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Nulla spes sit ... **Bosnia and the Papacy in the Thirteenth Century**

The main goal of this paper is to examine the relations between the Bosnian Banate and the papacy during the thirteenth century, one of the most turbulent periods in the history of this interaction. The focus will be set on the development of the situation regarding the Bosnian bishopric, its position in the political turmoil, and its fate after the collapse of every chance for agreement. First, we will give a short overview of the periods that precede this time when this bishopric was the centre of two waves of the Christianization of these areas and the carrier of religious life during the late Antiquity and early Middle Ages. The main part of the paper is dedicated to the events from the first half of the thirteenth century, crucial period that shaped the future political and religious picture of medieval Bosnia. The final part of the paper will cover the longest lasting consequences of the aforementioned events: the cessation of official contacts between Bosnia and the Roman Curia, relocation of the Bosnian bishopric outside its territory, and the formation of the Bosnian church – an autocephalous organization that emerged on the foundations of the previous Catholic diocese.

Keywords: Medieval Bosnia, papacy, Crusades, Hungarian Kingdom.



The oldest mentions about the official contacts between the medieval Bosnian state and the Roman Curia are dated at the end of twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth century. These contacts were friendly and cordial at first,¹ however, after a series of accusations against the Bosnian ban by his political enemies regarding his protection of heretics they quickly turned worse.² Both of these episodes are very significant, but they will not be a subject of this

¹ We are referring to the mission of the papal legate Theobald in Dalmatia and initiating contact with the Bosnian ruler, Ban Kulin (1180–1203) in the year 1180. Cf. FARLATI IV. p. 191–193; MAJNARIĆ 2008. p. 98–103.

² These contacts between Bosnian ruler Ban Kulin (1180–1203) and pope Innocent III (1198–1216) are one of the most important episodes in the history of relations between Bosnia and the Roman Curia. For the political context of that episode see: DAUTOVIĆ 2016. p. 195–212. Some of the important analysis: BASLER 1973a. p. 13–22; ANČIĆ 2003. p. 17–38; ČOŠKOVIĆ 2003. p. 75–117; BARABÁS 2014. p. 293; BARABÁS 2017. p. 38–43.

paper. The historical context of the time of the events that we will analyse is the period of so-called Innocent's successors, meaning the pontificates of three popes: Honorius III (1216–1227), Gregory IX (1227–1241), and Innocent IV (1243–1254). Processes which marked this period are the implementation of the statutes from the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and intensification of crusades on European soil.³

The developments we follow start with a mission by papal legate Acontius in Dalmatia with the purpose of solving the issue of pirates from Omiš, which robbed and murdered crusaders on the path to the Holy Land as well as ordinary Christians passing through.⁴ These pirates were a grand problem for local authorities as well, so the Hungarian king Andrew II issued warnings and using a well-rehearsed method of disqualification proclaimed them Patarens.⁵ In the letter from 13th April 1221 Pope Honorius III conveys to the archbishop of Split a concern regarding news about groups of Dalmatians and Slavs, enemies of Christ, practicing piracy, robbing crusaders and hiding like foxes with their loot.⁶ It is obvious that the initial mission of Acontius has nothing to do with Bosnia. Only after his visit to Split and Zadar did he receive reports about heretics allegedly living and acting unhindered in Bosnia. The authors of these denouncements are unknown but there are indications that they originated from the Hungarian side. Regardless of the source of these accusations, they were treated very differently than a couple of decades earlier when similar reports were presented to Innocent III. This pope, to whom many authors attribute a remarkable feeling for legal relations, conducted a thorough investigation which concluded that the reports regarding Bosnia were unfounded. His successor Honorius III, however, performed no investigations, nor did he contact the Bosnian ruler before promptly sending the letter *Inter alias sollicitudines*, a sort of a verdict against Bosnia without any possibility of appeal.⁷ The first part of the letter addresses the pirates of Omiš, before fiercely switching to the accusations against Bosnia. The pope points out that he heard reports that heretics are welcomed in Bosnia and allowed "like vampires breastfeeding in daylight, to spread their ideas and misconceptions,

³ For the decrees from this council see: GARCIA Y GARCIA 1981. Cf. RIST 2009.

⁴ More comprehensive analysis of Acontius' action: MAJNARIĆ 2009. p. 79–98. The author convincingly elaborated that Acontius arrived in Dalmatia in a role of *nuntio*, and only after familiarizing himself with the situation did he ask the pope to elevate him to the rank of *legate de latere*. However, his statement that the main argument against the theory of Acontius' arrival in Bosnia is that "no adequate secular authority or church organization exist there" cannot be sustainable at all.

⁵ CDCr III. nr. 162. p. 187–188.

⁶ RH III I. nr. 3245. p. 529; FEJÉR III/1. p. 307–308.

⁷ AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 11. fol. 168^v, ep. 69 (3 December 1221.) THEINER I. nr. 61. p. 31; FEJÉR III/1. p. 350–351; RH III II. nr. 3594. p. 13; CDCr III nr. 171. p. 196–197; POTTHAST I. nr. 6725; AHG nr. 83. p. 111; ARTNER nr. 33. p. 21.

too grief for the Lord”.⁸ For this reason, the pope addressed the Hungarian king and all archbishops and bishops of his land to repel these infectious people.⁹

Among the actions of Acontius declared against Bosnia, are letters of Honorius III to the archbishop of Esztergom (5 December 1221) asking for assistance in fighting the infidels and the spread of their teachings, once again repeating the vampire metaphor,¹⁰ and the letter to the Dubrovnik, 12 March 1222) advising them that during elections of the new archbishop they should select someone who is able to fight heretics in Bosnia and pirates in Dalmatia, once more repeating similar rhetoric.¹¹ These letters point to several issues. Obviously, Bosnia was not included in the original legat Acontius’s mission itinerary. Once rumours of the existence of heretics in Bosnia reached him, he forwarded them to the Roman Curia, from where instant condemnations were sent, without any call for questioning or renouncing of misconceptions. Clearly, the information which reached the pope was scarce, otherwise he would not have used the exact same syntagm in all of his letters. Although the pope demanded that the Hungarian ruler and clergy fought the heretics, there is no evidence that a crusade was launched. There are no mentions of indulgences and crusader vows. Even though this event was not followed by any concrete action, it carries much importance: Bosnia was once again in the focus of papal attention, with repeated negative context regarding the accusation of the presence of heretical teachings within its borders.¹²

For the next three years there are no further developments, until May 1225 when the letter *Gratus gerimus* of Pope Honorius III sent to Ugrin, archbishop of Kalocsa contained the first mentions of agitations for a crusade against Bosnia. The destruction of all heretics of Bosnia, Usora and Sol was the first directive, while repeating the vampire metaphor and mentioning the previous mission of legate Acontius. Onwards, the pope applauded the zeal of the

⁸ “*Cum itaque, sicut audivimus, in partibus Bosnie tamquam in cubilibus structionum heretici receptati, velut lamie nudatis mammis catulos suos lactent, dogmatizando palam sue pravitatis errores in enorme gregis dominici detremendum*” – AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 11. fol. 168^v, ep. 69 (3 December 1221). The usage of such allegories shouldn’t be much of a surprise. The letters of pope Honorius III were full of similar dramatizing metaphors. When he spoke about heresy, the pope regularly mentioned infections, the waves that desire to sink Peters boat, a broken hand that dangles from a wooden crutch, etc. RIST 2009. p. 85. For the usage of these classifications as a propaganda tool see: DAUTOVIĆ 2019. p. 59–80, and for the general use of propaganda in papal actions: MAIER 2016. p. 235–248.

⁹ “[...] *nos volentes pestilentes huiusmodi, si datum fuerit desuper, effugare, Karissimo in Christo filio nostro ... illustri Regi Ungarie, nec non universis Archiepiscopis et Episcopis illius Regni direximus scripta nostra*” – AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 11., ep. 69.

¹⁰ AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 11., fol. 168^v, ep. 71 (5 December 1221) RH III II. nr. 3601. p. 14; THEINER I. nr. 63. p. 31–32; FEJÉR III/1. p. 351; CDCr III. nr. 174. p. 198–199; POTTHAST nr. 6729; FERMENDŽIN nr. 35. p. 7.

¹¹ “*Cum itaque sicut audivimus vicini sitis castro predicto et partibus de Bossina, ubi heretici quidam dogmatizando palam sue parvitatis errores, Christi gregem et vineam*” – RH III II. nr. 3846. p. 50; FEJÉR VII/5. nr. 111. p. 229–230; FARLATI VI. p. 39; POTTHAST nr. 6802; CDCr III. no. 183. p. 209–210.

¹² Different authors argued different number of crusade expeditions against Bosnia in this period. For the survey of these historiographic interpretations see: DAUTOVIĆ 2020. p. 63–77. Cf. also ANČIĆ 2001. p. 89–106.

archbishop regarding the protection of faith, instructed him to rally the believers in front of the cross and to encourage them in fighting the heretics.¹³

In addition to this letter, the Pope confirmed the donation by which King Andrew II gave to the archbishop of Kalocsa, the territories of Bosnia, Usora and Sol, where the heretic infestation supposedly had spread.¹⁴ The final conclusion of this episode is revealed two years later, in the letter *Significavit nobis venerabilis* where Honorius III reminds the nobleman John Angelos that he received 200 silver ducats from the archbishop Ugrin to carry crusader insignia when fighting Bosnian heretics. The pope further reminded him to keep his promise and to persist in the work pleasing God, the extermination of heretics, while simultaneously commanding certain ecclesiastical leaders to force Angelos to do it.¹⁵ Sometime before, on 11 January 1227, the pope

¹³ "*Gratum gerimus et acceptum, quod catholice fidei ductus amore, ad profligandos hereticos de Bosna, Soy et Wassora, ubi tamquam lamie nudatis mammis publice catulos suos lactantes, ad exhortationem bone memorie magistri Acconci Subdiaconi et Capellani nostri, apostolice sedis legati, et aliorum bonorum virorum et viriliter accinxisti [...]. Super quo sinceritatis tue zelum dignis in domino laudibus commendantes, et favore debito prosequentes, fraternitatem tuam rogamus et monemus attente, ac per apostolica scripta mandamus, quatenus de gratia nostra confisus et auctoritate suffultus, prosequis ex animo causam Christi, catholice puritatis potenter prosequens subversores, ita quod Deo ad gloriam nobis ad gaudium et tibi ad profectum proveniat salutarem. Ut autem iniunctum tibi negotium perfectius exequi valeas, in partibus illis predices verbum crucis, fideles contra infideles efficaciter exhortando. Et si forsitan aliqui cruce signati vel cruce signandi per violentam manu iniectionem vinculo fuerint excommunicationes astricti, absolvendi eos iuxta formam ecclesie tibi concedimus facultatem, nisi forsitan adeo fuerit gravis et enormis excessus eorum, quod merito sint ad sedem apostolicam destinandi*" – AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 13., fol. 60^v, ep. 328 (15 May 1225) RH III II. nr. 5489. p. 338; THEINER I. nr. 118. p. 55; FEJÉR III/2. p. 33; CDCr III. nr. 216. p. 242–243; POTTHAST nr. 7407; KATONA V. p. 467–468; AHG p. 112; ARTNER nr. 40. p. 24; FERMENDZIN nr. 36. p. 7.

¹⁴ "*Cum a nobis supplicasti, siquidem nobis, ut cum Karissimus in Christo filius noster Andreas Ungarie Rex Illustris terras quasdam, videlicet Bosnam, Soy et Wosora, infects heretica pravitate tibi purgandas committens, eas ecclesie tue in perpetuum pia liberalitate donarit, prout eiusdem presentate nobis littere plenius continebant, donationem huiusmodi apostolice 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 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 patrocinio communimus. Nulli ergo etc. nostre confirmationis etc. Si quis etc. Datum ut supra*" – AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 13., fol. 60^v, ep. 329 (15 May 1225) RH III II. nr. 5490. p. 338; THEINER I. nr. 119. p. 55–56; FEJÉR III/2. p. 32; CDCr III. nr. 217. p. 243; POTTHAST nr. 7406; KATONA V. nr. 814. p. 466–467; ARTNER nr. 40. p. 24; RA I. nr. 421. p. 137; FERMENDZIN nr. 37. p. 7.

¹⁵ "*[...] set nequaquam attendes, quod fallitur, qui fallere Deum credit, qui secundum Apostolum minime tradetur, set derisores ipse deridet, contra dictos hereticos hactenus non curasti procedere, ab eodem Archiepiscopo pluries requisitus: qui si propter hoc nil penitus recepisses, deberes nichilominus ex animo persequi perfidos, ut fidei tue probatio clarius eluceret. Quia vero displicet Deo promissio infidelis, nec presumitur fidem hominibus servaturus, qui verax ipsi non potest existere veritati: nobilitatem tuam rogamus, monemus et hortamur attente, per apostolica scripta mandates, quatinus promissionem tuam fideliter prosequens contra memoratos hereticos una cum predicto Archiepiscopo procedas viriliter et potenter, acturus ita ex animo causam Christi, quod gratiam in presenti, et in futuro gloriam merearis. Alioquin ne tibi contra salutem tuam noxie deferamus, dilectis filiis Preposito et Magistro Ipolito Canonico Albensibus Vesprimiensis diocesis nostris damus litteris in mandatis, ut te ad complendum premissum, quod sine gravi peccato non servare non potes, per censuram ecclesiasticam, appellatione remota, cognita veritate compellant. Datum Laterani XVIII Kal. Februarii. Anno XI. Et super hoc scribitur illis executoribus*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 13., fol. 160^r–

affirmed the sale of the city of Požega to the archbishop of Kalocsa, for a more efficient fight against the heretics.¹⁶

Unlike the mission of Acontius, this episode had the semblance of preparation for a crusade, but it was never realized either. This should not be a surprise as there were numerous instances when the pope called for crusade, as well as occasions when indulgencies were given but military expeditions never took place. It is clear that a heretical label became not a symbol of Bosnian independence,¹⁷ but rather a successful and efficient branding – a political asset – which was assigned to a political adversary each time when he was to be destroyed.¹⁸ The benefits Hungary reaped from this action cannot be overlooked. The archbishop of Kalocsa is recognized as the supreme authority of Bosnia, Sol and Usora in front of the Curia, which can be understood as the first success of Hungarian agitation to achieve at least a formal authority over Bosnia. Knowledge about Bosnia inside the Roman Curia was reduced to rumours about vampires and heretics, which is unsurprisingly why Hungarian intents were successful.

During the following five years after Ugrin's attempts to organize campaigns against Bosnia, many changes took place which had direct influence on creating a new page in the relations between Bosnia and the papacy. The generally more passive (at least in Bosnian case) Honorius III was succeeded by one of the most pugnacious popes of the 13th century, Gregory IX.¹⁹ The Bosnian throne also changed possession, when Ban Kulin's successor was overthrown and exiled to the area of Usora, and Ban Matej Ninoslav became the new ruler;²⁰ in the Hungarian Kingdom, after the issuing of the Golden Bull, a stabilization of central control took place and the focus of politics was steadily shifted to adjacent countries.

A completely new situation arose which would dominate during the tumultuous decade which followed. The number of letters from the Roman Curia rose dramatically and the situation between the three main participants become significantly more heated. In historiography, two works are of special significance for reviewing the events from this period: Jaroslav Šidak's

160^v, ep. 466 (15 January 1227) RH III II. nr. 6167. p. 466; THEINER I. nr. 149. p. 72; FEJER III/2. p. 101–102; CDCr III. nr. 238. p. 264–265; POTTHAST nr. 7650; KATONA V. nr. 822. p. 498–501; FERMENZIN nr. 38. p. 7.

¹⁶ *“Quanto propensius ecclesiarum desideramus augmentum er hereticorum exterminium studiosius procuramus, tanto ea que nostro conveniencia desiderio rite fuerint libentius acceptantes, hiis robur perpetue firmitatis adiicimus maxime requisiti. Eapropter vestris supplicationibus grato concurrentes assensu castrum de Posega cum pertinentiis suis, quod tu frater archiepiscopo ad opus ecclesie Colocensis, specialiter pro hereticis de finibus illis penitus profligandis, charissimus in Christo filius rege Ungarie et Bela eius primogenito consentientibus [...]”* – FEJER III/2. p. 100; CDCr III. nr. 237. p. 264.

¹⁷ This theory is whidespread even today, especially as significant mark of the modern nationalistic ideology among Bosniaks. Cf. LOVRENOVIĆ 2008. p. 169–303.

¹⁸ KLAJČ 1994. p. 93.

¹⁹ Cf. DALL'AGLIO 2011. p. 173–184; LOWER 2004. p. 49–62.

²⁰ Cf. PEROJEVIĆ 1942. p. 219–231; ĆIRKOVIĆ 1964. p. 50–69; BARABÁS 2017. p. 48–50.

approach from 1955 (republished in 1975),²¹ and a part of a monograph by Nada Klaić which addresses this issue.²² However, it must be noted that even in the works of these great names of Yugoslav medieval scholarship there are certain problems, mainly with the analysis of the source material. Šidak's analysis of papal letters, practically the only source of news regarding this period is undisputable. He perceived many mistakes of earlier historiography and clarified a number of mysteries. However, his "naive" approach – in the good sense of the word –, to the writings of the Roman Curia, did not allow him to place the letters in proper political context, because he searched for ideological content inside them rather than discovering the motives of their origin. On the other hand, the strongest aspect of the research of Nada Klaić has exactly revealed the political background of the entire process, which was undoubtedly the main cause for all happenings, but she often exaggerated and completely abandoned some clearly important issues. Combining these two approaches, with the addition of overall context and the rules of political and internal crusades, we will attempt to shed light on these important events.

As for the wider context, which is very important for these events, Šidak made an excellent point when he mentioned that they followed the conciliation between the pope and King Frederick II and happened during the nine-year truce in the conflict between the empire and papacy. Gregory IX used this fact to deal with a series of problematic questions in the realms of western Christianity, including the continuation of the fight against the Albigensians and the campaigns against Stendigers, Drenthes, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Bosnia.

The first phase of this crusade is accusations presented to the Roman Curia against the Bosnian bishop which can be reviewed in the letter *Graves et enormes* by Pope Gregory IX to the archbishop of Kalocsa and the bishop of Zagreb. This source did not garner much attention in the historiography. Usually, only the information and accusations included in it are used, but it is very interesting and significant from both the ideological and political aspect and the letter represents a signal for all the events to come. It must be pointed out that this letter was not preserved in the archives of Gregory IX but by the Benedictine monks of the abbey of St. Martin, in the present-day town of Pannonhalma in the north of Hungary. However, it can be concluded from further sources, that it was not a forgery from a later period. The main content of this letter is the accusation presented to the pope against the Bosnian bishop, Vladimir.²³ The accusations against the bishop are as follows: he is illiterate, he got the position by simony, he openly protects heretics, in his church he never serves mass nor does he give sacraments, ecclesiastical duties are so foreign to him that he does not know the ritual of baptism, he lives in a village with

²¹ ŠIDAK 1975, p. 177–209.

²² KLAIĆ 1994, p. 94–119.

²³ This source does not give us the name of the bishop, so Šidak accepted the opinions of Jireček and Hoffer that it was Vladimir: cf. ŠIDAK 1975, p. 185; JIREČEK 1957, p. 129; HOFFER 1901, p. 73.

heretics and finally, his own brother is a heresiarch, and he protects him in his misconceptions.²⁴

Who was the author of this denunciation is not known, which is in accordance with the statutes guaranteeing complete anonymity to whistleblowers cemented by Gregory IX,²⁵ but it is clear that he was well informed about earlier accusations against Bosnia as well as in the art of propaganda. The first accusation regarding the bishop's illiteracy referred to not knowing the Latin language,²⁶ which by association meant that he held his sermons in the native language, a practice which the Curia wanted to root out for a long time. Additional weight to the denunciation was given by the mention of simony, one of the main practices the reformed papacy wanted to eliminate.²⁷ The next count on the accusation list – that he openly protects heretics – was subject to the severe punishment of excommunication, ever since the statutes of the Fourth Lateran.²⁸ The sins of not serving mass, giving sacraments or not performing baptism were in direct conflict with the guidelines that Casamaris set for the reform of the Bosnian church couple of decades before. Finally, the remark that the bishop lives in a village was also intended to point out that he breaks the papal statutes, as bishops had to be seated in cities and larger settlements, and the last touch was the heresiarch brother which struck the final blow on the personal image of bishop Vladimir. Thus, the bishop was accused of Slavic liturgy and simony, offences punishable since the period of Gregory VII, and of protection of heretics and disregard of reforms, sins defined during the time of Innocent III. Besides that, this denunciation was issued against an ecclesiastical figure, the leader of the Bosnian bishopric, and not against the Bosnian ruler or his political elite, allowing the Curia a more liberal position to deal with the situation as it deemed fit. It is clear that the Bosnian bishop had no defence against such a detailed and prepared accusation.

In a previous letter Gregory IX requested a report on Bosnia from the archbishop of Kalocsa and the bishop of Zagreb, after which on 30 May 1233, with a letter, *Human conditionis miseriam* he initiated the switch of the mission of papal legate Jacob of Prenestre to Bosnia with the intent of performing an

²⁴ “*Graves et enormes venerabilis fratris nostri [...] episcopi de Bossina excessus et maculas [...] Idem enim, sicut accepimus, imperfectum suum minime recognoscens, utpote literalis expens scientie a hereticorum publicis defensor, per quemdam manifestum hereticum simonie vito mediante se in episcopum procuravit assumi. Et quia que mallo sunt inchoata principio vix bono exitu potiuntur, ipsi que vinee Domini Sabaoth deberet cultor utilis inveniri et subditid suis proficere verbo pariter et exemplo, nullum in ecclesia sua celebrat divinum officium nec ministrat ecclesiasticum sacramentum adeoque factus esse dicitur ab ecclesiasticis oficiis alienus, quod baptismi forme penitus est ignarus nec mirum quod, sicut asseritur, cum hereticus in quadam villa morevetur et fratrem eius carnalem manifestum heresiarcam quem deberet ab initio ad viam recitudinis revocare.*” – (5 June 1232.), AHG nr. 177. p. 233–234; ÁÚO I. nr. 181. p. 298–299; CDCr III. nr. 315. p. 361–362; POTTHAST. nr. 8942.

²⁵ LEA 1887. p. 325; EVANS 1958. p. 1–22.

²⁶ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 185.

²⁷ Cf. LECLERCQ 1947. p. 523–530.

²⁸ GARCIA Y GARCIA 1981. p. 47–51.

investigation against the Bosnian bishop.²⁹ The pope expressed his sorrow regarding the behaviour and the transgressions of bishop Vladimir, and emphasized that his defence by ignorance is not accepted.³⁰ So, the legate was ordered to replace the bishop and to divide the territory of Bosnia into 2–4 bishoprics, where leaders would be learned people, obviously clerics of Latin liturgy.³¹ With this letter the focus of papal critique shifted from the Bosnian bishop to the population of Bosnia, which were described as poor in material means but rich in wickedness because they followed heretic infidel teachings.³²

On 10 October 1232, the office of Gregory IX sent three letters as follows: to the Bosnian ban Matej Ninoslav, to the Hungarian prince Coloman and to Dominicans "de Bosna". We will observe that these three letters complete the mission of legate Jacob of Preneste and represent the final attempts of diplomatic solution of the crisis, meaning attempts of finalizing the Pope's plans for the territory of Bosnia. The first letter was sent to *dilecto filio nobili viro Ninosclavo duci de Bosna* and represents the first mention of this ruler (1233–1251) in any sources. We further learn that the pope takes the Bosnian ruler into his protection as long as he remains in the Catholic faith and ensures the privileges that his heretic forefathers enjoyed and were now undeservedly taken from him.³³ On the same day the pope sent a letter to Prince Coloman, the son of the Hungarian king, Andrew II in which he stated that Ninoslav had appealed to him that his old claims on cities and counties were endangered, and since he recently converted to Christianity and started persecuting heretics, he demanded that he returned the aforementioned privileges to the

²⁹ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 50^v–51^r, ep. 164 (30 May 1233.) RG IX I. nr. 1377. coll. 775–776; THEINER I. nr. 192. p. 113; FEJÉR III/2. p. 341–342; AHG nr. 194. p. 268; CDCr III. nr. 327. p. 379–380; POTTHAST nr. 9211; ŠANJEK 2003. nr. 8. p. 92–93; FERMENDŽIN nr. 39. p. 7–8.

³⁰ Regarding these events, Šidak clearly pointed out that Franjo Rački in his highly influential essay concluded without any basis that the Bosnian bishop admitted to the legate to have followed heretical teaching; RAČKI 1869. p. 151.

³¹ "*Quamvis autem idem episcopus ex simplicitate asserat se peccasse, quia tamen non in peccato huiusmodi decipere vel posse decipi multum differt, non quos zelus comedit animarum, volentes earum periculis obviare mandamus, quatenus eodem episcopo a regimine Bosnensis ecclesie prorsus amoto, tam in eadem ecclesia quam in locis aliis Bosnensis diocesis, que ut dicitur non modicum est diffusa, duos vel tres aut quatuor, prout videris expedire, doctos in lege domini, quos ad hoc idoneos esse cognoveris, studeas i episcopos ordinare.*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., ep. 164.

³² "[...] *cum habitatores illius terre dicantur in facultatibus tenues et in malitia locupletes, utpote qui pro magna parte sunt infecti heretica pravitate, paupertatem Christi pauperis imitando ardenti spiritu ad despectos accedente non recusent*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., ep. 164.

³³ "[...] *Quos prosequitur dominus sue clemencie largitate, ipsos de morte ad vitam et ad lucem de tenebris reducendo, libenter apostolice sedis gratia confovemus, ut illius protecti munimine liberius valeant virtutum operibus insudare. Te igitur sincere caritatis brachiis amplexantes, personam et terram tuam de Bosna cum omnibus bonis, que impresentiarum rationabiliter possides, sub beati Petri et nostra protectione suscipimus et presentis scripti patrocinio communimus, districtius inhiabentes, ne quis te in fide catholica permanentem super eadem terra, quam, sicut asseris, progenitores tui qui fuerunt vitio heretice pravitatis infecti ab antiquo pacifice possederunt, presumat indebite molestare, iure carissimi in Christo filii nostri ... illustris regis Ungarie semper salvo*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 84^r, ep. 292 (10 October 1233.); RG IX I. nr. 1521. coll. 842; THEINER I. nr. 200. p. 120; FEJÉR III/2. p. 342; AHG nr. 197. p. 271; CDCr III. nr. 335. p. 388; POTTHAST nr. 9304; KATONA V. p. 661; FERMENDŽIN nr. 41. p. 8.

ban so he could resume such behaviour.³⁴ On the same day, a similar letter was sent to the Dominicans, with the additional mention of his cousin Prijezda, who sent his son as hostage, and the pope now demanded his release.³⁵

It is essential to examine all three letters as a whole, and keep in mind that these, seemingly cordial relations would dramatically deteriorate in only a couple of months. They are obviously a consequence of legate Jacob's mission and of the letter which Ban Ninoslav sent to the Pope. This was a well-known *modus operandi* of Gregory IX applied in Stendigers' and in several other cases.³⁶ Accused of protecting heretics on his territory, Ban Ninoslav was investigated under threat of excommunication. The result of this accusation depended on the investigation of the legate which was ensured by Prince Coloman. It is evident that certain rights were taken from the ban during the investigation, so he sent a letter to the pope to restore them. Also, the mention of heretic predecessors is not to be attributed to the letter by Ninoslav, but rather to the pope's interpretation of it. The proof that this was a diplomatic mission is that the son of Prijezda was sent to the Dominicans as a hostage. Giving and receiving hostages as a part of diplomatic process was common practice since the Antiquity, especially widespread during the Middle Ages, mostly in cases when a conflict was being resolved between sides with different languages and cultural heritage.³⁷ This was the case with Bosnia, as

³⁴ "[...] *Dilecto filio nobili viro Ninoslavo duce de Bosna nobis innotuit referente, quod cum progenitores sui de antiqua consuetudine comitatus et alias villas terre sue concesserint et abstulerint quibuscumque, prout eis proprie voluntatis arbitrium suggerebat, eo nuper ab heresi ad fidem catholicam domino faciente converso et hereticos expugnante, detentores comitatuum et aliarum terrarum ductus sui predictae consuetudini refragantur, comitatus et terras easdem contra voluntatem eius temere detinendo. Quare nobis humiliter supplicavit, ut cum ipse deterioris conditionis esse non debeat, quam dicti progenitores eiusdem qui fuerunt vito heretice pravitatis infecti, super hoc adesse sibi favore benivolo dignemur. Quocirca serenitatem tuam rogamus, monemus et hortamur in domino, quatinus consuetudinem ipsam, sicut est ab antiquis temporibus approbata, in favorem fidei et pravitatis heretice detrimentum facias firmiter observari, ita quod serenitatem tuam dignis exinde laudibus commendemus*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 84^r, ep. 293 (10 October 1233.); RG IX I. nr. 1522. coll. 842; THEINER I. nr. 201. p. 120; FEJÉR III/2. p. 343; CDCr III. nr. 336. p. 388–389; POTTHAST nr. 9305; KATONA V. p. 662; FERMENDŽIN nr. 42. p. 8.

³⁵ "[...] *Dilectus filius nobilis vir Ninoslavus dux de Bosna nobis exposuit et nos libenter audivimus et gaudemus, quod vestre sollicitudinis studio procurante nobilis vir Ubanus dictus Priesda consanguineus eius nuper ab immunditia pravitatis heretice rediit ad catholice fidei puritatem, et ut in illa stabilis preservet, suadente duce prefato, filium suum vobis obsidem assignavit. Verum quia de fide ipsius iam non debet, sicut idem dux asserit dubitari, cum puram et simplicem et devotionem eiusdem erga sanctam ecclesiam iam non argumenta sed experimenta demonstrent, dum in prosequendis hereticis fideliter elaborat, nobis pro parte sua fuit humiliter supplicatum ut dictum obsidem sibi restitui faceremus. Ideo mandamus, quatenus si vobis constiterit, quod dictus Ubanus sit plene conversus ad fidem, desiderio eius in parte ista sibi satisfacere procuretis, proviso quod per restitutionem huiusmodi nichil possit fidei contrarium procurari*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 84^r–84^v, ep. 294 (10 October 1233) RG IX I. nr. 1523. coll. 842–843; THEINER I. nr. 202. p. 120–121; FEJÉR III/2. p. 342; BOPI. nr. 100. p. 63; CDCr III. nr. 337. p. 389–390; POTTHAST nr. 9303; KATONA V. p. 663; FERMENDŽIN no. 40. p. 8.

³⁶ RIST 2009. p. 126.

³⁷ KOSTO 2003. p. 3–4.

the language of the liturgy was at the core of all problems between Bosnia and the Roman Curia.

The main consequence of the mission of legate Jacob of Preneste is the appointment of Johannes von Wildeshausen as the bishop of Bosnia. This member of the Dominican Order had prior experience in crisis zones, since he was the special emissary of the pope in the conflict with the Stendingers.³⁸ It is unknown when he was exactly appointed, but it seems that this act of the Curia, to appoint a Dominican as a head of the Bosnian diocese, was the main reason of that conflicts were about to ensue in February 1234. Possibly, it happened after the aforementioned letters in 1233.³⁹ According to the preserved sources, this appointment is to be taken as the last straw causing the definite rift between Bosnia and the Roman Curia. For a long time after this there would be no peaceful rhetoric between Bosnian rulers and the leader of the Roman Church. It is realistic to assume that besides the problems about language and liturgy in Bosnia, this forced appointments of strangers as leaders of the Bosnian bishopric introduced another one – the problem of investiture as a new, but strategically most important rift between the Bosnian ruler and the Roman curia.

Not even half a year after the previous letters, when Pope Gregory IX took the Bosnian ban into protection, praising his conversion all over, the same pope called for a crusade against Bosnia. The letter *Miserias et erumpnas* of 13 February 1234 marks the beginning of legatine action of the anonymous prior of the Carthusian monastery of St. Bartholomew from Trisulto in central Italy. His only task was to unite the clergy from adjacent territories around Bosnia under the sign of the cross, and he was supposed to give indulgences and privileges equal to those who marched to the Holy Land.⁴⁰ Several accusations and metaphors from the denunciation of the Bosnian bishop in 1232 were repeated with new ones added as well, all with the purpose of raising fighting spirit against heretics in Bosnia and the surrounding provinces.⁴¹ Only six days after, the Hungarian heir to the throne, Prince Béla pledged on the hands of Jacob of Preneste to cast out all heretics, fake Christians, Muslims and Jews from all the territories subjected to his rule.⁴²

³⁸ RIST 2009. 127; ROTHER 1895. p. 139–170; RABIĆ 2016. p. 53–69.

³⁹ Some authors offered time range October 1233. – February 1234 (Cf. JALIMAM 1999, p. 68.), but, if we consider the time needed for the news about the anointment to reach Bosnia and cause riots, as well as the time required for news about those riots to reach Rome, we can reasonably assume it happened before the end of the year 1233.

⁴⁰ *“Sicut enim nostris est auribus intimatum, tanta in Bosna et vicinis provinciis excrevit copia perfidorum, quod iam tota terra velut deserta et invia luget et languet spinis eam replentibus et urticis factaque est cubile draconum et pascua strutionum[...]. Ut autem nichil omnino desit ad tam sanctum negotium prosequendum, universis catholicis, qui ab eodem priore commoniti crucis assumpto caractere ad hereticorum exterminium se accinxerint, illam indulgentiam illudque privilegium elargimur, que accedentibus in terre sancte subsidium, conceduntur”* – AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 17., ep. 294.

⁴¹ AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 147^v–148^r; ep. 542 (12 February 1234) RG IX I. nr. 1798. coll. 985–986; THEINER I. nr. 207. p. 122–123; FEJÉR III/2. p. 379–381; CDCr III. nr. 343. p. 397–398; POTTHAST nr. 9402; FERMENDŽIN nr. 43. p. 8.

⁴² THEINER I. nr. 209. p. 123–124.

The situation gets even more complex during 1234. For a complete understanding of the events to follow, it is important to emphasize that the Hungarian king, Andrew II asked for help from the Roman Curia against the Galician nobleman, Danilo which he received in the end, but not before signing an agreement at Bereg Woods on 20 August 1233 with Curia.⁴³ There the king had to agree not to tolerate Jews, Muslims and holders of Christian slaves in his troops, to exclude the church from taxes on salt, whether it came by sea or land, to exempt all clergy from all general taxes except regarding certain legal affairs concerning property rights. However, as soon as he solved the political problem and achieved a success in Galicia, the king decided not to uphold the terms of the treaty, and married once more in his advanced age, leading to hostility with his sons Béla and Coloman. The Pope, through his legate Jacob of Preneste and later through the Bosnian bishop, Johannes von Wildeshausen warned King Andrew to honour his agreement via the letter *Quia ubi amor* of 28 July 1234,⁴⁴ and later in a letter with the same title from 16 August, excommunicating him and setting interdict on all his lands.⁴⁵

In the middle of October of the same year a severe propaganda action was launched by sending six letters which formed an organizational basis for starting a crusade. The first letter *Si tue serenitas* was sent on 14 October to Prince Coloman in which he was asked to force the heretic wickedness with full strenght in parts of Slavonia (*ad convertendum in robore tue fortitudinis infectos macula heretice pravitatis, te versus partes Sclavonie ita magnanimiter et potenter accingas...*),⁴⁶ later allowing the prince to serve mass in his territory being under interdict, but only in absence of heretics, behind closed doors and with a silenced voice.⁴⁷ All the mentioned events and noticeable absence of Bosnia and its ruler in these papal letters lead us to a conclusion that that Gregory IX meant not Patarens, Cathars or other "usual suspects", when mentioning heretics, but rather refers to King Andrew and his followers. After the return of Jacob of Preneste to Rome, the right hand of the pope was bishop Wildeshausen to whom he sent two letters on 17 October offering encouragement, allowing him to give indulgencies to those that stand under the cross and fight the heretics in his bishopric and close surroundings, with identical indulgences as those who marched on the Holy Land, even to people who had attacked a member of the clergy in the past. At first look, these letters have identical contents but the first was titled *Episcopo Bosnensi contra hereticos Sclavonie predicanti* and the second *Ad purgandam terram Bosne, que*

⁴³ THEINER I. nr. 196–198; Cf. KOSZTOLNYIK 1996. p. 110–116.

⁴⁴ AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 202^r–202^v, ep. 198 (28 July 1234); RG IX I. nr. 2060. coll. 1114; THEINER I. nr. 214. p. 126–127.

⁴⁵ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 202^v–203^r, ep. 198 (16 August 1234); RG IX I. nr. 2061. coll. 1115; THEINER I. nr. 215. p. 127–128.

⁴⁶ THEINER I. nr. 218. p. 128–129.

⁴⁷ THEINER I. nr. 219. p. 129. Also, on 17 October Gregory IX wrote to Stephen, bishop of Zagreb, asking him to take under his protection all those who took the sign of the cross and to protect their properties while they are on the campaign: THEINER I. nr. 221. p. 129–130. About bishop Steven: RAZUM 2019. p. 137–146.

*velut terra deserta et in via diu luxit et languit.*⁴⁸ The term Sclavonia had different meanings in different time periods and on different occasions, but but if we are correct in our previous assumption regarding the animosity between pope and the Hungarian king, then it seems that in this case it had been related to the homonymous region of the Hungarian Kingdom.⁴⁹

After one year, the situation in Hungary calmed down, which was made official by Andrew's donation of Bosnia to his younger son, Coloman, which the pope confirmed in the letter *Licet apostolice sedis* issued on 9 August 1235.⁵⁰ The donation was as worthless as the previous one to bishop Ugrin, but gave Coloman a free path to lead a crusade against Bosnia making him the chief protagonist of military efforts.⁵¹ A couple of days later the pope sent instructions to the archbishop of Esztergom informing him about actions needed to be performed by the king to revoke the excommunication and interdict, and also mentioned the Bosnian bishop and legate Jacob in the letter.⁵² The affair was concluded on 31 August when the pope notified the Bosnian bishop and the priors of the Franciscans and Dominicans of Esztergom in a short letter, that they should not act on a warning issued by the legate against King Andrew without a special papal order.⁵³

The next letter *Deputatus Jhesu Christi* of 20 September 1235 is very interesting because it shows that the Bosnian bishop, Johannes von Wildeshausen requested from the pope to be absolved of his duty, which prompted a melodramatic response not to renounce his position, to keep resisting against heretics and fight until he is eventually free of his earthly body. Finally, he presented him examples of saints willing to sacrifice themselves in the service of the cross.⁵⁴ We would not interpret this source as fear or

⁴⁸ AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 17., fol. 214^r, ep. 254 (16 October 1234.); RG IX I. nr. 2127. coll. 1143–1144; THEINER I. nr. 220. p. 129; AAV Reg. Vat. 17. fol. 214^v, ep. nr. 256 (16 August 1234.); RG IX I. nr. 2129. coll. 1144; THEINER I. nr. 226. p. 130; BOP I. nr. 113. p. 70; FEJÉR III/2. p. 397–398; CDCr III. nr. 363. p. 418; KATONA V. p. 711–712; POTTHAST nr. 9738; FERMEŃŽIN nr. 47. p. 9.

⁴⁹ For different meanings of the term "Sclauonia" see: ĆIRKOVIĆ 2020. p. 19–23. Cf.: Bagi Dániel: Sclavonia a Magyar–lengyel krónikában. In: „Köztes-Európa” vonzásában. Ünnepi tanulmányok Font Márta 60. születésnapjára. Szerk.: Bagi Dániel–Fedeles Tamás– Kiss Gergely. Pécs, 2012. 45–58.

⁵⁰ AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 18., fol. 61^r, ep. 189 (9. 8. 1235.); RG IX II. nr. 2726. coll. 138; THEINER I. nr. 229. p. 133; FEJÉR III/2. p. 449; CDCr III. nr. 385. p. 443; KATONA V. p. 733–734; POTTHAST nr. 9986; FERMEŃŽIN nr. 50. p. 9. Also see: FONT – BARABÁS 2019. p. 118.

⁵¹ In this instance Šidak denies the arguments of Marko Perojević that Bosnia remained under the secular control of the archbishop of Kalocsa up to 1247, and he considered that this donation was revoked because the bishop did not fulfil the condition under which he got it: ŠIDAK 1975. p. 191. However, we believe that N. Klaić was on the right track when she said that both donations were only dead letters, because the Hungarian king could not give away something he did not own. KLAJĆ 1994. p. 93.

⁵² AAV. Reg. Vat. vol. 18., fol. 63^r, ep. 196 (24 August 1235); RG IX II. nr. 2733. coll. 144; THEINER I. nr. 232. p. 134.

⁵³ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18., fol. 68^v, ep. 220 (31 August 1235.) RG IX II. nr. 2760. coll. 160; THEINER I. nr. 239. p. 136.

⁵⁴ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18., fol. 71^r, ep. 229 (20 September 1235); RG IX II. nr. 2769. coll. 166; THEINER I. no: 241. p. 137; FEJÉR III/2. p. 455–456; CDCr III. nr. 387. p. 444–445; KATONA V. p. 741–743; POTTHAST nr. 10019; FERMEŃŽIN nr. 52. p. 9.

tiredness from Wildeshausen, regarding war efforts in Bosnia. There is no evidence he ever even entered Bosnia. It can be assumed he grew weary of the intrigues and conflicts within the Hungarian Kingdom, which he witnessed first-hand, but these speculations do not concern our topic.

Šidak and Nada Klaić presented many good analyses to this subject, but understandably, did not offer the best solutions in some parts. Šidak correctly states that the problem of Sclavonia is not entirely resolved in the historiography, but then ties all the previously mentioned developments to Bosnia, with the initial assumption of its vassal position towards Hungary. Klaić goes too far in the opposite direction, proposing that none of the above happened in Bosnia, but rather in Hungarian territory. It seems that the truth is between these two theories.⁵⁵ The Roman Curia used the archaic term Sclavonia because the actions were undertaken on a wider area, not confined by borders of one country, which the scribes of the pope could not define better than through the aforementioned term. If the conflicts took place or had been planned only in the territory of the Hungarian Realm or the Bosnian Banate, the letters would specify the precise location, as in situations before and after. It is also clear that Bosnia was a part of these crusade plans, but we cannot be sure whether any true conflicts happened before 1237. Maybe there is validity to the assumption by Nada Klaić that during the reign of King Andrew the crusades against Bosnia were only future plans. Besides, Andrew died shortly after the interdict over his lands had been revoked on 21 September 1235, and it is difficult to envision Coloman being able to focus on plans in Bosnia until political tensions calmed down in Hungary.

The Roman Curia sent four letters on 8 August 1236 by which Pope Gregory IX took under his protection Prince Sibislav of Usora and his mother Ancilla, son and widow of the former Bosnian ban, Stjepan,⁵⁶ and the Hungarian clergy is notified not to disturb him or his men.⁵⁷ The pope singled Sibislav out as a lily among thorns, meaning that all other Bosnian noblemen and rulers fall into heretical depravity (*inter principes Bosnensis diocesis infectos macula heretice pravitatis existis quasi lilium inter spinas*). Šidak and Klaić agree that these letters should not serve to prove the possible conversion of Sibislav from heresy to Catholicism, but his asking for assistance from the pope should be a sign of preparation for the forthcoming military conflicts.⁵⁸

Before any confrontation with the historiographical literature and before forming any original conclusions for the events of these three years it is

⁵⁵ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 190–191; KLAJĆ 1994. p. 98–100.

⁵⁶ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18, fol. 183^v, ep. 183 (8 August 1236); RG IX II. nr. 3272. coll. 457; THEINER I. nr. 258. p. 147; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 36–37; CDCr IV. nr. 12. p. 15–16; FARLATI IV. p. 48; KATONA V. p. 772; POTTHAST nr. 10223; FERMENDŽIN nr. 55. p. 10; AAV Reg. Vat., vol. 18, fol. 183^v, ep. 185 (8 August 1236); RG IX II. nr. 3274. coll. 457; THEINER I. nr. 260. p. 147; CDCr IV. nr. 14. p. 17.

⁵⁷ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18, fol. 183^v, ep. 184 (8 August 1236); RG IX II. nr. 3273. coll. 457; THEINER I. nr. 259. p. 147; CDCr IV. nr. 13. p. 16; POTTHAST nr. 10225; FERMENDŽIN nr. 54. p. 10; AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18, fol. 183^v, ep. 186 (8 August 1236) RG IX II. nr. 3275. coll. 457–458; THEINER I. nr. 261. p. 147; CDCr IV. nr. 15. p. 17–18; POTTHAST nr. 10226; FERMENDŽIN nr. 55. p. 10.

⁵⁸ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 191; KLAJĆ 1994. p. 100.

important to review all preserved sources as a whole. There are only three sources from the year 1237. On 18 May, the consuls of Dubrovnik forbid their traders leaving for Bosnia and dealing there, until emissaries returned with news regarding the safety inside the land.⁵⁹ Therefore, it is obvious that certain information had spread about an unstable situation in Bosnia, so the rulers of Dubrovnik reacted as usual, barring their traders from entering the area of crisis. Likewise, we can conclude that the developments which caused the situation to deteriorate in Bosnia, could not have happened long before that date because the vigilant rulers of Dubrovnik still awaited actual news from the field. The other two pieces of information speak about Johannes von Wildeshausen leaving the position of the Bosnian bishop. In the letter sent by Pope Gregory IX to the Hungarian king, Béla IV on 31 May 1237, he is already mentioned as the former bishop, and the same words of thankfulness are repeated in the letter to the archbishop of Kalocsa.⁶⁰ Earlier historiography translated the word *quondam* from the source as late/deceased, not as former, and therefore assumed Wildeshausen was killed during fights in Bosnia.⁶¹ Šidak disproved this theory easily by proving Wildeshausen became a general of the Dominican Order in 1242 and died in Strasbourg in 1252.⁶²

The next letter Gregory IX sent to the prior of the Dominicans, who were spreading Christianity among the Cumans in Hungary, the pope specifically asked for a monk named Ponsa,⁶³ so he could appoint him as the next Bosnian bishop, proving without doubt the subjugation of the Bosnian bishopric to the Roman Curia (*quem soli apostolice sedi usque ad beneplacitum nostrum volumus haberi subiectum*).⁶⁴ The previous letter is significant because it holds information about the progress of Coloman's crusade. The pope praises the success of the prince against the heretics which he brings, with a lot of effort, to the light of the Catholic faith.⁶⁵

After this, the flow of information about developments in Bosnia ceases, until the last days of 1238 when Pope Gregory IX sent six letters to various addressees near Bosnia. With the first letter *Sedi apostolice presidentis* he orders Ponsa to support Coloman's intentions in Bosnia, and especially to strike, with joint effort, the rest of the bishopric where heretical wickedness

⁵⁹ CDCr IV. nr. 24. p. 27.

⁶⁰ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18, fol. 294^v, ep. 110 (31 May 1237); RG IX II. nr. 3716. coll. 672; THEINER I. nr. 277. p. 155–156; AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 18, fol. 294^v–295^r, ep. 111 (1 June 1237); RG IX II. nr. 3717. coll. 672–673; THEINER I. nr. 278. p. 156–157.

⁶¹ PEROJEVIĆ 1942. p. 224.

⁶² ŠIDAK 1975. p. 193.

⁶³ VARGA 1995. p. 169–175.

⁶⁴ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 9^v–9^r, ep. 53 (26 April 1238); RG IX II. nr. 4286. coll. 979; THEINER I. nr. 289. p. 162–163; AHG nr. 238. p. 316–318; BOP I. nr. 182. p. 101; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 124–126; CDCr IV. nr. 50. p. 56–57; HCRH–SA V. p. 836–838; FARLATI IV. p. 50; POTTHAST nr. 10585; FERMENDŽIN nr. 57. p. 10.

⁶⁵ “[...] *carissimus in Christo filius noster Colomannus rex et dux Sclavorum illustris, sicut eiusdem insinuatione percepimus, terram Bosne, deletis tamen pravitatis heretice maculis, non absque multis laboribus deduxit ad lucem catholice pravitatis*” – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 9^v–9^r, ep. 53.

still resided.⁶⁶ Later, the letter *De superni regis* again restates almost identical praises as before regarding Coloman and his exploits in stifling heresy, instructing him not to allow the return of infidel teachings.⁶⁷

On the same day the pope contacted the archbishop of Esztergom ordering him to support the work of Bishop Ponsa in Bosnia which is filled with heresy, after which he contacted the abbot in Varaždin, at first to gather crusaders to send to Bosnia and on a different occasion to send the money that the late Ban Iula had left for crusades in Bosnia to the Bosnian bishop.⁶⁸ Eventually, the pope contacted the Dominicans of Pécs to give Ponsa the money that Ban Ninoslav had left there for the building of a cathedral in Bosnia.⁶⁹ After this “onslaught” of letters almost an entire year passed without any news. Finally, at the start of December 1239, the pope broke the wall of silence with yet another letter of praise to prince Coloman. Gregory IX pointed out how he received the prince’s letters and that he is thrilled with his persecution of heresy and the promotion of true faith.⁷⁰ Two days later, the pope wrote to the Bosnian bishop, confirming the territories given to him by the prince – Đakovo

⁶⁶ “*Cum igitur carissimi in Christo filii nostri Colomanni [...], ac aliorum fidelium circumposite regionis efficaci diligentia faciente provenerit, quod ibidem triumphante conditoris dextera, consurgit religio christiana ... fideles in Regno Ungarie constitutos secundum datam tibi a deo prudentiam exhorteris, ut tanquam zelum dei habentes, se viriliter et potenter accingat ad heretice pestis residuum de predicta diocesi penitus abolendum*” – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 65^v–66^r, ep. 352 (23 December 1238); RG IX II. nr. 4691. coll. 1197–1198; THEINER I. nr. 306. p. 169–170; BOP I. nr. 187. p. 104; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 126–127; CDCr IV. nr. 63. p. 67–68; KATONA V. p. 839–841; POTTHAST nr. 10693; FERMENDŽIN nr. 63. p. 11.

⁶⁷ “*De superni regis provenire gratia gratulamur, quod agnoscens humiliter te ad ipsius ymaginem ac similitudinem esse conditum et eiusdem sanguine pretioso redemptum, sibi retribuere vigilas, ut de Bosne partibus, deletis pravitatis heretice maculis, ibidem fulgeat lumen catholice puritatis [...] et in remissionem iniungimus peccatorum, quatinus in hoc potissime te arbitrando magnificium, quod dei sapientia providisse dignoscitur.*” – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 66^r, ep. 354 (22 December 1238); RG IX II. no: 4693. coll. 1198; THEINER I. nr. 302. p. 168; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 130–131; CDCr IV. nr. 58. p. 64; KATONA V. p. 841–842; POTTHAST nr. 10688; FERMENDŽIN nr. 58. p. 11.

⁶⁸ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 66^r, ep. 353 (22 December 1238); RG IX II. nr. 4692. coll. 1198; THEINER I. nr. 301. p. 168; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 128; CDCr IV. nr. 59. p. 65; KATONA V. p. 845–846; POTTHAST nr. 10692; FERMENDŽIN nr. 59. p. 11. AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 66^r, ep. 355 (22 December 1238.); RG IX II. nr. 4695. coll. 1198–1199; THEINER I. nr. 303. p. 169; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 128–129; CDCr IV. nr. 62. p. 67; HEQ II. p. 109; POTTHAST. nr. 10689; FERMENDŽIN nr. 60. p. 11. AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 66^r–66^v, ep. 356 (22 December 1238.); RG IX II. nr. 4696. coll. 1199; THEINER I. nr. 304. p. 169; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 129; CDCr IV. nr. 61. p. 66; HEQ II. p. 110; POTTHAST nr. 10690; FERMENDŽIN nr. 61. p. 11.

⁶⁹ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 66^v, ep. 357 (22 December 1238.); RG IX II. nr. 4697. coll. 1199; THEINER I. nr. 305. p. 169; AHG nr. 251. p. 330; FEJÉR IV/1 p. 130; CDCr IV. nr. 60. p. 65–66; KATONA V. p. 843–844; POTTHAST nr. 10691; FERMENDŽIN nr. 62. p. 11.

⁷⁰ “*Nam sicut earum tenore percepimus, extirpare hereses et fidem studes catholicam propagare, exaltationem procuras ecclesie et ad expugnandum impugnatores ipsius eius te exponendo beneplacitis, beneficia que a potestate recepisti divina verbo et opere recognoscis*” – THEINER I. nr. 310. p. 172; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 175–176; CDCr IV. nr. 86. p. 93–94; KATONA V. p. 871–872.

and Blizna,⁷¹ and invites Dominican priors from Hungary to go to Bosnia and drive out heretics.⁷²

Let us start with the question of whether there was really an attack led by Coloman against Bosnia. In the analysis of all previous occasions when Bosnia was mentioned in the context of crusades: the actions of Acontius and Ugrin, even of Coloman before 1237, we were adamant that conflict did not take place and everything remained on the level of a threat. However, we believe that during 1237–1238 there had to be a certain incursion of a Hungarian army inside Bosnia. How else would the situation in Bosnia become calm enough to prepare for the building of a cathedral and the formation of a cathedral chapter? We cannot accept theories by Klaić that those were common conspiracies or webs of lies between the Roman Curia and the Hungarian royal court.⁷³ Such an approach towards a source can relativize any information, leading to further complications and the need for newer and newer theories. It is another question when we speak about the scale of these military actions. Here we cannot agree with Šidak when he states the total victory of the Hungarian army.⁷⁴ This source implies that the pope still did not believe that Bosnia was cleansed from the heretics, and ordered bishop Ponsa to constantly send new contingents of crusaders on a regular basis in that area.

All the successes of the Hungarian army and clergy vanished as fast as they happened. In the later source it is stated that the faith in this land could not be kept in the purity, and that the fortifications constructed were not strong enough.⁷⁵ The Bosnian ban, on 22 March 1240 once again acted as an independent ruler when dealing with Dubrovnik renewing previous rights and liberties. Furthermore, the Bosnian ruler felt powerful enough to guarantee the people of Dubrovnik protection in case they went to war with the king of Raška.⁷⁶ One Dominican chronicle from 1259 states that around this time the two monasteries built in Bosnia by these monks were burned down.⁷⁷

⁷¹ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 138^v, ep. 174 (7. 12. 1239.); RG IX III. nr. 4991. coll. 143; THEINER I. nr. 311. p. 12; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 177; CDCr IV. nr. 87. p. 94; KATONA V. p. 879–880; POTTHAST nr. 10824; FERMENDŽIN nr. 65. p. 12.

⁷² AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 19, fol. 138^v–139^r, ep. 175 (7. 12. 1239.); RG IX III. nr. 4992. coll. 143–144; THEINER I. nr. 312. p. 172–173; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 176; CDCr IV. nr. 88. p. 94–95; POTTHAST nr. 10823.

⁷³ KLAJČ 1994. p. 92.

⁷⁴ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 195.

⁷⁵ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 195.

⁷⁶ "... азъ Млатен Никославъ, по милости боже вѣлики ванъ босеньски, съ моими воларими кельнемо съ тебе, Николавъ Томисѣтъ, князъ дѣрвовъчкомъ, и въсѣ(ѣ)мь властеломъ и въсѣ ипльнигѣ градскѣ ѿ господа бога нашего Исоу Христа ... да ви стою ѿ вечни и тверди миръ и ѿ срьдченѣ любвьѣ и ѿ всавѣ правьдѣ, и по земле и владданіе мое и моудѣ съишь да си ходите свободно и пространо весь въсѣмъ десѣщине и весь никерѣ нильне даніе ... и ако съ разьратитѣ съ крамѣмъ рашьки, да васъ не дамъ ни вашъ довитекъ, паче да ви ѡхранѣ съ всѣ(ѣ)мъ вашимъ довиткомъ ..." – MONUMENTA SERBICA nr. 35. p. 28–29.

⁷⁷ It is the chronicle of prior Suibert: "*Ubi etiam duos conventus habuimus quos postea heretici combusserunt [...]*" – ŠIDAK 1975. p. 184. We cannot be sure where the location of these monasteries were. Antonin Zaninović quotes that in Bosnia in 1233 one, and in 1259 two Dominican monasteries existed, but he did not specify their location (ZANINOVIĆ 1918. p. 265.), while Slavko Slišković offered a theory that one of them was located near the cathedral of St. Peter in župa Vrhbosna, while the other Dominican monasteries, important for their actions in Bosnia, were

Indirect assistance which led to a break of papal and Hungarian pressure on Bosnia came from an unexpected source: the Mongolian horde of Batu Khan. The great offensive which propelled the Mongols from a nomadic people of the steppes to the most fearsome and most successful warriors of the medieval period, was moving incontinently towards Central Europe as well. After a crushing victory of the Mongols over the Kumans on the lower Volga on 1235, more than 40,000 Kipchak Kumans found refuge in the Hungarian Kingdom. Mongols did not appreciate that act of King Béla IV, so the war was inevitable. The decisive battle took place on the river Sajó or Tisza on 11 April 1241 and ended with the complete defeat of the Hungarian army. Prince Coloman was mortally wounded and King Béla had to escape as far as the Dalmatian islands, the only place where the Mongolian cavalry could not follow.⁷⁸ Archdeacon Thomas of Split and some other sources note that in the April 1242 a strong Mongolian squadron passed through Bosnia and ransacked it as well.⁷⁹ Beside that, this event still gave Bosnia a break from the threat of Hungarian attack and in the long term was one of the most significant twists of fate in its history.

The Cessation: *translatio sedis* and the Rise of the Bosnian Church

After the Mongol incursion, military intervention by Hungary within the borders of the Bosnian Banate was not possible anymore. Moreover, Ban Matej Ninoslav started to get involved in internal matters of the Hungarian Realm, when he became prince of Split, in order to help the city in the fight against the rising influence of Trogir, a city whose strength significantly increased after providing shelter to Béla IV from Mongol invaders.⁸⁰ A chronicler from Split, Archdeacon Thomas was a contemporary to this appointment and his writings offer a first-hand source for the events about to unfold.⁸¹ With excellent analysis of this source, especially regarding Tomas' attitude towards the strangers who were appointed as prince of Split in the past, Nada Klaić clearly showed that for the writer and his contemporaries Matej Ninoslav was by no means a Pataren, and that his conflict with the Hungarian king ensued precisely because of the audacity the ban displayed when accepting that position, and due to his robbing and burning of the areas around Trogir.⁸² Somehow at that exact time, the new pope, Innocent IV named a legate to investigate the state of faith in Croatia and Dalmatia and to restore its former honour.⁸³ We would not agree with Šidak who stated that these lands were

located outside of its borders, in Zagreb, Čazma, Kotor, Bihać and Dubrovnik (SLIŠKOVIĆ 2005, p. 485).

⁷⁸ UZELAC 2015; FONT – BARABÁS 2019, p. 121–125.

⁷⁹ THOMAE SPALATENSIS p. 300; ŠIDAK 1975, p. 196; SOPHOULIS 2015, p. 251–278.

⁸⁰ PEROJEVIĆ 1942, p. 227.

⁸¹ THOMAE SPALATENSIS p. 340–355.

⁸² KLAJĆ 1994, p. 107–111.

⁸³ THEINER I. nr. 347, p. 187.

heavily influenced by wars against Ninoslav and the heretics.⁸⁴ Bosnia is never mentioned in that letter and the context of this inspection is more than obvious, after the Mongol devastations.

Further developments around Split are not significant from our perspective. It is worth mentioning that the famous donation of Béla IV in 1244 which is often used as evidence of victory of the Hungarian army and that Ninoslav was forced to accept the arrangement of the Bosnian bishopric according to the Hungarian model cannot be used in scientific discourse as it is clear that it was a 14th-century forgery.⁸⁵ Therefore, based on the sources, a Hungarian advance inside Bosnia was not possible then. In the same year 1244 the pope would grant, at the behest of the current general of the Dominican Order and former Bosnian bishop Johannes de Wildeshausen the rights of inquisition to this ecclesiastical order with the letter *Odore suavi*.⁸⁶

The year 1246 was a time when a fierce diplomatic action of Hungarian agitation with the Curia started in order to subject the Bosnian bishopric to the archbishop of Kalocsa. After the evident pressure, Innocent IV sent the abbot of the monastery of St. Martin in Pannonhalma to investigate the claims of Hungarian prelates on the 20 July. There he mentioned that this request came from Bishop Ponsa himself, who repeated accusations against the archbishop of Dubrovnik for neglecting the fact that the last Slavic Bosnian bishop was a heretic, as well as for allowing the spread of heresy in Bosnia.⁸⁷ Later he spoke about the desire of the archbishop of Kalocsa to exterminate the wicked heresy in Bosnia and measures taken by his predecessor while he still had secular power (given to him by King Andrew) who allegedly drove out thousands of heretics from Bosnia, but could not keep the territories he cleansed due to the inability of erected fortifications to withstand the heretic attacks.⁸⁸ The pope

⁸⁴ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 196.

⁸⁵ KLAJČ 1976. p. 470–472; KLAJČ 1994. p. 112–115.

⁸⁶ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 75^v, ep. 448 (2 May 1244); RI IV III. nr. 449. p. 81; POTTHAST nr. 11245. Since Theiner did not publish this letter, Smičiklas and some authors after him were misled that a similar letter from 1246, holds the correct datation of its publication (Cf. CDCr IV. nr. 261. p. 295–296; JALIMAM 1999. p. 82). Actually, it is the fact that pope confirms the privilege on that date, but it hardly had any real connection with Bosnia, since it is the general privilege. Second letter *Odore suavi*: AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 310^r (7 July 1246); RI IV III. nr. 2006. p. 208; THEINER SM I. nr. 95. p. 77; POTTHAST nr. 12204.

⁸⁷ "*Ex parte venerabilis fratris nostri ... episcopi Bosnensis fuit propositum coram nobis, quod cum dudum ecclesia Bosnensi vacante etiam iam lapsa erat peccatis exigentibus in hereticam pravitatem ... Ragusensis archiepiscopus, eo tempore ipsius ecclesie metropolitanus, ibidem quemdam hereticum in episcopum prefecisset, ibidem in eodem crimine, cum ad eum pervenerit, quod tam ipse quam eius subditi huiusmodi erant labe respersi quodque in eclesiis civitatis et diocesis Bosnensis officia non celebrabantur divina, scienter tolerasset.*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 313^r, ep. 313 (20 July 1246); RI IV III. nr. 2034. p. 302; THEINER I. nr. 372. p. 201–202; FEJÉR VII/5. nr. 153. p. 268–270; FARLATI VI. p. 98; CDCr IV. nr. 263. p. 297–298; POTTHAST nr. 12233; FERMENDŽIN nr. 70. p. 13.

⁸⁸ "[...] *postmodum vero bone memorie predecessor venerabilis fratris nostri ... archiepiscopi Colocensis ecclesia in civitate et diocesi Bosnensi iurisdictionem habeat temporalem, ad extirpandam exinde pravitatem predictam, cum multis diversis temporibus exercitiis construendo et reficiendo in locis idoneis castra pro defensione ipsius Bosnensis ecclesie*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 313^r, ep. 313.

did not wish to hurry with such a decision and therefore instructed the emissaries to check the information he received from Ponsa.⁸⁹

We do not exactly know what the result of this expedition was, but too short time have passed from its beginning to determine that the letter *Amor celestis* was its result, a letter sent on the 3rd August to the archbishop of Kalocsa along with the sign of the cross inviting him to fight with resolve *contra hereticos de terra Bosnensi*.⁹⁰ As a supplement to the previous letter and in order to strengthen the resolve of crusaders, the pope arranged that the participants of the campaigns would divide the conquered land amongst themselves.⁹¹ The next letter by the pope, *Debent terre principes*, from the end of January of the following year is very significant. Along with the usual call to the Hungarian king by the pope to "fight the heretics and tame the evil enemies of the Roman Church" at the very end we have an addition *Sciturus pro certo, quod super facto terre Bosnensis nil penitus statuemus nisi de tuo consilio et assensu* where the pope promises the Hungarian king that the Curia would act in the future in Bosnia only with the approval and permission of the king.⁹² This is a true turning point and its significance needs to be emphasized. On one hand, this sentence shows the beginning of the abandonment of the Bosnian issue by the Curia, and on the other the Hungarian craving for Bosnia, if it was ever subdued, became institutionalized. Šidak also notes that in this letter, for the first time the heresy is titled with the name of the country itself – *Bosnenses hereses*.⁹³

Finally, with a letter of 28 August 1247, which was sent to the bishop of Győr and to the Hungarian prelates, the pope ordered the re-examination of the demands by the archbishop of Kalocsa, and if they proved to be truthful orders that the Bosnian bishopric becomes subject to him. This letter holds a famous sentence *nulla spes sit, quod ad fidem terra illa voluntarie revertatur*, where the pope confessed defeat of all his intentions in Bosnia.⁹⁴ In the historiography, several theories have developed about whether with this letter or immediately after it, the bishopric became officially subjected to Kalocsa or

⁸⁹ "Quia vero in tanto negotio absque magna deliberatione ac maturitate precedere nolumus, nec debemus, mandamus, quatenus inquiratis super hiis diligentius veritatem, et quod inveneritis nobis fideliter rescribatis ut exinde per vos instructi." – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 313^v; ep. nr. 313.

⁹⁰ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 317^r, ep. 55 (3 August 1246); RI IV III. nr. 2050. p. 305; THEINER I. nr. 373. p. 202; FEJÉR IV/1. nr. 153. p. 400–401; CDCr IV. nr. 264. p. 298; KATONA VI. nr. 962. p. 79–81; POTTHAST nr. 12246; FERMENDŽIN nr. 72. p. 13.

⁹¹ "Ut negotium fidei contra hereticos melius exequaris, presentium tibi auctoritate concedimus, ut possessiones eorum, quas a fidelibus occupari contigerit, possis concedere eisdem fidelibus eorumque heredibus, prout videris expedire" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 317^r, ep. 56 (3 August 1246); RI IV III. nr. 2051. p. 305; THEINER I. nr. 374. p. 202; CDCr IV. nr. 265. p. 299; POTTHAST nr. 12247; FERMENDŽIN nr. 71. p. 13.

⁹² AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 421^v, ep. 37 (30 January 1247); RI IV III. nr. 2953. p. 443; THEINER I. nr. 376. p. 202–203; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 461; CDCr IV. nr. 273. p. 310–311; KATONA VI. nr. 965. p. 88–89; POTTHAST nr. 12407; FERMENDŽIN nr. 73. p. 13.

⁹³ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 199.

⁹⁴ AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 455^v, ep. 155 (28 August 28, 1247); RI IV III. nr. 3204. p. 483; THEINER I. nr. 382. p. 204–205; FEJÉR IV/1. p. 467–468; BOP I. nr. 180. p. 175–176; CDCr IV. nr. 285. p. 322–323; KATONA VI. nr. 965. p. 89–91; POTTHAST nr. 12669; FERMENDŽIN no. 74. p. 13.

if this happened several decades later. For now, we stand by the theory proposed by Farlati which suited Šidak as well, that precisely during the year 1247 the metropolitan of the Bosnian bishopric was changed.⁹⁵

Here we need to return to the general context to correctly understand both previous and future moves by the Roman Curia. Pope Innocent IV issued several decisions in the later years of his pontificate which sharply digressed from the standard principles of the universal papacy and can be understood only from the aspect of the personality of this Roman bishop, as well as a set of contemporary circumstances.

For our topic it is significant that as a result of this change of attitude Pope Innocent IV allowed the Galician prince to perform the Slavic liturgy following eastern rituals, while on 29 March 1248 he allowed the archbishop of Senj the use of the Glagolitic liturgy and Slavic language where this custom remained.⁹⁶ This license cannot be interpreted as evidence that the papacy tolerated the Slavic liturgy even before. It must be regarded only in the context of relaxing the reins regarding religious issues. The authors who follow the aforementioned theory regularly fail to see that only two days before the approval to the bishop of Senj, the pope had sent two letters where he ceased all aggressive action against Bosnia and the Bosnian ban, and that all three letters are a part of an obvious joint venture with which the Curia wanted to calm the situation in the Balkan region and to solve problems on at least one front.

The first of the aforementioned letters linked to Bosnia *Cum sicut intelleximus* was sent to the archbishop of Kalocsa ordering him to cease all hostility towards Bosnia, until the old texts which Ban Ninoslav used to prove his righteous belief were examined. The composition of the delegation which was to examine this question, as well as the life, reputation, and behaviour of the Bosnian ruler, consisted of the aforementioned bishop of Senj and the prior of the Franciscans of Split.⁹⁷ The other letter was addressed to the executors of this mission with the explanation of their tasks.⁹⁸ With these letters this

⁹⁵ ŠIDAK 1975. p. 200. Supporters of the theory about year 1247: ĆIRKOVIĆ 1987. p. 205; KLAČIĆ 1994. p. 105; JALIMAM 1999. p. 83; DŽAJA 1992. p. 57; ŠANJEK 1975. p. 62.

⁹⁶ ŠIDAK 1937. p. 144–145; CDCr IV. nr. 307. p. 343; POTTHAST nr. 12880.

⁹⁷ "*Cum sicut intelleximus, nobilis vir Ninoslavus banus de Bossena a fide nequaquam deviet orthodoxa, sed tamquam catholicus vivat sub religionis observantia christiane, licet olim necessitatis tempore ab hereticis contra suos inimicos auxilium et favorem recepisse dicatur et eidem insuper nobili per quorundam fidedignorum litteras, licet antiquas, laudabile perhibeatur testimonium super fidei sua puritate, mndamus, quatenus provide pensans, quod animarum lucrum attendendum est potissime ac obtandum, contra prefatum nobilem et terram suam, presertim cum super eo, quod a prefatis hereticis interdum iuvamen habuit, satisfacere, sicut dicitur, sit paratus et nos de vita, fama et conservatione ipsius per venerabilem fratrem nostrum [...] episcopum Signensem et dilectum filium ... ministrum fratrum minorum Spalatensem, mandamus diligenter inquiri, aliquatenus non procedas*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 517r, ep. 699 (27 March 1248); RI IV III. nr. 3748. p. 567; THEINER I. nr. 387. p. 206; FEJÉR IV/2. p. 28–29; BF I. nr. 270. p. 511; CDCr IV. nr. 305. p. 341–342; POTTHAST nr. 12876; FERMENDŽIN nr. 76. p. 14.

⁹⁸ "*Presentium vobis auctoritate in virtute obedientie districte precipiendo mandamus, quatenus de vita, fama et conversatione nobilis viri Ninoslai bani de Bossene sollicito inquirentes, quod super hiis inveneritis, nobis vestris litteris fideliter intimetis*" – AAV Reg. Vat. vol. 21., fol. 517r, ep. 700 (27 March

episode of relations between the papacy and Bosnia came to an end. As we were able to see, there can be no discussion about military efforts by Béla IV against Bosnia in this period. Next to the classic use of crusader rhetoric, and indulgences were foreseen but like in most of the earlier occasions weapons were not raised.

After the official subjection of the Bosnian bishopric under the archbishop of Kalocsa, the next step was the transference of its seat outside the borders of Bosnia, inside the realm of the Hungarian Kingdom. This *translatio sedis* of the Bosnian bishopric is "one of the crucial events in the political and ecclesiastical history of medieval Bosnia whose importance cannot be overstated".⁹⁹ Unfortunately the source where the final decision of the Curia was expressed was not preserved, and neither was the more probable source belonging to the archbishop of Kalocsa where he ordered that this change took place, so we cannot determine the exact date when this happened. *Terminus ante quem* can be easily determined as 8 May 1252 when a letter to the bishop of Trebinje notes: *in villa que vocatur Diaco et ante domum in qua habitat episcopus Bosgnensis*.¹⁰⁰ It is obvious that it was already known that Đakovo was the new home to bishop Ponsa. Somewhat more problematic is to determine the *terminus post quem*. The oldest possible date is certainly the letter from the 7 December 1239 in which the donation of Đakovo and Blizna to the Bosnian bishopric by prince Coloman was confirmed. However, it seems that it is too early to use this date for the transfer of the bishopric seat.¹⁰¹ This decision would be difficult to perform as the Bosnian bishopric was not yet subjected to the archbishop of Kalocsa. From there it can be deduced that the date should be found after 28 August 1247 when the aforementioned mission was ordered to determine the validity of demands by the archbishop of Kalocsa. The exact same logic can be used to determine the date of subjugation to the archbishop of Kalocsa. It would be difficult for the Bosnian bishop to reside in Đakovo before his bishopric was subjected to Kalocsa. So, both events should be considered together, and it is conceivable that they happened in a "package", meaning that somewhere between the second half of 1247 and the first half of 1252 both the subjugation of the bishopric and the official transfer of its seat took place. Đakovo was not selected at random as the location for the new seat. The geostrategic position of this settlement on the main roads from Hungary to Bosnia and the erection of the church of St. Peter with the identical name as the cathedral church in Bosnia, were all strategically planned moves the Hungarian diplomatic machine aptly used in times to come.¹⁰²

What is the importance of this move? The bishopric is the basic administrative unit of the hierarchical order of the church. Even Cyprian, a

1248); RI IV III. nr. 3749. p. 567; THEINER I. nr. 386. p. 205–206; FEJÉR IV/2. p. 29; BF I. nr. 271. p. 511; CDCr IV. nr. 306. p. 342; POTTHAST nr. 12877; FERMENDŽIN nr. 75. p. 14.

⁹⁹ Cf. LOVRENOVIĆ 2010, p. 113–125.

¹⁰⁰ CDCr IV. nr. 430. p. 494–495.

¹⁰¹ It was still done by: ČOROVIĆ 1940. p. 198.

¹⁰² LOVRENOVIĆ 1994. p. 56; LOVRENOVIĆ 2004. p. 10–18.

theologian from the late Antiquity spoke about how the “bishop’s power is based on the word of God through which he assigned St. Peter the rule of the keys, so therefore the bishop is in the church and the church is in the bishop, and who is not with the bishop is not in the church either”.¹⁰³ The conclusion is simple: with displacing the seat of the Bosnian bishopric outside the Bosnian Banate, the multiple centuries year old membership of the Bosnian church to the western church was broken and an institutional rift ensued between the Bosnian medieval state and the Roman Curia. Bosnia became *regio nullius dioecesis* in the eyes of Rome.¹⁰⁴ The main consequence of this process was the confessional change inside Bosnia and the emergence of the Bosnian church.¹⁰⁵ The greatest authorities today agree that the Bosnian church (which did not existed before 1270s–1280s, so this term must be avoided when discussing the events in the 12th and first half of the 13th century) grew from the remains of the old Latin bishopric while they differ in the fact that it merged within a religious order of Krstjani, which existed in Bosnia from a long time before.¹⁰⁶ More than a century later, the leader of the Bosnian church, *djed* Radomir presented himself to the embassy from Dubrovnik as a “the true episcope of the Bosnian church”.¹⁰⁷

It is important to conclude that the transfer of the seat is the consequence of Hungarian aspirations towards Bosnia.¹⁰⁸ But we cannot agree with the authors who claim that in Bosnia there was a conflict between the Roman Curia, which wanted a hierarchical establishment of Christianity in Bosnia, and the interests of the Hungarian court which did everything to stop it from happening. If we can single out basic results from all this mess of ideological, religious, political, and military rhetoric we can observe several things:

1. Bosnia irreparably got a negative reputation at the Roman Curia
2. The Hungarian Kingdom managed to reaffirm its rights of patronage over the Balkan region in the eyes of the pope
3. The election of native bishops who held the liturgy in the Slavic language was forbidden
4. On several occasions, crusades against Bosnia, its ruler and people were proclaimed, but were actually realized only one time
5. The centuries-old tradition of official church hierarchy on Bosnian soil was interrupted
6. On the institutional and spiritual remains of *ecclesie Bosnensis* an autocephalous Bosnian church emerged whose existence and activity are directly rooted into the Bosnian medieval states.

¹⁰³ JEDIN 1972. p. 377–378.

¹⁰⁴ BASLER 1973b. p. 14.

¹⁰⁵ For more detailed elaboration Cf. DAUTOVIĆ 2021. p. 75-92.

¹⁰⁶ DŽAJA 1985. p. 81–102; DŽAJA – LOVRENOVIĆ 2008–2009. p. 245–246; ĆIRKOVIĆ 1964. p. 68.

¹⁰⁷ *Stare srpske povelje i pisma* I/1. nr. 440. p. 434.

¹⁰⁸ DŽAJA 1985. p. 96.

All these results suit clearly the Hungarian interests. As they were initiated by the Roman Curia, it cannot be concluded that the interests of the papacy and Hungary differed. Besides, if the Curia wanted longer-lasting success in the promotion of Catholicism on Bosnian soil, it could have implemented its strongest diplomatic weapon in the fight against heresy – the sending of the royal crown. In the 13th century, we have multiple examples when Rome used this exact method to solve its problems. Innocent III sent the royal crown in 1203 to the Bulgarian ruler Kalojan, the same thing was performed by Honorius III raising the Serbian župan Stefan Nemanjić to the status of king in 1217/1219. Then Innocent IV sent royal crowns to the Lithuanian duke Mindaugas in 1251 and to the ruler of Galicia-Volhynia Danilo Romanovič in 1253.¹⁰⁹ Dispatching of the royal crown to Ban Matej Ninoslav would solve all the problems that the Roman Curia and the Western Church had in Bosnia regarding heresy, schism or any other issues of religious nature. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that these questions were not the main goal of the Curia when communicating with Bosnia. The Hungarian Kingdom was too powerful ally for the papacy in East-Central Europe, and the popes of the 13th century did not wish to jeopardize this alliance by any means. The Bosnian Banate and the state of faith inside it were a collateral victim of the policy of leaning on strong secular rulers of a certain area which the papacy used to fulfil its own ambitions.

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¹⁰⁹ SWEENEY 1973. p. 320–334; MARITCH 1933. p. 39–43; SELART 2015. p. 201, 210–215.

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