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INSTITUTUL DE ISTORIE "NICOLAE IORGA"

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sunt greșelile frecvente de tipar. De asemenea, caracterelor italice, care au un rol important în articolele lui Curta, sunt redactate neglijent. De pildă, în articolul *Qagan, Khan, or King?*, publicat inițial în *Viator*, Curta folosea italicele fie pentru termeni preluați din surse, căroră nu le dădea un echivalent în engleză (e.g. *boilades, archon*), fie pentru concepte moderne, exprimându-și rezervele față de folosirea lor în înțelegerea Bulgariei medievale (e.g. *state, étatisme, Verfassungsgeschichte*). Din păcate, în versiunea inclusă în volumul *Text, Context, History and Archaeology*, doar unii dintre acești termeni sunt redăți în italice, ceea ce face ca unele din subtilitățile inițiale ale articolului să fie pierdute. Aceste neglijențe sunt cu atât mai supărătoare cu cât ele contrastează cu rigoarea științifică a autorului care, după cum precizează editorul în prefață, a ținut să revizuiască articolele înainte de a fi republicate.

În încheiere, aș dori să revin asupra „ambiguității” amplasării intelectuale a lui Florin Curta, pe care autorii celor două introduceri ale volumului, Patrick Geary și Victor Spinei, par fiecare a-l revendica istoriografiei pe care o reprezintă. Dacă Patrick Geary subliniază importanța perioadei americane în formarea intelectuală a lui Florin Curta, Victor Spinei îl consideră încă de la plecarea din România un istoric deplin format, care a ales să-și construiască o carieră într-un alt mediu academic. Evident, Curta eludează și această distincție artificială, după cum face cu toate celelalte. Temele cercetării sale par a le continua pe cele ale istoriografiei românești din anii 1980 – remarcabilă în parcursul intelectual al lui Florin Curta mi se pare puterea de a-și păstra intact interesul pentru etnicitatea medievală într-un mediu sufocat de manipulare ideologică a acestei teme – însă instrumentele analitice pe care le folosește sunt cele anglo-saxone. Ponderele perioadei „românești” sau a celei „americane” în formarea lui Curta este imposibil de apreciat din exterior. Ceea ce se poate însă afirma cu destulă siguranță este că ideile sale au găsit în anii 1990 o audiență mult mai deschisă în lumea academică anglo-saxonă decât în cea românească. Publicarea acestui volum în colecția inițiată de Victor Spinei este un demers important și binevenit pentru a întesni difuzarea ideilor lui Florin Curta, medievistii și arheologii români constituind acum o audiență mai receptivă decât erau cu un deceniu sau două în urmă.

Marian Coman

Mihailo St. Popovic, *Mara Brankovic. Eine Frau zwischen dem kristlichen und dem islamischen Kulturkreis im 15. Jahrhundert*, Mainz und Ruppolding, Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2010, 234 p. (Pelets, Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Griechenlands und Zyperns, hrsg. von Reinhard Stupperich und Heinz A. Richter, Band 45)

From the 14th – 15th centuries until the national resurrections of the 19th century, the Balkan Peninsula was dominated by the Ottoman Empire. However, the people of the South-Eastern Europe preserved their identity and manifested it, albeit under diminished political forms and according to the various degrees of dependence imposed by this last imperial formula in the Balkan world. Within the vast historiographical bibliography produced by research in this half millennium – syntheses, monographs, biographies, local studies, etc. – the present book stands apart. It addresses the relations between the Ottoman power in full rise and vassal Serbia, not yet annihilated as a state until the second half of the 15th century. The starting point is the personality of an influential descendant of the Serbian dynasty of the Branković. However, the research does not follow the traditional biographical path, but rather the line of the gender studies, aiming to identify the role played by women in the public life.

Mara Branković (cca. 1418-1487), the daughter of the Serbian despot George Branković, related to the Byzantine dynasties of the Kantakouzenos and the Palaiologoi, was since her teenage years in the focus of the Ottoman-Serbian political and dynastic relations, with the scales tilting increasingly in favor of the Islamic power. Her birth into a ruling family fallen under the domination of the Sublime Porte marked her destiny as a wife of the suzerain sultan, Murad II, in agreement with the matrimonial diplomacy and the doctrine of the family of princes subordinating to the supreme leader – the “emperor” – by real or fictitious affiliation, all the dynasts in the area of his power. In May 1428, during the Turkish-Serbian peace negotiations, Despot George Branković, who had recently ascended the throne after the death of Stefan Lazarević, offered his daughter Mara as a fiancée to Sultan Murad II. As the girl was too young, the marriage was postponed for the second half of 1436, at Adrianople. After entering Murad II's harem, Mara Branković was able to influence to a certain degree, at important moments, the policy of the Sublime Porte. Princess Mara's biography and her role in the political relations of the time are reconstructed by the author through an

outstanding effort of documentation and by application of historical criticism to the identified documentary materials.

The monograph has four subdivisions. The first one – the Introduction – outlines the purpose and the structure of the book, as well as the sources employed, and lists other historiographical works on the role of the woman and gender studies (*Geschlechterforschung*) in Byzantinistics. The main information on the Serbian princess' biography are to be found in the Byzantine sources, in the works of the great historians of the 15th century – Gheorghios Sphrantzes, Michael Doukas, Laonikos Chalkokondyles, Michael Kritoboulos – and in the short chronicles. Other sources employed and wielding important information were the Serbian annals and genealogies, and the Ottoman chronicles. Additional information was taken from the western sources such as Paolo Giovio, Marco Orбини, Theodoro Spandugino, Pero Tafur, Jacopo de Promontorio, etc. Mihailo Popovic also paid attention to from epistolary sources, among which figure five letters written by Mara Branković herself. Research undertaken by the author in the Venetian archives produced new and valuable material for a better understanding of Mara Branković and of her life and activity (the documents can be found in the appendix).

The second subdivision, *Mara Branković im traditionellen Bezugsfeld des Vaters und des Ehemannes*, follows the biography of the Serbian princess from her birth – the scarce available information on her childhood, illness and miraculous healing is presented – until her engagement and marriage to Sultan Murad II, when her biography integrated into what the author terms the field of relations between her father and her husband. The beginning of these relations is reconstructed based on information from the Byzantine historian Doukas. Therefore, upon hearing of Gheorghe Branković's succession to the throne of Despot Stefan Lazarević, the sultan summoned the former to submit to conditions he would impose and asked to marry his daughter. The name of the girl is not mentioned, but it could only be Mara Branković. By corroboration of the history of Doukas with the Turkish chronicle of Ashik pascha-zade, the author concludes that the agreement between the two and the matrimonial pact must have taken place in 1428. Exceptions conceded by the Islamic law allowed Mara to preserve her Christian Orthodox faith. Because of the Orthodox Church rules concerning the marriageable age, the wedding had to be postponed for eight years, and could only take place in 1436. Through thorough investigation of sources, the author was able to identify new biographical information dating to the time when the

daughter of the Serbian despot came out of anonymity. The wedding took place between the end of August and beginning of September 1436, most likely on 4 September. Multiple sources are quoted on Mara's takeover by the sultan's men and her entering the harem. Biographical data under these circumstances are related to political developments in the Balkans, to the general perspective of the Ottoman offensive and of the crusade, and especially to Sigismund of Luxemburg's initiatives. During the long years between Mara's engagement and her wedding to Murad II, sources do not attribute any initiative to her, and one can assume that no such initiative ever existed. No doubt, the political game then was in the hands of her father and future husband. The author makes a review of sources speaking of the wedding and of the considerable dowry provided to the sultan by Mara's father, including important territorial concessions.

Under the title "Mara Branković Wife of Murad II, 1436-1451," the author presents the little existing information on the life of the Serbian princess when, shortly after the celebration of the wedding, she was sent to the harem of Bursa. Her long stay there – however, not as a concubine but as a wife, and preserving her Christian faith – gives the author the opportunity to investigate into the organization and functioning of the harem. He also mentions the possible intervention of Mara in the events leading to the conclusion of the peace between the sultan and the king of Hungary in early 1444, a prelude to the crusade of Varna.

The accession of Mehmed II to the throne of the Ottoman sultans brought a major change in the life of Mara. Owing to the good relations established with the new sultan even before 1451, Mara became part of his political plans. With the sultan's leave, she returned to Serbia in the summer of 1451 at the latest. According to the author, Mehmed II was aware of the benefits he could obtain by using Mara as an instrument of his diplomacy in South-Eastern Europe, when preparations for the conquest of Constantinople were under way. His intuition would be proven right. On this background, a discussion is made of the failed project of marriage between Mara and Constantine XI Palaiologos. The project of marriage to the Czech mercenary commander Jan Jiskra, whom George Branković was hoping to employ against the new Ottoman expansionist wave of the beginning of Mehmed II's reign, is also mentioned. Internal conflicts in the Serbian despotate after the death of George Branković eventually determined Mara to flee to the Ottoman Empire in 1457 and seek the protection of Mehmed II, her step-son with whom she had always had good relations. This turn of fate inaugurated

her most active presence in the political realities of the time, and this topic is analyzed in the chapter "Mara Branković, an Independent Woman and a Mediator between Political and Ideological Camps."

The Serbian princess, the widow of a sultan, was received with great generosity by Mehmed II. She was given landed properties in Greece, three among which are known by their name – Ezeba, Marabintzion, and Doxompus –, and she held court, surrounded by Serbian clerics and laymen. In 1459, she purchased the Monastery Aghia Moni of Thessaloniki, and this purchase was confirmed by the sultan in an official document. The author lists Mara's main initiatives of public interest and her activities as a mediator in the Turkish-Ragusan and Turkish-Venetian relations, all occurring from her return to the Ottoman Empire and until her death.

Quite significant for Mara's position in the external relations of the Ottoman Empire during Mehmed II's reign was her mediation, on certain occasions, of the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Venice, especially during their long war of 1463-1479. From 1470 until 1475 the Serbian princess was contacted and visited by several Venetian ambassadors (Francesco Capello, Niccolò Cocco, Marco Aurelio, Geronimo Zorzi) who were sent by the Republic of St. Mark to the sultan's court. In this respect the author gives an important contribution not only to the evolution of the diplomatic negotiations but, more important, to the social network of Mara Branković and her court. Domenico Malipiero's *Annals* speak of the initiative of Mara and of her sister Catarina Kantakouzenos, to mediate in 1470 a peace between the sultan and the Republic of Venice before the decisive conquest of the isle of Negroponte by the Turks. The two sisters' efforts to patch up diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and the Venetians are addressed in detail. The Venetian diplomacy continued negotiations along this line, with rightful concessions to the superiority of the Ottoman power, until 1473, when the odds seemed to favor the Venetians, after the *Ak Koyunlu* khan, Uzun Hassan, had turned against Sultan Mehmed II. But not even then did Venice give up the project of a profitable understanding with Mehmed II, for which reason the Venetians turned one more time to Mara, whose cordial relations with the sultan were well-known, as she was "*la marregna del Turco*." Based on thorough investigation of the Venetian sources, the author was able to reconstruct minutely the evolution of the contacts and exchanges of information. In 1475, the Venetian Senate, acknowledging Mara's capacity as a mediator,

secretly sent to her patrician Geronimo Zorzi with the purpose to ascertain if there were any real prospects for peace. Zorzi found out from Mara about the defeat of the Turkish troops in Wallachia (Moldavia), „a defeat greater than any other defeat suffered by the Turkish troops.” The Venetian information on Mara Branković's role of mediator in the diplomatic contacts between Venice and the Ottoman Empire ends with the Turkish-Venetian negotiations of 1475-1476. The fact that her name or her activity as a diplomatic mediator are not mentioned anymore in the Venetian documents is attributed by the author to the fact that Mara had stopped acting as such because of old age, according the criteria of the time.

A continuator of the Nemanides tradition, Mara assumed from 1457 the role of protector of the monasteries of Chilandar and Aghios Paulos of Mount Athos. She had a great influence on church life in the Ottoman Empire, and in 1466 she was able to place on the patriarchal see her own candidate, Dionysus I. In 1469, with the consent of the sultan, she had the relics of St. Ivan Rilski transported from the Monastery of Târnovo to the Monastery of Rila. To ensure the protection of the monasteries of Chilandar and of Aghios Paulos after her death, she transferred the patronage of these monasteries to the voivode of Wallachia, Vlad IV the Monk, and his descendants.

Several texts preserved from Mara Branković refer to the relations with Ragusa. Some of her letters deal with family matters, namely deposits in material values made by her brothers in the Adriatic Republic; other letters enclose information sent to her on the Ragusan missions to the Sultan's court, some of these missions being received at her court in Ezeba. Although these diplomatic actions are only briefly mentioned, it is certain that Mara had played the part of a "useful mediator" in the Turkish - Ragusan relations. One should note that in her letters Mara assumed the appellation of "Lady Empress."

In the light of the Ragusan and Venetian archive documents, Mara appears to the author in three hypostases. A first one is the "Lady Empress," a title by which she asserts her affiliation to the sultans' family; the second defines her affiliation to the family of the Serbian despots, as the daughter of George Branković (these two hypostases establish the link between her Serbian past and her Ottoman present); and, the third marks her integration into the dynasty of the Ottoman sultans, as the "step-mother" of Mehmet II. "Basically", says the author, "one may retrace the evolution and diversification of Mara Branković's personality from daughter of an Ottoman vassal to woman at the cultural crossroads

of the Serbians, the Byzantines and the Ottomans, through a combination of instruments of prosopography and gender studies."

The book ends with a rich collection of Venetian archive documents and an exhaustive bibliography on Mara Brankovic's life and activity. To sum up the work of Mihailo Popovic is a very important contribution not only to the life of a Serbian princess but to the political and social history of the South-Eastern Europe in the 15th century.

Ovidiu Cristea

La diplomatie des états angevins aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles. Actes du Colloque international de Szeged, Visegrad, Budapest 13-16 septembre 2007, sous la direction de Zoltán Kordé et István Petrovics (Accademia d'Ungheria in Roma, Istituto Storico Fraknoi, Dipartimento di Storia Ungherese del Medioevo e della prima età moderna, Università degli studi di Szeged), Roma-Szeged, Jatep Press, 2010, 354 p.

Volumul reunește 27 de comunicări ale celui de-al șaptelea colocvii organizat în jurul istoriei comune și a remarcabilei diversități a țărilor guvernate de dinastia regală cea mai internațională din tot Evul Mediu european, cea a Angevinilor. Cele două instituții organizatoare, Academia Maghiară de la Roma și Departamentul de Istorie al Universității din Szeged au primit sprijinul Universităților din Angers și Provence, cărora li s-a adăugat Institut Universitaire de France.

Analizele politice comparative ce constituie obiectul celor șase volume care l-au precedat sunt întregite acum, în cel de-al șaptelea volum, de explorarea istoriei diplomației Casei de Anjou în Europa Centrală, de Est și de Sud-Est. Cele trei axe tematice ale volumului sunt tratate de patru întreprinderi politice și diplomatice de mare anvergură, unele izbutite, altele zadarnice: succesiunea Angevinilor la tronul vacant al regatului de Neapole la cumpăna dintre secolul al XIII-lea și al XIV-lea, tentativele de extindere a dominației angevine asupra Balcanilor și alianțele politice și dinastice dintre cele trei mari puteri ale Europei Centrale, regatul Ungariei, al Poloniei și al Boemiei. Abordarea acestor puncte majore de interes a fost o ocazie pentru contributori de a pune în lumină complexitatea rolului diplomaților de profesie, cum sunt legații papali, dar și al actorilor politici angrenați în manevrele diplomatice, alcătuind rețele personale, familiale, dinastice, de clientelă, comerciale,

ecleziastice care au traversat Europa. Nu lipsesc nici falșii pretendenți, precum "Re Giannino", un fiu de modest negustor sienez, convins de Cola di Rienzo că este mezinul regelui Ludovic al X-lea, a cărui biografie este reconstituită în acest volum de Tommaso Carpegna Falconieri. Damien Carraz prezintă însemnătatea serviciului diplomatic adus de cavalerii templieri și ospitalieri diplomației regilor angevini Carol I și Carol al II-lea. De ordinele cerșetore, ca agenți ai expansiunii angevine în Balcani, se ocupă Marie-Madeleine de Cevins. László Szende evocă rolul Elisabetei Piașt în diplomația maghiară, Thierry Pecout analizează și publică sumarul registrului diplomatic *Cartularium magnum* al lui Jean de Revest, procuror al reginei Ioana a Neapolelui.

Diplomația are nu numai agenți privilegiați, ci și modalități specifice, precum corespondența diplomatică, jurnalul diplomatic, ambasadele, congresele sau instrumente neașteptate, ca de pildă predicile, devoțiunile religioase (pelerinajul, patronajul), intrigile și comploturile politice sau cronicile de propagandă. Jean-Paul Boyer publică și analizează omilia ținută de Bartolomeo de Capua, rostită în fața papei Bonifaciu al VIII-lea în 1303 asupra succesiunii la tronul Ungariei. Cei doi trimiși pontificali care au jucat un rol ulterior în această afacere, Niccolo Boccasini și Gentile da Montefiore, sunt evocați, în activitatea lor diplomatică, de către Gergely Kiss.

Dincolo de interesul pe care îl prezintă fiecare studiu în parte pentru originalitatea unghiului de abordare, pentru istoriografia românească o însemnătate aparte o prezintă un mănunchi de articole ce s-ar putea grupa tematic în jurul temei expansiunii militare a Angevinilor în Balcani. Contribuția românească la acest volum (*Transylvania against Charles Robert: Voivode Ladislaus Kán and his Position in the Contest for the Hungarian Crown (1301-1310)*) este datorată lui Teodor Sălăgean, cu un studiu privitor la acțiunile politice ale voievodului Transilvaniei, Ladislau Kán, susținător, împreună cu toate stările transilvănene al ducelui Bavariei, Otto III von Wittelsbach. Situată la limita dintre intrigă politică și diplomație, în primul deceniu al secolului al XIV-lea, orientarea voievodului împotriva lui Carol Robert a cunoscut o schimbare radicală, ce a condus chiar la arestarea pretendentului bavarez și a jucat un rol decisiv în alegerea lui Carol Robert de către nobilimea maghiară în 1307, ca rege al Ungariei. Într-un studiu amplu, Elisabeth Malamut abordează mai întâi aspecte ale politicii matrimoniale dinastice a regatului maghiar în regiunea Balcanilor, în secolul al XIII-lea. Căsătoria fiicelor lui Ștefan al V-lea, regele Ungariei, a unit regatul cu dinastia balcanice și