



Battle for Silver: Srebrenica Between Bosnian Kings and Serbian Despots in the 15th Century

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ABSTRACT

Mutual relations between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Serbian Despotate can be observed in the period between 1402, when Prince Stefan Lazarević received the title of despot from John VII Palaeologus, until the Ottoman conquest of the Despotate in 1459. The most significant conflicts between Bosnian rulers and nobles with Serbian despots were fought over the rich Srebrenica silver mine. This town, with the fortress of Srebrenik, was located in the Middle Podrinje region, near the river Drina, which in this area represented the border between the two countries. The stronger economic rise of Srebrenica was followed during the 14th century when it gradually developed and became one of the most important mines in Southeast Europe. The seeds of the conflict around Srebrenica were sown by the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg. The Hungarian king first managed to get Srebrenica for himself, and then in the period 1411–1413, he handed it over to his vassal, despot Stefan. From this time until the end of the existence of the Serbian Despotate in 1459, Srebrenica changed its owner several times. Bosnian kings, nobles, and Serbian despots took part in the conflicts around Srebrenica, and in certain periods specific agreements were established regarding the ownership of this place, which brought in large revenues. A solid number of sources about Srebrenica have been preserved in the State Archives in Dubrovnik due to the fact that the Ragusan merchants and craftsmen saw great economic potential in this place and established a large colony. The interests of the Ragusan authorities were moving in the direction of obtaining timely information from this place, and they often sent delegations to conduct diplomatic negotiations with the local authorities regarding the status of their citizens in this place.

KEYWORDS

Srebrenica, Bosnian Kingdom, Serbian Despotate, mine, silver, border, wars, 15th century

Silver ore deposits in the Middle Podrinje region were exploited intensively in ancient times by the Romans. In the wider area of Srebrenica in ancient times, the city of Domavia was established, which reached its peak in the 3rd century, becoming the centre of the Roman mining administration in the provinces of Pannonia and Dalmatia. Archaeological excavations have revealed traces of strong ore exploitation in

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this area, in addition to silver, lead exploitation was also present on a smaller scale. In the immediate vicinity in ancient times, the administrative centre of the municipium Malvesiatium in Skelani also played an important role. Due to the exceptional importance of the numerous mining pits that were located in the immediate vicinity, the Romans named the entire area Argentaria. The migration of peoples and the penetration of barbarian tribes at the time of the collapse of the Roman Empire led to the collapse of these mining centres.²

According to sources, the Middle Podrinje region has been monitored as an integral part of the medieval Bosnian state since the 12th century at the latest, when the Drina River was mentioned as a border between Bosnia and Serbia in an anonymous chronicle entitled *Gesta Reg (n) um Sclavorum* and in the work of the Byzantine historian John Cinnamus.³ Certainly, Srebrenica was in the possession of Bosnian rulers, but until the first half of the 14th century, the political and economic situation in the area was unclear. It is at this time that ore exploitation is increasing in the wider area of Southeast Europe. This phenomenon is certainly closely related to the increase in demand and the jump in silver prices in Europe, and the arrival of excellent Saxon miners in the late 13th and early 14th centuries, originally in Serbia and then in Bosnia. Sources have been monitoring the exploitation of silver mines in the Middle Podrinje region since the middle of the 14th century, but taking into account the fact that mines in Serbia, such as those in Trešnjica and Lipnik near Srebrenica, have been working intensively since the early 14th century. The opinion that this is the time frame in which the beginning of the exploitation of Srebrenica mines should be positioned is quite justified.⁴ This is supported by the charter of Ban Stjepan II Kotromanić (1322–1353) from October 1339, which gives merchants from Trogir freedom of movement with their goods, citing gold, silver, copper and other metals.⁵ Srebrenica was first mentioned in sources in August 1352, and on that occasion, the Ragusans who live in this place have already been mentioned. Certainly, the preservation of the original material is extremely poor, and in this case, it greatly narrowed the boundaries of what is known about this place. The exploitation of Srebrenica mines certainly took place decades earlier, especially taking into account the fact that data on Ragusan goldsmiths in this area have been preserved in sources from previous years.⁶

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- 2 E. PAŠALIĆ, *O antičkom rudarstvu u Bosni i Hercegovini*, in: *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja NS (A)*, Vol. IX, Sarajevo 1954, pp. 60–64; I. BOJANOVSKI, *Bosna i Hercegovina u antičko doba*, ANUBIH Vol. LXVI, CBI No. 6, Sarajevo 1988, pp. 212–217; E. IMAMOVIĆ, *Srebrenica i okolica u rimsko doba*, in: *Članci i građa za kulturnu istoriju istočne Bosne*, Vol. XVII, Tuzla 2002, pp. 10–17.
 - 3 V. MOŠIN, *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina*, Matica Hrvatska, Zagreb 1950, pp. 54–55; G. OSTROGORSKI — F. BARIŠIĆ, *Vizantijski izvori za istoriju naroda Jugoslavije*, Vol. IV, Vizantološki institut SANU, Beograd 1971, p. 28.
 - 4 M. DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni*, Vol. I, SKA, Beograd 1978, pp. 46–48.
 - 5 T. SMIČIKLAS, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. X (1332–1342), *Academia scientiarum et artium slavorum meridionalium auxilio regiminis Croat., Dalm. et Slav., Zagrabrae* 1912, pp. 494–495.
 - 6 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, pp. 48–49; D. KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ, *Srednjovekovna Srebrenica XIV-XV vijek*, SANU, Beograd 2010, pp. 14–15.



In the second half of the 14th century, during the reign of Ban and King Tvrtko I (1353–1377; 1377–1391), Srebrenica appeared more and more frequently in Ragusan sources. During this period, a colony was formed in Srebrenica, which houses Ragusan merchants, craftsmen of various profiles, tenants of mining shafts and customs, and various other business people who saw the richness of Srebrenica mines. Silver ore from Srebrenica was transported further to Apulia, Sicily, Naples, Pisa, Florence, Venice, and the Levant via Ragusa and other Dalmatian cities. Through Venice, silver from Srebrenica reached the cities of Central and Western Europe. This phenomenon contributed to the accelerated economic development of this place, so at the beginning of the 15th century, Srebrenica grew into one of the most important and most developed urban settlements in the then-Bosnian state. In Srebrenica, there was a mint of Bosnian rulers. Srebrenica experienced its greatest economic rise in the first half of the 15th century, while after the Ottoman conquest of this place in 1462 there was an economic decline. The possession of Srebrenica brought the Bosnian rulers extremely large contributions, which they collected from leasing mining pits and various customs duties they collected. According to some general estimates, the annual production of mines in Srebrenica at the time of the largest volume of production was 5–6 tons of silver. Wealthy nobles and citizens appeared as tenants of mining pits and customs, and in this way, the Bosnian rulers generated a net income without major interference in the conduct of business.⁷

BEGINNING OF THE 15TH CENTURY

At the beginning of the 15th century, Srebrenica was in the possession of Bosnian kings, originally King Ostoja (1398–1404; 1409–1418), and from 1404 King Tvrtko II (1404–1409; 1421–1443). The then possession of Srebrenica is clearly illustrated by letters from the Ragusan authorities to its citizens in Srebrenica informing them of their relations with Bosnian rulers and attempts to abolish new duties in Srebrenica that were contrary to earlier customs.⁸ Changes in the ownership of Srebrenica can

7 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, pp. 48–54; D. KOVAČEVIĆ, *Dubrovčani zanatlije u srednjovekovnoj Srebrenici*, in: *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, Vol. XV, Sarajevo 1964, pp. 26–27, 38–44; B. HRABAK, *Prodaja proizvoda bosanskog rudarstva u Veneciji i Mlečanima u Dalmaciji*, in: *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, Vol. XXI–XXVII, Sarajevo 1976, pp. 59, 61–65; D. KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ, *O rudarskoj proizvodnji u srednjovekovnoj Bosni*, in: *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine*, Vol. XXXIV, Sarajevo 1983, pp. 118–122; KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ, *Srednjovekovna Srebrenica XIV–XV vijek*, pp. 14–19.

8 (28.3.1403) Dubrovnik State Archives (hereafter: DSA) Reformationes (hereafter Ref.) XXXII, 33v; “de notificando mercatoribus nostris existentibus in mercato Srebernize modos et condicionis ocurssis inter nos et exercitus Bosne. Et de dimittendo in eorum arbitrio modos se saluandi cum personis et eorum habere in illis locis quibus mellius videbitur eis se posse saluare sine aliquo termino” (17.7.1403) Ref. XXXII, 159; “Item se vigneri a concluder paxe debiate dir al Re come in so tempo li nostri mercadanti in Narento, in Souixochi, in Srebrenica et in molti altri luogì del reame foron agrauati” (30.3.1404) DSA Lettere di Levante (thereafter: Lett. di Lev.) IV, 64; M. PUCIĆ, *Spomenici srpski od 1395.-1423. to est*



be seen in a Ragusan complaint dated May 1405. These were the circumstances of war diplomacy at a time when Bosnia and its leader, Duke Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić, were at war with Hungary. On that occasion, in Srebrenica, Hrvoje's people stole letters from Hungary for the Bosnian aristocracy from Ragusan couriers. In this whole case, some citizens of Ragusa found themselves on Hrvoje's side.⁹ This information illustrates that Srebrenica was under the rule of Duke Hrvoje from May 1405 at the latest. Certain problems that Hrvoje's sister Vučica had in the first half of 1404 were a possible framework for Hrvoje's efforts to annex Srebrenica to his estate.¹⁰ However, the chronological sequence of events does not indicate the ultimate viability of this thesis. Sources do not provide a clear description of Hrvoje's occupation of Srebrenica. The sequence of events points to the fact that the change in ownership of Srebrenica took place in 1404, at the time of his removal from the Bosnian throne when King Ostoja was briefly replaced by Tvrtko II, the son of the famous King Tvrtko I.

Hrvoje led the Bosnian aristocracy, which gained privileges when electing a new king, while Hrvoje, among other things, won Srebrenica. In parallel with Hrvoje's takeover of Srebrenica, the Ragusan chronicler Restius records the conquest of Srebrenica and Kliševac by the Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437) in 1405, during the war between Bosnia and Hungary.¹¹ Restius' quote in historiography introduced broader calculations and a kind of intricacy.¹² The occupation of Srebrenica and Kliševac by the same matrix by Hungary is mentioned by another Ragusan chronicler, Mavro Orbin.¹³ The possible Hungarian occupation of Srebrenica in those years is not recorded by other sources.

pima pisana od Republike dubrovačke Kraljevima, Despotima, Voivodama i Knezovima Srbskiem, Bosanskiem i Primorskiem, Vol. I, Beograd 1858, Primedbe IV-VII.

9 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni* I, p. 55.

10 M. Dinić took into account that Hrvoje's sister was married to the Zlatonosović family, Srebrenica's immediate neighbors. DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni* I, p. 39. 39. At the beginning of March 1404, Vučica, together with her sons Vuk and Brnivoje, received permission to come to Ragusa in case of danger. LJ. STOJANOVIĆ, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, Vol. I/1, SKA, Beograd-Sremski Karlovci 1929, p. 487. Other information pointing to the problems between Vučica and Hrvoje contains a letter from the Ragusan authorities dated 29 May 1404. However, the context of that letter provides information that Srebrenica is still in the possession of the Bosnian king.

11 "Ostoja vedendosi prevenuto, comincio in fretta ammassar un esercito di quindici mila uomini per vendicarsi; ma li Ragusei, che intanto avevano fatto entrare in grazia di Sigismondo il duca Harvoje, fecero, con qualche sovvegno di denari datili, che Harvoje entrasse in Bossina con buone truppe. E nel medesimo tempo le truppe di Sigismondo, entrate pur in quel regno, occuparono Srebarniza e Cruscevaz, dal che stordito Ostoja si fermo alla difesa della Bossina, senza poter portare la guerra sul paese della republica, come desiderava." RESTIUS, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii item Joanis Gundulae*, Monumenta spectantia historiam slavorum meridionalium, Zagrabiae, 1893, p. 208.

12 T. VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrnica u srednjem veku*, in: *Glasnik Državnog muzeja u Sarajevu*, (NS) Vol. 1, Sarajevo 1946, p. 56.

13 M. ORBIN, *Kraljevstvo Slovena*, SKZ, Beograd 1968, pp. 157–158.



THE BEGINNING OF THE PLOT

Srebrenica, together with the surrounding towns, especially the forts Brodar and Susjed, was part of Hrvoje's estates no later than May 1410, when it became Hungarian property by an agreement between Hrvoje and Sigismund. At the end of May, the Ragusans wrote to Sigismund that they had received information from their merchants that Srebrenik, Kučlat, Brodar and Susjed with Srebrenica had become Hungarian possessions, congratulating their suzerain.¹⁴ After many years of fighting, Hrvoje reconciled with Sigismund in 1409, and the Hungarian king appointed him viceroy of Bosnia in early 1410.¹⁵ Given the economic importance of owning Srebrenica, the ceding of this mining centre to Hungarians was the basis on which the little-known agreement between Sigismund and his vassal Hrvoje rested.¹⁶ However, taking into account that the appropriation of Srebrenica to the Hungarian crown did not weaken the position of King Ostoja, who regained power in 1409. At that time, the Bosnian king had no influence on the situation in Srebrenica, and the agreement between Hrvoje and Sigismund implied broader and longer-term plans. From the Hungarian territories in this part of Bosnia, Sigismund formed the Usora region under the direct Hungarian administration, first under the city castellans, and then the bans of Hungary.¹⁷ Sigismund stayed on the stretch between Srebrenica, Kliševac, Drina and Sremska Rača on the Sava, expecting the opportunity to be crowned with the Bosnian crown, from the beginning of October to the beginning of November 1410. During his stay in Srebrenica, Sigismund issued a charter in October.¹⁸

The establishment of Hungarian rule in Srebrenica brought some changes. According to the data from the Ragusan letter, addressed to the Buda court in April 1411, the Ragusan authorities complained about the Hungarian customs officer Daniel in Srebrenica and asked the king for permission to trade freely. The Ragusans pointed out that at the time when Srebrenica was in the hands of the Bosnian king and Hrvoje, they did not pay any additional duties and they freely crossed from Srebrenica to Serbia. They instructed the Hungarians that they could find out about these rights from the Bosnian noblemen Zlatonosovićs and Dinjičićs, whose estates were in the immediate vicinity of Srebrenica.¹⁹ In late March and early April, the Ragusan authorities

14 (30.5.1410) J. GELCICH-L. THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, Kiadja a m. tud. akadémia tört. bizottsága, Budapest 1887, pp. 193–195. On Hrvoje's ceding of Srebrenica and neighboring towns to King Sigismund, see: N. ISAILOVIĆ, *Jedan nepoznati izvor o predaji gradova Hrvoja Vukčića Hrvatinića ugarskom kralju Žigmundu 1410. godine*, in: *Istorijski časopis*, Vol. LXIV, Beograd 2015, pp. 144–146.

15 S. ĆIRKOVIĆ, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, SKZ, Beograd 1964, p. 214; D. LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti (Sveta kruna ugarska i sveta kruna bosanska) 1387–1463*, Synopsis, Zagreb — Sarajevo 2006, p. 148; J. MRGIĆ, *Severna Bosna 13.-16. vek*, Istorijski institut SANU, Beograd 2008, p. 104.

16 LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 150.

17 ĆIRKOVIĆ, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, p. 214.

18 LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 152.

19 "Quia rellacione nostrorum mercatorum habitantum in Srebreniça percepimus ad unum vostrum ibi pro gubernatore gabellarum dicti loci quo ut nome Deus respectando quod ex-tis Latini lotamum heximie sperantes ... vostra nobilitas aliqua sinistra informatione non

discussed providing copies of privileges so that their traders could invoke them to protect their interests.²⁰

The further development of Ragusan's appeals to Sigismund remains in the shadow of the events of mid-April when the Bosnian army attacked Srebrenica. We are observing the event through the lens of Ragusan diplomatic activity. In mid-April, the Ragusan authorities decided to write to Bosnian Duke Sandalj Hranić Kosača about the capture and looting of traders in Srebrenica.²¹ At the end of April, they respond to his diplomat²² and at the same time send a letter which shows how the correspondence between these parties has been done before. The Republic begs Sandalj not to harm their traders who were taken from Srebrenica if they found themselves on his property.²³ The Ragusans give a broader description of the events in a letter to their suzerain Sigismund from the beginning of May of the same year. According to them, there was an attack on Srebrenica in which the Ragusan merchants were killed, who together with the Hungarians set out to defend the place. They begged to recommend their merchants to the authorities there and hoped that the Hungarian king would respond adequately to these events.²⁴ Considering the chronology of correspondence, the attack on Srebrenica certainly took place in the first half of April 1411. It is not clear in the Ragusan letters who the attacker was. Bearing in mind the fact that this was the time of the conflict between Bosnia and Hungary, earlier approaches pointed out the Bosnian barons as attackers, with special emphasis on the character of Duke Sandalj as the leader of the Bosnian side.²⁵ In addition to the standard ambitions to

moueret se contra antiquam consuetu ... a principio dominorum de Bosna ciuibus nostris in Srebernica etiamdo locorum circha vicinus illam vobis presentibus duximus ... cum eorum mercanciis veniebant in Srebernica franchi ab omni dano et gabella ... [4v] ... Et hoc videre potest per literas eis factas et post per Regis Bosne et per magnificum dominum ducum Cheruoye et alios [5]" (5.4.1411) Lett. di Lev. VII, 4v–5; VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrnica u srednjem veku*, p. 56; D. DINIĆ-KNEŽEVIĆ, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska u srednjem veku*, Filozofski fakultet-Institut za istoriju, Novi Sad 1986, p. 76.

20 (31.3.1411) (4.4.1411) Ref. XXXIII, 183v, 293.

21 "rescribendi voyuode Sandali supra capcione nostrorem ciuium et derobacionem facta in Srebernica ciuibus nostris" (16.4.1411) Ref. XXXIII, 293v.

22 (29.4.1411) Ref. XXXIII, 294.

23 (28.4.1411) PUCIĆ, *Spomenici srpski I*, p. 102; (25. 4. 1411) STOJANOVIĆ, *Povelje i pisma I/1*, p. 280.

24 (8.5.1411) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, pp. 200–201. DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, pp. 56–57; VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrnica u srednjem veku*, p. 56; LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 166.

25 DINIĆ-KNEŽEVIĆ, *Dubrovnik i Ugarska u srednjem veku*, p. 76; P. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Tvrtko II Tvrtković — Bosna u prvoj polovini XV stoljeća*, Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo, 1981, p. 66; MRGIĆ, *Severna Bosna*, p. 104. Radonić and Šišić believe that in 1411 the Hungarians had to retake Srebrenica. F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Vojvoda Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić i njegovo doba*, Izdanje "Matice hrvatske", Zagreb 1902, p. 223; J. RADONIĆ, *O knezu Pavlu Padenoviću — Priložak istoriji Bosne krajem XIV. i poč. XV. veka*, in: *Letopis Matice Srpske*, Vol. 211, No. 1, Novi Sad 1902, p. 54. Ćorović believes that this is a rebellion of the local population. V. ĆOROVIĆ, *Historija Bosne*, SKA, Beograd 1940, p. 406.



regain the rich mine, the Bosnian side could be motivated to attack Srebrenica by innovations introduced at the beginning of April 1411 at the latest, which were to the detriment of the local population. The presented Ragusan letter, sent to Sigismund at the beginning of May 1411, represents the chronologically last information about the Hungarian rule in Srebrenica.

APPLE OF DISCORD

Tensions between the Bosnian and Hungarian authorities calmed down as early as the beginning of May 1411. An indicator of this process is the permission of the Ragusan authorities to allow its traders to go to Bosnia and Despotate without hindrance.²⁶ The undertaken activities towards reconciliation between Bosnians and Hungarians, at the end of May, conditioned additional calming of the situation in Srebrenica. The attack on Srebrenica in April was a credible indicator of the value of Srebrenica's possessions, but also of Hungary's inability to maintain the conquered possessions deeper on Bosnian soil. The next information about Srebrenica from May 1413 refers to the contract of Ragusan artisans on the completion of works on a church in Srebrenica. According to the contract, the two stonemasons were to go *ad partes Sclauonie ad locum Srebernize*. This is precise information that indicates the already established rule of the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević (1389/1402–1427) in Srebrenica.²⁷ A later letter from Ragusa to the Hungarian king from August 1415 indicates that Srebrenica was handed over by the Hungarian king to a Serbian despot.²⁸

The strengthened relations between Sigismund and the despot Stefan were noticeable in July 1411, when the despot stayed in Buda and was rewarded for his loyalty to the Hungarian crown. At that time, the Serbian despot received, among other things, the mining towns of Szátmar, Némethi, Nagybánya, and Felsőbánya.²⁹ Sigismund's surrender of the estate is also testified by Stefan's biographer Constantine the Philosopher, who states that the despot resided in Buda in 1412 and was awarded the estate.³⁰ A Ragusan delegation, searching for Sigismund in November 1412, headed near Srebrenica, to the territory of Zlatonosovićs, where they had to inquire about the location of the Hungarian king.³¹ Although the Ragusan estimate was not precise enough, the Hungarian king was probably near Srebrenica. However, this allegation is difficult to connect with the Hungarian possession of Srebrenica in November 1412.

26 (2. 5. 1411) Ref. XXXIII, 294.

27 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, p. 57.

28 "Srebernizam, quam vestra serenitas dedit magnifico despoto Rassie" (18.8.1415) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 251.

29 J. RADONIĆ, *Sporazum u Tati 1426 i srpsko ugarski odnosi od XIII-XVI veka*, in: Glas SKA, Vol. CLXXXVII, Beograd 1941, p. 158.

30 V. JAGIĆ, *Konstantin Filozof i njegov život Stefana Lazarevića despota srpskog*, in: Glasnik SUD, Vol. 42, pp. 311–312.

31 (9.11.1412) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 210–211.



The silence of the sources between May 1411 and May 1413 formed a lack of precise knowledge which was interpreted in historiography through several assumptions based on the presented data.³² The main disadvantage of these constructions is based on the fact that the events in which Sigismund gifted the despot's estates were taken into account. There would certainly be a place in these charters to mention one of the richest mining centres in this part of Europe. The information about Sigismund's gift of property at the Buda ceremonies, given by the despot's biographer Constantine the Philosopher, represents the framework when Srebrenica could change its owner, given the fact that no charter on the allocation of territories from the middle of 1412 has been preserved.

According to further indicators, after the first mention of Srebrenica as part of the Despotate, the established trade routes through Bosnian territory went smoothly.³³ At the beginning of March 1414, there were the first complaints of the Ragusans about the introduction of new duties in Srebrenica. The Ragusans discussed sending letters to despot Stefan, customs officers and their merchants in Srebrenica.³⁴ A letter written for Ragusan merchants shows that the problems in Srebrenica broke out due to customs and duties.³⁵ The data presented in this letter indicate that after the takeover of Srebrenica, Despot Stefan confirmed to the Ragusans the privileges they previously had from King Tvrtko I. These changes in trade principles in Srebrenica should be seen as a new policy of despots towards Ragusan merchants, because the authorities, in parallel with the events in Srebrenica in February 1414, complained about the problems of merchants in the mine in Novo Brdo in Serbian Despotate.³⁶ At the beginning of June, a letter was sent to Marinus Gradi, a citizen and customs officer from Ragusa, in which they pointed out that merchants were complaining about him because he took off loads of goods at the crossing over the Drina and charged double the price per load.³⁷ The efforts of the Ragusans to annul the introduced news were not successful. During December 1414, a long-running debate began between the Ragusan authorities and Despot Stefan over the problems of the Ragusans, from whom the despot's officials confiscated silver.³⁸ The Ragusans complained to Despot Stefan about the duties in Srebrenica that harmed their subjects and violated the old privileges granted by the kings Tvrtko I, Dabiša (1391–1395), Duke Hrvoje, but also the despot himself.³⁹

32 On the models of the chronological framework of Sigismund's ceding of Srebrenica to despot Stefan in detail in: VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrenica u srednjem veku*, p. 57.

33 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, pp. 34–35.

34 (5.3.1414) Ref. XXXIV, 216–216v.

35 "dati a sauer le nouita nel fare el signor despotto contra de vuy metando dohana ouer colta ali mercadanti Ragusei" (6.3.1414) Lett. di Lev. VII, 100.

36 (21.2.1414) Ref. XXXIV, 215v.

37 (6.6.1414) Lett. di Lev. VII, 102.

38 "de dando commisionem et literas credenciales ser Johanni ser Jacobi de Gondola ambasiatori ituro ad dominum despotum pro argento accepto Zuicho Ligatich, Stiepcho Paulouich et aliis mercatoribus nostris Strebernize, qui ser Johannes vadat sumptibus predictorum mercatorum nostrorum" (18.2.1414) Ref. XXXIV, 237. (22.12.1414) DSA, *Diversa Notariae XII*, 65v.

39 "da tuti signori del dicto luogo de Sreberniza et prima dal Re Tuertcho, Re Dabissa et Cheruoy per fin che teneno lo deto luogo et etiamdio del deto signor, lo despoto per fin al



UNFULFILLED PLAN

The stay and movements of the Ottoman army, which had been in Bosnia since 1414, influenced the formation of unstable conditions in the vicinity of Srebrenica. The Ragusans stationed in Srebrenica were well-informed about the events in Bosnia at this time. At the end of June 1415, they reported on the movement of the Hungarian army, which was located in the Bosnian area of Usora.⁴⁰ After the battle of Lašva, in the territory of the Bosnian state, in July 1415, in which the Hungarians were defeated by the Ottomans, a time of temporary harmony and peace between the Bosnian king and nobles came. In early August, the Ragusans received a letter from Johannes de Maroth, who had been captured in Podzvečan. On that occasion, he pointed out to Sigismund how the nobles Hrvoje and Sandalj had reconciled in Bosnia and that the Bosnians were united against Hungary.⁴¹

In addition to Morović, in August 1415, the Ragusans sent Sigismund a letter in which they pointed out that the Bosnian barons had decided on an assembly to attack Srebrenica, which Sigismund had ceded to despot Stefan.⁴² The circumstances provided the Bosnian nobles with a solid basis for trying to reclaim Srebrenica. With the defeat in Lašva, the Hungarians were destabilized in this area and their potential interference was largely prevented. Hrvoje had good relations with the Ottomans, whom he had brought to Bosnia the year before. Shortly before that, Ostoja was recognized by the Ottomans as the Bosnian king, while the agreement between the Bosnian nobles was the last necessary element for the attack on Srebrenica. Srebrenica reappears in the sources at the end of September 1415, when the Ragusans elected judges for one dispute, but without the information on whose property it was.⁴³ The next information about Srebrenica is the contract on the transport of goods to Ljubskovo from the second half of September, according to which the well-known Vlach carriers Herak Milošević and Klapac Stanković obliged to transport goods with 53 horses *ad viazium in Srebrniza*, but without determining whom Srebrenica belonged to.⁴⁴ More specific data on the possession of Srebrenica are provided by the decisions of the Ragusan councils from November 1415 regarding the problem of merchants

presente solicitando et procurando in questi facti a relaxiation del dicto citadin nostro et recuperation dele dicto cosse tolte con quegli bolli modi maniere et parole” (21.12.1414) Lett. di Lev. VII, 116v.

40 (28.5.1415) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 250; Š. ČIRKOVIĆ, *Dve godine bosanske istorije (1414 i 1415)*, in: *Istorijski glasnik*, Vol. 3–4, Beograd 1953, p. 33.

41 (6.8.1415) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 251; E. KURTOVIĆ, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*, Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo 2009, p. 209.

42 “Preterea barones Bosne fuerunt ad universale colloquium a deliberaurunt auferre Srebnizam quam vostra serenita dedit magnifico despoto Rassie” (18.8.1415) Lett. di Lev. VII, 132v; GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 251.

43 (28.9.1415) A. VESELINOVIĆ, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji (1415–1459)*, Istorijski institut SANU, Beograd 1997, p. 9.

44 (21.9.1415) M. DINIĆ, *Iz dubrovačkog arhiva*, Vol. III, SKA, Beograd 1967, p. 187.

in Srebrenica. At that time, the Ragusan authorities discussed the restitution of the confiscated property of the Ragusans in Srebrenica by the Serbian despot, and on that occasion, they turned for help to the Duke of Srebrenica Bogdan, the famous nobleman of the despot Stefan, and the metropolitan.⁴⁵ The presented data illustrate the situation in Srebrenica and its surroundings between mid-August and the end of November 1415. These data, summarized in one place, indicate that in that time frame, there was no change of authority over this area, nor is there a written trace of a military attack. Despite the fact that Bosnian nobles were ready for such an endeavour, it seems that the causes of inactivity on the eastern Bosnian border should be sought in the loss of unity in the domestic policy of the Bosnian state caused by the events of the second half of August 1415, when the Bosnian Prince Pavle Radinović was killed during an assembly, with which a new balance of power emerged in Bosnia.⁴⁶

BOSNIAN ATTACK IN 1425

In the autumn of 1425, there was an Ottoman invasion of the territory of the Despotate, and shortly afterwards a Bosnian attack on Srebrenica followed. The Ottoman attack on the Despotate certainly helped the Bosnians in realizing their plans, but it is not known whether the time chosen for the attack was directly related to the situation in the despot's country at the time. According to Constantine the Philosopher, after the Ottoman detachments plundered Kruševac, Despot Stefan managed to make an agreement with them, according to which they stopped threatening his territory. During the Ottoman attack, Despot Stefan prepared the army to fight the Ottomans. However, when the Ottoman threat ceased, he directed his army towards Srebrenica, where Bosnians were already stationed. Stefan Lazarević appeared on the Drina River, which Bosnians thought was invincible. However, the despot managed to cross with the army to the left bank of the river. According to the despot's biographer, the Bosnian army left Srebrenica, leaving behind three cannons. Despot Stefan followed them to the territory of the Bosnian state, and the Bosnian king, who had meanwhile taken refuge in one of his towns, sent an envoy in an effort to make peace.⁴⁷ The writings of Constantine the Philosopher can be partially corroborated by sources of other provenances. However, a certain amount of idealization of the person being written about, which is characteristic of works of this kind, must certainly be taken into account.

45 (4.11.1415) (23.11.1415) DSA, Consilium Minus (thereafter: Cons. Minus) I, 46, 48v. (5.11.1415) (9.11.1415) (12.11.1415) (23.11.1415) (29.11.1415) (30.11.1415) DSA, Consilium Rogatorum (hereafter: Cons. Rog.) I, 28–30.

46 On the murder of Pavle Radinović, see: RADONIĆ, *O knezu Pavlu Padenoviću*, p. 59–60; M. ŠUNJIĆ, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosi u XIV. i XV. st.)*, HKD Napredak, Sarajevo 1996, pp. 143–144; LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 216; KURTOVIĆ, *Veliki vojvoda bosanski Sandalj Hranić Kosača*, p. 209–212.

47 JAGIĆ, *Konstantin Filozof*, pp. 316–318. For a brief overview of the Bosnian attack on Srebrenica, see: V. ČOROVIĆ, *Srebrenica za vlade despota Stevana (1413–1427)*, in: *Prilozi za jezik, književnost, istoriju i folklor*, Vol. 2, Beograd 1922, p. 75; VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrnica u srednjem veku*, p. 63–64; ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Tvrtko II Tvrtković*, p. 113–114; MRGIĆ, *Severna Bosna*, p. 113.





The information provided by the Ragusan diplomats about the events in the Despotate from October 1425 mostly refers to the position of their merchants who happened to be in this area. It seems that the military activities in the Despotate started at the beginning of October, considering that the Ragusan authorities allowed Despot Stefan to export larger quantities of weapons and ordered caution about this order.⁴⁸ On the same day, a decision was made to send a letter to all Ragusan citizens and nobles in the area of *Sclavonia*.⁴⁹ Along with this permit for the export of weapons to the Despotate, the Ragusans issued an explicit ban suspending the customs clearance of goods that were supposed to go to the possessions of Despots Stefan and Đurađ Branković.⁵⁰ In the first days of October 1425, the Ragusans had no information about the events in Srebrenica. The measures taken were conditioned by the Ottoman incursion into the Despotate. We conclude this on the basis of the fact that numerous Ragusan decisions never mention Srebrenica as a war-torn place. Trade with Brankovićs estates, which are geographically distant from Srebrenica, was then banned. According to the writings of Constantine the Philosopher, this development would be based on the fact that the despot's biographer stated that Stefan prepared the army primarily for the war against the Ottomans, and then used it against Bosnian forces.

The first information about the war activities in Srebrenica was mentioned by the Ragusan authorities on the last day of October 1425. According to a letter from Ragusan merchants from Podzvonik, there was a discussion about Ragusan detainees in the Srebrenik fortress.⁵¹ In mid-November, the Ragusan authorities made contact with the Bosnian king, and at the end of the month, a discussion was held on news from Bosnia.⁵² Only a few days later, a letter from King Tvrtko II arrived in Ragusa. At

48 "de donando domino dispot"; the first proposal did not pass: "de donando sibi domino dispot balistas viginti quinque fulcitas", it has already been adopted: "de donando eidem balistas fulcitas viginti"; "de donando etiam dicto domino dispot libras trecentum pulveris ad bombardas necessarie." (9.10.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 264; "de donando ultrascripto domino dispot mazios trecentos spaghi pro cordis balistarum"; "de dando libertatem ser Matheo de Gradi et omnibus aliis volentibus quod portare possint siue portari facere ad d. despot arma quecumque offendibilia et defendibilia." Ibidem, 264v.

49 "de scribendo omnibus nostris civibus tam nobiles quam popularibus existentibus in Sclavonie partibus, qui bene se portent in auersitatibus illarum contratarum" (9.10.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 264v.

50 "Captum fuit de precipiendo dohaneriis dohane maioris quod non faciant dohanam mercatoribus qui vellent ire in contratam domini despoti de Rassia et in contratam domini Georgii Volcouich. Et si fecissent aliquem dohanam hucusque quod precipiant illis mercatoribus quibus tam fecissent dohanam, quod non audeant modo aliquo nec presumant ire in contratam preductorum domini despoti et domini Georgii" (8.10.1425) DSA, Consilium Minus (hereafter: Cons. Minus) III, 258.

51 "de deliberando super littera nuper recepta a nobiles et mercatoribus Ragusinis de Subsuonich pro nobiles et mercatoribus obsessis in castro Srebrnich"; "de induciendo super predictis usque ad primam responsionem habendam a dictis nobiles et mercatoribus." (31.10.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 267v.

52 (16.11.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 270. "de induciendo super factis novitatum Bosne, pro quibus arengatum est in presenti consilio, usque ad prima nova que inde habebuntur et venient" (24.11.1425) Ibidem, 271.



the beginning of December, in parallel with receiving a letter from the Bosnian king, the Ragusans decided to write to Duke Vukašin Zlatonosović, trying to get a clearer picture of the events there from Srebrenica's neighbour. At the same time, the sending of a letter for Despot Stefan was postponed.⁵³ In the first half of December, however, it was decided to send a letter to the Serbian despot and Ragusan merchants in the Despotate.⁵⁴ The parallel sending of letters to Duke Vukašin Zlatonosović and Despot Stefan was reflected in the interpretation of the quality of their mutual ties.⁵⁵ Ragusan reluctance to send a message to despot Stefan and write to Duke Vukašin demonstrates that at that time they did not have information about the events in Srebrenica.

At the beginning of the following year, 1426, through the findings of the Ragusan authorities, the situation in Bosnia and the Despotate was settled. In mid-January 1426, the Ragusan authorities allowed trade with Bosnia and the Despotate through Zeta, but it still was not allowed to go to Srebrenica.⁵⁶ At the beginning of April 1426, the Ragusans discussed the correspondence with the Despot Stefan and the Duke of Srebrenica Bogdan.⁵⁷ At the end of July 1426, in *descent nostro Zreberniza*, Despot Stefan issued a document to the Venetians confirming the peace made.⁵⁸ There are no data on further fighting in Srebrenica between the Bosnian king and the Serbian despot in this period.

More detailed information about the events in Srebrenica in the autumn of 1425 can be found in a later letter from the Ragusan authorities to the Bosnian king Tvrtko II. In mid-April 1428, the authorities composed a response to Tvrtko II, who complained about the participation of the Ragusans in the defence of Srebrenica and about the damage caused to him by the Ragusan merchants on that occasion. The Ragusans justified themselves by saying that their merchants were not to blame for the damage in the amount of 10,000 ducats, as much as Tvrtko II estimated his loss. They pointed out that their merchants did not defend Despot Stefan, but withdrew to the Srebrenica fortress in order to save their own lives. According to them, in the

53 "de induciando usque prima noua supra responsione futura ad literam habitam a rege Bosne comminatoriam"; "scribendi voivode Volcassino Slatonosovich"; the proposal did not pass: "de scribendo domino dispotho de Rassia super his que dicta sunt in presenti consilio", it has already been adopted: "de induciando super eisdem usque ad prima noua" (3.12.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 271.

54 (10.12.1425) Cons. Rog. III, 272.

55 P. ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Usorska vlasteoska porodica Zlatonosovići i bosanski kraljevi (posljednja decenija XIV i prve tri decenije XV stoljeća)*, in: *Historijski zbornik*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, Zagreb 1986, p. 158.

56 "de franchando mercatores nostros quod cum eorum mercanciis ire possint in Sclauoniam per viam Zente."; "de franchando scriptis nostris mercatoribus viam Bosne et Sclauonie excepto quod ire non possint Srebrnizam." (18.1.1426) Cons. Rog. III, 279.

57 "de induciando supra responsione danda litere domini despothi usque quo responsonem habebimus del Srebrniza a Bogdano voiuoda et ab aliis mercatoribus Ragusinis ibidem"; "scribendi voiuode Bogdano et aliis mercatoribus Ragusinis in Srebrniza prout ipsis domino Rectori et minori consilo videbitur" (3.4.1426) Cons. Rog. III, 294.

58 (25.7.1426) Š. LJUBIĆ, *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga slavenstva i mletačke republike*, Vol. IX, JAZU, Zagreb 1890, pp. 17–18.



attack of the subjects of the Bosnian crown, the nobles Dinjičićs, who burned the suburbs of Srebrenica, suffered damage that they would not compensate with even 50,000 ducats.⁵⁹ The well-known facts about the war between King Tvrtko II and Despot Stefan are exhausted by these data. The presented facts indicate that the attack of the Bosnian army on Srebrenica took place in the second half of October 1425, during which the army of the Bosnian king and Bosnian nobleman Dragiša Dinjičić managed to enter the city and the population retreated to the fortress Srebrenik. During the attack, the suburbs of Srebrenica were burned, and the statement of Constantine the Philosopher, unconfirmed by sources of another kind, offers a continuation of the events according to which the Bosnian army withdrew due to the despot's attack, after which reconciliation was reached.

The failure of the Bosnian king to conquer Srebrenica and increase state revenues from Srebrenica mines led to the establishment of a new duty that was not in line with previous customs and rules. It was a new duty on the transport of silver through Bosnian territory, which affected the Ragusan silver trade from Srebrenica, but also from other places such as Novo Brdo, Rudnik and Trepča. Silver that did not have the king's stamp embossed as a sign of paid duties was most often confiscated. Despite numerous complaints from Ragusa, King Tvrtko II was adamant in his intentions to secure additional funds.⁶⁰

THE FALL OF THE DESPOTATE UNDER THE OTTOMANS 1439-1444

With the Ottoman conquest of the Despotate in 1439, when Stefan's cousin and heir Despot Đurađ Branković (1427-1456) was defeated, Srebrenica became part of the Ottoman state. The scarcity of sources does not allow a precise chronological reconstruction of the events from 1439 and 1440. The first data indicating Ottoman rule over Srebrenica date back to July 1440, when a decision was made in Ragusa to send a letter to an Ottoman official who ruled Srebrenica.⁶¹ In recent months, the Ragusan authorities have imposed bans on their merchants from going to Srebrenica and kept their subjects informed of the news introduced in Srebrenica, but without a clear indication of ownership of the place.⁶² In July 1440, King Tvrtko II complained to the

59 (19. 4. 1428) Lett. di Lev. X, 85-86; DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 58; ĆOROVIĆ, *Srebrenica za vlade despota Stevana*, p. 77; VUKANOVIĆ, *Srebrnica u srednjem veku*, p. 66-67; M. DINIĆ, *Srebrenik kralj Srebrenice*, in: *Srpske zemlje u srednjem veku*, SKZ, Beograd 1978, pp. 362-363.

60 For a broader framework of Tvrtko's silver trading policy, see: M. IVANOVIĆ, *Prilozi za istoriju carina u srednjovekovnim srpskim državama*, in: *Spomenik SAN*, Vol. XCVII, Beograd 1948, p. 47; D. KOVAČEVIĆ, *Razvoj i organizacija carina u srednjovekovnoj Bosni*, in: *Godišnjak Istorijškog društva BiH*, Vol. VI, Sarajevo 1954, pp. 246-247; D. KOVAČEVIĆ, *Trgovina u srednjovekovnoj Bosni*, Naučno društvo NR Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 1961, pp. 46-47, 52-53, 103, 105; ŽIVKOVIĆ, *Tvrtko II Tvrtković*, pp. 125, 128, 134; A. VESELINOVIĆ, *Carinski sistem u Srbiji u doba Despotovine*, u: *Istorijski glasnik*, Vol. 1-2, Beograd 1984, p. 19.

61 (6.7.1440) Cons. Rog. VII, 175.

62 (21.4.1440) (23.6.1440) Cons. Rog. VII, 150v, 172v; DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 74.

Ragusan authorities about some of the actions of their merchants in Srebrenica.⁶³ The Ragusans did not have much luck with the Ottoman officials in Srebrenica either. In mid-August, the authorities responded to Srebrenica merchants who complained about customs problems, saying they needed to be vigilant in the strange times that ensued.⁶⁴ Soon another letter was sent from Ragusa to the Srebrenica merchants, making it clear that the Ragusan authorities did not have mechanisms in place to obstruct the new duties imposed by Ottoman officials and advised its subjects not to lease customs duties from the Ottomans.⁶⁵ Significant action was taken in early September when the authorities advised merchants there to send an envoy to Sublime Porte to complain about the Turk Pintininus (Pinti Yunus) who was giving advice on joint customs leasing.⁶⁶ Ottoman officials did not pay much attention to the merchants' complaints, so the authorities sent a letter to customs officer Pinta Yunus in late November banning its merchants from bringing goods and money to Srebrenica.⁶⁷ The Ragusans sent envoys to the sultan, who were to express their gratitude for the Ottoman treatment of the Ragusans. In addition, they were supposed to submit a request for an investigation into the activities of their official Pinti Yunus in Srebrenica, who they accused of introducing a customs collection system that is not in line with the previous way of doing business.⁶⁸

Ragusan activities in Edirne provoked the sultan's decision to capture their merchants on the territory of Bosnia, Despotate, and Srebrenica due to the fact that the envoy from December 1440 did not bring tribute to the sultan. The Ragusans were

⁶³ (20.7.1440) Cons. Rog. VII, 178.

⁶⁴ (9.8.1440) VESELINOVIĆ, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji*, p. 453; (10.8.1440) Lett. di Lev. XII, 193, 194.

⁶⁵ (16.8.1440) VESELINOVIĆ, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji*, p. 454; (18.8.1440) Lett. di Lev. XII, 195–195v.

⁶⁶ “como dela grauamento che fadi sopra Giucho Braychouich raçionello et Pasqual de Marota li quali parsiano andati ala Porta del Turcho et abiano con loi sugestion uno Turcho chiamato Pintininus a comprar de compagnia le gabelle predicte dal imperator Turcho con noue usanze che non forno per auanti in tempo del signor dispoto Stephano. E de piu secondo el nostro scriuer par che anche Bencho Bratosalich habia parte in la detta compagnia” (3.9.1440) Lett. di Lev. XII, 196bis.

⁶⁷ (30.11.1440) Cons. Rog. VII, 203v; A. VESELINOVIĆ, *Zabrane i prekidi trgovine u Srbiji u doba Despotovine*, in: *Istorijski glasnik*, Vol. 1–2, Beograd 1983, p. 33.

⁶⁸ “chome essi suoy merchadanti sono bene visti et humanamente tratadi per tuti li paysi et tegnire della soa signoria excepto che in Strebreniza ... [213v] ... Et apresso per che secondo sapete molte nouitade et deuasamenti vien fatte alli merchadanti nostri de Strebreniza per Pynti Junus gabelloto perho vi comettemo che auanti che parotiati della presentia delli detti signori del audientia quando vi parera luogo te tempo debiati in spetialiter de alior dire ragreuarui et alior vien dati et fatte molte nouitade et deuasamenti nel fatto delle gabelle li qual sono tegnude per nome del detto Pyntiunus pregando instantamente le lor signorie che se degnano et dare modo et ordine che per parte della mayestade dello imperador vegna expressamente comandato et acomesso che li merchadanti nostri nel detto luogo de Streberniza siano humanamente tratadi et bene visti et che nel schuodi delle dette gabelle siano tratadi secondo che al tempo del signor despotto Steffano se usaua [217]” Lett. di Lev. XII, 213v, 217.



informed about these events through a letter from their envoys from Edirne, written at the end of January 1441. The response of the Ragusan authorities contained instructions stating that they should advocate for the release of imprisoned merchants and file an appeal, given that such actions are not in line with the privileges granted by the sultan immediately after the conquest of Smederevo.⁶⁹ The mechanism at the disposal of the Ragusans in the effort to secure their subjects in Srebrenica was the introduction of a ban on merchants going to Bosnia and Despotate, which was established in mid-March 1441.⁷⁰ During the year the Ragusan authorities issued permits for their subjects to go to Srebrenica on several occasions, but the ban on carrying goods remained in force.⁷¹ The final improvement of the situation in Despotate and Srebrenica was achieved after the agreement between the Ottomans and the Ragusans in February 1442.⁷² The news were published at the end of April 1442 to all Ragusan subjects.⁷³ The agreement with the Ottomans and the current improvement in the position of merchants in Srebrenica did not last long. In early 1443, the Ragusan authorities sent an envoy to Sublime Porte again to remind the sultan and commanders of the previous year's agreement and request written bans to Srebrenica and other Ottoman-ruled places where their merchants resided. However, this mission ended in failure.⁷⁴

At the beginning of 1444 at the latest, Srebrenica was again owned by the Despot Đurađ. The Bosnian nobleman Petar Kovačević (Dinjičić) was also connected with the establishment of the despot's rule in Srebrenica, who at the end of 1443 helped Đurađ in the fight against the Ottomans. According to incomplete Ragusan sources, the establishment of Đurađ's rule over Srebrenica could take place at the beginning of December 1443 at the earliest, according to a letter from the Ragusan authorities to the Hungarian ruler stating that their merchants from Srebrenica and Rudnik visited the despot's military camp.⁷⁵ According to the lawsuit from February 1444, it is learned that three Ragusans leased customs from the despot. However, after the news came that Đurađ was going to Hungary, Pavko Stipašinić from Ragusa confiscated money and silver from these merchants and drove them out of the customs office.⁷⁶ Stipašinić's lawsuit filed in March 1444 states that he was sent by a despot to collect

69 "tuti li mercadanti nostri tanto de Schiauonia et de Streberniza quanto per lo simel dela Bossina et de Romania sono stati ligati per li Turchi ... Et etiamdio quelli che la mayestade soa troandossi Sotto Smedreuo in lo acquisi nouamente della Schiauonia a fatto et concesso alli mercadanti nostri de Streberniza" (22.3.1441) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 16.

70 (16.3.1441) Cons. Rog. VII, 217v.

71 (18.4.1441) (6.5.1441) (11.5.1441) Cons. Minus VIII, 246v, 247, 251, 252; (8.7.1441) (31.7.1441) (24.8.1441) (4.9. 1441) (30. 9. 1441) (7. 11. 1441) (21. 11. 1441) (29. 11. 1441) Cons. Minus IX, 3, 10v, 16v, 21, 25, 34, 36v, 39; (23. 3.1441) Cons. Rog. VII, 244v, 245. (2.4.1442) Cons. Rog. VIII, 113v.

72 LJ. STOJANOVIĆ, *Stare srpske povelje i pisma*, Vol. I/2, SKA, Beograd-Sremski Karlovci 1934, p. 232–234; I. BOŽIĆ, *Dubrovnik i Turska u XIV i XV veku*, SKA, Beograd 1952, pp. 91–92.

73 (28.4.1442) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 73v.

74 (12.1.1443) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 99–99v.

75 (9.12.1443) GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 447.

76 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 76.

customs. However, some merchants complained to Duke Petar who imprisoned him, saying that Pavko wanted to take customs for the Ottomans and that he was disloyal to the despot, which is why he was tied up and his horses were confiscated.⁷⁷ The problematic situation in Srebrenica forced the Ragusan authorities to make a decision at the beginning of February 1444 to ban the carrying of goods to Srebrenica.⁷⁸ At the end of February, the proposal that the Ragusan nobleman, Ivan Gučetić, sends the despot fabrics that he would export from Srebrenica, was not adopted.⁷⁹ A permit to ban the transport of goods to Bosnia and Srebrenica was passed in mid-March. However, a few days later, the merchants had permission to leave for Srebrenica.⁸⁰ Scarce data indicate a layered account of the ownership of Srebrenica in early 1444 between the despot and Duke Petar. According to earlier approaches, the appearance of Duke Petar in Srebrenica was interpreted as a statement that Despot Đurađ entrusted the supervision of Srebrenica to Duke Petar as a reward for military assistance in the fight against the Ottomans.⁸¹ The Srebrenik fortress was still in Ottoman possession at this time. It is possible that this fact is the cause of the request that Duke Petar sent to Ragusa at the end of February for permission to hire an artisan to make cannons.⁸²



THE LAST CHAPTER: FREQUENT CHANGES OF OWNERSHIP

In accordance with the agreement on joining the war against the Ottomans, King Tvrtko II captured the fortress of Srebrenik in mid-May 1444 at the latest, and on this occasion, Srebrenica also fell under Bosnian rule. The Bosnian king's envoy was in Ragusa in mid-May when he was awarded by the Ragusan authorities for news of a change in ownership of Srebrenik.⁸³ The establishment of Bosnian authorities in Srebrenica did not end the problems with customs for the Ragusans. In early August, the authorities instructed its ambassadors at King Tomaš's to insist on the abolition of new customs duties, the redress of injustices inflicted on their

77 "Procuratores Pauchi Stipasinouich, videlicet, Gabriel de Prato et Dobruschus de Latini-za coram domino Rectore ser Michaelae de Bucignolo fecerunt lamentum supra dohanerios Strebenize, videlicet, Costadinum et Ziuchum Razonelum et Pierchum, Tunchum et Bernabam filios Stani de Illia, dicentes quod despot miserat ipsum Paucham ad exigendum gabellas Strebenize et scripserat quod sibi responderetur de dohanis et ipsi gabelloti iuerunt ad vaiuodam Petar Couacich et accusiunt ipsum dicentes quod ipse Pauchus volebat exigere gabellas per Teucris et quod non erat fidelis despoti et dederunt ipsum infidelitatem et facerunt ipsum ligare et fecerunt sibi acipere equos ad eo quod stetit in maximo periculo sue persone. Quare cum hoc fuerit contra honore suum et in magnum detrimentum suum petierunt ipsi Paucho subueniri de remedio oportuno" (28.3.1443) *Lamenta de foris* (thereafter *Lam. de for.*) XVII, 234.

78 (8.2.1444) *Cons. Rog.* IX, 17.

79 (28.2.1444) *Cons. Rog.* IX, 24.

80 (12.3.1444) (17.3.1444) *Cons. Rog.* IX, 28v, 30.

81 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 76.

82 (28.2.1444) *Cons. Rog.* IX, 23v.

83 (20.5.1444) *Cons. Rog.* IX, 51v. (22.5.1444) *Cons. Maius VII*, 178.



subjects, and a complaint about the theft of silver from their merchants.⁸⁴ The dispute between King Tomaš and the Ragusans over Srebrenica continued in the following months.⁸⁵

By re-establishing power over the Despotate and reconciling with the Bosnian duke Stjepan Vukčić, Despot Đurađ Branković formed a solid starting point for opening the Srebrenica issue. In the middle of April 1445, the envoy of King Tomaš stayed in Ragusa. In accordance with his visit, it was decided to write to the merchants in Srebrenica not to interfere in the events there.⁸⁶ Taking into account the later change of administration in Srebrenica, it is possible that a conflict between the Bosnian and Serbian rulers took place in Srebrenica at this time.⁸⁷ Even if there was a conflict between Tomaš and Đurađ at this time, it did not last long, given the fact that the Bosnian king was soon leading a campaign against his nobleman, Duke Stjepan Vukčić. In the following months, the Ragusans again encountered the problems of transit through Bosnia to Srebrenica. At the end of June, the authorities issued a ban on Srebrenica merchants from sending silver and other goods through the territory of Duke Stjepan.⁸⁸ In September 1445, Đurađ's rule in Srebrenica was already evident. In the middle of the month, Despot Đurađ confirmed to the Ragusans the privileges for Srebrenica that they had during the time of Despot Stefan.⁸⁹ Available sources do not cover in detail this change of rule in Srebrenica.

Despot Đurađ's rule over Srebrenica did not last long. Sources do not allow the reconstruction of the recapture of Srebrenica by King Tomaš. The earliest indication of his authority over the place dates back to early July 1446, when the Ragusans were rebuked by their authorities for negotiating with the Bosnian king over the lease of the Srebrenica customs and mint.⁹⁰ At the time of the conquest of Srebrenica, Tomaš

84 "Apresso al fato dele nouitade vien fate alli merchadanti nostri de Streberniza sopra della qual chosa dite auer parelato alla prefata maiestade la qual ve ha resposo che de zio vole auer bona information et poy fara quello se conuegnera ve dissemo che quanto sapete et potete debiate attendere de impetrar dalla deta maiestade che le dette nouitade siano lenate via et chelli deti merchadanti nostri siano tratadi secondo che per la comission vostra a pieno ve stato deto et acomesso" (4.8.1444) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 155.

85 (26.11.1444) Cons. Rog. IX, 94v.

86 "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et suo paruo consilio respondendi ambaxiatorum domini regis Bossine prout arengatum est in presenti consilio. Et etiam scribendi mercatores nostros de Strebrnize quod se impedire non debeant de factis dictorum sed tamen attendere eorum mercancis" (14.4.1445) Cons. Rog. IX, 144.

87 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 77.

88 "scribendi mercatoribus Bosne et Srebernize nostris Ragusinis quod se retineri et abstineri debeant in mittendo aut portando argentum Ragusi per teritorium et tenutas voyuode Stiepani et similiter auere de capsula donec aliud superinde scriptum fuit per nostrum dominium" (25.6.1445) Cons. Rog. IX, 166.

89 (17.9.1445) STOJANOVIĆ, *Povelje i pisma I/2*, p. 30–32; S. NOVAKOVIĆ, *Zakonski spomenici srpskih država srednjega veka*, SKA, Beograd 1912, p. 239; KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ, *Srednjovjekovna Srebrenica XIV-XV vijek*, p. 22.

90 "sono informati che essendo dela apresso del deto Re te mancho vignesti dela alli presentia del deto Re el qual intesino che vignesti com uno scritto per parte de voy tre azcechare de comprare la dohana della zecha del deto Re per fare che algune monete nostre de d'altre

was on good terms with Duke Petar Kovačević, who in previous years had apparently entered into arrangements with the despot in the management of Srebrenica.⁹¹ Already in August, information was available in Ragusa that Tomaš had imposed new customs duties, after which the Ragusan authorities decided to write to the king and its merchants in Srebrenica.⁹² The Ragusans suggested to their subjects that they choose an envoy that would ask the king to abolish the introduced novelties, and if Tomaš did not agree to that, they should threaten to suspend trade with Srebrenica.⁹³ The problems with customs were not resolved even in the autumn when the Ragusans decided to write to the merchants and respond to a certain Simko Bogavčić about the Srebrenica customs.⁹⁴ Further correspondence with the merchants in Srebrenica continued in mid-October 1446.⁹⁵

Additional complications in the business environment of Srebrenica were introduced by the division of customs revenues between King Tomaš and Despot Đurađ. The details of this division are not known. The first indication of this practice comes from the lawsuit of the despot's customs officer from Ragusa, Gunko Računat, who in early April 1447 accused the Srebrenica Prince Pavko Stipašinović of robbing him at the customs office.⁹⁶ Along with the despot's officials, Tomaš's men stayed in

parte non podesseno corce ne esser spendute per lo teritorio del prefato Re" (4.7.1446) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 193.

- 91 In mid-August, Duke Petar was mentioned in Tomaš's charter to the Dragišićs. (21.8.1446) F. MIKLOSICH, *Monumenta serbica spectantia historiam Serbiae Bosnae Ragusii*, Apud Guilelmum Braumüller, Viennae 1858, p. 440.
- 92 "scribendi domino regi Bosine super nouitatis factis in gabella Strebernize" (20.8.1446) Cons. Rog. X, 21v. "alli nobili et saui zentilhomini et altri prouidi Ragusey nostri li quali tegnete la gabella della zecha de Streberniza semo auxati che essendo voy stato per parte vostra alla mayestade de Re de Bosina tornaseno portando lettere del prefato Re comandando alli vaoturchi che ogni uno delli vauturchi debia tore denari in gabella de Re et che tuti li argenti li quali se fuora in Streberniza che se portano in gabella" (24.8.1446) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 213v.
- 93 "Et alla sua exellentia con quello bono modo che meglio saperano per parte de voy mercadanti dolce et rachiamare se debiano delle dette nouitade fate in la deta gabella digando et narando tale ne simile nouitade may prima del tempo passato non esser fate. Et chome la soa exelentia piu fiate ha promesso et deto valerin conseruare et mantegnir nelle franchitie che sono state per tempi passati. Et questo oltertanto per li soy priuilegi fati alla nostra signoria hauer confirmato tute le franchitie et bone usanze che auante per lo passato sono state fate et seruuate alli mercadanti nostri" (24.8.1446) Lett. di Lev. 212v. DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, 77–78. A letter with similar content was sent to Pavko Stipašinović at the same time. (24.8.1446) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 213bv.
- 94 "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et suo minori consilio scribendi mercatoribus nostris Strebernize et rescribendi Simcho Bogaucich ad literam eius scriptam nostro dominio super facti gabellarum Strebernize prout arengatum fuit in presenti consilio" (18.9.1446) Cons. Rog. X, 28v.
- 95 (13.10.1446) Cons. Rog. X, 38.
- 96 "Giuchus Razunat coram domino Rectore ser Thoma de Sorgo fecit lamentum supra Pauchum Stipasinoich comitem Strebenice dicens quod ipse venit supra ipsum Giuchum existentem gabellotum despota in Strebeniza in domo gabelle cum burgesanis Strebenize et per uni accepit sibi cum dictis burgesanis totum suum auere, videlicet libris LXXXIII



Srebrenica to watch over the work of the customs. At the end of December, a certain Prince Mikleuš and Prince Pavko Stipašinović of Srebrenica, as well as all the purgars of Srebrenica, were presented as obedient to the King of Bosnia.⁹⁷ Preserved examples of money with the name of King Tomaš on the obverse and Despot Đurađ on the reverse motivated researchers to explain the causes of the appearance of this money by dividing the revenue from Srebrenica customs between these rulers, forging money of one ruler from another, or mixing moulds in the mint.⁹⁸

The division of customs in Srebrenica between Tomaš and Đurađ is accompanied by documents from 1448. At the end of May 1448, the Ragusans wrote to King Tomaš about the novelties introduced to their subjects in Srebrenica.⁹⁹ In those months, Tomaš's *protovestiarior* Restoje was in Srebrenica, trying to introduce novelties that the people of Srebrenica complained about. It was an order for the Ragusans to build houses in Srebrenik and supply them with weapons, to which the Ragusans sent a letter to the merchants for Tomaš in which they complained about Restoje, reminding him of earlier times when such rules did not exist.¹⁰⁰ At the same time, a letter was sent to Srebrenica merchants.¹⁰¹ These were certainly significant changes because in early June the authorities decided to write to Duke Petar recommending their merchants.¹⁰² At the same time, the Ragusans were forbidden to lease part of the customs that belonged to the despot.¹⁰³ Apparently, an agreement was made on the division of customs in Srebrenica between the Bosnian and Serbian rulers, while power in

argenti fini in tribus peciis, item grossorum in cassa libris XXV et de chicis que veniunt in dohanam libris 37" (8.4.1447) Lam. de for. XXI, 42.

⁹⁷ (28.12.1447) K. JIREČEK, *Spomenici srpski*, SKA, Beograd 1892, p. 86.

⁹⁸ About this money with a review of older literature see: A. SULEJMANAGIĆ, *Novac podložnika bosanskih vladara*, in: Numizmatičke vijesti, Vol. 66, Zagreb 2013, pp. 69–75.

⁹⁹ (26.5.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 196v; (26.5.1448) Cons. Minus XI, 201; (26.5.1448) VESELINOVIĆ, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji*, p. 541.

¹⁰⁰ "Heri rezeuissimo vostra lettera fata della alle XX del presente per la qual fossimo auisati delle nouitate ve sono fate per lo prothobistiario Restoie per parte della maiestade del Re de Bossina et por lo simel forno per voy date allo deto prothouistario Restoie le qual comendemo esser assay prudentemente fate ... Anzi quando le interuegnuto alguno caso della suspetione della guerra quelli de lor li quali ano vogliuto redirsi nel castello de Strebernich allor e stato dato a posser intrare et stare. Et altri la quali non hano vogliuto redirsi in esso castello se sempre alloro e stato dato a posersi liberamente andare doue al loro e stato de piasere et contentamento perche li merchadanti per rispetto delle utilidade che rendono alli luoghi dou conuersano in ogni luogo et parte del mondo sono humanamente trattati et sono liberi de andare et stare done allor paiuse" (19.6.1448) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 261v.

¹⁰¹ (27.5.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 197.

¹⁰² "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et suo minori consilio scribendi voyuode Petar Dignicich et sibi recomittendo mercatores nostros prout arengatum fuit in presenti consilio" (3.6.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 199.

¹⁰³ "de describendo et reitrando mercatoribus nostris in Sereberniza existentis et commorantibus literas quas pridie sibi scripsimus super facto nouitatum de quibus arengatum fuit in presenti consilio"; "de vetando mercatoribus et ciuibus nostris commorantibus in Srebreniza quod se impedire non debeant de parte gabelle Srebrenize spectante domino despoto, donec aliud superinde habebunt in mandatis a nostro dominio" (3.6.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 199.



Srebrenica was in the hands of King Tomaš. A confusing situation arose that sources followed with varying intensity. The administration of the Bosnian king over Srebrenica was also registered at the end of July 1448, when the Ragusans wrote to the merchants in Srebrenica about the problem with Tomaš's demands.¹⁰⁴ At the end of July, it was still peaceful in Srebrenica and its surroundings, in those days the Ragusans recommended to one of their envoys that went to Smederevo that they could *per viam Srebernize*.¹⁰⁵

With the change of relations in Bosnia during the spring of 1448, there was a distance between Tomaš and Duke Stjepan, who reconciled with the Despot Đurađ. These changes were best used by Đurađ, who, according to an anonymous Serbian chronicler, took over Srebrenica in mid-September 1448 at the latest.¹⁰⁶ The military conflict over Srebrenica began in mid-August at the latest. This chronological determinant is brought by the Venetian *provveditore* from Skadar, who, by informing his authorities about the activities of the despot's son in Zeta, also mentioned the war in which the Bosnian king also took part.¹⁰⁷ In this clash with King Tomaš, Despot Đurađ had on his side, in addition to the Ottomans, an ally, Duke Stjepan, whose role in these events was reminded by the Ragusans a few years later.¹⁰⁸ With the establishment of the despot's rule in Srebrenica, the person in charge was the Byzantine nobleman, brother of Irena, the wife of the Despot Đurađ, Thomas Kantakouzenos, whom the Ragusans addressed in mid-October 1448 about the realization of earlier privileges that they had from the time of Despot Stefan.¹⁰⁹

The rule of the Serbian despot over Srebrenica after the conquest in September 1448 lasted only a few months. Sources do not indicate a renewed conflict between the two rulers in early 1449. The first indication of Tomaš's re-rule over Srebrenica dates back to March 1449, when the Ragusans discussed sending letters to the Bosnian king, Pavko Stipašinović, and the Srebrenica merchants regarding ores.¹¹⁰ At the same

104 (24.7.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 212v.

105 (30.7.1448) Cons. Rog. X, 214v.

106 (16.9.1448) LJ. STOJANOVIĆ, *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi*, SKA, Sremski Karlovci 1927, pp. 235–236.

107 "et bello etiam quo cum serenissimo Rege Bossine implicitus est." J. VALENTINI, *Acta Albaniae Veneta saeculorum XIV et XV*, Vol. III, No. XX, Panormi, Typis Josephi Tosini, Munich 1974, pp. 58–61.

108 Lett. di Lev. XV, 172; GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 513.

109 "Perche questi rezeuissimo vostra lettera nella qual tra altre ve lamentaui sopra de Zugno Zelubinouch dicendo che hauenolo voy achonzato et otegnuto com lo signor Thoma cognato dello illustre signor despoto el qual dela in pe del deto signore despoto chel li merchadanti Ragusey in fato delli pagamenti delle gabelle et dohane de Strebeniza fosseno tratadi con li modi patti et condition ch'erano antigamente nel tempo del signor despoto Vochio" (15.10.1448) Lett. di Lev. XIII, 272; (15.10.1448) *Ibidem*, p. 272v.

110 Proposals not adopted: "de faciendo tres ad formandum literas scribendas (crossed over: regi Bosine) et Paucho Stiepasinouch et mercatoribus Strebenice pro facto querelle facte per mercatores nostros pro rudis"; "de scribendo Regi Bosne pro querellis factis per mercatores nostros pro rudis", already adopted: "de scribendo Paucho Stiepasinouch et mercatoribus Striebenice pro facto querelle facte per mercatoribus Strebenice" (1.3.1449)



time, a response was sent to the merchants, in which it was noticed that Tomaš's officials were in Srebrenica, who together with Stipašinić were taking ore from the debtors.¹¹¹ Echoes of earlier battles between Tomaš and Đurađ over Srebrenica are contained in a lawsuit filed by the Bosnian king, who in early May 1449 complained to the Ragusan authorities about their nobleman and despot's leader Damian de Georgio.¹¹² A few days later, the authorities addressed Georgio, conveying Tomaš's complaints. Taking advantage of the conflict between Bosnia and the Despotate, Georgio ransomed the captured Bosnian nobleman Radoje Ljubanić (*uno zentilomo per nome Radoe Bubanich*) and demanded a much larger sum for his release after the war, for which he was reprimanded from Ragusa.¹¹³

During June 1449, at the Hungarian assembly, in the presence of the Bosnian king and Despot Đurađ, the way of resolving the conflict between the two rulers was presented, which mostly concerned Srebrenica as an inexhaustible source of conflict between the two states.¹¹⁴ Although according to the political circumstances in the region at the time, the Ottoman threat necessitated an agreement, this time it did not happen. The rule of King Tomaš over Srebrenica is followed by sources during 1450. Tomaš's interests in Srebrenica at this time were represented by Duke Petar. The position of the Ragusans in Srebrenica was of variable quality. Controlling the territory in the immediate vicinity of Srebrenica, in March and April 1450, Petar entered into a discussion with the Ragusan authorities over the actions of his subjects in Jadar. The authorities insisted on the restitution of confiscated silver and money.¹¹⁵ At the

Cons. Rog. XI, 46v; "de induciendo supra literas habitis de Streberniza et a Paucho Stipasinouich usque ad prima noua habenda de illis partibus." (19.3.1449) Ibidem, p. 54.

111 "come vui insiema cun alcuni valiosi del Re seti venuto nouamente in Strebreniza haue ti intromessi li debitori et tolte tute le rude de li mercadanti nostri. Et quelle rude fate lauore per lo Re in gran dano et prezudisio delli deti merchadanti nostri la qual cosa se cosi e molto ne despiaxe" (1.3.1449) Lett. di Lev. XIV, 8v; At the same time, a letter was sent to merchants in Srebrenica with similar content. (1.3.1449) Ibidem, p. 9.

112 "de respondendo litere regis Bosine scripte dominationi super facto ser Damiani Ju. de Georgio et de scribendo ser Damiano"; "de faciundo tres qui formare debeant ipsas literas scribendas regi Bosine et ser Damiano" (5.5.1449) Cons. Rog. XI, 68v.

113 "de firmando literam que dirigitur ser Damiano de Georgio pro facto Radoe Bubanich lectam in presenti consilo" (10.5.1449) Cons. Rog. XI, 71; "dizando che essendo preso ne la bataia to tra le zente soe et quelle de lo illustre signor despoto uno zintilomo per nome Radoe Bubanich pare che despoi vui lo habiate rescomprato et doue vui dite hauer sborsato ducati L^{TA}. Benche anchora la soa maiestade non sia certa ne creda che tanti siano niente de mancho pare che vui domandate ducati CC se lo douete lassar" (12.5.1449) Lett. di Lev. XIV, 15v.

114 K. JIREČEK, *Istorija Srba-Prva knjiga do 1537. godine (Politička istorija)*, Slovo Ljubve, Beograd 1978, p. 374; J. RADONIĆ, *Zapadna Evropa i balkanski narodi prema Turcima u prvoj polovini XV veka*, Izdanje Matice Srpske, Novi Sad 1905, p. 262; M. PEROJEVIĆ, *Stjepan Tomaš Ostojić*, in: *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, HKD, Napredak, Sarajevo, 1942, p. 518; LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 317.

115 "de mutuando danificatis per valiosum Petar Couacheuich apud Jadar ducatos sexaginta dantibus ipsis prius pignus sufficiens in camera auri aut argenti de restituendo ipsos comuni nostro de primis denaris qui recuperabuntur de damno habito" (19.3.1450) Cons. Rog. XI, 169v; (16.4.1450) Cons. Minus XII, 153.



same time, a ban was introduced on Ragusan merchants to bring goods to Srebrenica.¹¹⁶ It seems that the situation did not disrupt the business much, and in mid-April, the Ragusans thanked Duke Petar for his actions.¹¹⁷ Once again, merchants were soon allowed to come to Srebrenica with the merchandise.¹¹⁸ The scanty decisions of the Ragusan councils in their correspondence with Duke Petar indicate that Bosnian rule over Srebrenica persisted in the following months.¹¹⁹ Indicators of Kovačević's role in the rule over Srebrenica are also contained in the later Ottoman *kanun* for Srebrenica, which states that this is a law promulgated by Duke Kovač.¹²⁰

Along with the usual skirmishes in Srebrenica, the previously mentioned correspondence was conducted between King Tomaš and the Ragusans about the strained relations between Bosnia and the Despotate. In 1450, the problems surrounding the ownership of Srebrenica were incorporated into broader political contours concerning the problems with the Ottomans. The situation was changing at an accelerated pace. While Tomaš expected that there would be a war between Bosnia and the Despotate in April 1451, two months later, negotiations on the reconciliation of neighbours were conducted through the Ragusans. In mid-June, the Ragusans suggested to Tomaš that the stumbling block between him and the despot, which concerned the Srebrenik fortress, pass into the possession of the Ragusans while negotiations continue, and if no agreement is reached, the Republic of Ragusa would return the disputed place to the Bosnian king.¹²¹ Tomaš's decision to negotiate a reconciliation with the despot must be seen in connection with Đurađ's good relations with Sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481), who posed the greatest threat to the Bosnian king. The agreement was reached at the end of July 1451 at the latest, when the Ragusans from Smederevo sent a letter to their authorities. The Ragusans sent gifts to Smederevo and, according to the established diplomatic pattern, expressed their enthusiasm for the despot's takeover of Srebrenik.¹²² In November 1451, Despot Đurađ managed to obtain from Sultan Mehmed II a certificate of recognition of his possessions in Bosnia, which certainly included Srebrenica.¹²³

The rule of the Despot Đurađ over Srebrenica lasted until the end of his rule over the Despotate in 1456. During that time, the Ragusans in Srebrenica continued to come into contact with the Bosnian king and noblemen. Due to the fact that the war between the Republic of Ragusa and Duke Stjepan was going on at this time, the

116 (19.3.1450) Cons. Rog. XI, 170.

117 (18.4.1450) Cons. Rog. XI, 181.

118 "de sequestrando et permittendo mercatores nostros cum auere et mercantiis suis ire in Strebenizam" (18.4.1450) Cons. Rog. XI, 181.

119 (27.5.1450) (5.6.1450) (20.6.1450) Cons. Rog. XI, 197v, 201v, 208.

120 B. ĐURĐEV, *Da li je poznati rudarski zakon despota Stefana važio i za Srebenicu?*, in: H. KULOVIĆ (ed.), *Radovi sa simpozijuma Rudarstvo i metalurgija Bosne i Hercegovine od prahistorije do početka XX vijeka*, Muzej grada Zenice, Zenica 1999, p. 213.

121 "de dando libertatem domino Rectori et eius minori consilio possendi declarare in commissione ambassiatorum pro facto castri de Streberinich" (17.6.1451) Cons. Rog. XII, 81v; (17.6.1451) Lett. di Lev. XV, 1–4; DINIĆ, *Srebrenik kralj Srebrenice*, pp. 358–359.

122 (13.8.1451) Lett. di Lev. XV, 138–139; (12.8.1451) (13.8.1451) Cons. Rog. XII, 119v, 121; GELCICH-THÁLLOCZY, *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusane cum Regno Hungariae*, p. 514–517.

123 LOVRENOVIĆ, *Na klizištu povijesti*, p. 319.



authorities informed its merchants in Srebrenica about these events at the end of October 1451.¹²⁴ In February 1453, there was a dispute between King Tomaš and the Srebrenica prince Pavko Stipašinović regarding the payment of money for customs in Srebrenica, which a Ragusan had leased in previous years. The dispute was resolved to a certain extent only in 1454 when Stipašinović left certain amounts of silver to King Tomaš in his will.¹²⁵ In December 1453, the Ragusans living in Srebrenica also had a dispute with Duke Tvrtko Stančić over the seized money that had been sent from Srebrenica to Ragusa through its territory.¹²⁶ At the end of 1454, the despot entrusted the administration of Srebrenica to Duke Brajan, to whom he reported in October on the victory of his and Hunyadi's army over the Ottomans.¹²⁷ At this time, trade to Srebrenica via Bosnia was again difficult. At the beginning of November, the Ragusan authorities suspended the departure of merchants to Srebrenica through the property of Duke Stjepan and informed the merchants there not to return to Ragusa via that road, under threat of punishment.¹²⁸ Difficult traffic through Bosnia due to Ottoman orders to arrest Ragusan merchants persisted during 1455 when special permits were issued to go to Srebrenica.¹²⁹

Trying to take advantage of the Ottoman attack on the Despotate in May 1455, Srebrenica's neighbour Duke Petar attacked Srebrenica. According to Serbian chronicles, the Bosnian duke was defeated in this battle by the Serbian nobleman Dmtar Radojević.¹³⁰ These activities of Duke Petar in the middle of 1455 are not mentioned in Ragusan documents. In December 1454, his delegation was in Ragusa for unknown reasons, when the authorities there decided to send cloth gifts to the Bosnian nobleman.¹³¹ Power over Srebrenica, in accordance with the change on the throne, was taken over by his son, Despot Lazar Branković (1457–1458), after Đurađ's death.

124 (28.10.1451) Cons. Rog. XII, 160.

125 (21.2.1453) (28.5.1453) (4.6.1453) (12.6.1453) (14.6.1453) (21.7.1453) (25.8.1453) Cons. Rog. XIII, 157, 198, 200v, 203v, 205v, 216v, 231; (24.8.1453) VESELINOVIĆ, *Dubrovačko Malo veće o Srbiji*, p. 588. KOVAČEVIĆ-KOJIĆ, *Srednjovjekovna Srebrenica XIV-XV vijek*, p. 86.

126 "de induciendo super facto denariorum mercatorum de Strebeniza"; "de induciendo ad diem veneris" (5.12.1453) Cons. Rog. XIII, 265v; "de induciendo super facto denariorum impretitorum ex actorum in Strebeniza a mercatoribus per ser Dragoe de Sorgo et misorom Ragusium per famulum ser Johannis Mar. de Restis qui fuerunt accepti per Stancich et postra redditu ser Johanni Mar. de Restis, videlicet, yperperos CXIII"; "de induciendo per totum mensem aprilis" (7.12.1453) Ibidem, 266.

127 (10.10.1454) L. THALLÓCZY-A. ALDASY, *Magyarország mellektartományainak oklevéltára*, Hornyánszky Vikgor cs. és kir. udvari könyvnyomdaja, Budapest 1907, pp. 187–188.

128 "de vetando ciuibus nostris Raguseis et aliis qui se pro earum appellant quod non vadant cum auere auere per territoriam chercech Stiepani et de scribendo merchatoribus et ciuibus nostris qui sunt in Srebreniza et alibi quod non veniant cum auere per territorium chercech Stiepani donec aliud terminabitur per presens consilium rogatorum sub pena X pro cento illis qui contrafacerent" (5.11.1454) Cons. Rog. XIV, 98v.

129 (30.1.1455) (1.2.1455) (21.2.1455) Cons. Rog. XIV, 128, 128v, 134v.

130 STOJANOVIĆ, *Stari srpski rodoslovi i letopisi*, p. 122.

131 "de donando voioude Pethar Dinicich"; "de donando dicto voioude Pethar iperperis quingentos in pannis"; "de donando ambassiatoribus dicti voioude Pethar" (17.12.1454) Cons. Rog. XIV, 113.

The change in ownership of Srebrenica came again after the death of Despot Lazar. According to the report of Venetian subjects from Split, by mid-February 1458 at the latest, Tomaš occupied Srebrenica and some other fortifications in the vicinity. Tomaš assigned the occupied places to his noblemen Tvrtko Stančić and Tvrtko Kovačević, while he kept Srebrenica and two other fortified towns for himself.¹³² Tomaš's actions around Srebrenica certainly took place earlier, taking into account the time needed for the news to reach Split. The conquest of the territory around which the Bosnian kings and Serbian despots in the previous decades actively confronted according to the decisions of the Ragusan councils could be chronologically placed in the second half of January 1458 due to the fact that since then there has been a sudden change in economic relations between Ragusa and the region which manifested itself through the frequent issuance of permits for the departure of merchants.¹³³ After the establishment of the Bosnian king's rule in Srebrenica, the Ragusans continued to face difficult trade through the duke's territory. In mid-April 1458, they informed their permanent envoys to Duke Stjepan and the sultan about these problems.¹³⁴

Tomaš's conquest of Srebrenica at the beginning of 1458 ended the frequent change of power over this place between Bosnian kings and Serbian despots, given the fact that in the middle of 1459, the Despotate was conquered by the Ottomans. At the end of the 1450s, the economic capacity of Srebrenica was greatly reduced due to the Ottoman presence and the impassibility of roads. In recent years, the Ragusan authorities have been less and less inclined to issue special permits to its subjects to go to Srebrenica, which has diminished the importance of this mining centre. With further Ottoman conquests, Srebrenica was under the Ottoman rule in April 1462.¹³⁵

CONCLUSION

The town of Srebrenica is situated in the Middle Podrinje region, alongside the Drina river, on the Bosnian-Serbian border. The silver mine near Srebrenica was among the richest in Southeastern Europe during the 14th and 15th centuries. Until the beginning of the 15th century, the place was in the possession of the Bosnian rulers, and probably in 1404, due to the weakening of the royal power in Bosnia, this mining center was

132 "Nove havemo, come mori Lazaro despot, cussi Re de Bossnia cum hoste ando la et si ha preso Srebarnača, et altri castelli 11, deli quali reservo a si castelli 3 et 5 diti Astanach et quatro Atavacevich, li quali hano zurato esser soto posti alo dominio de Re de Bossina, li quali Sresbarnača et castelli 2 ha reservato Re per si" (22.2.1458) V. MACUSCEV, *Monumenta historica slavorum meridionalium vicinorumque populorum* II, Typographia regni Serbiae, Belgradi 1882, p. 204.

133 (18.1.1458) (23.1.1458) Cons. Rog. XV, 211, 211v.

134 "scribendi nobilibus et mercatoribus nostris in Srebrniza et in Smedreuo et Michailo Angelouich gubernatore Rassie" (10.4.1458) Cons. Rog. XV, 236. "scribendi ambassiatoribus nostris qui vadunt ad Magnum Turchum et ad cherzech Stiepanum pro facto mercatorum nostrorum in Srebreniza"; "scribendi mercatoribus nostris in Srebreniza" (17.4.1458) Ibidem, 239. "scribendi ad cherzech Stiepanum et mercatoribus nostris de Srebreniza et Sclauonie" (24.4.1458) Ibidem, 240.

135 DINIĆ, *Za istoriju rudarstva u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji i Bosni I*, p. 85.





ruled by the Bosnian nobleman, Duke Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić. In accordance with the agreement he had with the Hungarian king Sigismund of Luxembourg, Hrvoje handed over Srebrenica to him in 1410. As a result of Srebrenica's geostrategic position, the Hungarians were unable to hold it, so between 1411–1413 Sigismund handed it over to his faithful vassal, the Serbian despot Stefan Lazarević. Over the next half century, this event proved to be a stumbling block between Bosnian and Serbian rulers. During the first Bosnian attack on Srebrenica in 1425, it was evident that Bosnian rulers and nobles were unable to accept the loss of the mine, which generated a large amount of income each year. In the middle of 1444, King Tvrtko II conquered Srebrenica following the temporary conquest of the Serbian Despotate by the Ottomans. However, in the following year, the Serbian despot Đurađ succeeded in establishing his authority. After these events, a period of frequent changes in power over Srebrenica occurred between Bosnian and Serbian rulers, as well as frequent wars and conflicts. The rulers reached an agreement in 1447 regarding the division of revenue from customs duties and the leasing of mining pits. Nevertheless, this model was not sustainable and conflict continued here for many years. From 1452, sources indicate a more stable rule of Despot Đurađ over Srebrenica, which was not interrupted even by the unsuccessful attack of the Bosnian nobleman, Duke Petar Kovačević in 1455. With the death of Despot Lazar Branković, the Serbian Despotate was left without a ruler for a short time. King Tomaš took advantage of this situation and conquered Srebrenica in January 1458. Srebrenica remained in the possession of the Bosnian kings until 1462 when it was conquered by the Ottomans.