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THE LOST ARCHIVE: TRACES OF COMMUNICATION THAT HAS NOT BEEN PRESERVED BETWEEN BOSNIAN AND SERBIAN COURTS IN THE 15TH CENTURY**

Abstract: From today's perspective, direct communication between the Bosnian and Serbian courts in the 15th century is evidenced only by a transcript of a diplomatic document from October 1458. It is the charter of King Tomaš issued to the logothete Stefan Ratković. Despite this, according to documents from neighbouring countries, it is possible to shed some light on the issue of their mutual communication. Given that these are neighbouring countries with a large common border, it is quite logical to conclude that during the 15th century there was fairly frequent interaction between the population and political elites. During this period, Bosnian and Serbian rulers fought, made peace, were part of the same or opposing coalitions of a broader nature, negotiated, made various agreements and other contacts, as was usual during the late medieval times. For these purposes, envoys were certainly sent to diplomatic missions in both directions. In addition to direct communication, Bosnian and Serbian dignitaries frequently communicated through the Ragusan authorities and their extensive network of diplomats. With the indirect information that arrived in Ragusa through the Bosnian, Serbian, and Ragusan envoys, it is possible to single out data that indicate direct diplomatic contacts and communication. Traces of communication between the Bosnian and Serbian courts can also be followed through documents created by the Venetian authorities and the Hungarian kings. This research aims to determine the traces of this communication and situate them within the political context of the countries involved at the time.

Keywords: Bosnian Kingdom, Serbian Despotate, correspondence, diplomatic missions, Republic of Ragusa, rulers, nobility.

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During the 15th century, the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate existed as states within the Bosnian and Serbian political space. The Bosnian Kingdom had existed since 1377, when Ban Tvrtko crowned himself king on his own initiative.¹ Sources from the 15th century refer to the state formed on the territory of the Lazarević family as Servia and Raška. The term *Serbian Despotate* is a historiographical construct, derived from the title of despot that Stefan Lazarević received in 1402 from John VII Palaiologos, co-emperor and nephew of Byzantine Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos. This territory is also referred to as *the State of the Serbian Despots*. In historiography, the name *Serbia* is also used for the state ruled by Despot Stefan Lazarević, although at the same time, the territory of the Branković family was governed separately by Đurađ Branković and his mother Mara. In 1427, Đurađ Branković succeeded Stefan Lazarević with the title of despot and thus incorporated the Branković family's possessions into the Serbian Despotate.² The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate were two neighbouring countries with a long shared border, which, in broad terms, extended across the areas surrounding the Drina, Lim, and Tara rivers.³ During the 15th century, the rulers and nobility of these countries were not connected by ties of personal dependency, which undoubtedly influenced the frequency and nature of their interactions and communications. Their economic ties were primarily linked to their shared inclusion in the Ragusan economic sphere.

¹ A more detailed description of the formation process of the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate falls outside the scope of this paper. At this point, it is appropriate to refer to the most significant literature on these topics. Several works have been published about the coronation of King Tvrtko I, of which only those that have made a significant impact on historiography are cited here: Сима Ђирковић, "Сугуби венац (Прилог историји краљевства у Босни)", *Зборник радова*. Филозофски факултет 8/1 (Београд 1964) 343–369; Ђуро Базлер, "Проглашење Босне краљевином 1377. године", *Прилози. Институт за историју* 11–12 (1976) 49–61; Dubravko Lovrenović, "Proglašenje Bosne kraljevstvom 1377. (Pokušaj revalorizacije)", *Forum Bosnae* 3–4 (1999) 227–287.

² For more on the Serbian Despotate and the Branković possessions, see: Михаило Динић, "Област Бранковића", *Прилози за језик, књижевност, историју и фолклор* 26/1–2 (1960) 5–29; Миодраг Пурковић, *Кнез и деспот Стефан Лазаревић*, Београд 1978; Андрија Веселиновић, *Држава српских деспота*, Београд 1995; Момчило Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, Бања Лука 1999²; Милош Ивановић, *Коњ добри и оружје. Властела Државе српских деспота (1402–1459)*, Београд 2024.

³ The borders between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate are presented in the following publications: Михаило Динић, "Земље херцега светога Саве", *Глас*. Српска краљевска академија 182 (1940) 241–243; idem, "Област Бранковића", 10–11; Андрија Веселиновић, "Граница између Србије и Босне у XV веку", in: *Босна и Херцеговина од средњег века до новијег времена*, ed. Славенко Терзић, Београд 1995, 87–100; Јелена Мргић, *Северна Босна 13–16. век*, Београд 2008, 113–122; Сениша Мишић, "Обнова Деспотовине и њене границе (1444–1459)", in: *Пад Српске деспотовине 1459. године*, ed. Момчило Спремић, Београд 2008, 68–69; idem, *Историјска географија српских земаља од 6. до половине 16. века*, Београд 2014, 51–52; Enes Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, Sarajevo 2023, 389–400.

Because of its geographical location, the territory of the Bosnian state served as an important transit zone for economic connections with Ragusa, the most important commercial centre, which provided access to other significant hubs on the Adriatic and Mediterranean seas. Due to the lack of sources, not many records have survived about direct economic exchange between Bosnia and the Serbian Despotate during this period.⁴ Examining the institutional activity of the Churches established in Bosnia and Serbia in earlier periods, it can be concluded that religious ties were also of low frequency, although some indirect data shed light on this issue as well.⁵ Throughout the 15th century, a number of wars and conflicts were waged, and reconciliations and agreements were made between the rulers and noblemen of these two countries. Several marital alliances were established between the Bosnian and Serbian courts during this period.⁶ All these diplomatic activities were entirely common for the neighbouring medieval courts.

The majority of the preserved information about the relationships between these courts comes from documents originating in Ragusa, Buda, Venice, Naples, and other locations. This is because only a small portion of medieval documents created in the territories of then Bosnia and Serbia has been preserved. Today, only a few medieval documents of local origin are held in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and none of them have been preserved continuously in the region since the medieval period. The number of documents preserved in Serbia is somewhat higher, but most predate the 15th century and do not address diplomatic correspondence with neighbouring countries. Only one document that directly concerns the relationship between the Bosnian and Serbian courts during this period has been preserved. It is a copy of a diplomatic

⁴ For more on the economic system in which these two countries formed an integral part, see: Михаило Динић, “Дубровачка средњовековна караванска трговина”, *Југословенски историски часопис* 3/1–4 (1937) 119–146; *idem*, *За историју рударства у средњовековној Србији и Босни I*, Београд 1955; Desanka Kovačević, *Trgovina u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni*, Сарајево 1961; Андрија Веселиновић, “Забране и прекиди трговине у Србији у доба Деспотовине”, *Историјски гласник* 1–2 (1983) 25–42; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 331–357.

⁵ On the relationships between the Churches and religions active in the territories of these two countries, see: E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 361–385.

⁶ For more on the marital ties between the Bosnian and Serbian courts in the 15th century, see: Ђуро Тошић, “Последња босанска краљица Мара (Јелена)”, *Зборник за историју БиХ* 3 (2002) 29–45; Јелена Мргић, “Последња два Котроманића и Деспотовина”, in: *Пад Српске деспотовине 1459. године*, ed. Момчило Спремић, Београд 2011, 195–202; Невен Исаиловић, “Брачни планови Котроманића и државна политика Босне половином XV века”, in: *Пад Српске деспотовине 1459. године*, ed. Момчило Спремић, Београд 2011, 203–213; 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*, eds. Elmedina Duranović, Enes Dedić & Nedim Rabić, Сарајево 2019, 229–251.

document from October 1458, a charter issued by King Tomaš to Serbian logothete Stefan Ratković during negotiations regarding the marriage between Bosnian prince Stjepan Tomašević and Mara (Jelena), the daughter of Despot Lazar Branković.⁷ At that time, negotiations were underway for the Bosnian heir Stjepan Tomašević to assume the position of despot, a goal that was realised in the spring of 1459.⁸ In this charter, King Stjepan Tomaš confirmed to logothete Stefan the possessions he had previously held within the territory of the Serbian Despotate, and additionally granted him new possessions in the area of Bosnia. According to Šafárik, the document was preserved in a transcription from the mid-16th century, but its current location is not precisely known. Some sources claim that it is kept either in the State Museum or the State Archives in Budapest. Attempts to verify this information in both institutions have not yielded any new findings.

The dynamics of mutual relations between these countries suggests that Bosnia and the Despotate during the 15th century did not maintain diplomatic contact as frequently as might be expected between neighbours with a significant shared border. Despite the lack of preserved documents and the evidently limited diplomatic activity, it is entirely logical to conclude that correspondence did indeed occur between the courts of these neighbouring countries. Occasional information is contained in documents found in the archives of Dubrovnik and Venice. An analysis of all the documents that shed light on the political, economic, and cultural relations between these countries reveals that, in approximately 20 instances, there is evidence of direct communication between the courts of Bosnian and Serbian rulers and nobility. This study gives an overview of all discovered traces of mutual communication. The information from these documents has been contextualised within the political circumstances of the time, taking into account the events and processes occurring in the broader regional context.

The earliest piece of information about communication between the courts from the territory of Bosnia and the Serbian Despotate comes from a letter of the Ragusan authorities dated March 1405, sent to their nobleman and envoy Nicola de Goze, who

⁷ The document is known today only through transcriptions published by Pavel Jozef Šafárik, Franz Mikosich, Franjo Rački and Stojan Novaković. Pavel Jozef Schaffarik, *Serbische Lesehörner, oder Historisch-Kritische Beleuchtung der Serbischen Mundart*, Pestii 1833, 131–132; Franz Miklosich, *Monumenta serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae Bosnae Ragusii*, Viennae 1858, 481; Franjo Rački, “Prilozi za sbirku srbskih i bosanskih listina”, *Rad. Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti* 1 (1867) 156–158; Стојан Новаковић, *Законски споменици српских држава средњега века*, Београд 1912, 343–345.

⁸ For information on Stjepan Tomašević’s rule over the Serbian Despotate, see: М. Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, 612–638; Ђ. Тошић, “Последња босанска краљица Мара (Јелена)”, 32–38; Момчило Спремић, “Деспот Стефан Бранковић Слепи”, *Глас. Српска академија наука и умјетности* 164 (2010) 125–131; Ј. Мргић, “Последња два Котроманића и Деспотовина”, 199–200; Н. Исаиловић, “Брачни планови Котроманића”, 209–212; Е. Дедић, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 252–268.

was at the court of the Bosnian Voivode Sandalj Hranić Kosača. The instructions reveal that the Ragusan authorities were aware that an envoy of Despot Stefan Lazarević had visited Sandalj, and instructed their envoy to find out the reason for this visit.⁹ Unfortunately, later letters from Ragusan nobleman Nicola de Goze do not mention any further details regarding this visit. From today's perspective, the reasons for this visit can only be speculated upon based on the known political events of that period. It was a time of ongoing conflicts between Bosnian rulers and nobility and the Hungarian King Sigismund, who was, notably, the suzerain of the Serbian Despot. According to the records of the Ragusan authorities from May 1405, Despot Stefan had timely information about Sigismund's military campaigns.¹⁰ A few years later, Stefan shared Sigismund's ambitions toward the Bosnian crown. The visit of Stefan's envoy to Sandalj could also be connected to the conflict in Zeta, where both men were actively involved in the prolonged war between Stefan's relative Balša III Balšić and Venice. Alongside the diplomatic communication between Sandalj and Stefan, the Venetian authorities were also offering to Kosača to get involved in their conflict with Balša.¹¹ The conflict between Venice and Balša lasted until January 1413, when peace was concluded with Sandalj's assistance.¹²

It was precisely Sandalj's stronger involvement in support of Balša in 1411 that was motivated by his marriage to Jelena, the widow of Đurađ II Stracimirović Balšić, Balša's mother and Stefan's sister.¹³ This event undoubtedly contributed to closer and improved relations between Sandalj and Stefan, and it is reasonable to conclude that during the negotiations about this marriage, there must have been diplomatic communication between the two. The connection of Despot Stefan with his sisters, and the fact that their relationship was known even among neighbouring powers, is confirmed by a record from the Ragusan authorities from May 1423. Namely, in response to the request by Sandalj's envoys regarding the arrival of his sister Olivera,

⁹ "dela ambassata del despotto vene al ditto voyuoda a qui vene". (March 18, 1405) Državni arhiv u Dubrovniku [=DAD], Lettere di Levante IV, 85v.

¹⁰ (May 2, 1405) Љубомир Стојановић, *Старе српске повеље и писма* I/1, Београд – Сремски Карловци 1929, 385–386; Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (Sveta kruna ugarska i sveta kruna bosanska) 1387–1463*, Zagreb–Sarajevo 2006, 124.

¹¹ (May 7, 1405) Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* V, Zagreb 1875, 56; Иван Божић, "Албанија и Арбанаси у XIII, XIV и XV веку", *Глас. Српска академија наука и уметности* 338 (1983) 63; Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)*, Sarajevo 1996, 112; Esad Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*, Sarajevo 2009, 170.

¹² On this conflict, see: Иван Божић, "Први скадарски рат", in: *Историја Црне Горе* II/2, ed. Милинко Ђуровић, Титоград 1970, 99–107; Bogumil Hrabak, "Venecija i bosanska država", *Istraživanja* 12 (1979) 443–451; M. Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija*, 112–142; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 170, 189–191; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 74–76.

¹³ (December 8, 11, and 12, 1411) DAD, Reformationes XXXIII, 212, 212v, 304, 304v; (December 15, 1411) DAD, Lettere di Levante VII, 28–28v; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 45, 187; E. Dedić, "Serbian Princesses at the Bosnian Courts in the 15th Century", 234–236.

the widow of Sultan Bayezid I, they sought the opinion of her brother Stefan.¹⁴ Contacts and potential negotiations between Sandalj and Stefan regarding this marriage may have taken place during 1411. Stefan was certainly present at Sigismund's court in Buda in the summer of that year, while there are only vague references by Venetian authorities to Sandalj being in Buda before 1412.¹⁵ In any case, even if Sandalj's presence in Buda was confirmed, this theory cannot be substantiated with precise sources.

A meeting between Sandalj and Stefan certainly took place in the spring of the following year. In May 1412, King Sigismund organised a knightly tournament in Buda in honour of the reconciliation with the Polish King Władysław Jagiełło. Among those present were Sandalj and Stefan, as well as a delegation from Ragusa. The Ragusan authorities explicitly forbade their envoys, by letter, to discuss any agreements made between Sandalj and Stefan.¹⁶ Due to the very brief and unclear nature of the note, it is difficult to determine what the matter was in this case. Nevertheless, the agreement or event that took place shortly before was clearly known to the Ragusan authorities and their envoys. Based on the known events of the time, it is possible that the agreement was related to earlier developments in Zeta and assistance to Balša, which indeed occurred a year later. Another possibility is that the agreement concerned the formation of a coalition for a joint fight against the Ottoman prince Musa, who was increasingly pressuring the Serbian Despotate. This alliance, which also included the Hungarians and Đurađ Branković, was soon realised. In mid-1413, Sandalj's army participated alongside the Serbian and Hungarian forces in a battle against the Ottoman claimant Musa. The allies were successful and managed to defeat Musa's troops near the village of Çamorlu at the foot of mount Vitosha in the summer of 1413.¹⁷ As early as mid-July, Sandalj's envoy brought news to Ragusa of Musa's defeat and death.¹⁸ In May 1414, the Ragusan authorities wrote to Sandalj, informing him that they had told Sigismund he had acted bravely and nobly toward Despot Stefan.¹⁹ The quality of the relationship and frequent mutual communication between the

¹⁴ (May 17, 1423) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum III, 155v; Jorjo Tadić, *Promet putnika u starom Dubrovniku*, Dubrovnik 1939, 57; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 66; E. Dedić, "Serbian Princesses at the Bosnian Courts in the 15th Century", 237.

¹⁵ See: M. Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija*, 134; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 185.

¹⁶ "Perche Sandali e facta una cosa cum lo despotto et lo despotto cum lui, de questo facto non parlati niente cum li dicti despoto e Sandali." (May 13, 1412) DAD, Lettere di Levante VII, 43; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 189.

¹⁷ Nedim Filipović, *Princ Musa i šejh Bedreddin*, Sarajevo 1971, 450–473; Maја Николић, "Деспот Стефан Лазаревић и турске међусобице 1411–1413. године", in: *Моравска Србија. Историја-култура-уметност*, ed. Синиша Мишић, Крушевац 2007, 169.

¹⁸ "de donando nuncio Sandalis qui apportauit literas nouorum mortis Mussie Teucris usque ad valorem uerperum viginti de denaris nostri comunis" (July 17, 1413) DAD, Reformationes XXXIV, 82.

¹⁹ (May 18, 1414) Љ. Стојановић, *Повеље и писма I/1*, 290.

Bosnian Voivode and the Serbian Despot after Sandalj's marriage to Jelena is further evidenced by Stefan's charter to the Mileševa monastery, dated around 1413.²⁰

Good relations between Sandalj and Stefan were maintained in the following years. This is evidenced by their diplomatic correspondence with the Venetian authorities after the death of Balša in 1421. Sandalj and Stefan emerged as claimants to Balša's possessions, but the Venetians quickly seized certain territories.²¹ The Bosnian nobleman could base his claim to Balša's possessions on his marriage to Balša's mother. In July 1421, Sandalj's delegation unsuccessfully demanded from the Venetian authorities the return of Bar, Budva, and Zeta.²² The fact that Balša died at the Despot's court, where he had gifted his possessions to him shortly before his death, influenced Sandalj to withdraw his claims to those territories.²³ Despot Stefan took a much more assertive approach toward the Venetians than Sandalj did, and during the summer of 1421, he seized Drivast and Bar by military means. A final agreement was reached in August 1423.²⁴ At the same time, the Venetian authorities were actively communicating with Sandalj about an agreement concerning Kotor, while resolving the issue of Balša's possessions with the Serbian Despot. In June 1423, the Venetians drafted instructions for an envoy sent to Sandalj, in which they expressed concern that the Bosnian noble was disturbing Kotor and thereby supporting Despot Stefan's position. The envoy was also instructed to request Sandalj's mediation in the dispute over Zeta between the Venetians and Stefan.²⁵ Communication between the courts of the Kosačas and the Lazarevićs during these negotiations is also reflected in a letter from Venetian envoys, in which they reported Sandalj's words that he would not sign any agreement with Venice that would prevent him from aiding his cousin Despot Stefan, should the Bosnian King or the Ottoman Sultan order him to do so. The Venetian authorities also advised their envoys to

²⁰ Милош Благојевић, "Деспот Стефан Лазаревић и Милешева", in: *Милешева у историју српског народа*, ed. Војислав Ј. Ђурић, Београд 1987, 173–174; Ђорђе Трифуновић, *Деспот Стефан Лазаревић – Књижевни радови*, Београд 1977, 150–151.

²¹ (July 3, 1421) Sime Ljubić, *Listine o одношajih između južnoga slavenstva i Mletačke Republike VIII*, Zagreb 1886, 94–95.

²² (July 13, 1421) S. Ljubić, *Listine VIII*, 95; Момчило Спремић, "Припајање Зете Деспотовини и ширење млетачке власти у Приморју", in: *Историја српског народа: Доба борби за очување и обнову државе (1371–1537)*, ed. Сима Ђирковић, Београд 1982, 197.

²³ Иван Божић, "Други скадарски рат и крај Балшића", in: *Историја Црне Горе II/2*, ed. Милинко Ђуровић, Титоград 1970, 128–131; Момчило Спремић, "Припајање Зете Деспотовини и ширење млетачке власти у Приморју", 197. A more recent perspective on the ceding of Zeta to the Serbian Despot see in Dragutin Popović, "O nasljedstvu Balše III. Balšića", *Radovi. Zavod za hrvatsku povijest* 53 (2021) 47–67.

²⁴ М. Спремић, "Припајање Зете Деспотовини", 197–198.

²⁵ (June 8, 1423) S. Ljubić, *Listine VIII*, 247; М. Ђунјић, *Bosna i Venecija*, 155; Богумил Храбак, "Венеција и Сандаљ Хранић у његовом ширењу по Приморју почев од Херцег Новог", *Бока* 11 (1979) 219; Е. Куртовић, *Veliki vojvoda*, 252–253; Е. Дедић, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 85–86.

inform the Despot of Sandalj's demands.²⁶ The preserved data do not reveal further details about the continued communication regarding Sandalj's potential support to Despot Stefan. Apparently, both sides overlooked this clause in order to finalise the negotiations, and Voivode Sandalj also reached an agreement with the Venetians by issuing a charter in early November 1423.²⁷ An indicator of diplomatic communication between the Kosačas and the Lazarevićs may also be the marriage between Stjepan, the son of Vukac Hranić, and Jelena, the daughter of Balša III and cousin of Despot Stefan, which most likely took place in October 1424.²⁸ The mediating role in arranging this marriage by the bride's grandmother Jelena, sister of Despot Stefan, is unquestionable. However, as already mentioned, Balša, before his death, handed over his possessions to Despot Stefan, likely expecting him to show concern for his daughter's well-being. Sandalj's potential intermediary role in the conflict between Despot Stefan and the Ragusans in Srebrenica is hinted at in a letter sent from Ragusa in late May 1427. On that occasion, the Ragusan authorities suggested to their nobles in Srebrenica that they check whether Sandalj's envoy, who interceded for Ragusan prisoners, was involved with Despot Stefan.²⁹ Although later sources no longer mention even the possibility of Sandalj's role in this dispute, this reference suggests good relations, and thus the potential for frequent communication between Voivode Sandalj and Despot Stefan.

Alongside Sandalj, starting from the 1420s, during the negotiations over the purchase of Konavle, Voivode Radoslav Pavlović also maintained correspondence with Despot Stefan. The first diplomatic contacts between the Pavlović and Lazarević families are attested by a report from a Ragusan envoy who visited Voivode Radoslav's court in Borač. The Ragusan envoy reported to the authorities in July 1423 that Voivode Radoslav was delaying the Konavle sale negotiations, justifying this with the recent birth of his son, the expected arrival of Despot Stefan, and fear of the

²⁶ "quod si serenissimus dominus suus rex Bossine vel dominus Turchorum dicto Sandali committeret, quod iret vel mitteret gentes suas i subsidium domini despoti cognati sui contra nostrum dominum et terras nostras Albanie ... respondere et dicere, quod hoc non esset iustum nec conveniens, quod in partibus Albanie esset inimicus noster et guerizaret cum nostro dominio, et in partibus Sclavonie amicaretur nobis; et ista non conveniunt, quod sit amicus et inimicus in uno eodem tempore". (August 6, 1423) S. Ljubić, *Listine VIII*, 246–247.

²⁷ (November 11, 1423) Љ. Стојановић, *Повеље и писма I/1*, 328–331; M. Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija*, 157–158; Б. Храбак, "Венеција и Сандаљ Хранић", 220; E. Kurtović, *Veliki vojvoda*, 253.

²⁸ (November 9, 1424) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum III, 229; (November 13, 1424). DAD, Acta Consilii Minoris III, 177v; Ludwig von Thallóczy, *Studien zur geschichte Bosniens und Serbiens im mittelalter*, München und Leipzig 1914, 168; Enes Dedić, *Izvori za historiju Bosne u srednjem vijeku. Ispisi građe iz arhivske serije Acta Consilii Maioris Državnog arhiva u Dubrovniku (1415–1497)*, Sarajevo 2023, 110–111.

²⁹ "E perche ne direte che lo ambasadore de voiuoda Sandagl venne al signor despoth el qual ve dixè a vuy o a ser Volzo de Babalio che luy haueua pregato lo signor despoth per li nostri prezonieri per tanto mettetene aspiar e asauer tutto zo che pori supra de questa e quello poi hauere nel dete asaueri". (May 30, 1427) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 20v.

Bosnian King's reaction.³⁰ Although later sources do not confirm the Despot's visit to the Pavlovićs, it is quite certain that they maintained mutual communication.

Between 1430 and 1433, the Konavle War was fought between Radoslav Pavlović and the Republic of Ragusa. This conflict sparked a broader crisis because the Ragusan authorities sought assistance from most neighbouring rulers. In doing so, they also involved Despot Đurađ Branković in the conflict.³¹ They attempted to obtain help from the Ottoman Sultan through the Despot, as well as to secure Đurađ's mediation with Voivode Radoslav. In June 1430, Despot Đurađ informed the Ragusan authorities that, by order of the Hungarian King, he had sent a letter to Radoslav rebuking him for his attack on the Ragusan territory.³² Two months later, Radoslav was willing to reconcile with Ragusa under certain conditions. In August 1430, the Ragusan authorities were informed by Despot Đurađ that Ivaniš Dukojević, on behalf of Radoslav, had requested mediation in reconciliation with the Republic. According to their information, Despot Đurađ sent his envoy Dragić Ruparić, and once Ruparić arrived they would forward all related information to the Hungarian King.³³ The Ragusan authorities also wrote to Voivode Sandalj about the diplomatic communication between Pavlović and Branković.³⁴ Despot Đurađ indeed undertook diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict between Pavlović and the Republic of Ragusa, but his diplomats' efforts did not yield positive results. The Ragusan authorities wrote to Voivode Sandalj twice in August 1430 about the Despot's failure with Pavlović. They mentioned that Despot Đurađ had established

³⁰ "Et state ancora con buona speranza et buona solecitudine in questi facti come auete sempre facto che non saria marauigla chel nassimento del figlo che voi dite che a molto allegrato el signore et la venuta chel dice del despotho et la paura del re di Bosna o tutte o qualche una di queste cose saria stata caxon del suo ritardare a risponderan". (July 17, 1423) DAD, Lettere di Levante IX, 8v.

³¹ For more on Despot Đurađ's role in the Konavle War, see: Владимир Ћоровић, "Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић према конавском рату", *Глас. Српска краљевска академија* 90 (1923) 26–39; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 107–127.

³² "Dal signor Zorzio despoth abiamo ricepute lettere per le qual doliandosi di quello ne a fatto et fa Radossauo ne auisa come per commandamento [170v] del signor nostro Re de Ongaria e per lo buon amore chel porta alla signoria nostra a mandato Radossauo molto grauandosi della intermessa a fatto contra noi". (June 26, 1430) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 170v–171.

³³ "Dite al re come lo signor dispoth ne a scritto che Iuanis Ducoeuich per parte de Radossau e stato de esso pregandolo che si voglia interponere a fare paxe tra lo detto Paulouich e noi al qual Radossau a mandato lo suo messo Dragich Rugarich, il qual Radossau se atendere vora a quelle parole chelia mandate a dire per lo detto Dragich le qual a noi nona deschiarite dixे che esso Dragich vegnera qua da noi. Il qual vegnando tutto quello aueremo de esso alla maiesta sua daremo a saper". (August, 1430) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 191.

³⁴ "Dite a vouiuda che lo signor dispot per sue lettere ne a scritto come Iuanis Ducoeuich per parte de Radossau e stato da esso pregandolo che si voglia interponere a fare paxe tra lo detto Paulouich e noi, al qual Radossau a mandato esso dispot lo suo messo Dragich Rugarich". (August 7, 1430) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 205.

diplomatic contacts, but Radoslav, for nonsensical reasons, withdrew from negotiations, sought a different mediator, provoking the Serbian Despot's anger.³⁵

In connection with the Konavle War, Despot Đurađ also communicated with Voivode Sandalj. The two of them were to be members of the alliance formed by Ragusa against Voivode Radoslav. In a letter to their envoy at Sandalj's court, in March 1431 the Ragusan authorities asked for more information about the Despot's envoy, a certain brother of Radof, as they were unsure whether he had already arrived at the Kosača court or was still expected. They instructed their envoys to inform them, as fully as possible, about the purpose of the envoys' visit to Sandalj, and to pass on everything discussed, including secrets.³⁶ Although later sources do not clarify the motives of this diplomatic communication, it is reasonable to assume that it concerned arrangements for a joint action in the context of the Konavle War.

Shortly after the Konavle War, Voivode Radoslav recognised how important it was for him, given the constellation of political relations in the region, to maintain good relations with the Serbian Despot. Their relationship was strained because of Radoslav's stance toward Despot Đurađ's mediation to end the war. At the end of August 1433, Voivode Radoslav sent a letter to the Ragusans, requesting their mediation in a reconciliation between him and Đurađ.³⁷ The Ragusans fulfilled his request, and already

³⁵ "Et da una parte non vole che altro chal dispoto faza paxe et mo vole voiuada e doamn vora uno altro". (August 19, 1430) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 197v. "Di quo auessemo data la presente lettera al corier in viariula receuissimo vostra lettera com quella del dispoth et de ser Zohan de Gondola. E perche voiuada sperando ne fosse per despoto scritto di nouelle di Romania vi dixe lo douessimo auisar di quello scriueua, pero lo direte che la lettera del despot fo datta adi 14 del presente. E di nouelle di Romania ne d'altromente ne scriue saluo ne auisa che come alter fiade vi scriuissimo abiando Radossau Paulouich mandato ad esso a pregarlo che se douesse interponere a far con noi paxe dandoli piena liberta et abiando esso dispoto mandato di luy suo homo per questa cason. Esso Radossau mo in tutto se e desdito digando cose da garzone il perche esso dispot del detto Radossau molto se greua e con esso molto sie indignato et turbato offerndosi largamente a noi esser in tutto in nostra aiuto et fauore". (August 24, 1430) DAD, Lettere di Levante X, 201.

³⁶ "E que si sente et se a dala porta del Turcho dele qualcose et nouelle vegnando voi ne dobiate piena informacion dare perche sentiamo che ambassada del dispot zoe lo fradelo de Radof venne o fin mo e venuta a Sandagl pero datine a saper quanto potreti a que sera venuta essa ambassada e tutto quello praticarano et farano finche dila secreti et vegnando di tutto ne auisarete". (March 3, 1431) DAD, Lettere di Levante XI, 21.

³⁷ "Apresso perche siamo requerti da voiuada Radossau Paulouich che nuy vogliamo pregar el signor dispothi se digna acceptarlo per suo bon amico volemo dobiati con abel tempo dauanti el ditto signor dispoti comparer et a luy in questo modo dirli: [159v] Ilustre signor gentilomeni de Ragusa come cordialissimi amici de la magnificentia vostra i quali amano veder i signori e baroni de Bosna vostri conuici viuer con vuy in bon e fraterno amor cusi per gete de la mente a riposo de la persona de la signoria vostra e mance spexa come per lo bon e pacifico stato di li subditi vostri. Lo ben e pacifico stato de i quali desiderano et amano veder quanto el lor proprio. Siando requerti per voiuada Radossau vogliamo pregar la magnificentia vostra de acceptando in gratia e per suo bon amico cosi per le rason ditte et per

by the following month, the reconciliation took place. At the beginning of October, the Ragusan authorities wrote to their envoys, instructing them to thank Despot Đurađ for reconciling with Voivode Radoslav.³⁸ It is quite certain that although the reconciliation occurred with the help and mediation of the Ragusan authorities, diplomatic communication also took place between the Pavlović and Branković courts during August and September 1433. The role of the Ragusan authorities in this reconciliation is also mentioned by the chronicler Restius.³⁹ Radoslav's reconciliation with Despot Đurađ occurred during a conflict between King Tvrtko II and the Serbian Despot. The conflict arose as a consequence of Đurađ's interference in the Konavle War. Sources about the conflict can be traced from early 1432 until the autumn of 1433, and the military clashes ended with Đurađ's conquest of Zvornik.⁴⁰

Diplomatic correspondence with the Serbian court was also maintained by Sandalj's successor, Voivode Stjepan Vukčić. In late 1443, several years after the Ottoman occupation of the Serbian Despotate, the Serbian-Hungarian coalition successfully completed a campaign against the Ottomans, enabling Despot Đurađ to regain most of his territory. During the Ottoman occupation of the Serbian Despotate, Voivode Stjepan assumed a hostile stance toward Despot Đurađ and seized border regions of his territory.⁴¹ In the spring of 1441, while Despot Đurađ was staying in Zeta, his only remaining possession, he attempted to establish communication with Voivode Stjepan through the mediation of Ragusa. However, Ragusa's diplomatic efforts toward Kosača were unsuccessful.⁴² Shortly afterward, Despot Đurađ and his

che amano veder bon amor e paxe tra la magnificentia vostra e quello de luy voiuada Radossau come amici comuni pregano instantemente la signoria vostra se digna acceptarlo per suo bon e fidel amico [159v]". (August 25, 1433) DAD, Lettere di Levante XI, 159–159v.

³⁸ "Allo acceptare de le pregere nostre a fatto el ditto signor de voler riceuer el hauer voiuada Radossau Paulouich in e per suo bono amigo molto ne piaxe et a zio vogliamo a say per nostra parte dobiati regratiarlo". (October 1, 1433) DAD, Lettere di Levante XI, 165.

³⁹ Junius Restius, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii item Joanis Gundulæ*, Zagrabiae 1893, 262–263.

⁴⁰ For more on this conflict, see: E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 128–142.

⁴¹ Јован Радонић, *Западна Европа и балкански народи према Турцима у првој половини XV века*, Нови Сад 1905, 91–180; Иван Божић, *Дубровник и Турска у XIV и XV веку*, Београд 1952, 77–103; Сима Ћирковић, *Херцег Стефан Вукчић Косача и његово доба*, Београд 1964, 46–70; Иван Божић, "Борба Стефана Вукчића и Млечана за Зету", in: *Историја Црне Горе II/2*, ed. Милинко Ђуровић, Титоград 1970, 199–211; Момчило Спремић, "Први пад Деспотовине", in: *Историја српског народа: Доба борби за очување и обнову државе (1371–1537)*, ed. Сима Ћирковић, Београд 1982, 241–253; idem, "Дуга војна и обнова државе", in: *Историја српског народа: Доба борби за очување и обнову државе (1371–1537)*, ed. Сима Ћирковић, Београд 1982, 254–267; М. Šunjić, *Vosna i Venecija*, 209–224; М. Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, 239–356; Миломир Максимовић, "Срби и Дуга војна 1443/1444. године", *Војноисторијски гласник 1* (2013) 45–69; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 152–187.

⁴² "chome se a exemplo de molti signori passati per ho la mia signoria considerando che lo signore despotto stagando nella signoria de Schiauonia della qual le chazato esser bon scudo

family moved to Ragusa, from where, during May, he secretly, but unsuccessfully, attempted to establish communication with Voivode Stjepan and Voivode Radoslav through Ragusan authorities.⁴³

The success of the coalition against the Ottomans motivated Bosnian magnates to send their envoys to Buda, to Hungarian King Vladislav and Despot Đurađ, who at that time were together. The Ragusan envoys to Voivode Stjepan informed their authorities in late December 1443 that Voivode Stjepan and other nobles had sent their representatives to King Vladislav and Despot Đurađ. Lacking detailed information, they instructed their ambassadors to inform them upon the envoys' return.⁴⁴ The outcome of these missions is unknown. However, in this case, it is entirely clear why the Bosnian nobles showed interest in King Vladislav and Despot Đurađ, given their successes in the war against the Ottomans, who represented the greatest threat to the entire territory of the Bosnian Kingdom. That communication between Kosača and Branković did exist is confirmed by the fact that in mid-December, the Despot's envoy Đurađ Golemović was present on Kosača's estate, where Stjepan granted him free passage.⁴⁵ Already in early January 1444, letters from Voivode Ivaniš Pavlović addressed to King Vladislav and Despot Đurađ arrived in Ragusa, and the authorities voted to have these letters delivered to the intended recipients.⁴⁶ The diplomatic contacts of Voivode Ivaniš are

alla Ungaria et anche alla Bosina et per lo simel voy esser bono schudo alla zitade nostra scutendo certa differentia et inimicia esser nata fra la magnificencia vostra et lo prefato signore despoto et desiderando come amico dell una parte et del altra vedi fra de voy bona paxe et unitade per euitare ogni mal effetto". (March 7, 1441) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 14. "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et eius Minori consilio scribendi domino dispoto notificando sibi respensionem habitam supra factis suis a voyuodam Stipano per literas nostrorum ambaxiatorum ad ipsum voyuodam existentium". (March 23, 1441) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum VII, 244v.

⁴³ "de excusando nos a petitione secreta facta per dominum dispotum nostro dominio et de regratiando sibi pro ea". "faciendi dictam excusationem et regratiationem cum illis melioribus et habilioribus verbis et modo quibus sibi videbiter conuenire pro ipsa petitione". The decision was not adopted: "de sequendo ambaxiatam mittendam ad voyuodam Stipanum et voyuodam Radossauum". The decision was not adopted: "de deliberando supra ambaxiatam mittenda ad voyuodam Stipanum et ad voyuodam Radossauum". "respondendi domino dispoto in facto dicte ambaxiate et scribendi voyuode Radossauo Paulouich superinde prout arreatum fuit in presenti consilio". (May 5, 1441) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum VIII, 2v.

⁴⁴ "Et perche sentemo per lo deto vauoda et altri signori della Bossina esser mandata il lor ambassadori alla mayestade dello re de Ungaria nostro signore et allo signore despoto". (January 2, 1444) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 139.

⁴⁵ "Apresso ve comettemo et dissemo che se stagando voy dela apresso del deto voyuoda Stipan algun messo vegnera mandato per Giuragh Golemouich per impetrare algun saluconduotto del dicto voyuoda". (December 9, 1443) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 137v.

⁴⁶ "de legendo literas sclauas missas de Bossina que dirriguntur serenissimo domino nostro regi Vladislauo et illustri domino dispoto Georgio". (January 7, 1444) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum IX, 2v. "de mittendo quibus dirriguntur duas litteras sclauas voyuode Iuanis lectas in presenti consilio". (January 7, 1444) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum IX, 3.

also quite evident as all the magnates from Bosnia were striving to join the Christian alliance against the Ottomans. In the background of these efforts by the Bosnian magnates to establish communication with the Hungarian King and the Serbian Despot, a new Christian crusade against the Ottomans was unfolding. It ended with the Battle of Varna in November 1444, during which the leader of the crusade, the Hungarian King Vladislav, lost his life.⁴⁷

Direct communication between Despot Đurađ and Voivode Stjepan certainly took place no later than October 1444, as can be seen from the decisions of the Ragusan Senate. At the end of October, the Ragusan authorities received information from their subjects in the Despotate about the potential arrival of Voivode Stjepan to Despot Đurađ.⁴⁸ At the same time, Stjepan was also communicating with the Ragusans, asking for advice regarding the negotiations he was conducting with Đurađ at that time.⁴⁹ The communication between Stjepan and Đurađ is further confirmed by a letter from King Stjepan Tomaš sent to the Venetian doge in March 1445, in which he wrote that the two had already reached an agreement, and that Kosača had ceded parts of Upper Zeta to the Despot, including the fortress of Medun, which he had held in his possession for several years.⁵⁰ The good relationship and apparent frequent communication between Kosača and Branković were something the Venetians sought to take advantage of. In mid-June, they asked Despot Đurađ to intervene in reconciling them with Voivode Stjepan.⁵¹ It is unknown whether Despot Đurađ had any role in the reconciliation between Kosača and Venice, but only two months after the mentioned letter, a peace agreement was reached.⁵²

In these volatile times, the relationship between the two neighbours soon deteriorated. The reconciliation with King Tomaš, confirmed by a political marriage between the Kotromanić and Kosača families in the spring of 1446, inevitably led to a worsening of relations between Voivode Stjepan and Despot Đurađ.⁵³ These were

⁴⁷ Pál Engel, *The Realm of St Stephen. A History of Medieval Hungary, 895–1526*, London – New York 2005, 287–288; Nevyan Mitev, “Notes on the campaign of Vladislav Varnenchik in northeastern Bulgaria in the autumn of 1444”, *Banatica* 26/2 (2015) 246–255.

⁴⁸ “de dando libertatem domino Rectori et suo Minori consilio scribendi nobilibus nostris existentibus ad illustrissimus dominum dispotum quia si voyuoda Stipanus aut aliquis alius suo nomine accedet in persona ad presentiam ipsius dominis despotis rogare debeant illo habiliori modo quo sibi videbitur ipsum dominum despotum”. (October 16, 1444) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum IX, 88v.

⁴⁹ “de deliberando ad consulendum supra itu voyuode Stipani ad illustrissimum dominum despotum”. (October 26, 1444) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum IX, 88v.

⁵⁰ (March 4, 1445) Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i Mletačke Republike* IX, Zagreb 1890, 215–216.

⁵¹ (June 11, 1445) S. Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 221.

⁵² (August 23, 1445) S. Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 226–229; Небојша Порчић & Невен Исаиловић, *Документи владара средњовековне Србије и Босне у венецијанским збиркама*, Београд 2019, 393–401.

⁵³ Pejo Ćošković, *Bosanska kraljevina u prijelomnim godinama 1443–1446*, Banja Luka 1988, 99–121.

periods marked by frequent shifts in political alliances, and even the alliance between Kosača and King Tomaš did not last long. Due to his good relations with King Tomaš, Voivode Stjepan lost the influence he had previously held with the Ottoman Sultan Murad II. Given that Despot Đurađ was, at that time, regarded as a person through whom Balkan rulers and nobles could improve their standing at the Ottoman court, Voivode Stjepan also acted according to that principle.⁵⁴

Evidence of Stjepan's communication with the Serbian royal court is found in a letter from Ragusa dated October 1447. The letter states that Stjepan had sent envoys to the Branković court, but that the actions of these envoys were obstructed, at the initiative of the Ragusan authorities, by Ragusan nobles in Smederevo, since the alliance was not in their interest. According to instructions, the Ragusan envoys were to remind Despot Đurađ of Kosača's earlier betrayal, when he switched sides and entered into an alliance with King Tomaš.⁵⁵ According to the preserved records, it appears that Stjepan's diplomacy at that time yielded no results, as it was thwarted by the actions of the Ragusans. A report by the Count of Korčula, Petar Soranzo, from March 1448, indicates that at the beginning of that year, the Ottoman army invaded the Bosnian territory. According to his account, the incursion was orchestrated by Despot Đurađ, who provided the Ottomans with guides, and the attack was triggered by the failure of a planned marriage between the Branković and Kosača families.⁵⁶ Despite the fact that no other sources mention the potential marriage arrangement between these two courts, this does not mean that there was no communication between their courts on the matter. Their frequent communication at that time is also supported by records from June 1448, when Stjepan addressed the Ragusans with a request for a copy of his earlier agreement with the Despot. It seems that Kosača had already reached a new agreement with Đurađ and needed the previous charter draft in order to draw up a new treaty. The Ragusans continued their efforts to obstruct their reconciliation and refused to provide a copy of the agreement.⁵⁷

At the same time, King Tomaš also established diplomatic communication with Despot Đurađ. For years, the Bosnian King had failed to regulate his relations with

⁵⁴ С. Ђирковић, *Херцег Стефан Вукчић Косача*, 98–99; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 193–196.

⁵⁵ "Et per tenuto per che abbiamo presentedo lo deto vayuoda Stipan nouamente ancor mandato li soy ambassadori allo signore despoto per tratar de far liga et unione tra de lor la quale chosa per modo alguno non voriamo che hauesse luogo ne effeto una per la presente nostra expressamente ve dissemo et requiremo che non luogo et tempo quando a voy parera debiati dare dilligentia et cura de dare auiso tanto allo deto signor despotto quanto alla despotessa et alli lor fioli chome lo deto vayuoda Stipan tal liga et paxe ponto non zercha per alguna utilidade". (October 18, 1447) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 244v.

⁵⁶ (March 12, 1448) Frane Radić, "Prilog za povjest slavenskoga juga god. 1448.", *Starine. Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti* 27 (1895) 227–228.

⁵⁷ "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et suo peruo consilio exusando nos a petitione facta per ambaxiatorum vayuode Stipani supra facto copie poueglie acordii inter dominum despotum et ipsum vayuodam Stipani". (June 26, 1448) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum X, 206.

the Ottoman Sultan, and Despot Đurađ was an extremely important figure in achieving this key goal. By May at the latest, Tomaš had sent him a diplomatic mission, but it produced no results. The Bosnian King blamed the failure of his envoys on the Ragusan officials Pasqual de Sorgo and Damian de Georgio, who held administrative positions at the Despot's court. However, all the Ragusan authorities could do for Tomaš was to reprimand their nobles for obstructing contact between King Tomaš and Despot Đurađ.⁵⁸ In the following years, it is also possible to trace diplomatic contacts between Tomaš and Đurađ. In mid-1451, during the conflict between Voivode Stjepan and the Republic of Ragusa, King Tomaš and Despot Đurađ appeared as potential key players in an alliance initiated by the Ragusan authorities, which was directed against Kosača. The unresolved relations between the Bosnian and Serbian rulers posed an obstacle to the formation of this alliance, prompting the authorities in Ragusa to take steps towards their reconciliation, recognising that such an alliance was of crucial importance to them.⁵⁹ According to preserved sources, communication and negotiations concerning reconciliation between the Bosnian and Serbian royal courts were underway by June 1451 at the latest. In mid-June, the Ragusan authorities proposed to King Tomaš that the disputed area – the Srebrenik fortress, be temporarily placed under their control, to facilitate easier negotiations. Should the negotiations fail, the fortress would be returned to Tomaš.⁶⁰ More detailed information on the negotiations between the Bosnian and Serbian royal courts has been preserved from July 1451. At the beginning of the month, the Ragusan authorities sent a diplomatic mission to Despot Đurađ, emphasising the importance of his reconciliation with King Tomaš for the sake of a united stance against Kosača.⁶¹

⁵⁸ "In questi zorni passati la maiestadi del re Thomas de Bossina ne a scritto per sue lettere lamentadose grandemente di vuy et digando che per due volte per suggestione operation vostra non e seguito lo acordio tra luy e lo detto signor despoto, la qualcosa non credemo puncto anzi credemo tuto questo esser processo da maliouoli inimici vostri lo natural deli quali e sempre de seminar discordia doue puono". (May 27, 1448) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 261vbis. "de induciendo super querelam quam dominus rex Thomas Bosine facit per suas litteras supra ser Pasqualem de Sorgo et ser Damianum de Georgio nobiles nostros". (June 3, 1448) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum X, 199v. "de firmando literam scriptam ser Pasquali de Sorgo ceonich domini despotis et ser Damiano de Georgio ciuilibet nobilibus nostris in Smedreuo lectis in presenti consilio". (June 17, 1448) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum X, 203; (July 27, 1448) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIII, 264v.

⁵⁹ For more on the formation of the aforementioned alliance, see: С. Ђирковић, *Херцег Стефан Вукчић Косача*, 160–161; М. Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, 432–436; Е. Дедић, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 211–219.

⁶⁰ "de firmando correctionem comissionis ambassiatorum nostrorum iturorum ad dominum despotum, videlicet, ad partem que aspectat maiestatis regis Bosine de domino despoto". The second proposal was adopted: "de corrigendo iterorum", "de firmando dictam correctionem factam". (June 15, 1451) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XII, 80v. "possendi declarare in commissione ambassiatorum pro facto castris de Strebernich." (June 17, 1451) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XII, 81v; (June 17, 1451) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 1–4.

⁶¹ DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 153–153v; (July 8, 1451) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XII, 98v.

Behind the scenes, diplomatic negotiations between Tomaš and Đurađ were taking place. In mid-July, the Ragusans instructed their envoy at Đurađ's court to inform them promptly once the negotiations were concluded.⁶² At the end of July, the Ragusan envoys sent a letter from Smederevo stating that reconciliation and an agreement had been reached between Tomaš and Đurađ, and that, in accordance with the terms, the Serbian Despot had assumed administration of Srebrenik.⁶³

Their communication deepened even further the following year. According to reports from Ragusa in March 1452, a joint delegation of Despot Đurađ and King Tomaš had recently visited the Ottoman court, with the aim of regulating the status of the Bosnian King in relation to Sultan Mehmed II.⁶⁴ A few months later, a personal meeting between Tomaš and Đurađ also took place. According to the Ragusan sources, preparations for this meeting began as early as June 1452. In mid-July, the Ragusan Senate decided to compose a letter to their envoy at King Tomaš's court, instructing him to accompany Tomaš to his meeting with the Despot.⁶⁵ The time and place of the meeting between King Tomaš and Despot Đurađ can be deduced from their movements in late summer and early autumn of 1452. It is most likely that the meeting took place in October, near Srebrenica or Teočak. Around the same time, a Bosnian state assembly was convened in connection with this meeting.⁶⁶ Based on the current political situation, the history of their mutual relations, and some details found in later sources, it is possible to outline the reasons for the meeting between the Bosnian and Serbian rulers. Considering their earlier negotiations, this meeting was very likely part of the reconciliation agreement initiated a year earlier. Since both rulers were still within the circle of Ragusa's allies in the conflict between Voivode Stjepan and the Republic of Ragusa, it is quite certain that this, too, may have been a topic of their meeting. Sources indicate that after the meeting with King Tomaš, the Despot was, by late October, in the village of Radalje near Zvornik.⁶⁷ At the same time,

⁶² "Et questi per che sempre la sua maiesta ha detto che questi cosse non se pono ben concluder fieri che esso re non sia de acordio e fatta la paxi con lo signor despot. Se che nuy non aspetino altro pregemo la sua maiesta che subito habiando fatta la paxe con lo deto signor despot ne voglia auisar per che subito siando auisati ne daremo per far le conclusione". (July 18, 1451) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 152.

⁶³ "per le bone e gratiose nouelle dele qual ne hauete auisate li ma per lo castello de Strebrenich esser dato in man del signor despot. E per la paxe fata tra lo detti signor despot et re". (August 13, 1451) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 138.

⁶⁴ "Per che oramai doueraueno esser ritornati li ambassadori del signor despot e quelli del re dala Porta ouer almancho se doueraue sauer como hano fato per tanto auisatene circa cio de tuto quello che e segnuto che vuy sauete". DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 122.

⁶⁵ "respondendi litteris domini Aluysi de Goze scribendo sibi quod sequitur regem si ibit ad colloquium cum domino despoto". (July 12, 1452) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIII, 51v.

⁶⁶ (September 12, 1452) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 85; (October 1452) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 10; (October 8, 1452) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIII, 93v.

⁶⁷ "receuessemo una vostra fatta in villa Radaglie apresso Suonich ale 25 del passato". (November 22, 1452) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIV, 113. "de induciando pro facto literarum habitatum de

a letter from Ragusa reported that Despot Đurađ had achieved his objectives regarding Zvornik.⁶⁸

It is evident that Tomaš's recognition of Despot Đurađ's authority over Zvornik, which Đurađ had previously conquered, was part of their agreement, perhaps even one of the key elements of their meeting. During this meeting, Tomaš also agreed to act on Despot's behalf in Venice. In December of the same year, Tomaš's envoys mediated Đurađ's reconciliation with the Venetian authorities, emphasising that this mediation had been arranged upon during their earlier meeting.⁶⁹ Later sources do not continue to follow Tomaš's mediating role in these negotiations. With the data presented here, the record of communication between Tomaš and Đurađ comes to an end.

Ragusan sources shed light on the diplomatic communication between Vladislav, the son of Voivode Stjepan Kosača, and Despot Đurađ. According to a statement by official Pasqual de Sorgo from February 1453, Vladislav's delegation was present at Đurađ's court with the aim of establishing a marital alliance between their families.⁷⁰ These were negotiations for a marriage between Vladislav and Anna Kantakouzene, the cousin of Despot Đurađ Branković's wife, Jerina. Anna was the daughter of George Palaiologos Kantakouzenos and the great-granddaughter of Emperor Matthew Kantakouzenos.⁷¹ The communication between the Kosača and Branković courts on this matter lasted longer than initially expected. From the Ragusan perspective, activities surrounding the arrangement of this marriage were mentioned in June;⁷² meanwhile, in November 1453, Voivode Stjepan invited the Venetian authorities to the wedding of his son Vladislav with the bride from Despot Đurađ's court.⁷³ However, even at that time, the wedding did not take place. The marriage was finally celebrated in October 1455, which clearly indicates that negotiations for this political marriage were renewed shortly before the wedding, though the sources do not provide more

ceonicho domini despoti et aliis nostris ciuibus et ambassatoribus". (November 8, 1452) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIII, 109. "de firmando literam scriptam ser Pasquali de Sorgo ceonich lectam in presenti consilio", "de firmando literam scriptam nostro ambassiatori et nobilibus qui sunt apud dominum despotum". (November 21, 1452) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIII, 113.

⁶⁸ "Io signor dispot ha havuta la sua intention de Suonich se cossi e andarete ala presentia sua". (November 22, 1452) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIV, 113v.

⁶⁹ (December 22, 1452) S. Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 456.

⁷⁰ "Et etiam hauemo inteso come vayuoda Vladissau mando li sui ambadori al signor despot per lo fato de quella parentela che vuy savete". (February 20, 1453) DAD, Lettere di Levante XV, 53.

⁷¹ See the broader context surrounding these diplomatic activities in: Радивој Радић, "Ана Кантакузина – византијска невеста у кући Косача", *Зборник за историју Босне и Херцеговине* 2 (1997) 119–137; E. Dedić, "Serbian Princesses at the Bosnian Courts in the 15th Century", 242–246.

⁷² (June 20, 1453) DAD, Lettere di Levante XIV, 120.

⁷³ (November 5, 1453) & (November 15, 1453) Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i Mletačke Republike X*, Zagreb 1891, 19, 22, 23.

detailed information about them.⁷⁴ The marriage of Vladislav and Anna finally led to the execution of diplomatic negotiations that were led for years between Branković and Kosača courts, laying the foundations for improved political relations.

The examples presented indicate that communication between the Serbian and Bosnian courts primarily involved correspondence between the Kosačas and the Lazarevićs, and later the Brankovićs. In addition to the Kosača family, Bosnian rulers from the Kotromanić dynasty, and more rarely, the noble Pavlović family, also established communication with the Serbian royal court. The political actions of the Bosnian nobility, such as the Dinjičić and Zlatonosović families, whose estates were located in the border territories near the Serbian Despotate, suggest that they also maintained contact with the Serbian despots. A particularly notable case is that of Petar Kovačević (Dinjičić), who in the autumn of 1443 joined the Christian coalition in the conflict with the Ottomans, and afterward became involved in arrangements with Despot Đurađ regarding the governance of Srebrenica.⁷⁵ However, the preserved sources contain no direct or explicit records of their diplomatic communication, which is why such examples are not presented in this article. Although fragmentary, the analysed data represent credible traces of lost communication, offering insight into the diplomatic correspondence between the Bosnian and Serbian courts during the 15th century.

⁷⁴ “de firmando commissionem dandam ambassiatori iturus ad nuptias comite Vladissauī excepto capitulo temporis quo habent stare”. (September 30, 1455) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIV, 213v; DAD, Lettere di Levante XIV, 176. “de franchando ab eorum ambassiatā ser Jacobum Pe. de Bona et ser Nicolam de Palmota qui fuerunt ambassiatores ad nuptias comite Vladissauī”. (October 25, 1455) DAD, Acta Consilii Rogatorum XIV, 222v.

⁷⁵ Срђан Рудић, *Босанска властела у XV веку. Просопографска студија*, Београд – Бања Лука 2021, 69; E. Dedić, *The Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate (1402–1459)*, 184, 313.

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**ИЗГУБЉЕНИ АРХИВ:
ТРАГОВИ КОМУНИКАЦИЈЕ ИЗМЕЂУ
БОСАНСКИХ И СРПСКИХ ДВОРОВА У 15. СТОЛЕЂУ КОЈА НИЈЕ САЧУВАНА**

Резиме

Дипломатска комуникација између средњовековних владара и властелина представља један од основних облика извора и основу за истраживање међусобних односа појединих актера или комплетних држава током средњег века. Међусобна комуникација између босанских и српских владара и властелина у 15. столећу није сачувана. Сачуван је само један дипломатички документ између владара и властеле ових земаља. Ради се о повељи краља Стјепана Томаша логотету Стефану Ратковићу из 1458. године, сачињеној у време преговора око венчања Стјепана Томашевића и Јелене, кћерке деспота Лазара Бранковића. Дипломатска комуникација између дворова и појединаца из ових земаља се свакако одвијала. Пронађен је одређен број докумената дубровачке и венецијанске провенијенције у којима су изричито наведене информације о међусобној комуникацији. Истраживање је показало како је ова дипломатска комуникација била поприлично фреквентна. Кроз наведене документе се уочава директна комуникација између Котроманића, Косача, Павловића са дворовима Лазаревића и Бранковића у периоду који обухвата егзистирање Српске Деспотовине од 1402. до 1459. године. Поред трагова о директној комуникацији, уз компарацију ових навода са актуелном политичком ситуацијом у Босни, Српској Деспотовини и ширем региону могуће је понудити и потенцијалне поводе ових контаката и теме о којима се дискутовало. Посебан куриозитет представља неколико података о потенцијалним посетама српских деспота дворовима у Босни или одлазак властелина из Босне на простор Српске Деспотовине. Комуникација између ових дворова најчешће је подразумевала преговоре око склапања савеза, измирења, окончања сукоба, молбе и упите за посредовање, те склапање политичких бракова.