

= Battle of Baia =

The Battle of Baia (Romanian : Bătălia de la Baia) was fought on 15 December 1467 between the Moldavian Prince , Stephen the Great and Hungarian King , Matthias Corvinus . The battle was the last Hungarian attempt to subdue the independent Moldavia , as previous attempts had ended in failure . Corvinus invaded Moldavia as a consequence of Stephen 's annexation of Chilia ? a fortress and harbour at the coast of the Black Sea , which at the time was controlled by Hungarian and Wallachian forces , though it had belonged to Moldavia centuries earlier .

The conflict ended with a bitter defeat for the Hungarians . This put an end to all Hungarian claims on Moldavia .

= = Background = =

In 1359 , Bogdan I of Moldavia rebelled against Hungary and founded an independent Moldavia . However , the Hungarian attempts to seize control over Moldavia did not end there , and in 1429 , Sigismund , Holy Roman Emperor , and also King of Hungary , met with Władysław Jagiełło , King of Poland to try to persuade him to launch a common attack on Moldavia and divide the country in two equal parts ? Polish and Hungarian . Sigismund argued that the Moldavian nation did not " owe allegiance to anyone , is accustomed to live by theft and brigandage and so is everyone 's enemy . " He also complained about not receiving any help for his struggle against the Turks . In the Annals of Jan Długosz , the Polish chronicler wrote the following on Władysław 's reply to Sigismund :

Wladislaw replies that it would not be right to wage war on the Wallachians , who confess the Christian faith and have given him and his kingdom obedience and submission ; indeed , to do this would be an act of savagery . Though some may live by brigandage , they cannot all be tarred with the same brush , nor can they be blamed for not helping King Sigismund against the Turks , because they had gone with the Poles to the given rendez @-@ vous on the Danube and got there on time , yet had to waste two months waiting there , and then return home . Rather does the blame for this attach to King Sigismund , who failed to turn up at the appointed time . The squabbling continues for several days , at the end of which Wladyslaw stubbornness compels Sigismund to abandon the plan and seek other ventures .

In 1442 , Hungary again had to renounce its claims on Moldavia . On 17 October 1451 , Prince Bogdan II was assassinated by Petru Aron , a pretender to the Moldavian throne . The country was thrown into civil strife which lasted until 1457 , when Stephen , son of Bogdan , gained the throne and ousted the boyars loyal to Aron . The latter fled to Poland , but was later forced to seek asylum in Transylvania , after Moldavia and Poland concluded a new treaty . Stephen 's objective was to regain the region of Budjak with the castles of Chilia and Cetatea Albă . The region had previously belonged to Wallachia , but had been incorporated into Moldavia in the late 14th century . Due to the decline of Moldavia during the civil war , the region reverted to Wallachia , with Chilia being co @-@ ruled by Hungary and Wallachia .

= = = Foreign relations = = =

In 1462 , Stephen sent a letter to his cousin , Prince Vlad III Dracula of Wallachia , asking him to return Chilia back to Moldavia ? a demand that was most likely refused . On 22 June , when Vlad was fighting Sultan Mehmed II of the Ottoman Empire , Stephen launched an attack on Chilia , with some Turkish assistance , with the objective of capturing the fortress . The Wallachians rushed to the scene with 7 @, @ 000 men , and together with the Hungarian garrison , battled the Moldavians and the Turks for eight days . The Turks were defeated and Stephen was wounded by a piece of shrapnel ? an injury which would hasten his death . In 1465 , when Dracula was imprisoned in Hungary , Stephen again advanced towards Chilia with a large force and siege weapons ; but instead of besieging the fortress , he showed the garrison , who favoured the Polish King , a letter in which the King requires them to surrender the fortress . The garrison complied with the King 's

demand and Stephen entered the fortress escorted by Polish troops where he found ? its two captains , rather tipsy , for they have been to a wedding . ? Mehmed was furious about the news and claimed Chilia as being a part of Wallachia , which now was a vassal to the Porte , and demanded Stephen relinquish ownership . However , Stephen refused and recruited an army , forcing Mehmed , who was not yet ready to wage war , to accept the situation , if only for the time being . D?ugosz recalls that in the beginning of his reign , Stephen reformed his army by extending rights for men to bear arms :

This Stephen 's rule has been so strict and just that no crime has gone unpunished and people now obey his every order . He has insisted that not only the knights and nobility should bear arms , but that farmers and villagers do so as well , for everyone has a duty to defend his fatherland . If the Voivode learns that a farmer does not have a bow , arrows and a sword , or has mustered without a spear , the culprit is condemned to death .

In 1466 , Stephen regained Khotyn from Poland in a diplomatic victory , but in the same year , Corvinus became on bad terms with King Casimir IV Jagiellon of Poland , which frustrated the Hungarian king further , knowing that Moldavia was a Polish fief . One year later , in 1467 , the locals of Transylvania started an uprising in which Corvinus had a difficult time quelling the riots . He later found out that Stephen had supported the rioters , ? probably in order to find and kill Aron . D?ugosz writes in his ? ? Annals ? ? that in 1467 , a certain " Berendeja " went to the court of Corvinus and promised to make Moldavia his vassal , if the King would in turn make him Prince of Moldavia . This was denounced by Romanian historian Nicolae Iorga , who argued that Corvinus started recruiting troops and took Aron with him to put him on the Moldavian throne . This is disputed by D?ugosz though , who in ? ? Historiae Polonicae ? ? , adds that Corvinus brought with him both Aron and Berendeja , making unknown whom the king considered more worthy of the Moldavian throne .

= = = Preparations for war = = =

The Hungarians recruited an army of 40 @,@ 000 , many drawn locally from Transylvania . Many knights and Hungarian aristocrats followed , one of them being Stefan Báthory . With them , they brought 500 cannons and other heavy siege equipment . The Moldavians , being fewer in number and seeing that the Hungarians were determined to wage war , started to evacuate the population close to the Hungarian border and blockaded the passages by cutting down trees and placing them on the roads .

= = Battle = =

The Hungarians departed in the middle of October and reached the realm of Moldavia at the beginning of November , using a passage near Bac?u . On 19 November , the Hungarians arrived at the Trotu? River where they met some Moldavian resistance , but Corvinus , to ensure the " loyalty of his troops , avoids a pitched battle and limits his efforts to surprise attacks and ambushes , yet is himself prevented from foraging or doing further damage . "

The town was destroyed and the Hungarians headed for Bac?u , which they also burned down ; then they continued to Roman and stayed there between 29 November and 7 December . According to a chronicle , Stephen sent envoys to negotiate a peace treaty , but the two factions could not agree and the war continued . Roman was put to flames and the Hungarians killed everyone they encountered , ? without considering their sex , age , or looks . ? After three days of marching and more pillaging , they reached Baia where Corvinus met with a Hungarian by the name of Sythotus , who revealed to him the Moldavian position , their numbers (12 @,@ 000) , and their plan to attack before dusk . The Moldavians were encamped further north , between Moldova River and ?omuz creek . Corvinus ordered the city to be fortified with ? ramparts , ditches and a ring of wagons , ? as the men were told to be prepared for battle and guards were sent to guard strategic points .

A peculiar report mentions that Stephen himself was captured by the Hungarians on 14 December , but that he managed to trick them into releasing him . On 15 December , when dusk was

approaching , Stephen sent smaller detachments that set the town on fire from three different places : thereafter , noise and confusion set in . Stephen ordered his men to dismount and soon after they launched their attack and made battle until dawn . Descriptions of the battle say that the fire made the night equally light as the day and that many Hungarians were consumed by the flames . The two armies started to butcher each other at the gate of the city ; then the fighting continued onto the streets " with such a wrath , that nothing could be seen as more horrible than this . " The Moldavians got the upper hand of the battle and launched another attack against the royal guard , which consisted of 200 heavily armed knights , the aristocrats and Corvinus . Many Moldavians were killed in the tumult that followed , as Báthory and the rest of the knights tried to defend the entrance to the market . Corvinus was wounded by three arrows in the back and had to be ? carried from the battlefield on a stretcher , to avoid him falling into the hands of the enemy . ?

The retreating Hungarian army , on its way to Transylvania , was stopped by a blockade ; there they decided to bury the 500 cannons and other treasures , so the Moldavians would not be able to capture them . According to D?ugosz , Corvinus escaped the Moldavians due to the assistance of another Vlach (Romanian) , whom Stephen found and had executed because of treachery . The Moldavian @-@ German Chronicles say that someone named Isaia failed to launch the cavalry attack which would have blocked the path for the Hungarian retreat ; for this , he and others were later executed . Around 10 @,@ 000 Hungarians were said to have been killed ; most of the barons escaped with their king . A Hungarian chronicle mentions 7 @,@ 000 casualties for the Moldavians . This chronicle is disputed though , due to it being the only one mentioning the Moldavian casualties in numbers ; and because the Hungarians did not have the opportunity to calculate the numbers of their fallen enemy . The entire conflict , with the Hungarian invasion and retreat , took around forty days .

= = Aftermath = =

Some of the Hungarian standards that were captured came with a " huge booty of tents , waggons and guns , " which were sent to Casimir as proof of Stephen 's victory . Upon his return to Bra?ov on Christmas day , Corvinus took revenge on the people who had rebelled against him by torturing them to death ; thereafter he fined the Transylvanians a sum of 400 @,@ 000 florins , which they had to pay immediately , in gold . With this money he raised an army of foreign mercenaries , which would prove more loyal to him . In 1468 , Stephen campaigned in Transylvania , found Aron and had him executed . Stephen and Corvinus would later negotiate a peace treaty and become allies ; in 1475 , Corvinus sent 1 @,@ 800 soldiers that assisted Stephen in his victory at the Battle of Vaslui .