti has some specific features which give it a particular architectural character – notably, a rectangular plan (rather than the triconch plan familiar in the Moldavian Style), a polygonal *pronaos* and a bell tower-cum-porch over the church entrance in the south wall. It is also the location of the earliest discovered signature of a fresco painter in Moldova: "Gavril the hieromonk" signed his name at the base of the votive painting in the *naos* (Boldura 2006, 70).

Two seasons of archaeological work in the church in 2002 and 2003 sought to add a detailed examination of the methods of construction to existing studies by architectural historians of the outstanding artistic features of this building.[39] In doing so, the excavators also consolidated some of the parallels between this boyar project and those sponsored by the voivode in the late 15th century; thorough excavation of the Tăutu family graves beneath the church floor has provided excellent evidence of the methods of burial, to compare with the princely burials across the Principality.

The excavations comprised 19 trenches, within the church, in the porch and at key points on the exterior of the church (in the churchyard) [illustration 16]. In terms of the construction of the church, it was established that St. Nicholas's was the first building on the site – not just the first medieval building, but the first man-made structure, for there were no archaeological layers observed beneath the foundations. The monumental foundations themselves were found to be in good condition, made up of a layer of dressed stone resting on a thick bed of mortared hard-standing, with an approximate depth of 3m and of a similar breadth. The original floor is thought to have been of stone slabs laid on a bed of mortar: this would appear to have been in place by about the middle of the 16th century, as coins of Voivode Ştefăniţă (1517-27) were found in the mortar.

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[39] The programme of archaeological research, together with restoration work on the frescoes, was funded by Keyo University, Tokyo.

(The stone floor would have been akin to that observed at Putna.) The bell tower which adjoins the church and forms a colonaded porch over the entrance was found to be a secondary feature, though still a relatively early one; replacing an initial porch, it was added to the building before the completion of the interior paintings (which were commenced at the time of the church's construction) (Puşcaşu 2005, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 34).

Twenty-five inhumations were excavated within the church, mostly within the *pronaos*, representing two distinct chronological stages. The later stage is thought to date to the middle of the 18th century and comprised burials in "simple graves" within the *pronaos*, mostly without any grave goods. These burials disturbed a number of the earlier inhumations in the *pronaos*, which were the graves of Ioan Tăutu's family, dating from the period of the foundation of the church through to the first half of the 17th century, indicating the longevity of the Tăutu family's authority in the area. Nine tombstones of the Tăutu family have been incorporated within the modern church floor, most of which are aligned against the dividing wall between the *pronaos* and the *naos*. However, these stones provide merely an approximation of the location of the actual graves of the extended Tăutu family: illustration 17 shows that, on excavation, the *pronaos* was found to be clustered with close-packed graves.

The Tăutu family burials ranged from simple inhumations without coffins to burials within brick-built "crypts" – barrel-vaulted brick and mortar constructions with paved bases. This range of inhumations serves to augment the record of the numerous burial styles found at princely burial sites in the Principality. The acidic nature of the soil at Bălineşti meant that most of the bodies had been reduced to the major bones only – typically, only the skull, humeri, femurs and tibias were observed, with other bones having been reduced to a powder with the consistency of "cigarette ash". However, several of the graves were richly furnished with grave goods (R: *inventar funerar*), which in one case allowed for the identification of the remains as being those of Dragotă Tăutulovic, a relative of the founder and the second patron, who was responsible for carving the tombstones found in the *pronaos*, and whose name was appended to the foundation stone in the south wall of the church.

Four brick "crypts" were identified. Unfortunately, each one had already been broken into – the structures had been damaged, the bones disturbed or removed altogether, and goods or precious items had been robbed. (This destruction was attributed by the excavators to the period in which the latest church floor was laid down.) The crypts were distributed throughout the church. Crypt 1 was extremely unusual. This was a rectangular enclosure built against the apse of the church, behind the altar; a three-sided brick feature joined to the east wall of the church. The vault is presumed to have been destroyed by robbers. Burials are not normally found in this part of a Moldovan church, and certainly not elaborate tombs, which Crypt 1 appears to have been. The excavators cautioned that interpretation of this feature was very difficult.

Crypt 2 was a barrel-vaulted, mortared brick construction located on the south side of the *naos*. Though robbed and damaged, this was identified as being the founder's grave. The structure would almost certainly have housed just one body, being 1m in height and 2.3m in length; the walls were 30cm thick and the structure had a maximum width inside of 63cm. Tăutu was buried in a coffin; his bones are described as being "90% decomposed" and only fragments of clothing remained. Set to a depth of 2m from the contemporary floor level (the roof of the vault was approximately 1m beneath floor-level), the crypt was adjoined by two inhumations between it and the south wall of the church. Also set at a depth of 2m, these were coffined burials (though without identifying grave goods), which were thought to be the burials of two young sons of the founder who died while the church was still under construction.

The location of Crypt 2 equated to the "place of honour" that had been established for royal burials in the Orthodox lands (see clause 1.3.1 above). The excavators thought that burial of this kind in the *naos* – the liturgical area of the church – was exceptional. However, Tăutu's tomb and coffined burial seems akin to the much earlier 14th-century tomb discovered in the Mirăuţi Church and attributed to Petru I (see clause 1.3.5 above). In the absence of a *gropniţa* in the ground plan for Bălineşti, a tomb set within the *naos* seems to have been a bold expression by Ioan Tăutu of his eminence, if not equal with that of a voivode then at least showing that his status was relative to that of a prince. By contrast, Luca Arbore's tomb, though elaborate and canopied, is located in the

pronaos of the Arbore church. The likely grandeur of the founder's monument at Bălineşti is thought to be evidenced by the discovery of fragments of dressed stone and marble plates, incorporated within the modern church floor: these are thought to be part of a plinth and decorated tombstone which might have marked the founder's place of burial in the *naos*.

While the presumed burials of two of Ioan Tăutu's sons in the *naos* and two similar, simple burials in the *pronaos* were interpreted by the excavators as exhibiting a culture of "austerity" in burial practice (perhaps reflecting the youth of the deceased persons), Crypt 3, located on the north side of the *pronaos*, was an elaborate brick construction, with a paved floor of particular quality. Slightly larger than the founder's tomb, this grave was attributed to the mother of Dragotă Tăutulovic. The son's role in providing tombstones for many of the Tăutu family is emphasised by the special attention given to his mother's resting place.

Dragotă's own remains were identified in an undisturbed grave in the *pronaos*, just south of the line of axis of the church (inhumation no. 13). The grave contained several items of jewellery, including two signet rings which bore his name and monogram, respectively. Crypt 4, the smallest of the brick constructions, located fast against the north wall of the *pronaos*, to the west of Crypt 3, also contained several items of jewellery (earrings and pearls), as well as an engraved rectangular memorial badge or plate in the form of a miniature tombstone, bearing a coat of arms: these items were recovered from the filling of the crypt, which was tentatively assigned to Anghelina Tăutu (d.1617) (for all details relating to the excavation of the graves in the church, see Puşcaşu 21-3, Annexes 2 and 4).

The excavations at Bălineşti have revealed that this boyar church had many features that compare favourably with Ştefan's own foundations. While the Arbore church, and its founder's memorial, remains an outstanding example of boyar church patronage, so Bălineşti, for all its individual features – the prevalence of Transylvanian Gothic in the architectural decoration and the rather antiquated ground plan – aligns closely with the achievement of the Moldavian Style across

the Principality. In terms of the construction of the major tombs in the church, the use of brick has also been observed in burials at Mirăuți and is suggested in the burial of Ştefan cel Mare himself (if not brick at Putna, then enamelled tiles). Though robbed, it is still apparent that the Bălineşti burials were often furnished with grave goods and the bodies wore fine garments and rich jewels, just as in princely burials.

Nevertheless, the Putna tombs were superior to the "crypts" at Bălineşti. The Tăutu family burials were not particularly deep within the church and the term "crypt", as used by the excavators, describes a single enclosed burial (albeit one of sophisticated construction). The Putna burials, by contrast, were made within stone tombs set at a greater depth beneath the church, within subterranean features in which, according to their accounts, the investigators of the 19th century were able to move around.

2.2   Căpriana and churches east of the Prut

Just as in the 19th and 20th centuries the territory of Bessarabia was to acquire a distinct character from that of the rump of the Principality, so even during Ştefan's time this area exhibited characteristics that differentiated it from the lands to the west of the Prut, certainly from the heartland of Bucovina (Rădvan 2010, 333). At the mouths of the Danube and the Nistru, the fortified ports of Chilia and Cetatea Albă were cosmopolitan entrepôts: trading stations where Genoese merchants were influential, these ports had also experienced Tatar overlordship and they stood at the head of overland trade routes to northern and western Europe (Deletant 1991(a)). Ştefan may have built, or renewed, churches within these ports, but by the end of his reign they were both in Ottoman hands and there is archaeological evidence at Cetatea Albă of a church being demolished and replaced by a mosque (Ghimpu 2000, 62; Cândea 2004, 119-20).

Conversely, the 15th-century settlement and citadel of Orhei ("Fortification"), situated overlooking the river Răut, a tributary of the Nistru in the midlands of the territory, was built upon

the remains of a 14th-century fortified Tatar town – Şehr al-Cedid ("New Town"), and there two Christian churches succeeded a mosque (Postică 2004). Major foundations were few in number east of the Prut; the voivodes and boyars of the 15th and 16th centuries tended to build churches inside town walls rather than independent monasteries, or chapels within castles, such as at Hotin and Soroca in the north and northwest of the Principality.

There is some evidence for the development of the Moldavian Style in the territory east of the Prut: after all, the window jambs of the chapel of Hotin castle were decorated with "baguettes croisées" (Ghimpu 2000, 73). The Bălineşti church appears to have had a lasting influence at several sites. The outline plan of the wooden church at Petruşeni mirrors that of Bălineşti, displaying both a polygonal *pronaos* and a bell tower-cum-porch attached to the south wall of the *pronaos*. The Petruşeni church post-dates that at Bălineşti, dating to 1702, although the current fabric may have replaced an older church at the site (ibid., 106-8). More particularly, there are parallels between the plan of the Bălineşti church and a stone church excavated at Orhei.

The medieval fortress and settlement at Orhei is incorporated within a monumental landscape known today as Orheiul Vechi ("Old Orhei") [see illustration 20]. Extensive archaeological research has been carried out on sites and monuments at Orheiul Vechi, dating from prehistory to the modern age. Professional research began with a series of excavations conducted by archaeologists from the USSR, directed by a Ukrainian, Gheorghe Smirnov (1903-1979), between 1947 and 1962. Smirnov was responsible for revealing most of the components of the modern museum complex at Orheiul Vechi but he was not well-qualified as an archaeologist, having been a labourer on excavations prior to taking the lead at Orheiul Vechi, and there is disagreement among scholars about his legacy. Although much of his analysis has been revised subsequently, Smirnov's work eschewed the Slav bias which was prevalent in Soviet-era archaeology in Moldova and thus receives favourable comment in several Moldovan and Romanian sources. However, Vlad Ghimpu has criticised Smirnov's ignorance of local language and history, and in particular his lack of familiarity with the development of Moldovan church architecture (which by the 1940s had been reviewed extensively by Iorga and Balş) (ibid., 78-9).

Smirnov excavated the remains of a small stone church on the Peştere promontory at Orhei and dated it to the early 15th century. The church was little more than 15m in length. The ground plan and proportions of this building resemble that at Bălineşti, as there was a square *naos*, polygonal *pronaos*, and a porch attached to the south wall of the *pronaos*. This typology actually suggests a building of the early 16th century, rather than of the early 15th. Records indicate that Orhei was sacked by a Tatar force in 1499, an event which may have necessitated the construction of a new church. Ghimpu suggests that the close parallels between the outline of the Bălineşti church and that excavated at Orhei indicates that *logofăt* Ioan Tăutu was responsible for both foundations, and that the Orhei church can be dated to the first decade of the 16th century, only a few years after work started at Bălineşti. The high-status of the church at Orhei is evidenced by the discovery of two burials in the *naos*, the bodies of a man and a woman in rich attire who are thought to have been a *pârcălab* and his wife: the last mention of a *pârcălab* at Orhei comes from 1543 (ibid., 80-1).

Further investigation of the remains of the church by Ion Hâncu in the 1990s established that the foundations overlaid a 14th-century pit or grave. Hâncu thought that the construction of the church might thereby be dated to "the middle of the second half of the 15th century" (Hâncu 1999, 19). This dating does not quite accord with Ghimpu's theory (although Ghimpu actually cites Hâncu's work in support of his own dating scheme) but there is evidence from a second church that does support Ghimpu's late dating for the stone church. The remains of a wooden church with stone foundations were excavated by Smirnov near the stone church (a burnt layer indicated that the wooden church had been destroyed, presumably during the Tatar raid) and a tombstone was found in the southwest corner of the *naos* bearing an inscription which included the identity of the deceased, the "brother of Galiş". Vlaicu Galiş was *pârcălab* at Orhei in the 1480s. It is possible that the burial of his brother took place during the period of Galiş' control at Orhei, and from this it is reasonable to argue that the wooden church was the principal place of worship at Orhei into the late 15th century; the construction of the stone church only became necessary once the wooden church had been destroyed (Ghimpu 2000, 82-3, 91).

The ground plan of the wooden church highlights the differentiation in building styles between the area east of the Prut and Ştefan's heartland. This church was rectangular in shape, approximately 14m in length, but with square terminals at the west and east ends (that at the west end was a porch). There is evidence of internal partitioning – including a presumed iconostasis at the east end – but the greater part of the church interior was a rectangular *naos.* This "open plan" church design is in contrast to the compartmentalised, triconch style which predominated in Ştefan's foundations from the 1480s onwards. The rectangular plan has parallels in Transylvanian churches of the 13th century and was inspired by Cistercian Gothic. Ghimpu argues that this represents a local tradition in Moldova that, while superseded by the Byzantine-inspired churches of the Muşatin voivodes, was perpetuated by boyar founders. While the architectural evidence at Bălineşti and Arbore points to a fusion of regional tradition and features of the Moldavian Style, the archaeological evidence from Orhei suggests that there was diversity in church building practices continuing late into Ştefan's reign (ibid., 83-5).

A combination of archaeological and documentary evidence does indicate that the voivode was closely involved in the development of Căpriana monastery. In the 15th and 16th centuries, Căpriana was one of the principal religious complexes in the territory east of the Prut (Cereteu 2004, 74). Situated 35km northwest of Chişinău on the banks of the river Bâc, in a valley in the Codri region of forests and hills, the site is first attested in 1420 in a document issued by the chancery of Alexandru cel Bun, in which it is named "poiană a lui Chiprian" – "Ciprian's clearing". Documents issued in Ştefan's name in 1470 indicate that the monastery was by then the property of one of Alexandru's daughters, but was subordinate to the monastery at Neamţ. Relatively little is known about Căpriana thereafter until the monastery church was rebuilt by Petru Rareş, probably between 1541 and 1545 (Postică 1996, 109-10; Ghimpu 2000, 109-113; Cereteu 2004, 74-5).

A programme of excavation was carried out in and around the monastic church – which is dedicated to the Dormition of the Mother of God – in the summer of 1993, with the aim of addressing questions about the chronology of the development of the church [illustration 19]. In the aftermath of Moldovan independence, the excavations were sponsored by the Ministry of Culture

and the Institute of Archaeology and Ancient History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova, in collaboration with the Romanian Institute of Archaeology "Vasile Parvan": this official sponsorship and joint venture with a Romanian institution represented an innovation in Moldovan research, as did the project itself, for the archaeology of Christian buildings had been largely ignored during the Soviet era (Postică 1996, 109). The results of the excavations produced a debate among specialists concerning both the chronology of developments at Căpriana and wider issues concerning the development of the Moldavian Style.

The ensemble of buildings at Căpriana is not like those in the walled monasteries of Bucovina. With the monastery set close to the river's edge, the Bâc forms a natural defence on the west side of the precincts. The contemporary monastic buildings lie within two walled enclosures, which are both asymmetrical. On the northwest side of the monastery, a wall of stone and brick, punctuated by the original gateway, dates to the time of Petru Rareş. The Church of the Dormition is enclosed by this early wall. To the southeast of the Church of the Dormition, the Church of St. George (1903) is enclosed by 19th-century walls; in between the two churches is the Chapel of St. Nicholas (1824-40), dating from the early years of Tsarist rule in the territory. Several buildings house the cells and communal facilities of the community, in what is a rather sprawling arrangement that lacks the impression of planning observable in the Putna foundation, for example (Postică 1996).

The 1993 excavations focused on the environs of the Church of the Dormition (no other buildings of the medieval monastery were revealed) (ibid., 111). Three trenches were opened within the church itself, but for the most part, the programme involved opening trenches against the exterior of the fabric and investigating paved areas and terracing around the church. The church built by Petru Rareş is approximately 36m in length and triconch in plan, but it was extensively remodelled between 1819 and 1821, when a massive baroque tower was built to replace the traditional tower over the *naos*, and a square bell tower was erected over the church porch, features which serve to disguise the late medieval character of the fabric (ibid., 109) [illustration 18]. However, the archaeological work revealed the foundations of the church and those of its

15th-century predecessor, establishing the principal stages of development while raising questions concerning the dating of the early church. The environs of the church were peppered with burials, some of which had been disturbed by building works, but the relatively short excavation season did not allow for detailed study of burials, within or without the church (ibid., 110-11; Cereteu 2004, 75).

The excavators determined that there were two principal buildings on the site – "Căpriana I" and "Căpriana II". Căpriana II was the church of Petru Rareş, a classic Orthodox church featuring a ground plan typical of the developed Moldavian Style – porch, *pronaos*, *gropniţa*, *naos* (with two semi-circular lateral apses), and a semi-circular apse behind the altar. Beneath the foundations for this church, the excavations revealed a series of features illustrative of the evolution of the building: a demolition level, the foundations of an earlier church (Căpriana I) and, beneath these, a burnt layer that was indicative of tree clearance in preparation for building works. The stone foundations of the early church were substantial, being 2.8m wide and 3.15m deep; there was also evidence of stone elevation built upon these foundations, so it is likely that Căpriana I was a stone church: the dimensions of this building were slightly larger than those of Căpriana II, which overlies it (Postică 1996, 110; Cereteu 2004, 75-6).

The excavators attributed the stone church of Căpriana I to the time of Alexandru cel Bun, linking the archaeology to the documentary evidence from the 1420s. The size of the first church (the ground plan is of similar proportions to that at Putna) and the fact that Căpriana II appears to follow the plan of Căpriana I led to the suggestion that the 15th-century church is evidence of the early development in Moldova of the triconch plan, including a *gropniţa*, that is typical of the churches built late in the reign of Ştefan cel Mare. Comparisons with the ground plans of the churches at Bistriţa and Probota, the early fabrics of which are known to predate the "great architectural upsurge" of Ştefan's reign, seem to reinforce this argument, especially given that the

gropnița first appeared in Moldovan church-building at Bistrița (Postică 1996, 110-11; Ghimpu 2000, 124; Cereteu 2004, 76-8; see clause 1.2 above).[40]

However, archaeological work at Bistrița has revealed that the Church of the Assumption there is the product of a succession of building phases and that the ground plan of Alexandru's church was not quite that of Bistrița in its developed form: while featuring a triconch interior, the exterior of Alexandru's church was rectangular, reflecting Western as well as Byzantine influences. On this basis, Cereteu argues that Căpriana I should in fact be dated to late in Ştefan's reign (he suggests 1491-96), some 70 years later than the dating suggested by the the excavators (Cereteu 2004, 77-8).

Ştefan is claimed as the founder of Căpriana monastery in a 19th-century votive painting in the Church of St. George in the Zographu monastery on Mount Athos, complementing folklore from the area around Căpriana (Postică 1996, 19; Ghimpu 2000, 113, 118).[41] Citing references in documents issued in Ştefan's name in 1470 to the presence of woods and clearings in the vicinity of the monastery, Vlad Ghimpu, one of the excavation team in 1993, argues that Alexandru's foundation would have been a wooden church, located in "Ciprian's clearing" at a distance from Ştefan's stone foundation (Ghimpu 2000, 124). There are clear parallels here with the developments at Putna (see clauses 1.1 and 2.1 above).

The ground plan of Căpriana I suggested by the archaeology is too close to the classic, developed form of the Moldavian Style to permit dating it to a period earlier than the late 15th century. In this respect, it should be noted that the nature of the archaeological work at Căpriana in

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[40] Not *all* scholars agree that the *gropnița* appeared first at Bistrița; Virgil Vătășianu has argued that the formal tomb room was first incorporated into the plan of the church at Moldovița monastery (Cereteu 2004, 77).

[41] Căpriana was made subject to the Zographu monastery in the late 17th century (Asociaţa Museion).

1993 – in particular, the limited interventions inside the church – restrict a nuanced analysis of the development of Căpriana I, which could have been *extended* by Ştefan from an initial building established by Alexandru (in keeping with Ştefan's work at monasteries to the west of the Prut). The example of Căpriana highlights some of the limitations of church archaeology (as well as the lacunae in the documentary record) but does draw-in evidence from across the Principality and emphasises certain complexities attaching to the evolution of the Moldavian Style.

Summary of Section One

The published archaeological research carried out at churches and monasteries in Moldova and Romania – which is seen to complement documentary evidence – contains a significant general theme in that several of Alexandru cel Bun's monastic foundations were built in wood, to be succeeded or replaced by Ştefan's buildings in stone. Church-building in stone was known in Alexandru's time – (and before – the 14th-century Mirăuţi Church is evidence of this) – while building in wood remained important in Moldova into the early modern period, as is apparent in the church at Petruşeni. However, taken as a whole, the progression evidenced by the archaeology from wooden monasteries in the early decades of the 15th century to elaborate stone complexes by the end of the century emphasises the increasing technological sophistication to be found in the monasteries and churches of the Moldavian Style sponsored by Ştefan cel Mare.

In addition, whereas Alexandru's monasteries were situated within wooded areas, Ştefan cleared the trees. The exposure of the monasteries seems to have necessitated the construction of formal defences. Putna was certainly defended by walled precincts and elements of military architecture. Further archaeological work is required at Căpriana to reveal the original nature of the precincts, which today are somewhat irregular in comparison with the clearly defined perimeters of the monasteries of Bucovina: it seems likely that some form of defence would have been built at Căpriana to offset the felling of the surrounding woodland. The defensive element at Moldovan monasteries links their construction to the considerable efforts made during the reign of Ştefan cel Mare to develop and expand Moldova's fortresses.

SECTION TWO: Fortresses

Ştefan's reign represented the culmination of a century of castle-building by Moldovan voivodes. The dual elements of continuity and innovation exhibited in Ştefan's church-building can also be seen in his military and defensive works, not least the development of the legacy of Alexandru cel Bun's network of castles and fortified places. By the end of Ştefan's reign the Principality's defences were diverse, exhibiting architectural influences from Europe and the East, and their construction histories were often complex.

This section focuses on the extensive archaeological work that has been carried out at three of the key 15th-century fortresses. State-sponsored research over an extended period has brought about a genuine increase in knowledge while at the same time allowing monuments to be reinterpreted as cultural resources. Ştefan's association with these sites has often been a key factor in promoting their investigation and, in several cases, reconstruction.

1   Orhei

Ironically, of the numerous castles and fortifications with which Ştefan cel Mare is associated, the site that has received the most sustained attention from professional archaeologists is the least conventional of the Principality's defences – the medieval citadel or fortress on the Peştere promontory at Orheiul Vechi. As described above in Section 1, archaeological work has been carried out within the multi-period, culturally diverse landscape of Orheiul Vechi on a near continuous basis since 1947. Orheiul Vechi was the location for a programme of state-sponsored research throughout the Soviet era, work which continued through the 1990s despite economic and political turmoil within the newly independent Republic.[42] Orheiul Vechi has served as the training ground for several generations of Moldovan archaeologists and the inheritors of Gheorghe Smirnov and Pavel Bârnea, the Soviet-era excavators, have been able to continue digging at the site by maintaining political support for the project and by attracting NGO

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[42] Orheiul Vechi was described in the mid 1980s as "a state history and archaeology reserve" (Shukhat 1986, 109).

sponsorship and commercial backing. In this way, Ion Hâncu, Gheorghe Postică, Sergiu Musteaţă and others have carried on the tradition of using Orheiul Vechi as a teaching centre for students of archaeology (Postică 1999, 7-8; Postică 2006, 200).

Orheiul Vechi has received such outstanding attention from researchers because of the complexity of the landscape and the numerous archaeological horizons and periods of occupation which are evidenced there. A site of great natural beauty, it encapsulates the Republic's varied history and has provided opportunities for Slavophiles and Romanianists to advance theories about the ethnic characteristics of the inhabitants of the Republic. The Moldovan Museums Association (*Asociația Museion*) describes the archaeology of Orheiul Vechi as "...an excellent example of the complex process of ethnogenesis and cultural-genesis (*culturogeneză*) in the territory between the Prut and the Nistru..." (Asociația Museion – Monumente de arheologie). Orheiul Vechi was entered on the "Tentative List" of World Heritage Sites by UNESCO in 2007 (World Heritage Centre).

The Peştere citadel survives in the modern landscape as a large trapezoidal enclosure of low stone walls (reconstructed in 1974-76), which define the exterior of the feature [photographs 36-39] (Postică 2006, 41). The bases of decorated, essentially decorative, circular towers are visible at the four corners of the enclosure, while a semi-circular bastion is positioned in each of the southern, western and eastern walls, and two angular bastions are situated in the northern wall [illustration 21]. The northern wall is 127.08m in length, the southern wall is 121.86m long, the western wall is 106.97m long, and the eastern wall has a length of 92.26m. The width of the walls is approximately 1.9m; the corner towers are approximately 3m in diameter. The entrance gateway was located in the southern wall (Hâncu 1999, 16; Postică 2006, 201). The original height of the perimeter walls is not known.

The remains of the interior buildings excavated by Smirnov – in particular, the residence of the *pârcălab* of Orhei, which abutted the northern wall – have been backfilled and an access road to the museum landscape transects the citadel. Nevertheless, though restored, the perimeter walls

represent the overall extent of the citadel for a visitor and the stepped character of the walling in the southwest corner shows how the fortification was adapted to the topography of the promontory [photograph 36].

While the citadel is far less imposing than the surviving castle at Hotin in Ukraine and Petru Rareş' fortress at Soroca on the Moldovan border with Ukraine, Orhei played a significant role in the history of the Principality's borderlands, having been the site of a Tatar stronghold and the location for several important confrontations between the forces of the Moldovan voivodes and invaders from east of the Nistru. As such, Orhei has produced unique archaeological results in the context of the development of Moldovan fortifications in the 15th century.

The governor's residence or "palace" (*palatul pârcălabului*) was the main focus of Smirnov's early work at Orheiul Vechi [photograph 35]. Like the citadel itself, this building had an irregular plan – the eastern wall of the residence being foreshortened so that it adjoined the northern perimeter wall of the citadel at an angle; the interior spaces of the residence in the northeastern corner appear distorted as a consequence [see illustration 21]. The residence ultimately had 26 rooms of varying sizes, and some of the rooms underwent significant changes in the course of the building's transition from Tatar to native Moldovan use.

The relatively substantial walls were faced with red bricks of regular size, 25x25x5cm each, joined with lime mortar. In its first, Tatar, phase (c.1330-69), when the Orhei region was under the control of the Golden Horde[43], the building appears to have been a place of worship as well as an administrative centre. The largest room, in the middle of the building, is thought to have

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[43] The "Golden Horde" is the name given to the polity established by Khan Baty, the grandson of the great Mongol leader Jenghiz Khan. The Golden Horde formed a division of the Mongol Empire, which exploited the Russian principalities, in particular, for over 200 years. Baty led the Mongol assault on Europe which, between 1237 and 1241, devastated the Rus lands and penetrated deep into the Kingdom of Hungary by way of Polish, Moldovan and Wallachian territory. Baty then established his capital at Sarai on the lower Volga, from where he and his successors ruled as subordinates of the Great Khan at Karakorum.

been a mosque: the basement or crypt of this central room contained the tomb of a dignitary. The tomb room was lined with dressed and decorated stones that had been taken from another building on the Peştere promontory, thought to be the caravansarai [see illustration 20]. One stone – possibly the tombstone – was decorated with an inscription and Arab ornament (*ornament arabesc*). Entry to the tomb room was effected through a special opening in the vaulted ceiling.

The change of the building's use following the retreat of the Golden Horde was evidenced by the conversion of the tomb room into a store room; a new entrance to the crypt was punched through the wall in the northeastern corner. The building has been identified in this period as being the residence and administrative centre of the Moldovan governor of the Orhei border region. The main entrance to the building was transformed by the construction of a verandah (R: *cerdac*) and exterior decoration in the style of local Moldovan domestic architecture. However, eventually the building was abandoned following its destruction by fire (most likely during a Crimean Tatar raid, thought to have occurred in 1510; raids were common, as the destructive raid of 1499 mentioned above in Section 1, clause 2.2 testifies). The effects of fire were found "everywhere" and the fire had been so intense that the archaeological remains were unstable: in the 1990s, Hâncu concluded that the residence could only be exposed again, and the walls preserved, if under cover of a state-of-the-art pavilion (Hâncu 1999, 16, 19; Orheiul Vechi; Postică 2004).

In the 1990s, researchers were particularly concerned with the chronology of the citadel's development set out by Smirnov, following his work on the defences and excavation of the *pârcălab*'s residence. Smirnov discovered the remains of a fortification of wood and earth beneath the later stone citadel. He attributed the earlier defence to the 12th-13th centuries, supposedly being a construction by the native population which pre-dated the arrival of the Golden Horde and the establishment of the Tatar town, Şehr al-Cedid, on the Peştere promontory. Smirnov attributed the stone citadel to the reign of Ştefan cel Mare, implying that the *pârcălab*'s residence predated the northern perimeter wall of the stone fortress, which it abutted, by around 100 years. Smirnov's successor, Pavel Bârnea, did not conduct any excavations in the citadel but revised Smirnov's

chronology by arguing that the wooden fortress dated to the reign of Alexandru cel Bun (thus post-dating the Tatar occupation of Orhei) (Postică 1999, 39; Orheiul Vechi).

Architectural assessment of the citadel by T. Nestorov and Ion Hâncu in the 1980s challenged Smirnov and Bârnea's chronologies. The "Oriental" character of the surviving walls led them to suggest that the stone citadel was constructed in the 14th century, during Orhei's incorporation within the Golden Horde, rather than by Ştefan cel Mare in the second half of the 15th century (Postică 1999, 39). This suggestion automatically dated the wooden fortification to at least the early years of Tatar occupation, and possibly earlier. In 1996, Gheorghe Postică commenced new excavations within the citadel with the aim of testing Nestorov and Hâncu's thesis.

Excavation sectors were opened at five key points within and without the citadel: trenches running out from the northwest and northeast corners of the citadel perimeter; trenches running along the western wall from the southwest corner to the bastion at the mid-point of the western wall; trenches running out from the southern wall in the southwest corner; and a sector in the interior of the citadel in the southwestern corner (Sector 76) [illustration 22]. Postică established what he described as "perfect stratification", confirming that the site of the citadel was in continuous use between the 13th/14th centuries and the early 17th century, distinguishing eight chronological "horizons" (Postică 1999, 39; Orheiul Vechi; Postică 2006, 204). His headline conclusions were that Smirnov had been correct to attribute the fortification of wood and earth to the period before Tatar occupation at Orhei, but the attribution of the stone citadel to the reign of Ştefan cel Mare was wrong: the stone citadel was constructed by the Tatars and then taken over by the Moldovans following the retreat of the Golden Horde; it was "reconstructed" during the reign of Ştefan (Postică 2004).

The first "chronological horizon", dating to the 13th century/first-half of the 14th century, was represented by sporadic ceramic materials, found in the southwest of the Peştere promontory,

associated with a local "Moldovan" population. The second chronological period was far better evidenced. Dated precisely by Postică from the first half of the 14th century to the year 1369 (the year in which sources state that the Golden Horde retreated from the region), this horizon represented the Tatar occupation of Orhei and the construction of Şehr al-Cedid over the "autochthonous" habitation level.

Combining the stratigraphic results with a study of the numismatics recovered from his excavations, together with documentary records, Postică argued that the perimeter stone walls of the citadel were constructed in the 1360s, probably within the years 1366-69, enclosing the building later known as the residence of the *pârcălab*. (In this respect, Postică's argument confirms Smirnov's original proposition that the governor's residence pre-dated the perimeter stone wall of the citadel, but the chronology is condensed.) While other discoveries on the promontory, such as lime kilns and a grave, attested to its mixed use in this period, the excavator focused on the importance of Şehr al-Cedid as a regional political centre. Coins discovered at the site indicated that between 1363 and 1365, the "new town" was the residence of a Khan Abdallah. Coins and documentary evidence suggested that in the last two years of Tatar occupation, Şehr al-Cedid was the seat of an Emir Dimitrie, described by Postică as a "political separatist" in his relationship with the Golden Horde.

In the third stage of Postică's chronology, the final quarter of the 14th century, the "Oriental" town gave way to a Moldovan settlement, based within the stone citadel. A building containing a brick oven was discovered, within which a preponderance of "Moldovan" ceramics were found. The fourth stage encompassed the reigns of Alexandru cel Bun and his successors in the first half of the 15th century: several residential buildings were found within the southwestern sector of the citadel, including one in Sector 76 of "Oriental" style, built beside the citadel wall, which had been subject to extensive modifications [illustrations 21 and 22; photograph 38].

The reign of Ştefan cel Mare constituted the fifth horizon in Postică's scheme. In this period, the stone residential building in Sector 76 was rebuilt, the citadel fortifications were augmented, and artillery positions were probably added to the walls. The outstanding discovery dating to this phase were the two bronze cannon which were found in the rubble of a cellar belonging to the residential building in Sector 76. The rubble in the cellar was interpreted as belonging to the 16th-century phase of the building and the excavator suggested that the late 15th-century cannon were hidden during a raid by Crimean Tatars in 1510 (Postică 2006, 206).

In addition to residential buildings, an extensive cemetery was investigated in Sector 72, outside the northwest corner of the citadel. Forty-five graves dating to the 15th and early 16th centuries were revealed, associated with the wooden church excavated by Smirnov (ibid., 138-40, 207; see Section 1, clause 2.2).

The reigns of Alexandru cel Bun and Ştefan cel Mare saw the flourishing of Orhei, with a growth in population on the Peştere promontory, the development of commerce and an increase in the local circulation of coinage. The citadel became the fortified residence of the region's *pârcălab* while a civilian settlement developed on the promontory. However, the final phases in the chronology established by Postică witnessed a rapid decline at the site. In the sixth horizon, in the first half of the 16th century, the citadel was vacated and the town of Orhei was displaced to another site, 15km to the northwest. In the seventh horizon, in the middle of the 16th century, the citadel was demolished, possibly by Prince Alexandru Lăpuşneanu on the orders of his Ottoman overlords.[44] In the eighth horizon, in the second half of the 16th century and into the early 17th century, there was a failed attempt to repair the citadel associated with Prince Ieremia Movilă (1595-1600 and 1600-06) (ibid., 207-8).

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[44] A great builder and renovator of churches, Lăpuşneanu's political weakness led him to be a great destroyer of castles!

The two bronze cannon discovered in Sector 76 raised interesting possibilities concerning the occupation of Orhei in the later years of Ştefan's reign. The oldest cannon *of this type* to have been discovered in the Romanian lands to date, they compare stylistically with examples which date to the 1470s found in Poland, the Czech Republic, and elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe. The heraldic mark on the first cannon is probably Polish-Lithuanian, suggesting that the cannon was manufactured by a Polish gunmaker [illustration 23]. The excavator hypothesised that the cannon had been captured from the retreating Polish army following the failed siege of Suceava in 1497 (the Chronicle of Bistriţa records that the Moldovans captured Polish artillery at the battle of Codrii Cosminului that season). The second cannon, which features a rather crude heraldic mark, is thought to be a copy of the first cannon, perhaps manufactured by the Moldovans themselves (ibid. 110-12).

It is unclear at what point these two small artillery pieces were taken to the citadel at Orhei, and no other examples of guns have been found at the site. The discovery does tie-in with Ştefan's documented adoption of modern firearms and the establishment of sophisticated architectural solutions to the threat of siege artillery at the major defended sites within the Principality (see clauses 2 and 3 below). However, the citadel at Orhei was probably ill-equipped to deal with that threat – despite benefitting from formidable natural defences, not least the cliff face above the Răut on the northern side of the perimeter. The thickness of the walls does not compare well with those at Suceava and Cetatea Albă, for example. Furthermore, as Postică's investigations confirmed, the style of the fortification, established in the second half of the 14th century, was antiquated by Ştefan's time.

The in-filled circular stone towers at the corners of the Orhei citadel represent a traditional Oriental element in the design, known as "*guldasta*", which was decorative rather than part of a functional defensive scheme (ibid., 54). It is unlikely that the small-scale towers and bastions at Orhei could have served as gun emplacements, a feature which was common to Ştefan's major fortresses.

The walls of the Tatar citadel were plastered, inside and out, another feature which indicates that the citadel was conceived as a defended civil residence rather than as a military fortress (ibid., 54-5). The work carried out on the defences of the citadel during Ştefan's reign does not seem to have altered this essential characteristic of the original Tatar complex. Orhei was never a *castle* and had limited success as a place of refuge. Though known latterly as a "citadel" and as a fortress, even in Ştefan's period Orhei retained the status of a fortified residence and a high-status civil settlement. There is very limited archaeological evidence to suggest otherwise. Orhei is an anomaly amongst Ştefan's defensive network.

2   Cetatea Albă

Like the settlement at Orhei, the fortress-port at Cetatea Albă in the south of the Principality had a complex occupation history. Located strategically on a promontory inside the estuary (*liman*) of the Nistru, Cetatea Albă passed through many hands before becoming a Moldovan possession: the site overlies Tyras, a Greek colonial settlement of the 6th century BC, and was thereafter a Roman frontier post, a Byzantine port, a Ruthenian possession, a Tatar possession and, from the late 14th century until 1484, a key Moldovan trading station and defence (Rădvan 2010, 343-4, 473-9).[45] Cetatea Albă was the site of the martyrdom of St. John the New, and it was from here that his remains were translated to Suceava on the orders of Alexandru cel Bun in 1402.

In Ştefan's reign, Cetatea Albă was the headquarters of the *pârcălab* for the region and home to a permanent "voievodal garrison" (Šlapac 2001, 232-3; see Chapter 2, clause 2.1.2). A melting pot of peoples and cultures, Cetatea Albă outstripped Orhei's cultural diversity and it was a far grander settlement than that hill town and modest fortification in the midlands east of the Prut. Today, Cetatea Albă survives as the fortress of Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky (known in the 19th century as

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[45] Andreescu suggests that Cetatea Albă may have come into Moldovan hands in the 1390s, after the reign of Petru I, while others have suggested dates in the late 1370s and mid 1380s (Andreescu 2000, 76-7; Rădvan 2010, 478-9).

Akkerman), in southern Ukraine: a substantial complex with a circumference of over 2km, standing walls and towers over 10m in height and a landward ditch some 13m deep. Although it was also a civilian centre, Cetatea Albă is an example of the major military architecture with which Ştefan is associated (Finkel et al. 2006, 9; Akkerman).

2.1   The city-fortress

The medieval complex, augmented and enlarged by Ottoman and Russian military architects in the early modern and modern periods, comprises four principal features: a "citadel" – a "donjon-type tower" with circular corner towers, in the northern part of the fortress, attached to the curtain wall overlooking the Nistru; an adjacent enclosure known as the "Garrison Yard", which is divided by an internal wall from a larger enclosure in the southern part of the complex known as the "Civil Yard"; and a walled enclosure on the western shoreline of the Nistru, known as the "Port Yard" (Finkel et al. 2008, 8). The double perimeter walls, bounded by a continuous landward ditch, are punctuated by 30 defensive towers and bastions [illustrations 26 and 27]. The fortress complex stands on rock, but the surrounding terrain is "watery ... where reed-beds and soft soils are prevalent" (Finkel et al. 2007, 13).

The towers and bastions are sited at regular distances, offering structural support and protection to the curtain walls. In its later Moldovan phase, the towers of Cetatea Albă incorporated defensive features such as hoardings, machicolations and bow windows. The variety of shapes – including "prism-shaped" towers with rectangular or octagonal bases and "cylindrical-shaped" towers – reflects styles common in the "Orient" and in the West. The strengthening of the curtain walls, which were crenellated or topped with defensive parapets, completed by Ştefan, was part of a general response to developments in siege artillery, just as the towers and bastions – autonomous defensive units within the fortress complex – provided platforms on which to mount artillery (Šlapac 2001, 234).

The military use of gunpowder is first attested in Western Europe in the 1320s. In the 14th and 15th centuries, European castle and town walls came to be built generally lower and thicker than before in order to withstand shot, incorporating rounded towers to deflect shot better than rectangular towers. Machicolations atop towers and sharply angled walls provided defences to the weaker areas of walls in-between towers. Towers were also used as artillery platforms, while walls were pierced with round holes for guns rather than slits for archers (Nicholson 2004, 86).

The citadel is thought to have been the earliest stone fortification at Cetatea Albă, dated by an inscription, formerly placed on the outer west wall, to c.1395 (Šlapac 2001, 233). The Moldovan fortress developed out from the citadel over the course of the 15th century, most likely starting from a relatively simple earth bank and wooden palisade following the line of the later Garrison Yard walls (Akkerman). Šlapac has established a chronology for the development of the fortress based largely on documentary and pictorial sources, suggesting that the Garrison Yard walls were standing by the 1440s, to be supplemented with towers by 1454; Ştefan completed the main gate, leading into the Civil Yard, in 1476 and the stone walls of the Civil Yard were constructed by 1479 (Šlapac 2001, 233). (For inscriptions recording these works in Ştefan's name, and in the names of the *pârcălabs* Luca, Duma and Herman, see Catalogue 1958, 217-8.)

The work of archaeologists at Cetatea Albă reflects the political changes and shifting national boundaries in the region in the 20th century. Following Russian antiquarian interest in the medieval inscriptions at Cetatea Albă in the mid 19th century, formal archaeological work commenced in 1900 with an "expedition" to Tyras (remains of which are to be found outside the main gate of the fortress, adjacent to the eastern wall) (Chetraru 1994, 33-40; Akkerman). Further excavation work was carried out by the University of Iaşi in 1918/19, and was continued in 1927 by a Romanian commission for historical monuments which also carried out restoration of the main gate and the curtain walls (Catalogue 1958, 218-9; Chetraru 1994, 118-9).

In the post-war era, Soviet authorities carried out a range of work on Tyras and within the fortress (Šlapac 2001, 32). A survey of the fortress was carried out in 1955 but this was followed up by works which led to the "levelling" of the "undulating" surface within the walls and the loss of archaeological material (Finkel et al. 2006, 10). Several programmes of excavation and survey were carried out at Cetatea Albă, between 1977 and 1980 and in 1982, by the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences; and a further programme was directed by Romanian archaeologist Ionel Cândea in 1997 and 1998, all of which resulted in the discovery of a church beneath the remains of a 15th century mosque in the Civil Yard, and work on the chapel in the citadel (Ghimpu 2000, 62, 64; Šlapac 2001, 32, 35; Cândea 2004, 117). Subsequent "restoration" of the fortress has been criticised by recent international researchers for "effectively remaking many parts of the site" (Finkel et al. 2006, 10).

The chronology of the development of the fortress, particularly the effects of the transition from Moldovan to Ottoman occupation, has prompted a debate between the Romanian archaeologist Cândea and the Moldovan architectural historian Šlapac, the latter being forced to revise an initial "Ottoman hypothesis" that the citadel was completely rebuilt after 1484, on the basis that the "chapel" (R: *paraclis*) in the citadel has been shown by the archaeology to predate the Ottoman takeover (Cândea 2004, 117-119). Cândea has also questioned Šlapac's suggestion that the church discovered in the 1980s in the Civil Yard, beneath a later mosque, represented a "second chapel" at Cetatea Albă. The date range suggested by the excavators indicates that the church in question may have been founded in the 13th century, notwithstanding the stylistic similarities with later, Moldovan churches noted by Šlapac (ibid., 119-20). Given that several other churches are attested at Cetatea Albă, the church in the Civil Yard appears to show how, by 1484, the fortress was densely occupied; the chapel in the citadel was surely for the private use of the *pârcălab*.

In recent years, Cetatea Albă has been the subject of both a multi-disciplinary international research project and a programme of restoration and promotion sponsored by the Ukrainian government. While the latter is essentially a municipal campaign intended to enhance Bilhorod-

Dnistrovsky as a site for international tourism[46], the former – the "Akkerman Fortress Project", sponsored by the British Institute at Ankara – seeks to enhance academic knowledge of the site through a combination of archaeological and historical research, and architectural and geophysical survey.[47] The Akkerman Fortress Project is manned by specialists in Ottoman history and its main focus is on the Ottoman occupation of the site, from 1484 onwards, when Akkerman formed part of a chain of strongholds protecting the Black Sea territories of the Ottoman Empire. However, in seeking to revise previous assumptions that the Ottomans carried out little work on the structure of Cetatea Albă, the project has brought to light certain aspects of the condition of the Moldovan fortress at the time of its falling into Ottoman possession (Finkel et al. 2006, 9; Ostapchuk et al. 2009, 6).

Excavation and architectural survey carried out by the Akkerman Fortress Project has focused on the Port Yard and revealed that, for all the structural development and adaptation to sierge warfare carried out by the Moldovan builders at Cetatea Albă, there was a major weakness in the defences of the fortress. The Port Yard defences comprised a shore wall and barbican, but in 1484 the wall was quite low – about 3.5m in height, topped with crenellations. This wall was subsequently enhanced and topped by musket loopholes, apparently a reaction by the Ottomans to an inadequate defensive platform that had relied on the occupiers firing arrows from the low crenellated wall. It seems that, while Ştefan's fortress was well-provisioned with reinforced walls and gun emplacements on the landward side, the shore defences along the *liman* were not up-to-date and this may have been a factor in the city's capitulation to the seaborne Ottoman forces (Finkel et al. 2008, 8; Ostapchuk et al. 2009, 6).

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[46] For details of this Ukrainian heritage initiative, see http://www.fondazione-delbianco.org/inglese/InsertNews/Akkerman_Fortress.htm.

[47] One of the goals of this interdisciplinary project is "to work at a specific location where both historical and archaeological data are rich and overlap and thereby allow a mutual informing between these two disciplines" (Ostapchuk et al. 2009, 7). This appears to be a more nuanced attempt to combine history and archaeology than has been evidenced by work at sites in Romania (see the Introduction to this Chapter 5 and Section 3, clause 1 below).

2.2 "Another Constantinople"

While individual elements of the defences at Cetatea Albă derived from Byzantine models and were most likely the work of Byzantine builders[48], the ensemble – a city built on a coastal promontory, with massive sea and landward defences dependent upon curtain walls – recalled Constantinople itself. Like many fortresses in the West and the East, from the castle of Caernarfon built for King Edward I of England (1272-1307) to the walls of the Moscow kremlin, the walls of Cetatea Albă derived from the 5th-century Theodosian walls at Constantinople (Šlapac 2001, 235, 237; Nicholson 2004, 85).[49] The topography of Cetatea Albă was similar to that at Constantinople, enhancing the analogy between the two fortified cities (Rădvan 2010, 483). The cultural status of Constantinople within the Principality was sufficient alone to require at least a reference to the "Queen City" in the style and decoration of Moldovan military and civic architecture.

The survey by Mariana Šlapac of the identifiable medieval components of the fortress at Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky confirms the Byzantine influence at Cetatea Albă. The major elements of the complex each exhibit aspects of Byzantine military architecture, although the influences were not exclusively from Southeastern Europe. She describes the citadel as "an imported element of eastern origin, brought to Moldova by master-builders of Byzantine tradition" (Šlapac 2001, 235). The barbican on the shoreline of the Port Yard is judged to have been "an oriental invention which was brought to Europe by the crusaders" (ibid., 234). In general, the fortified gateways exhibit both Byzantine and European Gothic styles. The main gate to the complex, built by Ştefan, has two

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[48] The name of at least one architecht of Byzantine origin is known at Cetatea Albă: Theodor, who "emigrated" to the settlement in 1435 and whose name is recorded on an inscription dated to 1440 (Chetraru 1994, 38). It is conceivable that this was the same Theodor who worked at Putna in the 1460s (see Section 1, clause 1.1).

[49] The landward walls of Constantinople, which still survive in stretches in Istanbul, were built for Emperor Theodosius II (402-50) (initially as a single wall and then, after an earthquake, in their developed form from 447). Stretching for a distance of 3.5 miles between the Sea of Marmara and the Golden Horn (the stretch of water which bisected Constantinople), they comprise a tall inner wall, a terrace providing troop access to a lower outer wall, and a moat. The inner wall is 11m high and 4.6m thick at the base, punctuated by angular towers circa every 70m; the towers of the outer wall alternate with those of the inner wall, providing continuous protection. The inner wall is built of stone layered with courses of brick, with a concrete core (Geanakoplos 1984, 109-10; Mansel 1995, 3; Cyril Mango, "Constantinople", in Mango (ed.) 2002, 67-8; Nicholson 2004, 70; Phillips 2004, 147-8; Herrin 2008, 14, 318).

floors, the vault being supported by three ogival arcades, a standard feature of Gothic architecture (Catalogue 1958, 219; Šlapac 2001, 234).

Specific connections with Byzantine building styles are apparent in some of the many towers: Šlapac states that the dimensions of the southwest tower of the citadel comply with the "Byzantine measurement system", as do the dimensions of the entrance gate in the west wall (presumably, she is referring to the entrance into the Civil Yard from the Port Yard, the "Water Gate") and the exterior diameter of the northeast tower (perhaps tower 30, the "Fisher Tower") (Šlapac 2001, 235). The building materials found at Cetatea Albă are local – including gritstone, brick and timber – but the methods of construction display Byzantine technology: barrel vaulting (in the towers and bastions) was achieved by strengthening the walls with packing stones and lime mortar, with a system of wooden tie-beams binding the masonry, and the use of rows of bricks to join the facing stones with the packing materials (ibid., 236).

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The spiritual importance of Constantinople in Moldovan culture is apparent through its incorporation into the pictorial schema of the painted churches of Moldova: in the 16th century, "the Siege of Constantinople" was depicted as a continuation of the story of the Virgin relayed in the "Akathistos Hymn", a commonplace of the external frescoes (Ogden 2002, 56).

The Akathistos Hymn is a 7th-century "war hymn in the defence of Byzantium", which tells the story of how the procession of an icon of the Virgin through the streets of Constantinople brought her intercession when the city was under seige by Avars and Persians. After the eventual fall of Constantinople in 1453, the hymn became a feature of Moldovan religiosity, in part as a statement of the Principality's new role as the defender of Orthodoxy against the advance of the Ottomans (ibid., 72-3; Herrin 2008, 15).

The hymn is represented in the frescoes in 24 panels, divided in either four or six tiers. Depictions of the Siege of Constantinople follow the story of the Virgin's life and Dormition (Ogden 2002, 73-4). One of the earliest (and best) representations of the supposedly 7th-century siege appears at Moldoviţa (refounded by Petru Rareş in 1532), where the city is shown as a trapezoidal fortress enclosed by crenellated stone walls, punctuated with angular towers of varying height and size, some topped by steeples familiar from churches of the Moldavian Style. Large guns are clearly shown firing from the battlements and through gun ports in the lower walls [illustration 29]. The artist, Toma of Suceava, would have been influenced by Byzantine art, may have worked with Byzantine artists, and may even have seen the walls of Constantinople with his own eyes; but his representation of Constantinople drew strongly upon Moldovan military architecture and is a reflection of the great fortified places of the Principality (as the anachronistic guns at Moldoviţa testify). At Humor, Toma even painted himself as a Moldovan boyar leading the Byzantine army out of the city to meet an enemy attack (ibid., 74, 77, 142, 156, 160-1).

As a flourishing civil settlement – both within and outside the walls of the fortress – Cetatea Albă continued to be a melting pot and trade centre after the Ottoman takeover in 1484. Christians continued to live and worship there (a grant made by Pope Sixtus IV in the Papal Bull *Redemptor noster* in 1477 mentions two "cathedral" churches at Cetatea Albă, indicating a significant ecclesiastical infrastructure). The cult of St. John the New may well have continued to be significant in the community (Denize 2004, 103). Although there is archaeological evidence that a mosque replaced a church in the Civil Yard in the 15th century, documentary and epigraphic evidence points to there having been several churches or chapels dedicated to St. John the New at Cetatea Albă, including one church *extra murus*, posssibly near the reputed site of his martyrdom (Ghimpu 2000, 59-62). By 1484, while the focus of the cult had long since transferred to Suceava, Cetatea Albă probably remained a place of Christian pilgrimage, and to this extent at least, it retained its Moldovan character, even as the Ottomans rebuilt and extended the stone fortress [see illustration 28].

3   Suceava and the heartland fortresses

The *Cetatea de Scaun* at Suceava ("Citadel of Residence" or "princely citadel", hereafter "Suceava Castle") is situated on a wooded hilltop plateau on the eastern side of the town, above a small creek which divides the hillside from the rise on which the Mirăuți Church stands, some 200-300m to the northwest. The prince's court (*curtea domnească*), a fortified ensemble of domestic buildings, was located some 500m due west from the castle, within the confines of the late medieval town. From the mid-14th century, the town itself was enclosed within defences of earth ramparts, wooden palisades and ditches; these defences were extended during the 15th century as the settlement grew in importance as a voivodal residence and industrial centre (Bojoi et al. 1981, 65-7; Andronic 1991, 148) [illustration 35].

Suceava Castle formed part of an extensive military and civil complex on the plateau: extending eastwards from the castle there was a defensive zone of approach now known as the *Câmpul Şanțurilor* (the "Field of Ditches") [illustration 31]. This was a palisaded area which incorporated barracks and stables; residential buildings and small industrial units; a church or chapel with an extensive graveyard used in the 14th and 15th centuries; and a high-status building, the *casa domnească* ("Prince's House"), which may have served as an audience chamber and meeting house.

The collection of princely sites and structures at Suceava, in which the castle is pre-eminent, stand out as the most significant concentration of Muşatin buildings in the Principality, evidencing the status of Suceava as a place of voivodal residence, a "capital" for the Principality in the late middle ages. The castle also belongs to the wider grouping of strategic defences raised by the great Muşatin voivodes – Petru I, Alexandru cel Bun and Ştefan – and needs to be understood within the general context of the development of military architecture in Moldova, as well as in relation to the evolution of Suceava as a great town (Rădvan 2010, 333-5).

3.1   Suceava, Neamț and Roman: historical summary

In general, and in a reversal of historiographic tendencies in Romanian medieval studies, historians have come to rely on the results of archaeological work at the major Moldovan fortresses to establish the chronology of their use and development, the 17th-century narrative chronicles being unreliable and official documents from the 14th and 15th centuries being too opaque and partial for the purpose (Batariuc 2004, 1-3, 42-3; Matei 2004, 127-8). There have also been long-running debates between specialists about the origins of the best known heartland fortresses – Scheia, Suceava, Neamț and Roman – and the architectural influences exhibited in their plans and technical features. Theories range from the castles having been built first by Teutonic knights, to their having been built under the direction of Polish-Lithuanian, Italian or Byzantine master builders.[50] [51] As in the case of the Moldavian Style of church architecture, it has also been argued that castle-building in Moldova was carried out by indigenous architects who adapted external (predominantly Western) styles to local needs (Andronic 1991, 150-2; Batariuc 2004, 3, 6, 9, 14-16, 46-8; Matei 2004, 132). The attribution of the design and construction of the heartland fortresses forms an undercurrent in Romanian castle studies linked to issues of identity and authenticity.

Used in combination with the documentary sources, the chronologies established by excavation – together with epigraphic evidence at Suceava Castle, where the discovery of a series of dedication inscriptions featuring princely coats of arms enabled researchers to suggest *termini ante quem* for the sequence of work there – allow a reasonably precise historical timeline to be put forward (Batariuc 2004, 54; Matei 2004, 146-7). The discovery of fragments of stone decoration,

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[50] The attribution of stone-built castles to the Teutonic Knights links to a German tradition in castle studies that asserted the superiority of Teutonic castles over the wood and earth defences associated with medieval Slavs (Link 2009, 338, 340).

[51] It is possible that the defensive works at Suceava Castle were supervised by an Italian master of works: Batariuc notes the discovery of a tombstone of one Baptista din Vesentino, *magister in diversis artibus*, in a cemetery associated with the monastery of St. John the New in the town (Batariuc 2004, 59; cf. Rădvan 2010, 444). Andronic drew attention to the employment of Italian architects from Kaffa by Ivan III of Muscovy, men who passed through Moldova on route to serve in Moscow (Andronic 1991, 152).

such as baguettes croisées from the window jambs and a Gothic balustrade in the entrance complex at Suceava, also allow for comparisons to be made with sites elsewhere in the Principality: in the case of the balustrade, a strong link is suggested with the decoration at Ion Tăutu's church at Bălineşti, built in the mid 1490s, and even with Maria of Mangop's sarcophagus (Batariuc 2004, 61-2) (see Section 1, clauses 1.3.2 and 2.1).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Construction of Cetatea Nouă (the "New Castle") near Roman[52], located in a strategic position in the valley of the river Siret between Piatra Neamţ and Bacău, took place solely within Ştefan's reign. Although the settlement at Roman on the Siret was defended by ditches and palisades by the end of the 14th century, and a Muşatin wood and earth fortification seems to have been situated close to the town as well, documentary and archaeological evidence both indicate that a separate stone fortification, located some 5km downstream from the town, was built from scratch by the 1460s. The *pârcălab* of Cetatea Nouă is mentioned in a document of September 1466, providing, according to Matei, a *terminus ante quem* for the building of the new castle which is backed up by the results of excavations conducted by Lucian Chiţescu in the mid 1960s (Chiţescu 1966, 405, 410-14; Matei 2004, 148).

In 1467, Matthias Corvinus sacked the settlement at Roman but not the new castle, which was in fact severely damaged during the Ottoman incursion of 1476. A second building phase, in which the castle was repaired and then extended, is dated to the period 1483-84. The *pârcălab* of Cetatea Nouă is absent from the list of witnesses to chancery documents between the years 1476-78, but Cetatea Nouă itself is mentioned in one of Ştefan's documents dated 22 January 1479 (Chiţescu 1966, 411; Andronic 1991, 148, 152; Matei 2004, 129-30, 147-9). Thus, while the settlement at Roman has a long histroy, only coming firmly under the control of the Moldovan voivode in the reign of Alexandru cel Bun, the Cetatea Nouă has a relatively tight chronology, construction having spanned two phases in the middle years of Ştefan's reign.

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[52] References to "Cetatea Nouă" and "Roman" are interchangeable. The castle stood close to the village of Gîdinţi.

Suceava and Neamț had longer histories of development. Cetatea Neamț, positioned above the town of Târgu Neamț, stands on a spur of the Berdac mountain, 80m above the river Neamț (a tributary of the river Moldova), in a strategic position protecting the valleys of the Moldova and Siret rivers to the east and, crucially, the trade route leading to Transylvania. The castle is first attested in documents dating to the final decade of the 14th century, and archaeological excavations carried out between 1959 and 1963 found evidence of the primary building phase dating to the reign of Petru I (Luca 1993, 51-2).

Originally a quadrilateral stone castle, with square towers incorporated at each corner, which resisted a Hungarian siege in 1395, Neamț was enhanced and extended by Ştefan in two building phases in the 1470s and 1480s. Like Suceava, Cetatea Neamț withstood an Ottoman siege in 1476, although, just as at Suceava, the fortress was occupied by the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1538 (ibid., 52-4).

While both Cetatea Nouă and Suceava were eventually blown up in 1675 by Prince Dumitraşcu Cantacuzino (1673, 1674-5, 1684-5), on the orders of his Ottoman overlords, Neamț – a natural citadel – had a long life as a place of refuge. Although the complex was partially destroyed by Lăpuşneanu in the 1560s (typically, at the instigation of the Turks), reconstruction by Ieremia Movilă at the turn of the 17th century and subsequently by Vasile Lupu granted Neamț a century of active use by Moldovan forces, before it too fell into neglect following the Austro-Turkish war of 1716-18 (ibid., 54-7). State-sponsored reconstruction of Cetatea Neamț took place in the 1960s (whereas to this day, Cetatea Nouă is a ruin).

The settlement at Suceava acquired great political significance in the second half of the 14th century. Petru I transferred the "capital" of the Principality (properly, the voivode's main place of residence) from the town of Siret in the north of Moldova to Suceava, in the heart of Bucovina. As well as founding the Mirăuți Church and the princes' court, Petru is also thought to have been responsible for the building of two stone castles in the environs of Suceava – the Citadel of

Residence on the plateau above the town, and a rectangular fortification, flanked by towers, beyond the northwestern defences of Suceava, in the vicinity of Scheia. This latter site, first investigated by K.A. Romstorfer at the turn of the 20th century, is thought to have been a precursor to the more elaborate citadel, and was therefore the first stone-built castle in the Principality (Andronic 1991, 148, 150; Batariuc 2004, 44). However, the castle at Scheia had a relatively short life: archaeological research has suggested that it was dismantled during the reign of Alexandru cel Bun – indicating that Suceava was adequately defended by the town ramparts and nearby citadel (Matei and Andronic 1965, 22; Batariuc 2004, 45).

Petru I's citadel was a rectangular construction (in common with Scheia and Neamţ), defended on three sides by a ditch or moat. Alexandru is thought to have enhanced the defences (adding a perimeter wall – see photograph 31) and to have been responsible for elaborate decoration within the castle. Fragments of frescoes from the walls of the first chapel have been dated to his reign; the chapel may have been connected to the cult of St. John the New (Matei and Andronic 1965, 16; Andronic 1991, 150; Batariuc 2004, 49-51).

Ştefan's work at Suceava Castle can be divided loosely into two phases, one preceding the Ottoman siege of 1476, and the other in the decade following the siege. However, the details of his building work at the citadel – revealed through campaigns of excavation and archaeological research at the turn of the 20th century and later over a 20-year period commencing in 1951 – suggest near constant building activity at Suceava from at least the 1470s through to the 1490s. The siege of Suceava Castle in 1497 by the army of John Albert of Poland was unsuccessful, as had been the Ottoman siege of 1476. But the complex of buildings and defences in the Field of Ditches was destroyed during the siege and this necessitated repairs and rebuilding work on the plateau in Ştefan's final years.

Suceava Castle was not just subject to military attack, it was also damaged by several earthquakes: the effects of an earthquake in 1471 necessitated rebuilding work on the castle itself,

and the north range was lost entirely as a result of another earthquake – possibly that which followed the deliberate destruction of the castle in 1675 [illustration 30]. Occupied by the army of Suleiman the Magnificent in September 1538, Suceava Castle declined in importance once the voivode's main residence was transferred by Lăpuşneanu to Iaşi in the 1560s. Ieremia Movilă and Vasile Lupu both tried to restore Suceava Castle (as they also rebuilt Neamț), but the castle was described as a ruin by Dimitrie Cantemir and by the end of the 18th century, although the Hapsburg authorities in Bucovina instigated the cataloguing of historic monuments in the area, lots of stone had been robbed from the castle for use in construction works in the town. By the time K.A. Romstorfer was commissioned to carry out reparation works at the site of the castle in 1895, it was almost completely overgrown (Batariuc 2004, 70, 81, 87, 96, 98, 99-100, 139, 140).

Romstorfer uncovered the walls of the Muşatin citadel and conducted exploratory excavations in the Field of Ditches, amassing enough finds to start a museum in the town. His legacy was taken up during the communist era when the state supplied the means for the rebuilding of the castle, a process which came to an abrupt halt in 1978 before being continued following the 1989 revolution (Matei and Andronic 1965, 10, 43-6; Batariuc 2004, 140-44).

3.2   The evolution of castle design along the Siret valley

Ştefan did not build castles exclusively in stone. Given the number of stone castles constructed or extended during his reign, and the labour and materials required for the task at a time of near constant warfare, during which scorched earth campaigns were necessary, it is hardly surprising that several of his strategic defences were constructed from earth and wood. There is archaeological evidence of "temporary" wood and earth fortresses in the area of Bârlad in the southwest of Moldova, which were destroyed deliberately by fire, by their occupiers, probably during the Ottoman campaign of 1476. Archaeological remains of a wooden castle (*cetatea de lemn*) constructed in Ştefan's reign have also been found at Soroca, located on the Nistru on the northeast border of the Principality (the imposing stone fortress there was constructed by Petru Rareş) (Andronic 1991, 152; Matei 2004, 144-5, 155).

The mixed use of wooden and stone defences in Moldova reflected similar practice in Wallachia, and served as a pragmatic continuation of the policies of Petru I and Alexandru cel Bun (Andronic 1991, 150, 152; Matei 2004, 139-40). Nevertheless, Ştefan's reign witnessed significant developments in stone-built military architecture and by the 1480s his most significant works exhibited features that bore his own imprint.

While the rectangular stone castle at Scheia may have served as a prototype for the early citadels at Neamț and Suceava, the first building phase at Cetatea Nouă in the 1460s was radically different from its Muşatin predecessors. Here, Ştefan's builders overcame the difficulties of building a massive structure on soft ground through the innovative design of parallel foundation trenches supported by an earthen berm; but it was in the use of circular bastions rather than square corner towers that Cetatea Nouă was truly distinct. The rectangular core of the castle was encompassed by an outer wall into which were built five, possibly seven, circular bastions. Each bastion had an interior diameter of approximately 6-7m, and an exterior diameter of 11-14m. The outer wall was surrounded by a stone-lined ditch or moat which, by the mid 1480s, was probably filled with water conducted overland via a conduit from the river Siret. The bastions served a dual purpose as a response to the new threat of siege artillery: they were intended to deflect incoming shot and to act as platforms on which to mount defensive guns (Chițescu 1966, 406, 413-4; Andronic 1991, 152; Matei 2004, 131-2) [see illustration 33].

At Neamț and Suceava, Ştefan inherited rectangular castles with square towers – projecting towers in the case of Suceava [illustrations 32 and 34]. Little new building work is attested at Neamț prior to the Ottoman invasions of the mid 1470s, but at Suceava Ştefan embarked on what may have been a hurried programme of works to bring the castle up-to-date. The chronology of works at Suceava is disputed – Andronic suggested that work may have been ongoing there from Ştefan's accession whereas Matei has indicated a more compressed timeframe in the mid 1470s. The actual works in the first phase of Ştefan's activity at Suceava Castle were innovative, establishing a blueprint that would be repeated at both Neamț and Cetatea Nouă –

although Suceava remained stylistically distinct from the new build near Roman (Andronic 1991, 151; Matei 2004, 142).

Whereas the rounded bastions of Cetatea Nouă were probably inspired by Byzantines – as at Cetatea Albă, Ştefan's builders adopted designs derived from the experience of the downfall of Constantinople – at Suceava, new towers were constructed to serve as gun emplacements, but these were rectangular and square towers. Technologically, the new towers at Suceava were less advanced than those at Cetatea Nouă, being analogous with older Genoese fortifications in the Crimea (Andronic 1991, 151; Matei 2004, 132; Herrin 2008, 318).[53]

Despite this, the works at Suceava *were* original in the way that Ştefan's builders extended the confines of the fortification. The original Muşatin castle was retained, but its moat was filled in and a new "enceinte" established, with the creation of an outer ward some 20m in extent from the core castle, defended by a new curtain wall some 2m thick and c15m in height (Matei and Andronic 1965, 24) [illustration 32]. While the angular towers themselves were not the best design for combatting artillery fire, the outer ward provided additional protection to the core castle by pushing an attacker's guns out of range. This new defence may not have been completed by the time of the Ottoman siege in 1476 – there is a suggestion that a seemingly anomalous wall connecting the new outer wall with the southwestern tower of the original castle represents a hurried rounding-off of the works at the time of the Ottomans' arrival (Batariuc 2004, 55); however, the new defences were sufficient to repel the Ottoman siege.

Repair works were necessary at Roman and Neamţ following the Ottoman incursion of 1476; at Neamţ, the walls of the Muşatin castle were increased in height by perhaps 2m (Matei

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[53] Walled Genoese and Venetian commercial colonies lined the coastline of the Crimean peninsula in the 14th and 15th centuries, chief amongst which was Kaffa – contemporary Feodosia in Ukraine – the Genoese slave hub through which the Black Death is thought to have entered Europe in 1347 (Deletant 1991(a); Ascherson 1995, 94-6).

2004, 143). More importantly, in the 1480s, a second phase of building was initiated at Cetatea Nouă, Neamţ and Suceava which established the use of the defensive outer ward or enceinte as a signature feature of Ştefan's castle-building. Illustrations 32-34 all clearly show how Ştefan's builders extended the defensive zone of the core Muşatin castles. At Roman, the southeastern flank of the fortress was doubled in size, with a vast new set of walls some 4m thick, supported by circular and semi-circular bastions, projecting from the original moat. At Neamţ, the natural defences were augmented on the northern approach to the citadel by a massive stone platform, incorporating four semi-circular bastions, and a rather precarious walkway built on stone stilts, leading in an arc across a great ditch. At Suceava, the new outer wall was encased by a further wall, making it some 3-4m thick, and the square towers were enveloped by semi-circular bastions with angled, "battered" bases. A new defensive ditch was extended and consolidated by a retaining wall, while the entrance complex in the northeast corner was augmented with bastions and a new inner gate.

The process at Suceava again mimicked developments at Genoese fortifications in the Crimea, where square towers were enclosed by rounded bastions (Andronic 1991, 151-2). However, although it is apparent that Moldovan fortifications followed a variety of designs and influences, even in the first decades of Ştefan's reign, the elaboration of Roman, Neamţ and Suceava in the 1480s followed a pattern that was particular to the Moldovan voivode's needs and was a response to the military experience of invasion in the 1470s.

3.3   The archaeology of Suceava Castle in the reign of Ştefan cel Mare

K.A. Romstorfer's work at sites associated with Ştefan cel Mare commenced with his appointment in 1895 as *conservator* within Bucovina by the Central Commission for Arts and Historic Monuments of Austria-Hungary. Romstorfer undertook recovery and restoration work at buildings and monuments in Suceava – chiefly, the Citadel of Residence and the Mirăuţi Church – before he proceeded to work at Putna in the first years of the 20th century. Leading on from work undertaken by recently-founded local and Romanian antiquarian societies, Romstorfer was

charged with excavating the site of Suceava Castle, in order to reveal the walls and establish the basic plan of the complex, which was heavily overgrown (Batariuc 2004, 4, 23-4, 140).

Romstorfer's work at the castle did not constitute archaeology as it would come to be practised later in the 20th century: essentially, his team of labourers was involved in the removal of spoil and the stabilisation of the remains. His work in the Field of Ditches was more sophisticated, involving a more nuanced programme of excavation on selected parts of the site. In total, Romstorfer's work on the plateau produced an enormous quantity of finds – from architectural elements and building components to domestic items and decorations, especially glazed tiles and ceramics, which formed the basis of the collection for a new town museum in Suceava. This was opened in 1900, the finds having previously been stored within the monastery of St. John the New (ibid., 24-5). This first period of investigation at Suceava Castle lasted for a decade, concluding in 1904 with the commemoration of the 400th anniversary of Ştefan's death. (Evidently, Putna monastery was not the only location for commemoration activities that year. See Chapter 3, clause 3.)

Archaeological work recommenced in 1951 with the establishment at Suceava of the first field school of medieval archaeology in Romania, under the direction of Professor Ion Nestor. Recognising the potential quality of the medieval archaeology and its connection with a glorious era in Romanian history, the communist regimes of Gheorghe-Dej and Ceauşescu invested heavily in the monuments on the plateau. A programme of excavations in the castle and the Field of Ditches between 1951 and 1959 went hand in hand with conservation work on the remains, funded by the Cultural Committee – *Comitetul Aşezămintelor Culturale*. Conservation and restoration work – which amounted to the rebuilding of parts of the castle (see photographs 29 and 30) – was carried on for nearly 20 years by the State Committee for Architecture and Buildings (*Comitet de Stat pentru Arhitectură şi Construcţii*) and the General Directorate on Historic Monuments (*Direcţiei Generale a Monumentelor Istorice*), under the direction of architects Nicolae Diaconu, Virgil Antonescu and Gheorghe Sion (in succession), until work was suspended in 1978 – presumably

for political reasons or due to lack of funds – following the disbanding of the directorate of historic monuments (ibid., 142-3).

Work at Suceava Castle has not been without its difficulties. A further programme of excavations was carried out between 1965 and 1968 but the results of this work remain largely unpublished. Work in the Field of Ditches was compromised by the bulldozing of part of the area in 1975. However, in 1988, celebration of the 600th anniversary of the first known documentary record of the settlement at Suceava received state-backing – public historical commemorations were a feature of the Ceauşescu regime (see Verdery 1991, 221) – being marked by a string of publications about the castle. Limited archaeological work has been possible since the 1989 revolution. The partially rebuilt castle is now a tourist attraction (Batariuc 2004, 9, 15-16, 143-4) (see photographs 27 and 28 and Chapter 6, clause 2).

3.3.1   The castle

The formal archaeological research at Suceava Castle, building on the rescue work carried out by Romstorfer, focused on four principal elements: the two building phases for Ştefan's curtain walls; the extent and design of the defensive ditch; the entrance gateway; and the castle chapel. Within the castle, if not in the Field of Ditches prior to 1975, archaeologists regularly complained about the difficulties of working in areas where the stratigraphy had been disturbed by the process of demolition and by the efforts of Romstorfer's labourers (ibid., 33, 143).

Construction of the curtain walls required the infilling of the original moat, which was sited approximately 4m from the walls of the core Muşatin castle, with a width of c.30m and a depth of c.10m. This in itself involved massive engineering work, with the moving of many tonnes of soil as the second defensive ditch was excavated. The original moat was also infilled with spoil and debris from the castle; in particular, fragments of frescoes and dressed stone coated with plaster were

discovered which are thought to have come from the chapel, which was remodelled as part of Ştefan's works (ibid., 36-7, 46, 49).

While the dual process of excavation and reconstruction of the castle walls allowed for observation of how the second stage of the curtain wall was "grafted" onto the first stage, with semi-circular bastions encasing the earlier square towers within the course of the curtain walls (Matei and Andronic 1965, 26, 32), epigraphic evidence was discovered in 1971, during restoration of the walls on the north side of the castle, which has been interpreted as refining the dating for Ştefan's first phase of works. An inscription and a coat of arms of Ştefan cel Mare, dated 8 September 1477, was observed on a reused stone. This inscription was thought to relate to the conclusion of the first phase of construction on the curtain wall, which had been interrupted by the Ottoman siege in the summer of 1476 (the siege may have necessitated the construction of the anomalous or temporary wall connecting the curtain with the southwest tower of the castle) (Batariuc 2004, 54-5). If this dating sequence is correct, then the second phase of building work on the curtain walls does not appear as a straightforward response to the experience of the 1476 siege: the relatively thin curtain wall punctuated with square towers must have been continued before the more sophisticated, more modern curtain with semi-circular bastions was added to it.

Understanding the chronology of the second building phase of the curtain walls has been hampered somewhat by the epigraphic evidence, rather than clarified. The discovery in 1953 of a stone bearing a coat of arms and the remains of an inscription, in the area of the castle entrance, prompted several theories about the date of the works commemorated by the plaque. Initially thought to date to the reign of Ştefaniţa (1517-29), subsequent analysis of the inscription suggested a date at the end of Ştefan's reign, in 1500-02, and study of the heraldic devices suggested the date 1492 (ibid., 13, 36, 57). This would suggest that work on the curtain walls and major defences of Suceava Castle continued into the last years of Ştefan's reign, and may have been ongoing at the time of the Polish siege in 1497. (Repair works were certainly required at the castle following the siege, dated by another coat of arms from after 1497, discovered in fragments (ibid., 69).) Prominent archaeologists who have worked at Suceava – Andronic, Matei, Batariuc –

have preferred to argue that the deficiencies of the first phase of works at Suceava – the relatively thin curtain and the outmoded angular towers – were such that Ştefan would have required their immediate upgrading, in the late 1470s or 1480s (Matei and Andronic 1965, 35; Batariuc 2004, 57).

The new curtain walls were protected by an impressive new system of external earthworks. To the east and southeast of the castle, a ditch was excavated, up to 30m in width; the spoil from this ditch was used in part to create an earth bank on the southwest and western sides of the castle, and in part to raise the level of the ground opposite the castle on the edge of the Field of Ditches, creating a range of uneven, soft ground in which it would be difficult to position artillery pieces (Batariuc 2004, 58). The ditch was consolidated by a retaining wall, running in an arc from the castle entrance in the northeast sector round to the southeast [illustration 32]. The discovery of a stone-built culvert or drain in the ditch, near the entrance complex, demonstrated that the ditch was not filled with water (ibid.).

The main entrance to the castle underwent several stages of development. The earliest castle entrance was in the south wall but another gate led into the northeastern corner of the Muşatin stronghold, at the point where a square tower may have adjoined the lost north range. The entrance in the northeast corner was extended several times, eventually incorporating a string of gateways – at least three – protected by interconnected bastions which joined the castle proper with the curtain walls. Romstorfer thought that the work in the northeast sector dated to the reigns of Ştefan's successors (ibid., 35, 59). However, even if work on the curtain walls and semi-circular bastions continued late into Ştefan's reign, the developed form of the gate complex was integral to the fortress and belongs to the same building phase.

Access to the castle would have been very restricted. The complex was approached by a wooden bridge over the second phase ditch, carried on two stone pillars. (The burnt remains of one of the wooden doors from the gatehouse which faced the bridge were excavated from the infill in the ditch.) Crenellated bastions which protected the gatehouse gave way to the gateways

beyond, which were approached through a narrow tunnel known as the "mouse trap" (*cursă de soareci*) (ibid., 59). The elaborate gate defences highlight the castle's dual role as a citadel, a place of refuge and a high-status private stronghold for the voivode and *pârcălab* (also known at Suceava as the *portar* (gatekeeper) and *hetman*).

The element of privacy afforded to the occupants of the castle is evidenced by the redesigned castle chapel. Situated on the first floor of the east tower, which was rebuilt to accommodate the east end of the chapel, this was a relatively small place of worship available only to the chief men in residence and their families [illustrations 30 and 32]. Decorated externally with enamelled tiles and coloured discs in the fashion that was common to the churches of the Moldavian Style in the 1480s and 1490s, and internally with new frescoes, the chapel was almost certainly larger than the early Muşatin chapel which it replaced (because the apse was extended into the east tower). It is analogous to the chapel in the citadel at Cetatea Albă: both are identified as Orthodox chapels from their eastern apses, which contain in classic Orthodox style a central altar flanked by two niches, the "diaconicon" to the south and the "prothesis" to the north (ibid., 61; Cândea 2004, 117-118, 120; Akkerman).

3.3.2   The Field of Ditches

The Field of Ditches, a 10ha zone so-named on account of the earthworks dug there by the Cossack army of Timuş Hmelniţki in 1653, extends across the plateau from the southeast of the castle [illustration 31] (Batariuc 2004, 114). A military and industrial area, the variety of buildings and features which grew up in this zone in the 14th and 15th centuries served the castle but also represented a suburban development with a unique character. Additionally, the *casa domnească* provided a third site in the environs of Suceava from which the voivode might conduct business.

Romstorfer's work in the Field of Ditches focused on the discovery of the foundations of a rectangular church or chapel (shown on the eastern edge of Sector C in illustration 31). Re-excavated in the 1950s, the church was revealed to be surrounded by a sizeable cemetery – around 250 graves were excavated – containing several high-status burials and numerous others which could be attributed to the families of courtiers and servants, who had presumably been resident in the buildings within the Field of Ditches.

The church in its second phase was approximately 15m long and 6m wide, with a superstructure of wood and no internal divisions. Although it had a brick floor, it was far simpler in design than the voivodal churches of the second half of the 15th century: within sight of the Mirăuți Church, it was far less prestigious. Nevertheless, the site did contain some notable tombs: Romstorfer found two brick-built vaulted graves beneath the floor of the first church, and another was found beneath the south wall; these are comparable with those discovered at Mirăuți and elsewhere in the Principality, notably at Balineşti. The burnt fragments of a significant tombstone were found displaced in the church foundations: this tombstone recorded one Vlad of Theodor-Mangop, who died in 1480, the servant of Prince Isac, Ştefan's brother-in-law: this Vlad had presumably accompanied Maria of Mangop to Moldova in 1472.

Excavations in the 1950s established that the church had originally been built entirely from wood, but this structure was destroyed by fire. Aside from Vlad of Theodor-Mangop's tombstone, other fragments of carved grave slabs were discovered, exhibiting palmettes and semi-palmettes in the style associated with funerary decorations found throughout the Principality in Ştefan's reign; one fragment was dated to 1492-3. The destruction of the first church and fire damage were most likely evidence of the Polish siege in 1497, when, although the castle itself did not fall, the Field of Ditches was ransacked (Batariuc 1993, 230-1; Batariuc 2004, 115-6).

The cemetery which surrounded the church was found to have gone out of use in the 1530s, at the time of Ottoman occupation, so the rebuilt church may have ceased to function as

such at the same time (Batariuc 1993, 231, 249; Batariuc 2004, 117). Nevertheless, in the 14th and 15th centuries, the cemetery was an important burial site, underlining the size and relative status of the community that served the castle. Almost all of the excavated burials were oriented in keeping with Christian practice, with the head to the west, and the greater part of the burials were simple inhumations. However, there was a variety of grave types in the cemetery, including graves with stone covers, graves lined with stone or bricks, in the style of "cyst" burials, and a small number of brick-built vaulted tombs. Of the 153 graves excavated in the 1952 season, evidence of a coffin was found in 45 cases. The cemetery seems not to have been carefully ordered – burials clustered around the church and were not in rows – but there was some evidence of family plots, as children and adults were often buried in close proximity. The excavators were disappointed by the amount and quality of finds associated with the graves in the cemetery. However, in addition to some coins and jewellery, clothing was often discovered, featuring distinctive "globular" buttons of various sizes: these represent a signature for the members of the community which was associated with the castle (Batariuc 1993, 249; Batariuc 2004, 118-120).

Probably the most prestigious building in the Field of Ditches was the "Prince's House", located some 60m east of the castle moat (in Sector A on illustration 31). Burnt down during the Polish siege of 1497 (and not rebuilt), the Prince's House had a relatively short lifespan, having been constructed in the 1480s. In some respects, it was a modest building: constructed in wood, on a skeleton of oak beams, with wood-panelled walls bound with clay, the structure was approximately 32m in length and 11m in width, containing a vestibule and a principal room of 22m x 10m. The dimensions, if not the method of construction, were similar to the churches of the Moldavian Style which were being built at the same time. It was in its decoration that the Prince's House stood out: the exterior may have been encrusted with enamelled tiles and coloured discs, while in the interior, a tall stove in late Gothic style stood against the east wall, a major feature in the main room. Sufficient remains of this apparatus were recovered to permit a detailed reconstruction of the stove. It was approximately 3.8m in height, made up of some 700 pieces, many of which were individually ornamented and with the whole apparently crenellated in a manner which may have been a representation of Suceava Castle itself. While ornamental stoves

of this kind were common in Southeastern Europe, the particular features of this example were held up by Radu Popa as indicative of a "Moldovan" variation in stove design, emphasising the prestige of the building in which this stove was located (Batariuc 2004, 120-123).[54]

A number of residential buildings were excavated in the area to the east of the Prince's House (Sector B on illustration 31). Whilst contemporary with the Prince's House, they were smaller in size. Constructed in wood on stone bases, they may represent a stage in the transition from building in wood to building in stone at a domestic level (as has been seen, building entirely in stone was a feature restricted to ecclesiastical and military architecture in Ştefan's reign). Evidence was also found in parts of the Field of Ditches of 14th century wooden buildings and a 16th-century stone building, illustrating that the Field of Ditches was occupied over a lengthy period, not just in the second half of the 15th-century – albeit that the archaeology suggests that the Field of Ditches reached its height in terms of occupation and development during Ştefan's reign (ibid., 126-8).

The defences to the Field of Ditches included a stone gatehouse in front of the bridge which led across the castle moat, protected by a nearby watchtower, consisting of a wooden superstructure built on a stone base. A similar tower was positioned within "Sector B". The military characteristics of the plateau are also evidenced by the discovery of buildings associated with metal working, as well as a large stable block (ibid., 128-30). The Field of Ditches was clearly an organised zone: several paved pathways leading across the plateau, rebuilt on numerous occasions, were discovered, as were water conduits, some lined with clay tiles, others made of wood, which presumably channelled water to key buildings (ibid., 131-2).

The overall impression gained from the investigations, carried out predominantly in the 1950s, is that the Field of Ditches was a self-contained military settlement, almost a town apart from Suceava itself. The Field of Ditches was vulnerable during times of military occupation – only

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[54] This stove may have been manufactured in Suceava, as there is archaeological evidence for a crafts quarter south-west of the town, producing tiles and tiled stoves (Rădvan 2010, 539).

the castle held out against besiegers in the 1470s and 1490s – but it was nevertheless occupied as an adjunct to the castle for most of the period of Suceava's eminence as a major voivodal residence and must have sustained a community of courtiers, servants and soldiers.

Summary of Section Two

The chronology of fortress development in Moldova has been, and continues to be, a subject of debate for researchers. Postică set out to revise the Soviet-era chronology for the citadel at Orhei (although his own suggestions for dating at Căpriană monastery have been challenged subsequently by fellow Moldovan researchers). Šlapac and Candea have debated the details of building and rebuilding in the citadel at Cetatea Albă, while generations of Romanian historians and archaeologists have put forward numerous theories concerning the origins and building phases of Ştefan's major castles in Bucovina and the Siret valley. Underlying the academic debates have been political pressures – along with the vagaries of state sponsorship, which was severely disrupted in the 1990s – and the fact of shifting state boundaries, which has meant, among other things, significant changes to the authorities bearing responsibility for research and conservation: Austro-Hungarian, Romanian, Soviet, Moldovan.

There is a clear contrast between the multi-ethnic fortified towns and fortresses in the eastern borderlands of the Principality and the castles in Ştefan's heartland territory. Although numerous foreign influences have been ascribed to features of castle-building at sites such as Suceava and Neamţ – and the settlements which they defended were historically culturally and ethnically diverse – by the end of the 15th century such fortresses bore the imprint of designers addressing the needs of the voivode: most particularly, the use of extended defensive platforms or enceintes to protect the core Muşatin castles. Orhei, by contrast, remained an anomalous construction of Tatar origin and Cetatea Albă, in Ottoman hands after 1484, was a city-fortress which referenced Constantinople but also incorporated Oriental elements.

SECTION THREE: Princes' courts

The "princes' courts" (*curti domneşti*) were defended ensembles of administrative and residential buildings from which the voivode conducted business in the major towns of the Principality. In the reign of Ştefan cel Mare, all of these complexes were located west of the Prut, so the archaeology of the 15th-century princes' courts has been carried out largely by Romanian researchers.

Archaeological investigations of the courts have tended to be bound-up with the wider objectives of urban archaeology. In the communist era, the archaeology of medieval towns addressed the economic and social concerns of dialectical materialism; the princes' courts were viewed as the vestiges of feudal authority whereas the remains of artisans' houses and manufactured goods within towns such as Suceava, Iaşi and Bacău provided evidence of socio-economic development in the pre-industrial age.

When written-up, the archaeology of the princes' courts has often been set beside documentary evidence, being used to confirm or supplement historical information. In this respect, the study of princes' courts is perhaps the best example of the importance of culture-history to Romanian archaeological practice (see the Introduction to this Chapter 5, clause 2). Overall, the results of detailed excavations at the court ensembles have been significant in throwing light on the organisation of voivodal rule and the iconography of the court. This section outlines the results of work at key *curti domneşti* that demonstrate some of the practical aspects of these palaces, their influence on the towns in which they were located, and the culture of public display at the voivode's court.

1   *Curti domneşti* in Suceava, Iaşi and Bacău

In 1476, an Italian servant in the army of Mehmet II which was besieging Suceava left a brief account of the town. Giovanni Maria Angiolello described Suceava as being surrounded by a

ditch and palisade; the houses and churches within the town were built of wood and coated with shingle; the citadel, in contrast, was a stone building with plastered walls (Matei 1989, 131; Batariuc 2004, 56; Rădvan 2010, 540). In 1476, as subsequently in 1485 and 1497, Suceava was sacked. These events retarded the morphology of the town and meant that even at the end of Ştefan's reign, most of the buildings in the town were still wooden constructions (for the morphology of early Suceava, see Rădvan 2010, 364). Nevertheless, archaeology has shown the "capital" of the Principality to have been a vibrant artisan centre capable of rapid recovery following each disaster (Matei 1989, 189-90). The town expanded its limits throughout the 15th century, and at its heart was the major complex of fortified stone buildings which made up the princes' court [illustration 35].

Intensive archaeological research has been carried out on the site of the princes' court over the past decade (with a view to revising work first carried out in the 1950s in tandem with excavations at Suceava Castle), in addition to preparing the site of the court for conservation [see photographs 32-34] (Hău and Dejan 2005, 362). In 2004, excavation at the site was funded as part of the national programme of commemoration of Ştefan's death. As Angiolello's fragmentary account indicates, documentary sources are inadequate for a reconstruction of the architecture and function of the court complex.

The site of the princes' court was first developed by Petru I, in the last quarter of the 14th century. A group of wooden buildings (including cellars which were timber-lined chambers), Petru's residence also incorporated a watchtower built on a stone base, and overlay earlier dwellings which were apparently cleared to make way for the court (Andronic 1991, 148; Rădvan 2010, 534-5). The complex was subject to frequent rebuilding, with stone residential and storage buildings being introduced in the reign of Alexandru cel Bun. Complex stratigraphy at the site has made it difficult to produce a clear chronology for the evolution of the court, but the destruction of 1476, when the court was burnt down along with the town, was a key event which brought about new building phases in stone.

The archaeology of the court in Ştefan's reign is dated fairly clearly to phases before and after 1485 – a decade of construction following the sack of Suceava in 1476, and a longer phase of reconstruction following the sack of 1485: the greater part of Ştefan's building work appears to have taken place after 1485 (Matei 1988, 19). Illustrations 36 and 37 show that, while there were numerous wooden and stone ancillary structures, with a focus on storage spaces which suggests that provisions were kept in large quantities on site, the court came to be in essence an L-shaped building (Hău and Dejan 2005, 362-3). The east wing was clearly the public building, closely resembling the arrangement observed at Putna, with arcaded audience and administrative spaces (see Section 1, clause 2.1). First dating to Alexandru's reign, the north section of the east wing was rebuilt by Ştefan; the wing then nearly doubled in size after 1485, with an extension to the south. New cellars with vaulted ceilings were constructed beneath the main spaces, supported by stone pillars and probably carried by brick arches.

The north wing, most likely the private residential area of the court, was reconstructed and remodelled after 1485, with perhaps seven major rooms, the interiors of which were paved with flagstones. Enclosed within a stone perimeter wall, the complex as a whole received enhanced defences. Excavations in the mid-1980s identified a fortified gatehouse and, in the middle of the north wing, a guard room (Matei 1988, 19).

In the mid-16th century, Suceava was replaced by Iaşi as the most important voivodal residence. Despite Suceava's military prominence and the work which was carried out on the development of the court there, other sites – notably Iaşi and Vaslui – were long favoured by Ştefan. Numerous documents were issued by him from the court at Iaşi (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 17). Although Suceava occasionally regained prominence, notably during the reign of Ieremia Movilă, Iaşi came to be the formal capital of the Principality, the seat of the Phanariot princes in the early modern era and the place in which Alexandru Ioan Cuza was elected Prince of Moldova in 1859.

The site of the princes' court in Iaşi is occupied today by the "Palace of Culture", standing at the head of Blvd dul Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt (formerly Ulitsa Mare – *the Main or Great Street*), on the southern edge of the town [photographs 6 and 42]. Completed in the 1920s but subject to redevelopment in the 2000s as a mixed-use museum, retail and residential complex, the Palace of Culture succeeded a number of grand buildings on the site, which were home to the various Moldovan governments in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries (Andronic 1975, 164). These "palaces" were all built atop the medieval *curtea domnească*. In this respect, Iaşi has a significantly different history to the abandoned site at Suceava: the compound in Iaşi evolved over the centuries as a site in continuous use, and the archaeology is less accessible as a consequence. Researchers have been hindered by later buildings, merely revealing sections of the Iaşi court complex rather than the complete plan seen at Suceava.

Nevertheless, the medieval town and princes' court was the subject of a long series of excavation campaigns, beginning with rescue archaeology in the 1950s and progressing to year-on-year work at the site of the court between 1960 and 1990 (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 12). The principal excavator and historian of the medieval court was Alexandru Andronic. His published work sets out time and again the argument for the role of archaeology as a support to documentary history, and as a resource that fills in gaps in the documentary record:

> ... each stage in the voievode court is well illustrated by the discovered archaeological material. They confirm and support the few documentary data which have reached us, enriching the range of information concerning every day court life... Moreover, the correlation of the archaeological researches in the princely precincts with those on the town territory enable us to demonstrate that the urban settlement benefited by the existence of a political-administrative headquarters of the prince, especially after Jassy became a capital town.
>
> (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 26. See also Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 388 and Andronic 1975, 157, 163).

As the beneficiary of state sponsorship for archaeological research, Andronic's publications on Iaşi also lavish necessary praise on the communist regime:

Pour la première fois dans notre pays, grâce aux conditions créés par le régime socialiste aux recherches archéologiques, les résidences princières de Moldavie, parmi lesquelles celle de Jassy s'avère d'une importance toute spéciale, firent l'objet de fouilles intenses.

For the first time in our country, thanks to the conditions for archaeological research created by the socialist regime, the princely residences of Moldova, amongst which that of Iaşi had particular importance, have been the object of intense research.

(Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 335)

The town of Iaşi first appears in documentary sources in the late 14th century. By 1408, Iaşi was a customs point, as is evidenced by a document issued by Alexandru cel Bun in October 1408: Iaşi was listed alongside settlements including Suceava, Cetatea Albă and Tighina[55] (on the Nistru) as a place were customs were to be paid; in addition, Alexandru granted commercial privileges in Iaşi to merchants from Lvov who were trading in the "Tatar lands". The first mention of the princes' court at Iaşi occurs in a document issued by Ştefan II (1433-35, 1436-47) in October 1434 (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 12; Rădvan 2010, 343). Archaeological research indicates that the court was founded in the reign of Alexandru cel Bun (Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 350, 383).

The development of the court has been closely linked with the economic development of the town. Iaşi was a commercial centre by the end of the 14th century, and quickly grew to be the dominant regional market and a manufacturing centre. The presence of the voivode's court in Iaşi from the early 15th century spurred urban expansion and economic growth (ibid., 383). In documentary sources, Latin terminology is used to denote how Iaşi, like Suceava, evolved from being a *forum* – in effect, a large settlement with a market, to being an *oppidum* – a town (Andronic 1975, 159; see Rădvan 2010, 373-4).

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[55] Bendery, now a part of Transnistria.

Iaşi's location within central Moldova and its position within the network of international trade was crucial to its progress. Iaşi was sited at the intersection of commercial routes between Europe and the East, forming a "great crossroads" (Rădvan 2010, 503)[Map 6]. However, there is also plenty of archaeological evidence for local manufactures, with pottery and ceramics and metalworking being the dominant local industries in the 15th century. As at Suceava, most of the houses in the 15th-century town were built from timber, but evidence of an increase in the circulation of money during Alexandru's reign and of goods produced in the Black Sea region appearing in Iaşi point to its increasing prosperity in the first decades of the century (Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 384; Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 13-14).

Excavations on the site of the princes' court revealed two general phases of construction in the 15th century. Phase I represents the court prior to the reign of Ştefan cel Mare, the first buildings – in stone, with no wooden precursors – probably having been founded by Alexandru cel Bun. The court was located on a plateau above the river Bahlui, with an escarpment providing natural defences on three sides. The foundations of mortared stone exterior walls were excavated in the southeast sector of the complex, though they were obscured by later building works. While there is no clear plan of Alexandru's residence, the walls were evidently built to take account of the gradient, and were approximately 1m thick. The excavators also posited a rectangular space divided into two rooms, which would perhaps have had vaulted ceilings (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 15-16).

There was better evidence for Ştefan cel Mare's work at the site, constituting Phase II in the archaeology. The court was extended, fortified and fitted-out in "luxurious" style. Further, the construction of the Church of St. Nicholas in the early 1490s, on the northern side of the court complex, extended the voivode's zone of influence at Iaşi. The church was set within its own walled precincts, the foundations of which were revealed during excavations at the house museum known as Casa Dosoftei (the Museum of Moldavian Literature, which stands on the north side of Piaţa Palatul Culturii (Palace of Culture Square)). The church served as the court chapel, and was referred to as the "biserica Domnească" (ibid., 17, n.43). The "square" created at the junction of the

entrances to the court and church precincts formed a market place to rival the commercial heart of the town further east (Andronic 1975, 160; Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 26; see Rădvan 2010, 503-4 and map 7); but Ştefan supported the town in the same way that his grandfather had done, renewing trading privileges there for the merchants of Lvov in July 1460 (Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 17).

One of the main archaeological discoveries belonging to Phase II at the court was the foundations of a rectangular stone tower or bastion in the southeastern sector of the compound, measuring 9m x 7.75m, with walls approximately 1m thick. The foundations of two stone pillars within this structure indicated that there had been a vaulted ceiling and, presumably, a storey above (ibid.).

Despite much of the 15th-century remains lying beneath the Palace of Culture, excavations also produced a wealth of decorated material from Ştefan's residence, in particular, numerous examples of glazed and enamelled tiles. The interior walls of the Iaşi residence were tiled, as were features such as grand stoves, like that at the Prince's House in the Field of Ditches beside Suceava (see Section 2, clause 3.3.2 above). Such tiles were decorated in relief with geometric, zoomorphic and anthropomorphic imagery, as well as Moldovan heraldic devices and scenes from daily life (Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 385; Andronic and Cheptea 1990, 17-18). Evidently, applied arts proliferated in the 15th-century Principality alongside the voivode's architectural programmes (see clause 2 below).

Archaeological research at other court centres associated with Ştefan has revealed a programme of building works in the second half of his reign that was as concentrated as the campaign to improve Moldova's fortresses and the "great architectural upsurge" of church-building. Halfway between Iaşi and Suceava, Hârlău became the preferred residence for Ştefan's immediate successor, Bogdan III, following Tatar raids on Iaşi. The residence and the Church of St. George there were built at the same time (the court being a rebuild, dated to 1486-96; a voivodal residence

had been sited at Hârlău since the 14th century) (Catalogue 1958, 234; Andronic 1975, 160). South from Iaşi at Huşi, a preferred residence of Ştefaniţa, Ştefan cel Mare's palace was built at the same time as the episcopal palace there. The two buildings were closely associated: remains of a cellar that was possibly part of the voivodal residence have been discovered beneath the episcopal palace (Catalogue 1958, 235; Andronic, Neamţu and Dinu 1970, 386). At nearby Vaslui, one of Ştefan's most important courts, the residence and the Church of St. John the Baptist (1490) were in close proximity, like the arrangement at Iaşi (Catalogue 1958, 237; Petrescu-Dîmboviţa 1981, 650-1).

Southwest from Iaşi at Bacău, on the river Bistriţa and near the river Siret, prolonged excavation campaigns have revealed the complex of voividal buildings associated with Ştefan and his son, Voivode Alexandru (see Chapter 2, clause 2.1.3). Bacău had similar characteristics to Iaşi. First mentioned in a document of 1408, there is also indirect documentary evidence that Bacău was a significant town by the late 14th century. A Florentine document of 1439 refers to the vacant Roman Catholic bishopric of Bacău, a bishopric created by Pope Boniface IX (1389-1404) in 1391/2. The authenticity of the Florentine document has been questioned, but a strong Roman Catholic presence in Southern Moldova in the early years of the Principality would accord with what is known about the ecumenical make-up of the territory during Alexandru cel Bun's reign (Gorovei 1986/7, 282-3; Rădvan 2010, 453-5) (see Chapter 1, clause 1).

Bacău's geographical location was of at least equal significance, and potentially greater advantage, to that of Iaşi. Bacău stood at the confluence of international trade routes. The town was adjacent to the Moldovan Road, which ran northwards along the Siret valley, and connected with several routes leading into Wallachia and Transylvania, notably the Oituz Road (Artimon 1993, 72; Patzinakia [1])[Map 6]. Archaeological campaigns at Bacău, which commenced in the late 1960s and continued at intervals up to 1990, have provided evidence of the town's growth as a regional crafts centre and trading hub in the second half of the 14th century. Occupation levels beneath the site of the princes' court and elsewhere in the town indicated an expansion in manufacturing throughout the 14th century, with finds of ceramics and metal goods complementing

those found in other urban centres such as Iaşi and Suceava. The establishment of the princes'

court at Bacău, which was occupied by Voivode Alexandru by the early 1480s, has been credited

with further enhancing Bacău's economic status and potential (Artimon 1993, 70-2).

Illustration 38 shows a plan of the excavations carried out on the site of the *curtea*

domnească in the centre of Bacău (by the mid 1970s, over 30 trenches had been dug in this

area)(Artimon 1986/7, 285). Described by a Venetian traveller, Marcus Bandini, as a ruin in 1646,

the voivodal residence was sited on the east side of the Church of the Dormition of the Mother of

God, known as "Biserica Precista", which was dedicated by Voivode Alexandru in 1491 (Patzinakia

[1]). Excavators discovered the foundations of the residence during the first archaeological

campaigns in the late 1960s, and over the course of the next few years revealed not only that the

residence probably predated Voivode Alexandru's church, but also that the court area was a multi-

period site, with early medieval habitation levels (4th-7th centuries) as well as 14th- and 15th-

century buildings. Precise dating of the inception of the residence was not possible, beyond

aligning the archaeology with documents issued by Voivode Alexandru in the early 1480s, although

a 1481 Ottoman coin of Bayezid II was discovered in the occupation level (Artimon 1986/7, 285,

287, 291; Artimon 1993, 70). It is possible that, as at Suceava, existing buildings were cleared

away in the central zone of the town to allow for the construction of the court complex in the late

1470s and early 1480s (Patzinakia [1]).

The principal buildings of the court have been excavated – the residence, the church, and

a tower house or guard post. The *casa domnească* was found to be a comparatively small

rectangular building, with exterior dimensions of 17.90m x 8.50m (roughly half the size of the

Prince's House in the Field of Ditches at Suceava), built on foundations of mortared stone blocks.

Little evidence was retrieved for the upper storey, but the basement or cellar was excavated in

detail. This area was divided into two rooms, the larger room measuring 12.50m x 6.20m, the

smaller being about 6.35m x 2.15m. The walls varied in thickness from 1.50m to just over 1m. The

larger room was divided by a line of four square-shaped pillars, running longitudinally down the

centre of the room; these pillars supported a brick vault ceiling, analogous with those observed at

Putna (see Section 1, clause 2.1) and Târgovişte (see clause 3 below). Two arched niches built into the walls would have housed lamps or candles to light the cellar. The two rooms were connected by a decorated stone archway. The smaller room was effectively a point of access to the vaulted cellar beyond, containing a staircase of eleven wooden steps leading to the archway.

The final archaeological level, in which a coin of 1517 was discovered, was a layer of burnt material that indicated that the residence was destroyed by fire. Bacău is known to have been sacked by Suleiman the Magnificent in his 1538 campaign. As at all voivodal sites, the infill in the cellar contained numerous fragments of glazed tiles, ceramics and terracotta discs, indicating that the rooms above had been decorated with the heraldic and symbolic designs typical of Ştefan's residences in the latter part of his reign (Artimon 1986/7, 286-7; Artimon 1993, 73; Patzinakia [1]).

In the mid 1980s, the base of a tower house or guard post was excavated in the southeast corner of the court complex, close by the residence. Also destroyed by fire in the first half of the 16th century, this structure was sited to protect the voivodal residence itself and as a watch tower surveying the commercial road in the Siret valley. Constructed from quarried stone, the mortared walls formed a rectangular plan, with dimensions of 12.80m x 10.80m. The exterior walls were approximately 1.40m thick. An access stairway of nine stone steps was excavated in an entrance in the east wall, leading to the building's cellar. Two square-shaped pillars were positioned centrally within the cellar, presumably to support a brick vault. As at the residential building, the infill included decorated tiles and ceramics, showing depictions of court life and the common theme of St. George and the dragon. The tower house recalls the watchtower in the Suceava complex, but it is also analogous with constructions in Transylvania (Artimon 1986/7, 289, 290, 292; Patzinakia [1]).

The Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, the third major component of the court complex, fulfilled a similar role to that of St. Nicholas in Iaşi, and was set some 30m away from the residence. Repaired and renovated on numerous occasions in the 19th and 20th centuries, it

retains the characteristics of Voivode Alexandru's foundation. This church was typical of the triconch churches of Ştefan's reign. 25m in length, built of stone and brick, with an enamelled brick floor laid in a zigzag design, the church contained several burials: a gravestone dated to 1494 may have marked the burial of one of Voivode Alexandru's children (Catalogue 1958, 90-94; Patzinakia [1]).

2   Art and display in the *curti domneşti*

One of the outstanding categories of archaeological finds to have been excavated at the sites of princes' courts, together with certain fortresses and buildings in the Field of Ditches, is decorated wall, floor and stove tiles. These items, often excavated from the rubble infill of the cellars of court buildings, characterise Moldovan voivodal residences in the archaeological record and serve as illustrations of the art and culture of 15th-century court life.

While enamelled tiles, coloured ceramic discs (typical of exterior decorations) and terracotta pieces have been discovered at all the sites mentioned in clause 1 above, one of the most important sets of discoveries comes from the *curtea domnească* at Vaslui. A voivodal residence from the first half of the 15th century, Vaslui flourished under Ştefan cel Mare, gaining a status that may have been second only to Suceava: certainly, a large number of documents was issued in Ştefan's name from the *curtea domnească* there (Rădulescu 2006, 81). Ştefan's patronage of Vaslui suggests that he continued to exercise strong influence in the Ţara de Jos, given Vaslui's proximity to Voivode Alexandru's personal court at Bacău.

Excavations at Vaslui in the mid 1970s uncovered the remains of a large residential building, built of stone and brick, with foundations 1.70m thick, and architectural fragments with Gothic decorations. The residence was extensively restored in the late 15th century, at the time of the foundation of the Church of St. John the Baptist, and many of the finds associated with the residence probably date to this period of restoration. Fragments of frescoes, enamelled tiles,

terracotta pieces and coloured discs all point to elaborate decorations. The colours of the tiles –
green, yellow, brown and golden – are typical of the decorative elements found at voivodal
residences across the Principality, but the number and character of the decorations mean that
Vaslui stands out as a paragon of Moldovan artistic display (ibid., 81-2).

While there are examples of the geometric and zoomorphic designs common at other
sites, many of the Vaslui tiles are decorated with relief images of ceremonial and court life, such as
formal dances, or feature soldiers of the voivode's retinue. There are also symbolic designs –
heraldic decorations that show various coats of arms associated with the Muşat family – and
representations of mythical and legendary figures, most notably St. George slaying the dragon – a
motif that was of importance throughout Central and Southeastern Europe, not least to the Dracula
family and other members of the chivalric Order of the Dragon (ibid., 82).

Rădulescu has studied two glazed terracotta stove tiles from Vaslui that represent a
significant event in the history of the Muşat dynasty – Ştefan's marriage to Maria of Mangop in
1472, an alliance that advanced his credentials as a successor to the Byzantine emperors.
Although the relief decorations on these tiles are rather crude, certainly in terms of the proportions
of the figures, the images act as a narrative of the ceremonial surrounding the wedding; Rădulescu
suggests that the artist would have been an eye-witness to the scenes displayed (ibid., 91).

One of the tiles [illustrations 39 and 40] depicts a group of cavalry carrying banners in
procession (the procession includes pack animals and is analogous to a hunting scene). The
representation of a "wedding tree" in the upper right-hand corner and a "wedding flag" bearing four
stars confirms the link to an engagement or wedding party. These knights may be carrying
wedding gifts to the celebrations (ibid., 85-6, 92). The central equestrian figure on this tile, who is
carrying the voivode's standard, appears to be a high-ranking priest. Wearing leg armour, he bears
a Greek cross in the centre of his tunic and is wearing a conical helmet, possibly a mitre, that is
topped by a cross: it recalls the cross that is sometimes shown in representations of the Byzantine

emperor's crown (ibid., 83; see Herrin 2008, ill.17). This alone emphasises the imperial aspirations and late Byzantine culture of Ştefan's court. The second tile actually incorporates the Byzantine two-headed eagle.

The second tile probably depicts Ştefan cel Mare himself, leading his new bride on horseback. The two equestrian characters shown on this tile, a man and a woman, both wear crowns – that of the male being conical but apparently composed of several elements, and without the cross that distinguishes the helmet or mitre of the prelate on the first tile.[56] The Byzantine eagle, shown in the upper right-hand corner of the tile, can also be found in the border decoration of Maria's embroidered tombcover at Putna (Rădulescu 2006, 86-7, 96, 100).

These tiles suggest that the decoration of the voivode's residence, in both its public and private spaces, included narratives of the secular life of the court, rather as the frescoes on voivodal churches provided vast narratives of the gospels and religious life in the region. Besides being ostentatious shows of wealth and artistry, the mural decorations found at the Moldovan court were a record of the history and achievements of Ştefan's reign.

The art of display seen at the voivode's courts was mirrored at the *curti* of the leading boyars. Excavations at the sites of 10 boyar residences in Suceava County have recovered examples of decorated tiles and bricks to compare with those found at the *curti domneşti*. At Arbore and at Bălineşti, it appears that existing court buildings were redeveloped during Ştefan's reign, in tandem with the construction of the boyar churches which served as court "chapels" in the same way as the churches built by the voivode in proximity to his residences.

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[56] Compare the Moldovan tile with the portrait medal of Emperor John VIII Palaeologus (1425-48) by Pisanello, dated c.1438-43. The emperor wears a conical cap with an angular brim or peak (Cyril Mango, "Byzantium: A Historical Introduction", in Cormack and Vassilaki 2008, 33; Herrin 2008, 307).

Bearing a variety of geometric, vegetal, zoomorphic and heraldic motifs, and scenes from everyday life, the tiles represent prosperity and patronage to compare with that shown in the public and private spaces of the princely residences. Images of the dragon-slayer St. George found at Bălineşti link with royal iconography in Moldova and beyond (Batariuc 1994, 75-6, 82-3). It is clear that certain of the leading boyars were free to express their power and status within their own estates; it is unclear whether this reflects a degree of weakness in the voivode's relationship with his great boyars in the later years of the reign.

3 At the court of the Wallachian voivode

Dracula was a peripatetic voivode, just like his Moldovan counterpart. Vlad III dedicated much of his short reign between 1456 and 1462 to the construction and redevelopment of fortified residences and castles, prominent among which were the island monastery of Snagov, the town of Bucharest (which perhaps served as his capital in 1476), and the hilltop fortress of Poenari, above the river Argeş. Together with the town of Argeş, the fortified town of Târgovişte had been established by Mircea the Old as a voivodal residence; under Vlad Dracul and then Dracula, Târgovişte became the de facto capital of Wallachia, dominated by the *curtea domnească* (Ciobanu 1979, 41, 123; Moisescu 1979, 247; Florescu and McNally 1989, 86, 88).

The majority of the documents known to have been given by Dracula were issued in Târgovişte. The substantial remains of the princes' court there are impressive in comparison with those of Moldova. Although there are individual features of the court buildings which suggest the particular character of Dracula, in essence the ensemble functioned in much the same way as the courts in the neighbouring Principality.

The Târgovişte compound was situated on a terrace above the river Ialomiţa, enclosing a stretch of parkland within its walls. The town itself was located at a strategic point on the main commercal route through Wallachia, connecting the Danubian territories with Transylvania. Like

Iaşi, Târgovişte came to prominence in the early 15th century: in a grant of trading privileges made in 1403 by Mircea the Old to merchants from Lvov, Târgovişte is the only named customs point in the principality (Moisescu 1979, 247).

Despite having a long history of occuption, the princes' court was subjected to numerous destructive attacks and was raised at the order of the Ottomans in 1660. 19th-century photographs and illustrations show the court to have been a set of 'Romantic' ruins. Major professional archaeological work at the court complex was conducted from the early 1960s through to the late 1970s.

The stone foundations of a single-storey, sub-rectangular 15th-century hall building (the "palace"), measuring about 29m x 32m, with walls 2m thick, have been revealed by excavation; the palace was doubled in size with the construction of an east range in the 16th century. The substantial cellars of both ranges have been uncovered nearly intact: the 30cm-thick stone walls and brick-arched vaults have been restored and incorporated within a museum complex.

The court was dominated by the Chindia ("Sunset") Tower, a circular stone tower with an angular, battered base (inexpertly restored in the 19th century), standing nearly 30m tall. Located at the north end of the palace, it was built over the west end of the first palace chapel. Ostensibly a watchtower, built or extended by Dracula, the Chindia Tower was possibly also used by him as a viewing platform when executions were conducted in the courtyard of the *curtea domnească*.

The foundations of the small palace chapel, built in stone by Mircea the Old, with a semi-circular apse and two semi-circular transepts, have been excavated and restored. Dracula founded a grander court chapel to the south of the palace – the church which survives within the museum grounds, known as the "great church of the prince". The whole ensemble was surrounded by stone walls, which adjoined the town defences. Like the Moldovan courts, the *curtea domnească* was

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differentiated from the town, occupying a distinct position at its edge (Ciobanu 1979, 41-2, 122-5; Moisescu 1979, 35-9, 54-5, 247-252; Florescu and McNally 1989, 86-7).

Târgovişte was surrounded by a system of ditches and an earth rampart with a wooden palisade; a Turkish chronicler, Turshun-Beg, described the "citadel of wood" there in 1462. The Ialomiţa and a branch of the river served as a natural defence on the eastern side of the town, and the ditches were also filled with water channelled from the river. The town was the seat of a bishop and, as in Moldova, its commercial development was spurred by the presence of the court. Courtiers and boyars took up residence in the town, building fortified townhouses which often incorporated private chapels. The street plan developed in a chaotic fashion, but there was a degree of organisation in the establishment of individual plots: these were up to 90sq. m in size, while the artisan quarter was more densely packed. Târgovişte reached its apogee in the early modern period but its significance in the 15th century is attested by the Ottomans' need to secure it during the campaign of 1462 (Moisescu 1979, 247-9).[57]

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Over the course of 12 years as a political prisoner of King Matthias Corvinus in Hungary, Dracula moved from being incarcerated at Visegrád, possibly in the Salamon Tower of Visegrád Castle overlooking the Danube, to conditional liberation in a private house in Pest, facing the capital in Buda, with marriage to one of Corvinus' kinswomen. Both locations serve as a contrast with the voivodal residences of Wallachia and Moldova. Whereas the voivodes built compounds which sought to echo the magnificence of Byzantium, Matthias Corvinus was a patron of Renaissance artists and architects: his palaces were inspired by the great courts of Italy and Western Europe.

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[57] Although his 1979 survey of Târgovişte's historic buildings focused on the early modern period, it is rather telling that Cristian Moisescu made virtually no mention of the Draculas in relation to the history of the town, seeming to reflect their ambiguous status in Romanian history in the Ceauşescu era.

Visegrád is the location of one of Hungary's most important medieval castles, a largely 13th-century citadel complex which became a royal residence in the 14th century, sited on a hilltop above the Danube. By the early 15th century, an extensive royal palace had been added to the ensemble on the lower slopes, built into the hillside, facing the river and adjacent to an urban settlement [photographs 47 and 48].

The palace incorporated private residential buildings; public meeting areas and the chancery; a chapel standing on a terrace cut into the side of the hill; and a large courtyard which is thought to have been the site of festivals and tournaments. The palace was probably in a state of relative decay during Dracula's enforced residence at Visegrád, as Matthias' government operated out of Buda. However, following Matthias's marriage in 1476 to Beatrice of Aragon, the daughter of Ferdinand, King of Naples (1458-94), Matthias embarked upon extensive programmes of renovation and decoration in the Renaissance style, at Visegrád and at the fortified royal palace on Castle Hill in Buda. One of the outstanding archaeological finds from decades of excavations at the royal palace of Visegrád is the red marble "Hercules Fountain", which has been built in replica to great acclaim, set in a reconstruction of the ceremonial courtyard and loggia within which it stood in Matthias' restyled palace (Buzás, Laszlovszky and Magyar 2003, 355-363).[58] There is nothing to compare with this art and architecture in the Romanian court buildings of the period.

OVERVIEW: The "culture" of the Muşat dynasty

Mehmet II, the conqueror of Constantinople, created a new palace complex on the banks of the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn – the New Palace (later known as the Topkapı Palace), to the north of the medieval palace of the Byzantine emperors. But it was the earlier complex – the Great or "Bucoleon" Palace, built and extended over the centuries in the southeast corner of the city on the site of Constantine's original palace, together with the Blachernai Palace in the

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[58] For a picture of the replica fountain, designed according to the excavated elements which are displayed in a reconstruction in a nearby museum room, see http://www.visegrad.hu/-95.

northwest of the city – that served as the exemplar to the rulers of the Christian states in Southeastern Europe in the 15th century.

Although Constantinople never regained its old eminence following its sacking by the Fourth Crusade in 1204, the wealth and oppulence of the 12th-century court of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-80) still provided a legacy of ritualistic display into the late medieval period which informed the organisation and decoration of the more modest *curti domneşti*. The complex of imperial buildings in Constantinople – including the Roman Hippodrome, the Church of Hagia Sophia, and the Great Palace, together with government offices, treasuries and barracks – could not be matched by small polities like Wallachia and Moldova, but its glory could be emulated (Mansel 1995, 57; Phillips 2005, 148-50; Herrin 2008, 171).

Contemporary descriptions of the 12th-century Byzantine palace complex emphasise its awesome magnificence. One element, the *Mouchroutas* (a free-standing domed chamber or hall), was detailed by a Byzantine author as follows:

> The steps leading up to it are made of baked brick, lime and marble; the staircase, which is serrated on either side and turns in a circle, is coloured blue, deep red, green and purple by means of a medley of cut, painted tiles of a cruciform shape... The canopy of the roof, consisting of hemispheres joined to the heaven-like ceiling, offers a variegated spectacle; closely packed angles project inward and outward; the beauty of the carving is extraordinary, and wonderful is the appearance of the cavities which, overlaid with gold, produce the effect of a rainbow..." (Nicholas Mesarites, quoted in Phillips 2005, 150.)

In comparison, the Moldovan court buildings were mundane, evoking Byzantium through iconography rather than architectural oppulence. Nevertheless, the local industry and skill required to decorate the voivodal residences, fortresses and churches with bespoke coloured discs and enamelled tiles should not be underestimated: this work serves as a record of the Principality's

economic strength during Ştefan's reign, as well as of the political and cultural aspirations of the Muşatini.[59]

The second half of Ştefan's reign witnessed an extraordinary concentration of major building projects. The "great architectural upsurge" of church building was also the period in which the voivode's "luxurious" residences were built or extended, and the time in which major works on the Principality's fortresses were concluded. These projects were interconnected: architectural and decorative features imply a shared design and probably a shared workforce on many of the projects.

The scale of these works had no serious precedent in Moldova and outstrips the achievements of contemporary Wallachian voivodes. The growth of Moldova's towns in tandem with the voivodal residences indicates the economic advantages brought to the Principality by the trans-European trade routes by which it was transected, which offset to a degree the cost to Moldova of the necessary strengthening of its network of fortifications.

The culture exhibited by Ştefan cel Mare's buildings was particular to Moldova – the churches of the Moldavian Style are evidence enough of this. But the culture was not inward-looking. Ştefan's Moldova was a multi-ethnic state and the architecture of the second half of the 15th century was inspired by builders and artists drawn from the West and the East – including Italians from the Black Sea trading cities, Transylvanians, Byzantines and possibly Oriental architects as well.

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[59] There is little documentary evidence for labour duties on the part of town dwellers, but these can be surmised from the extent of the construction and decorative works carried out in Ştefan's reign: see Rădvan 2010, 417.

The political identity of Moldova was defined by opposition to Ottomans and Tatars, as well as by conflict with fellow Christians. However, the cultural identity of the 15th-century Principality was characterised by assimilation rather than by conflict, an openness to styles and skills from across Central and Southeastern Europe.

Above all, in his religious and secular foundations, Ştefan cel Mare promoted the Muşat dynasty. The Muşat cult was expressed in imperial terms, looking beyond the Romanian lands to Constantinople for its authority, vocabulary and iconography.

SECTION FOUR: Archaeology before, during and after the age of nationalism

Ştefan cel Mare's reputation in the Romanian lands has not *depended* on archaeological research. Ştefan's place in the pantheon of Romanian heroes was established by writers and folkorists long before Romstorfer commenced his rescue work in Bucovina, and long before professional archaeological research was undertaken with the backing of communist regimes in the RPR and USSR. Indeed, Ştefan's recent reputation in the Republic of Moldova has been established by the Moldovan political elite despite a comparative dearth of archaeological sites associated with him being located within the current boundaries of the state; instead, Ştefan's statue in Chişinău has been made to fulfil the role for Moldovans that his tomb at Putna and any number of churches in Bucovina can play in providing a physical reminder to Romanians west of the Prut of his achievements and the culture of his time.

Nevertheless, this Chapter 5 has shown that there is ample archaeological material surviving from the era of Ştefan cel Mare, which has been the subject of sustained research in the 20th and early 21st centuries. Furthermore, Papacostea reported that folklore preserved long-standing celebrations of the value of material remains "associated" with Ştefan, that his name became linked in popular consciousness with historic monuments:

> ... folk mythology amplified Stephen's Faustian genius through the centuries, linking his name to various constructions or traces of constructive activity in Moldavia. "Any fortress, any wall, any trench one asks about, the answer one gets is that Stephen the Great built it. Any bridge, any church, any well, any old court or palace would owe its existence to that hero!..." – noted one of the initiators of folklore research in Romania in the last century. "Finally, for the Moldavians, this Prince is responsible for all the historic deeds, all the monuments, all the accomplishments and all the buildings raised during five centuries by so many rulers." (Papacostea 1996, 79)

Although this reporting of folk memory is somewhat tongue-in-cheek, given that 'any old building' might be attributed to Ştefan, still it suggests that archaeology should be considered in relation to the development of Ştefan cel Mare's legacy.

Archaeological sites and historic buildings introduce fundamental, interrelated questions for ethnosymbolists looking for meaning inherent in or implied by ethnic symbols: why are certain sites chosen for investigation, what is the process and course of that investigation, and how are sites and buildings interpreted and used by students, vested interests and the wider audience? Because ethnosymbolism seeks to account for the origins of nations before the modern era, the question must also be asked whether certain sites point towards the emergence of Ştefan cel Mare as an ethno-symbol before the modern age.

1   Why are sites chosen for investigation?

The buildings, sites and monuments associated with Ştefan cel Mare have been investigated by antiquarians and archaeologists over the course of two centuries (and sometimes longer), so work has been brought about by a variety of factors. Political sponsorship or influence has frequently been a motive for investigation, and the prominence of churches and monasteries has meant that ecclesiastical sponsorship has been significant as well. Only in the post-communist era is it possible to identify research projects which have been undertaken for exclusively academic research purposes and which have the potential, therefore, to be devoid of a nationalist agenda.

The church buildings and monastic grounds within Ştefan's lands have witnessed a variety of interventions. The longest history of intervention and research occurs at Putna, which is unsurprising given its longevity as a functioning monastery and its status as Ştefan's burial place. In the 18th century, and possibly earlier, the voivode's grave was robbed (albeit so that jewels from his burial garments could be used to raise funds for the monastery and be fashioned into icons). The monastery had already seen campaigns of rebuilding in the early modern period, emphasising its enduring importance as a religious centre and as a strategic voivodal site in the Bucovina heartland. This history of symbolic eminence and occasional physical intervention culminated in the official investigation of the princely burials at Putna in the 1850s, an event that served both religious and political needs.

Subsequent work at Putna, at the turn of the 20th century and during the communist period, continued the political theme. Conservation work and archaeological investigation tended to be aligned with commemorative events associated with anniversaries, sponsored by governments; the celebrations of 1904 represented something of a competition between Austro-Hungarian and Romanian authorities at a time when Bucovina was disputed territory. In the 21st century, archaeological work has given way to the promotion of Putna as a pilgrimage venue, establishing the monastery as a religious heritage site, although competition between the Romanian and Moldovan governments for the appropriation of Ştefan cel Mare as a national symbol was apparent in 2004.

Work at the Mirăuţi Church in Suceava had official sponsorship in the late Hapsburg period, tying-in with commemorative events in 1904; but otherwise, archaeological work within the church has largely been a bi-product of renovation of the fabric. In the 1990s, excavation beneath the church floor recovered materials which were suitable for comparative analysis with the results from excavations at other medieval churches in the region. Subsequent excavations in the church at Bălineşti, already known as an outstanding art-historical monument, have added to the corpus of medieval church archaeology in northeastern Romania. Using international funding, projects have been undertaken in the post-communist period which address fundamentally academic research aims.

In the Republic of Moldova, limited archaeological work undertaken at Căpriana monastery in the 1990s echoed examples in Romania of opportunities for excavation being created by programmes of restoration work. The history of excavation at Orheiul Vechi is far more extensive and more political, stretching through the Soviet era and the complicated transition years of the 1990s and 2000s. Archaeological research has been conducted against the backdrop of Slav, Romanian and Moldovan nationalist interests. The work conducted at Orheiul Vechi is outstanding for its longevity (even in the transition years, funds have been raised to maintain the legacy of Soviet-era state-sponsored research) but represents the tension of academic and political interests in a landscape with the potential to provide a narrative in miniature of regional ethnic history.

Work at medieval fortresses reveals common investigative themes, notwithstanding changes to national borders and political vagaries. Originally sites of antiquarian interest in the 19th century, several fortresses were subject to the dual processes of excavation and reconstruction in the 20th century, leading to their management and use as heritage sites in the 21st century. Work at Suceava Castle in the 1950s stands out for having been carried out as a school of medieval archaeology. The communist authorities promoted research into the era of Ştefan cel Mare, combined with the rebuilding of the monument; underlying this was a specialised educational initiative with a Romanian nationalist bent.

In contrast, the history of investigation and conservation work at Cetatea Albă reflects multiple changes in territorial possession, having been carried out variously by Romanian, Soviet, Ukrainian and international bodies. The site itself passed through numerous identifiable ethnic and national hands in its long history of occupation, so the multiplicity of researchers to have worked there is apt. Unlike Suceava, Neamţ, and the citadel at Orhei, the fortress at Cetatea Albă has not been investigated – and rebuilt – as an exclusively medieval fortification. Rather, its investigation developed almost in tandem with its continued use during the 19th century. Subsequent research has taken equal account of its significance in the early modern and modern periods as in the medieval era, the later contexts being largely divorced from the late medieval function of the site.

Work at the princes' court complexes belongs to a defined area of archaeological research – urban archaeology. Located almost exclusively within the boundaries of Romania, excavation at the princes' courts was largely a phenomenon of the communist era and represented the dual aims of researching the court complexes for themselves within the context of town morphology. The latter aim was governed by a desire to examine the economic history of Romanian towns, with a political bias that required evidence for the development of indigenous craft production and the organisation of labour. The complex in Iaşi was a good example of this: the buildings of the prince's residence and the Church of St. Nicholas occupied a position on the edge of the town and delineated a public market area, a space which competed with the market place in the centre of the settlement (Rădvan 2010, 504).

1.1   Selection and resonance

What are the consequences of this survey for the ethnosymbolist approach? Some sites, notably Cetatea Albă and Orheiul Vechi, do not fit easily into an overall narrative – their occupation and research histories are complicated. But general themes do emerge which show how sites and monuments can acquire, through selective investigation and sponsorship, the symbolic status that is expected by ethnosymbolism. Archaeology has been pursued at sites associated with Ştefan cel Mare to fulfil the interests of the Orthodox Church; to further political goals and uphold dogma; and latterly to pursue academic research.

The interests of the Church have been highlighted at Putna, in the 19th century and in recent decades, where the monastery has been promoted as a centre of pilgrimage, in a statement of independence and continuity by the Church hierarchy in the face of suppression by Hapsburg and communist authorities, and in counterpoint to the uncertainties of post-communist transition (Curry 2007). The burial place of Ştefan cel Mare, the tombs of members of his dynasty and their setting within the monastic precincts have been investigated and conserved as relics for the faithful. Political authorities have invested in the site and in the remains of the great voivode, but much of the work at Putna has been inspired by bishops and abbots: the Ceauşescu regime made possible formal archaeological research at Putna monastery at the instigation of Metropolitan Justin. The close relationship between the Romanian Orthodox Church and successive Romanian governments has allied the interests of the Church with political nationalism.

The enthusiasm of so many governments in the territories of Romania and Moldova to carry out investigative and rebuilding works at medieval sites and monuments suggests a need on the part of political authorities to be associated with a built heritage that is valued by the local population. The case of fortresses which had all but disappeared (Suceava, Roman) argues for a level of indifference in the fate and history of once great features of Ştefan's principality (or perhaps that the need to use these features as resources for construction materials was of overriding importance). But it is a long-standing feature of the region that authorities have seen fit

to invest in the excavation and reconstruction of medieval buildings, sites and monuments. The clear assertion of political dogma in the process of archaeological investigation occurs in the case of Romanian urban archaeology.

The pursuit of contemporary academic research interests is apparent in conservation work at Bucovinan churches, where frescoes require the latest restoration technology (see Chapter 6, clause 3). The sponsorship by international agencies of conservation work in churches of the Moldavian Style has highlighted the regional and international cultural significance of the painted churches. Conservation projects have brought about opportunities for archaeological work on the fabric. But whereas the symbolic status of the churches as cultural icons is enhanced, the research is seemingly independent of national political and even religious constraints.

2   The origins of a nation: do sites and monuments reveal Ştefan cel Mare as an ethno-symbol before the modern age?

Investigation of sites and monuments associated with Ştefan cel Mare has a long history, stretching through the age of nationalism and continuing to the present. But does the history of these sites and monuments provide any evidence to support the ethnosymbolist suggestion for the origins of nations in the pre-modern era?

The ethnosymbolist approach is distinguished from perennialism, to a degree, by accepting that "massive disruptions" occurred in the historical progression from the medieval to the modern world. However, ethnosymbolism still suggests that there may be undercurrents of cultural continuity despite the "discontinuities" in the historical record, despite "ruptures" in communities caused by political and economic changes (Smith 2004, 10-11, 18-19).

Anthony D. Smith insists on differentiating "*ethnies*" from "nations", ethnic identity being one of the principal contributors to social organisation in a nation. In doing so, the origins of a

nation may at least be identified by signs of ethnic identity in the pre-modern era: ethnosymbolism considers "the long-term ethnic and popular sources of national identity" (ibid., 14). Intellectually, *ethnies* and the nation may become conflated by Smith's approach, but the identification of elements of continuity in the cultural identities that bind communities is still a legitimate mode of enquiry.

In the case of Romania and the Republic of Moldova, a subsidiary issue to that of whether ethnic or national identity can be traced in the pre-modern era must be one of nomenclature. If cultural continuity can be associated with the development of a nation or nations in the territory of the Principality, how might these be named? Romanian? Moldovan?

2.1 Archaeology, ethnicity and ethnosymbolism

The archaeology of ethnicity is a subject usually associated with early medieval studies rather than with the high and later middle ages: in Europe, the era of migrations in the centuries that followed the break-down of the Western Roman Empire. However, the approach taken to the identification of ethnic groups in early medieval Europe can be applied in principle to manifestations of communal identity in the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries as well.

Complicated and fraught with disagreements among specialists, the archaeology of medieval ethnicity is an approach whereby symbolic representations of cultural community – frequently, articles of dress and ornaments, burial rites and grave goods – are catalogued and interpreted in relation to theories of settlement, social organisation and inter-group relations (Kaiser 1995, 104-6; see Musteață 2005 for a discussion of the socio-political development of the Moldovan lands in the 8th and 9th centuries). Surveying the field, Florin Curta highlights two aspects of the debate which are important to ethnosymbolism: concepts of "style" in artefacts, and the "textual model" of archaeological research (Curta 2007). The latter is the theoretical means by which archaeologists are able to interpret the meaning inherent in material objects, to study

material culture as a record of human thought processes and not just as a physical record in itself. The former aligns closely with ethnosymbolism, particularly in the conception of "emblemic style", which is the archaeological manifestation of group identity through material symbols and a record of conscious attempts to define that group identity:

> Since material culture embodies practices, emblemic style was the way of communicating by non-verbal means about relative identity. Because it carried a distinct message, it is theoretically possible that it was used to mark and maintain boundaries, including ethnic ones. But ethnicity was also a function of power relations. Both emblemic styles and 'traditions' became relevant particularly in contexts of changing power relations, which impelled displays of group identity. In most cases, the study of both symbols and 'traditions' implies a discussion of the power configuration in any given historical situation, with an emphasis on the political forces that may have been responsible for the definition of symbols, their organization and hierarchization. (ibid., 184)

The concept of emblemic style highlights the practical political elements of ethnicity, and brings to the fore ideas of "representation" by and within medieval elites. The presentation of signs and symbols to a group as representations of communal identity, and implying allegiance to the authors of such symbolism, is a highly suitable line of enquiry for the late medieval period, from which there is a wealth of structural and artistic evidence. Furthermore, the longevity of such signs and symbols can be assessed through the occupation history of buildings or the provenance and dissemination of artworks, allowing for an assessment of cultural continuity.

2.2   Archaeology and ethnosymbolism in the Principality

Continuity of occupation or use of buildings is a strong indication that sites associated with Ştefan cel Mare maintained his legacy, and in so doing helped to define that legacy to the inhabitants of the Principality. Putna monastery, the dynastic burial site founded by Ştefan, is the *nonpareil* in this regard. Members of the Muşat family, including two voivodes, were buried in the Church of the Assumption for three decades following Ştefan's death, and were memorialised by funerary monuments that echoed that of Ştefan himself. More importantly, although successor

Moldovan princes sought to develop rival mausolea from the mid-16th century onwards, as the *locus* of voivodal power moved south to Iaşi, Putna remained a site of strategic importance that attracted voivodal sponsorship – not least the campaign of rebuilding in the mid-17th century.

The *curtea domnească* at Iaşi stands out as a complex of buildings which had been defined and elaborated during Ştefan's reign and which continued in use as the seat of Moldovan government through the early modern period and beyond. While Ştefan's residence was subsumed within a series of palaces, the court church of St. Nicholas was preserved in situ, maintaining its status despite the construction nearby of the outstanding ecclesiastical building of the early modern era, Vasile Lupu's Church of the Three Hierarchs [photographs 24 and 26].

Church-building itself served as a continuation of Ştefan's legacy as a patron of new buildings. The Moldavian Style of architecture reached its peak with the 16th-century churches in Suceava – the Church of St. George in the monastery of St. John the New as well as Petru Rareş' Church of St. Demetrius, foundations which represented powerful expressions on the Suceava skyline of the art and style of the Principality.

The culture of painted frescoes in Ştefan's churches continued and was amplified by his successors in the 16th century and beyond; patrons and artists maintained key pictorial themes such as the representation of the "The Cavalcade of Constantine" (Chapter 2, clause 3).

Epigraphic evidence recording building work at sites such as Suceava Castle and Cetatea Albă, as well as the dedication stones at Ştefan's church foundations, provides some of the clearest evidence of a public symbolism associated with Ştefan and his regime, expressed through heraldic devices as well as inscriptions.

The Church of St. Demetrius, set in the commercial heart of Suceava near the prince's court, replaced an earlier foundation made by Ştefan cel Mare. However, the dedication inscription acknowledged Petru's father by name, "Ştefan cel Batran", in time-honoured style, underlining Petru's legitmacy as ruler. (Similarly, Ştefan's dedication inscriptions usually identified him as the son of Voivode Bogdan (Chapter 2, clause 2).) Petru's inscription was topped by a carved relief of the auroch's head symbol of the Muşat family, the heraldic motif strongly associated with Ştefan [photograph 23] (see Chapter 4, clause 3 and Ogden 2002, 212). Continuity with the past could be expressed directly through words and images. A century later, the auroch's head seal would be incorporated not just into the carving above the dedication inscription on the Church of the Three Hierarchs in Iaşi, but also into the carving in the jambs of the ceremonial south door. Indeed, the auroch's head is a commonplace symbol found on the early modern churches and monasteries of Iaşi and its surrounding area, notably at Cetăţuia and Golia (see Ogden 2002, 122, 136).

The votive paintings and dynastic tombs commissioned by Ştefan cel Mare demonstrate his concern with atemporal public expressions of power (Chapter 2, clauses 2.1.3 and 3). In particular, the carved tombstones commissioned by Ştefan for the graves of his predecessors and his extended family, being examples of funerary art which are unique to the Principality, form a prominent expression of a distinct culture of representation and religious and dynastic symbolism. The continuation of such features by voivodes and boyars after Ştefan's death reinforces the significance that contemporaries placed on visual representations of the Muşat dynasty's culture and identity.[60]

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For ethnosymbolists, archaeological evidence for the visual culture of the Moldovan elite in Ştefan's era, such as the decorated tiles recovered from the site of the prince's court at Vaslui, is perhaps more *dynastic* than *ethnic* or *nationalistic*. Nevertheless, Smith accepts the role of

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[60] There were stylistic changes to Moldovan funerary monuments and a simplification in the style of the carved tombstones during the 16th century, with accentuated oriental designs; but the principles of the funerary art developed at Rădăuţi and Putna persisted. See Balş 1928, 268-9, 370.

"aristocratic ethnies" in forging political groupings which might serve as the precursors of nations: so dynasticism and nationalism may be causally linked over *la longue durée* (Smith 2004, 21-2). Smith posits "lateral" and "vertical" ethnicity, lateral ethnicity being that displayed by an elite that is closed off from a wider community, vertical ethnicity being the phenomenon of ethnic identity spreading through a community irrespective of social status (ibid., 187-8). In the case of the Principality, the reign of Ştefan cel Mare and its immediate aftermath might be termed a triumph of lateral ethnicity, in which the Muşat culture was set apart from all others within the multi-ethnic polity. In the age of nationalism, that lateral ethnicity was superseded by a form of vertical ethnicity, under the influence of the Romanian Orthodox Church and the nascent Romanian nation state (see the discussion in clause 1.1 above).

There are various examples in medieval Europe of dynasticism constituting the primary component of emergent communal identification, within multi-ethnic polities as well as in polities with dominant ethnic groups. While the kingdom of England is cited by some medievalists as having exhibited early nationalism, with a "longish history of political unity under one dynasty...", Robert Bartlett also refers to examples from central Europe:

> In a phrase from a medieval Hungarian tract, much cited by modern historians, we even encounter an explicit eulogy of the multiethnic state: "a kingdom of one race and custom is weak and fragile." The Hungarian statement ... implies that what matters in a polity is allegiance to a dynasty, not one's language or descent or even, within limits, one's religion. In this it parallels the modern concept of citizenship... (Bartlett 2001, 50, 53)

Summary of clause 2: the longevity of dynastic culture

There is undoubtedly a wealth of surviving visual identifiers associated with the person of the Moldovan voivode, the name of the voivode's family, and the territory over which he ruled. This can be related to Grosby's suggestion that *representation* by a ruler constitutes a criterion of early communal, perhaps national, consciousness: that the ubiquity of signs and symbols of the voivode's person and of his dynasty acted to bind his subject people (Özkırımlı and Grosby 2007,

533). The question of collective nomenclature for the *ethnies* of the Principality of Moldova must therefore be linked to the vocabulary of the time, which argues for a nuanced use of the term "Moldovan". The 15th-century Principality was populated by numerous ethnic groups – indigenes, Saxons, Armenians etc. – but together they constituted a Moldovan populace, represented at a high level at least by the culture of the Muşat dynasty.

Ultimately, archaeology narrates change rather than continuity: the evolution of sites; their varied structures and uses; their decline and abandonment. Furthermore, elements of continuity need not necessarily be indices of ethno-national identification, but reflections of the function of buildings: the longevity of Iaşi as a seat of government was determined by wider geopolitical factors than the mere fact that Ştefan cel Mare had favoured the site. Nevertheless, the history of a special building such as the Church of the Assumption at Putna – where reconstruction of the fabric in the 17th century followed the founder's plan, where the interior of the church respects the original plan despite successive remodellings, and where the founder's tomb has been respected as a monument even though the grave has been disturbed at least twice – argues for the primacy of its association with Ştefan cel Mare, notwithstanding changes in the political, territorial and popular composition of Ştefan's lands.

The case for the origins of a nation – Romanian, Moldovan – in the late medieval period is not proven by archaeological evidence, nor by related art historical evidence. However, the corpus of material evidence does illustrate a sophisticated, multi-layered public dynastic culture in the Principality which endured beyond Ştefan's lifetime and even the timeline of his dynasty.

CHAPTER SIX: How does medieval archaeology influence public life?

Chapter 5 has illustrated that archaeological work in Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine – undertaken throughout the 20th century and continuing today despite political and economic crises – has added to the historical record, variously consolidating, supplementing and challenging documentary sources. Over and above this, buildings, sites and monuments have been influential, in varying degrees, in the construction and development of forms of communal identity.

This Chapter 6 looks at archaeology and ethnosymbolism in a contemporary context. Further questions arise for ethnosymbolists in relation to the post-communist development of the Romanian nation states: what impact does archaeology have on the continuation of Ştefan cel Mare's posthumous reputation and how is that manifested in public life? As in Chapter 5, these issues can be addressed through the criteria of *selection* and *resonance*, here in relation to the post-1989 reality.

1   Defining the relationship between archaeology and ethnosymbolism

The persistence of culture-history as an approach in archaeology, not least in Romanian and Moldovan archaeology, gives the study of the material remains of the past a continuing role in nationalism studies (Díaz-Andreu 2001, 438). Material evidence – whether discovered through excavation or expressed in the built environment and the arts – should therefore form an element of an ethnosymbolist's research data.

Reading Anthony D. Smith, it is possible to distinguish two main areas in which ethnosymbolism identifies archaeology as being important to nationalism, in the modern and post-modern eras. In the first area, as a scientific discipline, archaeology can be used to provide legitimation for nationalists. Archaeology offers people a material, tangible connection with the past. Though the interpretation of archaeological materials may be benign or malign, manipulative or abusive, as a "scientific" discipline, the process of archaeology can offer reassurance about the authenticity of material that is adopted for a nation (Smith 1986, 178-181; see Niculescu 2007, 134-5).

The work of Gustav Kossinna and the German schools of archaeology and history in the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries warns how, historically, the *practice* of archaeology has been tainted by associations with nationalism in its racist form (see Chapter 5, Introduction, clause 2). In medieval studies, the work of Bodo Ebhardt (1865-1945) in castle research provided another outlet for ideas of ethnic homogeneity and the expansion of German territory: "When Kossinna identified material culture as the reflection of ethnicity... Ebhardt posited that ground plans and masonry of medieval castles corresponded to ethnic groups"; "[Ebhardt] considered German castles as symbols of national identity, representing the unification of the German people" (Link 2009, 327, 339-40).

The ethnosymbolist approach does not justify the racism inherent in some archaeological approaches to issues of nationalism, and in some uses of archaeology by nationalists. Rather, Smith writes of 19th-century archaeology being "absorbed into the circular reasoning of national authenticity, while the very materiality of its finds came to express the popular basis of the national self and the authentic spirit of the common folk" (Smith 2001, 442-3; see Champion 2001, 463). The ethnosymbolist approach accepts and studies the interpretation of archaeology by nationalists, it does not necessarily defend it.

In the second area, ethnosymbolism requires that attention is paid to how individual finds and archaeological sites can provide "historic motifs and symbols" that are used to define nations and bind them together, especially if a community is under threat. Smith is not an archaeologist and his lexicon is not always precise, but he suggests that:

> ... the power of these national symbols derives mainly from their antiquity and
> uniqueness, which answer to the need for rootedness and dignity of peoples who
> have become uncertain of their place in the world and who aspire to cultural
> parity as nations. (Smith 2001, 447)

It is not just artefacts and remains that provide symbols. Sites and monuments belong to the terrain in which they are situated and contribute to notions of ethnic "homelands", by virtue of their age (real or perceived) and their history (known or imagined). Smith writes persuasively of the

significance of medieval castles in the European landscape, writing of their "fusion" with the landscape and their role as memorials to struggle (Smith 1986, 185-7).

Smith is sensitive to the selectivity inherent in archaeological research: archaeology is not a neutral science and the choice of sites for investigation is the first aspect of interpretation which governs the process of archaeological research (ibid., 180). However, while acknowledging the influence of Romanticism on the development of early archaeology, Smith's own analyses can seem to be Romantic themselves and expose his partial account of archaeology to criticism. While he is perceptive about the status of monuments in ethnic landscapes, Smith's studies lack detailed analysis of how archaeological sites and monuments develop and are researched.

The ethnosymbolist approach allows for a more in-depth consideration than Smith has provided of the role of archaeology and sites and monuments in the development of symbols of national identity.[1] Accordingly, the following clauses address how key buildings and sites in Romania and the Republic, associated with Ştefan cel Mare and discussed in Chapter 5, have been selected as contemporary symbols of identity and how they have been received and used in this context by various interest groups in the post-communist era.

2   Suceava Castle as a contemporary monument

Perceptions of the medieval past occupy a vibrant place in the life of 21st-century societies in Southeastern Europe. This can be seen in the pageantry of the annual tournaments held at Visegrád, on the tiltyard where Matthias Corvinus would have presided over games[2]; in the simple

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[1] N.B., Jones warns that archaeological materials and monuments receive variable ascriptions over time, and their interpretation by students of nationalism must be equally flexible: "...monuments and assemblages of material culture have to be understood in the context of heterogeneous and often conflicting constructions of cultural identity. There is no single, unambiguous ethnic association, because no such single social reality has ever existed." (Jones 1997, 140.)

[2] See http://www.visegrad.hu/international-palace-games.

commercialism of the annual "Festival of Medieval Arts" held in the citadel at Sighişoara; and, at another extreme, in the dark legend of the battle of Kosovo Polje (1389) and its hold over Balkan politics, manifested during the break-up of Yugoslavia (Glenny 2000, 11, 626-8, 652-62; Geary 2002, 7-8)[3].

At Suceava, there is an annual Festival of Medieval Arts, rather like that at Sighişoara, but dedicated to Ştefan cel Mare. The festival is sponsored by local museums and the municipal authority: including folk art and theatrical performances, the festival is centred on two days' of events held at Suceava Castle, where the site is taken over by demonstrations of medieval combat, living history events and musical performances [photographs 27 and 28]. The castle is used as an entertainment venue, with little restriction on access or use of the site, in contrast to the *curtea domnească* in the centre of the town, which was cordoned-off throughout the 2000s while archaeological research and a programme of restoration unfolded slowly [photographs 32 – 34].

Ştefan's name clearly holds sway in Suceava, where a festival is dedicated to him and a university named in his memory, just as a literary festival and a high school are dedicated to the name of the national poet, Mihai Eminescu. The rebuilding of Suceava Castle has provided a dramatic venue at which the town can celebrate its medieval heritage. It is a moot point whether Ştefan's popular reputation would have been any less significant without the restoration work and archaeological research which has taken place at the castle. However, work has been carried out at Suceava Castle over a long period, starting in the late 19th century, and since the 1950s there has been near continuous research and reconstruction carried out on the plateau, demonstrating to the local populace that the site and, by extension, personalities associated with the history of the site, have a rare importance.

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[3] Verdery describes how, between 1987 and 1989, the procession of the remains of Serbian Prince Lazar (reigned c.1370-89), who died at Kosovo Polje, from the Patriarchate in Belgrade to monasteries across Yugoslavia, followed by burial in the province of Kosovo, was used to make claim to the lands of a "Greater Serbia" (Verdery 1999, 17-18).

The status of Suceava Castle as an archaeological monument that is also a focus of public attention continues to evolve. In April 2009, the president of the Council of Suceava County (*Consiliul Județean*) announced that funding of EUR14m had been put together to support the "rehabilitation" of Suceava Castle and its environs. In the teeth of international economic crisis, the money had been provided jointly by the regional development agency for northeastern Romania (backed by EU funds), Suceava County and the municipal authority in Suceava. (The crisis may have stalled the project, but the authorities reinforced their plans with a further announcement in February 2010 that the funding would be available and that the project would be concluded within five years.)[4]

While the project was intended to address structural problems at the castle, particularly in the north range, the principal focus of the project was to establish Suceava Castle as a viable international tourist attraction, with an infrastructure of improved, safe visitor facilities and a lighting system to provide night time illumination of the castle in its dramatic setting. All this was planned to contribute to the status of Bucovina as an area of historical interest and the development of the local economy. While the monument was seen to be of historic importance in itself, its *value* to local authorities was fundamentally as a means of promoting economic growth – a modern and uncontroversial perspective, given the relative poverty of the region and the example of cultural heritage management provided by developed economies in Europe.

At one level, this use of Suceava Castle as a venue to attract cultural tourism is little different to the exploitation of the Dracula legends and the plans to create a "Dracula Land" theme park in central Romania (Chapter 4, clause 3.3). However, whereas in Wallachia and Transylvania it is the name and morbid idea of Dracula which is used to attract tourists to sites and venues associated with a fictionalised Romanian history, in Moldavia – in Suceava County, at least – it is

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[4] For local press reports of the announcement in April 2009, see
http://www.evenimentul.ro/articol/cetatea-de-scaun-a-sucevei-reabilitata-cu-bani-europeni.html and http://www.obiectivdesuceava.ro/listare.php?ids=51929. The further announcement in February 2010 is reported at
http://www.suceava-news.ro/stiri/cetatea-de-scaun-a-sucevei-a-primit-finantare-pentru-a-fi-reconstruita/.

the rebuilt monument itself, Suceava Castle, which is intended to be the magnet for cultural tourism, rather than the name of its chief patron, Ştefan cel Mare.

From an ethnosymbolist standpoint, the rebuilt castle serves as a theatre in which the name of Ştefan can be honoured, as occasion demands. But as a monument, a survival from the past, the castle in its reconstructed state is a dominant image that symbolises continuity, whereas the long-dead voivode – for believers, a saint in paradise – is a more ethereal ideal. It is true that recent memorials to the man – such as the plaque fixed to the exterior wall of the chapel tower [photograph 9] and the equestrian statue that stands on the hillside nearby – are physical representations of Ştefan's vital, popular reputation. Yet Ştefan is intangible: he represents identity through values, whereas the castle is evident and "real" – a tangible connection with Romanian history (however complicated that history may be, and however ethnically diverse the original influences on the architectural style of the castle). Furthermore, it is the castle itself that provides the basis for an economic plan.

Fundamentally, while intellectuals and professionals – essentially archaeologists and historians – have played their role in interpreting and restoring the castle, it is politicians of varying hues who have provided the means for the intellectuals to get to work, and it is an economic imperative rather than a specifically ethno-nationalist agenda which now provides the stimulus for promoting the castle as a local resource.

The example of Suceava Castle does highlight the enduring legacy of Ştefan cel Mare, a legacy which has been consolidated by the work of archaeologists. But it also suggests a separation of the physical monument as a resource from the idealised memory of its patron. In practical terms, the castle iself has potential as a symbol of identity and *opportunity* for Bucovina: archaeology and conservation work have combined to turn the monument into an economic resource.

3   Monasteries and churches as cultural resources

There are so many monasteries and churches in northeastern Romania dating from the late 15th and 16th centuries that the campaign to effect their restoration seems piecemeal and never-ending. There is a long history of attempted conservation work on the painted churches, some of it successful. In the post-war era, the Ceauşescu regime sought to counter years of neglect, supporting structural renovations and the beginnings of conservation of the frescoes, while the churches were converted into museums. Post-1989, various national and international agencies have sponsored works of excavation and consolidation within the monastery precincts and, in particular, programmes of technically advanced conservation on the church frescoes, for which the foundations have international renown (Curry 2007).

Probota monastery has received particular attention over the past four decades. Between 1977 and 1989, a new roof was built on the church, with elongated eaves to provide greater protection from the elements for the exterior paintings. Prior to this, the floor of the church had been relaid in the 1930s, while plastering and over-painting, inside and outside the church, was carried out in the 19th century (Ogden 2002, 186; WHL). Recent work has sought to reverse the effects of over-painting and stabilise the structure of the church. A part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site since 1993, Probota has been granted special attention by UNESCO. Between 1996 and 2001, a programme of work was carried out under UNESCO supervision and with financial support from the Japanese delegation to UNESCO. Interior and exterior frescoes dating to the period of Petru Rareş were restored (albeit the exterior frescoes had been very degraded over time), and an underfloor heating system was introduced in the church, to help regulate the temperature and counteract the effects of moisture on the paintings (WHL; Japanese Fund-in-Trust).

In 2006, EU sponsorship allowed for the staging in Bucovina of a significant international symposium of conservators. Funding from the EU "Culture 2000" programme allowed Romanian conservation authorities, in partnership with agencies from Western Europe, to stage a roving "in

situ laboratory" at the monasteries of Suceviţa and Popăuţi and the church at Bălineşti, with the chief aim of experimenting with new laser technologies for the cleaning of painted surfaces, architectural elements and even metal objects, textiles and paper. An interdisciplinary, international event entitled "Saving Sacred Relics of European Medieval Cultural Heritage", this programme brought specific benefits to Romanian research institutions and their specialists and students, while also reflecting the national political direction towards membership of the European Union (Sinigalia 2006).

Even more so than the project to renovate Suceava Castle, restoration work at the churches of Bucovina has demonstrated the European dependency of Romanian politics over the course of the last 20 years. Positioning the painted churches within "European" culture reflects the needs of a transition state, offering a case study of Romania's more general need for support in economic and political terms. European and United Nations agencies have responded to the financial and practical needs of their Romanian counterparts. By designating a selection of the Bucovina churches as an element of World Heritage, UNESCO has provided the cultural credentials required to encourage investment in the restoration and conservation of monuments which are deemed to tell a far wider story than the legacy of the medieval voivodes. In other words, receipt of international accreditation for its local heritage is the necessary price that Romania has had to pay to attract the funds, and expertise, required to maintain the churches of Bucovina. It follows, in theory, that with such accreditation comes the potential of enhanced tourism and the revenues that tourism may generate for the local economy.

However, a visit to the Church of the Holy Cross at Pătrauţi reveals a paradox associated with World Heritage designation.[5] Though a part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site, Pătrauţi is situated within a very small village, several kilometers from the main road (E85) which leads from Suceava to Cernăuţi (Черновицу) in Ukraine. It is, quite literally, off the beaten track. Beautifully restored in its tranquil setting in hills above the Suceava river, the church

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[5] This commentary is based upon a site visit in the summer of 2008.

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is so small that it can only accommodate a few visitors at a time. A visitor has remarkable proximity to the restored interior frescoes – the restored votive painting in the *naos* is at eye-level – but Pătrăuţi is fundamentally an extraordinary local church rather than a visitor attraction. Outside, the village offers little by way of facilities – there is hardly any space for vehicles to park, and there is only a small museum adjacent to a nearby school building. It is not a site that can ever generate the funds required to invest in its maintenance or boost the local economy.

Though one of Ştefan cel Mare's earliest foundations, there is little on display for the uninitiated to indicate that the church is associated with him. A new signboard stands beside the churchyard wall, though away from the entrance gate. Bearing the World Heritage logo (and the logos of several sponsors, from local authorities to the Avis car hire firm), the signboard gives brief details in close-packed text in Romanian, English and German. Ştefan is named as the founder of the church, the "Athlete of Christ" whose portrait can be seen in the *naos*. But it is the outstanding paintings – the votive, the Cavalcade of Constantine, and the Last Judgement on the exterior west wall – which are highlighted in 11 lines of English text. So, Ştefan cel Mare is memorialised only by association with these works.

The restoration of the interior and exterior frescoes at Pătrăuţi is a considerable, recent achievement. The story of the restoration work forms the central theme of the impromptu guided tours of the building that are provided to visitors by student volunteers. In terms of the underlying principles of World Heritage status – the preservation and appreciation of the great works of man and nature – this treatment of Pătrăuţi is ideal. But, for all the money and skill that has been invested necessarily at the site, the church is a small monument and a small-scale heritage operation. While some of the restored monasteries of the region can be expected to fulfil the dual purpose of religious institutions and tourist attractions, a site like the church at Pătrăuţi can be expected to continue as a minor attraction but a local treasure.

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As symbols, the monasteries and churches of Bucovina seem now to point towards an integrated European identity rather than an ethnic Romanian identity; even the church at Pătrauți is bound up in this form of internationalism. But Pătrauți is as much a local monument as a part of a World Heritage Site. Like all the "Painted Churches of Moldavia", Pătrauți is particular to a region of contemporary Romania. Archaeology and advanced conservation techniques have been carried out in the name of international ideals; but these processes have stabilised buildings of local character and resonance.

4   Cultural resources in the Republic of Moldova

A smaller nation than Romania, in terms of territory and population, and subject to acute economic privations, the Republic of Moldova has been unable to invest in its cultural heritage to the same extent as its neighbour across the Prut. This economic reality is exemplified by the tiny museum in the border town of Leova, in southwestern Moldova. Housed in a Soviet-era cultural complex still named after Maxim Gorky, in the summer of 2006 the museum's single display room was largely taken up with an assortment of traditional agricultural tools. With electricity at a premium, the museum curator was on hand to turn the lights on and off (just as her counterparts in the National History Museum in Chişinău were obliged to do, when visitors moved from one display room to another).

The darkened entrance hall to the Leova museum was dedicated to the achievements of Ştefan cel Mare, being decorated with a display of pictures and collages about the voivode created by local schoolchildren – the display was apparently a legacy of the 2004 celebrations. This simple museum presented a narrative in which Ştefan was the national hero, while the local history was dominated by rural culture.

4.1   Căpriana monastery

Although the paucity of major sites which are associated with Ştefan in the Republic of Moldova skews analysis of the role of archaeology in the perpetuation of his memory, the Moldovan authorities have attempted in recent years to establish a heritage industry in which the medieval past is prominent, focusing on two sites – Căpriana and Orheiul Vechi – that were important in Ştefan's era.

In September 2008, the government's official website reported on a service of celebration marking the completion of a five-year restoration project at Căpriana monastery. President Voronin was present at the ceremony where the Metropolitan Bishop of Chişinău and All Moldova (a subordinate of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church) rededicated the early 20th-century Church of St. George within the precincts, restored with funds raised by public appeal as well as by a grant from the state.

As reported, Voronin used the theme of public participation in the renovation of the monastery to make elaborate claims for the significance of the site as a symbol of Moldovan identity:

> The Capriana Monastery is a precious heritage, the heart and soul of Moldova, a symbol of the spiritual communion of Moldovans. Its reconstruction symbolizes the spiritual rebirth of society, Moldova's revival as a state and of Moldovans as a nation. This represents an invaluable contribution in the [*sic*] Moldova's modern history, the president said. (Republic of Moldova)

From the standpoint of ethnosymbolism, Voronin's words reflect the desire of the political elite to focus the attention of the population of the state on a national identity in which nation and state are one. According to Voronin's speech, the Moldovan nation is explicity Christian and spiritual, a society which represents continuity of beliefs, values and practices. Notably, there is little sense in the statement of a timeframe of Moldovan history, no mention of the monastery's

medieval origins and no mention of its founders: it is as if Căpriana and, by extension, Moldovan identity, is timeless.

Given the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic make-up of the citizenry of Moldova within the Republic proper (setting aside Gagauzia and Transnistria), Voronin's argument was overly simplistic: an ideal suited to a perceived audience which could associate itself with a language, customs of religious practice, and a fairly restricted territory.[6] Nevertheless, the fact that money had been raised from the general public toward the restoration of Căpriana, and not just been provided from a state grant, indicates a level of public acceptance of the importance of the monastery, certainly as a place of worship and perhaps also as a symbol of national identity, as Voronin stated.

Voronin certainly gave good copy for those who study the influence of the past in contemporary societies. The president was keen to use history – to the consternation of teachers and academics – to consolidate the Republic's independence. As a former communist bureaucrat who had seen Ştefan cel Mare replace Lenin as the state's icon of leadership, Voronin understood the propaganda value of national symbols. At a meeting of Moldovan historians in 2006, called to discuss the introduction of the controversial "integrated history" textbook, Voronin declared: "...our country is neither a gubernia nor a province of some others [*sic*] state, but has its own contemporary state symbols with a centuries-long tradition, culture, and history" (Musteață 2008, 139, quoting the "Press Service of the President of the Republic of Moldova". See Chapter 3, clause 3.3.1).

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[6] Kaneff and Heintz have emphasised the complex, fractured ethnic make-up in Moldova and southern Ukraine. Ethnic identity at village level is seemingly straightforward, with groups of "monoethnic" settlements producing an overall regional "mix". However, at local level it is possible for neighbouring villages with communities belonging to the same ethnic group to exhibit differences in language and religious or ritual practices. "The overall resulting picture is of local communities that can be temporarily aggregated along different principles (ethnic, economic, linguistic and history) to serve the interests of the moment" (Kaneff and Heintz 2006, 10-11).

Ultimately, the value of Căpriana for Voronin did not depend on Ştefan. Ştefan cel Mare's original connection with Căpriana is oblique in the historical and archaeological records, which may account for his seeming absence from Voronin's account of Căpriana's importance (see Chapter 5, Section 1, clause 2.2). Local folklore claims Ştefan as the founder of the monastery, not the results of documentary study or archaeological research. While the voivode is recorded as the founder of Căpriana at the Zographu monastery on Mount Athos, an interesting feature of contemporary Căpriana is more elemental: "Ştefan's oak-tree", located in a nearby nature reserve.

4.2   Case Study: Orheiul Vechi since Independence

While Căpriana is a working monastery of medieval origin at which archaeology has been carried out, in contrast, Orheiul Vechi is an archaeological landscape.[7] As a candidate for inclusion on the World Heritage List, it offers greater scope for study of the role of archaeology in contemporary Moldovan public life. This is defined through the following sub-clauses.

4.2.1   Research and interpretation

With a long history of research at Orheiul Vechi dating back to the 1950s, the 1990s witnessed the most intense period of archaeological work across the landscape, paving the way for its designation as an "open air museum". Led by Ion Hăncu and Professor Gheorghe Postică, archaeological research benefitted from a revival in interest in Moldovan history in the new Republic, symbolised by a special presidential visit to Orheiul Vechi made by Mircea Snegur on 19 August 1996 (Postică 1999, 7).

The work undertaken in the late 1990s was conducted primarily by Moldovans and Romanians, and a conference held at Orheiul Vechi in August 1997 to celebrate 50 years of archaeological research there was attended by many Moldovan specialists of the post-communist

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[7] See illustration 20 for the several components of the Orheiul Vechi landscape.

generation. Between 1996 and 1998, Gheorghe Postică focused on establishing the chronology of the Peştere citadel (revising Smirnov's earlier dating – see Chapter 5, Section 2, clause 1), as well as working on earlier periods which are key to concepts of indigenous identity – the Geto-Dacian era and the early medieval period between the 6th and the 11th centuries (Musteaţă 2005, 190).

However, researchers from Russia and Ukraine also visited the excavations of 1996-1998 (Postică 1999, 7-8), and Postică's revision of Smirnov's chronology of the Peştere citadel does not serve a politicised interpretation of Moldova's history – attributing the citadel's original construction to Tatar occupiers, rather than to the era of Ştefan cel Mare. In general, the history of archaeological research at Orheiul Vechi suggests that the multi-period, multi-ethnic character of the archaeological landscape has surpassed any political interference in the interpretation of archaeology and history there.

The site museum at Orheiul Vechi is a museum of *archaeology*, and this serves as a balance to the prominent visual features of the complex – the natural landscape itself and religious buildings. Similarly, the on-site noticeboards deal largely with explanations of archaeological features, placing the standing remains within a broader context. This concentration on explanations of the archaeological significance of the complex is in part a reflection of the influence of Moldovan NGO archaeological organisations, such as the CCARM and The National Association of Young Historians of Moldova ("ANTIM"), on the development of Orheiul Vechi as a visitor attraction.

4.2.2   Sponsorship

Still, Orheiul Vechi is a political environment. No other archaeological site in Moldova receives such a level of national and international interest, and a list of the sponsors which have supported work there since Independence indicates its contemporary significance to policy-makers. Construction of the site museum was funded by a grant from the United States embassy in Chişinău and represents an investment in Orheiul Vechi's potential as a tourist attraction. In

contrast, some archaeological research in the early 1990s appears to have served an ethno-national objective, with the work on the Thracian and Geto-Dacian sites being supported financially by the Romanian Institute of Thracology. Philanthropy has also played a part, as the programme of 1996-1998 was supported by the Soros Foundation[8] in Moldova and served an educational remit, with financial support being given for two sets of summer schools aimed at schoolchildren and university students (Postică 1999, 7-8).

The CCARM ran the summer schools at Orheiul Vechi in 1997 and 1998. The guiding principles behind these schools were to instill in young generations a respect for cultural monuments and "national" history. This found expression in various statements made by the organisers: "one of the main direction [*sic*] being the formation of a respectful attitude towards the historic past of our native land..." (Bârlădeanu 1999, 49);[9] "the initiation of a strong program for the promotion of the values of the historical and cultural patrimony in the Orheiul Vechi micro-zone..." (Musteață 1999, 46). The vague theory was combined with a practical approach to providing educational opportunities in archaeological techniques, conservation skills, and environmental studies, at secondary and tertiary levels. Orheiul Vechi was the focus of these efforts, although the summer schools had a wide-ranging application. The schools also served as an opportunity to establish partnerships between universities in Moldova and the countries from which students were sent to the summer schools, including Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine and Russia (ibid., 44-46). The summer schools represented a proactive attempt by archaeologists to raise awareness about Orheiul Vechi as a cultural monument of the nation state and, beyond this, to find ways of providing educational opportunities which were missing from school and university curricula.

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[8] George Soros, a native Hungarian, is the head of Soros Fund Management and has used his wealth to fund a global network of foundations dedicated to supporting open societies. His organisations have been particularly active in Eastern Europe post-1989.

[9] In context, "our native land" is a vague reference, perhaps to Moldova in its current form, perhaps to a wider Romanian legacy.

Several initiatives arose from the summer schools. A "Foundation" was established, comprising the schools' participants, which was designed to perpetuate the interdisciplinary studies and institutional partnerships which had taken place during the schools. The principles of educating young people in the conservation of cultural monuments were taken further by ANTIM in 2000, while the "*Salvati Orheiul Vechi*" programme ("Save Orheiul Vechi") was first set up in 1998 as a campaign to use the media to promote public appreciation of the importance of Orheiul Vechi (ibid., 46).

4.2.3   Conservation

In the autumn of 2001, there was an inspection of the museum complex by a parliamentary commission and two main threats to Orheiul Vechi were identified by Sergiu Musteață, one of Postică's colleagues. First, inhabitants of the local villages were claiming land rights and carrying out restricted agricultural practices in contravention of legislation. The local administrative council of Trebujeni had set itself against the concerns of archaeologists, defending local farmers and growers who continued to exploit the land without regard for the protection of archaeology. The planting of vineyards was a particular problem. Musteață acknowledged the economic needs of the local residents and the necessity to them of working the land, but argued for the overriding importance of the legislation which gave protection to the archaeological landscape (Musteață 2001(b)).

The second threat concerned the renovation of the Peştera monastery. The monastic community returned to Peştera in the mid 1990s and had set about renovating the cave chapel and the external belfry there without reference to professional conservators. The results were extremely frustrating for archaeologists, not least the installation of doors, an outsize iconostasis, and modern window fittings set in concrete which had caused excessive condensation within Peştera, so that the walls were dripping with water. (To the monks, the walls were weeping the "tears of the Mother of God".) The community had also installed a monument on the hillside of Butuceni, representing the crucifixion, without receiving permission from the Ministry of Culture.

Orheiul Vechi was subject to wide-ranging environmental threats at this time. The river Răut was polluted by rubbish and local waste, while the advent of tourists to the museum complex had introduced the problem of further refuse being discarded there. Trees had been felled, leaving large areas populated merely by stumps, and one local landowner had decided to "solve" this problem by planting more trees elsewhere, despite restrictions on plantings within the archaeological landscape. Small-scale quarrying had taken place on Butuceni, while earthworks had been levelled and some of the cave hermitages had been blocked up. The inspection of the site by the parliamentary commission and members of the government led to governmental decrees being issued in relation to Orheiul Vechi, but there could be no overnight resolution of the environmental problems there (Musteață 2001(a)).

4.2.4 Orheiul Vechi in law

The legal name for the Orheiul Vechi museum complex is "Complexul Muzeal 'Oraşul medieval Orhei'" – *musem complex of the medieval town of Orhei*. This suggests that the protected area is rather limited, as the landscape incorporates far more than the medieval components implied by this name. However, the terminology used to describe the museum complex varies from publication to publication and the name "Orheiul Vechi" is of overall importance.

Moldovan governments have provided for the protection of Orheiul Vechi, together with Căpriana monastery, from the earliest days of the Republic. Decree of the Government of the Republic of Moldova no. 506, "Concerning measures to realise a state programme at 'Oraşul medieval Orhei' and Căpriana Monastery", is dated 11 September 1991. The communist government took a particular interest in developing Orheiul Vechi as a designated museum landscape, and issued several decrees during the 2000s.

Following the inspection of Orheiul Vechi in the autumn of 2001 by the parliamentary commission, President Voronin's prime minister, Vasile Tarlev, signed Decree no. 1378, "Concerning the priority steps required to safeguard historic-cultural monuments within the museum complex of the medieval town of Orhei", 10 December 2001 (Monitorul Oficial no. 1428, 40). This Decree addressed some of the extant disputes and sought to bring together the various

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national and local authorities with responsibility for the landscape, under a timetable for action (Monitorul Oficial no. 1428, Annex, 41). The principal aim of the Decree was to "stop the process of degradation of monuments, ensembles and historic sites" within the complex. A two-year financial programme of approximately 1.5m lei was proposed for the conservation and restoration of the monasteries and St. Mary's Church on Butuceni, together with the construction of a new museum for the complex.

On 21 April 2003, Tarlev signed a further Decree, no. 476, "Concerning the attribution of a unitary landscape at the museum complex of the medieval town of Orhei", conforming to the provisions of Art. 8 of the Land Code of the Republic of Moldova (1991). This Decree was an attempt to resolve disputes concerning land rights within the museum complex. 123ha of land in public ownership was assigned to the museum complex, including arable land, pasture, and woodland. The museum complex was established as the principal beneficiary of land in private ownership containing archaeological remains within its perimeter. A further 61ha of land was transferred to the museum complex by Trebujeni Council. This provision appears to confirm the dominant status of the museum complex as a legal and territorial entity within the local landscape. Thus, a compromise was established in law between the economic needs of the local inhabitants to farm and exploit the land and the protection and conservation imperatives of the designated archaeological landscape – a landscape which had been mapped, which was to be monitored by the police, and which, as a "museum complex", had been given legal property rights.

However, although the state had demonstrated its interest in the protection and promotion of Orheiul Vechi, the communist government was for the most part unable to provide sufficient funds for the conservation and management of the landscape. A tarmac road linking Peştere with Butuceni (including a dramatic road bridge over the Răut) was rebuilt in 2002-2003 but represented an exceptional investment: this followed an unscheduled visit to the site by Prime Minister Vasile Tarlev, at the instigation of Gheorge Postică, who took the opportunity of a government meeting being held in nearby Orhei to invite the Prime Minister to witness the unacceptable state of the unmade road at the site and to lobby for the construction of a proper road surface.

4.2.5   Orheiul Vechi as a World Heritage Site

Orheiul Vechi was entered on the "tentative list" of World Heritage Sites, submitted to UNESCO by state parties to the World Heritage Convention, in July 2005, under the title "Le landschaft culturel [*the cultural landscape*] Orheiul Vechi" ([World Heritage Centre](#)). A mission from UNESCO's Venice office inspected the site in September 2005 and a national commission was established in Moldova to prepare the World Heritage submission dossier. This work was funded by the United Nations Development Programme ("UNDP").

In terms of the justification for listing Orheiul Vechi, the site was submitted to UNESCO as an example of a combination of cultural and natural features. This took advantage of the division of the concept of World Heritage into "cultural" and "natural" categories. The case for including Orheiul Vechi on the List was enhanced by its "combined" status; this also reinforced the official interpretation of the site, building upon the designation of the Orheiul Vechi landscape as an "open air" museum complex:

> "Le caractère particulier de l'Orheiul Vechi réside dans la cohérence de la relation du l'homme avec son environnement naturel, au cours des temps" [*The particular character of Orheiul Vechi resides in the coherence of the relationship between man and his natural environment, over the course of time.*] ([World Heritage Centre](#)).

Developing Moldova's tourism infrastructure was a priority for the government, and it was given significant support by the UNDP. This agency worked in partnership with the Moldovan authorities from 2000, providing financial and technical support on, for example, internet projects, leading a "Sustainable Tourism Development" project, and supporting the Orheiul Vechi World Heritage submission dossier. Indeed, the development of Orheiul Vechi as a tourist attraction was at the heart of the UNDP's activities from the early stages of its involvement in Moldova (UNDP 2005, 2).

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

The examples of World Heritage Sites in Moldova and Romania illustrate the integral relationship between the protection of cultural heritage sites and the creation of economic opportunities, both direct and indirect, through various forms of employment and tourism. Sites and

monuments cannot be restored and managed without investment (both local and inward), but international accreditation for sites and monuments should bring with it economic rewards that justify that investment. If such sites and monuments also bear local significance, as ethno-national symbols, the investment made in their restoration and management may also be socio-political in nature: World Heritage Status may enhance the otherwise local status of sites and monuments and dignify their ethno-national character.

However, neither the Painted Churches of Moldavia nor Orheiul Vechi are quite so straightforward to categorise: the Orheiul Vechi landscape, with its multi-ethnic occupation history over the course of millennia, is especially hard to define in ethnosymbolist terms. The museum complex does little to solve the identity conundrum facing the Republic, far from it. Because Orheiul Vechi is a mélange of sites and cultures, it is a complicated symbol for Moldova, and not a potent symbol to be exploited by Moldovanists or Romanian and Slav nationalists.

4.2.6   Ştefan cel Mare at Orheiul Vechi

Accordingly, Orheiul Vechi has not been used to promote overt notions of Moldovan national identity. Nationalist messages from the archaeological work which has taken place in the era of Independence are subtle, at best. The two bronze cannon discovered in the citadel on Peştere and now displayed in Chişinău are a small testament to Moldovan resistance to invaders, as well as being unique discoveries in East European archaeology (Chapter 5, Section 2, clause 1).

As an archaeological landscape, Orheiul Vechi does provide evidence of the nature of the rule of the Moldovan state's national hero, Ştefan cel Mare, in terms of military consolidation of the Principality. But this is not supported by images of Ştefan at the site; there is no monumental statue or commemorative likeness to compare with sites across the Prut or with Plămădeala's statue in the Moldovan capital.

Ştefan cel Mare's connection with Orheiul Vechi is just one element in the presentation of the site. Posters and leaflets have featured the 18th-century stone cross that stands on the cliff edge on the Butuceni promontory, near the bell tower of the Peştera monastery, along with images of the early modern cave monasteries on Butuceni. The overt Christian symbolism is offset by panoramas of the course of the Răut and references to the Geto-Dacian occupation of the area [illustrations 24 and 25].

The Orheiul Vechi tourist guide, scripted by Gheorghe Postică and produced by the Department of Tourism Development with the support of the UNDP (Postică 2004), is illustrated with the full range of imagery present in or recovered from the landscape – the Church of St. Mary on Butuceni; the reconstructed walls of the citadel, the medieval church and the Tatar bath house on Peştere; medieval coins bearing the auroch's head symbol; inscriptions and pottery, together with "traditional" peasant houses in the nearby village of Butuceni. Within the short guidebook, however, there is a certain emphasis accorded to the late medieval occupation of Orhei, and Ştefan is cited by name several times as "Stephen the Great and Saint": he is the only voivode to be named within the guide. Although Orheiul Vechi is a multi-period, multi-ethnic landscape, there is just a hint here that Ştefan's association with the medieval settlement and citadel ties in to the wider narrative of his political prominence in Moldova in the 2000s.

Summary: the definition of archaeology in public life

The example of Orheiul Vechi shows that archaeology has an "impact" or "influence" in public life when it is a part of, or linked to, other processes. In general, the examples discussed from Romania and Moldova place archaeological research within wider contexts of technical conservation, architectural reconstruction, and revenue generation.

The several elements in the discussion of Orheiul Vechi demonstrate that archaeology provides raw materials for interpretation, leading to the presentation of those materials, which requires sponsorship. Interpretation and presentation links to education and training (funded

through various forms of sponsorship, both public and private), as well as to the conservation of materials and sites, which may be protected by legislation. It is a feature of relatively poor states like Romania and Moldova that these elements require international accreditation – ultimately expressed through World Heritage status – in order for the protection and dissemination of archaeology to be realised.

Ironically, whereas legislation, accreditation, and sponsorship require certainties in terms of clearly defined materials and the potential for their exploitation, the interpretation of material remains is subtle, variable and often complicated. While archaeology may find its way into numerous areas of public policy, the symbolism of sites promoted by professionals and interest groups can be lacking in definition.

In the case of Ştefan cel Mare, the material remains of his regime, in particular the archaeology, architecture and decoration of the high-status buildings which he sponsored, have received considerable attention from researchers and policy-makers alike. The material remains of his regime form a corpus of heritage, in Moldova as well as in Romania, which is a key component of the cultural heritage of these contemporary nation states, with all that that implies in terms of commercial opportunities and educational resources. The person of Ştefan seems to be incidental to this phenomenon, although the picture is varied and contradictory. The example of Orheiul Vechi seems to show that there is a contrast between the protection of the archaeological landscape there, of which the material remains of his regime is but one component, and the prominent political uses of the image of Ştefan to be found in Chişinău. The example of Suceava Castle indicates that although Ştefan is honoured at the site, it is the monument itself which is meaningful as a heritage site in the contemporary context of economic need.

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Archaeology is clearly important to the continuation of the legacy of the 15th-century Principality. But key sites and monuments have been selected, often through the agency of political institutions and with international accreditation, because of their perceived importance in the

interpretation of that legacy for contemporary needs. The archaeology of 15th-century Moldova now has a major role to play in fostering economic opportunities.

The "historic motifs and symbols" of the ethnosymbolist analysis are resources to be exploited over and above their being agents of identity and community. It remains an open question as to whether the *person* of Ştefan cel Mare is an identity figure for the contemporary populations of Romania and Moldova by means of the material remains of his regime, rather than by virtue of history and folklore.

CONCLUSION:
What does the case of Ştefan cel Mare reveal about ethnosymbolism
(and vice versa)?

The historical Ştefan cel Mare has been an identity figure of importance in the age of nationalism, in the modern age and in "post-modern" times. The reasons for this are to be found in an outstanding career of military, diplomatic, and artistic achievement; a career which was propagandised within his own time and the story of which survived through literature, memory, and the physical survival of his many buildings, both secular and religious.

The material discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 suggests that it would be possible, even logical, to present an exclusively modernist account of the use of Ştefan cel Mare in the construction of national consciousness in Romania and Moldova, one dominated by documentary source material. However, ethnosymbolism takes account of a wider range of sources than modernism, and allows for the long view. In the case of Ştefan cel Mare, ethnosymbolism provides perspective on what is clearly a long (and uneven) process; a process which started in Ştefan's lifetime and which was *intended* to survive him.

To study *la longue durée*, ethnosymbolists need to make use of material evidence. While the personality and achievements of Ştefan cel Mare, outlined in Chapter 2, may have been obscured or reinterpreted with the passage of time, and subsumed within the figure of a venerated saint, Chapters 5 and 6 reveal the potential of material evidence to serve as an ongoing physical reminder of the realities of his regime, and as a resource for the appropriation of his legacy in response to changing historical circumstances and needs.

This case study of Ştefan cel Mare as a source of identity demonstrates that ethnosymbolism can be a valuable approach for medieval studies because ethnosymbolism looks to account for the original character of ethnic signs and symbols, not just for the provenance of historic symbols which acquire new meanings for nationalists. Ethnosymbolism encourages identification of the mechanism of continuity whereby symbols maintain, or regain, potency.

Muşat iconography – the symbolic language of the elite of the medieval Principality – serves as an example of this phenomenon. Characterised by representations of the auroch's head seal, Muşat iconography persisted in the Romanian lands as a socially restricted expression of identity, before gaining wider significance as a symbol of communal and then national identity, largely through the agency of the Orthodox Church. The transfer from "lateral" ethnic symbolism to "vertical" ethnic symbolism depended on the strength and persistence of the culture of the elite, as interpreted by institutions.

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Like archaeology, ethnosymbolism can do little to rediscover the character of a significant individual such as Ştefan (that is properly the work and province of history). However, by using the example of Ştefan cel Mare and his legacy, this thesis shows how the relationship of archaeology to ethnosymbolism can be assessed according to two main themes: the origins of a nation and the value of archaeology as a contemporary resource.

In relation to the former, archaeological evidence does not prove the existence or beginnings of a nation or national identity in the Principality of Moldova during the reign of Ştefan cel Mare. Rather, the archaeology provides a corpus of material that represents elements of an enduring Moldovan public culture, the signs and symbols around which peoples coalesce, in this case deriving from the works that the voivode sponsored.

As a contemporary resource, archaeology is appreciated by ethnosymbolists for providing, through its materiality, direct and legitimating connections to the past. These connections must be considered critically. The example of the regime of Ştefan cel Mare shows how prominent sites and monuments become public resources in nation states. Archaeological remains provide opportunities for commercial exploitation but are also objects for political manipulation. As critics of ethnosymbolism point out, while states may support archaeological research on its own terms, the needs of nation states such as Romania and Moldova for national self-identification and economic development mean that archaeological resources can be appropriated, or mis-appropriated, for

processes which are divorced from the intellectual framework of communal identification that is set out by ethnosymbolism.

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The headline conclusions to drawn about the relationship between archaeology and ethnosymbolism are:

- material evidence can be an index of cultural continuity;

- the association of material evidence with an individual or defined set of individuals may elevate such people to the status of symbols or identity figures, set apart from the influence of documentary sources;

- medieval archaeology can provide evidence of dynasticism serving as the precursor for more socially inclusive manifestations of communal identity;

- archaeology provides a tangible connection with the past and can and has been used in the construction of nationalist narratives;

- sites and monuments can acquire ethno-symbolic status as a result of selective investigation and sponsorship;

- political and economic considerations can mean that the exploitation of sites and monuments may be more socially significant than the nationalist elements by which such material remains have acquired importance.

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This thesis has sought to cover several inter-related research elements, all of which raise possibilities for future study, in relation to the reign of Ştefan cel Mare and more generally. The study of medieval history has a long pedigree in Romania and, to an extent, in Moldova; however, research and publications tend to be presented in the regional languages and there is scope for greater dissemination of materials in the English language. The history and archaeology of Ştefan's era have been studied extensively by local scholars, usually within the context of Moldova's international relations with the Christian and Muslim powers by which the Principality

was surrounded. The unstable period in Moldova and Wallachia which preceded Ştefan's accession stands out as requiring more focused attention: further research in both history and archaeology could serve to improve knowledge of the early and mid 15th century in the Principality, placing Ştefan's rise to power and the character of his regime within a deeper narrative context than the emphasis on the legacy of Alexandru cel Bun, followed in this thesis, suggests.

Throughout this thesis, mention has been made of prominent individuals in Central and Southeast European medieval history who have retained or acquired the status of national heroes in the successor states and nation states of the region. Clearly, just as this thesis has settled upon Ştefan cel Mare as a case study of ethnosymbolism, so similar work could be carried out on Matthias Corvinus in Hungary, Bogdan Hmelniţki in Ukraine, or Vlad Ţepeş in Romania, to name just three. There is also the potential for a more general study of national heroes which could draw upon these and other examples, allowing for a comparison of trends and phenomena in Central and Southeast Europe.

The relationship between archaeology and ethnosymbolism set out above is open to further analysis and criticism. This should take the form of case studies, as the principles of ethnosymbolism can only be tested in this respect by reference to detailed analysis of a set of archaeological data or corpus of archaeological material. Late medieval archaeology is highly suitable for this purpose, drawing ethnosymbolists into a critical consideration of whether there can be evidence for the origins of nations in the pre-modern era.

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APPENDIX

Buildings, archaeological sites and monuments associated with Ştefan cel Mare,
cited in this thesis

Romania		
Name	**Location**	**Description**
Arbore, Church of St. John the Baptist	The village of Arbore, between Rădăuţi and Suceava, Suceava County	Court church of the great boyar Luca Arbore, notable for the founder's tomb and outstanding internal and external frescoes. Part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site.
Bacău, princes' court	Sited in the centre of the modern town of Bacău (Bacău County), in a zone designated as the "Precista Archaeological Site", on the east side of the Church of the Dormition (*Biserica Precista*)	Archaeological remains of a voivodal complex, including a residential building and a defensive tower house. The Church of the Dormition, built by Ştefan's son Voivode Alexandru, still stands.
Baia, Church of St. George (the "White Church")	Baia, near Fălticeni, Suceava County	The church was built in thanks for Ştefan's victory over Matthias Corvinus in 1467.
Bălineşti, Church of St. Nicholas	The village of Bălineşti, near Siret, Suceava County	Court church of the boyar Ioan Tăutu. The rectangular plan of the church is at variance with the triconch plan of churches of the Moldavian Style, but the themes of the interior frescoes align with those found at voivodal churches across Bucovina. A necropolis for the Tăutu family.
Bârlad	South of Vaslui, in Vaslui County	Archaeological evidence of temporary wood and earth fortresses, destroyed by their occupiers, probably during the Ottoman campaign of 1476.
Bistriţa monastery	Near Piatra Neamţ, Neamţ County	Founded by Alexandru cel Bun (who is buried in the *gropniţa* in the monastery church), Ştefan added a bell tower to the complex. Burial place of Ştefan's eldest son, Voivode Alexandru.
Dobrovăţ monastery	Iaşi County	Ştefan's last foundation, the monastery church was patronised by Petru Rareş, who initiated the painting of exterior church walls there, for which the 16th-century Moldovan churches are renowned.
Hârlău	Iaşi County	The Church of St. George, associated with the princes' residence there (a rebuild dated to 1486-96).
Huşi	Near Vaslui, Vaslui County	Archaeological remains of the princes' residence and an episcopal palace.

Iaşi, princes' court and Church of St. Nicholas	The site of the "Palace of Culture" at the head of Blvd dul Ştefan cel Mare şi Sfânt, Iaşi (Iaşi County)	Archaeological remains of the medieval *curtea domnească* lie beneath the Palace of Culture, the 1920s successor to a series of residences and government buildings (17th-19th centuries). The medieval complex incorporated the Church of St. Nicholas (1490s, rebuilt in the 19th century). The equestrian statue of Ştefan cel Mare (1883) stands on the medieval public space – possibly a market area – formed by the junction of the precincts of the church and the princes' court.
Milişăuţi, Church of St. Procopius	Near Rădăuţi, Suceava County	Built in 1487, the dedication inscription describes the battle of Râmnic and Voivode Alexandru's participation in the battle beside his father.
Moldoviţa monastery	By the Moldoviţa river in Suceava County	Monastic complex built by Petru Rareş, with outstanding frescoes. Replaced a 15th-century complex. Part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site.
Neamţ Castle	The fortress stands on a spur of the Berdac mountain, 80m above the river Neamţ (a tributary of the river Moldova), in Neamţ County	Stone fortification, reconstructed in the late 1960s. A 14th-century quadrilateral castle with stone towers at each corner, extended in the 1470s and 1480s by a massive stone platform incorporating four semi-circular bastions and a stone walkway carried on columns across a defensive ditch.
Neamţ monastery	Near Târgu Neamţ, Neamţ County	A 14th-century foundation, elaborated by Alexandru cel Bun and completed by Ştefan cel Mare. A centre of learning and crafts, key members of the community were transferred to Putna.
Pătrăuţi, Church of the Holy Cross	The village of Pătrăuţi, north of Suceava, Suceava County	One of Ştefan's earliest foundations, featuring outstanding frescoes, including the Cavalcade of Constantine in the *pronaos*. Part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site.
Piatra Neamţ	Piatra Neamţ, Neamţ County	Church of St. John (incorporating a bell tower built by Ştefan in 1499) and princes' residence (now a museum).
Popăuţi, Church of St. Nicholas	Popăuţi, Botoşani County	Dating to 1496, with a freestanding bell tower from the era of Ştefan cel Mare. Outstanding interior frescoes, although the church has been remodelled and rebuilt.
Probota monastery	In the Siret valley, Iaşi County	Rebuilt by Petru Rareş as his mausoleum, the previous monastery church was probably the burial place of Ştefan cel Mare's mother. Part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site.
Putna monastery	Near Rădăuţi, Suceava County	Working monastery, incorporating the Church of the Assumption of the Mother of God and various residential buildings, enclosed by precinct walls that are fortified by the 15th-century "Treasury Tower" in the west wall and a ceremonial gateway in the east wall. The church contains the in situ monuments

		and graves of Ştefan cel Mare and most of his immediate family.
Rădăuți, Church of St. Nicholas	Rădăuți, Suceava County	The church of the Bogdana monastery. Burial site of the early Muşat rulers of Moldova; Ştefan commissioned tombstones for the major graves in the church.
Războieni, Church of St. Michael	Războieni, near Piatra Neamț, Neamț County	Built in 1496, the dedication inscription describes the battle of Valea Albă and Voivode Alexandru's participation beside his father. An ossuary containing the bones of the Moldovan dead from the battle has been excavated.
Roman (*Cetatea Nouă*)	Near the village of Gîdinți, in the valley of the river Siret, Neamț County	Archaeological remains of a stone fortress in open land near the confluence of the Siret and Moldova rivers.
Suceava Castle (*Cetatea de Scaun*)	Situated on a plateau on the eastern side of the town of Suceava (Suceava County), adjacent to a zone known as the "Field of Ditches" (*Câmpul Şanțurilor*), approx. 200m from the Mirăuți Church	Substantial remains of a stone fortress or citadel, extensively rebuilt from the 1950s onwards. The complex consists of a rectangular inner castle dating from the 14th century, remodelled in the 15th century, enveloped by a massive curtain wall punctuated by rounded bastions, with a defensive ditch on three sides. The north range of the castle is lost, but a steep slope on the north side of the complex formed a natural defence. The features of the Field of Ditches to the southeast of the fortress are largely obscured by a car park, woodland and ploughed fields.
Suceava, the Mirăuți Church (Church of St. George)	Located in the northeastern quadrant of the modern town of Suceava, off Mirăuților street	Triconch church in the Moldavian Style. The Metropolitan cathedral church and place of coronation of the Moldovan voivodes in the 15th century, it houses the graves of members of the Muşat dynasty.
Suceava, princes' court	Adjacent to the Church of St. Demetrius, central Suceava	Archaeological remains in open ground between Curtea Domnească street and Blvd dul Ana Ipătescu, cordoned-off for excavation and development as a heritage site (2000-).
Vaslui, princes' court	Voivodal complex close to the Church of St. John the Baptist, adjacent to the Blvd dul Ştefan cel Mare in the town of Vaslui (Vaslui County)	Archaeological remains of a voivodal residence and associated buildings, noted for the quality of the decorative elements recovered. The site (*Curtile Domneşti*) is open ground, located beside a football stadium.
Volovăț, Church of the Holy Cross	Volovăț, near Rădăuți, Suceava County	Built between 1500 and 1502, the church incorporates an elaborate dedication inscription in the names of Ştefan cel Mare, Maria Voichița, and Voivode Bogdan.
Voroneț monastery	Near Gura Humorului, Suceava County	Monastery church of St. George built in 1488, replacing a wooden church from earlier in Ştefan's reign. Part of the "Painted Churches of Moldavia" World Heritage Site.

Moldova

Name	Location	Description
Căpriana monastery	Near Străşeni, Chişinău District	Working monastery incorporating the medieval Church of the Dormition of the Mother of God, two later churches and an ensemble of residential buildings, located on the banks of the river Bâc.
Orheiul Vechi: the Orhei citadel on the Peştere promontory	Orheiul Vechi (between the villages of Trebujeni and Butuceni), Orhei District	A trapezoidal enclosure of low stone walls (reconstructed in the 1970s), known as a "citadel", with circular corner towers and bastions, on the crest of the Peştere promontory. Excavated buildings within the enclosure (including the residence or "palace" of the *pârcălab*) have been backfilled and a modern road transects the citadel.
Orheiul Vechi: medieval churches on the Peştere promontory	Orheiul Vechi (between the villages of Trebujeni and Butuceni), Orhei District	Archaeological remains of: **1** a wooden church with stone foundations, rectangular in plan (unlike most churches of the Moldavian Style). A tombstone found in the southwest corner of the *naos* suggests that the brother of the *pârcălab* of Orhei in the 1480s was buried there. A burnt layer indicates that the church was destroyed by fire; **2** a stone church with similar dimensions to the wooden church, with a ground plan akin to that at Bălineşti. Two burials in the *naos* may be those of a *pârcălab* and his wife.
Soroca Castle	Soroca (Soroca District). Sited on the banks of the river Nistru, on the northern border with Ukraine	Archaeological evidence of a wooden castle (*cetatea de lemn*) built during Ştefan's reign, a precursor to Petru Rareş's stone fortress.
Tighina fortress	Bendery (Bendery Municipality), on the western banks of the Nistru, in Transnistria	Part of the network of defensive fortresses for the Principality, a 15th-century stone-built fortress replaced a Genoese foundation but was rebuilt by the Ottomans in the 16th-century.

Ukraine

Name	Location	Description
Cetatea Albă	The fortress of Bilhorod-Dnistrovsky, sited on a promontory in the estuary of the river Nistru in southern Ukraine	The fortress survives as a substantial complex of standing stone walls and towers, with a circumference of over 2km, and a landward ditch c.13m deep.The medieval complex (incorporating a citadel, segregated garrison yard, and civilian residential space within the curtain walls) was augmented by Ottoman and then Russian military architects in the early modern and modern eras. Under Ottoman occupation, Cetatea Albă formed part of a network of Black Sea strongholds.
Chilia	Near the town of Kilija in the Danube Delta	Along with Cetatea Albă, Chilia was a port fortress of great strategic significance to the Principality.
Hotin Castle	Near the town of Hotin on the southern bank of the Nistru, Chernivestska oblast	Medieval fortress surviving as a "state historical-architectural reserve".

Jeanne d'Arc

Place des Pyramides, Paris, France

(Sculptor: Emmanuel Frémiet, 1889)