

Enes Dedić

*THE BOSNIAN KINGDOM AND
THE SERBIAN DESPOTATE
(1402–1459)*

HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

Enes Dedić

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Cazin – Sarajevo, 2023

To father Esad and mother Rezija



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PREFACE

The research on the relationship between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate began in 2013 during my doctoral studies at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo. I defended my doctoral dissertation titled “The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)” on January 26, 2017, in front of a committee consisting of Prof. Dr. Esad Kurtović (president) and Prof. Dr. Pejo Čošković (member). Prof. Dr. Dubravko Lovrenović, who unfortunately passed away just days before the defense, also participated as a committee member, having already submitted an evaluation report. The book before us represents a revised and expanded version of the dissertation. While the fundamental hypothetical standpoints remained unchanged, the manuscript was enriched with archival data found during later research, as well as the latest historiographic achievements. Recent observations of historical processes on this topic have also highlighted the need to revise and define certain positions more clearly. Since Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia lack archives with significant medieval sources, the portrayal of the relationship between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate is heavily dependent on the perspective of neighboring sources. Consequently, this study does not exhaust all the possibilities associated with this thematic framework. This book is the result of eight years of research, during which the author has matured scientifically. The modified and expanded text of the dissertation was published by the Institute of History at the University of Sarajevo in the winter of 2021 in the Bosnian language. The book immediately captured the interest of a wider readership, as evidenced by the fact that the first edition sold out within the first month.

The Ministry of Science, Higher Education, and Youth of Sarajevo Canton made a decision at the end of 2022 to allocate funds for the translation of this book into the English language and its publication. I entrusted this task to MA Anela Dedić, a young translator with significant translation projects

in the field of historical science already under her belt. Despite the fact that there has been an increased number of scholarly works on the medieval period in Bosnia and Serbia over the last decade, the medieval history of these countries remains relatively unknown and poorly recognized in the European context, primarily due to the language barrier. I considered it valuable to publish a new edition of this book in the English language, aiming to make the results of my research accessible to a wider circle of historians and interested readers. The policies and ideologies in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period following the publication of the Bosnian edition of the book have placed a special focus on the relationships between Bosnia and Serbia in the Middle Ages. Thus, the publication of the English edition of this book is of great significance. Hopefully, this book will increase the interest of foreign historians in the medieval history of Southeast European countries, as well as encourage domestic historians to publish their works in English. I would like to express my gratitude to the publishers of the book, the Institute of History at the University of Sarajevo, and the P.I. "Center for Culture and Tourism Cazin – Department of the Museum of the Bosnian Kingdom" for the trust they have shown and the recognized potential of this study.

I am grateful for the advice and suggestions provided by the members of the Committee during the preparation of my doctoral dissertation. Special thanks are due to my mentor, Prof. Dr. Esad Kurtović, who guided the process throughout the dissertation writing and subsequent revisions, providing exceptionally valuable and useful suggestions. Also, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to Prof. Dr. Vesna Mušeta-Aščerić for reviewing the book and providing valuable guidance that significantly enriched this work.

I am particularly grateful to my colleagues at the Institute for History, who have offered generous support and understanding whenever needed. For the purpose of researching this topic, I stayed at a number of domestic and foreign institutions. The employees of the Dubrovnik State Archives, the library of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Sarajevo, and the library of the Institute for History at the University of Sarajevo regularly

assisted me, and I extend my warmest thanks to them. In gathering hard-to-access literature and assistance with certain translations, I received significant help from Dejan Zadro, Dženan Dautović, Nedim Rabić, Irfan Teskeredžić, Milomir Maksimović, Milan Vojnović, Elmedina Duranović, and Miloš Ivanović. The work on this book over the past years was financially supported by my extended family from Sanski Most, European countries, and the United States. On this occasion, I would like to thank each and every one of them. Aside from providing financial support, my family provided understanding and moral support during the writing process. A special thanks is due to my wife, Anela, for her support, faith, and understanding throughout all these years. The life partners of all historians inevitably live with their topics. Once again, Anela's artistic work adorns the cover of this book, which reflects her understanding of this topic.

Sarajevo, September 2023



INTRODUCTION

Ground zero: Defining the research position



The history of Southeast Europe up to modern times illustrates how the issue of state relations is an extremely complex problem. A significant burden in the study of mutual relations between the Slavic states of the Middle Ages lies in the false perception of this period in later history. From the period of the awakening of national consciousness, projected through reliance on the Middle Ages, scientific constructions about the medieval past were initiated to suit the circumstances of that time. The modern age conditioned a specific state-legal relationship between the territories previously occupied by the medieval states of the South Slavs, thus creating a specific character of interpretation of the medieval past. Mirroring of the daily political circumstances into a medieval setting reduced the state framework of an epoch to an inaccurate context that made it difficult to form clearer notions of the South Slavic Middle Ages.

The presented model particularly influenced the study of the mutual relations of states established in Southeast Europe. The medieval era, with its unique understanding of neighborliness and interstate relations, considered through the lens of modern state perceptions, received treatment adapted to the conceptions of the South Slavic region with the ideological imprint of its time. The historiography of the modern age, as a silhouette of the past, reflected a contaminated image of the relations between the states of Southeast Europe in the Middle Ages. The state relations of the 15th century, viewed in light of a people's shared past in the 20th century, left historiographic rifts and taboos that are evident in the fact that no monographic study has been published to date concerning the mutual relations of the medieval past of these countries. In such an atmosphere, following the

developmental path of scientific thought of the pioneer scholars of South Slavic medieval studies, the period, loosely defined as modern critical historiography, continued to tread the paths of studying the past because the modern history of Southeastern Europe continued being reshaped ever since. Scientific publications, based on distorted foundations with predetermined research goals, could not contribute to more exact reconstructions of mutual relations between the states of Southeast Europe and in many ways imposed a heavy burden on later attempts to reconstruct this thematic framework.

Indicators of the briefly presented abuse of the specific developmental trajectory of scientific thought in this area are especially applicable to the examples of mutual relations of the medieval state organizations of Bosnia and Serbia. Without the intention of delving deeper into a chronological framework that is not within the scope of this research, there is a need to emphasize that the above-mentioned model of researching history was established in the periods of the very beginnings of political organization in Bosnia in the 10th century and in the last quarter of the 15th century, i.e. during the reign of King Tvrtko I Kotromanić (Ban / King 1353 / 1377-1391), when Bosnia, in the political context of that time, grew into the strongest state in Southeast Europe. According to the historiographical construction of the Serbian character of the Bosnian political element, Bosnia in the 10th century appeared as a geographical determinant within the Serbian state, and from the 12th century, after a kind of division of the Serbian state, as an independent state that grew out of the Serbian state. Due to aforementioned construction, all later forms of medieval Bosnian exclusivity were provided with Serbian political and ethnic prefix.¹ Creating the necessary dynastic legitimacy from his

¹The presented model of observing the medieval Bosnian state in the period from the 10th to the 12th century is represented through several scientific works. On this occasion, we will list several overviews of the political history of the medieval Serbian state in which the presented principle is recorded: Stanoje Stanojević, *Istorija srpskoga naroda*, Izdavačka knjižarnica Napredak, Beograd 1926, 95. Konstantin Jireček, *Istorija Srba-Prva knjiga do 1537. godine (Politička istorija)*, Slovo Ljubve, Beograd 1978, 68. Vladimir Čorović, *Istorija Srba*, BIGZ, Beograd 1989, 85. Sima Ćirković, "Srbija između Vizantijskog carstva i Bugarske", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena*

distant kinship with the Nemanjić dynasty and using the established practice of the European Middle Ages, Tvrtko fulfilled all the requirements of the medieval bureaucracy for the elevation of his state to the rank of kingdom. This event was the basis on which theses about "Serbs", as the most significant element in Tvrtko's royal title, were constructed. According to these interpretations, the Serbs were the legitimate bearers of the kingdom and the most numerous residents in the state.² Once constructed, such theses were passed on in an almost identical form through a wider framework of historiographical works and literature, including school textbooks, for more than a century, and thus left significant traces on all segments concerned with the study and understanding of political relations between Bosnia and Serbia in the Middle Ages. This kind of understanding of the line of development of the state organization in Bosnia has become the interpretation followed by the entire historiographical school.³ The modern projection of the character of the Bosnian state as a continuation of Serbian statehood in the 15th century produced unsubstantiated grounds on which it was not possible to draft a larger sketch of the mutual state relations of the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate in this historical framework. The nature of the primary sources on the mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate in the 15th century is interwoven with elements that do not allow the reconstruction of the aforementioned perspective. It is necessary to observe the medieval circumstances and the context of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate in their original form, making a clear distinction between the organization of that time and the modern achievements, to which

do Maričke bitke (1371), Prva knjiga, SKZ, Beograd 1981, 162. Miloš Blagojević, *Nemanjići i Lazarevići-Srpska srednjovekovna državnost*, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd 2004, 277.

² At this point, we will list only a few publications. Stanojević, *Istorija srpskog naroda*, 177. Jireček, *Istorija Srba I*, 320. Miloš Blagojević-Dejan Medaković, *Istorija srpske državnosti*, vol. 1: Od nastanka prvih država do početka srpske nacionalne revolucije, SANU, "Beseda" izdavačka ustanova pravoslavne eparhije Bačke-Društvo istoričara južnobančkog i sremskog okruga, Novi Sad 2000, 238-242.

³ The latest lexicon edition of Serbian historiography, the Lexicon of the Serbian Middle Ages, incorporated medieval Bosnian history into its scope of study. However, all references to the medieval feudal state organization have passed without examples from the history of medieval Bosnia. Compare: *Leksikon srpskog srednjeg veka*, Knowledge, Beograd 1999.

today's researchers are witnesses. Although the writing of a historical episode is essentially a view of history from the perspective of a researcher who is subject to the influence of his time, but the sources, with all their breadth and character, represent the basis, benchmark and guide for a credible projecting of an image of the past. Preserved sources from the 15th century dictate a research position in the study of mutual relations between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate as two separate neighboring state formations, which in the turbulent period of the final phase of the Middle Ages came into direct contact with each other and broader political movements of a regional character. It was the primary archival source material from the titled chronological framework that represented the basic support for the research of this topic.

Mutual relations between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate in the period from 1402 to 1459 were manifested through several segments. The neighboring character of these states conditioned frequent relations that were reflected through political, economic and religious circumstances. The task of this book concerns the reconstruction of the mutual relations of these states, contained through the lens of the direct relations of the most important factors of the two state organizations. The chosen methodology is based on the separate processing of different thematic frameworks for which adequate sources existed. The political relations of Bosnia and the Despotate, as the areas with the most frequent interactions, represent the central segment and occupy the largest part of the book in terms of volume. The specific political, economic and geographical position of Srebrenica as a bone of contention between Bosnian kings and Serbian despots is presented in a separate thematic framework so that the overall historical episode of one of the most striking examples of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate can be viewed as an uninterrupted whole. The economic character of this region and the geographical position of Bosnia and the Despotate conditioned the belonging of these countries to a single economic circle with the center in Ragusa, which also

determined common points of contact in the sphere of business. A special segment of mutual contact between different religions in the area of Bosnia and the Despotate was observed in symbiosis with political-geographical indicators. However, with the aim of better clarity, that part was placed in a separate chapter. The available knowledge about the geographical relations between Bosnia and the Despotate, which are manifested through frequent changes of the border, is presented in another chapter.

The first half of the 15th century represents a period of turbulent events on European soil, which strongly affected Bosnia and the Despotate. In this period, the influences and ambitions of the Eastern and Western powers strongly clashed over the Balkan states. Therefore, the analysis of the mutual relations of these states must be viewed in symbiosis with major events in the whirlwind of which the last stage of the medieval era ended. The aim of this book is to present the overall chronology of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate to the extent that the source material allows. Particularly important is the analysis of the problems of mutual conflicts, foreign policy interventions regarding certain events, the relationship of states towards the great powers, the participation of the nobility, the problem of the border, participation in the same economic flow and cultural permeation. In the shadow of major state issues, there is a need to define the role of these relationships in the life of ordinary people, especially in border areas. One of the main challenges of this research consisted in the description of these relations through the lens of the neighboring countries. The analysis of archival material is presented using a descriptive method in combination with the methods of historical topography and comparison. A descriptive methodological approach brings the historical source and its content even closer to the reader. The methodology of earlier historiographical models of studying Bosnia's relations with other countries offered quality starting points that were also applied in this book.



Contemporaries about Bosnia and the Despotate



The most important aspects of the relationship between the two states concerns the direct mutual correspondence between the rulers and nobles. The specific fate of the territories encompassing Bosnia and the Despotate in later eras conditioned the preservation of an extremely small number of diplomatic documents originating from this area. The collection of documents available today from the rulers of Bosnia and the Despotate contains only one document that directly dealt with their mutual relations.⁴ The statistics clearly illustrate the problems and potential limitations faced by researchers who are required to reconstruct these relationships by examining the archival material of their neighbors. Among the most significant contemporaries, the Republic of Ragusa with a branched network of businesses in Southeastern Europe should definitely be highlighted. Extensive material on the political and economic activities of the Ragusans from this period is contained in the present-day Dubrovnik State Archives. The files of the Ragusan chancery and notary and the preserved Cyrillic and Latin documents of the rulers and nobles of neighboring states represent the primary and most important sources on which the research of this thematic framework is based. The publication of Cyrillic documents, which began in the middle of the 19th century, greatly facilitated the work of historians, and many segments of the past of the states that belonged to the Ragusan economic circle were shed light on. Of particular importance are the collections published by Franz Miklosich, Medo Pucić, Konstantin Jireček and Ljubomir Stojanović.⁵

⁴ Franjo Rački, "Prilozi za sbirku srbskih i bosanskih listina", *Rad JAZU I*, Zagreb 1867, 156-158.

⁵ Franz Miklosich, *Monumenta serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae Bosnae Ragusii*, Apud Guilelmum Braumüller, Viennae 1858. Medo Pucić, *Spomenici srpski od 1395.-1423. to est pisma pisana od Republike dubrovačke Kraljevima, Despotima, Voivodama i Knezovima Srbskiem, Bosanskiem i Primorskiem I*, Beograd 1858. Konstantin Jireček, *Spomenici srpski*, SKA, Beograd 1892. Ljubomir Stojanović, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma I/1, 1/2*, SKA, Beograd-Sremski Karlovci 1929-1934.

The Latin documents of the Dubrovnik Archives represent the essential starting point of any research into the medieval segment of the states in the Ragusan region. These documents are of great importance for reconstructing the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate. This material was published by József Gelcich and Lajos Thallóczy, Nicolai Iorga, Mihailo Dinić, Andrija Veselinović and Esad Kurtović.⁶ This is an extensive collection of material that contributes to the understanding of Bosnia's relationship with the Despotate through the prism of Ragusan strategic interests. Through the documents of this provenance, it can be clearly seen that these are significant areas that the Ragusans clearly perceived as two completely separate subjects.

In addition to the Dubrovnik Archives, the documents from other neighbors, the Kingdom of Hungary, the Kingdom of Naples and the Republic of Venice, are also important for the reconstruction of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate. Documents from the Hungarian Archives in this case were used through the published sources edited by György Fejér, Jozsef Teleki, Iván Nagy, Albert Nyáry and Lajos Thallóczy and Antál Aldasy.⁷ Documents from the Naples Archive were published by

⁶ József Gelcich-Lajos Thallóczy, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, Kiadja a m. tud. akadémia tört. bizottsága, Budapest 1887. Nicolai Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servir al historie des croisades au XVe siecle* Vol. II, Ernest Leroux, Éditeur, Paris 1899. Mihailo Dinić, *Iz dubrovačkog arhiva III*, SKA, Beograd 1967. Andrija Veselinović, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji (1415-1459)*, SANU, Istorijski institut, Beograd 1997. Esad Kurtović, *Izvori za historiju srednjovjekovne Bosne (Ispisi iz knjiga zaduženja državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku 1365-1521)* I/1-I/2, ANUBiH, Sarajevo 2017. Esad Kurtović, *Arhivska građa za historiju srednjovjekovne Bosne (Ispisi iz knjiga kancelarije Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku 1341-1526)*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu-Institut za historiju-Javna ustanova Historijski arhiv Sarajevo, Sarajevo 2019. Esad Kurtović, *Ispisi građe za historiju srednjovjekovne Bosne (Lamenta de foris-Tužbe kaznenih djela učinjenih izvan grada, sv. IV /1419-1422/, Državni arhiv Dubrovnik)*, Sarajevo 2020.

⁷ Georgii Fejer, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus a civilis*, Tomi X. Volumen V/VI/VIII, Regia Vniversitatis Vngaricae, Budae 1842-1844. Jozsef Teleki, *Hunyadiak kora Magyarországon*, X, Emich Gusztáv könyvnyomdája, Pesten 1853. Iván Nagy-Albert Nyáry, *Magyar diplomaciaziai emlekek-Matyas király korabol I*, A.M.T. Akadémia könyvkiadó-hivatalaban, Budapest 1875. Lajos Thallóczy-Antál Aldasy, *Magyarország mellektartományainak oklevél tara*, Hornyánszky Viktor cs. és kir. udvari könyvnyomdaja, Budapest 1907.

Franjo Rački and Vincentio Macuscev.⁸ The source material of the archives in Venice represents significant material for the reconstruction of the political interactions of Bosnian rulers and nobles with Serbian despots. During the preparation of this work, editions of Venetian sources by Šime Ljubić and Joseph Valentini were used.⁹

In addition to archival materials, chronicles also make a significant contribution to the research of the relations between these countries, of which the Ragusan chronicles of Mavro Orbini, Giacomo Luccari and Juni Resti, who wrote their works in a time when the Middle Ages represented a bygone era, stand out in terms of number.¹⁰ Among the Serbian sources, the Hagiography of Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389/1402–1427) by Constantine the Philosopher has been preserved.¹¹ Ottoman chronicles are only interesting for the last decade of the fall of the Despotate, and the chronicle of Konstantin Mihailović occupies a particularly important place.¹² Chronicles compiled according to authors' own ideas, memories, or knowledge of past events point to the necessary caution and comparison of data from this type of source with other available sources.



⁸ Franjo Rački, "Izvadci iz kralj. osrednjega arkiva u napulju za jugoslovensku poviest", *Arkv za povjestnicu jugoslavensku VII*, Zagreb 1863, 5-71. Macuscev Vincentio, *Monumenta historica slavorum meridionalium vicinorumque populorum II*, Typographia regni Serbiae, Belgradi 1882.

⁹ Šime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i mletačke republike*, JAZU V-X, Zagreb 1875-1891. Josephi Valentini, *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV*, Pars III, Tomus XIX-XXI, Panormi, Typis Josephi Tosini, Munich 1973-1975.

¹⁰ Giacomo Lvccari, *Copioso Ristretto de gli Annali di Ravsa*, Ad instantia di Antonio Leonardi, Venetia 1605. Restius, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii item Joannis Gundulae*, Monumenta spectantia historiam slavorum meridionalium, Zagrabiae 1893. Mavro Orbin, *Kraljevstvo Slovena*, SKZ, Beograd 1968.

¹¹ Vatroslav Jagić, "Konstantin Filosof i njegov život Stefana Lazarevića despota srpskog", *Glasnik SUD* 42, Beograd 1875, 223-328.

¹² Konstantin Mihailović, *Janičareve uspomene ili turska hronika*, SAN, Beograd 1954.

Historiography on the relations between Bosnia and the Despotate



Various, more specific, episodes of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate were treated in the less extensive scientific publications by Vladimir Čorović, Jelena Mrgić, Đuro Tošić and Neven Isailović.¹³ The starting points for researching the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate, in the context of the political events of the 15th century, are contained in the syntheses of the Bosnian Middle Ages written by Vjekoslav Klaić and Vladimir Čorović, the synthesis of the Croatian Cultural Society “Napredak” for which the political history was elaborated by Marko Perojević, and the synthesis of Sima Ćirković.¹⁴ In the syntheses of the Bosnian Middle Ages, the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate was observed from the perspective of mutual political interactions between the two neighbors. While writing the history of Serbia, the circumstances in the Bosnian state were simultaneously covered and

¹³ Vladimir Čorović, “Despot Đurađ Branković prema konavoskom ratu”, *Glas SKA* 90, Beograd 1923, 26-39. Jelena Mrgić, “Poslednja dva Kotromanića i Srpska despotovina”, in: *Pad Srpske despotovine 1459. godine*, SANU, Beograd 2011, 195-202. Đuro Tošić, “Bosanska nazovi krvica za pad Srpske despotovine”, in: *Pad Srpske despotovine 1459. godine*, 185, 194. Neven Isailović, “Bračni planovi Kotromanića i državna politika Bosne polovinom XV veka”, in: *Pad Srpske despotovine 1459. godine*, 203-214. The following works also belong to newer publications: Enes Dedić, “Relations Between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate in a Regional Context”, in: *Medieval Bosnia and South-East European Relations. Political, Religious and Cultural Life at the Adriatic Crossroads*, Arc Humanities Press, 2019, 53-64. Enes Dedić, “Serbian Princesses at the Bosnian courts in the 15th Century (Contribution to knowledge of the marital relations of the rulers and noblemen of the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate)”, in: *Bosna i njeni susjedi u srednjem vijeku-pristupi i perspektive*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu-Institut za historiju, Sarajevo 2019, 229-251.

¹⁴ Vjekoslav Klaić, *Poviest Bosne do propasti kraljevstva*, Zagreb 1882. Vladimir Čorović, *Historija Bosne*, SKA, Beograd 1940. Marko Perojević, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, HKD, Napredak, Sarajevo 1942. Sima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, SKZ, Beograd 1964.

analyzed.¹⁵ The syntheses of Serbian medieval history viewed the Bosnian state as a creation stemming from the earliest Serbian state, interpreting the Bosnian Kingdom and the Despotate in the 15th century through a rigid and closed ideological framework that portrayed them as two Serbian states.

Significant segments of the line of development of political events, elaborated through publications on the most prominent Bosnian nobles of the 15th century Hrvoje Vukčić, Radoslav Pavlović, Sandalj Hranić, and Stjepan Vukčić, represent quality starting points for understanding the actions of Bosnian rulers in this period. The historical context and neighborly character conditioned the relations by which the Bosnian nobles sporadically, to a greater or lesser extent, engaged in direct relations with the Serbian despots. Studies and articles by Jovan Radonić, Aleksa Ivić, Sima Ćirković, and Esad Kurtović are indispensable foundations for the study of political and economic relations between Bosnia and the Despotate.¹⁶ Pavo Živković covered political circumstances from the perspective of the Bosnian king Tvrtko II Tvrtković (1404–1409; 1421–1443), thus covering almost four decades of Bosnian history in the 15th century.¹⁷ The beginning of the reign of King Tomaš was covered by Pejo Čošković.¹⁸ On the other hand, the political activities of Serbian despots Stefan Lazarević and Đurađ Branković were covered by Miodrag Purković, Andrija Veselinović and Momčilo Spremić.¹⁹

¹⁵ Jireček, *Istorija Srba I-II. Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371.)* *Istorija srpskog naroda: Doba borbi za očuvanje i obnovu države (1371–1537)*, Druga knjiga, SKZ, Beograd 1982. Čorović, *Istorija Srba*.

¹⁶ Ferdo Šišić, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić i njegovo doba*, Izdanje "Matice hrvatske", Zagreb, 1902. Jovan Radonić, "O knezu Pavlu Radenoviću-Priložak istoriji Bosne krajem XIV. i poč. XV. veka", LMS 241-242, Novi Sad 1907, 39-60. Aleksa Ivić, "Radoslav Pavlović veliki vojvoda bosanski", LMS 241-242, Novi Sad 1907, 1-23, 24-48. Sima Ćirković, *Herceg Stefan Vukčić Kosača i njegovo doba*, SANU, Beograd 1964. Esad Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*, Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo 2009.

¹⁷ Pavo Živković, *Tvrtko II Tvrtković-Bosna u prvoj polovini XV stoljeća*, Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo 1981.

¹⁸ Pejo Čošković, *Bosanska kraljevina u prijelomnim godinama 1443-1446.*, Institut za istoriju, Banja Luka 1988.

¹⁹ Miodrag Purković, *Knez i despot Stefan Lazarević*, Sveti arhijerejski sinod SPC, Beograd 1978. Andrija Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, Novinsko-izdavačka ustanova "Vojska", Beograd 1995. Momčilo Spremić, *Despot Đurađ Branković i njegovo doba*, Glas srpski, Banja Luka 1999.

The treatment of Bosnia's relations with neighboring states contributed to a better understanding of the consequences of major political moves that left their mark on Bosnia and the despots, as well as their mutual relations. Monographs on Bosnia's relations with Hungary, Venice and the Ottoman Empire offered quality methodological approaches that greatly helped the research of this topics as well.²⁰ Studies on the relations of the Republic of Ragusa with the Hungarians and the Ottomans and the thematically broader publication of Jovan Radonić on the relations of the Balkan peoples with the Ottomans provide breadth in the observation of major political changes in Southeastern Europe, which also reflected on the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate.²¹

Srebrenica, as an extremely important place and subject of disputes between Bosnian kings and Serbian despots, has been treated in historiography in several publications. The results of research on this topic are contained in the works of Mihailo Dinić, Vladimir Čorović and Desanka Kovačević-Kojić.²² However, the issue of the change of rulers over Srebrenica in the 15th century has not been consolidated into a separate scientific research. Stable starting points for further study of the economic relations between Bosnia and the Despotate, due to the specificity of the economic system of this region centered in Ragusa, are contained in the publications

²⁰ Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)*, HKD Napredak, Sarajevo 1996. Mladen Ančić, *Putanja klatna (Ugarsko-hrvatsko kraljevstvo i Bosna u XIV. stoljeću)*, Zavod za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Zadru-Ziral, Zadar-Mostar, 1997. Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (Sveta kruna ugarska i sveta kruna bosanska) 1387-1463*, Synopsis, Zagreb -Sarajevo 2006. Emir O. Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo (1386-1463)*, Orijentalni institut, Sarajevo 2019.

²¹ Jovan Radonić, *Zapadna Evropa i balkanski narodi prema Turcima u prvoj polovini XV veka*, Izdanje Matice Srpske, Novi Sad 1905. Ivan Božić, *Dubrovnik i Turska u XIV i XV veku*, SKA, Beograd 1952. Dušanka Dinić-Knežević, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska u srednjem veku*, Filozofski fakultet-Institut za istoriju, Novi Sad 1986.

²² Vladimir Čorović, "Srebrenica za vlade despota Stevana (1413-1427)", *PKJIF* 2, Beograd 1922, 61-77. Tatimir Vukanović, "Srebrnica u srednjem veku", *Glasnik Državnog muzeja u Sarajevu*, Nova serija 1946, sv. 1, Sarajevo 1946, 51-80. Mihailo Dinić, *Za istoriju ruderstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, SKA, Beograd 1955., Mihailo Dinić, "Srebrenik kraj Srebrenice", in: *Srpske zemlje u srednjem veku*, SKZ, Beograd 1987, 357-367. Desanka Kovačević-Kojić, *Srednjovjekovna Srebrenica XIV-XV vijek*, SANU, Beograd 2010.

of Mihailo Dinić, Desanka Kovačević-Kojić, Andrija Veselinović and Esad Kurtović.²³ Existing scholarly achievements regarding the religious background of mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate, are presented in books and articles by Miloš Blagojević, Marija Janković, and Boris Nileyović.²⁴ The efforts of earlier authors in determining the borders between Bosnia and the Despotate resulted in different findings. Mihailo Dinić's research on the border in the southern parts of Bosnia and the Despotate, which can be followed since 1427, still represents a quality starting point for potential further elaboration of this problem.²⁵ The border in the northern areas was dealt with in the research of Andrija Veselinović, Siniša Mišić and Jelena Mrgić. A detailed insight into the source material made it necessary to additionally revise the findings from these publications.²⁶

The treatment of mutual relations between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate falls within the category of topics outlined in the 1980s project “Društveni cilj XIII/2” under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences and Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, this project has not been finalized.²⁷ An overview of the available source material and the

²³ Dinić, *Za istoriju rударства I.* Desanka Kovačević, *Trgovina u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni*, Naučno društvo NR Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 1961. Mihailo Dinić, “Dubrovačka srednjovekovna karavanska trgovina”, *JIČ* 3/1-4, Ljubljana-Zagreb-Beograd 1937, 119-146. Andrija Veselinović, “Zabrane i prekidi trgovine u Srbiji u doba Despotovine”, *IG* 1-2, Beograd 1983, 25-42. Esad Kurtović, *Konj u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni*, Univerzitet u Sarajevu, Sarajevo 2014.

²⁴ Marija Janković, *Episkopije i mitropolije srpske crkve u srednjem veku*, Narodna knjiga-Istorijski institut Beograd, Beograd 1985. Miloš Blagojević, “Despot Stefan Lazarević i Mileševa”, in: *Zbornik radova Mileševa u istoriji srpskog naroda*, SANU, Beograd 1987, 165-174. Boris Nileyović, *Srpska pravoslavna crkva u BiH do obnove pećke patrijaršije 1557. godine*, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo 1990. Marija Janković, “Crkvena organizacija na teritoriji Kosača”, in: *Srpska proza danas. Kosače-Osnivači Hercegovine*, Bileća-Gacko-Beograd 2002, 494-505.

²⁵ Mihailo Dinić, “Zemlje hercega svetog Save”, *Glas* CLXXXII, Beograd 1940, 241-243. Mihailo Dinić, “Oblast Brankovića”, *PKJIF* XXVI/1-2, Beograd 1960, 10-11.

²⁶ Andrija Veselinović, “Granica između Srbije i Bosne u XV veku”, in: *Bosna i Hercegovina od srednjeg veka do novijeg vremena*, Istorijski institut SANU, Beograd 1995, 87-100. Jelena Mrgić, *Severna Bosna 13.-16. vek*, Istorijski institut SANU, Beograd 2008, 113-122. Siniša Mišić, “Obnova Despotovine i njene granice (1444-1459)”, in: *Pad Srpske despotovine 1459. godine*, 68-69. Siniša Mišić, *Istorijska geografija srpskih zemalja od 6. do polovine 16. veka*, Magelan Pres, Beograd 2014, 51-52.

²⁷ Izvedbeni projekt Društvenog cilja XIII-2. Istraživanje iz oblasti istorije, Sarajevo 1986, 17-18.

current state of historiography regarding the treatment of the relationship between Bosnia and the Despotate, unequivocally indicates the need for detailed and comprehensive research, which would shed light on this segment of the rich Bosnian history of the 15th century. A great starting position, based on previous achievements, represents fertile ground for the grafting of new knowledge from sources of different provenance, quality and credibility. With a critical review of previous historiography and sources, but also with a dose of self-criticism, this work presents propositions and conclusions that do not exhaust the ultimate scope of the given thematic framework.



Bosnia and Serbia until the 15th century



The lack of a comprehensive study that would, based on a thorough research of the sources, show the processes and mutual relations of the areas where the Bosnian and Serbian states developed from the earliest times until 1402, makes it difficult to define the starting position of the research on the relationship between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate. For more than five centuries, Bosnia and Serbia experienced various transformations that were inevitably reflected at the beginning of the 15th century. The situation is further complicated by the already mentioned burden of historiography, that is, the formation of constructions about the character of political spaces that, as a kind of consensus, were initially implanted in scientific circles, and then became established as a general understanding.

The Bosnian Kingdom, which we recognize at the beginning of the 15th century, was preceded by five centuries of long processes in various stages of development. The core of the medieval Bosnian state developed in the Visoko area on both sides of the river Bosna.²⁸ The oldest data on the formation of the state organization in chronological terms refer to the period of the 10th and 11th centuries.²⁹ In the 11th century at the latest, a larger political-geographical territory was formed that had the basic characteristics of an early feudal state.³⁰ The growth of feudal state norms until the 12th century took place in the occasional change of political dominance of Byzantium, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia and Dioclea. The degree of vassalage in these cases did

²⁸ Pavao Andelić, "Teritorijalno širenje imena Bosna u prvim stoljećima razvitka" in: *Studije o teritorijalno političkoj organizaciji srednjovjekovne Bosne*, Svjetlost, Sarajevo 1982, 31-32.

²⁹ Anto Babić, "Opitanju formiranja srednjovjekovne bosanske države", *Radovi III*, Sarajevo 1955, 67-68, 77-78. Tibor Živković, "O počecima Bosne u ranom srednjem vijeku", *Godišnjak CBI* 39, Sarajevo 2010, 154, 157. Dubravko Lovrenović, "U početku bijaše bosanska...", *BF* 42, Sarajevo 2015, 38.

³⁰ Babić, "O pitanju formiranja srednjovjekovne bosanske države", 78-79.

not derive from the legally established position of the state towards another state, but from the current balance of power and general circumstances that influenced that relationship.³¹ The supremacy of neighboring states did not call into question, nor did it interrupt independent political development. The understanding of the Bosnian state with a unique ethnic element known as *Bošnjani* (Bosnians) since the 12th century was established among contemporaries.³² The neighboring counties of Lepenica, Trstivnica, Vidogošća, Lašva and Brod were added to the original Bosnian core centered around the Visoko area and the Sarajevo valley. Further territorial development included more distant counties in the direction of the north, northwest and northeast. An advanced state, by the 12th century at the latest, developed into the Bosnian Banate. By the end of the 12th century, the neighboring regions of Usoara, Soli, Donji Kraji and Podrinje were part of the Bosnian state.³³ The reign of the first Bosnian bans Borić (1153–1163) and Kulin (1180–1204) represents a turning point in Bosnian presence and recognition at the regional and European level. During this time, state institutions, borders, and the political and economic activities of rulers came to the fore, earning them exceptional respect from their neighbors.³⁴

During the 13th and early 14th centuries, Bosnia entered into a strong internal and external political struggle for existence. Since the time of the first Bosnian bans, relations of a changing character have been recorded with the Kingdom of Hungary, the most powerful neighbor, which extended its pretensions to Bosnia, and above all to the western parts of the Donji Kraji.³⁵ At the end of the 13th century, Bosnia came under attack from the

³¹ Babić, “O pitanju formiranja srednjovjekovne bosanske države”, 78–79. Nada Klaić, *Srednjovjekovna Bosna –Politički položaj bosanskih vladara do Tvrtkove krunidbe (1377. g.)*, Eminex, Zagreb 1994, 28. Lovrenović, “U početku bijaše bosanska...”, 43.

³² Lovrenović, “U početku bijaše bosanska...”, 43, 45.

³³ Andđelić, “Teritorijalno širenje imena Bosna u prvim stoljećima razvijta”, 33.

³⁴ About Bans Borić and Kulin, see: Vladimir Čorović, “Ban Borić i njegovi potomci”, *Glas* CLXXXII, Beograd 1940, 47–61. Marko Perojević, “Ban Borić i ban Kulin”, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, 196–204.

³⁵ Čorović, *Historija*, 190–208. Ćirković, *Istorija*, 216–243.

Šubić princes of Bribir, who took over a part of the state and assumed the title of Bosnian ban. The Bosnian ruling dynasty Kotromanić restored the unity of the state in the 1320s and regained control over the entire state territory.³⁶ Ban Stjepan II Kotromanić (1322–1353) greatly expanded the borders of the state and additionally strengthened the position of the Bosnian ruler in the state. One of the more significant expansionist moves was the conquest of Hum, which was previously part of the Serbian state. It is important to single out the conquests of the Krajina region and, towards the west, the area of Livno, Duvno, and Glamoč fields. Stjepan II ensured that the Bosnian state, for the first time in history, had access to the sea and thus brought the state closer to the Mediterranean world. According to the statement from his own charter, he had authority over the territory from the Sava river to the Adriatic Sea and between the Drina and Cetina rivers.³⁷ The expansionist policy was continued by Tvrtko Kotromanić, who further strengthened the Bosnian state, expanding its borders and establishing its positions in international politics. Tvrtko extended his rule to parts of Polimlje, Gornje Podrinje, Gacko, Konavle, Trebinje and Dračevica, which was previously part of the Serbian state, and to parts of Croatia and Dalmatia, with the exception of Zadar and Ragusa.³⁸ The reigns of the Bans Stjepan II and Tvrtko provided the basis for the elevation of the Bosnian state to a higher rank. Thanks to the ties with the Nemanjić dynasty, Tvrtko was crowned king in 1377. With this, the Bosnian political space took on the framework that existed until the end of the Bosnian medieval state.³⁹

³⁶ Čorović, *Historija*, 216–243. Marko Perojević, “Šubići gospodari Bosne”, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, 239–249. Ćirković, *Istorija*, 77–88.

³⁷ Vladimir Čorović, “Teritorijalni razvoj bosanske države”, *Glas* CLXVII, Beograd 1935, 32–35. About Ban Stjepan II, see: Čorović, *Historija*, 243–275. Marko Perojević, “Ban Stjepan II. Kotromanić”, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, 250–285. Ćirković, *Istorija*, 88–121.

³⁸ Čorović, “Teritorijalni razvoj bosanske države”, 39–41.

³⁹ Vladimir Čorović, *Kralj Tvrtko I Kotromanić*, SKA, Beograd 1925, 31–90. Perojević, “Ban Stjepan Tvrtko”, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, 313–349. Ćirković, *Istorija*, 121–139

Tvrtko's rule represented the period in which Bosnia was the most powerful state on the eastern coast of the Adriatic, stretching between the rivers Una, Sava, Drina and the Adriatic Sea.

The medieval Bosnian state largely developed according to the Western European feudal model. Along with the development of the state organization of medieval Bosnia, there was also the formation of institutional frameworks on which the organization of the state rested. The Bosnian feudal system was based on land ownership, which was called *baština* (heritage). The bonds of personal dependence, which represented the bond between the ruler and the noblemen, represented the basis on which the state organization rested. "Faithful service" refers to the entirety of the obligations owed by a nobleman to a ruler, whether as service or individual actions that were the motive for gifting land property. On the other hand, by giving the "noble faith", the ruler committed himself to the inviolability of the nobleman's property and life as long as the nobleman is subordinated to him and fulfills his obligations.⁴⁰ *Sabor* (assembly), also called *stanak*, *rusag Bosanski*, *sva Bosna* or *zbor*, represented the most important state institution, and was first mentioned in 1354. In ordinary circumstances, the ruler convened it, and the most prominent nobles participated. At the assembly, the most important state decisions were made, such as launching military campaigns, negotiating peace agreements, choosing rulers, resolving disputes, that is, investigating committed treason. It was common for the ruler to issue charters after holding assemblies regulating relations with individual nobles, while other attending nobles were referred to as witnesses in these charters. In times of crisis, the nobility upheld the institution of the assembly, which represented a significant lever for the survival of the state and the *baština* (heritage) system.⁴¹ The territorial organization of the Bosnian state is based on the system of a county headed by *župan* (prefect) who was initially subject to the ruler, and later to more prominent nobles.⁴²

⁴⁰ Sima Ćirković, "Verna služba i vjera gospodska", ZFFB VI-2, Beograd 1962, 95-112.

⁴¹ Mihailo Dinić, *Državni sabor srednjovekovne bosanske države*, SKA, Beograd 1955, 5-6.

⁴² Pavao Andelić, "Osnovne značajke teritorijalnopolitičke organizacije u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni", in:

Sources trace the first state organization among the Serbs from the 9th century. The first princes known by name were Višeslav, Radoslav and Prosigoj, but no more details are known about their rule. The original area included the areas on the Lim river, the upper Drina, together with Piva and Tara rivers, the Ibar valley and the upper course of the western Morava. More details are only known about the reign of Prince Vlastimir from the middle of the 9th century. He was succeeded by his sons Mutimir, Strojnik and Gojnik. The strong expansion of the Bulgarian Empire from the middle of the 9th to the end of the 10th century and the Byzantine supremacy in the 11th century seriously questioned the survival of Raška. There are known Serbian princes from this period who did not rule for a long time and were often at the service of Bulgarian and Byzantine expansionist interests. The relationship between Raška and Byzantium was not only military-political. From this period, the influence of Byzantium was felt in almost all elements of political, cultural and religious life. With the establishment of the Ohrid Archbishopric at the beginning of the 11th century, which included the area of Raška, this territory was, in the church's view, incorporated into the Byzantine religious circle. Despite the pressures, the territory of the Serbian state at this time was expanded to include Travunija, Konavle and the Principality of Neretva.⁴³ Along with the gradual decline in the power of the Byzantine Empire at the end of the 11th century, more favorable conditions were created for state development. However, the Serbian rulers of that time, who were often subject to the Byzantine emperors, found themselves in the gap of Byzantine-Hungarian conflicts that prevented the formation of a stronger state core. The characteristic of this period is the expansion of state territories towards the southeast, in

Studije o teritorijalnopolitičkoj organizaciji srednjovjekovne Bosne, 12-13.

⁴³ Jireček, *Istorija Srba* I, 112-137. Sima Ćirković, "Obrazovanje srpske države", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 141-155. Sima Ćirković, "Srbija između Vizantijskog carstva i Bugarske", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda: Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 156-169. Ljubomir Maksimović, "Trijumf Vizantije početkom XI veka", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda: Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 170-179. Sima Ćirković, *Srbi u srednjem veku*, Izdavačka zadruga Idea, Beograd 1995, 15-48. Miloš Blagojević, *Srpska državnost u srednjem veku*, SKZ, Beograd 2011, 68.

the direction of Kosovo. The weakening of Byzantine supremacy occurred at the end of the 12th century, and simultaneously with the coming to power of the Nemanjić dynasty, whose most important representatives at this time were the Grand Župan (prefect) Stefan Nemanja (1168–1196) and his son Stefan Nemanjić (the Grand Župan (prefect) 1196–1217; King 1217–1227).⁴⁴ At the end of the 12th century, the Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja managed to expand the state borders and finally secure the independence of his state from Byzantium. Then the state territory was expanded to include Zeta, Metohija, Pomoravlje, Kosovo, Niš and Prizren regions, Skopje and the area of the upper course of the Vardar, and a little earlier the Serbian rulers gained power over Zahumlje. His son and successor Stefan Nemanjić was crowned king in 1217, with the help of Pope Honorius III (1216–1227).⁴⁵ This act established the Serbian Kingdom with the hereditary Nemanjić dynasty, which existed until the middle of the 14th century.

In the late 13th century, King Dragutin (1282–1321) initiated the conquest of Byzantine territories, thereby directing the expansion of the state to the south. During his reign, the state territory was extended to Durrës and the area in northern Macedonia, around Skopje, Ovče Polje, Polog and Debar. This period was marked by the division of territories between Dragutin and his brother, the former king, Milutin (1276–1282), who ruled Mačva, Srem and territory in northeastern Bosnia. After Dragutin's death, he was succeeded by his son King Vladislav (1316–1324), whom King Milutin defeated and annexed most of his territories to his state.⁴⁶ Significant expansionist progress of the Serbian state was recorded during the reign of King Dušan

⁴⁴ Jovanka Kalić, "Srpski veliki župani u borbi s Vizantijom", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 197–211. Ćirković, *Srbi u srednjem veku*, 49–50. Blagojević, *Srpska državnost u srednjem veku*, 68.

⁴⁵ Jireček, *Istorija Srba I*, 162–172. Jovanka Kalić, "Borbe i tekovine velikog župana Stefana Nemanje", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 251–261. Jovanka Kalić, "Odbrana Nemanjinog nasleda–Srbija postaje kraljevina", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda: Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 297–314.

⁴⁶ Jovanka Kalić, "Počeci osvajačke politike", in: *Istorija srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 437–448.

(King 1331–1346; Emperor 1346–1355). Immediately upon ascending to the throne, Dušan launched attacks on Byzantine possessions towards the Aegean Sea. These campaigns resulted in the conquest of Prilep, Ohrid and Strumica, and the subsequent military campaigns, in addition to possessions in southern Macedonia, of which Ser stands out, also secured the authority over Berat, Kanina and Kroja in Albania. Having conquered Ser, Dušan crowned himself emperor in 1346, raising the Serbian state to the highest level of medieval state organization.⁴⁷

The Serbian Empire did not last long. After Dušan's death in 1355, his son Uroš (1355–1371) came to the throne, during whose reign acquired territories were gradually reduced and the nobility was strengthened, which over time created positions for independent political activity. With the death of Uroš in 1371, the Serbian Empire formally disappeared. It marked the culmination of the process of strengthening Serbian nobles who, through separate and divided territories, acted independently and often came into conflict with each other. On the ruins of the Serbian state, Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, Vuk Branković the lords of Zeta from the Balšić family, stood out among the many regional lords.⁴⁸ During the 1370s and 1380s, Prince Lazar increasingly expanded his possessions at the expense of regional neighboring lords. On the foundations of Lazar's possession, which was reduced after the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Serbian Despotate was established, which was ruled by his son and successor Stefan Lazarević. This was the area of Moravian Serbia, which included the basin of the three Morava rivers and roughly extended from Kosovo to the Sava and Danube and from the lower Lim and Drina rivers to the Homolj mountains.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Jireček, *Istorija Srba I*, 212-222. Božidar Ferjančić, "Osvajačka politika kralja Dušana", in: *Istorijski srpskog naroda. Od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371)*, 511-523. Ćirković, *Srbi u srednjem veku*, 111-155.

⁴⁸ Jireček, *Istorija Srba I*, 236-254. Rade Mihaljić, *Kraj srpskog carstva*, BIGZ, Beograd 1989, 11-187. Ćirković, *Srbi u srednjem veku*, 163-168. Rade Mihaljić, *Lazar Hrebeljanović-istorija kult predanje*, Srpska školska knjiga, Beograd 2001, 29-77. Marko Šuica, *Vuk Branković-slavni i velmožni gospodin*, Evoluta, Beograd 2014, 39-74.

⁴⁹ Rade Mihaljić, "Doba oblasnih gospodara", in: *Istorijski srpskog naroda: Doba borbi za očuvanje*

The state and social organization of the Serbs mostly developed according to the Byzantine model. At the head of the Serbian state, power holders with the titles of princes, grand prefects (*župani*), kings and emperors were recorded. Serbian grand prefects (*župani*) did not rule the state centrally, but shared power with their closest relatives. This is how the territories within the Serbian state were created, which in historiography are characterized by the term “divided principality”⁵⁰ In Serbia, from the earliest times, there existed the institution of the state assembly, which was convened by the ruler, and ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries took part, where they deliberated on matters brought forward by the ruler.⁵¹ The proclamation of the empire led to the assumption of Byzantine titles. From this time, the Serbian emperors awarded their prominent dignitaries the titles of *despot*, *caesar* and *sebastokrator*, while the titles of *protovestiyar* and *logothete* were established at the royal court. A Byzantine institution of *kephale*, which referred to the officials appointed by the ruler to manage certain town settlements and the surrounding area in his name and with his authority, was adopted.⁵² With the occasional conquest of Byzantine territories in the Serbian state, the system of *pronoia* expanded, which referred to the conditional land ownership by people who were subordinate to the *pronoetes*, a warrior who was obliged to perform military service.⁵³

⁵⁰ *i obnovu države* (1371-1537), 28. Miloš Blagojević, “Pregled istorijske geografije srednjovekovne Srbije”, ZIMS 20, Beograd 1983, 112-117. Veselinović, *Država srpskih despota*, 112.

⁵¹ Blagojević, *Nemanjići i Lazarevići i srpska srednjovekovna državnost*, 18. Blagojević, *Srpska državnost u srednjem veku*, 121. There also existed the institution of co-rulership, or the principle by which the heir to the throne would receive the title “young king.” The institution of co-rulership continued to exist even after the establishment of the Empire, through the perspective of the rule of the emperor’s son, or the heir to the throne with the title of king in a certain part of the state. Jireček, *Istorija Srba* II, 11. Milka Ivković, “Ustanova mladog kralja u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji”, *IG* 3-4, Beograd 1957, 79. Ćirković, *Srbi u srednjem veku*, 155.

⁵² Jireček, *Istorija Srba* I, 260. Nikola Radojić, *Srpski državni sabor u srednjem veku*, SKA, Beograd 1940, 200-214.

⁵³ Jireček, *Istorija Srba* II, 24-25.

⁵⁴ About *pronoia* with an overview of the older literature, see: Miloš Ivanović, “Pronija u državi srpskih despota”, *ZRVI* LIII, Beograd 2016, 324-341.

The medieval Bosnian state cultivated relations with countries throughout East-Central Europe, as well as with distant states. The fact that Bosnian rulers and nobility established and maintained mutual relations with more than twenty political entities, dating back to the 10th century, demonstrates the distinctiveness of Bosnian statehood in medieval international politics. With regard to the typology of these relationships, a wide range of character elements has been identified, among which political, economic, cultural, and religious relationships prevail. The primary function of states determines the political form of relations as quantitatively the most represented, while geographical features mark the most frequent relations with neighboring states. According to this principle, medieval Bosnia developed the most intensive relations of a military-political type with Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and Serbia, while economic activity is represented through the prism of relations with Ragusa, Venice and Kotor, with the emphasis that even these relations were not without military-political consequences. The religious aspect involved interactions with the Roman Curia and Hungary. In addition to these states, the Bosnian state intensively maintained relations, of different types, with Byzantium, Dioclea, Croatia, Naples, Kotor and the Dalmatian communes, while Bosnian diplomacy also reached Bulgaria, Germany, Poland, Milan, Florence and other parts of the world at that time.⁵⁴

According to its type, Bosnia's relations with Serbia and the remnants of the Serbian Empire until the 15th century were military-political, with emphasized expansionist elements in line with its stated strategic interests. The situation on the ground also changed as a result of the changes in priorities of the Bosnian and Serbian rulers. The relations between the Bosnian and Serbian states recorded in the 10th century cannot be followed continuously until the 13th century, which indicates the weak intensity of neighboring relations and the different foreign policy performances of the Bosnian and

⁵⁴ Historiography has paid more attention to the international relations of medieval Bosnia in the last few decades. Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija*. Ančić, *Putanja klatna*. Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*. Filipović, *Bosansko kraljevstvo i Osmansko carstvo*.

Serbian rulers in which interest spheres were not significantly aligned.⁵⁵ These relations became more intense only in the first half of the 14th century, during the reign of Ban Stjepan II in Bosnia and King Stefan of Dečani (1321–1331) and his successor, King and Emperor Dušan in Serbia. Significant military contacts occurred that resulted in the expansion of Bosnian borders and the conquest of Hum, which in earlier centuries was part of the Kingdom of Serbia.⁵⁶ Along with the collapse of the Serbian Empire, favorable conditions for additional expansion of Bosnian borders were achieved. Due to the active involvement of Ban Tvrtko in the conflicts between the feuding Serbian regional lords, Podrinje, Polimlje, Trebinje, Konavle and Dračevica were annexed to the Bosnian state in the 1370s.⁵⁷ The epilogue of the intense, half-century-long relations between Bosnia and Serbia is reflected in Tvrtko's coronation in 1377. As a result of the power he had accumulated, he acquired the vacant crown through his family ties with the Serbian royal dynasty as well as the possession of a portion of the former Serbian state. This provided a pathway to elevate the state to the rank of a kingdom.⁵⁸ This act of assuming the Serbian crown did not have lasting consequences for Bosnia's relations with Serbian regional lords. King Tvrtko I and his successors did not influence the political processes on the territory controlled by the Serbian regional lords, nor did they come into close relations with the Serbian Orthodox Church, and therefore were not incorporated into the Serbian political and religious tradition. The character of the new kingdom remained exclusive-

⁵⁵ Stanojević, *Istorijski srpskog naroda*, 113. Jireček, *Istorijski Srba* I, 204-205. Ćirković, *Istorijska*, 47-48. Čorović, *Istorijski Srba*, 163. Ćirković, *Srbija u srednjem veku*, 111.

⁵⁶ Jireček, *Istorijski Srba* I, 320-321. Čorović, "Teritorijalni razvoj bosanske države", 32-34. Veljan Trpković, "Branivojevići", *IG* 3-4, Beograd 1960, 69-81. Veljan Trpković, "Kad je Stevan II Kotromanić prvi put prodro u Hum", *IG* 1-2, Beograd 1960, 151-153. Ćirković, *Istorijska*, 89-90. Mrgić-Radojčić, "Rethinking the Territorial Development", 56-57. Nedim Rabić, "Odnosi Bosne i Srbije u vrijeme Stjepana II Kotromanića", *HT* 5, Sarajevo 2010, 168-169.

⁵⁷ Čorović, *Kralj Tvrtko I Kotromanić*, 34-40. Mihailo Dinić, *O Nikoli Altomanoviću*, SKA, Beograd 1932, 25-28. Čorović, "Teritorijalni razvoj bosanske države", 39-40. Mihaljić, *Kraj srpskog carstva*, 227-242.

⁵⁸ About Tvrtko's coronation with an overview of older literature, see: Dubravko Lovrenović, "Proglašenje Bosne kraljevstvom 1377.", *Forum Bosnae* 3-4, Sarajevo 1999, 227-287.

ly Bosnian, while the areas conquered by Serbian rulers and nobles in the following period developed as an integral part of the Bosnian Kingdom and as a possession of the Bosnian nobility, although their ethnic and religious background was mostly Serbian and Orthodox. In the following decades, the political development of the Serbian territories took place independently of the Bosnian influence, and it reached its political peak at the beginning of the 15th century with the establishment of the Serbian Despotate under the rule of Stefan Lazarević.





CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

Factography and the character of relations



In the period between 1402 and 1459, the mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate were largely characterized by the established principles of neighborly relations associated with the late feudal period. Bosnia and the Despotate were not related by the medieval phenomenon of vassalship and suzerainty, so their mutual relations flowed along the middle line of intensity with constantly open foci that led to deeper interactions. As a result of their own ambitions, sporadic permeation also occurred in areas where, because of crises, the interests of the two neighbors coincided. Mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate often included a wide range of neighboring states, thus creating significant moments that left an outline on the everyday life of the wider area of Southeast Europe. Due to the specific geographical location of Bosnia and the Despotate, both Eastern and Western powers exerted strong influences on these states. Powerful forces often created the circumstances in which Bosnian and the Despotate's political actions intersected. The quality of the foreign policy position of Bosnia and the Despotate was a nuance that significantly contributed to shifting the focus of the mutual power ratio.

In the first decades of the 15th century, the uneven foreign policy of the Hungarian Kingdom towards its southern neighbors created a foundation for the further encroachment of neighboring influences. In this period, the seeds of discord were sown through the foreign policy of King Sigismund, which greatly influenced the relations between Bosnia and the Despotate. With the Hungarian ceding of the rich ore-bearing area of Srebrenica to Despot Stefan Lazarević, a new model of power over this place was established, which was never accepted by the Bosnian nobles. As part of his foreign policy

actions directed at the Hungarians, Despot Stefan provided a quality starting point in relation to the Bosnian state. By joining the ranks of Hungarian vassals, Stefan gained the benefit from a strong suzerain who in the first decades of the 15th century waged a series of wars against the Bosnian Kingdom, in which the Serbian despot also sporadically participated. The result was the creation of a characteristic basis, which in this period prevented the development of deeper relations between Bosnia and the Despotate. The opening of the war in Zeta and the Ottoman interregnum led to sporadic and fragmentary reversals of influence during this period. However, these were short-lived episodes that did not have a significant impact on state relations.

The defeat of the Hungarian army in Lašva in 1415 also weakened Sigismund's influence in Bosnia, which was seeking to stabilize domestic policy following a decade of Hungarian attacks which had a significant impact on Bosnian foreign policy engagement. Furthermore, the change in regional political circumstances conditioned a weaker Hungarian engagement in favor of Despot Stefan. The Bosnian king Tvrtko II, by consolidating positions in the border areas of the Bosnian state together with the nobles, decided to attack Srebrenica in 1425, thus demonstrating the quality of neighborly relations at the time. Shortly after the weakening of Hungarian influence, Bosnia and the Despotate found themselves within the reach of the intensified expansionist policy of the Ottoman Empire in the 1420s, following a shift in the focus of power. By refusing to join the ranks of the obedient, the Bosnian king moved on the margins of dependence on the Ottoman sultan. Due to this commitment, the Bosnian state has once again been unable to establish a stable foothold, which has adversely affected its relations with its neighbors. On the other hand, Despot Đurađ Branković joined the ranks of permanent Ottoman vassals in the late 1420s, thus temporarily creating a position that affected later relations with the western neighbor.

By excluding significant Hungarian influence in shaping the political framework in Southeast Europe, the predominance in direct conflicts in this area belonged to the side that firmly adhered to the Ottoman course.

Due to ties at the Ottoman court, Despot Đurad was included in the list of participants in the Konavle war by the Republic of Ragusa, but his role in the Bosnian-Ragusan conflict in the early 1430s remained on the surface of diplomatic activities without significant impact on the outcome of the war. Skillfully keeping his distance from unnecessary contact with the Ottomans, King Tvrtko II used the power of his own resources to solve the potential loss of part of the Bosnian crown's possessions. Immediately after these events, the Bosnian king found himself in the same role during the conflict with Despot Đurad, when the despot's role in earlier events was the reason for their confrontation. Using the position of the Bosnian state as the main economic artery of the Despotate with Ragusa, the Bosnian king established the economic isolation of Đurad's territories. The context of broader political relations came to the fore again in this case, when the Bosnian king was forced to reduce his activities towards despot Đurad in line with the Ottoman attacks on Bosnia. The stay of Tvrtko II and Đurad in Buda in the following years was used by King Sigismund to mediate between the conflicting parties due to the fact that the stability of mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate dictated the predisposition to strengthen Ottoman influence in Southeast Europe.

Adhering to Sultan Murad II did not provide Despot Đurad with immunity from the Ottoman plans. It was a concept of foreign policy that gave the Despotate an advantage in conflicts with neighboring states, but at the same time it created an ostensible image of protection from the Ottoman ambitions. During a strong Ottoman attack in 1439, the Despotate temporarily fell under Ottoman rule, which opened the space for Bosnian nobles to expand Bosnian territory at the expense of the despot's possessions. In these activities, Duke Stjepan Vukčić, who was engaged in the Zeta area, was the strongest. When the Bosnian duke occupied the territory of Upper Zeta, he penetrated all the way to the coastal areas, where he met with strong Venetian influence that sought to exploit new political opportunities. In addition to this context, Duke Stjepan posed the greatest threat to Despot Đurad

during his exile, along with the Ottomans, and he was forced to leave the Republic of Ragusa, where he stayed for a short time, for fear of Kosača's plans. After the dismissal on the Bosnian throne, King Tomaš revived Bosnia's ambitions to occupy Srebrenica, which he annexed to the Bosnian state, in a changed political framework. With the restoration of the Despotate under the Hungarian patronage, the relations between Bosnia and the Despotate in the 1440s took on new contours with several points of contact, among which the issue of Srebrenica stood out in particular. Following several military conflicts around Srebrenica, the established framework for the division of customs and the simultaneous stay of officials from Bosnia and the Despotate proved to be an ineffective approach to resolving the issue. Upon the return of the land, Đurad firmly followed the Ottoman path, and he used his contacts at the Ottoman Porte to his advantage in his conflicts with the Bosnian king. Along with these events, Duke Stjepan developed relations with Despot Đurad that were of extremely variable quality. At the end of the 1440s, a specific constellation of relations was established between Bosnia and the Despotate, which included King Tomaš, Herzog Stjepan and Despot Đurad. However, the period of concluding short-term alliances did not leave significant traces in the sphere of larger state relations.

The conflict between Herzog Stjepan and the Republic of Ragusa in the early 1450s in the mutual relations between Bosnia and the Despotate was a repetition of the events that took place two decades ago when Duke Radoslav Pavlović clashed with the Ragusans. The Ragusan ambitions to annex Herzog Stjepan's possessions dictated action leading to the Ottoman court. In these efforts, from the beginning of the conflict, Despot Đurad took over the role of Ragusan mediator at the Ottoman Porte. With the further development of events, the role of the Despot was extended to one of the participants in the alliance, whose members, according to Ragusan ideas, were to buy the Kosača possession. Đurad's active diplomatic engagement at the Ottoman Porte on behalf of the Ragusans indicates the proportions of the Serbian despot's interest in the issues that arose. At the same time, an agreement was

reached between Tomaš and Đurađ regarding the improvement of the position of the Bosnian king at the Ottoman Porte, for which the despot took over the ownership of Srebrenica as compensation. In this case, the context of political currents of a regional character surfaced once again, in which Đurađ's status as a regular Ottoman vassal was a quality trump card in the Despotate's relations with Bosnia. The scope of the participants' ambitions was thwarted by the further actions of King Tomaš, who did not allow any type of purchase of territories under the jurisdiction of the Bosnian crown.

With the strengthening of Ottoman influence in southeastern Europe in the 1450s, relations between Bosnia and the Despotate took on a new dimension. In accordance with plans drawn up on the European courts, the two neighboring states were to serve as a barrier to Ottoman attacks on Central Europe. Despite European ambitions, after the death of Đurađ Branković, a specific foreign policy, which maintained the state's independence, came to an end in the Despotate. Following the brief reign of Despot Lazar in 1458, space was created in the Despotate to accommodate the more important activities of King Tomaš. The Bosnian king saw the opportunity to expand his authority over the remaining parts of the Despotate after occupying the possessions of the Serbian despots west of Drina in earlier years. The Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus also played a significant role in realizing Tomaš's ambitions. The necessary legitimacy was found in the marriage of Tomaš's son Stjepan to Lazar's daughter Jelena. At the end of the history of relations between Bosnia and the Despotate, a kind of climax was reached with the proclamation of the Bosnian prince Stjepan Tomašević as despot. The political framework of the wider region was not suitable for the long-term maintenance of the power of Despot Stjepan, who did not have a more serious basis for the fight against the Ottomans. Stjepan's position in Smederevo was also difficult due to the presence of the Ottomans in Bosnia, where King Tomaš was not in a position to provide significant assistance to the young despot. Having been unable to remain in the Despotate, which was almost completely conquered by the Ottomans, Despot Stjepan decided to return to Bosnia in June 1459,

thus influencing the final event in the history of mutual relations between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate.

Aside from political activity, Bosnia and the Despotate's geographical location conditioned intensive relations between them through the prism of economic activity. Due to their affiliation to a single economic sphere, both states developed similar business practices, which were reflected in the formation of businesses aiming to operate in Bosnia and the Despotate. The position of the Bosnian state, which intersected the connections between the Despotate and the most important economic center of Ragusa, conditioned the scope of economic flows that were proportional to the current situation in Bosnia during the 15th century. The wars of the Bosnian state with the Hungarians, Ottomans and Ragusans, as well as changes in the established practice of business by inertia, hindered the economic exchange of the Despotate, and often led to the complete cessation of trade and business in general. The importance of the geographical position of the Bosnian state is best shown by the example from the 1430s, during the war between King Tvrtko II and Despot Đurađ, when the Bosnian king tried to aggravate the position of his opponent by blocking trade.

The specific character of the religious image of Bosnia and the Despotate, in which various church organizations were present, conditioned the question of their influence. Observed historical sources do not indicate that the centers of Serbian Orthodox Church institutional organization existed on the territory of the Bosnian state in the observed chronological framework, which is a matter for future research and consideration. In a similar manner, the Bosnian Church's activities did not significantly extend into the territory of the Despotate. Despite the lack of an institutional background, the preserved examples indicate the presence of adherents of the mentioned churches in both states. The case of Srebrenica as a border town is characteristic, where during the 15th century the construction of religious buildings and the presence of members of the Catholic faith, as well as the presence of members of the Orthodox faith and adherents of the Bosnian Church were witnessed.

The issue of the common border between Bosnia and the Despotate is one of the more complex thematic issues. This part of the Bosnian border was most susceptible to displacement during the first half of the 15th century. As a result, each description of a border line in these areas can only shed light on a short period of time. Through this study, more light is shed on the time periods during which the border has undergone significant changes, relying on archival sources as the sole source of information. In historiography, the thesis that the Serbian despots ruled a complete and unbroken region west of Drina has been shown to be untenable. The points where displacement of the border line occurred the most were detected in the vicinity of Srebrenica, Zvonik, and Višegrad.

Since the coronation of Tvrtko I Kotromanić in 1377, who was titled **к^{ра}л Сръбл^је и Босн^је и Поморију и Западнији странам^ь**, all subsequent Bosnian kings also contained the element **Сръбл^је** in their title. As a result of scarce sources and an insufficiently understood concept of Tvrtko's state immediately following the taking over of the Serbian crown, opposing theories continue to surface and political spirits are agitated on a daily basis. According to King Tvrtko I's projections, he had intended to expand his rule or have his supremacy acknowledged by the Serbian nobles who emerged after the collapse of the Empire in the 1370s. However, later events and processes demonstrate that this concept was not maintained. In the following century, the kingdom remained exclusively tied to the territory of the Bosnian state and the Bosnian institutional framework. Based on the perspective and time-frame defined by this topic, it is quite clear that the title of the Bosnian kings had no effect on the nature of relations between Bosnia and the Despotate. According to preserved sources, the relationships between rulers and noblemen of these states were rather rare and superficial at the beginning of the 15th century. As a consequence, it may be concluded that these political actors in the first decades of the 15th century merely determined the character of the relationship, which remained devoid of any mutual suzerainty or vassalage in the following decades. There is no mention

or any indication of the influence of Bosnian rulers on the territory of the Despotate until 1459. It is the wider web of events surrounding the takeover of the Despotate by King Tomaš that shows the aforementioned character of relations between these states. Regardless of the fact that at that time the title of the Bosnian king contained the mentioned element Сръблјемъ, the Bosnian heir to the throne had to legitimize the political agreement on taking over the despotic title by marrying the daughter of the late Despot Lazar Branković. It was during this period that King Tomaš made a clear distinction between the state forms of Bosnia and the Despotate when he defined them as **кralевство босансько и сръбско госпоцтво**.



The lost archive: An interrupted line in understanding mutual relations



Direct mutual communication between political actors from the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate, from today's perspective, is based on a transcript of one diplomatic document dated October 1458. It concerns a charter issued by King Tomaš to Logothete Stefan Ratković, guaranteeing him rights and possessions. This charter was composed during the negotiations for the marriage of Bosnian Prince Stjepan Tomašević and Jelena (Mara), the daughter of Despot Lazar Branković. There is no information regarding the fate of this document. According to the latest information, this transcript was located in the National Museum of Budapest. However, despite the low number of preserved diplomatic correspondence between Bosnian and Serbian rulers and nobles, information from documents of neighboring states can partially shed light on the question of their mutual communication.

It is reasonable to conclude that, as neighboring states sharing a large border, there were frequent interactions between citizens and feudal lords during the 15th century. Bosnian and Serbian rulers and nobility engaged in warfare, reconciliation, and were part of the same or opposing broader coalitions. They negotiated, made various agreements, and had other contacts, as was customary during the medieval era. For these purposes, a significant number of envoys were sent on diplomatic missions in both directions, usually accompanied by different instructions, letters, and charters of various natures and purposes. In addition to direct communication, of which only the transcript of one document has survived to this day, Bosnian and Serbian magnates frequently communicated through the Ragusan authorities and their extensive network of envoys. Indirect knowledge that arrived in Ragusa through Bosnian, Serbian, and Ragusan envoys can also

provide information indicating direct diplomatic contacts and communication. Without intending to extensively explore the reasons and outcomes of these contacts and correspondences on this occasion, a few examples reveal elements of a permanently lost archive.

Ragusans had knowledge of a diplomatic encounter between Duke Sandalj and Despot Stefan in March 1405. According to the knowledge of the Ragusan authorities, an envoy of the Serbian despot visited the Bosnian nobleman, and they instructed their envoy to gather details about this visit. Given the fact that their influences intersected in the matter of Zeta, it was assumed that the negotiations revolved around those issues. Ragusan envoys attending knightly festivities in Buda in 1412 were instructed not to discuss the agreement between Sandalj and Stefan with them, indicating a strong diplomatic relationship between the two magnates. On the basis of subsequent events, it is possible that an agreement could have been reached regarding a joint action against the Ottoman prince Musa. The synchronized action of Duke Sandalj and the Serbian Despot against the Venetians within the context of the Zeta issue can be traced back to the early 1420s, when Venetian authorities clearly stated that the Bosnian nobleman supported Stefan's positions. In addition to these claims, the Venetian authorities attempted to mediate with the Serbian ruler through Duke Sandalj, demonstrating mutual communication between them. A sort of culmination of these events was projected through Sandalj's stance towards the Venetians, in which he refused to deny assistance to Despot Stefan. To ensure a better position for their subjects in the Despotate, the Ragusans attempted to leverage the good relations between Sandalj and Stefan during 1427. Duke Sandalj also maintained diplomatic relations with Despot Đurad in a similar environment. During the Konavle War in March 1431, the Ragusan authorities had information that the Serbian Despot was either already present at Sandalj's court or expected to arrive soon.

The neighboring nature of the possessions of the Pavlović nobility and the Serbian despots also left an impact on their mutual communication.

In a letter from a Ragusan envoy in July 1423, it was emphasized that the arrival of Despot Stefan was expected in Borač. The relationship between these neighbors also extended to economic aspects, as evident from the correspondence between Duke Radoslav and the Ragusan authorities in July 1424. Relations with Stefan's successor, Đurad, were not always favorable for the Pavlović family. During the Konavle War, Despot Đurad informed the Ragusan authorities that, by order of the Hungarian king, he had sent a letter to Duke Radoslav criticizing him for his attack on Ragusan possessions. Shortly thereafter, Pavlović sent his envoys to the Despotate in order to negotiate Đurad's mediating role in his planned reconciliation with the Ragusan authorities. However, their mutual communication during this period did not lead to an improvement in their relationship. The subsequent generation of the Pavlović family continued to communicate with the Serbian Despot, although such communication could only be sporadically traced. In January 1444, during the efforts to reclaim land and the Serbian despot's fight against the Ottomans, Duke Ivaniš Pavlović sent a letter through Ragusa to Despot Đurad with unknown content. It is logical to assume that the intention in this case was to seek involvement in the war led by King Władysław and the Serbian despot.

The good relations initiated between Sandalj and Despot Stefan were not continued by their successors, Duke Stjepan and Despot Đurad. After a strong military offensive during the temporary fall of the Despotate, the Bosnian nobleman conquered certain possessions belonging to Đurad. However, with the reestablishment of Đurad's state and his good relations with the Ottoman Sultan, Stjepan was compelled to improve the relationship. For this purpose, in October 1444, he prepared for a visit to the Despotate. Correspondence between these courts was certainly established, considering that a few months later, their reconciliation was announced. Stjepan's mission sent to the same address in October 1447 served a similar purpose. This engagement with Despot Đurad was a direct consequence of Duke Stjepan's failure with the Ottoman Sultan and aimed to improve his

own position through the Smederevo court. References from the Ragusan authorities in the following year attest to the continuity of correspondence between the two courts, as they highlighted how Duke Stjepan requested a copy of his older agreement with the despot, and the Ragusans also sent a request to the despot in 1449, asking Đurađ to ensure better treatment for their merchants.

There was a crisis of greater proportions during the conflict between Herzog Stjepan and the Republic of Ragusa, causing several neighboring political factors to become involved in the conflict. As events unfolded, a rift occurred within the Kosača family, where his son Vladislav joined the coalition led by the Ragusans. The ambition to acquire his father's possessions led them through Despot Đurad to the Ottoman court. In February 1453, they sent a joint mission to the sultan. The good relationship between Vladislav and the court in Smederevo continued in the following period, which was evidenced by their extensive and ongoing communication regarding agreements and preparations for Vladislav's marriage to Anna Kantakouzene from 1453 to 1455.

Bosnian King Stjepan Tomaš tried to take advantage of Despot Đurad's good relationship with the Ottoman court. According to the Ragusans' knowledge, during the spring of 1448, King Tomaš sent his own envoys for this purpose. In this case, the results of this mission, which was unsuccessful, are known. Among the reasons for the failure was the unfavorable attitudes of the Ragusan officials in the despot's service. The quality relationship between Despot Đurad and Ottoman officials remained a lasting characteristic. During the summer of 1451, King Tomaš once again engaged in broader and more detailed correspondence with Đurađ for the same reasons. On this occasion, he handed over Srebrenik and managed to gain a stronger foothold with the Ottoman viziers through a joint mission sent to the Porte. The culmination of these negotiations and communication between the courts was the meeting of King Tomaš and Despot Đurad during the autumn of 1452 in the eastern regions of the Bosnian state when,

according to some assumptions, the despot's ownership of the Zvonik was confirmed.

A few selected and presented examples demonstrate that the disappearance of source material in the territories of the medieval states of Bosnia and Serbia did not entirely prevent the basic representation of correspondence between Bosnian and Serbian courts. Based on the reflections on this communication, preserved through decisions and instructions of Ragusan authorities, it appears that these were relationships of moderate frequency and uneven quality, which were influenced by regional factors. Nevertheless, these observations show that there were also typical neighborly relationships among the political magnates of these states behind more significant political processes. Despite all efforts, sources of this kind do not sufficiently shed light on the life of the common people in border areas and their interaction with neighboring regions. In this and many other contexts, lost archives represent lost history.





SOURCES AND LITERATURE



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANUBiH	Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine
ANURS	Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Republike Srpske
AV	Arhivski vjesnik
BG	Braničevski glasnik
BIGZ	Beogradski izdavačko-grafički zavod
BF	Bosna Franciscana
BZK	Bošnjačka zajednica kulture
CCP	Croatica christiana periodica
GDI	Godišnjak Društva istoričara
GGB	Godišnjak grada Beograda
GID	Godišnjak Istorijskog društva
GNČ	Godišnjica Nikole Čupića
GPB	Građa o prošlosti Bosne
GZM	Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja
HAZU	Hrvatska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti
HDZU	Hrvatsko društvo za znanost i umjetnost
HKD	Hrvatsko kulturno društvo
HT	Historijska traganja
HZ	Historijski zbornik
IG	Istorijski glasnik
IČ	Istorijski časopis
IZ	Istorijski zbornik
JAZU	Jugoslovenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti
JIČ	Jugoslovenski istorijski časopis
LMS	Letopis Matice srpske
MG	Mešovita građa
MZ	Mileševski zapisi
NV	Numizmatični vestnik
POF	Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju
PKJIF	Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor

SAN	Srpska akademija nauka
SANU	Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti
SKA	Srpska kraljevska akademija
SKZ	Srpska književna zadruga
SSA	Stari srpski arhiv
SUD	Srpsko učeno društvo
VIG	Vojnoistorijski glasnik
ZFFB	Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu
ZIRAL	Zajednica izdanja “Ranjeni labud”
ZIBiH	Zbornik za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine
ZIMS	Zbornik Istoriskog muzeja Srbije
ZMSI	Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju
ZRVI	Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta
ZMSS	Zbornik Matice srpske za slavistiku

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SOURCES AND LITERATURE

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- *Consilium Minus* (Cons. Minus)
- *Consilium Rogatorum* (Cons. Rog.)
- *Lettere di Levante* (Lett. di Lev.)
- *Diversa Cancellariae* (Div. Canc.)
- *Diversa Notariae* (Div. Not.)
- *Debita Notariae* (Deb. Not.)
- *Lamenta de foris* (Lam. de for.)

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