



1515

**John Musachi:
Brief Chronicle on the
Descendants of our
Musachi Dynasty**

The chronicle or memoir of John Musachi (Ital. Giovanni Musachi) constitutes the oldest substantial text written by an Albanian. Musachi, despot of Epirus, was of a noble, ruling family from the Myzeqe region of central Albania. He was forced to abandon his land and take flight to Italy when Albanian resistance to the Ottoman conquest collapsed and the country was occupied by the Turks. The prime objective in his chronicle was not to provide a history of his times, but simply to prove to his descendants that they were of an important, landowning family so that they did not forget their origins and property rights. While the chronicle is no work of great scholarship and may prove confusing to students of history, it is nonetheless an important source not only for late fifteenth-century Albania, but also for Albanian toponyms and the names of local Albanian rulers. Indeed it is significant as proof of the rise of the Albanians as a distinct ethnic group.

Appendixed to the chronicle, though not included here, is a text by John's son, Constantine Musachi, dated 1535, in which the latter states that his father "was buried in the large church of Francavilla in the country of Otranto in a marble grave where mass is conducted three times a week. On it is an inscription reading: Almighty Jesus, this is the grave of John Musachi, the son of Gjin the Despot, Lord of Epirus and of Myzeqe, who stemmed from the city of Byzantium and bore the double headed eagle as his emblem. To him was dedicated this wreath in the year of our lord 1510." For this reason, the following chronicle is traditionally dated 1510. A reference in the text to the Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 proves, however, that John Musachi cannot have died before 1515.

...

I, Lord John (Giovanni) Musachi, Despot of Epirus, having been expelled from my home by the Sultan and having been deprived of the said country, arrived in the Kingdom of Naples where King Ferdinand (1) of Aragon, caring for my essential needs and those of my family, promised to assist me and give me land in Apice as well as other things. He also accepted us at his court. It was my misfortune, however, that he perished and that unexpected wars began. I was left like a ship without a rudder in the midst of a great storm, not even knowing the Italian language. But as it please God, I was able to raise you and ensure that you were nourished in that country, you my children, Lord Theodore, Lord Adrian, Lord Constantine and your two sisters Lady Helena and Lady Porphida, though this was not accomplished without trial and tribulation. When I arrived in this country, you, Lord Theodore, were one and a half years old, and you, Lord Adrian, were one and a half months old, whereas you, Lord Constantine, were born in this kingdom.

I wish you to know that the destruction of the Byzantine Empire, which also meant our own destruction, began with a disagreement between Palaeologus (2) and Cantacuzene (3). This led to Palaeologus asking assistance from Murad I, the King of the Turks (4). The latter set foot in Europe, it is said, in 1363.

Passing through all these countries, he occupied much land, among which was the city of Adrianopole (Edirne). When Murad the Second (5) took power, he seized Serbia and Bulgaria in a huge onslaught. Lazar (6), the Despot of Serbia, and King Marko of Bulgaria and Theodore Musachi, the second-born of our family, and the other Lords of Albania united and set off for battle, which the Christians lost (7). It was there that the above mentioned Theodore, who had a large band of Albanians with him, was slain. The said Lazar of Serbia was taken prisoner and later slain. Now began a period of continuous warfare with the Turks in Albania, in which many lords and gentlemen gave their lives. As mentioned above, it was a lack of courage among them that caused them to lose their states. The city of Croya (Kruja) fell during the reign of Bayazid (8) the First, as later did Velona (Vlora), although we defended them without interruption. Nonetheless, the power of the sultan continued to grow and our power continued to diminish.

After a fierce attack by Bayazid, my grandfather, Lord Andrew Musachi, was dispossessed of a part of Devoli (Devoll) and Musacchia (Myzeqe), which he recuperated. He never lost any other part of the country. My father and your grandfather, Lord Ginno (Gjin), reigned over the country of our forefathers and, though he lost part of Myzeqe, he was able to retrieve it.

All the young lords of Albania thus died in battle. Only the following lords remained alive: Lord Arianiti Comnenus, Lord Coico (Gojko) Balsha, Lords Nicholas and Paul Dukagjini, my father Lord Gjin Musachi, Lord Andrew Thopia and Lord Peter Spani. They all lived to an advanced age and most of them reigned long. They had other children, too, but few in number because they were tied down by continuous warfare. Nonetheless, they defended the land as best they could, although they did lose much of the country.

Later, during the reign of Murad the Second, Scanderbeg arrived, the son of Lord John Castriota, who ruled over Matia (Mat) in Albania. His father had given him and his two brothers as hostages to the said Murad when they were all small. The other two died. When he turned Turk, the one called George Castriota became known as Scanderbeg, meaning Alexander and Bey, which is a ruler. When he grew up, he managed to gain influence and was clever and courageous. When his father died, he escaped from the sultan. It is said that when the sultan sent the Pasha of Roumelia to fight against the Hungarians, he sent Scanderbeg with him. The said pasha was defeated, the Turkish army routed, and the said Scanderbeg took flight with the others. As fate would have it, the chancellor of the pasha happened to be with him. Scanderbeg took him prisoner and forced him to issue a decree in the name of the sultan for the governor of Kruja to cede that territory to him. The chancellor finally agreed to sign the decree, although against his will. So he then slew the said chancellor so that nothing of the matter would ever be revealed. He then took to the road with a number of Albanians who were with him and, having arrived in Albania, entered Kruja. He presented the decree to the governor and the governor turned the place over to him. He thus became Lord of Kruja, a mighty fortress. All the rulers of Albania rejoiced at the event and Scanderbeg immediately became a Christian.

He then summoned the said rulers of Albania to a meeting at Alessio (Lezha) (9). Some came in person and others sent their representatives. Thus the said Scanderbeg became their commander-in-chief in Albania and each of them donated either men or money according to his capabilities. Other sons of these noblemen also served under his command, taking part in the war and defending their country.

The said lord was skilled and courageous in warfare and became commander-in-chief, and everyone obeyed him.

The said Scanderbeg married the daughter of Lord Arianiti Comnenus and this lord sent my father, Lord Gjin, as a matchmaker because the said Lord Arianiti was the

brother in law of my father. He was married to Maria Musachi, the sister of my father, by means of whom, as I said, the marriage was concluded. He took Lady Andronica Comneniates for his wife, who was my cousin, and she adopted the surname Scanderbeg from her husband. Later, the said lord, by means of his virtue, his courage and with assistance from these other lords, carried out many an onslaught against the Turks and won many victories, though not without losses on the part of our lords and cavalrymen.

But in the end, the forces of the sultan increased and when Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, the Morea and everything else that remained of these countries were taken, we were no longer able to resist.

They also took away from us Myzeqe and Belgrado (Berat), the aforementioned capital thereof. My father died a little earlier, not only of old age, but also of suffering and despair. His brother in law Arianiti Comnenus also perished.

Lord Scanderbeg, realizing that he was being overwhelmed by the enemy and that there was little hope left, fell sick with a fever in Lezha and died in 1466 (10) at the age of sixty three. You can imagine how much land was lost with [the death of] such a commander. There were few sons of noblemen left alive after such long and bloody battles. Almost all the old men had perished, either of old age or out of despair.

Lady Scanderbeg, his wife, departed for the Kingdom of Naples when her husband died. With her were their young son, Lord John, and my two sisters, whose husbands had been slain in fighting. One of them was Lady Maria who is the wife of Lord Musachi Comnenus, commonly known as Dangelino. The other one was Lady Helena who was married to Lord George Carles.

The aforementioned Lady Maria took with her only her grown up daughter Lady Porphida. Helena also had a daughter with her, called Voisava. Other women arrived, too, and were well received by the said king.

I stayed behind in our country and the other noblemen remained on their land for a short time, for as long as the Venetians remained to support us. We were constantly wearied and were under attack for about six years. I had very little of the country under my control, for the other part of it had been captured.

I was still in our country, in Lesser Myzeqe, also known as Tomonishta, when King Frederick of Aragon, who was crown prince at the time, proceeded with the army of King Ferdinand, his father, to take Durazzo (Durrës) from the Venetians. I

was called to assist by the proveditor of the Venetian government, which was situated in the said city of Durrës. I arrived in support of the Venetians with good troops, both infantry and cavalry, and freed Durrës from the said prince, Don Frederick. But the Venetians later made peace and I did not want to be part of it. Indeed they treated me as if I had been defeated. Such was my recompense.

Meanwhile, Mehmed (11), the prince of the Turks, had written me many letters and stated in them that in case I wanted to go over to him, taking you, my sons, with me, and would swear to abide by his faith, he would make me governor of the whole country and would keep us at his court and would make you great rulers. But at no time did I wish to abandon my true and holy faith, nor did I wish to inform you of his offer. I did not want to give way to greed and honours, despite the arguments he utilized to persuade me. Indeed, this very sultan later made peace with the Venetians when they gave him Scutari (Shkodra).

Not only did I refuse to have anything to do with this affair, but they wanted to hand me over to them. Because of this, some of the gentlemen of Durrës advised me to take flight immediately. I was obliged to dress up in the night and, thus disguised, set off on a boat which departed, without anyone knowing who I was. I arrived in this country in about the year 1476 (12). Such was the situation of the other rulers of Albania. Some departed and others turned Turk. All of them were ruined. My wife, your mother, Maria Dukagjini, was in her last month of pregnancy with Lord Adrian when we were in flight in the city of Durrës, and hid at the home of some noblemen, who were friends of ours. It was there that the aforementioned Lord Adrian was born. He was taken to be baptised as if he were a baby of a peasant found somewhere, so that no one would know whose son he was and who his godparents were. Lord Theodore and Lady Helena found refuge with other noblemen, without betraying who they actually were. But subsequently, when suspicion arose, the Turks came and searched the town for your mother and her children. Your mother hid in the headboard of a bed under a feather mattress and the bed was made up so that no one would notice her. When the Turks searched the house, they were unable to find her, thanks to God in His mercy. In this manner, she and her children were saved from the wrath of the Turks and were not delivered into their savage hands. The aforementioned noblemen and some other good people, who were our vassals, managed within a month to lease a boat and send her and her children secretly to Apulia, where they arrived safe and sound.

For this reason, I beg you, my children, to fear and to love God, and I appeal to you to be good Christians, if you wish to have my blessing, for it was the sins of

the rulers of the Greeks, and indeed our own ones, too, which first plunged us into this abyss of pain and suffering. Be humble and devout and always avoid sin. Have faith in the Holy Trinity and in the Most Sacred Mother of our Saviour, who will save your souls and give you good health. Take to heart Christian teachings, do good and righteous deeds and return to your homeland.

I am leaving you with this brief chronicle, so that when God in his mercy should deign to return you to your homeland, you will at least know some details of your country and of your forefathers. From the little information I have, I would like to inform you of the names of your forefathers, who held sway and who were expelled from your land and country by the sultan. Alas, I cannot tell you anything of the first ruler in ancient times because the chronicles of this country have been lost, but I do wish to bring to light the little I know and what people have told me.

They say in fact that our dynasty stems from the city of Constantinople and came to rule over Epirus in Albania.

From the start, it is important that you learn our family name, and what the reason was that we are called Molosachi. You should know that our family name comes from the land of the Molossi, known as such since ancient times. We were rulers of that land and thus they called us. The word Molosachi was then corrupted into Musachi.

You should also know that the emblem of our dynasty since ancient times has been a flowing fountain which flows in two streams, one on each side. This is the fountain of Epirus about which many authors have written that it extinguishes a lit torch and lights an extinguished torch. Later, we also had a two headed eagle crowned with a star in the middle, and as you know, we have cherished this fountain ever since that time for undertakings and ceremonies.

These arms of ours are ancient, and both the arms and the family name come from that country.

The emblem of your mother's dynasty is a white eagle. She comes from the Dukagjini family, a noble dynasty, so do not forget where you come from.

I can confirm to you that Andrew Molosachi or Musachi was the *sebaston cratos* and ruler of Epirus, which in Albanian is called *pylloria*. He ruled all of Myzeqe and other districts.

This Myzeqe is the country of the Molossi and was thus named after them. We have been the rulers of that country from ancient times to the present day and took on the family name Molosachi, but the word Molossia was corrupted and is pronounced Mosachia and in Albanian it is called Myzeqe. This Molossia is in actual fact Epirus, as was mentioned above. It is a part of the whole land to be described below, which today is part of Epirus as far as I remember. I am telling you what I know and what I have heard.

May you know that *sebaston cratos* means commander-in-chief of the emperor. It is one of the five titles which the emperor accorded. Lord Andrew Musachi (13) held this title.

When you come upon the city of Belgrade (Berat), you should know that it is the one in Epirus and in Myzeqe, and not the one in Hungary.

When you come upon the name Theodore Musachi Chiscetisi (Kishetisi), know that Kishetisi means long haired. And indeed they wore their hair long. In Albanian, the word 'kishet' (*gërshet*) means 'braids' and that was the way they were accustomed to wearing their hair, as far as I remember. Even in our times, they usually wore their hair down to their shoulders in our principality. This is why I mention this.

And when you come across the term despot, be aware that this means prince and is the foremost title given by the emperor.

I must explain in particular what this post or title means, which in spoken Greek is called *sevastocrator*. In written Greek, they say *sebaston cratos*. The meaning is as follows: *sebaston* means 'consecrated, honourable, venerable, worthy of honour, reverence and respect', in Latin *augustem et venerabile* thus *sebato civitas Augusti nomine dedicata, cum antea Samaria diceretur* (Strabo, book 16). The word *cratos* means 'power, government or reign', in Latin *potentia, imperium*. Such is the meaning of the title *sebaston cratos*. This is explained in the dictionary and the Greeks have explained it in the same way. Thus, as I have stated, *sebaston cratos* or in the spoken language *sevastocrator*, has the significance of the aforementioned dignitary, being a combination of two words, *sebaston* and *cratos*.

As far as I remember and have heard, the forefathers of our Musachi dynasty are the ones referred to here below:

Lord	Andrew	Sevastocrator,	and	after	Andrew	comes
Lord	Theodore	Kishetisi,	and	after	Lord Theodore	comes

Lord Andrew the Despot, and after Lord Andrew the Despot comes
 Lord Gjin, and after Lord Gjin comes
 Lord Andrew, and from Lord Andrew comes
 Lord Gjin, my father, and from Lord Gjin I come
 myself, Lord John, and from me come
 you, Lord Theodore, Lord Adrian and Lord Constantine, my sons.

I have informed you in this written chronicle of the forefathers of our family in direct lineage. Now I would like to make known what regions they governed, as far as I am aware.

Lord Andrew Sevastocrator possessed and ruled over the regions referred to below:

The town of Berat which is the capital of Myzeqe, i.e. the whole region of Myzeqe beginning on one side at the border with a village called Carugua (Garunja), and at another side with the village of Giossi (Gosa), and at another side with one called Basti (Bashtova) and on another side with one called Miliota where the river Shkumbin flows, and all of Myzeqe from the town of Berat down to the river Vjosa, to a place called the Two Stones.

He also possessed and ruled over the other part of Myzeqe, near the aforementioned town of Berat, at Tomonishta, which is in Lesser Myzeqe.

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Selenizza (Selenica) right down to the coast, which has many villages.

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Tomorniza (Tomorica) with all the villages in the valley and on the mountainside of Thomorri (Tomor). These are about sixty villages in all, beginning with Dardasi (Dardha) and all the others at Tercotigue (Tërrova).

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Sclepari (Skrapar) with eighteen villages. He also possessed Serchi, Midegni, Sereci (Zerec) and Duscari (Dushar).

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Opari (Opar) which is inhabited by Slavs, with the hamlets of Festazzi (Peshtan), Beci, Maserecchi (Mazreka), Lodari (Lavdar), Mariani (Marjan) and Ceriasceli (Çemerica?), all of which are inhabited by Albanians.

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Greater Devoll. It should be noted in this respect that there is a place there called Vescop (Voskop), which is in ruins.

He also possessed and ruled over the town of Corizza (Korça) up to a village called Savoiana (Sovjan) and also the village of Viola, where they catch many big fish and eels.

He also possessed and ruled over the region of Lesser Devoll up to Nestramo, a town which is in ruins.

He also possessed and ruled over the town of Costurri (14), including all the surround-ing villages. He took this town by force of arms from King Marco. I would like to stress in this respect that the said town of Costurri or Castoria is a fair town with a broad plain leading to it.

From this Lord Andrew Molosachi was born Theodore Musachi Kishetisi who possessed all the above mentioned lands.

From this Lord Theodore was born the second Lord Andrew Musachi, who was *sevastocrator* and who fought with King Vukashin. Vukashin was the king of Bulgaria who ruled land almost all the way to Adrianopole and who was always among the great enemies of the emperor of Constantinople.

The king had made ready a great army and had arrived to attack Epirus, which was under the rule and reign of the aforementioned Lord Andrew. The aforementioned Lord Andrew, getting wind of the activities of the said king, assembled a great army from his country. He took with him all the barons and nobles and indeed his relatives and friends, and set out to meet the said king. They met at a place called Mount Peristeri where there is a spring called Dobrida which is the border between Albania and Bulgaria. And as the day dawned, the said king was vanquished in those cliffs. He was taken prisoner, as was a son of his called Duslandi. When he received word that Lord Andrew had won such a victory, the emperor of Constantinople rejoiced, since Lord Andrew had removed his greatest foe almost from under the walls of Adrianopole. As a token of his delight and pleasure at such a great victory, the said emperor bestowed upon him his coat of arms, that is, the two headed eagle crowned with a star in the middle, this being the imperial coat of arms, and gave him the title Despot of Epirus, and with it, a golden seal as a sign of authority. He also sent him a despotic throne into which the above mentioned eagle was wrought in pearls. He was also invested with the town of Castoria, which Lord Andrew had taken by force from King Marco. In this undertaking, he had called upon the assistance of his son in law, King Balsha, who was married to Lady Comita Musachi, his first-born daughter.

He had also called upon the assistance of his other son in law, Lord Groppa, ruler of the town of Ocrida (Ohrid) which included much surrounding land belonging to him. The town of Ohrid is situated beside a lake from which the river Drin springs and in which many carp, trout and other fine fish are caught. This Lord Groppa of Ohrid was married to Lady Chiranna, his second daughter. Thus he subjugated the said town of Castoria which remained under the rule of our family.

From the said Lord Andrew Molosachi the Despot were born three sons and two daughters. The first born was called Lord Gjin, the second Lord Theodore and the third Lord Stoya. Of the daughters, the first one was called Lady Comita Musachi and the second Lady Chiranna. He left all of his land, with the exception of Berat, Myzeqe and Castoria, to his first-born son, Lord Gjin Musachi. To his second son, Lord Theodore, he left Berat and Myzeqe, and to his third son, Lord Stoya, he left Castoria with all the villages and estates belonging to it.

His first daughter, the above mentioned Lady Comita, was married to the said King Balsha who held sway in Shkodra, Bar, Kotor, Šibenik, Trogir and much other land. His second daughter, Lady Chiranna, was married to the said Lord Groppa, Lord of Ohrid or Debria (Dibra).

The first born, the said Lord Gjin, had five children, the first of whom was called Andrew Molosachi, the second Lord Materango, the third Lord Blaise, the fourth Lord Bogdan and the fifth Lord Laldi.

To this third Andrew Musachi was born Lord Gjin, my father, and to Lord Gjin, were born me, Don John, and my brother, Lord Andrew, as well as six girls.

I myself, Don John Musachi, had three sons and two daughters. The first one was Don Theodore, the second Don Adrian and the third Don Constantine. My first daughter is Donna Helena and the second Donna Porphida, who is staying with Queen Joan, sister of the Catholic king, who is Queen of Naples and the wife of King Ferdinand the Elder. To my brother Lord Andrew was born Lord Gjin.

This second Lord Andrew, who captured the said King Vukashin, King of Serbia and Bulgaria, was married to the daughter of Lord Paul Sevastocrator. His wife was called Euthymia, meaning 'honoured'.

This Lord Paul ruled over a province called Ghora (Gora) which is near Lake Ohrid. Lord Andrew Musachi, the said second despot, and his wife, Euthymia, as she was called, were buried in the town of Durrës, within the church of Saint Anthony, to the right side of the main altar, in a beautiful grave made of marble

and containing the following epitaph: 'Here lies Lord Andrew Molosachi, Despot of Epirus.'

To the said Lord Andrew, the second, was first born the said Lord Gjini, who married Lady Suina, the daughter of Lord Materango Arianiti Comneniates.

The son of the said Lord Gjini was Lord Andrew the third and was married to Lady Chiranna who was the daughter of Lord John Sarbissa (Zenevisi), lord of the town of Ariocastro (Gjirokastra) and Evaguenegiana (Vagenetia), an extensive territory. This lady received as her dowry a territory called Grabossa.

This Lord Andrew the third had two sons and two daughters. The first son was called Lord Gjini the second, and the second one Lord Theodore Musachi. The first daughter was called Lady Maria and the second Lady Helena. This Lord Gjini the second was married to Lady Chiranna, who was the niece of Lord Paul Sevastocrator, and to the said Lord Gjini, I was born, Lord John. The aforementioned second son, Lord Theodore, his brother, was slain in warfare with the aforementioned sultan and left no direct heirs. My father, the said Lord Gjini, became his heir. The said Lady Maria, the sister of my father, was married to Lord Arianiti Comnenus, Lord of Cerminica (Çermenika) and of Mochino (Mokra) and Spatennia (Shpat) up to the river Devoll, which divides his land from ours and constitutes the border. The second daughter, the said Lady Helena, was married to Lord Philip who had a large estate in Ragusa (Dubrovnik).

The said Lady Maria and Lord Arianiti Comnenus had eight daughters. The first was called Lady Andronica, the second Lady Voisava, the third Lady Chiranna, the fourth Lady Helena, the fifth Lady Despina, the sixth Lady Angelina, the seventh Lady Comita and the eighth Lady Catherine.

The first daughter, Lady Andronica, was married to Lord Scanderbeg Castriota, who was Lord of Dibra, Mat and Kruja down to the sea, and of Deberina, also called Randesio (Renc?), and of the province of Guonimi (Gjonëm).

This Lady Andronica and Lord Scanderbeg gave birth to Lord John Castriota who was Duke of Saint Peter in Galatina, and this Lord John was married to the lady Donna Erina Palaeologus, who was the daughter of Lord Lazar, Despot of Serbia. They had many children who died. Only two of them survived: a boy and a girl, Don Prince Ferdinand Castriota who is Duke of Saint Peter, and a girl called Donna Maria Castriota.

The second daughter called Donna Voisava was married to Lord John Cernovichi (Cernojevic), Lord of Montenegro and Zeta, and they had two sons. The first one was called Lord George and the second one was Lord Scanderbeg.

Lord George married and had two sons. The first one was called Lord Solomon, the second Lord Constantine, as well as three daughters. Two of the latter married in Hungary and the third one in Venice. The said Solomon died and Constantine married in Venice.

The second son, the said Lord Scanderbeg, turned Turk and now rules the land of his brother, which was given to him by the sultan for his having turned Turk.

The third daughter, Lady Chiranna, was married to Lord Nicholas Dukagjini. She was the only daughter among brothers, and gave birth herself to two sons. One died and the other turned Turk and became a pasha and a great commander of the sultan.

The fourth daughter, Lady Helena, was married to Lord George Dukagjini, to whom many children were born and all turned Turk. One called Scanderbeg is still alive and is a sanjak bey.

The fifth daughter, Lady Despina, was married to Lord Tanush Dukagjini. They had two children: a boy and a girl. The boy died. The girl, Lady Theodora, was married to [...] and had two sons, Lord Blaise and Lord Jacob.

The sixth daughter, Lady Angelina, was married to Lord Stephen, son of the Despot of Serbia called Lord George. The said Lady Angelina and Lord Stephen had two sons and one daughter. The sons died. The daughter was called Lady Maria and married the lord Marquis of Monferrato. They had two sons. The first one was called Lord William who married the sister of Monsignor d'Alençon, who is now the dauphin of France. This nobleman had two children: a boy and a girl. The boy is now the Marquis of Monferrato and the girl married Lord Frederick, Duke of Mantua. The other brother, Lord George, died without children.

The seventh daughter, Lady Comita, married Lord Gojko Balsha who is Lord of Misia. They had two sons and one daughter. The sons died in Hungary. The daughter, Lady Maria, married the nobleman, Count of Muro, and had two daughters. The latter were called Donna Beatrice and Donna Isabel. The first lady, Donna Beatrice, married Prince Ferdinand Orsino, Duke of Gravina, and the other one, Princess Isabel, married Lord Louis of Gesualdo, Count of Conza.

The eighth daughter was Lady Catherine who was married to Nicholas Boccali. They had two sons, Lord Manoli and Lord Constantine Boccali, and two daughters.

Now let us turn to the five brothers who are as follows: Lord Andrew Musachi, Lord Materango, Lord Blaise, Lord Bogdan and Lord Laldi.

I have already told you about Lord Andrew. As to Lord Materango, I can tell you that he was the father of Lord Gjin Molosachi Materango. To this Lord Gjin was born Lord Andrew who turned Turk, and the father, Lord Gjin, was slain by the Turks. Their domain was known as Gora and as such, he was called Lord of Gora.

The third brother, Lord Blaise, had five sons. The first one was Lord Bogdan, the second Lord Gjin, the third Lord Constantine, the fourth Lord Theodore and the fifth Lord John. He also had two daughters. The Turks captured all the five sons and murdered them by breaking their bones with hammers. One of their sisters was married to Lord Constantine Miserri who was Lord of Guasciti and who was also slain by the Turks. The sultan made his son Pasha of Romania and gave him his daughter for wife. Another daughter was called Lady Theodora who was married to Lord Paul Zardari who was the son of Congo Zardari and ruler over a land called Zardaria. The said Paul had another brother called Caragnus begla (Karagush Bela?), who had two children. One of these was called Hasan Bey and the other Avar Bey, both of whom are now in Turkey. From this Lady Theodora and the said Lord Paul was born Lady Maria who was married to Lord Brana Conte (Vranakonti), Duke of Ferrandina.

To the fourth brother, Lord Bogdan, was born a boy called Gjin Musachi Bogdan. Bogdan died and was survived by his son Gjin Bogdan who had a barony in Tomorica called Merlona (Milova).

Lord Laldi, the fifth brother, had a son called Lord Andrew Musachi, and this Andrew married Lady Theodora, the sister of Lady Comita who was married to Lord Andrew Musachi the Blind, Lord of Copes and of other villages.

Lord Andrew, my grandfather, had two sisters. The first was called Lady Helena and the second Lady Condisa. The said Helena was married to Lord Ajdino Clopes who was Lord of Vresda (Vreshtas?) and had two sons. One of these was Lord Haxhi Bey and the other one was Lord Hasan Bey. He also had a daughter called Lady Despina who was married to Lord Ali Bey, a Turk from the sanjak of Ciorno. The said Lord Haxhi Bey had sons, one legitimate called Hajdin and the other a bastard called Agu Bey. Four children were born to the said Lord Hasan Bey. The

first one was called Andri Bey, the second one Cler Bey, the third one Ali Bey and the fourth one Murad Bey.

The aforementioned Lady Condisa, the second daughter, was married to Suleyman Bey, to whom two sons were born: the first one was called Andri Bey and the second one Ali Bey.

Lord Petro Musachi was the cousin of my father. He was married to Lady Angelina and had a son called Hasan, whom the sultan made Pasha of Romania and who was slain in Persia during a war at the time against the Sofi (15). You should know that you have a relative in Turkey called Hajdar Bey, who was Lord of Svernia (Zvirina) near Sovjan. He was married to a blood cousin of mine called Lady Chiranna, the daughter of Lord Andrew Musachi the Blind. To the two of them was born a son called Hasan Bey. The said Lord Andrew the Blind was a blood cousin of my father and was married to Lady Comita, the sister of my mother, to whom three sons were born. The first was called Mighiria, the second Lord Paul and the third Lord Blaise.

I, Lord John, had six sisters. The first one was called Lady Suina, the second one Lady Maria, the third one Lady Helena, the fourth one Lady Comita, the fifth one Lady Condisa and the sixth one Lady Theodora.

The first one, Lady Suina, was married to Lord Musachi Comnenus, the son of Lord Comnenus Arianiti who ruled over a land covering part of Çermenika and part of Mokra. The main village there is called Liborasi (Librazhd), the other villages are called Drago, Stugna (Dragostunja), Dorisa (Dorëz), Zuchisi (Qukës) and Guri (Gurra), in addition to other hamlets. The said Lady had two sons. One was called Comnino and the other Arianiti. She also had three daughters. Two of these died and the third one, the youngest, was called Lady Yela, who was married to the son of Lecca (Lekë) Dukagjini, called Cola (Kolë) Dukagini. He was killed and the sultan married the said Lady Yela off to Sinan Bey, who was the son of Bogdan Musachi. With him she had two sons, who are Turks.

The second daughter, Lady Maria, was married to Lord Musachi Comnenus, commonly known as Dangelino, who had a manor called Biesca (Bjeshka?) and quite a number of other hamlets in Çermenika and Tamadia. There are four Marguesi (Murras?) villages which are near Paglola (Pajova). The said Lady Maria had one daughter called Donna Porphida Comneniates who was raised at the court of Queen Joan, sister of the Catholic king, who is Queen of Naples and the wife of King Ferdinand the Elder. The said Princess Porphida was married to Lord Giulio

of Valignano, a baron in the Abruzzi region, who was the great esquire of the said queen. Her children live in the town of Chieti. With her husband, she had two sons and two daughters. The first son was Lord Giovanni Giacomo of Valignano and the other one was Lord Geronimo who died leaving no heirs. The first daughter was called Lady Hipolita Maria and was married to the nobleman Baron della Tolfa, the son of Lord Gentile della Tolfa. The other daughter, Lady Joan, was married to Lord Giovanni Vincenzo Brancazzo, a Neapolitan nobleman, and had no children. The said Lord Giovanni Giacomo had two sons. The first one was called Lord Anthony and the second one Lord Julius Caesar, who are in the town of Chieti, as I have said.

The third daughter, Lady Helena, was married to Lord George Blandisi, or Carles, who owned Lower Dibra, Postea, Bellechi and many other villages. To him was born the lady Donna Voisava whom the said queen raised at her court and married to Lord Francesco Martino in Teano. She had many children: three sons and three daughters.

The first, Lord Frederick, had three children and then died. Lord Giovanni Ferrante died without sons. Lord Alphonso is in Teano and has children. Lady Porphida had one daughter by her husband, Lord Giovanni Battista Caracciolo, and died without sons. Lady Giovanna became a nun. Lady Andronica the third was married to Lord Giovanni Antonio Ayno, with whom she had one son.

The fourth daughter, Lady Comita, was married to Lord Arianiti, the son of Lord Musachi Arianiti, who owned a fine barony in Çermenika. All of their sons were killed and only one daughter remained, who was married to the son of Lord Helichis, the ruler of the land of Montenegro.

The fifth daughter, Lady Condisa, was married to Lord Duche, the son of Ajdin, who ruled over Neppe and many other villages in Shpat.

The sixth daughter, Lady Theodora, was married to Lord Voisavo Balsha or Basscichi (Balsic), who had a fine territory. The said lord was the brother of the father of the lady Countess of Muro and was called Gojko Basha. The said Lord Voisavo died without children and the said lady later married Lekë Dukagjini, but had no children.

Let me also tell you that Lady Chiranna, my mother, had two brothers. The first one was called Lord John and the other one Lord Balsha. To Lord John was born Lord Paul and Lord Gjin, who turned Turk, and to Lord Balsha was born one son

called John, who turned Turk, too, and one daughter who was married to the son of Lord Zorca.

NOTE

I would also like to inform you, my sons, that in Albania there are some regions which do not have rulers or even heirs at the moment. Among them is a place known as the region of Prespi (Prespa) and Torrichi, his son, whose country has now fallen to us because it belonged to our lineage.

There is also another region, the town of Gjirokastra and Vagenetia and Paracalo (Parakalamo). In this region, there is a castle called Ostravilla which is now in ruins. This place belonged to Lord Simon Sarbissa (Zenevisi) who is the cousin of my father because Lady Chiranna, my grandmother, was the daughter of Lord Giovanni Sarbissa, Lord of Gjirokastra and of the aforementioned region. He was the nephew of my grandfather. Therefore, this land belongs to us, together with a place called Grabossa, which the said Lady Chiranna Sarbissa, my grandmother, received as her dowry.

There is another place called the town of Ohrid which is also called Dibra and which is an archbishopric. This town of Ohrid has a fine countryside, which earns it well over twelve thousand ducats of gold. This region belonged to Lord Groppa who was married to Lady Chiranna, the second daughter of Lord Andrew Muzachi the Despot, and since he had no heirs, it belongs to us.

Be aware, my sons, that on our land in Tomorica there is a hamlet called Orchova at the side of a mountain, and a river flows past the said hamlet from the other side. Between the said hamlet and the mountain flows a torrent and near the said torrent, on the mountain side of it, there is a vein of gold. Do not forget this, because it is our land.

Know also that the said country of Prespa, with all the land which was under the rule of Lord Comnino Prespa and of Torrichi, his son, are part of this inheritance from your grandmother, Lady Chiranna, as their closest relative. I also wish to tell you that within this region there is an island on which there is a place with a monastery and the body of Saint Archelao (Achilles).

I would also like to inform you that Vlora and the town of Canina (Kanina) with all their estates were part of our dynasty in ancient times and belong to you. If anyone should oppose you, asserting that they were ruled by Mark, King of Serbia, reply that this is true, but only in the following manner. You should know, my sons, as I

mentioned earlier, that King Balsha was married to Lady Comita Musachi, the daughter of Lord Andrew Musachi the Despot. To him she bore a daughter called Regina who was married to Marko, King of Serbia. Gjin Molosachi, the brother of the said Comita, bequeathed to the said Regina, his niece, the said towns of Vlora and Kanina with all their estates as a dowry . However, the said niece latter died without leaving behind any heirs by her husband. Nor did her mother, Lady Comita, leave any heirs by her husband, King Balsha. And since they now have no heirs, the said land returns to its bequeathers and, as such, it belongs to you and thus returns rightly to the domains of the Musachi dynasty.

You should also know that the town of Castoria which was formerly ruled by King Marco, from whom it was taken by force of arms by Lord Andrew Musachi the Despot, is a beautiful town with a broad entrance. The said Lord Andrew left it to his last son called Lord Stoya, who died leaving no heirs. It thus fell to his brother called Lord Gjin, your great-grandfather, so it has always been part of our dynasty, until it and other land fell to the sultan.

It must be noted, as I have said above, that the real name of Lady Scanderbeg was Andronica, from the house of the Comneniates or, more exactly, Comnenus, but she was called Scanderbega after her husband. She is my first blood cousin and was the daughter of Lady Maria Musachi, the blood sister of my father. She was married to Lord Arianiti Comnenus. Thus we are blood cousins, born of brother and sister.

May you know that Lady Maria of Balsha, now Countess of Muro, is my second cousin because she is the daughter of the aforementioned lady Donna Comita Comnenus, the sister of Lady Scanderbeg, who was the daughter of Lady Maria Musachi, my aunt. And the Duke of Saint Peter was also my second cousin because he is the son of Lady Scanderbeg, who is my cousin in flesh and blood.

You should also be aware that the Marquise of Monferrato is my second cousin, as she was the daughter of Lady Angelina, the sister of the said Lady Maria Musachi, both these women being daughters of Lady Maria Musachi, my blood aunt, the sister of my father.

And the great lady Donna Porphida of the Comneni is my blood niece, as she is the daughter of the lady Donna Maria, my sister. The said Donna Porphida was married to the aforementioned Lord Giulio of Valignano.

And the said lady Donna Voisava Carles who was married to Lord Francesco Martino, was my niece because she was the daughter of the lady Donna Helena, my sister.

It would also seem essential for me to inform you in this chronicle about the family of your mother, where she comes from and in what manner. I mentioned to you that she was of the house of Dukagjini and you should know why they were the ruling dynasty in Albania. It is said that they took their origins in ancient times from the Trojans and then moved to France. They had two sons who returned to Italy at the time when the King of France and other Christian princes were undertaking a campaign to conquer Jerusalem. Having thus arrived in Italy, one of the said brothers took up residence there and became Lord of Este and later, with time, of Ferrara, as they are now. The other brother, who was called Dukagjini, took part in the said campaign to conquer the Orient and then he returned to Albania. He took over an area called Sadrima (Zadrima) and villages called Fanti (Fan) and villages called Montenegro and another region called Paliti (Pult) and Flati (Flet). There he built a castle called Flet and had a small town called Sati (Shat) which is now destroyed. All the places which we mentioned above are now known as Dukagjini territory, named after their rulers, the lords of Dukagjini. The first Lord Dukagjini was slain by his vassals in the villages of Elefanti (Ndërfanë) because the bishop of that diocese had looked at his wife in a dishonourable way and the said lord slew the said bishop in the church of Saint Mary of Ndërfan. For this reason, the said lord and all of his household were slain. No one survived, with the exception of one little child who had hidden and was spirited off by one Stephen Progano of the village of Calameri (Kallmet). When the boy was old enough, the said Stephen gave him his daughter for wife. With the advice and assistance of the said Stephen, he took over the possessions of his original father and took on his name, i.e. Dukagjini. To this son were born many other children in direct lineage, many descendants whom I cannot remember, except for one George Dukagjini. He had two brothers, one called Tanusso (Tanush) and one called Dukagjini. The first brother, George, was Lord of Zadrima. The second one, called Tanush, was Lord of Fan and the rest of the country. The third brother, Dukagjini, had as his part of the country, eight villages in Zadrima. He married and set up house in Shkodra. They had children and from this third brother was born the dynasty of the Dukagjini which was in the said town of Shkodra and which is now in Venice where they are barons, as I have said.

To the first-born son, the aforementioned George Dukagjini, was born Nicholas Dukagjini the Elder, and other brothers. To the second son, Lord Tanush, was born a second George and other brothers, of whom many other heirs would later stem

and rule over the land. Some of them died natural deaths and others in battle. Few of them survived, and finally there remained only one Paul Dukagjini who was married to the sister of Lord Arianiti Comnenus, the father of Lady Scanderbeg. When the said Paul and his sons perished, the dynasty of the true Dukagjinis died out. No one was left of this actual dynasty. There are only, as I have said, the ones in Venice, who stem from the last brother, the aforementioned Dukagjini.

Do not forget that Lord Gjin Musachi, my father and your grandfather, died in Sereziabunga and was buried at the church of Saint Mary which he himself had built in Bunga. His grave is just outside the church on the south side. My mother and Lady Chiranna, my grandmother, the mother of my father, also lies buried at the said church, on the west side. The said lady, my grandmother, built the church of the Holy Trinity in Laudari (Lavdar) near Ceria (Xerje) and, in the same fashion, our descendants built the church of Saint George in Erosto.

I am dividing my principality among you, my sons. God in his mercy has left it in your hands.

To you, Don Theodore, who were born first, I leave Berat and all its possessions, all of Myzeqe and the town of Kanina and its possessions and Sclipario (Skrapar).

To you, Don Adrian, I leave Tomorica together with all its villages and hamlets: Serchi, Midigni, Zerec, Dushar, Opar, Lavdar, Marjan and Vescopebeci. In addition, as I said, I leave to you the region of Opar and Lavdar up to the said hamlet of Marjan. I also leave you the region of Greater Devoll with the town of Korça and the hamlet of Sovjan.

To you, Don Constantine, I leave the whole region of Lesser Devoll and the town of Castoria together with all its villages up to Nostramo which is a ruined city.

I would also like you to know the titles of the Byzantine Empire. There are five major titles. The first title is that of emperor. The second title which has been accorded is despot which is the same in Greek as the Latin word for king. It is unique and sacred, similar to the status of a king. The emperor was wont to bestow this title upon his brothers, his sons-in-law, his brothers in law, his sons and other great nobles seen to be worthy of this title. It was accorded also in inheritance to their descendants, as it was to us in perpetuity. The third title was *sevastocrator*. The fourth title was *magacissate* (*megas domestikos*). The fifth title was *panhypersevastos* (*panhyper-sebastos*). These, after the despot, are high courtly titles, as I have said. Those who held any of these five titles were also addressed with the title 'holy majesty' (*sacra maestà*). They all had the right at receptions to

bear their double headed eagle in various forms and colours, as can be seen clearly in the seal of the pope, devised by a Greek called Gemisto.

In the Byzantine Empire, there were the following despots. The first one was the Despot of Serbia who was called Despot Vuk Vukovic. He was succeeded by the Despot George, and George was succeeded by the Despot Lazar with his two brothers, but this despot did not survive long because his country was overrun by the sultan and their lineage was wiped out with his death. The second one was Despot Codrilli, the Despot of Sagorana. The third one was the Despot of Nicopolis and of Adrianopole. The fourth one was the Despot Andrew Musachi, Despot of Epirus. The fifth one was Despot Charles Tocco, Despot of Larta (16), the first despot of this family. From him stems Lord Charles who resides in Rome, the son of Leonard, who was the grandson of the said first Despot Charles. He had no legitimate children and his inheritance was taken over by the said Lord Charles the Second.

Despots of the Palaeologus dynasty

The sixth one was Lord Andrew, Despot of Risa. The seventh one was Despot Andronicus, Despot of Salonika. The eighth one was Despot Theodore, Despot of Silvera. The ninth one was Despot Demetrius, Despot of Mistra. The tenth one was Despot Thomas, Despot of Patras.

The first five aforementioned despots were the sons of the Emperor Emanuel of the house of Palaeologus. Thereafter came John Cantacuzene and there were other despots, too, but I don't remember their names.

Know also that Lord John Castriota, the father of Lord Scanderbeg, was married to Lady Voisava Tribalda, with whom he had four sons and five daughters.

The first son was called Repossio, the second Stanisso (Stanisha), the third Constantine, and the fourth George. The said Repossio was a religious man and journeyed to Mount Sinai where he became a monk and died. The other three were given by their father to the sultan, as you learned earlier.

The first daughter was Lady Maria, the second Lady Yela, the third Lady Angelina, the fourth Lady Vlaica and the fifth Lady Mamiza (Mamica).

The first daughter, Lady Maria, was married to Lord Stephen Cernojevic. The second, Lady Yela, was married to [...]. The third, Lady Angelina, was married to

Lord Vladino Arianiti Comnenus. The fourth, Lady Vlaica, was married to Lord Balsha, and the fifth, Lady Mamica, was married to Lord Musachi Thopia.

To the said third daughter, Lady Angelina and the said Lord Vladino Comnenus or Comneniates was born the aforementioned Musachi Comnenus, commonly known as Dangelino. He was the nephew of Scanderbeg. He was married, as I have said, to my sister Maria, and from them was born Donna Porphida Comneniates who, as noted above, was with the queen. For this reason, she was called the Great Donna Porphida.

To the fourth sister, Lady Vlaica, who was married to Lord Balsha, was born John and Coico Balsha. This Lord Coico was the father of the lady, Countess of Muro.

The fifth daughter, Lady Mamica, was married to Musachi Thopia after Lord Scanderbeg forced him to divorce his first wife called Lady Zanfina or Suina Musachi and to marry Lady Mamica, his sister, as you will see later. The father of Lord Moses Comnenus Arianiti was Musachi, the brother of Lord Arianiti Comneniates. His mother was called Lady Voisava and this Lord Moses was married to the said Lady Zanfina or Suina Musachi, who had been the wife of Lord Musachi Thopia, whom the said Scanderbeg caused to be divorced. To Lord Moses and Lady Zanfina was born the father of Lady Joan Comneniates who is in Naples, married to Lord Paul Brancazzo. This Lord Moses was a courageous man.

I would like to add that our land in Tomorica had four barons whom I know of. One of them was Gjin of Bogdan who ruled over Barlois and five other villages. The other one was Bardi Fachiemiri (Bardh Faqëmiri) who had two other villages called Barci (Barç). Then there was Joan Visagni (Vishanj) and a Duke of Dobril (Dobrenj?) who had Gurisciti (Gurishta). Another was Basan Bilochisi who had only Disguimari, and there was another one who had only one hamlet called Aidin. There were also two others from the Cervota lineage. One was John Cervota and the other Martin Cervota. There was also a Count Balguri (Ballguri) who had a village called Guerbisi (Gjerbës) and who was the voyvode of Tomorica.

As I have stated, the said region of Tomorica belonged to our family and the said barons were subject to us, and the said voyvode was appointed as governor by our family. The word voyvode means the same as a captain or governor.

May you also know that Nicholas Saccati was baron in two villages in Sendia and had three daughters. The first one was married to Lord Comnenus Arianiti, the second one did not marry, and the third one was married to the father of Lord

Domenico Sati. Lord Domenico was married to Lady Philippa Ivana and to her was born Lady Andronica, the wife of Lord Gjini, who resides in Misaghe (Miza?).

I would like to add that the said Lord Musachi Comnenus, the father of the great Donna Porphida, and the aforementioned Moses Comnenus and another lord, Gjini Musachi, were all excellent horsemen and vanquished the Turks in a battle which they fought. Seeking victory with a vengeance, they cut many Turks to pieces who fled from them into the middle of the Valcha (Vajkal) valley (17). But the Turks were lying in ambush and they all turned against these lords and horsemen who fought on courageously in the middle of the valley and fled up onto a certain hill. At the top of the hill, there were Turkish infantrymen, and the said horsemen, not knowing who they were and believing them to be Christians, were taken prisoner and sent to Balaban Bendera, their commander who dispatched them forthwith to the sultan. Lord Scanderbeg sent a request to the sultan for the return of the prisoners, promising Turkish prisoners and some money in exchange. But advised by the said Balaban of their importance, he refused to free them. Indeed he skinned them alive one by one for a period of fifteen days and they died from this gruelling ordeal.

The said Musachi Comnenus was the nephew of Lord Scanderbeg and was called Dangelino because Angelina was the name of his mother, the sister of the said Lord Scanderbeg. The said Lord Musachi was married to the lady Donna Maria, my sister, to whom was born the said lady, the great Donna Porphida.

I wish to inform you that the town of Durrës belonged to Lord Andrew Thopia. You should also know that King Robert (18), who was the King of Naples, sent one of his bastard daughters to the Prince of Morea for wife, but a great storm rose at sea and drove her ship towards the said town of Durrës where she remained for several days. During this time, Lord Andrew fell in love with the said lady and she with him, and they agreed to live together. And so they did, and had two sons. The first one was called Lord Charles and the second one Lord George. You should also know that at this time King Robert invited his daughter and his son in law to Naples and murdered the two of them for what they had done.

The aforementioned sons fled back to their country. Later on, the said Lord Charles married Lady Voisava, the daughter of Lord Balsha, and had one son called George. This George pledged Durrës to the Venetians but he died without leaving heirs. The second son, Lord George, i.e. the brother of the said Lord Charles, married and had children, from whom the Thopia family descends.

You should know that Lord Musachi Thopia, otherwise known as Charles Musachi, was married to Lady Zanfina, otherwise known as Suina, with whom he had two children, a boy called Andrew and a girl called Yela. The said Lady Yela was married to Lord George Cernojevic, and I have told you that Lord Scanderbeg broke up the marriage of the said Lord Musachi and Lady Zanfina Musachi, against the wishes of God and everyone and against the wishes of the children they had had, and forced him to marry his sister Lady Mamica. This lord had four sons and two daughters by his second wife. The sons turned Turk and the one daughter, Lady Yela, married Lord Andrew Musachi.

Lord Charles Thopia ruled over both Scurias, Fiisina and Blevisti in Taransa Minore (Lesser Tirana), Canabi (Krraba) and Fuorcha (Farka). And King Balsha, as I have said, held sway over Shkodra, Bar, Kotor, Šibenik, Trogir, Misia and much other territory and, in the end, the Balsha dynasty came to rule over the land of Misia.

The heads of the Dukagjini dynasty ruled over a region called Zadrina, together with the villages of Fan and some villages called Montenegro, as well as another region called Pult and Flet. All of this is now called the region of Dukagjini, including Lalla and the river Drin.

Lord John Castriota, the father of Lord Scanderbeg, ruled over the region called Mat. Later, Lord Scanderbeg became not only Lord of Mat but also Lord of Kruja, of Dibra and of Birina, i.e. of Randisia, Tomorista, Misia and the Gjonëm country down to the sea.

And Lord John Cernojevic was lord of the region called Montenegro and Zeta.

Lord Arianiti Comnenus was lord of a part of Macedonia, i.e. of the region of Çermenika, Mokra and Shpat extending to the river Devoll which divides our land from his land and marks the border.

Lord Lecca Zaccaria (19) was lord of a town called Dagno (Deja) near the river Drin.

Lord John Sarbissa (Zenevisi) was lord of the town of Gjirokastra and the region of Vagenetia and Paracalo (Parakalamo). This then passed to the son of Lord John, called Lord Amos Sarbissa (Zenevisi) and, as I have said, it belongs to us.

Lord Paul Zardari was the son of Lord Drugo Zardari, who was lord of a region called Zardaria.

Lord Groppa was lord of the town of Ohrid or, more precisely, Aeleria which belongs to us, as I have said.

Lord Ercecho was Lord of the Duchy of Saint Sava which was situated in the Kingdom of Bosnia in the direction of Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and borders on Ragusan territory and Castelnuovo (Hercog-Nov), which belongs to him. Thus this Duke of Saint Sava was commonly known as Chercecho. One person from his family lives in Venice and is married.

Lord Scanderbeg died on the 4th of December of the year 1466. He lived for 23 years after his return and conversion to Christianity. When he returned, he was about forty years old, so he lived to about the age of sixty three. The war between the sultan and Lord Scanderbeg went on for about twenty four years, and after his death, it continued with other lords of Albania for about another seven years. The said Lord Scanderbeg was intelligent and courageous and inclined to do good. He was the greatest ruler from among all his predecessors. After taking Mat, the principality of his father, he took possession of the town of Kruja, which his father had not owned, and later became commander-in-chief of the lords of Albania. After a short while, he aimed at ruling the whole country. He captured Lord John and Lord Coico Balsha, who were brothers, and sent them to King Ferdinand the Elder of Naples. The latter kept them in prison and he took over their principality which extended between Kruja and Lezha, the so called the land of Misia. He also took the principality of Lord Moses Comnenus away from him, which was situated in Dibra, This Moses was a hearty man of strength and courage. As he was not able to put up such an act of violence as had been perpetrated against him, he fled to the sultan. The sultan made him commander of one of his armies and sent him to do battle against Scanderbeg. But later, Scanderbeg sent him a message begging him to return home, adding that he would treat him as a brother. Moses did return, realizing that he was not safe with the sultan and not wishing to waste any more Christian blood. When my father died, he also took Tomonishta away from us, i.e. Lesser Myzeqe. He did the same to other lords, too, taking away the lands of Commi (Koman?) and Randisia which could not be defended because he had raised an army of warriors, and the sultan was threatening to invade at any time. Great expectations were raised when Pope Pius II announced the formation of a crusade, but later, when the said pope died, the expectations began to wane and in the end, the sultan expelled us for our sins, as was the will of God, because we were simply in his way.

Be aware, my sons, that on our land in Tomorica there is a hamlet called Horcova(20) at the side of a mountain, and a river flows past the said hamlet from

the other side. Between the mountain and the said hamlet flows a torrent and near the said torrent, on the mountain side of it, there is a vein of gold. Do not forget this, because it is our land.

Note also that the other Dukagjinis do not stem from the dynasty in direct lineage, but have appeared on the scene recently to their good fortune. Among them is Paul Dukagjini who appeared with Lord John, the father of Lord Scanderbeg. To this first Paul were born Nicholas Dukagjini and Lekë Dukagjini, and two brothers called George and Progan Dukagjini, who died. To their brother Lekë was born Stephen Dukagjini who is now in the Marches of Ancona. Of the said Nicholas, one child has survived called Progan, who has now turned Turk and has become the Pasha of Romania. In the Marches are the descendants of the said Stephen, i.e. Lekë and Paul Dukagjini.

You should know that the grandfather of Lord Scanderbeg was called Lord Paul Castriota. He ruled over no more than two villages, called Signa (Sina) and Gardi Ipostesi. To this Lord Paul was born Lord John Castriota who became Lord of Mat. And to him was born Lord Scanderbeg. The mother of the said Lord Scanderbeg, i.e. the wife of the said Lord John, was called Lady Voisava Tribalda who was of a noble family.

You should also know how they were related to the Marquis of Tribalda. Let me inform you that they were related to them through his wife. As you know, to Lord Blaise Musachi was born Lady Theodora who was married to Lord Paul, the son of Lord Vugo (Vuk) Zardari. This Lord Vuk was himself ruler over a land called Zardaria. And to the said Lady Theodora and Lord Paul was born Lady Maria who was Duchess of Ferrandina.

So that you understand properly, let me tell you that to Lord Musachi was born Lord Andrew, my grandfather, and Lord Blaise. To the said Andrew was born Lord Gjin, my father, and Lady Maria, who was the mother of Lady Scanderbeg. To the said Lord Blaise was born Lady Theodora who was married to Lord Paul Zardari. To them was born the aforementioned Lady Maria who was Duchess of Ferrandina. I myself, Lord John Musachi, was born the son of Lord Gjin. Lady Chiranna, my mother, was the daughter of Lady Maria, the sister of Lord Vuk Zardari. My lady mother and Lord Paul, the father of the said Duchess of Ferrandina, were thus blood cousins. But the marriage of the said Lady Maria with Lord Vranakonti took place at a time when almost all the lords of Albania had been defeated by the sultan. The said lady was young at the time and disposed of no riches because her family had also been defeated and most of them had been slain

in the said warfare with the sultan. In order not to fall into the hands of the Turks, they formed an alliance with Lady Scanderbeg. She, too, had been constrained into exile to this region. Before leaving the area, Lady Maria married the said Vranakonti who was later to become the Duke of Ferrandina and was to be accorded the titles of knight and baron.

I would like you to know who the father of the lady Donna Joan Comnenus was and where the mother of Lord Thomas Minutolo came from. I have already told you that Lord Scanderbeg broke up the marriage of Lady Zanfina Musachi and Lord Charles Musachi and gave to the said Charles his sister Yela. The said Lady Zanfina married Lord Moses Comnenus, to whom was born a Lord Comnenus otherwise known as Caesar Comnenus, and Lady Despina. To Lord Caesar was born the lady Donna Joan Comnenus, who is the wife of Lord Paul Brancazzo, a nobleman from the seat of Nido. Lady Despina was married to the Duke of Ferrandina and bore him two daughters. One was Lady Andronica, who went to Milan with the Duchess of Milan. There, she married a gentleman from Pavia of the house of Corte who had two castles and she became rich. The other daughter married Lord Charles Minutolo, to whom Lord Thomas Minutolo, a gentleman of Capua, was born ...

-
- (1) Ferdinand I of Aragon, King of Naples (r. 1458-1494).
 - (2) John V Palaeologus (r. 1341-1347).
 - (3) John VI Cantacuzene (r. 1347-1355).
 - (4) Actually Sultan Orkhan (r. 1326-1359), as Murad I only began his reign in 1359.
 - (5) Meant here is Sultan Murad I (r. 1359-1389).
 - (6) Lazar, King of Serbia (r. 1371-1389).
 - (7) The Battle of Kosovo Polje in June 1389.
 - (8) Sultan Bayazid I (r. 1389-1403).
 - (9) On 2 March 1444.
 - (10) Scanderbeg actually died on 17 January 1468.
 - (11) Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1451-1481).
 - (12) He is more likely to have arrived in 1479.
 - (13) Andrew Musachi I (1280-1319).
 - (14) Kastoria, now in northern Greece.
 - (15) Persian Shah Ismail I Safawid (r. 1499-1524), known as the Great Sufi, was defeated by Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520) at the Battle of Chaldiran near Lake Van in August 1514. This fact would indicate that our author, John Musachi, did not die in 1510, but was still alive until at least 1515.
 - (16) Also known as Charles Tocco, Despot of Cephalonia (1381-1429).
 - (17) The Battle of Vajkal took place in April 1465.

(18) Robert the Good (r. 1309-1343), King of Naples.

(19) d. 1447.

(20) Referred to above as *Orchova*.

[Extract from: *Breve memoria de li discendenti de nostra casa Musachi. Per Giovanni Musachi, despoto d'Epiro*. Published in: *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues publiées avec notes et tables généalogiques*, ed. Charles Hopf, Berlin, 1873, p. 270-340. Translated from the Italian by Robert Elsie. First published in R. Elsie: *Early Albania, a Reader of Historical Texts, 11th - 17th Centuries*, Wiesbaden 2003, p. 34-55.]