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### PRINCE DOMINIC, THE SZEKLETS, AND THE LOWER COUNTRY OF MOLDAVIA

(Summary)

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Several studies were devoted to the most delicate issues of the origins of the Moldavian Csangós and the roots of the so-called *Lower Country* of Moldavia. A source in the Vatican Archives, also edited half a century ago, but apparently ignored until now, enables a different approach. In April 1327, Pope John XXII addressed not only King Charles-Robert of Hungary, the count of Braşov, the ban of Slavonia, the voivodes of Transylvania and Wallachia, as well as high ranking officials of the Angevine Hungarian system, but also *mutatis mutandis dilecto filio nobili viro Domenico, Principi milicie ceterisque nobilibus Principatus Siculorum Regni Ungarie*. Dominic was deemed a prince alike Salomon, count of Braşov, Mikud, ban of Slavonia, Thomas, voivode of Transylvania, and Basarab, voivode of Wallachia, and ruled over a territory different from proper Szeklerland, under the authority of count Michael, one of the other parties addressed by the pope in that spring. After combats with the Tartars, a new missionary crusader system in South-Eastern Europe seemed to be in the making under the suzerainty of Charles-Robert and Papal command. The system collapsed in the second half of 1330 following the battles north and south of the Lower Danube, in particular due to the changes in the policy of Basarab of Wallachia. Attempts to revive the system were made chiefly through various Hungarian-Wallachian compromises in particular in the 1340s but failed to secure long term results for Buda. In return, in the 1370s, in area east of the Oituz pass, previously under the rule of Dominic, the Wallachians emerged receiving an own bishop and a crown from Pope Gregory XI, the crown of the so-called *Lower Country* of Moldavia, preserved in the princely treasure in Suceava (in the so-called *Upper Country* of Moldavia or Moldavia proper) well into the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The *Lower Country* of Moldavia remained a major problem for the rulers in Suceava until the 1470s when after combats, deportations (of Szeklers in particular) and compromises the matter was settled in the favour of Suceava, who secured control over this vital strategic area that connected Transylvania to the Danube Mounds (and hence had been a lasting object of conflict not only between Hungary and Moldavia, but also between Moldavia and Wallachia, the other competitor in the area, thus changing hands – primarily parts of it – throughout the decades). Still, after the death of Stephen III of Moldavia (1504) in the context of his disputed succession, Poland attempted to revive – with support from Wallachia – the question of *Lower Country*. The matter was in effect far from being settled until the Ottoman collapse of Jagiellonian Hungary removed pressure and interest from the disputed area.

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