

Historiographic controversy about the Crusades against Bosnian “heretics”

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Abstract:

The teachings of the Bosnian Church constitute one of the greatest mysteries of the medieval period of Bosnian history. The issue whether it acted in the realms of heresy or orthodoxy has been disputed in a scientific battleground in historiographical circles many times. Just a touch less controversy is linked with the nature of military missions proclaimed and executed against Bosnian "heretics". Some authors characterize these conflicts as religious, so typical for crusades, while others, however, emphasize the political and territorial pretensions of Hungary regarding Bosnia, as the main motif, describing the Holy war idea as a cover story for the sake of the Papal curia. The triangle between Hungary, Rome and Bosnia was the focal point of discourse in which numerous accusations on one side and explanations from the other occurred, along with war propaganda, anti-heretic warnings and attempts to prove innocence and that right path were followed. Interestingly, the Bosnian medieval state, so many times threatened with crusades against it, became the leading advocate for crusade missions against the Ottoman danger in the 15th century. This transformation did not occur because crusader ideas prevailed, but rather because of an evolution within the social and administrative structures. This work will explore all the differences between the opposing historiographic streams, their approaches regarding sources and literature.

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The main goal is to determine how research performed with more or less identical source material, can produce such opposing results.¹

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Studying of the Crusades against the medieval Bosnian state implies the analysis of whole sets of propaganda activities aimed at the exploitation of accusations about the existence of heretics in Bosnia. Unlike most other Crusades, when main propaganda activities came from ecclesiastical circles,² from the beginning of correlation of Bosnia with heresy, main accusers were its neighbours, who almost always had either territorial or economic motives. Thus, the first mention of heresy in Bosnia originates from a letter created in 1199 by Vukan, the ruler of Duklja, in which he informed Pope Innocent III that the ruler of Bosnia, Ban Kulin (1180-1204), shelters and protects heretics in his realm.³ It would be naïve to conclude that Vukan had purity and wellbeing of the Catholic faith on his mind when he sent this denunciation against the bosnian ruler to the papal curia, as some authors advocate.⁴ Concrete political motives which arose from the existence of the two conflicting political alliances were prevailing reason for labeling Bosnia as heretical haven.⁵

¹ This paper initially was presented on the Conference "The Fairest Meadows in the Worlds: Crusades and Crusaders in the Balkans", which was organized by St. Cyril and St. Methodius University in Veliko Tarnovo, Bulgaria, on November 7th - 9th 2013. Unfortunately, the volume with the essays from this Conference never was published.

² Christoph T. Maier, *Crusade Propaganda and Ideology. Model Sermons for the Preaching of the Cross*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) 280.

³ Since that in this occasion Innocent III did not mention the possibility of launching a Crusade against Bosnia, this topic is not included in paper. More information about a series of events that Vukan's letter triggered, and eventually end with the so-called *Abjuration of Bolino Polje*, one of the most famous documents from medieval Bosnian history, can be found in vast literature. We emphasize: Dragutin Kniewald, "Vjerodostojnost latinskih izvora o bosanskim krstjanima." *Rad JAZU* 270 (1949): 115-283; Pejo Čošković, "Interpretacija Kniewaldovog kritičkog izdanja Bilinopoljske izjave." *Prilozi* 32 (2003): 75-115; Lujo Margetić, "Neka pitanja abjuracije iz 1203. godine," in *Fenomen "krstjani" u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni i Humu*, ed. Franjo Šanjek (Sarajevo and Zagreb, 2005) 27-103.

⁴ Ivana Komatina, *Crkva i država u srpskim zemljama od XI do XIII veka*, (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2016), 231.

⁵ Dženan Dautović, "Prilog tumačenju značaja pisma Inocenta III od 9. novembra 1202. godine (Reg.Vat. 5, ff: 53v-54r, e: 103) za proučavanje političkih odnosa u Jugoistočnoj Europi početkom 13. stoljeća", in *Bosanski ban Tvrtko "pod Prozorom u Rami"*, ed. Tomislav Brković (Prozor, Sarajevo and Zagreb: Synopsis, 2016), 195-212.

In historiographical writings we can find that there were eight different occasions when Crusades were launched to medieval Bosnia. The main goal of this paper is to gather in one place all sources about these events, and to present very different historiographical opinions and interpretations of these sources, and finally to show how many of them we can actually label as Crusades. Regarding the preconditions which have to be present so one military campaign could receive a crusader prefix, one can still rely on the arguments by famous German medievalist Hans Eberhard Mayer, who stated that such a campaign have to be authorized by the Pope, participants had to pledge a crusader oath, and a pope had to issue general indulgences for every participant.⁶

Acontius' Crusade (1221-1222)

The first half of 13th century was without a doubt the period of most intense relations between Bosnia and the Papacy, so it is not surprising that the majority of alleged Crusade campaigns happened at that time. It started with a mission of the papal legate Acontius on the eastern Adriatic coast. The main task of this papal chaplain was to deal with pirates from Omiš who attacked Crusade armies and pilgrimages on their way to the Holy Land.⁷ While he was in Dalmatia, Acontius was warned that heretics were warmly welcomed in Bosnia. This information reached Pope Honorius III. who, in his letter *Inter alias Sollicitudines*, from the 3rd December 1221, for the first time in history called for a Crusade on Bosnia.⁸ The leader of this Crusade was supposed to be the King of Hungary Andrew II., but he was preoccupied with some problems in his kingdom, so Archbishop of Kalocsa Ugrin was appointed to this honour instead.⁹ Acontius on the other hand, organized a synod in Dubrovnik,

⁶ Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 30-37. Cf. Rebecca Rist, *The Papacy and Crusading in Europe, 1198-1245*, (London: Continuum, 2009), 1.

⁷ The most detailed description of this mission can be found in: Ivan Majnarić, „Papinski poslanik Akoncije u Dalmaciji i Hrvatskoj 1219. - 1223. godine,“ in *Humanitas et Litterae, ad honorem Franjo Šanjek*, eds. Lovorka Čoralić and Slavko Slišković (Zagreb: Dominikanska nakladna istina and Kršćanska sadašnjost, 2009), 79-98.

⁸ Augustino Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam Sacram Illustrantia*, Vol. I (Romae: Typis Vaticanis, 1859), 31.

⁹ King Andrew II promised to Ugrin that he would give him Bosnia and Usora, if he managed to expel heresy from there: „Honorius episcopus servus servorum dei venerabili fratri Ugrino archiepiscopo Colocensi salutem et apostolicam benedictionem. Cum a nobis supplicasti, siquidem nobis, ut cum karissimus in Christo filius noster Andreas Ungarie rex illustris terras quasdam, videlicet Bosnam, Soy et Wosora, infectas heretica pravitate tibi purgandas committens, eas ecclesie tue in perpetuum pia liberalitate donavit, prout eiusdem presentate nobis littere plenius continebant, donationem huiusmodi apostolico dignaremur munimine roborare, presertim cum idem rex nobis super hoc porrexit preces suas. Nos itaque tam ipsius regis quam tuis supplicationibus annuentes, terras ipsas sicut

with all the bishops from “Pannonia, Trachia and Illyria”, with one theme only – the fight against the heretics in Bosnia.¹⁰

Most authors agree that this campaign was not realized, and Hungarian and Croatian noblemen were pointed out as main culprits.¹¹ Some of the studies that deal with crusades in the 13th century do not even mention this mission,¹² which cannot be accepted as proper methodology since with this campaign the Crusade wars had been established as a specific sort of diplomatic relations between papacy and Hungary with Bosnian state. Outside all these interpretations, stands the opinion of Dominik Mandić (which is supported only by Miroslav Brandt) who claims that “this crusade, had actually happened, and that Acontius and Ugrin assembled a large army and attacked Bosnia, whose defences, unprepared for war, were overrun and suffered heavy losses. The Crusaders managed to conquer most of the country, and thousands of infidels were deported to southern Hungary”.¹³ However, these arguments were discarded as unfounded constructions.¹⁴ Regarding the

pie ac provide sunt donate, tibi et ecclesie tue per te salvo iure regio in redditibus et rationibus consuetis auctoritate apostolica confirmamus et presentis scripti patrocionio comunimus. Nulli ergo etc. nostre confirmationis etc. Si quis etc. Datum Tibure idibus maii, (pontificatus nostri) ano nono“. Tadija Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. III (Zagreb: Ex officina societatis typographicae, 1905), 243; Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam I*, 55-56.

¹⁰ Whether this synod actually took place or not still is not finally decided in historiography. More information in: Giacomo Lucari, *Copioso ristretto de gli annali di Rausa*, (Venetia: Ad instantia di Antonio Leonardi, 1605) 35; Majnarić, „Papinski poslanik Akoncije u Dalmaciji i Hrvatskoj“, 92-93.

¹¹ Franjo Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, *Rad JAZU* 10 (1870), 146-147; Vjekoslav Klaić, *Poviest Bosne do propasti kraljevstva*, (Zagreb: Tiskom dioničke tiskare, 1882), 66; Marko Perojević, „Ban Stjepan“, in *Poviest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine, od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463*, (Sarajevo: HKD Napredak, 1942) 217; Sima Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države* (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1964), 58-59; Anto Babić, *Iz istorije srednjovekovne Bosne*, (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1972), 246-247; Milan Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages* (Prague: Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1973), 212; Jaroslav Šidak, *Studije o "Crkvi bosanskoj" i bogumilstvu* (Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber, 1975), 182; John V. A. Fine Jr., *The Bosnian church: A New Interpretation* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1975), 135; Dragoljub Dragojević, *Krstjani i jeretička Crkva bosanska* (Beograd: Balkanološki institut SANU, 1987), 60; Salih Jalimam, *Historija bosanskih bogumila* (Tuzla: IP Hamidović, 1999), 104; Majnarić, „Papinski poslanik Akoncije u Dalmaciji i Hrvatskoj“, 91.

¹² Mladen Ančić, „Križarske vojne" XIII stoljeća“, *Radovi Hrvatskog društva za znanost i umjetnost* 4 (1996): 12-35.

¹³ Domagoj Mandić, *Bogomilska crkva bosanskih krstjana* (Chicago: The Croatian Historical Institute, 1962), 57; Miroslav Brandt, „Dubrovnik i heretička Bosna u prvoj polovini XIII stoljeća“ *Anali* 12 (1970): 29-30.

¹⁴ Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 182, footnote 27: „This conceptualization, for which he (Mandić) couldn't find any contemporary source, should corroborate his main hypothesis

aftermath of this campaign, there are a lot of disagreements about whether, after the collapse of the idea of a crusade, Acontius went to Bosnia and died there, or not.¹⁵

Ugrin's Crusade (1225-1227)

As we could see, the origins of this campaign were established during the mission of legate Acontius, when King of Hungary Andrew III. appointed Ugrin, the Archbishop of Kalocsa, as the leader of the crusade army. Ugrin needed an experienced military leader for his crusade units, so he promised a wage of 200 marks of silver to Ivan Angelos, son of the Byzantine Empress Margareta, and nephew of King Andrew III.¹⁶ This campaign was began on the 15th May 1225 with the issuing of the papal confirmation of King Andrews grant of *Bosnia, Soy et Wasora* to Ugrin. No crusade rhetoric was repeated until a year later when Ugrin bought castrum Požega from the King of Hungary. He pleaded to the Pope for confirmation of this purchase referring to the need that "heretics in those lands should be destroyed".¹⁷ Obviously, not even this papal confirmation was sufficient entice warriors to a Crusade on Bosnia, because only a couple of days later, Pope Honorius III. reminded prince Angelos of his commitments.¹⁸

Sources are silent on whether the Hungarian-Byzantine prince and the Archbishop of Kalocsa fulfilled their promise, but historiography is almost unanimous that none of these crusading armies entered Bosnia at this time.¹⁹ Vjekoslav Klaić even claims that the failure of the crusade idea led to the change on the Bosnian throne, when the previous ruler Ban Stephan, was replaced by Ban Mathew Ninoslav.²⁰ However, this is almost impossible to prove, and we must treat that assumption with a great deal of suspicion. As the only result of this campaign Marko

about fled of pretended djed Bartul-Tomaš from Bosnia to France. To these arguments of Mandić, with same arguments, accepted M. Brandt".

¹⁵ More about that in: Majnarić, „Papinski poslanik Akoncije u Dalmaciji i Hrvatskoj“, 91-93 (although we cannot agree with authors baseless statement that in that time there wasn't any secular power in Bosnia).

¹⁶ Ančić, „Križarske vojne" XIII stoljeća“, 18.

¹⁷ Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. III, 264; Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 183.

¹⁸ Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. III, 264-265. Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 183; Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, 149.

¹⁹ Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, 149; Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 183-184; Babić, *Iz istorije srednjovjekovne Bosne*, 246-247; Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, 212, 222; Fine Jr., *The Bosnian church*, 136-137; Dragojović, *Krstjani i jeretička Crkva bosanska*, 60-61.

²⁰ Klaić, *Poviest Bosne*, 67.

Perojević mentions the building of some fortress on the Hungarian-Bosnian border,²¹ while Mladen Ančić just states that the results of this campaigns remain “a subject of vivid discussions between historians, but without any real results”.²² Of course, there were some authors who claimed that Ugrin’s Crusade was real and very bitter. This time round Dominik Mandić did not even mention the events from 1225 to 1227 because they did not suit his theories about the successful war from 1222, whereas his faithful follower Miroslav Brandt, in the attempt to make Mandić’s arguments stronger, wrote about the three Crusades of Archbishop Ugrin in 1221, 1225 and 1227.²³ Salih Jalimam approached this historiographical stream with his analyses, but without any real progress,²⁴ and even Sima Ćirković “assumed” that these early crusades were successful, even though in the same text he claimed that the course of events remains unknown.²⁵

Koloman’s Crusade (1234-1239)

During the following 10 years there were not any military actions, but some very important events happened. First of all, in that period, the friars of the Dominican order arrived in Bosnia. These fierce fighters against heresy, proved their eagerness for the preservation of the purity of church in southern France.²⁶ Then, in late 1233 some complaints about Bosnia reached the Roman curia again. The energetic leader of the catholic world Gregory IX sent his representative, the legate Iacopo Pecorarius, to investigate allegations against a domestic Bosnian bishop who was accused of being illiterate in Latin and of living in a village, together with his brother who was “heresiarch” – the leader of the Bosnian heretics.²⁷ The main results of this investigation were the replacement of the accused bishop and exemption of the Bosnian diocese from the jurisdiction of the Ragusan archdiocese. The new Bosnian ruler Ban Mathew Ninoslav, who was “born in heresy”, together with his relative Prijezda, accepted Christianity, and as insurance, Prijezda’s son

²¹ Perojević, „Ban Stjepan“, 218.

²² Ančić, „Križarske vojne“ XIII stoljeća“, 18.

²³ Brandt, „Dubrovnik i heretička Bosna“, 31-33.

²⁴ Jalimam, *Historija bosanskih bogumila*, 104-105.

²⁵ Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, 60.

²⁶ More in: Salih Jalimam, *Djelatnost dominikanaca u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni* (Tuzla: IP Hamidović, 1999), 196. In one dominican chronicle from 1259. it was written that they established two monasteries in Bosnia where they burned heretics (Sima Ćirković, in: *Leksikon srpskog srednjeg vijeka*, s.v. „Dominikanci“), but that source was never subject of serious scientific exploration.

²⁷ More information about these events can be found in: Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 184-186.

was handed over as hostage to Dominicans. With these actions, the stage was prepared for the attempt of the final solution for all ecclesiastical problems in Bosnia.

King Andrew II again avoided assuming a direct role in this campaign, and appointed his son, Duke Coloman as the leader of his armies. And again, same as Archbishop Ugrin before him, Coloman was to be rewarded with lands in Bosnia for his success. Pope eagerly confirmed this donation.²⁸ The recently appointed Bosnian bishop, dominican friar Johannes von Wildeshausen (Johannes Teutonicus) was at that time very tired in carrying out his duty, and was eager to withdraw from his function, but was averted with a papal letter in which he was persuaded to "kill infidels".²⁹ Most authors agree that this was the only implemented Crusade war on the bosnian soil. Their conclusions rest on the assumption that the Bosnian ruler Ban Ninoslav, had actually, at first, taken the side of the crusaders. He appealed to Pope Gregory IX. that he fought against heretics in his land, and confiscated their property, but also that he encountered big opposition among nobles. That same day the Pope wrote three letters, one to the Ban, to Prince Koloman, and to the Dominicans with further instructions.³⁰ But soon the Bosnian ruler realized that religious motives were secondary in Koloman's goals, and that sovereignty of his realm was in danger, so he distanced himself from the invaders. This role of the Ban Ninoslav was probably wrongly interpreted, though sources did say that Koloman had much success in this campaign, enough to boast about his victories to the Pope,³¹ and the position of the defenders in Bosnia was obviously very difficult. The salvation came from a direction nobody expected. The fiercest warriors of their time, the Mongols, attacked Hungary in 1241. inflicting heavy defeat to the Hungarian army in the Battle of Mohi (11th April 1241) where Prince Koloman was murdered, and King Bela IV. was forced to flee all the way to the city of Trogir. Bosnia, because of its mountainous terrain did not suffer in these incursions, so ban Ninoslav used these events to re-establish his power over the Bosnian banate.

This Crusade campaign lasted very long, and had many consequences, so it was natural that it left significant marks in

²⁸ Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. III, 443.

²⁹ "... si cruce officii pontificalis assumpta hostes crucifixi indutus armaturam dei hacentus viriliter expugnaris, si te belli labores opprimunt, si ad regressum e contra insurgentia pro fide certamina te inducunt"; Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam I*, 137; Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, 156.

³⁰ Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam I*, 120-121.

³¹ Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam I*, 169.

historiography. We will start with the most radical of all the theories, that of Nada Klaić. The renowned Croatian medievalist stated that even this campaign never happened, that Hungarian armies never crossed Bosnian borders, and that Koloman's bragging to the Pope was in fact lies fabricated to cover the fact that he failed to fulfil his promise.³² This brave theory of a historian known for her very rigorous relations to the sources did not find many supporters. Events presented in previous lines were drawn first from the sources by Franjo Rački, who was then followed by most historians who stressed political over religious motives of the Hungarian forces.³³ One of the few historians, who highlighted Koloman's religious components as well as the other 13th century campaigns on Bosnia, was Mladen Ančić, but he also stands alone regarding this interpretation.³⁴ There were also some disputes over the exact meaning of the term "hereticos de Sclavonie partibus" in one of the previously mentioned papal letters, but that is not the subject of this paper.³⁵

Later Thirteenth century Crusade

Mathew Ninoslav felt confident enough that, only a couple of years after the Hungarian catastrophe on Mohi, he participated in some activities within the domestic policy of the Hungarian kingdom. He got involved in the quarrel between towns of Split and Trogir, and took the side of the commune of Split, against King Bela IV. who favoured Trogir. However, the restored military power of the Hungarian kingdom once again proved to be too strong for Bosnian forces. In 1244. the Ban was forced to sign a peace agreement in which Bela imposed some requirements considering the organization of the church in Bosnia.³⁶ These arrangements did not probably work, because two years later the Archbishop of Kalocsa again called for a Crusade, and in 1248, Pope Innocent IV. declared that "the Bosnian diocese is so deep in heresy, that it no longer can be considered even a part of the Catholic church".³⁷ This campaign did not result with a military expedition, but with an action with far-reaching consequences. The Bosnian diocese was removed from

³² Nada Klaić, *Srednjovjekovna Bosna. Politički položaj bosanskih vladara do Tvrtkove krunidbe (1377. g.)* (Zagreb: Eminex, 1994), 100-101.

³³ Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, 155-158; Vladimir Ćorović, *Historija Bosne* (Beograd: Srpska kraljevska akademija, 1940), 196; Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, 62-64. Mandić, *Bogomilska crkva*, 427.

³⁴ Ančić, „Križarske vojne" XIII stoljeća“, 18-20.

³⁵ More in: Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 279-280, 363-365.

³⁶ Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovekovne bosanske države*, 67.

³⁷ Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungarum* I, 204-205.

Bosnia and relocated to the city of Požega in the Hungarian kingdom.³⁸ After this time, Bosnia became the only medieval state that broke its connections with the Papacy, and from the vacancy within the Bosnian diocese arose the Church of Bosnia, as a fine example of a state-church. This situation remained long after the disappearance of the Bosnian medieval state.

Fourteenth and Fifteenth century Crusades

After the turbulent events in the 13th century, there were four other occasions when Bosnia was marked as a target of crusade campaigns. We must emphasize that none of these incidents were implemented with actual military expeditions, but all of them were filled with crusader terminology, papal indulgencies and other similar folklore that accompanied proper Crusade wars. The first attempt was from 1337. when Croatian and Hungarian nobles managed to acquire a papal permission for a crusade against the Bosnian ruler Stephen II. Kotromanić.³⁹ It failed because King of Hungary Charles I. Robert did not allow this attack on his loyal ally. There are a lot of different explanations with a political context behind this campaign. The main theory is that it was a product of a struggle between the Croatian nobility and the King for power and more autonomy within the realm of the Hungarian crown.⁴⁰ The Bosnian ruler was caught in the middle of this struggle. Traditionally, Rački the main role in the proclamation of war address to the Pope;⁴¹ Marko Perojević regarded the aspirations of Duke Nelipčić as the main motive,⁴² whereas John Fine had doubts in choosing between these two options.⁴³

³⁸ More information about these events in: Dubravko Lovrenović, „Translatio sedis i uspostava novog konfesionalnog identiteta u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni - I“, in *Franjevački samostan u Gučoj Gori*, ed. Velimir Valjan, (Guča Gora and Sarajevo: Franjevački samostan Guča Gora and Kulturno-povijesni institut Bosne Srebrene, 2010), 113-125.

³⁹ Theiner, *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungarum* I, 616-617.

⁴⁰ Ćirković, *Istorija srednjovjekovne bosanske države*, 110. To some degree, this thesis was supported by Ćorović, *Istorija Bosne*, 257, and Loos, *Dualist Heresy in the Middle Ages*, 296.

⁴¹ Rački, „Bogomili i patareni“, 179. Also, V. Klaić and S. Jalimam accept this thesis, Klaić, *Poviest Bosne*, 121; Salih Jalimam, „Spor dominikanaca i franjevac u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni“, *Croatia Christiana Periodica* 13 (1989): 18.

⁴² Marko Perojević, „Stjepan II Kotromanić,“ in *Povijest hrvatskih zemalja Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463* (Sarajevo: HK Napredak, 1942), 262; also in: Dubravko Lovrenović, „Utjecaj Ugarske na odnos crkve i države u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni“, in *Znanstveni skup "11. stoljeća bosanskih franjevac 1291 - 1991.*, ed. Marko Karamatić (Samobor: Franjevačka teologija Sarajevo, 1994), 60.

⁴³ Fine Jr., *The Bosnian church*, 179.

In 1357, Bosnia was again linked with a Crusade. The powerful King of Hungary Louis I. the Great, wanted to obtain crusade status for his campaign against Serbia. This action woke up the old idea of a crusade against the Bosnian heretics inside the Hungarian ecclesiastical circles. Especially active in the implementation of these ideas was the new Bosnian bishop Peter Siklosi, who three years later received a letter from Pope Innocent VI. encouraging him for the fight against heretics.⁴⁴ It is certain that in that period no campaigns were led against Bosnia, but there are still some issues about the war between Bosnia and Hungary from 1363. Due to the fact that King Louis justified his attack with words "... ubi in regno nostro Bozne innumerabilis multitudo hereticorum et patarenorum pululasset in errore fidei orthodoxe",⁴⁵ some historians also characterized this campaign as a Crusade,⁴⁶ while others pointed out the writings of the King's secretary John archdeacon, who described the war as "an attempt to destroy the arrogance of some rebels".⁴⁷ As we could not find any papal reactions on these events, we are willing to say that this war either was not a crusade campaign, or that it was a continuation of propaganda activities initiated in 1357, when the crusade idea, more than any time before that, was used as a camouflage of political aspirations of the Hungarian King.

At the end, there are two conquest attempts by King Sigismund of Luxemburg. This medieval ruler was a master of all kinds of diplomatic pressure, so he also used crusade vocabulary in his numerous attempts to obtain the Bosnian crown. In late 1391. Sigismund sent his plea to the Pope Boniface IX. to assure that his campaign against "Turks, Manicheans and heretics" in neighbouring lands got a form of a Crusade war. Of course, this request was approved, and the Pope in a letter from 18th December 1391. promised the same indulgences as for the fighters in Holy Land.⁴⁸ Eventually, nothing happened, because Sigismund had a lot of problems in his other projects. These events did not attract much

⁴⁴ Tadija Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. XIII (Zagreb: Tisak dioničke tiskare, 1915), 18-19.

⁴⁵ Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus XIII*, 358; Šidak, *Studije o Crkvi bosanskoj*, 235.

⁴⁶ In fact, Nada Klaić even named one of chapter in her book: „Failed Crusade of Louis on Bosnia from 1363.“, Klaić, *Srednjovjekovna Bosna*, 238-247.

⁴⁷ Marko Perojević, „Ban Stjepan Tvrtko,“ in *Povijest Bosne i Hercegovine od najstarijih vremena do godine 1463* (Sarajevo: HK Napredak, 1942), 300; Ćorović, *Historija Bosne*, 285; Mandić, *Bogomilska crkva*, 400; Lovrenović, „Utjecaj Ugarske“, 68.

⁴⁸ Tadija Smičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus Regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Vol. XVII (Zagreb: Jugoslovenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1981), 409-410; Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti. Sveta kruna ugarska i Sveta kruna bosanska 1387-1463*, (Zagreb and Sarajevo: Synopsis, 2006), 69.

attention in historiography. Fine said that these events "must be taken in the context of the war Sigismund waged against Ladislaus, Bosnian King Tvrtko (recently deceased) and various Croatian nobles including Hrvoje",⁴⁹ but the most logical assumption is that the main motive for this campaign was the great victory that the new Bosnian King Dabiša achieved earlier of the same year over a strong contingent of the Ottoman army.⁵⁰ Sigismund had to wait for a new chance for more than fifteen years. These events belong to a very turbulent period of Bosnian-Hungarian relations from the first decade of 15th century.⁵¹ Armies of King Sigismund had a lot of success in Bosnia, and then a letter arrived from Pope Gregory XII. who summoned "the whole Christian world" to gather help for the King of Hungary in the fight against "Turks, Arians, Manicheans and other infidels".⁵² Whether this appeal worked or not, is unknown, but in the next year the Hungarian King launched another overwhelming attack on Bosnia. What is certain is that this war had nothing to do with religious motives. It was a usual conquest war for territory and power. Obviously, "wars of Sigismund against Bosnia, guided under the pretence of the Christian zeal, were very far from the religious ideals which once powered the crusade idea. Just an ideological

⁴⁹ Fine Jr., *The Bosnian church*, 198.

⁵⁰ Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 69.

⁵¹ More about that in chapter: „Years when only weapon spoke (1404-1408.)“ in: Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 121-142.

⁵² „Gregorius etc. Universis et singulis Christi Fidelibus presentes litteras inspecturis salutem etc. In vinea Domini Sabaoth Sancta videlicet et universali Ecclesia Cultores atque Custodes, quanquam immeritos, inscrutabilis dispositione consilii deputatos attentius vigilare nos convenit, ne gens impiissima de Sylva tanquam essera progrediens videlicet Teucrorum quos Turcos vocant, Arianorum, Manichaeorum ac aliorum perfidorum infidelium vineam ipsam inhumaniter depascatur, et quantum nobis ex alto conceditur, ut eadem vinea praeservetur illaesa, impetum bestiarum illam demoliri satagentium sub omnipotentis virtute dexteræ reprimamus. Verum Sacrosancta Romana Ecclesia mater omnium fidelium et magistra suspiria producit ab intimis, eculi ejus solvuntur in lachrymas, vehementibusque genitibus ipsius pectora quatiuntur, eo quod praeter hostilitates, quae a blasphemis crucis adversus fidei professores exercentur extrinsecus, undique bella fremunt intrinsecus, seditioes intestinae dilaniant et inquietant domesticae similitates, gladiisque fidelium, qui ad Christianorum salutem et exterminium malorum foret contra hostium fidei cuneos exercendus, conversus, conversus in proximos, proh dolor! Inebriatur sanguine christiano et (quod acrius excoquit mentem nostram) scelerati filii et a devotione semoti caeco furore immaniter debachati armantur in matrem, ac illum ex quo prodierunt uterum, nituntur summis viribus lacerare; quo sit, ut nos una cum memorata Ecclesia sponsa nostra circa exhibitionem opportuni subsidii in hac parte juxta desiderium nostrum et apostolicae debitum servitutis manus adjutrices extendere nequeamus“ Joseph Koller, *Historia Episcopatus Quinqueecclesiarum*, Vol. III (Posonii: sumptibus Joannis Michaelis Landerer, 1784), 283-288; Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 134.

shell remained from former ideals which served as a cover for political goals".⁵³

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The crusade wars against Bosnia and its "heretics" are very complicated questions that delve into some of the most dubious aspects of Bosnian medieval history, such as the teachings of the Church of Bosnia, Bosnian-Hungarian-papal relations etc. Lack of contemporary sources leaves room for very diverse historiographic interpretations and theories, which arose during the previous century and a half. These interpretations proved to be very rigid, and one's opinion was hardly ever altered with strength of argument from the other side.

Obviously, campaigns from the 13th century, mainly the Koloman Crusade (others were only threats and not real campaigns), were more serious and had more long-term consequences. They eventually resulted in the dislocation of the Bosnian diocese outside Bosnian borders, which was the direct cause for the appearance of the Bosnian church. With that, Bosnia became the only medieval European state that ended all formal connections with papacy. In the later period, crusades against Bosnia were declared several times, always as purely political wars, without a genuine religious background. Additionally, these events are a great example of how religion, its postulates and its importance in the society, were used in the Middle Ages as a weapon for completing political ambitions. One can easily say that the whole story of heresy in medieval Bosnia was a well-used political theatre by the Hungarian Kingdom, warmly welcomed at the Papal curia.

We can see that one of the most widespread romantic perceptions (beside the alleged link between Bosnian *krstjani* and Bulgarian *Bogomils*) about the medieval Bosnian history – Bosnian state as a victim of numerous Crusade wars, doesn't have almost any confirmations in contemporary sources, and it had to be abandoned as one of the main narratives in popular culture. However, that one occasion when the crusade war against Bosnia most probably was realized, is sufficient argument that medieval Bosnia should be included as one, although particular episode of crusade warfare on the European soil during the Middle Ages.

⁵³ Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 155-156.

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