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**NORTH MOLDAVIAN VOLOSTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PRINCE'S THRONE AT THE END OF THE 1530s – THE BEGINNING OF THE 1570s**

**Abstract.** *The purpose of the research is to highlight the military and political situation of the northern territories of Moldavia (Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts) during the struggle for the prince's throne in the late 1530s – early 1570s, based on the analysis of sources and monographic literature. The research methodology is based on the principles of a concrete historical approach – historicism, objectivity, comprehensiveness, integrity and systematicity, as well as on the methods of analysis and synthesis, historical and comparative, problem-chronological methods. The scientific novelty consists in a comprehensive study of the course and consequences of the armed struggle of various claimants to the Moldavian prince's throne, which affected the territories of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts of Moldavia, which has been carried out in Ukrainian historiography for the first time, and a new periodization of military and political processes on the territory of Bukovyna in 1538 – 1572 has been introduced. The Conclusions.* *In the first third of the 16th century, relations between Turkey and Poland in Central-Eastern Europe normalized. As a result, since 1538 Moldavia had fallen into a vassal dependency of Porta. However, the Polish kings tried to keep Moldavia in their sphere of influence, supporting their proteges on the Moldavian throne and using anti-Turkish sentiments in the state. The territory of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts found itself in the vortex of this struggle, as it was located on the Polish-Moldavian border and was the first on the way to the capital Suceava. The Poles, the Cossacks, foreign mercenaries, on one hand, and Turkish-Tatar troops, on the other, inflicted significant damage, destruction and robbery on these lands from time to time. The Khotyn fortress again began to play an important strategic role as an outpost on the Polish-Moldavian border. Therefore, at that time the Northern Moldavian (Bukovynian) lands became the arena of struggle between claimants to the prince's throne from both the Ottoman Empire and the Commonwealth of Nations, since both countries during the years of 1538 – 1572 sought to extend their power to Moldavia, and later to the territory of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts.*

**Keywords:** *Moldavia, Poland, the Ottoman Empire, Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts, prince's throne.*

## ПІВНІЧНОМОЛДАВСЬКІ ВОЛОСТІ ТА БОРОТЬБА ЗА КНЯЖИЙ ПРЕСТОЛ НАПРИКІНЦІ 1530 – НА ПОЧАТКУ 1570-х рр.

**Анотація.** *Мета розвідки* – на основі аналізу джерел та монографічної літератури висвітлити військово-політичне становище північних територій Молдавії (Чернівецької та Хотинської волостей) під час боротьби за княжий престол наприкінці 1530 – на початку 1570-х рр. **Методологія дослідження** базується на принципах конкретно-історичного підходу – історизму, об'єктивності, всебічності, цілісності та системності, а також на методах аналізу та синтезу, історико-порівняльному, проблемно-хронологічному. **Наукова новизна** полягає у тому, що вперше в українській історіографії здійснено комплексне дослідження перебігу та наслідків збройної боротьби різних претендентів на молдавський князівський престол, яка охопила території Чернівецької та Хотинської волостей Молдавії, а також запроваджено нову періодизацію військово-політичних процесів на території Буковини у 1538 – 1572 рр. **Висновки.** У першій третині XVI ст. відносини між Туреччиною і Польщею в Центрально-Східній Європі нормалізувалися. У результаті з 1538 р. Молдавія потрапляє у васальну залежність від Порту. Проте польські королі намагалися втримати її у сфері свого впливу, підтримуючи своїх ставленників на молдавському престолі та використовуючи антитурецькі настрої в державі. Територія Чернівецької та Хотинської волостей опинилася у вирі цієї боротьби, оскільки розміщувалася на польсько-молдавському кордоні і була першою на шляху до столиці – м. Сучава. Поляки, козаки, іноземні найманці, з одного боку, та турецько-татарські війська, з іншого, час від часу завдавали цим землям значної шкоди, руйнувань і пограбувань. І Хотинська фортеця знову почала відігравати важливу стратегічну роль як форпост на польсько-молдавському кордоні. Тому північномолдавські (буковинські) землі стали на той час ареною боротьби між претендентами на княжий престол з боку як Османської імперії, так і Речі Посполитої, оскільки обидві країни протягом 1538 – 1572 рр. прагнули поширити свою владу на Молдавію, а згодом на територію Чернівецької та Хотинської волостей.

**Ключові слова:** Молдавія, Польща, Османська імперія, Чернівецька та Хотинська волості, княжий престол.

**The Problem Statement.** During the first period of military and political processes on the territory of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts, which lasted from 1538 to 1552, Poland did not challenge Turkish sovereignty over Moldavia and did not interfere in internal Moldavian affairs. The Jagiellons then sought to make peace with the Ottomans and even helped them. The change in Polish policy took place in 1552 – 1572. In particular, this was connected with the beginning of the new Habsburg-Ottoman war in Hungary, which enabled Poland to intensify its actions regarding Moldavia. It is interesting that Sigismund II Augustus himself continued to pursue a peaceful policy towards the Sultan. This was expressed both in the content of the renewed Polish-Turkish treaty of 1553 and in the subsequent refusal actions of the king to join the anti-Ottoman league. The Polish magnates seized the initiative in Moldavian affairs, putting on the throne in Iasi the hospodars who formally recognized the sovereignty of both Porta and Poland. These were risky actions that threatened the outbreak of war with Turkey. Fortunately, both the king and the sultan did not give in to their emotions and maintained a mutually beneficial peace. Awareness of the role of the Bukovynian lands in this case and processes which took place there during the specified period is very important for understanding the situation that developed.

**The Review of Recent Research and Publications.** In recent decades, researchers have increasingly turned to problems related to the military and political history of medieval Bukovyna. In particular, certain issues related to the struggle for the Moldavian prince's throne became the object of scientific research by the Polish researchers Z. Spieralski (1967; 1977), D. Milewski (2011; 2013; Milewski, 2022), B. Szutkiewicz (2009), I. Czamańska

(1999), A. Dziubiński (2005), P. Kozieł (2021); by the Romanian researchers M. Berza (1957), K. Rezachevici (2001; 2006), V. Ciobanu (1985) and the others. However, for today, there is still no specific research on this issue. For an objective study of the course of this struggle, the role of the North Moldavian Volosts in it and their consequences for the region, the following sources were used: the Chronicle of the Land of Moldavia by G. Ureche (1990), collections of Moldavian documents (Veress, 1929; Corfus, 1983; Balan, 2005), diplomatic acts of that time (Dogiel, 1758; Jabłonowski, 1878), as well as materials of the Main Archive of Ancient Acts (Warsaw, Poland) and the Library of Princes Czartoryski (Kraków, Poland).

**The purpose of the study:** to elucidate the course and nature of the struggle for the prince's throne in Moldavia, which directly affected the territory of the northern lands of Moldavia (Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts) in 1538 – 1572, to show their negative consequences for the population and economy of the region.

**The Results of the Research.** After the conquest of the Moldavian state by the Ottomans, its borders became the outer frontiers of the Ottoman Empire. Nominally, the territory of the North Moldavian Volosts (Bukovyna and Khotynshchyna) came under the power of the Ottomans, although local elders (pirkelabs) who were subordinate to Moldavian hospodars continued to rule here (Masan, 2005, p. 76). In the Moldavian-Polish chronicle, it was noted that “the Turkish king (sultan – O. B.), having spent some time in Suceava, went back to Turkey, ordered not to spoil anything in the land (Moldavia – O. B.), but before that he took into his possession one Moldavian castle, Tighina” (Buganov, 1976, p. 122). Sultan Suleiman I (1520 – 1566) at the beginning of October 1538 announced decrees regarding Moldavia, which led to significant changes in the status of this state, because not only Petru Rareș (1527 – 1538) was removed from the throne, but also more brutal Ottoman control was introduced over the country and the southeastern part of the territory adjacent to the Kilia and Bilhorod fortresses, including the Tighina fortress, was annexed. The new territory inhabited by the Tatars was hence forth called Bujak and became directly adjacent to the North Moldavian Volosts. The sultan proclaimed the creation of the new Akerman sanjak, which included the newly annexed territory and a part of the Sylistrian sanjak (Milewski, 2022, p. 37).

Thus, the Turks annexed a significant part of the Moldavian lands, which began to be subordinated directly to the sultan. From the city of Tighina (a Moldavian customs post, first mentioned in 1408), which was renamed to Bendery, and 18 surrounding villages, the Ottomans formed the Bendery Raya, having built a new bastion-type fortress complex there (Krasnozhan, 2018, pp. 115–118). The garrison stationed in Bendery ensured the loyalty of the Moldavians and made it easier for the Tatars to cross the Dniester in their expeditions to the northwest along the Volosky way (Milewski, 2022, p. 37), which affected the position of the Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts negatively.

The sultan appoints Stephen V (1538 – 1540), nicknamed Lacusta or Locusta, who was the brother of Petru Rareș and the grandson of Stephen III the Great, as the new hospodar of Moldavia (Ohui, 2010, p. 36). At the same time, the Polish king Sigismund I (1507 – 1548) did not hide his concern about the dethronement of Petru Rareș and the appointment of a new hospodar, but he did not want to aggravate relations with Porta, since in 1533 peace was concluded for the ages and forever, i.e. for the lifetime of one of the contracting parties: the sultan or the Polish king (CAHRW, Libri Legationum, sign. 6, fol. 91a–93a; PCLK, ms. 271, pp. 616–618). He expected that Stephen V would not want to adhere to the peace treaty concluded with Poland by his predecessor, and that the Tatars, who were stationed in

Moldavia, would attack the border lands. However, Stephen Lacusta, in accordance with the sultan's intentions, supported friendly relations with Poland (Spieralski, 1967, p. 98). Therefore, in October of 1538, an envoy of Stephen V appeared in Kraków, some Abraham – most likely, Avram Banylivskyi (from Banyliv, nowadays – a village of the same name in Chernivtsi region), a multiple ambassador to Poland, as well as a pirkelab of Chernivtsi Parish (Corfus, 1983, pp. 9–11). The post of pirkelab was the equivalent of a Polish starosta, and a pirkelabship was a territorial unit in the Moldavian State headed by a pirkelab, similar to voivodeships in Poland. The hospodar stated his desire to restore friendship between Moldavia and Poland. As a result, on February 20, 1539, he concluded a friendship treaty with King Sigismund I, which renewed good-neighbourly relations between the countries (Dziubiński, 2005, pp. 121–123). The king was interested in the situation in Moldavia, the position of the hospodar himself and the attitude of the Ottomans towards him. Appropriate instructions for solving these issues were given to Tomasz Sobotsky, who went as an envoy to the sultan in December of 1539. Sigismund I advised him to plead for the hospodar before Suleiman I, and even seek the return of Bujak, which had been separated from Moldavia. The envoy received a favourable reception from the sultan, but he failed to return Bujak to Moldavia. He was forbidden to raise that issue at all (Corfus, 1983, pp. 20–21). For the development of the Bukovyna lands at that time, it was important that they were not attacked by either the Poles or the Ottomans, ensuring stability in the region and demographic growth of the population.

In order to stabilize the Polish-Moldavian relations, Stephen Lacusta confirmed the waiver of claims on Pokuttia, and in June of 1540, in Khotyn, he held a congress of the Polish and Moldavian commissioners to settle relations on the Polish-Moldavian border and establish peaceful relations (Spieralski, 1967, p. 98), obviously, the pirkelabs of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts, located on the border of Moldavia and Poland, had to take an active part in this congress.

The beginning of military operations in Hungary in October of 1540 became a signal for an anti-Turkish uprising in Moldavia itself, where the public hoped for help of the Habsburgs. Patriotic Moldavian boyars organized a conspiracy and poisoned the hospodar Stephen V in December of 1540. The leader of the conspiracy, the Suceava Voivode Oleksandr nicknamed Kornia, the illegitimate son of the ex-hospodar Bohdan III, as well as the grandson of Stephenn III the Great, ascended the Moldavian throne. However, the sultan refused to approve him, supporting instead, the ex-hospodar Petru Rareș. Thus, the reign of Olexandr Kornia (1540 – 1541) lasted only two months, since already in February of 1541, Petru Rareș (1541 – 1546), who entered Moldavia at the head of the Ottoman troops (Spieralski, 1967, p. 98), occupied the Moldavian throne for the second time. By his order, O. Kornia was captured and executed (Dragnev, 1987, p. 132; Milewski, 2022, p. 42).

The Polish government accepted the appointment of Petru Rareș as the Moldavian hospodar quite discreetly (Masan, 2005, p. 78), who, by the way, began to pay Porta the tribute, increased to 12,000 zlotys (Berza, 1957, p. 10). Returning to the throne, he immediately executed the unfaithful boyars who betrayed him in 1538, undertook to preserve the Ottoman garrison in Suceava, send his son Iliyaș to Porta as a hostage, recognize the territorial changes in Moldavia and participate with his army in the Ottoman expeditions. Nevertheless, the hospodar dreamed of creating an anti-Ottoman coalition and was looking for new allies. For this purpose, he concluded an agreement with Brandenburg Duke Johann and Moscow Tsar Ivan IV (Ohui, 2010, p. 37).

The hospodar Petru Rareș also tried to restore relations with the Polish king. In a letter sent apparently at the beginning of 1541, he informed Sigismund I that he was restoring his power in Moldavia by the grace of the sultan and sought to maintain friendship with Poland and even gift the king with a sum of 10,000 zlotys. The appeal-request to the king in this letter is interesting: “I am asking you, as a lord and my close and great neighbour, to rejoice that the Lord God and my lord the sultan deigned to give me this country of mine (Moldavia – O. B.) and we, being in our country, will be friends with your highness and your country (Poland – O. B.), according to the oath that we took with your hetman near our city of Khotyn, and which I will gladly keep, without having any malice and treachery” (Corfus, 1983, pp. 40–41). He also wanted the king to hand over to him the boyars who fled with their treasures to Poland. The signing of the Polish-Moldavian agreement in Khotyn testified about the strategic importance of this territory in the politics of the Moldavian hospodars.

The culmination of the then-started exchange of ambassadors and lively correspondence was the sending of the pirkelab of Chernivtsi Avram Banylivskyi to Poland in 1542, in response to which the embassy of Matei Wlodek arrived (Ciobanu, 1985, pp. 181–188). At first, the hospodar was very friendly and sought Polish help, but when he was refused, he began to treat his northern neighbour more and more coldly. Thus, there is a gradual deterioration of the Polish-Moldavian relations, but it is worth noting the diplomatic activity of the Chernivtsi pirkelab in these relations. Suleiman I, fearing the rapprochement of Poland with the Habsburgs, ordered his hospodar to destroy the Polish borderlands. Therefore, the situation of the pre-Obertyn period was repeated, when the sultan used Petru Rareș to pressure King Sigismund the Old to divert him from relations with the Habsburgs. However, the border disputes were less dangerous, since the Turkish inspiration was not accompanied by the Moldavian claims to Pokuttia. Petru Rareș was now thinking about the lost Moldavian territories captured by the Turks in 1538, and not about secondary Pokuttia.

At the beginning of 1546, the Polish ambassador Jakub Wilamowski arrived in Moldavia, but the hospodar imprisoned him, which obviously was a consequence of strained Polish-Moldavian relations. Only after the unexpected death of Petru Rareș on October 4, 1546, his son and successor Ilyaș II Rareș (1546 – 1551), recognized by the sultan as the new hospodar, freed J. Wilamowski (Spieralski, 1967, p. 103). During his reign, the amounts of monetary and in-kind taxes in favour of Porta (bur, tribute) increased several times (Buganov, 1976, p. 96), which resulted money laundering from the Moldavian lands, in particular from Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts. On November 30, 1547, the Moldavian hospodar, without making any territorial claims, concluded a peace treaty with Poland, which once again regulated border relations (Spieralski, 1967, p. 112), apparently it was also about the establishment of relations on the Bukovyna-Podilskyi border.

In Moldavia itself, he resolutely suppressed boyar conspiracies and tried to increase state revenues by trying to tax church estates. This caused dissatisfaction among part of the Moldavian elite. Opponents of the hospodar found refuge in Poland and from there in 1549 made an expedition to Moldavia with the aim of dethroning the hospodar. However, Ilyaș II coped with this intervention, but still could not resist the growing opposition for long (Kozieł, 2021, p. 173; Milewski, 2013, p. 44). Obviously, the Bukovyna lands had to be devastated at that time, since they, being located on the Polish-Moldavian border, could become a bridgehead for intervention.

In response, the Moldavian hospodar organized an attack on Poland, apparently on Bar, in February of 1550. Evidence of that is the letter of the new Polish king Sigismund II Augustus

(1548 – 1572) to his hospodar Ilyaş II dated May 11, 1550. The king reported that he refused to receive his ambassadors, because the hospodar violated the terms of the peace treaty and sent his men to attack Poland. A commission was appointed to investigate the damage caused by this invasion. It is interesting that the Khotyn pirkelab Henhey Sheptylich and Avram, a priest from Khotyn, acted as the Moldavian ambassadors at that time. Some damage was done to the latter, which the Polish monarch regretted, promising to compensate him for the losses incurred, but only after the hospodar compensates for the damage caused to Poland (Corfus, 1983, pp. 151–153).

Despite all this, at the end of his reign, Ilyaş II Rareş converted to Islam, changing his name to Mehmed, and took a lot of treasures to the capital of Porta (Rezachevici, 2006, p. 117). In May of 1551, he renounced the title of hospodar in favour of his younger brother Stephen, and he himself transferred to the Turkish service and became the governor of Ochakiv eyalet, neighbouring Moldavia (Milewski, 2013, pp. 44–45). But soon, due to numerous military failures, he was executed by the Ottomans (Ohui, 2010, pp. 38). The Moldavian economic throne was occupied by the younger brother of Iliaş – Stephen VI (1551 – 1552), who established a brutal regime of terror against the higher boyars in Moldavia, as a result of which many representatives of the Moldavian aristocracy were forced to flee to Poland. Among them were the Khotyn pirkelab Negul and the logophet Ion Mohyla, who obviously owned significant land resources and had numerous supporters in the Khotyn region (Masan, 2005, p. 78). It is interesting that in 1550 H. Sheptylich was mentioned as the Khotyn pirkelab, and in 1551 this position was already held by Negul, which testified to the active anti-Ottoman position of government officials from Khotyn region, who were often changed.

The emigrant boyars appealed to the Polish king to accept Moldavia under their protectorate and place the hospodar they needed on the Moldavian throne, promising in return four Moldavian fortresses (apparently Suceava, Khotyn, Neamts and Soroky), an annual tribute and 20,000 cavalry to fight external enemies. However, the Polish monarch refused them (Dragnev, 1987, p. 136), not wanting to provoke the Turks. In our opinion, the Turkish sultan, concerned about the war with Persia, would not risk conflicting with Poland because of Moldavia.

However, Sigismund II Augustus had the imprudence to send the Moldavian boyars to Mykolay Senyavskiyi (Mikołaj Sieniawski), the Russian voivode and crown the Polish hetman, who not only advocated a joint war with the Habsburgs against Porta, but also sought to restore the Polish influence in Moldavia. Therefore, it is not surprising that M. Senyavskiyi accepted and supported Moldavian emigrants, realizing the possibility of provoking the Turks. Among them was the pretender to the Moldavian throne Ivonya, the 25-year-old son of the hospodar Stephen IV, the great-grandson of Stephen III the Great (Spieralski, 1967, p. 114). Hetman M. Senyavskiyi did not refuse Ivonya help and provided him with several cavalry banners. At the head of these troops in July of 1551, he crossed the Dniester and entered Moldavia, apparently on the territory of Chernivtsi or Khotyn Volosts. Stephen VI Rareş turned out to be ready for an invasion: he attacked and defeated the army of Ivonya, forcing him to retreat to the Polish borders. Wanting to take revenge on the Poles for their support of Ivonya, the Tatars already at the end of August – beginning of September of 1551 invaded Bratslav Region and Podillia, capturing and burning the town of Bratslav (Milewski, 2022, p. 60; Ciobanu, 1984, pp. 198–199). Therefore, the ambiguous actions on the part of Kraków showed the desire of the Poles to continue maintaining the opportunity

to interfere in internal political Moldavian affairs, and the Tatars to take revenge on them with their raids.

The Moldavian emigrants continued staying in Poland, using the protection of M. Seniavskiy, who even hired them into service for royal pay. We have a confirmed presence of the Moldavian boyars in the ranks of the Ivonya's banner together with other local units in the camp near Terebovla on November 30, 1551. The banner had 216 horses. Twenty-three Moldavian boyars served in it, among whom were the above-mentioned Khotyn pirkelab Negul and logophet Ion Mohyla, as well as hetman Negrylo, butler Petro, janitor Motsak, visternyk Dan, postelnic Lichul, and others (Spieralski, 1967, p. 115). It is worth noting among them the logophet I. Mohyla, whose son, Jeremiah Mohyla, sat on the Moldavian throne with the help of Poland less than half a century later. Therefore, almost all members of the prince's council left the hospodar Stephen VI and fled from him to Poland.

In 1552, Stephen VI actively supported Suleiman I, opposing the Habsburg army in Transylvania. This caused the natural reaction of Ferdinand Habsburg, who decided to negotiate with the boyar opposition through his envoy, who met with the butler Petro-Olexandr in Transylvania, promising him help. Having established cooperation with Ferdinand, Petro-Olexandr, as a contender for the prince's throne, won even greater support from hetmans M. Seniavskiy and Jan Tarnowski, who traditionally acted in the interests of the Habsburgs (Kozieł, 2021, p. 179).

On September 1, 1552, a party of the Moldavian boyars, in agreement with the boyars who had emigrated to Poland, organized the murder of the hospodar Stephen VI in a camp at the Prut River (Milewski, 2022, p. 66; Statti, 2002, pp. 137–138). The chronicler wrote that “the boyars killed Stephen Voivode Rareș in Tsetsor (a village at the Prut River – O. B.), electing Zholdya as their hospodar” (Ureche, 1990, p. 86). With the death of the latter, the rule of the Mushatyn dynasty ended in Moldavia, which formally allowed Porta to further strengthen the state's dependence (Dragnev, 1987, p. 137). And the Moldavian boyars, not waiting for a response from the emigrant boyars from Poland, appointed the unknown Ion Zholdia as the hospodar.

Therefore, armed actions against the Turkish proteges on the Moldavian throne began in the first years after the conquest of the state by Porta. As a result of these uprisings, the hospodars Stephen V Lacusta (1540) and Stephen VI Rareș (1552) were killed. At the same time, the local population was actively involved in the anti-Ottoman struggle, apparently including the Bukovynians, mercilessly destroying the janissaries who were in the suburbs of Suceava (Botushanskyi, 1998, p. 45) and, obviously, in other settlements of the region.

The author shares D. Milevskiy's opinion that the adherents of Stephen VI were supporters of Rareș in Moldavia, led by the mother of the murdered hospodar, Helena Brankovych. It was she who achieved the election of Ion I Zholdya (1552) as a Moldavian hospodar (Milewski, 2022, p. 67), seeking to connect him with the ruling dynasty through his marriage to Roxanda, the older sister of Stephen VI (Kozieł, 2021, p. 180; Ureche, 1990, p. 86). Z. Spieralskyi had a different opinion, asserting that in September of 1552, Maria Rareș was his wife at the time (Spieralski, 1967, p. 116). No matter which of the sisters became the wife of I. Zholdya, he was not able to establish himself on the Moldavian throne for a long time.

At the same time, the representatives of another Moldavian boyar party in Poland, after finding out about the events in Tsetsor, appointed their claimant to the magistrate's throne – a boyar Petro-Olexandr, a butler, who was also supported by the Russian voivode and Polish crown hetman M. Seniavskiy, the patron of emigrant boyars (Masan, 2005, p. 78;

Ureche, 1990, p. 86). Thus, the Poles, from time to time, tried to place their claimants on the Moldavian throne, using the discontent in Moldavia with the Turkish proteges.

Serving in the ranks of the Ivonya's banner, Petro the butler became known by the name of Oleksandr soon. The illegitimate son of the ex-hospodar Bohdan III, and therefore, the nephew of Petru Rareș and the uncle of Ivonya, he was nicknamed Lepushnyanu (Lopushanyin) in honour of his mother, who came from the Moldavian town of Lopushnia. Sharing the usual fate of members of the hospodar's family who traveled around the world, he arrived in Poland before 1535. As a 20-year-old young man, he left for Turkey with a letter of recommendation from Sigismund I the Elder to Sultan Suleiman I. Petro-Olexandr must have won the trust of the Turks, since he returned to Moldavia during the second reign of Petru Rareș and even entered the prince's council. His escape to Poland was not of a political nature, but was caused by a personal conflict with his Moldavian hospodar. Seeing that the Moldavian boyars were trying to overthrow Stephen VI from the throne, Petro-Olexandr decided to become a hospodar himself (Spieralski, 1967, p. 115). In our opinion, his position could have been influenced by the ceding of the throne by Ivonya, who was younger (in 1552, O. Lepushnyanu was about 35 years old, and Ivonya was only 25) and not experienced enough. Therefore, being also a descendant of a prince's family and a mature man, O. Lepushnyanu seemed a better candidate for the Moldavian throne than the young, inexperienced Ivonya.

Meanwhile, M. Seniavskiy, developing his success, quickly gathered almost all his troops: more than 3,000 cavalymen (along with the Ivonya's banner) and 150 infantrymen (Spieralski, 1967, p. 116). On September 5, 1552, they united with the Moldavian troops near Bakota, a Bukovynian town at the Dniester, located opposite the village of Komariv, in Khotyn region (nowadays – the village of the same name in the Dniester district of Chernivtsi region) (Spieralski, 1977, p. 369). Before crossing the Moldavian border, in the same place, in Bakota, a boyar Petro, under the name Oleksandr Lepushnyanu, as a sign of gratitude, issued a deed recognizing Moldavia as a patrimony of the Polish crown, i.e. signed an act of vassalage to Poland. This act was sealed with the seals of 23 Polish captains and 66 Moldavian boyars (Dogiel, 1758, pp. 618–619; Jabłonowski, 1878, p. 18). Among the captains were the commander-in-chief of the expedition, Maciej Vloddek, the starosta of Kamianets, Bernard Pretvych, the starosta of Terebovlya, and others (Spieralski, 1967, p. 116). The Romanian historian K. Rezachevici, questioning the date of September 5, convincingly proved that the day of taking the oath was September 2, 1552 (Rezachevici, 2001, pp. 621–622). Although it did not significantly affect the situation.

Soon, the Polish-Moldavian army crossed to Bukovyna bank of the Dniester River, apparently to Komariv or Kormanets, and from there moved to the Moldavian capital of Suceava (Masan, 2005, pp. 78–79). Detachments of emigrant boyars and their Polish allies, having found out that I. Zholdya, who had seized the country's prince's throne, was on his way to Suceava, set out to catch up with him, and when they fired near the town of Shypot, which is on the Zhyzhya River (the right tributary of the Prut River), then defeated the army of supporters and captured I. Zholdya alive, cut off his nose and sent him to the monastery (Ureche, 1990, p. 86). The winners declared Oleksandr Lepushnyanu (1552 – 1561), the first ruler of Moldavia in many years, who had to thank for the leadership to the armed support of Poland.

The king of Poland was informed about the actions of M. Seniavskiy in Moldavia less than two weeks after the Polish hetman received the vassal oath from O. Lepushnyanu.



He immediately sent a general ordering a categorical withdrawal from Moldavia, and the oath itself was rejected by the king because of his relationship with Porta (Szutkiewicz, 2009, p. 14).

Having received the Moldavian throne, O. Lepushnyanu sent ambassadors to Sigismund II Augustus to sign a new Moldavian-Polish treaty. However, the Polish king declared that he did not give orders for the actions of the magnates and would withdraw them from Moldavia, and also assured Suleiman I that he was not going to interfere in Moldavian affairs and considered Moldavia to be a country subordinate to Porta. Not having received support from Poland, Oleksandr Lepushnyanu was forced to submit to the Turkish Sultan, who officially confirmed him on the prince's throne. The position of the new hospodar was unstable, since at that time he had rivals, in particular the brothers of Stephen VI Rareș, always ready to offer their services to the sultan (Dragnev, 1987, pp. 137–138).

That's when Ioan Jacob Heraclid, who having secured the support of the Habsburgs and the Polish magnate Olbracht Laski (Łaski), also appeared on the political scene, aimed to seize power and the throne in Suceava.

The newly elected hospodar was forced to send his son as a hostage to Istanbul, as well as to place a detachment of janissaries in the capital Suceava (Mehmed, 1976, pp. 58, 82). To gain the recognition of Porta, the amount of tribute paid by the hospodar of Moldavia was almost doubled to 30,000 zlotys (Corfus, 1983, pp. 178–180), although its scale was still impressive. This sum was first mentioned in 1553, "the Moldavians pay the sultan of Turkey 30,000 florins" (Berza, 1957, p. 11). According to some data, the "firman" (sultan's written decree on the throne) cost the Moldavian hospodar another 200,000 zlotys (Ohui, 2010, p. 40). In order to keep the Moldavian throne, in 1552 – 1553 Oleksandr Lepushnyanu provided active assistance in the sultan's war against the imperial troops of Ferdynand Habsburg in Semygorod. After that, he reconciled with the surviving members of the family of Petru Rareș and in 1553 married his eldest daughter Roxanda. Around the same time, the logophet I. Mohyla, one of the main perpetrators of the overthrow of Stephen VI Rareș, married his younger sister Maria, the widow of the ex-hospodar of Ioan I Zholdya (Spieralski, 1967, p. 117).

Stabilization of the internal political situation in Moldavia, which also corresponded to Turkish interests, greatly facilitated the task of the Lviv castellan S. Tenchynskyi, who in April of 1553 left with the embassy to Istanbul. He was accompanied to Suceava by the Belgian castellan P. Boratynskyi. On June 1 of the same year, the hospodar Oleksandr swore allegiance to the Polish crown in front of them. Compared to the oath in Bakota, it was supplemented by military obligations. However, this act did not affect Turkish interests at all, since Moldavia still remained subordinate to the sultan. If Suleiman I had some apprehensions, the clashes with the Habsburgs in Hungary, as well as the unfinished war with Persia, which had been going on since 1548, encouraged him to exercise restraint (Spieralski, 1967, p. 117). In any case, S. Tenchynskyi's mission was complete success.

Paradoxically, M. Seniavskyi's intervention in the Moldavian affairs helped the king to reach an agreement with Porta. On August 1, 1553, the Polish-Turkish peace treaty was renewed, which became the basis of good relations between the two states until the death of Sigismund II Augustus (CAHRW, Archiwum Koronne Warszawskie, Dz. tur., k. 68, t. 157, no. 302–304; PCLK, ms. 612, pp. 247–252). The treaty also contained a passage prohibiting the Moldavian raids on the Polish lands.

In 1556, under the order of the Turks, O. Lepushnyanu helped defeat the imperial troops from Semygorod and put on the throne of Transylvania Queen Isabella Bochkai and her

son, whom he helped to recapture Munkach (nowadays – Mukacheve in Transcarpathia) the following year.

Owing to brisk trade and the stabilization of the political situation, the economic life of Moldavia began to revive, as evidenced by the huge treasure that O. Lepushnyanu accumulated during the first 10 years of his rule (Ohui, 2010, p. 40). He also made peace and established trade relations with neighbouring states (Buganov, 1976, p. 126). Obviously, economic life on the territory of Bukovyna was also revived gradually.

According to A. Zhukovskiy, the Moldavian hospodar “established friendly relations with Western Ukraine, becoming the founder of the “Voloska Church” in Lviv and, together with his wife Roksanda, presented the Przemyśl cathedral a silver kyot (ark) with relics and a handmade cross, artistically carved in 1557” (Zhukovskiy, 1991, p. 66).

During the first management of O. Lepushnyanu, no one violated the Moldavian borders, and on his order chronicles were written in the state. However, gradually the hospodar began to pursue an internal authoritarian policy (Stati, 2002, p. 139), which, in our opinion, should have caused considerable dissatisfaction on the part of the great boyars of Moldavia, particularly in Bukovyna.

The beginning of the 60s of the 16th century was again marked by the intensification of the struggle for the Moldavian magistrate's throne. It was started by the international adventurer Ioan Jacob Heraclid, nicknamed the Despot, a native of the Greek island of Samos, crowned by Emperor Charles V as Count Palatine. Later, having learned several languages, including the local one, he pretended to be a relative of Roksanda Rareş and a descendant of the Heraclides family (Czamańska, 1999, pp. 133–138).

He was given military assistance by a young Polish tycoon, Sieradz voivode Olbracht Laski, whose expedition to Moldavia was tantamount to sticking a stick into an anthill, since the Moldavian hospodar O. Lepushnyanu had been a dual citizen of Poland and Turkey since 1553, and the political balance in this corner of Europe hung by a thread.

In the spring of 1558, claiming to be related to the hospodar's wife Roksanda, I. J. Heraclid went on a visit to the manor house of the hospodar of Moldavia. Obviously, at first he tried to convince the hospodar to oppose Turkey. However, under unknown circumstances, he was forced to leave Moldavia. And all the preparations for the Moldavian expedition were carried out by O. Laski with the money of his wife, who died in February of 1561. He gathered troops actively and trained them skillfully. The first expedition to Moldavia, organized by Heraclid and Laski, began in November of 1560 and included, in addition to 500 Yarotskiy cavalymen, 180 Spaniards, 200 Germans, 200 Hungarians, 150 Polish infantrymen, and they also had 10 cannons at their disposal (Zieliński & Żelewski, 1982, pp. 23–26). However, in order to attack Moldavia, these troops had to pass through well-defended Polish territories. Even before the troops reached Podillia, O. Laski handed over the command to J. Heraclid, and hurried to Poland. During O. Laski's absence, hetman M. Seniavskiy blocking the way of the army, defeated them near the village of Pomeranians. J. Heraclid, having accepted the demands of the hetman, gave all the artillery, and the nobility and foreigners dispersed on their own (Czamańska, 1999, p. 141). Thus, the first expedition, never reaching the borders of Moldavia, failed. The whole matter was saved by the energy and intelligence of O. Laski. With the support and financial assistance of Ferdynand Habsburg, in October of 1561 he set out again on an expedition with the same forces (about 2,000 soldiers), but on a different route (Zieliński & Żelewski, 1982, p. 27). From Munkach, along the southern slopes of the Carpathians, he and his troops entered the territory of Bukovyna via Snyatyn already

in November of 1561 (Masan, 2005, p. 79). Not even a few weeks had passed when they attacked Khotyn and recaptured it by making a surprise assault (Zieliński & Żelewski, 1982, p. 32). Since then, the Khotyn Castle and the territory of the whole Khotyn region became the place of frequent military collisions and conflicts between various states that competed for influence over Moldavia (Dobrzahnskyi, Makar & Masan, 2002, p. 86). The Moldavian chronicler confirms that their army consisted of foreign mercenaries, as well as some Cossacks (Ureche, 1990, p. 88). According to Chernivtsi researcher O. Masan, the city of Chernivtsi did not suffer any devastation at that time, as J. Heraclid had to take care of a personal support from local residents (Masan, 2009, p. 35). However, from that time the Cossacks, as a hired force, became an important factor in the political life of the Moldavian state.

The main military events of this expedition took place on the bank of the Siret River, where on November 18, 1561, near the modern city of Dorohoi, O. Laski, at the head of a detachment of 2,000 mercenaries, defeated the hastily assembled Moldavian troops of O. Lepushnyanu (who at one time took the throne also with the help of the Poles, but quickly refocused on the Turks – O. B.). He inflicted such a devastating defeat on the hospodar that he did not even try to resist, but simply fled to Turkey. Meanwhile, Ioan II Jacob Heraclid (1561 – 1563) declared himself the new hospodar, having entered the old capital of Moldavia, Suceava, in mid-November. He immediately appointed O. Laski “hetman of the Moldavian land” and gave him Khotyn and the surrounding territories as a pledge, since he could not immediately reimburse him for all the expenses of the expedition (Zieliński & Żelewski, 1982, pp. 27–28; Buganov, 1976, pp. 114, 123). Obviously, Khotyn eldership, as compensation for the debt obligation of the new hospodar, had to go to O. Laski.

Immediately after that, J. Heraclid sent his ambassadors to Istanbul with the aim of bribing the members of the sultan’s divan (the Imperial Council). He promised them as much as 20,000 ducats, which together with the gifts amounted to 50,000 zlotys (Ohui, 2010, p. 41). In the end, he got his way and was confirmed as the sultan on the Moldavian throne.

For some time, O. Laski himself was in Khotyn and the Khotyn Fortress. This can be evidenced by the letter he sent on May 20, 1562 to the Austrian Archduke Maxymilian Habsburg from the Moldavian fortress of Khotyn (“*ex Moldaviensi arce Chotino*”) (Veress, 1929, p. 215).

In the end, the Polish garrison was located in the Khotyn Castle, and the commandant of the fortress was appointed Jan Piasetskyi, who happened to be a relative of Dmytro Vyshnevetskyi, the organizer of the first Cossack Sich (Masan, 2005, p. 79; Uryvalkin & Uryvalkin, 2008, p. 64). Prince D. Vyshnevetskyi, a favorite of the Polish king Sigismund II Augustus and a “watchman on Khortytsia”, sister’s son on mother’s side of the hospodar Peter Rareș, was “the father of Ukrainian Moldavian politics” and an ardent enemy of Porta (Ohui, 2010, p. 41).

However, at the beginning of 1563, an enmity between J. Heraclid and O. Laski began. By order of the sultan, the hospodar of Moldavia was forced to take Khotyn from the latter. Carrying out the decision, on January 14, 1563, the Moldavian hospodar arrived in Khotyn and expelled O. Laski from the fortress, seizing the surrounding lands. The ambitious tycoon was deprived of any opportunity to quickly return the money invested for his help in obtaining the Moldavian throne, now with the same enthusiasm was preparing to deprive him of power in Moldavia (Czamańska, 1999, pp. 147–148).

During the above-mentioned events, the hospodar was accompanied by representatives of the Austrian Archduke Maxymilian led by Martin St Gotthard. In his message sent from

Khotyn (“ex Hotin”) to Austria on January 20, 1563, the latter described the strategic location of the fortress on the border of Moldavia and Podillia, and also pointed to its good condition (Veress, 1929, p. 236).

Seeking to take revenge on the Moldavian hospodar and compensate for the material losses he suffered, O. Laski decided to use the hatred of the church hierarchs and the entire population of the country against J. Heraclid, because he was a Protestant and mercilessly robbed Orthodox churches (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar, & Masan, 2002, p. 86). Dissatisfaction with the policy of the foreigner was also growing among the Moldavian boyars. Having found himself in a difficult situation, J. Heraclid began to look for a new ally and patron in Poland. First, he held negotiations with the Kyiv voivode, Prince Vasyl-Kostyantyn Ostrozki, and later – with the Kraków castellan Marcin Zborowski (Masan, 2005, p. 79). However, these actions did not lead to the desired results.

The unstable position of J. Heraclid in Moldavia was further worsened by the boyar conspiracy that broke out in the summer of 1563 against the power of the latter's, led by the Moldavian hetman Stephen Tomsha. In the end, J. Heraclid with his loyal troops surrounded the detachments of S. Tomsha in the Suchava fortress (Czamańska, 1999, p. 148; Ureche, 1990, pp. 96–97). Considering this, the Moldavian hospodar again asked Sieradz voivode O. Laski for help (Masan, 2009, p. 35). However, the latter, instead of helping, decided to come to an agreement with a longtime contender to the Moldavian throne, Prince D. Vyshnevetskyi (a well-known hero of Ukrainian thoughts about Bayda), since he was a descendant of the Despots and Mushatins, who ruled the country until 1552, on mother's Anastasia side (Ohui, 2010, p. 41). Hetman S. Tomsha also expressed his support for Dumitrashko (as he was called by the Moldavian chroniclers – O. B.), although he himself harbored plans to become a hospodar (Ureche, 1990, pp. 93–95).

In turn, D. Vyshnevetskyi, having heard about the uprising, agreed to take part in the Moldavian campaign, and having gathered the Cossack army, he marched to Moldavia (Uryvalkin & Uryvalkin, 2008, p. 65). Regarding the number of troops, the data differ. More likely, the Cossack detachment consisted of 4,000 people. It was also joined by the Polish unit located in the Khotyn fortress (Botushanskyi, 1998, p. 46). In the summer of 1563, D. Vyshnevetskyi with a 5,000-strong squad of the Cossacks and the Poles, led by J. Piasetskyi, approached the Dniester River and set up a camp, waiting for the army of O. Laski (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar & Masan, 2002, p. 87).

There are several versions of the unfolding of further events. According to one of them, D. Vyshnevetskyi unexpectedly retreated from O. Laski, hoping to assume the position of hospodar of Moldavia on his own. According to another, local boyars invited D. Vyshnevetskyi as one of the contenders for the throne, and O. Laski was forced to return to Poland (Uryvalkin & Uryvalkin, 2008, p. 65). Let's try to figure out how everything was in reality.

A part of the Moldavian boyars really turned to D. Vyshnevetskyi with a proposal to go to Suceava immediately, where an uprising broke out against J. Heraclid (Buganov, 1976, pp. 115, 123; Dragnev, 1987, p. 139). Despite his illness, the Ukrainian prince, nevertheless, went on a campaign without waiting for O. Laski. It is not known for certain whether he passed through Khotyn, since the chronicles and documents do not report anything about it (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar & Masan, 2002, p. 87). S. Komarnytskyi believed that “in 1563, the Ukrainian Cossacks led by Prince D. Vyshnevetskyi occupied the Khotyn fortress and began negotiations with the Moldavian hospodar about a joint action against Turkey” (Komarnytskyi, 2001, p. 16). However, this judgment contradicts the course of events,

because it does not correspond to reality. Most likely, “D. Vyshnevetskyi with the Cossacks and J. Piassetskyi with the Poles approached Suceava from the south, which meant that they were moving there from the direction of Soroky – the traditional place where the Cossacks crossed the Dniester” (Masan, 2005, p. 80). On the way of the Cossack units to Suceava, D. Vyshnevetskyi tried to find an understanding with S. Tomsha (Czamańska, 1999, p. 148). However, the latter, seeking to seize power in Moldavia, tricked the Cossacks into an ambush near Verchykan (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar, & Masan, 2002, p. 87). D. Vyshnevetskyi was wounded and, together with his closest associate J. Pyassetskyi, was captured. In October of 1563, S. Tomsha handed him over to Sultan Suleiman I the Magnificent (Kanuni), on whose order the prince was executed (Uryvalkin & Uryvalkin, 2008, p. 65). The Moldavian chronicler, describing those events, noted that “a battle took place near Verchykan, at the Siret River, and they were defeated at once (Cossacks. – O. B.), and they were cut out, and the field was filled with blood, and the ground was covered with corpses of the dead, and Dumitrashko himself was captured, and with him many alive, and bound and sent to Istanbul to Sultan Suleiman. And there Dmytro met a fierce death” (Buganov, 1976, pp. 130–131). It is known that the Turks threw D. Vyshnevetskyi and J. Piassetskyi from the fortress walls onto iron hooks (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar, & Masan, 2002, p. 87). These events clearly indicate the active involvement of a new military political force – the Ukrainian Cossacks – in the struggle against the Turkish oppression on the territory of Bukovyna and all of Moldavia.

Now let's return to the issue of help that J. Heraclid expected to receive from O. Laski. The latter decided to free the hospodar from the siege in the Suceava fortress. Having gathered an army, he captured the Khotyn fortress and went to Suceava, but he was late. Having reached the Seret River, on November 11, he found out that the Moldavian capital had capitulated and J. Heraclid had perished (Milewski, 2022, p. 95). In the Moldavian-Polish chronicle it was noted that “the Despot was besieged in Suceava, having mounted a horse, he rode out of the fortress to that Tomsha, begging to save his life. However, nothing helped, he was ordered to be executed instantly and he (S. Tomsha – O. B.) struck him first with amace” (Buganov, 1976, pp. 115, 123). O. Laski marched back through Bukovyna, successfully repulsing the attacks of Stephen Tomsha's army, and took care of the fortification of Khotyn, which remained the only trophy in his hands from the Moldavian campaign.

Stephen VII Tomsha (1563 – 1564), having seized the magistrate's throne, immediately informed O. Laski about the change of power in Moldavia, offering him truce. He asked the Polish magnate to withdraw his troops from the country (Masan, 2009, p. 35). Having nothing to do in Moldavia, the Poles began to cross the infamous Kozmin forests in Bukovyna with much caution, fearing a repeat of the events of 1497. However, that is what happened, O. Laski's army, suffering from hunger and disease, was attacked by the army of S. Tomsha and local peasant bands armed with flails and scythes (Ureche, 1990, pp. 97–98), apparently from Bukovyna. Having passed the Kozmin forest, the Polish troops probably had to pass through the city of Chernivtsi. Chronicles about the city in the context of these events do not mention anything. But some researchers suggest that Chernivtsi was burned by the demoralized soldiers of O. Laski (Masan, 2009, p. 35).

This is evidenced by a document dated July 9, 1569, in which the children of Bukovyna boyar Shcheful appealed to the next hospodar, Bohdan IV Lepushnyanu (1568 – 1572), regarding the privilege on Zastavna, which was lost when “the Despot locked him up in Suchavskyi Grad and when Laski came for the second time even to Chernivtsi” (Balan, 2005, p. 43). O. Masan believed that this document was obviously kept in one of Chernivtsi

churches and burned in the autumn of 1563 during O. Laski's campaign to Moldavia (Masan, 2009, p. 35). Thus, these were difficult times for Bukovyna, as the settlements of the region were devastated by foreign troops.

On the other hand, Z. Spieralski, on the contrary, noted that, pursued by S. Tomsha's army, O. Laski broke through Bukovyna forests without losing a single soldier. He hastily fortified the castle in Khotyn, having left a pledge there, and returned to Poland (Spieralski, 1967, p. 128).

Trying to regain the magistrate's throne, at the beginning of 1564 in Moldavia at the head of the Turkish troops, the ex-hospodar O. Lepushnianu reappeared. Having never managed to gain a foothold on the Moldavian throne, S. Tomsha and his supporters had to flee to Poland, where they were arrested and, at the request of Sultan Suleiman I, handed over to the Turks. However, the Poles left to themselves the ex-hospodar and three high-ranking boyars, who were accused of the events of 1563 and executed on May 5, 1564 in Lviv (Ureche, 1990, p. 99; Masan, 2005, p. 80). And O. Lepushnianu (1564 – 1568) became the hospodar for the second time.

The Khotyn fortress was under the control of the Poles at that time, but the Sultan sought to regain control over it. In May of 1564, an ambassador was sent to Kraków with a demand to return the Khotyn fortress, which was occupied by the Poles ("la fortezza di Cocimo occupata già da un Polono") (Veress, 1929, p. 249). And King Sigismund II August was forced to hand over the Khotyn fortress to the Moldavian hospodar in July of the same year (Spieralski, 1967, pp. 133–134), for which he received gratitude from the Turkish sultan (Petriceicu-Hăjdeu, 1865, p. 62). Having returned Moldavia to O. Lepushnyanu, Sultan Suleiman I ordered him to destroy all the fortifications in the state, and the hospodar was forced to obey, "wanting to please the Turks". However, he left the Khotyn Castle, which was located on the Polish-Moldavian border, as "the protection from the Liakhs" (Ureche, 1990, p. 100).

In 1565, by sultan's order, O. Lepushnyanu moved the capital of Moldavia from Suceava to the city of Iasi, away from the border with Poland (Ohui, 2010, pp. 43). After that, the importance of the North Moldavian Volosts in the life of the Moldavian state temporarily declined, and at the same time, the "Ukrainian appearance of the country" (Zhukovskiy, 1991, p. 66). As for the name of the region, there is no reason to believe that already in the 16th century the name "Bukovyna" spread to the entire territory of modern Chernivtsi region. Evidently, at that time only the area in the upper reaches of the Siret was called Bukovyna. At the same time, chronicles and documents of the second half of the 16th – 17th centuries testify to the use of the same name for those forests that covered the territory between the Prut and the Dniester rivers (Masan, 1992, p. 112).

O. Lepushnyanu, having come to power for the second time, was again unable to overcome the boyar opposition and was poisoned, apparently by oppositionists, in 1568. After him, his eldest son Bohdan IV (1568 – 1572), who seriously suffered from eye diseases, occupied the Iasi throne. In order to stay in power, he initially cooperated with the Turks and supported their campaign against Poland (Ohui, 2010, p. 43), but later changed the vector of foreign policy and began to focus on the Poles. Being in Red Rus, he concluded a defensive anti-Ottoman alliance with Poland in 1569, and also stationed the Polish soldiers led by M. Dobrosolovski in the Khotyn Castle (Masan, 2005, p. 81). The Italian chronicler Alessandro Hvanini rightly noted that Bohdan IV "loved the Poles more than the Moldavians and kept them at court, while he hated the Moldavians and simply disgusted them" (Hvanini, 2009, p. 185).

All this caused a wave of boyar conspiracies in February of 1572, as well as the corresponding reaction of Sultan Selim II (1566 – 1574) (Ohui, 2010, p. 43). Therefore, Bohdan IV was forced to flee across the Dniester River (Masan, 2005, p. 81). A. Hvanini described these events as follows: “The Sultan, seeing what Bohdan was doing, sent Ivonia to the Moldavian household, in Bohdan’s place. The latter, having twenty thousand Turks with him, came to Moldavia” (Hvanini, 2009, p. 185). In 1571, the Turkish fleet suffered a heavy defeat in the battle near Lepanto, so the sultan needed significant funds for its reconstruction. It is obvious that all these events became the impetus for the appointment of Ivonia as the Moldavian hospodar at the price of a large bribe (220 thousand zlotys) (Ohui, 2010, pp. 43–44), who entered history under the name of Ioan III the Fierce and with the help of the Turkish troops occupied the Moldavian capital – the city of Iasi.

However, the Polish king sought to reinstate his protege Bohdan IV on the magistrate’s throne and even sent his envoy to the sultan, as well as gave unofficial permission for Polish “volunteers” to go to Moldavia (Masan, 2005, p. 81). It was about military assistance from the Podil Voivode Mikołaj Mielecki and the village elder of Stryi Mikołaj Sieniawski (Spieralski, 1967, p. 131). “Bohdan came against him (Ioan III. – O. B.) with the small army he had from his friends from Poland (...). The senior of this army was Mikołaj Mielecki, under whom the Russian voivode Mikołaj Sieniawski served” (Hvanini, 2009, p. 185).

The Polish troops led by M. Mielecki entered Moldavia at the end of March of 1572. They numbered about 2,000 soldiers (Milewski, 2011, pp. 38–39). Apparently, the crossing over the Dniester River took place near Mosorivka (now the village of Musorivka, Chernivtsi district) (Masan, 2005, p. 81). Having crossed the Dniester River, they headed in the direction of Chernivtsi (Milewski, 2011, p. 39). On the territory of the Chernivtsi Parish, the Poles “began to take provisions by force, to do harm to people. When Mielecki found out about this, (...) he immediately reorganized the army, sent 700 souls of cavalry junk back home” (Hvanini, 2009, pp. 185–186).

From Chernivtsi, they moved along the banks of the Prut River to the Moldavian capital of Iasi and “came to Stepanovyts” (nowadays – the city of Ștefenest in Botoșani County, Romania. – O. B.) (Hvanini, 2009, p. 186). There they came across the Turkish-Moldavian army of the hospodar Ioan III and after several skirmishes, apparently on April 10, M. Mielecki ordered to retreat to Khotyn (Milewski, 2011, p. 40). In our opinion, the Poles, repelling the Turkish attacks, obviously had to retreat through the western part of the current Dniester district of Chernivtsi region.

On the night of April 12 to 13, the Polish-Cossack army approached Khotyn and camped near the fortress (Masan, 2005, pp. 81–82), “and the most important stayed in the castle with Bohdan” (Hvanini, 2009, p. 191). Thus, army officers were located inside the Khotyn Castle.

On the morning of April 13, 20,000 Turkish-Moldavian troops launched an attack, but the Poles and Cossacks repulsed the offensive of the troops of Ioan III, launching a counterattack, pushed the enemy back to the nearby forest, continuing the battle for some time. O. Masan noted rightly that this episode testifies to the fact that in the 16th century the forest range approached Khotyn itself (Dobrzhanskyi, Makar & Masan, 2002, p. 88).

The flood on the Dniester, as well as the lack of food and fodder, complicated the situation of the Polish-Cossack army (Masan, 2005, p. 82). The nobleman Radetskyi was sent to the hospodar Ioan III on behalf of Bohdan, “asking him not to take his own throne from him. This did not move Ivonya at all”, and Radetskyi himself was taken prisoner (Hvanini, 2009, p. 191).

The Poles, realizing that Bohdan IV would not reconquer the Moldavian throne, began to withdraw their troops. The situation was saved by appearance of the Crown Hetman of Poland Jerzy Jazłowiecki's units, which numbered 800 soldiers, on the opposite bank of the Dniester (Milewski, 2011, p. 41). As a result of the negotiations, the Moldavian-Turkish-Tatar army withdrew to a certain distance from the Dniester, which gave the Poles and Cossacks an opportunity for crossing. It lasted for five days (Dobrzahanskyi, Makar & Masan, 2002, p. 88; Masan, 2005, p. 82), but was accompanied by attacks of Moldavian soldiers "who wanted to harm the rest of us (the Poles. – O. B.) during the crossing, but their infantry, which had guns in the rearguard, drove them away with shots" (Hvanini, 2009, p. 191). Eventually, they managed to cross the river.

Finally, in his letter dated April 15, 1572, the ex-hospodar instructed M. Dobrosolovski "to lock himself up" in the Khotyn Castle "in front of the enemy" and defend it for "a quarter of a year", i.e. three months (Petriceicu-Hăjdeu, 1864, p. 76). "Ivonya stormed it for several weeks, but he could not do anything to it, even from the castle they made sorties several times" (Hvanini, 2009, p. 192). Therefore, the Polish garrison remained in the Khotyn castle and successfully defended it for several months.

After unsuccessful attempts to capture the Khotyn fortress, the hospodar Ioan III resorted to diplomatic negotiations with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, promising to take an oath of loyalty to the Polish king in exchange for the return of Khotyn to Moldavia (Masan, 2005, p. 83). These negotiations ended with the acceptance of the oath by the hospodar and the highest boyars already after the death of King Sigismund II Augustus (July 7, 1572), but this fact was hidden from the Moldavian delegation. As a result of these events, the Khotyn fortress was returned to the Moldavian hospodar. And the ex-hospodar Bohdan IV was forced to flee first to Poland, and later found refuge with the Habsburgs. In the end, suffering from an eye disease, he refused to continue the struggle for the throne and found refuge "in Muscovy", where he died (Ureche, 1990, pp. 102–103; Purich, 2000, p. 169). So, after returning the lost Moldavian lands and overcoming any encroachments on the throne, the hospodar in Moldavia became the protege of the Ottoman Empire, Ioan III the Fierce.

**The Conclusions.** The first period of military and political processes on the territory of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts lasted from 1538 to 1552. This was the time of the absolute domination of the Ottoman Empire in Moldavia, with which Poland tried not to conflict. At the same time, minor border disputes continued, but until 1551 there were no decisive actions aimed at restoring Polish influence in the country, in particular during the renewal of the struggle between Porta and the Habsburgs in Hungary. Taking advantage of the situation, the Moldavian hospodars focused on the northern Moldavian Volosts, bordering on Poland, actively using the pirkelabs of Chernivtsi and Khotyn Volosts as diplomats. But a year later, the Polish troops succeeded in placing the pro-Polish hospodar O. Lepushnyanu (1552 – 1561, 1564 – 1568), and then his son Bohdan IV (1568 – 1572) on the Moldavian throne. Both hospodars paid tribute to Poland, although they were in no hurry to break with the Ottoman's protection. Their reign marks the second period in the history of the Polish-Moldavian relations in the context of the history of Bukovyna, which can be called the time of the Polish influence return (1552 – 1572). This situation was not changed either by the short and adventurous reign of Ioan Jacob Heraclid (1561 – 1563), or even a shorter reign of Stephen VII Tomsha (1563 – 1564).

In 1572, only the dethronement of Bohdan IV by the Ottomans and the failure of the Polish expedition carried out in his interests put an end to the Polish influence. Bukovyna



lands suffered considerable destruction and devastation at that time, and the Khotyn fortress began to play the role of an outpost on the Polish-Moldavian border.

The result of the long struggle for the Moldavian magistrate's throne was an increase in economic demands, frequent stops of foreign troops, and demographic losses. During this period, the Cossack element in the Polish-Moldavian-Turkish relations became more and more noticeable. And after the death of Sigismund II Augustus, the Ukrainian Cossacks themselves showed the greatest activity in the Moldavian affairs.

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