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**Technical and military strategy in the era of the Later Crusades**

Abstract of the Doctoral Thesis

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## Contents

Chapter I. Historiographical and methodological preliminaries.....	3
1. General bibliography .....	3
2. Methodology and hypotheses.....	10
Chapter II.The Late Crusade in Romanian and international context.....	18
1. Theoretical Principles. The birth and evolution the crusade.....	18
2. Development of the idea of the Later Crusade.....	31
3.The historical frame.....	34
Chapter III. Medieval and early modern military equipment in the romanian space.....	47
1.The sword.....	47
2.The Sabre.....	57
3.The bow.....	60
4 The crossbow .....	64
5 Knife and dagger.....	69
6. Scythe, ax, .....	72
7 Battle whip .....	74
8 The mace.....	76
9.The spear and the lance.....	83
10. The halberd.....	87
11 The armour.....	91
12. Armor and armor parts of the Romanian space.....	109
13.Firearms.....	119
14.Fortifications.....	132
14.a Evolution and significance of military fortifications in the Romanian space..	132
14.b The main cities and castles.....	140

14.c. The development of fortification systems in the sixteenth century.....	146
Chapter IV. Strategy and military thinking.....	150
1 Military forces.....	150
2 Army composition.....	168
3 Military tactics of the Middle Ages.....	180
3. a. The siege.....	199
4 Military revolution of the sixteenth century and Romanian space.....	202
5 The Ottoman empire.....	214
5a Foundations of the Ottoman military system.....	219
5b The climax of the Ottoman army: the XVth and XVIth centuries.....	226
6. Naval war. The Romanian space in the European shipbuilding strategy.....	233
Conclusions.....	241
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	246
ANNEXES.....	265

## Synthesis of the main parts

**Keywords:** Crusade, military technology, strategy, tactics, Papacy, Empire, military personnel, military formation.

The idea of writing a history paper in medieval Romanian military might, at first glance, seem obsolete and would have even wanted to be. The reality is that with the whole Middle Ages concerns for the evolution theory and the art of war have lost ground to the trend of increasingly sharp definition and conceptualization of notions and attitudes with immediate impact. Because the issue was considered closed, the revaluation of a subject on which was written enormously and on which were built the careers of well-known Romanian historians should normally be viewed as either an exercise in futility or a display of vanity. Important historical sources have remained virtually the same for decades, the bibliography is enormous, thus placing legitimate questions about what actual contribution, what original ideas, can one still bring in the study of this issue. From our point of view the answer is in critical analysis of historiography, identifying the weaknesses obvious in the general theory on the composition of herds, potential and thus the strategy and tactics tackled by Romanian rulers in the spring chosen chronological gave us the necessary motivation in this study.

We opted so that during our approach to refer constantly to this historiography, to quote extensively where found necessary, so that was, we believe, possible to identify the internal logic of the constitution of the main theoretical coordinates significant for our area of interest . Perspective, once achieved, could be faced with universal historiography achievements in the field and, very soon, the image of a sand castle took the place of what appears at first glance as an extremely solid foundation.

Why these theories, still dominant in the Romanian school of taught, are not fully satisfactory relate to an idea that may seem trivial, but it took a long time for it to make room in historiographical perception, namely that the history of military medieval is extremely complex and so it obstinately refuses to conform to ideological processes that it confronts. Any simplification, idealistic or not, will reveal therefore limits when confronted with specific cases or eccentricities and, ultimately, we can say with sufficient certainty that all history is the sum of specific cases.

Once removed the image of a Europe composed of States "imperialist" mentality contaminated expansion at any cost and that turns north Danubian in their own theater of war, the scenario taking place is obviously much different. Reality makes late Middle Ages, in spite of centripetal progress made by local monarchies, still be an era of profound political and social division or maybe it would be even more appropriate to say that it was an era of legal division. In the corollary mentality of feudal vassals, this fragmentation has a specific logic and structure in a pyramidal association. If classic Medieval Age witnessed two powers competed for dominance: the Holy See and the Empire, after the obliteration of the theocratic plans of the XIV-th century we cannot longer find a single driving force able to agglutinate the energies of Christianity, but the schema resist and reproduce itself at smaller spatial scales. In this process, the extra-Carpathian Principalities place is not very clear, rulers enjoying a status superior to that great vassal because principalities territory was not formally included within a neighboring kingdom, but lower than the monarch. This ambiguous position, the Principalities were, but not quite, in the Occidental vassalage system was the key to their political thinking and thus their military actions. In other words, the rulers were aware, or had no way to be different, that they were secondary actors in the South-East European political context and this results in the need for natural rallying to a higher power factor. This rallying, although meant especially for the fifteenth century, mutual understanding is not achieved at all on an equal basis and not have other motivations than the legal, political, military or economic. Responding very pragmatic interests, such agreements had a lifespan correlated to satisfy these interests. Once the Turks occupy the Balkan space and it becomes obvious that they are not particularly interested in the annexation of Romanian Land and Moldavia, the Porte is nothing but another actor who could be negotiated with. This creates the indissoluble relationship between politics and military strategy and we can safely say that, as there are several policy options, there are as many strategies and same pragmatic interests that have prompted the Romanian rulers to fight against the Ottomans, made to fight against Hungary, Poland or another. The idea of a traditional polity of crusade or even a firm anti-Ottoman policy line is thus limited by the existence of such conflicts.

How significant was the political motivation in legalistic conflicts or conversely, how much of a conflict that seems politically is actually a legal dispute, is an issue whose complexity we believe that we are only beginning to crystallize, but we think we've done our duty to highlight issues of logic that inevitably occur when we insist on looking at the Romanian rulers

as mere politicians and army commanders, they being, in fact, simultaneously a source of jurisprudence, big landlords, protectors of the Church and representatives of the cast of *bellatores*. Only by understanding the pressure of all these images a ruler had to assume we hope to identify with some certainty the conditionalities that ultimately dictated their actions.

In structural terms our thesis includes four chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the general historiography, national and universal, and comprises the introducing into the, our motivation and the methodology that we are considering.

The second chapter deals with the origin and development of the idea of crusade, the holy war crusade classical and obviously late crusades, including Ottoman strategies. At the same time, I found it necessary that this chapter also include an overview of the main European political and military mutations that occurred in the chronological arc that we have proposed.

The third chapter focused on medieval and early range of modern military equipment. Our intention, materialized in the utmost, was to visit museums in Romania, to photograph valuable and original exhibits and present them in this chapter, along with the text. Of course not for all the types of weapons such action was possible and where there were gaps, we used images of museums in the Western world.

Finally, the fourth chapter covers the subject's vast military strategy, in which we tried to illustrate and classify the various tactics employed in the wars of the era, the evolution of the military mind and its relationship with technical advance in the war, the Western tradition and the Ottoman, the special topic of the importance of navigation routes in the Crusade schema closing our thesis. We should mention that this chapter prioritizes military theory at the expense of traditional formula of presenting historical facts in linear, chronological method.