

## SERBIA AND HUNGARY IN THEODORE SPANDOUNES'S WORK ON *THE ORIGIN OF THE OTTOMAN EMPERORS*<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

Theodore Spandounes was born in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century to a family of the Greek exiles who had found shelter in Italy after the fall of Constantinople. The Spandounes family had not played any significant role in the history of the Byzantine Empire but his mother Eudotia came from the famous Kantakouzenos family. Members of the Kantakouzenos family played an important political role in Serbia until its annexation by the Ottoman Empire in 1459. Theodore established close relations with popes Clement VII and Paul III, who he advised on the Ottoman affairs. Probably around 1515, Spandounes wrote the first version of the treatise *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*. In 1538 he dedicated the final version to Henry, Dauphin of France (the future king Henry II). As suggested by the title, the main objective of Spandounes's treatise was to explain how the Ottomans rose from the humble beginnings to their current mighty status in a relatively short time. In its final version from 1538, the treatise consists of four parts, different in size, composition and content. The most original and creative part, which is also of the greatest importance to the scholars interested in the Ottoman history, is the second part. However, information concerning the history of Serbia and Hungary can only be found in the first part. A detailed analysis of Theodor's treatise leads to the following conclusions: 1) Spandounes's remarks concerning Hungary and Serbia are generally infrequent, and the events described were rather accidentally chosen; 2) The author pays more attention to Serbia, with which he was emotionally connected through his ancestors. The information about the genealogy of the ruling family is interesting and reliable; 3) Spandounes is barely credible in his descriptions of events from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. His accounts are tendentious and quite often false; 4) Information concerning Hungary becomes more frequent for years 1520–1538, and it is relatively credible.

**Keywords:** Theodore Spandounes, Ottoman Empire, Medieval Serbia, Medieval Hungary.

Theodore Spandounes's family found shelter in Italy after the fall of Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> His father, Matthew Spandounes, served in the army of the Republic of Venice

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<sup>1</sup> Thank are due to Piotr Godlewski, MA for the translation of the manuscript.

<sup>2</sup> A synopsis of Spandounes's work, information about extant manuscripts of the treatise and its editions, the author's biography, and the bibliography of basic studies concerned with Spandounes

as a *stradioti*, a member of a cavalry unit. The Spandounes family had not played any significant role in the history of the Byzantine Empire before this date, but more is known about Theodore's mother, Eudotia Kantakouzeno, and her side of the family.<sup>3</sup> Her grandfather was George Palaiologos Kantakouzenos, a great soldier and scholar, as well as a direct descendant of Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354). He came to fame during his service under the despot of Morea, Constantine Palaiologos (1428–1449). Towards the end of the 1430s, George and his brother Thomas moved to Serbia, where their sister Irene had lived since her marriage to the despot Đurađ Branković (1427–1456) in 1414. Members of the Kantakouzenos family (including George's numerous offspring) played important political roles in Serbia until its annexation by the Ottoman Empire in 1459.<sup>4</sup> Some researchers (G. Sathas, and after him D.M. Nicol) suggested that Theodore Spandounes was under the greatest influence of his aunt Mara Branković – one of Đurađ Branković and Irene Kantakouzenos's daughters – who became a wife of Sultan Murad II (1421–1451) in 1435. After Murad's death, she enjoyed the favour of Mehmed II (1451–1481) and then his son, Bayezid II (1481–1512). The young Theodore allegedly spent some time at her court in Ježevo in Macedonia, becoming acquainted with the Turkish language and customs in the process.<sup>5</sup> However, this view was rightly criticised by T. Ganchou, who underlined that such claims find no evidence in sources, perhaps most importantly in the writings of Theodore Spandounes himself.<sup>6</sup>

What is certain is that Theodore visited Constantinople in 1503. He was protecting the business of his brother Alexander, who had suffered financial losses during the war of 1500–1503. Unfortunately, Alexander soon passed away. According to Theodore himself, it was precisely his resolution to get over the trauma caused by his brother's death that induced him to engage in the study of the history of the Ottoman emperors.<sup>7</sup> Spandounes returned to Venice in 1509 but was soon forced to leave the borders of the Republic having been suspected of a pro-French attitude, something frowned upon in Venice after the formation of the League of Cambrai. The first version of the treatise was written in France, probably around 1515. In his later work

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were provided by: P. Schwarz Lausten, "Teodoro Spandugino" [in:] *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History*, vol. 6: *Western Europe (1500–1600)*, eds. D. Thomas, J. Chesworth, Leiden–Boston 2014, pp. 420–438.

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors*, transl. and ed. D.M. Nicol, Cambridge University Press 1997, pp. VIII–IX; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs à l'histoire de la Grèce au moyen âge*, IX, Paris 1890, pp. III–VII.

<sup>4</sup> *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A.P. Kazhdan, vol 2., pp. 1103–1104; D.M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Family Kantakouzenos (Cantacuzenus) ca. 1100–1460: A Genealogical and Prosopographical Study*, Dumbarton Oaks Studies XI, Washington D.C. 1968, pp. 230–233.

<sup>5</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. IX–X; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. XII; R. Čuk, "Carica Mara," *Istoriski časopis* 1978, vol. XXV, pp. 80–87. F. Babinger, "Witwensitz und Sterbeplatz der Sultanin Mara" [in:] *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen zur Geschichte Südosteuropas und der Levante*, vol. I, München 1962, pp. 240–244.

<sup>6</sup> T. Ganchou (review), D.M. Nicol (ed. transl.), "Theodore Spandounes: On the Origin of the Ottoman Emperors," *Revue des Études Byzantines* 1998, vol. 56, pp. 324–326.

<sup>7</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. X–XI, p. 3.

Theodore informed readers that he had already dedicated his treatise to Pope Leo X (1513–1521) and the French king, Francis (1515–1547), beforehand.<sup>8</sup>

Even though Spandounes, as a Greek, remained in the Orthodox church, in the 1420s he established closer relationships with Popes Clement VII (1523–1534) and Paul III (1534–1549), who advised on Ottoman affairs.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, he was close to the French court. In 1538 he dedicated the final version of his treatise to Dauphin Henry (the future Henry II). This version became a basis for subsequent editions, printed in Lucca in 1550 and in Florence in 1551. It was also the basis for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century edition by C.G. Sathas, in volume IX of *Documents inédits...* from 1890, and indirectly for a contemporary English translation by D.M. Nicol from 1997.<sup>10</sup>

As suggested by the title, the main objective of Spandounes's treatise was to explain how the Ottomans rose in a relatively short time from humble beginnings to their current mighty state. As the author informs in the dedication which opens the book, he also wanted to present the Ottoman court, military and administrative offices, as well as the lives and customs of the Turks. All of this was done in hope of helping in the fight with the Sultan. In its final version from 1538, the treatise consists of four parts, different in size, composition, and content. In the first and largest part, the author describes the reigns of ten Turkish rulers in chronological order, from Osman I (1299–1324) to the Sultan of his day, Suleyman the Magnificent (1520–1566). The last events mentioned in the treatise are the Turkish expedition to Moldavia in July–October 1538 and the conquest of Cephalonia by the Turks under the command of Hayreddin Barbarossa.<sup>11</sup>

The second part, only slightly shorter than the first, has an entirely different nature. It contains very detailed information about the broadly understood organisation of the Ottoman Empire in the times of his contemporary Sultan, Suleyman the Magnificent. As Spandounes writes:

Having now described in brief the origins of the house of Ottoman and the deeds of their Emperors, I shall go on to describe the offices of their court, their revenues, the form of their military strength, their style of living and of government, and the many ways in which they differ from the principalities of Christendom.<sup>12</sup>

Part three of the treatise appears only in its latest edition from 1538. It describes the reigns of two Persian kings: Ismail (1501–1524) and Thamas (1524–1576) (also called Sofi). Being enemies of the Ottoman Empire, they could be considered, according to Spandounes, as potential allies of Christian countries. This very interesting part of Spandounes's work is noticeably shorter than the previous two, and in

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<sup>8</sup> *Petit traité de l'origine des Turcs par Théodore Spandouyn Cantacasin*, publié et annoté par Ch. Schefer, Paris 1896, pp. XLI–XLII.

<sup>9</sup> P. Schwarz Lausten, "Teodoro Spandugino," p. 421.

<sup>10</sup> All quotes from Spandounes's work were taken from the English translation by D.M. Nicol. Unfortunately this translation has many abbreviations and should be used together with the full Italian edition of C.N. Sathas.

<sup>11</sup> C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 201–202.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 202–252; Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 109.

Sathas' edition it covers around 8 pages.<sup>13</sup> The treatise closes with a very brief part four (only one page!), where Spandounes takes issue with certain authors of similar works which are based on publications by writers "from Germany, Poland, and other countries," and which for example give an incorrect number of sultans. He also refers to objections raised by unspecified critics with respect to the earlier edition of his treatise.<sup>14</sup>

Undoubtedly, the most original and creative part, and of the greatest importance for scholars interested in the Ottoman history, is the second part. However, information concerning the history of Serbia and Hungary can be found only in the first part, and that is what we are going to analyse here.

Even though his stay at the court of Mara Branković in Ježevo is probably fictitious, considering his family ties to Serbia it comes as no surprise that Theodore Spandounes provides a relatively generous amount of information about this country, while Hungary which he was not so familiar with is given less attention in his work. Already at the beginning of the narration, when Theodore informs us about the organisation of the Fourth Crusade by western knights and mentions the arrival of young Alex, son of Emperor Isaac (1185–1195), near Zadar, he fails to mention that the city had been taken by the crusaders from the Hungarians.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, Theodore discusses the participation of the Serbs in the Byzantine civil war fought between John V Palaiologos (1341–1391) and John VI Kantakouzenos in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century relatively extensively. Presenting the course of the conflict in a greatly oversimplified manner, Theodore sees it as a struggle between two camps: the camp of John Kantakouzenos, allied with the Serbs of "King Stefan" and with the Venetians, and the camp of John V Palaiologos, who received support from the Genoese and the Turks of Sultan Orhan (1324–1362). Strengthening the alliances was a clear purpose of marriages: Kantakouzenos married his son Matthias to a daughter of the "King of Serbia" (Stefan Uroš IV Dušan (1331–1355)), who gave Albania to the Greeks as a dowry, and John V Palaiologos gave his illegitimate sister's daughter (*sorella consobrina bastarda*) to Sultan Orhan.<sup>16</sup> Spandounes, who sympathises with Kantakouzenos and the Serbs, departs from the truth here, as it was Kantakouzenos (and not Palaiologos) who actually sent his daughter Theodora to the Sultan's harem.<sup>17</sup>

After the victory of John V Palaiologos, King Stefan Dušan made an alliance with Sultan Orhan against Byzantium in hope of recovering Albania. However, the Turks soon turned against Serbia. The new Sultan, Murad II:

. . . captured more and more places in Serbia and reduced it to a tributary province. Then he allied with the Bulgars, the Wallachians and the Goths and with the Emperor of Constantinople against the Kingdom of Hungary; and they attacked Hungary from two sides.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>13</sup> C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 252–260.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 260–261.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 18–20; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 143–145.

<sup>17</sup> G. Ostrogorski, *Dzieje Bizancjum*, Warszawa 1968, p. 406.

<sup>18</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 21; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 146.

In these two sentences Spandounes referred to events which were quite far-off in time: the fall of Serbia and the decline of its influence after the death of Stefan Dušan (1355) and the events of 1389, since the mentioned "attack on Hungary" refers to what was actually a Turkish expedition to Serbia that year.<sup>19</sup> It is worth quoting here the passage in the chronicle where this event is described:

Murad, called "ghazi," took with him more than 80,000 soldiers to invade Hungary; and had it not been for the intervention of divine providence Hungary would have fared badly. Murad came to place in the forests of Serbia called Kosovo (Consogno) near Novo Brdo. There twelve knights in the pay of Hungary conspired to murder him; and it happened that certain Miloš Kobilić (Miloš Cobilovichio) was chosen for the deed. He was a Serbian in the service of Hungary. What he did was brave and memorable and much celebrated.<sup>20</sup>

Later follows the depiction of Murad's assassination and its consequences for the ceremonial reception of guests by future sultans (from that time on, they would be held by their arms). Interestingly, the author does not mention the battle of Kosovo at all nor its outcome, even though in historiography it is regarded as one of the crucial events in the Balkans.<sup>21</sup> Spandounes devoted more space to the small events in which his ancestors took part. For example, he mentions the reasons that led his great grandfather to move to Serbia.

. . . George Cantacuzene called "Sachatai" who was a grandson of Emperor John [VI – P.W.] Kantakuzen . . . went to visit his sister "Helena" [Eirene – P.W.] wife of the despot George of Serbia, where he found that the Despot was at war with Hungary. So, he elected to stay there and was instrumental in building the strong fortress of Smederevo (Sfenderono). This prince was accompanied by a large body of men.<sup>22</sup>

Let us add that George was previously in Morea, where he had fought against Turks under the command of the despot Constantine Dragases.

Spandounes makes absolutely no mention of the crusade of Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437), which ended in defeat at Battle of Nicopolis in 1396, while he provides an extensive, though tendentious and totally false, description of the events of the year 1444.<sup>23</sup> The military operations were allegedly initiated by Emperor John VIII (1425–1448), who had spent seven years in Western Europe looking for help.

Only the King of Hungary and Philippe Duke of Burgundy (Bergonia) took action against the Turks in 1444, though the most reverend cardinal Juliano Cesarini went as a legate from the Apostolic See. The Christian army encountered Murad at a place called Varna and such were their talents and their discipline that the Christians were victorious, breaking and scattering the army of the Turks so that Murad and his Janissaries were forced to retreat to the top of the small hill nearby, together with a very few others who thus escaped death. There they were sur-

<sup>19</sup> *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. I: *Od najstarijih vremena do maričke bitke*, ed. S. Ćirković, Beograd 1981, pp. 593–602.; *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. II: *Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države (1371–1537)*, ed. J. Kalić, Beograd 1982, pp. 36–46.

<sup>20</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 21; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 146.

<sup>21</sup> J. Czamańska, J. Leśny, *Bitwa na Kosowym Polu 1389*, Poznań 2015, pp. 157–165.

<sup>22</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 29; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup> J.V.A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, Ann Arbor 1987, pp. 424–425.

rounded by the victorious Christian army. After three days of siege and starvation Murad was forced to capitulate . . .<sup>24</sup>

According to Spandounes, the conditions of the capitulation were so humiliating that Janissaries became outraged and started insulting the sultan who was crying like a baby. They killed his horse to prevent him from escaping, and next launched a spontaneous attack. Surprised, the Christians suffered a complete defeat. Spandounes continues:

Among the dead was King Vladislav of Hungary and Poland and Cardinal Cesarini, the Pope's legate. To this day at Varna there can be seen a huge mound of the bones of the Christians who died in that rout.<sup>25</sup>

The prince of Burgundy, who only just escaped execution for offending the Sultan, was released for a huge ransom. Of course, this entire elaborate Burgundian subplot was totally fabricated (it is probably a far echo of the participation of John the Fearless in the expedition of 1396). The rest of the account is similarly far-fetched. What is correct is only the simple fact that the Christians were defeated and King Władysław III (1434–1444) and Cesarini were both found death at Varna.<sup>26</sup>

Spandounes frequently deplores the constant conflict among Christian rulers which facilitate Ottoman conquests. Even the Fall of Constantinople (1453) did not change that state of affairs. Theodore (himself an Orthodox Christian) also notices religious conflicts, and does not hesitate to praise his ancestors at every opportunity:

There was at that time fierce warfare between the despot George (Jurgo) and the king of Hungary... The Despot observed the Greek rite, the King of Hungary the Latin. And there were many bloody battles between them and great carnage on either side. The Hungarian were more often the losers though in the end, in the savage feat of arms, they took the despot and with him the Lord Theodore Cantacuzene. Both were taken to prison in Hungary. Theodore, however, was allowed to go on oath to Serbia to collect and provide 300 000 ducats as ransom. This he was unable to find; but, so as not to break his oath, he returned to prison in Hungary until the money was paid.<sup>27</sup>

Theodore proceeds to inform us that the Hungarians in their barbarity tried to force old John Kantakouzenos to order the capitulation of Smederevo fortress by threatening to kill his son, but to no avail. Unfortunately, the chronicler did not follow that plot and did not explain how the prisoners were finally released.

Spandounes is surprisingly accurate when it comes to genealogical issues. After his description of the events of Varna, Theodor mentions that the Sultan married Mara, a daughter of Serbian despot Đurađ Branković (Jurgo), and ordered his two sons Stefan and George (Grgur) to be blinded during their visit to their sister in Adri-

<sup>24</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 29–30; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 151–152.

<sup>25</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 30; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 152.

<sup>26</sup> J. Jefferson, *The Holy Wars of King Wladislas and Sultan Murad: The Ottoman Christian Conflict from 1438–1444*, Leiden–Boston 2012, pp. 422–487.

<sup>27</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 34–35; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 155.

anople.<sup>28</sup> The Branković family affairs must have been important to Spandounes, as he returns to them when mentioning Đurađ's death. Aside from Mara Branković, he also writes about his second daughter, Katarina, a wife of the count of Celje, whose daughter became the first wife of Matthias (1458–1490), King of Hungary. Following that plot, Spandounes comments upon the marriage of Branković's oldest son – the blinded Stefan, and the fate of his children (from his marriage to the Albanian Angjelina Arianit Komneni, three children were born: George, John, and Marija, who later married Boniface of Montferrat). Theodore also mentions (and it seems he is correct!) the marriages of three daughters of Lazar (1456–1458), Đurađ Branković's third son, who ascended to the throne after his father, and who ruled side by side with his mother for a time.<sup>29</sup> It is worth to quote here a fragment of Spandounes's work, on account of his personal attitude towards that women:

His mother, Eirene Cantacuzene, sister of the prince George Cantacusino, who was my mother grandfather (*mio avo materno*), was content to be regent and guardian of her son's realm. Lazar however was not content. He wanted it all, with no fear of God, he poisoned his said mother Eirene, a princess endowed with every virtue. Thus, did Lazar make himself shunned and hated by all his vassals and his neighbours and in the confusion, he earned the implacable wrath of Mehmed, who resolved to take over Rascia and Serbia.<sup>30</sup>

This account basically keeps to the truth, with the restriction that Irene Kantakouzenos is regarded by Serbian historians as one of the most detested rulers, and Mehmed's attack and the Ottoman annexation of Serbia in 1459 had no connection with her death whatsoever.<sup>31</sup>

Noteworthy is Theodore's report about the Siege of Nándorfehérvár (present day Belgrade in Serbia) (1456). This important fortress, situated in the borderlands and controlled by the Serbs (during the rule of Stefan Lazarević) and later by the Hungarians (after 1427), appears several times on the pages of Spandounes's treatise. A mention concerning the Turkish siege of Belgrade appears after the information about the seizure of Bosnia by the Turks (1463), although it is impossible to determine whether this is a case of wrong dating or a flaw in the treatise's composition.

The following year he [Mehmed – P.W.] attacked the strong city of Belgrade, which after ruin of despots of Serbia had fallen into the hands of King of Hungary. The Hungarians refused to surrender it at Mehmed's command and he went in war against them. Belgrade was saved by John Hunyadi (Iancho Vaivoda), father of King Matthias and renowned soldier of Hungary and by the Franciscan friar Giovanni (Ioan) Capistrano who came from Germany with a cross on his shoulder and more than 20,000 troops ready to die for the Christian religion. The Turks were beaten off and their Sultan withdrew in disgrace and with heavy losses. The saintly Capistrano

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<sup>28</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 31; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 152–153.

<sup>29</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 38–40; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 158–159.

<sup>30</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 39; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 158.

<sup>31</sup> P. Wróbel, *Krzyż i Półksiężyc. Zachodnie Balkany wobec Turcji w latach 1444–1463*, Kraków 2000, pp. 73–81; *Istoriya srpskog naroda*, vol. II, pp. 303–313; M. Orbini, *Kraljevstvo Slavena*, Zagreb 1999, pp. 340, 387–388, 401.

however, who had led the field with his cross and given heart to the others was killed as a martyr with other good Christians.<sup>32</sup>

The dating issue aside, other facts presented by Spandounes are close to truth. However, it turns out that Giovanni Capistrano did not meet a martyr's death in battle but died from a plague. It is surprising though that on this occasion the author made no mention of John Hunyadi's death (also due to a plague) and, even more importantly, about a serious injury suffered by Sultan Mehmed during the battle.<sup>33</sup>

Matthias Corvinus, the great Hungarian king who (especially at the beginning of his reign) conducted successful operations against the Ottomans, is only mentioned twice in Spandounes's work. The chronicler mentions him only as a son of great general, John Hunyadi. Information about Hungary during the rule of Louis II Jagiellon (1516–1526) is also lacking. This probably stems from the fact that neither Sultan Bayezid (1481–1512) (occupied by the rebellion of his brother Cem, who escape from the Ottoman Empire and ended up in Christian hands) nor his successor Selim I (1512–1520) (occupied with conquests in Syria and Egypt) were particularly active in the Balkans.<sup>34</sup> More striking, considering Spandounes's connections with the Papal court, is his silence about an attempt to form an anti-Ottoman crusade in Hungary in 1514 and about the Peasants' Revolt of György Dózsa.<sup>35</sup>

Information concerning Hungary become more widespread only in the context of the expedition of Suleyman the Magnificent against Belgrade in 1521.<sup>36</sup> As Theodore writes, after suppressing rebellions in Syria and Egypt,

... Suleyman than elected to make war on Hungarians to punish them for the great injuries they had inflicted on him. He was aware that the princes of Christendom were divided among themselves by great altercations and internecine warfare. So, he took personal command of a vast army to attack the city of Belgrade. He laid siege to it with such savagery that its defenders, seeing their fortress destroyed and with no prospect of help coming from any quarter, surrendered and offered to make peace in exchange for their survival. Nonetheless, many of them were put to death and there was much looting and pillage.<sup>37</sup>

As Spandounes continues (and what other sources confirm!), the Sultan took many relics from Belgrade, which were later bought back by the patriarch of Constantinople.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 45–46; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 163.

<sup>33</sup> J. Kalić, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1967, pp. 127–172.

<sup>34</sup> For more about Bayezid II (Yildirim or Thunderbolt), see: *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, eds. G. Ágoston, B. Masters, New York 2009, pp. 80–82 and for more about Selim I (Yavuz Sultan Selim, Selim the Grim) see: *ibidem*, pp. 511–513.

<sup>35</sup> I.A. Fessler, *Geschichte von Ungarn*, Bd. 3, Leipzig 1874, pp. 297–303; K.M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, Philadelphia 1979, pp. 150–157.

<sup>36</sup> J. Kalić, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, pp. 241–261.

<sup>37</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 65–66; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 184.

<sup>38</sup> Ludwik Tuberon de Crieva, *Pamiętniki o czasach moich*, Kraków 2016, pp. 413–414; J. Kalić, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, pp. 263–264.

Towards the end of his work, Spandounes mentions Hungary more often, as the country became a focus of Sultan Mehmed's plans of expansion. The description of the fall of the kingdom is especially dramatic.<sup>39</sup> This time Theodore is scrupulous about the dates of the events:

Suleyman . . . led a huge army to Hungary in 1526. Its king Louis II (Ludovico) was only twenty years old but he raised a force of 25000 men to fight the Turks; and he was joined by contingents from Transylvania and elsewhere. But they came too late for Suleyman advanced from Belgrade and reached a place called Mohács (Noaz) which was in the plain; and there on 28 [mistake, it should be 29! – P.W.] August Ibrahim with the army of beylerbey of Natalia defeated the Christians. The King fled and met his death trying to ford a swollen river or swamp on horseback. His body was later found.<sup>40</sup>

After that, Theodore provides quite a long list of Hungarian casualties. He also informs that the queen fled close to the Austrian border with the palatine Stephen Báthory. Meanwhile, the Ottomans marched to Buda, which they plundered, and the spoils of war were later displayed in public in Constantinople. Further on we read that John Zápolya (1526–1540), Voivode of Transylvania, was elected as a new king of Hungary shortly after, although some among the Hungarians were accusing him of treason, as he had failed to come to his king's rescue at Mohács. The Diet was summoned once again, and this time Archduke Ferdinand of Austria was elected as the new king. Zápolya fled to Hungary hoping to get support from the Turks. Indeed, in 1529 a Turkish army invaded Hungary, King Ferdinand was driven out and Zápolya reinstated to the throne. Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha was sent to Austria and laid siege to Vienna, but quickly withdrew.<sup>41</sup>

If Spandounes is to be believed, the expeditions to Hungary had a revolutionary impact on Suleyman's customs:

He [the Sultan – P.W.] filled a whole room in his palace with all the jewels and precious stones that he had collected; and he took using a dining table and stools "in the Italian fashion" a thing that the Turks had never done before.<sup>42</sup>

There is one more interesting note related to the history of Hungary and Poland in Spandounes's work. In 1532 the Sultan intervened in the defence of Zápolya who had been attacked by the Habsburgs. A peace treaty was signed, with the King of Poland as the arbiter and guarantor. However, according to Spandounes, the Sultan realized that the Polish ruler did not have enough authority to keep the Habsburgs at bay, and so he soon marched out directly on Vienna. However, the expedition failed due to heavy rains.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> G. Perjés, *Upadek średniowiecznego królestwa Węgier: Mohacz 1526–Buda 1541*, Oświęcim 2014, pp. 103–114, 158–241.

<sup>40</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 70; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 189–190.

<sup>41</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, pp. 70–71; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 190–191; G. Perjés, *Upadek średniowiecznego królestwa Węgier*, pp. 114–124.

<sup>42</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 71; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, p. 191.

<sup>43</sup> Theodore Spandounes, *On the Origin*, p. 72; C.N. Sathas, *Documents inédits relatifs*, pp. 192, 194; G. Perjés, *Upadek średniowiecznego królestwa Węgier*, pp. 124–132.

Conclusions: 1) Spandounes's remarks concerning Hungary and Serbia are generally infrequent, and the events described were rather accidentally chosen; 2) The author pays more attention to Serbia, with which he was emotionally connected by his ancestors. The information about the genealogy of the ruling family is interesting and reliable; 3) Spandounes is barely credible in his descriptions of events from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. His accounts are tendentious and quite often false; 4) Information concerning Hungary are more frequent for years 1520–1538, and this is relatively credible.

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