

## Elena Suff

### *The Moldo-German Chronicle: a History of Stephen the Great for Occidental Eyes*

In the late 1490s the Moldavian voyevod Stephen the Great (1457-1504) had commissioned a chronicle to be written about his reign. Finished about 1502 and entitled *Cronica breuiter Scripta Stephan[i] Dei gracia Voyvoda[e] Terrarum Moldannens[ium] necnon Valachyens[ium]*, it has survived in an only copy made for (or by) Hartmann Schedel of Nuremberg. It is not clear if it had been originally written in German or if the German version is a translation.

Subject to heated debate in Romanian historiography and an unsolved mystery as far as its author and original language are concerned, this chronicle presented the prospective foreign reader with an image of Stephen the Great that the readers of local chronicles might have found unusual. While Moldavian chronicles, mostly written in monasteries, insisted upon showing the voyevod as a deeply pious, God-fearing and directly supported by God and his saints character (St Demeter himself was said to have blessed his army on the eve of a battle once), the Stephen of the Moldo-German Chronicle is, first of all, a ruthless military leader, distinguished mostly by the amount of bloodshed he inflicts upon pillaged cities. He is also a shrewd politician, who chooses his alliances carefully. Our hypothesis is that the text had been deliberately modelled for Western eyes, underlining Stephen's importance as *antemurale Christianitatis* and drawing upon famous images of legendary knights and monarchs that would have been familiar to Western audiences.