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King Matthias and the Western European Powers^{*}

The paper investigates the diplomatic relations of Matthias with Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy and King Edward IV of England in the 1470s. Apart from the sole effort of Jenő Horváth in the 1930s there have been no researches looking further behind the traditionally emphasized scope of Matthias' diplomatic activity, that is, the Ottomans and the Habsburgs.¹ I am to introduce a wider span of Matthias' diplomacy. His concerns were not restricted to Central Europe but he was able to run a leading role in the European „grand policie”. Matthias' foreign policy is to be seen within the framework of the French-Burgundian antagonism, also in line with his Neapolitan stand: he faced the Venice-backed Valois-party, promoting René d'Anjou for the throne of Naples. Both Burgundy and Hungary were seeking for allies within the Empire – the houses of Wettin, Wittelsbach, both its Palatinate and Bavarian branches – against France, Emperor Frederick III and the Jagiellonians, which put them onto the same diplomatic track. To gain an Electoral Principality, Matthias wished to form a united front and have Bohemia encircled by allies.

In 1468-1471 Matthias contracted alliances with Albert the Bold [der Beherzte] Duke of Saxony (1464-1500), and Ernest, Elector of Saxony, Margrave of Meissen (1464-86).² He had the scheme on the political agenda to marry from the Wettin dynasty. The agreement was that if Duke Albert would surrender his claims to the Crown of Bohemia, they would put pressure on the Emperor to have Matthias acknowledged as King of Bohemia, and he would acknowledge their rights to their properties in Bohemia and Silesia (E. Kovács, *Matthias*, p. 108.). It was a great achievement to detach Saxony from the Habsburgs. Parallely, Duke Albert moved towards Burgundy, and was made member of the Order of the Golden Fleece.

In 1472 Matthias treated for an alliance with Elector Albert III Achilles of Brandenburg (1470-86).³ The parties, together with the dukes of Saxony and their uncle, William III the Brave [der Tapfere] of Saxon-Weimar, Landgrave of

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¹ HORVÁTH, I. p. 71-94. Also see KÁROLYI, *Mátyás*.

² Missions to Albert: 1468: MKL I. No. 236.; rapprochement: 1470: MKL I. Nos. 179.; 180-81.; agreements: 1471: MKL I. No. 183.; peace: MKL I. Nos. 186.; 204.; action against common enemies: MKL I. No. 202.

³ MKL I. Nos. 187.; 188. In the 1460s Matthias asked Elector Frederick II's daughter to marry. He accepted an annuity of 2000 Florins p.a. FRAKNÓI, *Hohenzollernek*, p. 5-6.; 9-10.

Thuringia, discussed their disputes in Zerbst.⁴ It was only after Matthias received a positive answer from them that he assured his backing for the Austrian estates (September 1472) (MKL I. No. 196.). Hungary was to reproach Frederick for his alliance with the Jagiellonians (MKL I. No. 205.; 214.). The Elector of Brandenburg and Albert IV the Wise, [der Weise], Duke of Bavaria-Munich (1467-1508), the archbishop of Trier invited Matthias to a conference to discuss their attitudes towards the Habsburgs.⁵

Matthias had long been maintaining warm relations with the Wittelsbachs. In 1469 contracted a mutual military alliance against the Habsburgs and George of Podiebrady with Louis IX the Rich [der Reiche], Duke of Lower Bavaria-Landshut (1450-79) and Albert the Wise (E. Kovács, *Matthias*, p. 106.). Duke Charles the Bold was long, since 1465 allied with Frederick I the Victorious [der Siegreiche], Elector Palatine of the Rhine (1451-76), and his Bavarian cousin, Louis (Vaughan, p. 16.; 124.). The Elector was engaged in bitter quarrels with the Habsburgs and their follower, follower Dieter von Isenburg, the Archbishop of Mainz, and was allied with Hungary from 1469 on (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 68-9.). Charles succeeded in detaching the Palatinate from the French alliance.

The Bavarians were the first to have Matthias acknowledged as King of Bohemia in 1469 (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 41.). Duke Albert also offered to act as Matthias' vicar in Bohemia. The Wittelsbachs all sent representatives to the wedding of Matthias and Beatrice of Aragon. Christoph the Strong, Duke of Bavaria-Munich (†1493) was knighted "with the sword of St. Stephen" and "sat closest to the Queen, on her left hand".⁶ Duke Louis of Bavaria was a long opponent of the Habsburgs since he invaded the imperial free cities of Dinkelsbühl and Donauwörth. Charles promoted the cause of another opponent of the Habsburgs, Ruprecht, Archbishop of Cologne (1463-80), brother of the Elector Palatine, when he laid siege to Neuss in 1473 (Paravicini, p. 111.). Burgundy allied with John of Baden-Zähringen, Archbishop of Trier (1456-1503), and his brother, George, bishop of Metz (1459-84); Savoy and several Low Countries and Rhinelands lords (Dukes of Cleves-Mark; Geldern; Jülich-Berg; Counts of Nassau; Moers), (Vaughan, p. 57.; 73.; 320.; Paravicini, p. 107.). Matthias also tried to find allies amongst the spiritual princes, e.g. like Bernhard II von Rohr, Archbishop of Salzburg (1466-82) (MKL I. No. 193.).

⁴ MKL I. Nos. 191.; 192.; FRAKNÓI (Vilmos), *Az 1472-iki zerbsti szövetség*, in *Történeti Szemle*, 3 (1915) 1. p. 115-18.; MKL I. Nos. 195.; 201.

⁵ August 1473. KÁROLYI, *Adalék*, p. 28-31.

⁶ He also excelled in the tournaments: *Magyarország királya, Mátyás esküvője és a királyné koronázása* (1477), in *Krónikáink magyarul*, Ed. Péter KULCSÁR, Budapest, Balassi, 2006. p. 123-32. p. 126-9.; *Aragóniai Beatrix*, No. 25.; The Palatinate report: *Mátyás király menyegzője 1476. A pfalzi választófejedelem követeinek hivatalos jelentése szerint*. Ed. Gábor KAZINCZY, Pest, 1863, p. 117-37.; Christoph is also pointed out by Peter Eschenloer in his *Geschichten der Stadt Breslau*, in SZAMOTA (István), *Régi utazások Magyarországon és a Balkán-félszigeten 1054-1717*, Budapest, Franklin, 1891, p. 106.; He received an annuity, 4600 florins p.a. FRAKNÓI, *Mátyás*.

The members of the mutual interest system were tied by several marriages. Albert of Brandenburg married Anna of Saxony. Katherine of Thuringia married Frederick II of Brandenburg. Louis IX of Bavaria married Amalia of Saxony. Elector Frederick's mother was of Savoy. Ernest of Saxony married Elisabeth of Bavaria.

Until 1474 Duke Sigismund of Tyrol was also allied with Burgundy hoping aid against the Swiss (Paravicini, p. 40.; 127.). Charles insisted that Sigmund promote his scheme of the the kingdom of *Lotharingia* (Horváth, p. 84.). Matthias also sought to have the House of Habsburg divided, and attempted to detach Albert VI Archduke of Austria from the Emperor already in the early 1460s.

The obvious common platform between Hungary and Burgundy was their friendship with the Neapolitan Aragonese. From the late 1460s Matthias moved to the side of Naples. King Ferrante (1458-94) was the ally of Burgundy and the Yorkist house of England, opposing the expansion of France and the The titular monarchical house of Naples-Sicily, headed by King René of Anjou.⁷ Ferrante had already been negotiating for the marriage of Beatrice with Matthias since the mid-1460s and was himself interested in get Matthias involved in an anti-French alliance, under the leadership of Burgundy.⁸

It is not known how Matthias and Charles came to terms regarding the issue of the Roman Kingship. Charles would have been satisfied with an independent state even without the Roman crown either. When he got disappointed as Frederick was unwilling to promote his dream in 1473, he strove to realize this with other partners (Vaughan, p. 42.; Paravicini, p. 115.). The Duke expected that Habsburgs might sacrifice their imperial power by ceding some of it to Burgundy in return for the acquisition by Maximilian of the Burgundian territories; which would mean his obtaining the crown of the Romans, and then succeeding himself to the imperial throne on Frederick's death or abdication (Paravicini, p. 47.). The Habsburgs would thus be pushed to the Western territories of the Empire, this was the prime motive Matthias was touched by. Charles hoped if he would support Matthias' Czech crown, he would back him in the electoral college. Charles would not have to clash with Matthias, who at that point did not wish to have himself crowned Emperor. The question of the Kingdom of the Romans, to which in theory both rulers was applying, was set aside for the moment. Matthias might have agreed to accept Charles as Emperor, if it had meant the abdication of the Frederick. Matthias would have thus had the Habsburgs ousted from the Central Europe. He hoped that with the support of the new Emperor he might modify the inheritance treaty of 1463 (Nehring, *Mátyás*, p. 430.). The Duke found that the key towards his Roman crown

⁷ Military alliance, 1471. Charles received the Aragonese Order of the Ermine, and Ferrante became member of the Golden Fleece: HAYNIN, II. p. 131.

⁸ *Aragóniai Beatrix*, No. 6.; MDE II. No. 65.

was the interest-circle of the Hohenzollerns, the Wettins, the Wittelsbachs; centrally held together by Matthias.⁹

The viewpoint of Nehring regarding the Burgundian-Habsburg marriage connection is to be revised (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 68.). He postulated that the treaty of 1471 seemed threatening for Matthias since it confirmed the position of the Emperor within the Empire and meant a loss of a potential Western ally (Nehring, *Mátyás*, p. 430.). However, Maximilian was only one of the claimants for the hand of Mary. The preliminary agreement of a betrothal with Maximilian was not the only option. Mary's hand was eagerly sought by a number of princes (Calmette, p. 459.; 462.; CSPM, I. p. 67.; 168.). Charles was using his only daughter in accordance with his momentous political considerations. The Duke did not for a moment think it seriously that he would give his daughter to Maximilian, not at all in 1473 after the break-up of his schemes at Trier (Vaughan, p. 126-8.).

In the early 1460s, Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy was going to enter a joint crusading enterprise with Hungary against the Ottomans organized by Pope Pius II. It already had an anti-French colour since Louis XI sought to make the Pope place the Angevins on the throne of Naples. He made it clear that otherwise he would back George of Podiebrady, which turned Hungary against France (Horváth, p. 83.; Fraknói, *Mátyás*.). When Matthias invaded King George, he turned to Louis for help (Fraknói, *Hohenzollernek*, p. 8.). This would have put Hungary and Louis' opponent, Charles the Bold into the same platform. However, Podiebrady also sent embassies to Burgundy (Fraknói, *Hohenzollernek*, p. 16.; Hoensch, p. 99.; 106.; 114.). Charles first promoted the cause of George Podiebrady, as far as he seemed to be willing to support his ambitions to get the Crown of the Romans, in return of which Charles would reconcile George with the pope (Macek, p. 230.; Comines, III. p. 116-8.). However, when the Duke learnt that George had less and less weight, approached Hungary (Odlozilik, p. 239-42.). Matthias was also to come close to an understanding with Burgundy. In 1473 Charles was appointed by the Pope as arbitrator of the Bohemian conflict between Matthias and the Jagiellonians (Hoensch, p. 132.; 134.). The Duke might have wished himself to obtain the position, but a letter of Matthias to Charles of Burgundy on 6 July 1471, so far unknown in Hungarian scholarship, shows that two years before it was Matthias that sought to ask the Duke to act as a mediator.¹⁰ (The two rulers had already been being in touch by the late 1460s. In 1469 the Duke received envoys from Hungary in Ghent) (Putnam, p. 245.). The envoy, in the summer of 1471 on his way back to Hungary was showing off with the alliance of his king with the duke of Burgundy (*Politische*

⁹ Matthias' position was aided by alliances in Silesia: Konrad X the White [Biały Młodszy], Duke of Öls/Oleśnica (1471-92); John II the Wicked [der Böse/Szalony] Duke of Sagan/Żagań (1472-1504) and Glogau/Głogów.

¹⁰ Bibliothèque National, Paris. Mélanges de Colbert 396, Nr. 688. cited by NEHRING, *Matthias*, 68. p. 115n.; SEGESSER, p. 4.

Correspondenz, I. No. 655. p. 587.). The Elector of Brandenburg advised the Emperor that in his oncoming talks with Charles the Bold he should strengthen his alliance with the Jagiellonians against the fraternity of Matthias with Charles (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 68.). The alliances of Matthias in 1472 must have pushed Frederick III to declare that he was willing to acknowledge Matthias' rights for Bohemia if he would withdraw his troops from Habsburg territory. A year after, in 1473 Matthias tried again to turn to the Duke against the Emperor (Szabó, p. 144.). The Duke was not to commit himself until he realized that the Habsburgs were on the way to approach the French diplomacy: in the summer of 1474 Emperor proposed to treat for an alliance with Louis XI (Vaughan, p. 291.). A few weeks after Matthias' troops invaded Austria, in May 1473 the duke of Burgundy received an embassy from Hungary at Valenciennes (Vaughan, p. 138.). The threat of an encircling Burgundian-Hungarian alliance had a striking impact on the Emperor: in June he offered a personal meeting to be held at Trier. However, he made it clear that he had no intention of abdicating his imperial authority to Charles. Although Charles agreed on the meeting, he started a diplomatic campaign even beforehand. He wished to put pressure on him with a massive list of allies. In the summer of 1473 at Thionville he received ambassadors from Hungary, England, Brittany, Ferrara, the Palatinate, the representatives of whose, including Matthias also sent embassies to Trier (Putnam, p. 347.; 363.; Hoensch, p. 135.). Frederick still felt himself strong enough to oppose Matthias, since he hoped to get to an understanding with Burgundy, for he desired to finalize the scheme of the betrothal of Mary and Maximilian. That is why he rigidly refused all Matthias' demands and summoned the Reichstag to call upon him to withdraw from Austria and surrender the castles under his control. There was no word of the acknowledgement of the *Wenzelskrone*. At the end of June Matthias informed the Austrian estates that for the acknowledgement of his Bohemian crown, he was bound to seek for other means, which could not mean anything but an understanding with Burgundy.

After the failure of the Trier negotiations Duke Charles, having learnt that Frederik "tried to persuade our subjects [i.e. the Upper Rhine provinces] to rebel against us", was now no longer interested in maintaining friendly relations with the Habsburgs (Vaughan, p. 336.). He committed himself in assisting his anti-Habsburg allies, first of all Ruprecht, Archbishop of Cologne, if need be by force of arms. Charles must have been in need of the support of Matthias since from April 1474 engaged in a campaign against the chapter of Cologne and laid Neuss under siege (Paravicini, p. 119.). Frederick III was bound to call the Imperial Estates to war but most of the allies of Charles and Matthias flatly refused to assist him. Only Albert, Elector of Brandenburg provided a significant force. Although Duke Albert of Bavaria was present, did not take an active part in the clash, more or less kept being neutral. Albert of Saxony, willy-nilly, responded the call of Frederick and raised a contingent, but he was always "on the brink of packing up". On 20 March 1475

Charles wrote congratulating him on going home with his men, and offered an alliance (Vaughan, p. 333.; p. 339.).

In April 1474 Charles initiated new negotiations with Matthias (Hoensch, p. 135.). The autumn of 1474 and the spring of 1475 saw several missions between the two rulers. In November 1474 a treaty was drawn up between Burgundy and Hungary as well as Duke Charles reconfirmed his alliance with Naples (Hoensch, p. 135.). An eye-witness, Philippe de Croy, count of Chimay relates that the “king of Hungary has sent here his venerable ambassador” (Haynin, II. p. 184.). Chastellain also confirms the presence of Matthias’ embassy at the Burgundian camp (Chastellain, VIII. p. 268.). A German source emphasizes the presence of Hungarian envoys.¹¹ On 8 December 1474 in Breslau, in the armistice with the Jagiellonians, Matthias had Charles the Bold enlisted amongst his confederates. When the Neapolitan envoys arrived in 1475, the king also boasted with his new Burgundian ally (Fraknoi, *Mátyás.*).

In 1474-75 Matthias and Charles were acting in concord. In February 1474 Matthias contracted a peace treaty with Wladislas Jagiello, but it was in no time betrayed by the Polish as they entered into an alliance with Frederick. Matthias announced that he would launch a campaign into Silesia in June. He reconfirmed his alliance with the Wettins and set out to besiege Breslau (MKL I. Nos. 208.; 216.; 217.). Matthias found that the commitment of Burgundy towards an alliance against Frederick III was newly confirmed by the acts of the Duke to find a new match for his daughter, putting the 1471 agreement with Maximilian aside. It was partly due to the king of Hungary’s efforts that a new marriage scheme was forged between Mary and Federico, infant of Naples, Queen Beatrice’s brother.¹² The parties were thus to be united in a double marriage alliance and the Burgundian inheritance would pass on the Aragonese Prince (Calmette, p. 459-60.). Even before, in 1473, Louis IX, fearing of isolation abandoned the good king René, and sought to ally with Naples and seal it with a marriage of a Valois prince and Beatrice (Toutey, p. 169.). King Ferrante, however, partly due to an intervention of Matthias and Duke Charles he refused the King of France. The alliance of the French Anjous with Venice meant a threat towards Hungary as well, particularly after the conspiracy of Janus Pannonius, who had maintained good relations with Venice and King René (Horváth, p. 80-2.). As Venice came to an understanding with the Habsburgs, Matthias was on his own part interested to get closer to the Aragonese (Teke, p. 252.;

¹¹ „Wie die mechtigen Erbkünigreich vnnd Fürstentumb Hispania, Hungern vnnd Gelldern zu den loblichen heusern Osterreich vn (nd) Burgundi kommen sein“. Walther ISENBERG. 1520 gedruckt bei Johann Schönsperger zu Augsburg. München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 20 A. lat. b. 385/3, fol. 14 b. in ADELPHUS (Johannes), *Ausgewählte Schriften*. Hrsg. von Bodo Gotzkowsky. Berlin, de Gruyter, 1974. I. p. 298.

¹² PONTIERI (Ernesto), *Su le mancate nozze tra Federico d’Aragona e Maria di Borgogna*, in *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane*, lxiii (1939) p. 78-112.

258.). The same motives explain the rapprochement between Matthias and Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan in 1471-73 (Horváth, p. 84.; MDE II. No. 166.; Teke, p. 255.). The negotiations for the marriage of Matthias and Beatrice were accelerated as Venice broke with the Neapolitans because of the Cyprus-affair in 1474 (Teke, p. 258.; E. Kovács, Corvin, p. 961.). The relationship was helped by the mediation of the Este of Ferrara, who had already been nurturing deep connections with both Charles and Matthias (Haynin, II. p. 183.). In the spring of 1474 Matthias sent another mission to Naples: the betrothal was announced and the couple married *per procuram* (Berzeviczy, *Beatrix*.). In the summer of 1474 one of Duke Charles's chief advisers, the jurist Johannes de Candida was commissioned to travel to Naples for Prince Federico (Horváth, p. 84.). In October 1474 King Ferrante sent Federico and an embassy having a *procuratio* to treat for the marriage (Calmette, p. 463-65.). His words speak of a deep amity between the houses (*benivolentiae et fraternitatis nexus, quibus mutuo astringimur, indissolubili et perpetua firmitate et stabilitate firmabuntur, et mutuus amor effecit*). As the count of Chimay relates, Prince Federico visited the Duke at Neuss: "the king of Naples' son [came] to see what is going on. The king of Hungary has sent here his ambassador" (Haynin, II. p. 183.). In July 1475 a Burgundian embassy was to go Naples, England, Portugal, Aragon as well as Pope Sixtus IV, to notify the members of the system of the marriages (*Thüringisch-Erfurtische Chronik*, p. 81.; CSPM, I. p. 192.). In December 1475 a special envoy was sent to Hungary from Naples to make preparations for the wedding (MDE II. No. 202). Prince Federico was staying with Charles the Bold in the following years, until 1476 and was also fighting in the Burgundian army. It was a symbolic act that Duke Charles had Federico seated on his left hand when he received the homage of Lorraine in 1475.¹³

The Italian partners of the Burgundian coalition were also interrelated through marriages. Ercole d'Este, Duke of Modena and Ferrara (1471-1505) married Eleonore of Aragon. Alfonso d'Este married Anna Sforza.¹⁴ Charles was brought up together with Francesco, an illegitimate Este offspring, who, as his lifelong companion must have had a part in operating the relations between Charles and Matthias. Isabella d'Este married to the Gonzaga house of Mantova, who maintained good relationships with Burgundy. Federico I Gonzaga married Margaret of Wittelsbach, a daughter of Duke Albert III. Ludovico III of Mantova sought to seal his

¹³ Federico was working in the Burgundian military machinery, mostly with Charles until April-May 1476. VAUGHAN, p. 170.; 309.; 381. He was still fighting with Charles in September 1476 and did not receive the Hungarian embassy in Naples that was sent for Beatrice. E. KOVÁCS, Magyarország, p. 235.; BERZEVICZY, *Beatrix*. Federico, though returned to Naples by the autumn of 1476 and was invited, did not take part at Matthias' wedding. He was to be substituted with his brother, Francesco. *Aragóniai Beatrix*, No. 21.; WALSH, p. 321.

¹⁴ Ecclesiastical sees were donated to Ippolito d'Este, Archbishop of Esztergom (1486-1497); Bishop of Eger (1497-1520), son of Ercole d'Este; and John of Aragon, Archbishop of Esztergom (1480-85), son of Ferrante.

Burgundian alliance sending his son, Rodolfo to the ducal court (Vaughan, p. 59.; 73.).

Even before the planned Silesian campaign, Matthias sought for other allies in Europe. He got into contact with England already in 1471. One of the most influential members of Edward IV's government, Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers, the king's brother-in-law decided to go on a crusade (1471: RYMER, *Foedera*, XI. p. 727.). As he was back only by July 1472, it is not probable that he had been in the Holy Land, at the time it was out of the question to fight in Palestine *contra Incredulos et Christianae religionis immanes hostes*. It is most possible that he went to fight the Ottomans at the Hungarian frontier, since it was not uncommon for English noblemen to go on crusade in Hungary in the 1460s-80s.¹⁵ Rivers also served on missions to Burgundy and Naples.

The Duke of Burgundy nurtured deep family relations with England, felt committed to their cause to get the crown of France (PARAVICINI, p. 105). In the Wars of the Roses Charles favoured the House of York, opposing the French-supported house of Lancaster, headed by Queen Margaret of Anjou. In 1467 a mutual defence agreement was drawn up between England and Burgundy, sealed with the marriage of Charles and Margaret of York, a sister of Edward IV. When in 1470 the French assisted the Lancastrians' returning to power and Edward fled to Burgundy, Charles supported the Yorkists in regaining the throne, then contracted an offensive alliance versus Louis XI.¹⁶ In 1474 the parties set up a scheme of invasion "to recover the realm of France" (Rymer, *Foedera*, XI. p. 804-09.; PRO Exchequer E 30/1073/15.). It was agreed that Charles would "allow the King of England to be crowned King of France", and, "in return, he would cede to him the county of Champagne" (Rymer, *Foedera*, XI. p. 810.; 813.). In July 1475 English troops landed in Normandy, the Hundred Years War appeared to be restarted (ROSS, p. 226ff.).

Probably in June 1474 three Hungarian knights went on a tournament at Canterbury, which might signify an informal royal mission, an act of inquiry of the standpoint of England.¹⁷ The knights brought letters and precious gifts to the King and Queen of England (Siklóssy, p. 515-23.). On 2 December 1474 December Edward IV sent an embassy to Matthias and proposed an alliance *contra Lodowicum, Regnum*

¹⁵ E.g. Robert de Champlayn: Public Record Office/The National Archives [PRO], Kew, England. Chancery: Patent Rolls: C 66/567 m 4.; or James Radclyffe: British Library MS Ashmole 1114. ff. 78-9.; 84-5.; PRO Exchequer: Miscellaneous Ecclesiastical Documents: E 135/19/63.

¹⁶ PRO Exchequer, Treasury of Receipt: Diplomatic Documents E 30/1073/11.; E 30/1073/15.; RYMER, *Foedera*, XI. p. 737.

¹⁷ „there be come to Canterbury III worshipfull Knighths of the King of Hungaris court called Vladislaus of Bodna, Fredericus of Waredma, and Lancelagus of Tresulvan [...] desired to present your Grâce there lettre also lettres from the Queene of Hungarie to your grâce and the Queenes, [...] great gifte they hæve given for your sake." *Magyar történelmi okmánytár*, p. 150.

et Coronam Francie impresentiarum nequiter Usurpantem.¹⁸ It was of prime importance as John Morton, the bishop of Ely, royal physician and secretary was dispatched, one of the most influential members of the government, later to be Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor, also known in Shakespeare's *Richard III*.¹⁹ He was also to coordinate English policies with those of Burgundy and Hungary as staying at Neuss until the end of January 1475 (ROSS, p. 224.). Right afterwards, Edward sent Earl Rivers to treat also with the allies of Burgundy (CSPM I. p. 195-6.).

In August 1474 Edward IV sought to reconfirm his Neapolitan alliance (Rymer, *Foedera*, XI. p. 816.). He wished to make Ferrante acknowledge his rights *super recuperatione regni Franciae* and support his campaign against *Lodovicum Franciae Regnum injuste occupantem*. The King of Naples was made Knight of the Garter (CSPM, p. 108.; 115.). The envoys of Matthias could even meet the English and, as the latter were given safe conducts on 15 August, it seems that Edward decided to send them to Naples *only* after the Hungarians had negotiated with him, and he had learnt of Matthias' standpoint. Matthias must have replied positively, since Hungary was listed as an English ally at the peace between France and England at Picquigny in August 1475.²⁰

Edward reconfirmed his old ties or allied with other members of the Burgundian alliance (Aragon, Portugal, Ferrara, Brittany, Castile) (Rymer, *Foedera*, XI. p. 741.; 762.; 775.; 791.; XII. p. 2.). He made Federico da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino - who also had good relations with Hungary - Knight of the Garter.²¹ Urbino was a pillar of the papal party, and helped prevent Frederick III and Louis XI from deposing Pope Sixtus IV. Sixtus had his nephew, Giovanni della Rovere married to Federico's daughter.²² Edward IV sought to contract an alliance with the Teutonic Knights, who, with the bishop of Ermland, Nicolaus von Tüngen, had been allied to Hungary since the early 1470s (Hoensch, p. 141.). Grand Master Heinrich Reffle von Richtenberg, supported by the Pope offered Corvinus an imperial

¹⁸ "De Tractando cum Rege Hungariae contra Ludovicum.[...] Amicis, Alligatis, Confoederatis nostris cum Consanguineo nostro Gratia, Hungariae Rege, [...] Concludendi et firma, perpetua, et reali Pace atque Concordia, quam de et super Ligis [...] inter Nos [...] Subditor, Confoederatos, Alligatos nostros, et alios nobis Faventes et Adhaerentes." RYMER, *Foedera*, XI. p. 834.

¹⁹ Sir Thomas More, who was brought up in his house, wrote of him in his *Utopia*: "The Kynge put much truste in his counsel, the weale publyque also in a maner leaned unto him, when I was there." FEST (Sándor), *Skóciái Szent Margittól a walesi bárdokig*. Ed. KOROMPAY H. János - CZIGÁNY Lóránt. Budapest, Universitas, 2000. p. 607-12. p. 608.

²⁰ „Treugis, Ligis et Confoederationibus comprehendatur Alligati, et Confoederati hincinde postea nominatur, Ex parte Serenissimi Principi Anglie Regis, Rex Hungariae": RYMER, *Foedera*, XII. p. 17.

²¹ ROSS, p. 213. Beatrice's entourage on its way to Hungary in 1476 chose to stay in Urbino. Matthias to Montefeltre: Nehring, *Angaben*, p 87.

²² *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*, Ed. John GAIRDNER, London, Camden, 1876, p. 235.

vicariate in Prussia if he would assist them against the Poles in the „Pfaffenkrieg“ (Galla, p. 158.).

It was a success to have Milan detached from the Valois bloc. Since the mid-1460s both Hungary and Burgundy had been striving to have Milan on their side.²³ Milan found a partner in Hungary in preventing the Habsburg-Burgundian marriage in 1471-73 (Teke, p. 256-7.). The contacts were eased by a number of marriages within the Burgundian orbit: between Ippolita Sforza and Alfonso d’Aragon; Gian Galeazzo and Isabella of Naples; Anna Sforza and Alfonso d’Este. In 1475 the Sforzas allied with Burgundy against France in the League of Moncalieri, and there was even talk of a visit of Lodovico Sforza to Charles (Comines, III. p. 356-62.; *Dépêches des ambassadeurs*, I. p. 77.; 254.). England also moved towards Milan, and the Prince of Wales was to wed a daughter of Galeazzo Maria. The Sforzas had already proposed an alliance against Venice and France to Hungary in 1471. Two years later they contracted a military alliance (MDE II. Nos. 176.; 177.; MKL I. No. 200). Florence also entered the coalition against Venice. When in 1472 Louis XI asked Lorenzo Medici to mediate for the marriage between the dauphin and Beatrice of Aragon, *Il Magnifico* rejected him and declared that he was supporting the Burgundian side (Horváth, p. 84.).

By the autumn of 1474 Hungary and Burgundy had been tied in a firm alliance (8 Hoensch, p. 135.). Matthias reproached the Emperor for his Polish alliance in 1475, with a stable Burgundian backing (MKL I. No. 219.). A Veronese chronicler noted that in September 1474 a perpetual fraternity was proclaimed between Charles, Naples, Hungary and England. According to a Ferrarese account Charles sent a mantle of crimson velvet *a la borgognona* to Duke Ercole, and he also had the Neapolitan insignia of the “Armellino” (Walsh, p. 289.). In the lieu of his new commitments, Matthias renewed his old alliances, first with Ernest of Saxony. In December 1474 he treated with Duke Ernest in a secret matter, probably asking him to support Charles at the siege of Neuss. King Ferrante also reconfirmed his alliance and supplied soldiers to Burgundy (Paravicini, p. 81.).

The *Thüringisch-Erfurtische Chronik* reports that in January 1475 Charles and Matthias agreed to partition the Empire. Charles, as King of the Romans was to have the towns and bishoprics along the Rhine, while Matthias was to have Breslau and Bohemia as Elector.²⁴ In return, the Duke will guarantee that the Electors safeguard

²³ In 1470 Galeazzo Maria Sforza was made knight of the Golden Fleece. VAUGHAN, p. 74-5.; MDE II. Nos. 72.; 152-67.; 189.; 202.; E. KOVÁCS, *Corvin*, p. 961.

²⁴ January 1475, the camp at Neuss: „Der koning von Vungern hatte sich mit deme herzoge von Burgundien verbunden vund vortragen, das der herzoge von Burgundien der solde vnder der gestalt das bisthum zu Koln gewinne, vnd jn neme den Ryn strom, die bisthume vnd die stete, So wolde der koning von Vngern gewynne der Stadt Bresla vnd die Slesiere Behemer land, Vnde wann er das gewonne,; was sie des Landes gehorende hetten zu der kron zu Behemen; Vnd der herzoge von Burgundien solde eyn romischer konig verde. Also meynten die zweite hern das rich vnd die dutzen fursten vnd das richs stete vnder sich zu

Hungary against Poland. In May another Hungarian embassy arrived at Neuss, confirmed the alliance, and in August a Burgundian embassy set out for Hungary (Vaughan, p. 341.). Charles needed the support of Hungary as he suffered his first defeat from the Swiss at Héricourt in November 1474 (Ross, p. 224.). A few days later the communes also contracted an alliance with France against Burgundy (Vaughan, p. 292.). The military situation at Neuss came to a standstill. Charles, being tied up, and his armies being at war for over a year, could not give support to the English in Picardy (Paravicini, p. 97.). Edward was bound to sign a peace with France in August 1475. Charles was also bound to contract a treaty with Louis XI at Soleuvre, and, was forced to agree on a peace, but *not an alliance* with the Emperor on 17 November in Nancy. However, in the treaty he still maintained his confederation with Matthias, which *dictus dux habet cum rege Hungarie et Boemie* (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 74. 156n.). The treaty with the Emperor did not break the alliance between Hungary and Burgundy. Some scholars find that in vain Matthias tried to make Burgundy his ally and involve him in the war against the Habsburgs since as Burgundy contracted an alliance with Frederick III, so the attempts got void, and the alliance annulled. Nehring, and partly Zsuzsa Teke stipulates that Matthias was not able to prevent the alliance of Charles with the Emperor (Teke, p. 260.). E. Kovács also thinks that the 1475 agreement “prevented the further approach between Matthias and Charles”, and thus “Hungary had not much hope to make benefit of the situation” (E. Kovács, *Matthias*, p. 116.). I would not agree. Hoensch also speaks of an alliance, though finds that it did not touch that of Charles and Matthias (Hoensch, p. 153.). The alliance was firmly working even after the treaty of Nancy. Charles needed the support of Matthias more than ever: the Swiss attacked him at the back again. In October 1475 another Hungarian embassy was to treat for a reconfirmation of the Burgundian alliance, specifically against Emperor Frederick, who, as Matthias wrote, “enticed the Swiss against the Duke”. The allies were right to guess that Louis XI – recruiting large numbers of Swissmen – would unite forces with the Habsburgs. France betrayed the June 1474 Compiègne treaty with Burgundy and allied with the Emperor on 31 December 1475 (Vaughan, 319.; Paravicini, p. 113.). It demanded a closer cooperation between Burgundy, Naples and Hungary. Charles learnt that he was unable to fight a two-front war. Brandenburg took now to support the Habsburgs (Fraknói, *Hohenzollernek*, p. 23-5.). That is why Matthias and Charles were to keep the alliance working even in 1475-76. Hungary was also trying to get new allies, e.g. Ludovico III Gonzaga, Margrave of Mantua, already allied to Burgundy and Milan (MKL I. No. 226.). Matthias wished to re-assure himself from the commitment of Milan as well (MKL I. No. 227.).

bringen vnde das were alles also ergangen, hette der konig von Vngern recht genommen, vnd das die Poln nicht also starg gewest weren.” *Thüringisch-Erfurtische Chronik*, p. 91.

After the fiasco of Neuss Matthias sensed danger and warned Charles not to engage into a campaign against the Swiss, who, with the mediation of Louis XI, made peace with the Habsburgs (Segesser, p. 69.). The spring of 1476 saw a Burgundian embassy to Buda to confirm the alliance again (Teleki, IV. p. 470-72.). In May 1476 Matthias dispatched a letter to the Duke. As a “prophet”, he predicted the fate of Charles.²⁵ He felt out what the Emperor was trying to forge to deceive Charles and turn the Swiss – having *semper presidia imperii* – against him: “you will have the empire against you, if you attack that invincible people, you cannot win over them”. “You will never escape [...]. It will be turned into a tale how a mighty prince was overcome by rustics”.²⁶ His warning was futile. On 22 June 1476 the Duke suffered a crushing defeat “from the hands of peasants” at Murten.

Frederick III and Wladislas contracted an alliance again in December 1476. Hungary was not in the position to give support to Burgundy. That is why Matthias chose to confirm his alliance with Saxony and applied for the help of the Imperial princes.²⁷ However, in his letter of 15 March 1476 to Pope Sixtus IV – where he disapproved the schemes of Louis XI and the Emperor to convene a synod to elect a new pope – Matthias listed the Duke as his ally, *fratre meo carissimo ac singulari confederato*. He did not believe that Charles would join the scheme based on their confederation: *nullomodo credere possum, prorsertim si nostre mutue confederationis memor esse voluerit*.²⁸ In the autumn of 1476 he sent an envoy and asked the Duke to join an anti-league in defence of the pope (Fraknói, *Magyarország*, p. 154). The envoy was also to write to the Pope as soon as he learnt of the Duke’s purposes, and the king also sent a special envoy to the Holy See (SrS, XIV. p. 8.). Matthias also invited the Duke and the king of England for his wedding.²⁹ The King did also to inform the Pope of his negotiation in this regard.

Hungary, Milan and England did not abandon the Burgundian alliance, but coordinated their actions to keep the coalition alive.³⁰ Matthias sent ambassadors to

²⁵ 7 May 1476. MKL, II. No. 239.; MDE II. No. 212.; Report of the Milanese envoy: *Dépêches des ambassadeurs*, II. p. 126.

²⁶ „Mirari satis non possumus, quod ita notorie decepta vestra fraternitatis, tantoque cum damno et dedecore prius seducta, nunc quoque ad talem labyrinthum trahi se permisit, [...] cum populo illo indomito insuperabilique bella agere conduceret, quos intellexerit forte sicut solet bellorum eventus esse dubius vincere posse, vinci non metueret [...] Per quam et regna et bona et personam ipsam suam vestra certis periculis exposituram noverat [...] homines illi exterminarentur [...] tantum principem a rusticis superatum, quos vicisse nullus aut parvus ad modum honor, a quibus vinci turpe semper fuit”.

²⁷ 2 October 1476. MKL II. No. 242.; 15 November 1476. MKL II. No. 245.

²⁸ *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae regis epistolae*, No. LXXXVI.; MKL I. No. 233.

²⁹ SrS, XIII. p. 179. Underlined by a Milanese report from Buda, May 1476: „sono invitate alle noze et cosi l’Imperatore et tutti Duca, Conti e Baroni de Alemagna e invitato ancora el Duca de Borgogna”: MDE II. No. 114.

³⁰ *Dépêches des ambassadeurs*, II. p. 202-03. England is still listed in the register of the Hungarian chancery “titulature” in 1477. Nehring, *Angaben*, p. 93.

Florence to ask help from the the Medicis (MKL I. No. 236). England sent a new envoy to the Sforzas in October 1475 (CSPM, p. 217). King Ferrante dispatched an embassy to Burgundy and England (CSPM, p. 221). Charles also worked hard to make alliance survive: in January 1476 he had Hungary listed amongst his allies (Horváth, p. 87.). But Grandson and Murten changed everything. As Galeazzo Maria Sforza was killed, Milan approached Louis XI again, and Charles was on the way of isolation. A way out was a treaty with the Habsburgs: on 6 May 1476 he agreed on the betrothal of Mary and Maximilian (Paravicini, p. 122.).

After Murten, Matthias made a last attempt to mediate between Charles and the *Eidgenossenschaft*.³¹ Matthias informed the Duke of Milan that the Archbishop of Bari, who was staying in Hungary, would be commissioned as a joint Hungarian-Neapolitan envoy to go to Burgundy (MDE II. No. 227.; MDE II. No. 229.). Antonio d' Ayello was only waiting to be able to report the capture of Szabács/Sabać and he was going to leave *immediately* for Burgundy on 20 February 1477.³² Matthias was going to assure him that after the siege he was now free to work for the concerns of Burgundy. The 30 May 1477 letter of Matthias to the Swiss shows that at the time the king had no idea of the death of Charles the Bold (January 1477).³³ He still wrote of an alliance that "he was about to conclude with his brother". He says that he sent the envoy *to the Duke of Burgundy*, that is, he must have been be alive for the time being! Either the dating of the letter is wrong, or, it should have been issued before that date. As it says that the Hungarian envoy was staying at the court of Burgundy, and the alliance was being firm, it fits into the year 1476.

In the context of the overlapping Burgundian-Neapolitan-Hungarian interest circles Prince Federico was going to become the *grand duc d'Occident*, his sister, Beatrice was to marry the great ruler of Central Europe. Naples would be able to withstand France, while England and Burgundy lay a campaign into France and the Habsburgs' fiefs. According to Nehring, Charles "was not convinced that an alliance with Matthias would work at all" and the Hungarian diplomacy overestimated its own role since it expected that the influence of Matthias over Duke Charles would result in the failure of the proposed marriage negotiations between Frederick III and

³¹ „So hoffen wir durch erber zimlich wege di sachen zwischen eu zu früntlichen vrtage zu bringen; und getrauen, zwieveln auch nicht daran, ir werdet uns solchen gütlichen handel nit abslaen, und eu in solchen sweren leufften und anligen der Cristenheit als frumen cristen lewten in sulchen geschwinden lewffen der ganzen Cristenheit wol gepüret, auffrechtlich hallten und zimlich wege nicht verschlachen. Das wollen wir gen eu und den ewrn, wo esz u schulden kumpt, gnedlich erkennen": 10 June 1476: MKL I. No. 240.

³² „Lo Archivesvovo de Barri ha havuto lettere de partirse de li e subito andare dal Duca de Borgogna, havuto chl abbia la licentia el Re de Hungaria, quale credo havere fra 20-di se parte, et va in Borgogna." MDE II. No. 239.

³³ „[...] sunder so senndten wir den edeln unsern lieben getrewen Jörgen von Stein unsern ratt vordem zu unsern bruder dem herzog von Burgund nit wider den gannanten künig [France] noch ew." 30 May 1477. MKL I. No. 250.

Burgundy (Nehring, *Matthias*, p. 68-9). I think that it is to be revised on the basis of Burgundian and English sources. Charles did not contract an alliance with the Habsburgs, but peace. He did not abandon the Hungarian, English and Aragonese alliances, on the contrary, he relied on them even afterwards. The Duke was convinced of the positive effects of a league with Naples and Hungary. Had he not been committed to it, he would not have included most of his allies from Pfalz to England in it.

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