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LOST LETTERS FROM THE SUMMER OF 1480 (Summary)

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Six weeks after the start of the Ottoman siege of Rhodes (May 23, 1480) and some three weeks before the Ottoman fleet appeared in front of Otranto (July 28, 1480), the harbour of her father, Ferdinand of Aragon, king of Naples, Beatrice, the wife of Matthias Corvinus, king of Hungary, wrote to her sister, Eleanor, and her brother-in-law, Ercole d'Este, duke of Modena (July 9, 1480), who probably received the – identical – letters of Beatrice at the same time with the news of the Ottoman siege of Italian Otranto. Queen Beatrice sent word of the recent anti-Ottoman exploits in Wallachia (late May-mid-June 1480), and then in Bulgaria, of the captains of her husband, supported by the *Magnificent* Stephen III, voivode of Moldavia, with whom Matthias had recently concluded *peace*, accepting the voivode as his vassal, still according to the same queen. Two days after the queen's letters, on July 11, 1480, and with significantly fewer details, Matthias appended basically the same news as post-scriptum to his messages sent to the cities of Augsburg and Nürnberg, nominally under the authority of King Matthias' arch-enemy, Emperor Frederick III of Habsburg. Less than a month earlier, already informed about the siege of Rhodes, Matthias had warned his father-in-law about the imminent Ottoman attack on the Kingdom of Naples and urged him to reach an agreement with the sultan. Not too long ago, Matthias had also allowed Ottoman riders to raid the 'Austrian lands' of Frederick III. A question therefore arises: were the messages sent by Matthias and Beatrice 'fake-news' aimed at covering Hungarian-Ottoman arrangements at a time when Christendom was besieged by the Turks?

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