

The Crusade in the Fifteenth Century

Converging and competing cultures

Edited by Norman Housley

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11 The key to the gate of Christendom?

The strategic importance of Bosnia in the struggle against the Ottomans

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In July 1464, just over six months after his arduous winter campaign in Bosnia ended in victory, the Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus complained to Pope Pius II of renewed Turkish attacks against him and the possessions he had recently acquired through great labour, claiming that the enemy ‘... again invaded Bosnia, which is certainly, so to speak, the key and gate of the whole of Christendom, from where paths in all directions towards the west and north can easily be accessed’.¹ When he described his successful Bosnian war to the same Pope a few months earlier, he wrote jubilantly that his victory would allow the wound, which had been inflicted on the Christian body through the ruin of Bosnia, to heal more easily and completely than before, and that this was important ‘... since the said wound affected not only the corners and sides of Europe, but its very heart, from where it could easily have spread and infected all of its parts’.²

The king, evidently an eloquent master in the language of his day,³ could not have made clearer the perceived importance of Bosnia in the general struggle of Christendom against the Ottomans. Even though these two instances represent obvious use of embellished *antemurale* rhetoric and crusading terminology, they were still grounded in decades of experience in dealing with Ottoman assaults on the front line of conflict. The principal aim of this study will therefore be to investigate those instances when *antemurale* language was applied to Bosnia, with special attention given to sources emanating from Hungary and Venice, the two archetypal bulwark states. Tracing the origins and historical development of this crusading discourse, I shall present documented occasions when Turkish raiding troops surged through Bosnia during the first half of the fifteenth century in order to invade Hungary, Croatia, Dalmatia and Slavonia, as well as such distant lands as Carniola, Carinthia, Styria and Friuli. In that sense, I shall attempt to show how these attacks helped shape the typical *antemurale* concept of Bosnia as the ‘gate of Christendom’, and the ways in which this ideological device was then used as a propaganda tool to mobilize a unified Christian resistance to the imminent danger posed by the rising Ottoman power.

Bosnia in the midst of other *antemurale* states

Although he made good use of it, the rhetorical strategy employed by King Matthias in his letters to the Pope was certainly not an innovation devised by

his royal chancery. In fact, its origins in the central parts of Europe can be traced back at least to the thirteenth century when Hungary, as the furthestmost bastion of Christianity, was attacked by a vast Mongol army. This event precipitated the formulation of a frontier ideology which drew upon the distinctly medieval idea of a 'unified Christian commonwealth' with determined borders and a defined territory. Due to the apparently unique position of Hungary at the time, King Bela IV was then able to promote his kingdom as a 'gateway to Christendom' which was entrusted with a mission to protect Christianity from external enemies.⁴ Other frontier states soon began adopting and developing this notion that the faith had to be defended as a whole. Consequently, they presented any potential attack on their borders as a supposed threat to other Christians as well. Such an arrangement implied that those polities which bordered with infidels would be the ones who endured the greatest strain of the conflict, defending their neighbours and the rest of Christendom, while others provided only military and financial assistance.⁵ In order to accentuate their delicate position on the first line of defence of the Christian world, to gain recognition for their valiant struggle, and to invite a united response, rulers of the endangered states resorted to using powerful and vivid metaphors in their diplomatic correspondence, referring to themselves as the gate (*porta, ostium, fores*), bulwark (*antemurale, propugnaculum*), key (*clavis*), shield (*scutum, clipeus*) or wall (*murus*) of Christendom.

This ideology evolved further in the late-fourteenth and fifteenth century with the emergence of the ever-growing Ottoman Empire whose very existence posed a threat to the medieval world order. Moreover, the *antemurale* topos subsequently even came to be predicated on constant and seemingly limitless Ottoman expansion. Thus in the course of the protracted Ottoman conquest of the Balkans, almost every state inevitably, at one point in time, had to become a shield or wall which was supposed to momentarily stifle the rising influence of the Turks, protecting its hinterland in the process. The first of such blocks was Constantinople itself, and even Rhodes and Cyprus figured to some extent as bulwarks of the faith.⁶ Once Bulgaria succumbed to Ottoman pressure in the last few decades of the fourteenth century, it was Serbia's turn to act as a buffer. In 1441, just a couple of years after the Serbian capital Smederevo fell to the Ottomans for the first time, the Ragusans urged Bosnian nobles to help the expelled Serb despot George reclaim his country, since he was 'a good shield for Hungary and Bosnia'.⁷ The pattern is obvious: after Serbia, Bosnia was next in line to serve as the barrier of Ottoman advance to the West, and after Bosnia came Croatia, then Venice, and so forth.

However, the most prominent of these early *antemurale* states was Hungary, which, as the biggest and the most powerful kingdom in the region, with traditional ties to Rome, represented the safest option for leadership of a general crusade with the aim of containing the Ottomans south of the Danube and Sava for as long as possible.⁸ Soon the same mantle was taken up by Poland,⁹ and somewhat later by Croatia.¹⁰ These three were also the best-researched cases since the *antemurale* myth became incorporated into their respective national identities during the course of centuries. In recent times, valuable studies have also appeared which analyse the positions of Moldavia and Ragusa in this sense.¹¹

Among the *antemurale* states, Bosnia represents a curious example. It has actually never been previously considered as such in historiography despite its important geopolitical position and despite ample evidence which testifies that contemporaries understood its strategic significance, calling it the 'key', 'shield' or 'gate of Christendom'. Since most of the attention was focused on neighbouring Hungary and Croatia, states which willingly adopted and embraced the rhetoric, it was assumed that Bosnia remained on the other side of Christendom's bulwark. And indeed, the Bosnian kingdom was not an *antemurale* in the classical sense of the word, but rather an *ante-antemurale*, which possessed the potential to prevent unhindered passage of the Turks deeper into the territories controlled by Venice and the kings of Hungary.¹² However, due to specific historical circumstances, Bosnia was forced to serve more as a 'gateway' than as a 'shield'.

'The principal gate of the Christians'

While he was gathering an army to march against Bosnian duke Hrvoje Vukčić and his Turkish allies in June of 1398, Hungarian King Sigismund described Bosnia as 'the shield and defence of our kingdoms of Dalmatia and Croatia'.¹³ Almost 60 years later, in June 1457, Bosnian King Stjepan Tomaš, who was being prepared for leadership of an upcoming crusade, told Cardinal Juan Carvajal that the Sultan considered his kingdom to be 'la principal porta de christiani'.¹⁴ This rhetorical evolution, from 'shield and defence' to 'gate', reflected the way that Bosnia's position in regard to the Ottoman Empire changed during those six decades, but the deceptively insignificant modification also tells us a lot about the way that King Tomaš wanted to describe his situation to those from whom he expected concrete military aid.

The first Ottoman incursions into Bosnia began as early as 1386 and increased in number and intensity after the battle of Kosovo three years later. In those early instances the Bosnian nobility handled the confrontations well and withstood a number of fierce Ottoman assaults.¹⁵ But after a period of severe pressure, during which the Bosnians and Turks sometimes fought as allies against their common adversary King Sigismund of Hungary, the Bosnian rulers and nobles finally yielded in 1415 and reached for a lifeline offered by the position of a tributary state of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁶ Using the complex internal political conditions to their advantage, and exploiting discord in the country, in the following decades the Turks practically turned Bosnia into a corridor for attacks on the neighbouring regions of Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, venturing even further into Hungary and the lands controlled by the counts of Cilli, the dukes of Austria and the patriarchs of Aquileia. It is important to note, though, that those raids were intermittently scattered throughout the first half of the fifteenth century, usually alternating with incursions into Bosnia, and that their frequency waned in those periods when Bosnian rulers managed to organize some kind of resistance or paid regular tribute. But it became clear very early on that Bosnia could not hold out against this menace for long and that it needed outside help, so the impression that its demise would have disastrous consequences for the rest of Christendom formed

the basis of Bosnian international diplomacy with the sole aim of organizing a crusade to relieve the pressure and push the Ottomans far away from its borders.

This policy of insisting on the importance of Bosnia for the whole of Christendom would eventually become not only the preserve of Bosnian rulers but of all those who were advocating crusade in the fifteenth century. For this they relied on *antemurale* frontier ideology which had its roots in the understanding that the growth of Ottoman power was almost unstoppable. In a kind of a domino effect, the fall of each Christian kingdom consequently meant that all other neighbouring states became directly threatened as potential targets for the next invasion of the all-conquering Ottoman army, and that it was just a matter of time before it reached the distant lands of Germany or Italy. Ottoman expansion came to be perceived and presented by Christians as a universal tragedy. This anxiety was voiced as early as March 1307 when Pope Clement V warned that the fall of Constantinople into the hands of 'Turks, Saracens and other infidels' would place the Roman church and the whole of Christendom in grave danger.¹⁷ His contemporary, the Venetian Marino Sanudo, feared that the Turks, if not prevented soon, would enter Europe and that no one would be able to stop them,¹⁸ while Pope Clement VI wrote to the French king in May 1345 that the Turks were ravaging Greek lands, capturing people and selling them like cattle, forcing them to renounce their Catholic faith, and if the crusaders who then captured Smyrna had not stopped them, who knows how far the Turks could have reached, to Naples, and maybe even further.¹⁹

The contemporary view about the character of Turkish intentions towards Christian states is summed up well in a letter written in May 1429 by the Ragusan government to the bickering Bosnian dukes Sandalj Hranić and Radoslav Pavlović, urging them to reflect on Ishak-bey, the 'evil and cunning' marcher lord of Skopje, who thinks of nothing else but to breed conflict among the Bosnian nobles so that he could 'devour' them and destroy them one by one:

And this is the custom of the Turks who had no possessions in *Romania* a hundred years ago, and working for a hundred years with their malice, sowing discord among the Greek lords, whom they destroyed one by one, they arrived at great dominion and power. They did the same thing with the Bulgarian Emperors, and similarly in the kingdom of Serbia, and they have attempted and are still attempting to do the same in Bosnia.²⁰

Indeed, ever since they appeared on European soil for the first time, the Ottomans were determined to conquer important river crossings, pathways and passes, as well as forts and towns crucial for further advance towards the West.²¹ This allowed them to use those locations as stepping-stones in order to harass and pillage neighbouring countries. The diplomatic correspondence of the time is full of allusions to certain places, forts or states, whose strategic importance was presented as such that their loss would have had a devastating impact on Christianity in general, allowing the Turks virtually unopposed access to other Christian lands. During the course of the fifteenth century this idea developed even further,

becoming an essential propaganda tool of diplomacy for those states situated on the violent Ottoman frontier. Thus in 1465 Matthias Corvinus informed his messengers in Rome that the Sultan had attacked him for a third year in a row with the intention of capturing Belgrade, occupying Serbia and recovering Jajce and Bosnia. According to the Hungarian king, these were the ultimate goals of Mehmed II since Belgrade represented the door to Hungary, Poland and Bohemia, whereas Jajce was the gate to Dalmatia, Istria, Italy and Germany.²² After the fall of Negroponte in 1470, the Venetians wrote that the Turks – ‘the eternal and implacable enemies’ – did not take just any Christian town or island, but that they ‘had overcome the shield and bulwark of all Christians, opening the path and removing all obstacles to invade, assault and spoil Italy itself’.²³ The same sentiments were expressed once again five years later by Prince Stefan of Moldavia. After his glorious victory in the battle of Vaslui, he notified the western powers that the Sultan – ‘the infidel Emperor of the Turks, who is the destroyer of all Christendom’ – will be planning revenge ‘and will want to obtain this gate of Christendom, which is in our realm’, warning them that ‘if this gate should be lost, then all Christendom will be in danger’.²⁴ In 1476, a year after the fall of Caffa in the Crimea to the Turks, Pope Sixtus IV encouraged Charles of Burgundy to help the common Christian cause, because ‘if Hungary is conquered Germany will be next, and if Dalmatia and Illyria are overrun Italy will be invaded’.²⁵

All of these instances were in fact cries for help intended to portray the certainty and imminence of Ottoman danger to the Christian West. They were supposed to stir the emotions of fellow co-religionists and hopefully result in a common military action in the form of a general crusade. In essence, their message was that distant countries should not allow themselves the luxury of having to defend their home at the doorstep, but that they should rather protect their possessions in advance by helping those on the forefront of the conflict.

As mentioned earlier, the same rhetoric was applied to Bosnia. On 15 November 1455 Juan Carvajal, the Cardinal of St Angelo and papal legate to the German lands, wrote to the duke of Bavaria warning him that the Sultan could easily transfer his troops to Germany through the Bosnian kingdom which was subject to him through tribute.²⁶ Antonio Guidoboni, the Milanese envoy to Venice, expressed concern in June 1462 that the Bosnian king and Duke Stjepan Vukčić might be defeated by the Sultan, or forced to make peace with him. In that case, he warned, the Turks might end up in Friuli with great ease, and there would be no way to resist their power on land.²⁷ King Stjepan Tomašević had pretty much the same message for Pope Pius II, warning him in the same year that the defence of Christendom depended on defending Bosnia first, because, as he claimed, Turkish insatiability had no bounds:

After me he will attack the Hungarians and the Dalmatians who are subjected to Venice, and then through Carniola and Istria he will seek Italy which he aspires to rule. He often speaks of Rome, and his heart pulls him there. If the Christians permit him to obtain my kingdom, he will have the most suitable province and appropriate places to achieve his desire. I expect the first

storm, and after me the Hungarians and the Venetians will taste their fate, and not even Italy will be able to rest; this is the enemy's design. I am submitting this information to you so that you cannot say that it was not foretold, and accuse me of negligence. My father predicted the calamity which befell Constantinople to your predecessor Nicholas and to the Venetians – but he was not believed.²⁸

In February 1463 the Bosnian king again alerted his neighbours to the impending danger. He sent envoys to Venice and his representatives conveyed the message that the king had a trusted source which informed him of the Turkish intention to occupy and ruin his kingdom. He hoped the Venetians would realize that this would cause great damage to their state, and that they would send messengers to the Pope in an attempt to petition for a crusade, suggesting straightforward military action, without delay, because it was clear that the Turk was growing each day because of the Christian silence – ‘e questo se vede chiaramente, el Turcho se fa ala zornada piu grande per taxer i Christiani’.²⁹

Despite all of the warnings, the king's pleas proved ineffective. He received no military aid, no weapons and no soldiers. After a quick offensive led by the Sultan himself in May and June 1463, Bosnia finally fell to the Ottomans and the king was beheaded. When the Venetians heard about the outcome of the Sultan's actions they became aware of the immediate danger posed by further Ottoman expansion and had reason to worry greatly since the conquest of the Bosnian kingdom exposed not only the Dalmatian towns, then ruled by Venice, but also the Adriatic ports of Italy.³⁰ The collapse of Bosnia led to extreme terror being spread everywhere, and Venice now found itself directly in the path of the Ottoman military threat.³¹ The Venetians instantly set about on a diplomatic and military mission to inform their allies and friends about the Bosnian demise, to alarm them of the Ottoman peril, and to try and organize some sort of military campaign.³²

Therefore, in just a couple of months the tables turned and Venetians, who responded to Bosnian pleas only with hollow phrases of encouragement, found themselves in the same position as Bosnia before the conquest, having to resort to *antemurale* rhetoric in order to arouse the attention of neighbouring states and implore their assistance. They told the *Provveditore* of Zadar on 12 June 1463 that the Turks – ‘enemies of the whole of Christendom’ – had captured Bosnia, ‘the gate of Italy’.³³ In a letter sent on 14 June directly to the Pope in Rome they said that the Turkish forces had advanced all the way to Senj on the coast, to the doors of Italy – *ad hostium et fores Italie*.³⁴ On the same day, the Venetians warned the Florentines that the Sultan was not satisfied with the capture of Bosnia, but that he was ‘striving for further conquests and more spacious lands, promising his army even more’, not fearing ‘to arrogantly bring his arms to the seashore at Senj, to the very gate and entrance of Italy’.³⁵

The same feeling was shared by Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, who wrote to his father Count Lodovico Gonzaga of Mantua from Tivoli informing him of the Bosnian plight and expressing concern that unless the Turk was strongly opposed immediately, he could take a great part of Italy in less than a year and a half.³⁶ On

3 July 1463 Pope Pius II wrote to Bologna stating his disappointment and remorse that the Sultan had occupied Bosnia all the way to the shores of Dalmatia, and was now arrogantly standing with his weapons at the gate of Italy.³⁷

Realizing that something tangible had to be done, the Pope sent Cardinal Bessarion to Venice in July 1463, hoping finally to unite forces and organize a crusade.³⁸ The Venetians were completely prepared to commence a full-scale military conflict against the Turks, stating that they were aware that if they did not resume the war, which they considered to have been in progress since the fall of Constantinople, they would undoubtedly lose not only their Dalmatian provinces, but also the city of Ragusa, the Croatian Banate, the counties of Krbava, Cetina and Senj, and that the Turks would enter even deeper into the core of Christian lands, thus arriving in the vicinity of the gates and crossings into Italy.³⁹ They gave Bessarion a written reply which the cardinal conveyed to the Pope in his report. In their response the Venetians claimed that they understood, from the fact that the Turks had occupied so many kingdoms in such a short period of time, that Venetian dominions would be their next target. In order to avert this, they had persistently incurred many expenses, and had they not done so, the Turk would already have been in Italy. The senators confirmed that their republic was always ready, and especially now, for a general expedition against the Turks, also declaring that they had already made preliminary contacts with the king of Hungary.⁴⁰

This Veneto-Hungarian alliance, although late in coming,⁴¹ still proved to be very successful in its initial stages. King Matthias waited for the majority of Turkish troops to retreat before he made a decisive strike, capturing almost the whole of the Bosnian kingdom, and managing to seize the important fortress of Jajce on Christmas Day 1463.⁴² The king's triumph, which was presented as the rescue of Christendom's 'key' and 'gate',⁴³ lifted the spirit of resistance in those states which were affected by the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia. As soon as the news of his achievement reached Venice, the Venetians decided to send him even more money to aid him in his future endeavours, expressing happiness about his victories, praising him and lauding the fact that he managed to conquer Bosnia which was undoubtedly the shield of their state and possessions in Dalmatia (*scutum status et locorum nostrorum Dalmatie*).⁴⁴ However, their joy was premature and the successes of the Hungarian king eventually proved to be short-lived, because the Ottomans resumed hostilities as early as the spring of the following year.

Was Bosnia an 'open gate' of Christendom?

The reason why Venice and Hungary reacted to the fall of Bosnia in the way that they did was that the disappearance of the Bosnian kingdom from the political map of the fifteenth century brought the previously protected borders of both states into direct contact with the expanding and aggressive Ottoman Empire. Even though they had bordered and clashed with the Turks in the past, the new situation required an immediate response. Seeking to assemble as many allies as possible for the forthcoming war, they sent out many letters to foreign rulers

and governments, and while some of their claims were certainly exaggerated for propaganda purposes and in accordance with the literary style of the time, they still had a logical rationale behind them.

This was because the methods and tactics of the Ottoman army in the early stages of their expansion were founded on the agility and speed of their *akinci* raiders, who were able to cover great distances and overrun faraway lands, spreading fear wherever they went.⁴⁵ These raids were mostly conducted from the territory of their vassal or tributary states, and thus Turkish incursions from Bosnia into Hungarian and Venetian regions became a relatively common occurrence even before the final Ottoman conquest of the kingdom in 1463. So, far from being merely a metaphor, to contemporaries Bosnia represented a genuine 'gate of Christendom' through which, as it seemed at the time, Turks entered as they pleased.

The first Ottoman intrusions into territories beyond Bosnia – Croatia, Slavonia and Hungary – occurred against the background of the struggle for the Hungarian crown between Sigismund of Luxemburg and Ladislaus of Naples in the last years of the fourteenth century, and increased in number during the first decade of the fifteenth century. The majority of Bosnian nobles, led by Duke Hrvoje Vukčić, chose to support Ladislaus in his attempt to overthrow Sigismund and put the Angevin dynasty back on the Hungarian throne.⁴⁶ Wishing to hasten the political and military demise of his opponent, and in line with the axiom that the enemy of an enemy is a friend, Ladislaus allied himself with Sigismund's principal adversaries, the Turks, who were then conducting their first raids into Hungary from Serbia.⁴⁷ This in turn meant that Bosnians also became Turkish allies, commencing combined assaults on territories controlled by King Sigismund, primarily concentrating them on Slavonia and Croatia, since Duke Hrvoje and his allies already controlled possessions in Dalmatia.

These attacks diminished after the crisis caused by Ottoman defeat in the battle of Ankara in 1402. Thus having strengthened his position in Hungary, beginning in 1406 King Sigismund was able to undertake a number of offensive expeditions against Hrvoje and his associates – 'the perfidious Turks'.⁴⁸ After a couple of years of heavy fighting, Sigismund's army finally managed to defeat the rebellious Bosnian nobles in September 1408, inflicting a shattering blow on the plans of Ladislaus who would completely abandon his Balkan ambitions the following year. Despite the successful outcome of Sigismund's Bosnian campaigns, which had also included the submission of one of his most stubborn opponents, Duke Hrvoje, it seems that the disturbed and unsettled political situation in Bosnia caused by the conflicts only hastened the arrival of fresh Turkish troops. Just a few months after Sigismund's victory, in November of 1408, the Venetians heard rumours that Nikola Frankopan, the count of Senj, intended to give provisions to the Ottoman army and allow it safe passage through his lands.⁴⁹ In May of the following year, the Venetians denied Count Nikola's request for a loan of 10,000 ducats. He claimed that he needed the money due to the numerous Ottoman incursions and other wars he had to fight.⁵⁰ If taken at face value, these would constitute the first of many Turkish invasions into Dalmatia from Bosnian territory.

The following few years were relatively calm on the Turkish front, mainly due to the consolidation of Bosnia after years of battle with the Hungarians, but also due to internal developments in the Ottoman Empire where the sons of Sultan Bayezid were fighting each other for the throne. The apparent unity between the Bosnian nobles and King Sigismund did not last long. In 1413 Sigismund denounced Duke Hrvoje, condemning him as a rebel and a traitor, accusing him of renewed collaboration with the Turks and confiscating his lands in Croatia and Dalmatia.⁵¹ Regardless of whether the accusations were true or not, and Hrvoje did attempt to convince Sigismund of his innocence,⁵² this clash triggered an immense political shift in the Balkans. Already in the following year, wishing to reclaim his territories and to gain revenge, Hrvoje again introduced Turks into Bosnia, allied himself with the Venetians, and began a mass-scale attack on the lands of King Sigismund.⁵³

The first information about the movement of the Ottoman army dates from June 1414, and they caused terror and panic almost everywhere. It was obvious from the beginning that the main focus of the campaign would be directed against Dalmatian coastal towns and islands which were once in the possession of Duke Hrvoje. Thus on 2 July 1414 the Ragusans warned their people on Brač, Hvar and Korčula, three islands in the Adriatic, to prepare for the worst, to repair their ships and ensure guards, so that they would not suffer damage from the Turks.⁵⁴ In the letter which the Ragusan government sent to Sigismund on 10 July we discover that the Turks had marched towards Bosnia and that Duke Sandalj tried to stop them with the Bosnian army, but when he saw that he was not able to defend and keep the passes, he allowed them to enter. Thus as early as 5 July they came to Uskoplje in central Bosnia, where they split into three groups. One went along the flow of the Bosnia river towards Dubočac and Slavonia, another went towards Zagreb, while the third one remained in Uskoplje.⁵⁵ The raiding and pillaging continued throughout the summer of that year. Unfortunately, not many sources survive about these invasions, but their extent can be grasped from a letter of Berengar de Muntmany written in Barcelona. He told King Ferdinand of Aragon in August of 1414 that a duke called 'Carvoya' attacked Senj and Istria with 20,000 Turkish horsemen, ravaging Dalmatia and Slavonia in the process.⁵⁶ These raids also seemed to have reached as far north as the dioceses of Zagreb in Croatia and Kalocsa in Hungary.⁵⁷

The winter brought only a short respite. Already on 10 January 1415 the citizens of the coastal commune of Trogir agreed to send ten archers, for a period of one month, to aid Ivaniš Nelipčić, count of Cetina, because of the 'Turkish fear', and in February they decided that, in the case of necessity, they would also send armed men to Omiš.⁵⁸ Their caution proved to be justified as sources from the following month speak of the Turks passing through Bosnia, devastating the lands around Omiš, Šibenik and Zadar, and even reaching the seacoast.⁵⁹ They then pillaged and burnt, among many, the fort Zvoničac between Šibenik and Drniš.⁶⁰ At the beginning of March, a certain G. de Fenolet wrote from Barcelona to King Ferdinand of Aragon about the news he had received from Venice, that a multitude of Turks had ravaged the lands of the Hungarian king.⁶¹ Contemporary

Venetian chronicles report that the Turks then laid waste the lands of Count Nikola Frankopan, as far as Senj, taking back with them 12,000 slaves.⁶² The description given by Dietrich of Niecheim is somewhat more detailed. He writes that in March 1415, invited by the prefect of Bosnia – probably Duke Hrvoje – the Turks attacked Dalmatia as far as the seacoast, launching an invasion into Slavonia as well, riding night and day until they reached the diocese of Veszprem, in the vicinity of Lake Balaton in Hungary, where they captured many people of both sexes. He also claims that they arrived at the borders of Germany, burning and destroying churches, villages and fields, killing many Christians and capturing more than 8,000 slaves.⁶³

These persistent attacks continued for the following few months. In May 1415, the Turks reached Ljubljana in Carniola, and preparations were undertaken in Udine, Friuli, for defence.⁶⁴ Wanting to prevent their unrestricted invasions into his lands, King Sigismund, who was then busy in Constance, sent an army to Bosnia in July in order to deal with the Turks. However, instead of restraining them, the Hungarians suffered defeat in a decisive battle fought in the county of Lašva in central Bosnia.⁶⁵ Apart from definitively asserting their influence in Bosnia, this also allowed the Turks to continue raiding during the rest of the summer. Dietrich of Niecheim writes that this victory opened the paths to the lands of the counts of Cilli as well as to Germany and the borders of the diocese of Salzburg and the lands of the patriarch of Aquileia.⁶⁶ In August of 1415 Turks arrived in Friuli. Seeking aid in soldiers and *ballistae*, Patriarch Louis of Teck wrote to Udine that the Turks had arrived through the lands of the counts of Cilli and those of Ortenburg, causing ‘maxima damna’. On 2 September the patriarch again contacted Udine saying that the Turks had now retreated, but that they were preparing a new assault, and that the duke of Austria, the Hungarians, the counts of Cilli, Croatia and Ortenburg, as well as the lord of Wallsee on the Danube in Lower Austria, were preparing weapons for a war against them.⁶⁷ Contemporaries reported that even though they did not cross the Sava this time, the Turks still apparently managed to capture and enslave 70,000 people.⁶⁸ According to one Venetian chronicle, Celje and Senj saved themselves from greater misfortune because they gave provisions to the aggressors and paid a sum of 6,000 ducats.⁶⁹

Paying the Turks appeared to be the only way to avoid the pillaging, looting and killing. Thus Bosnians resorted to this solution very early on. In June of 1415 the Ragusans wrote to Sigismund that new Turkish pillaging was expected beyond the borders of the Bosnian kingdom, in which they would not rob anyone since all of those areas were obedient and were paying tribute to the Sultan in order to save themselves.⁷⁰

These incursions in 1414 and 1415 were just a taste of what would happen on a regular basis if Bosnia remained a tributary state of the Ottomans or if it was conquered and incorporated into their growing Empire. However, in the following period the Ottomans devoted themselves to resolving internal disputes, battling in Wallachia and Albania, and besieging Constantinople.⁷¹ With the exception of smaller raids, the lands neighbouring Bosnia were mainly left in peace and the next major raid occurred only a decade later. In August 1426 the Ragusans wrote

to King Sigismund that 4,000 Turks had devastated Bosnia and the surrounding areas in the preceding few months, that they had taken key passes and ravines, and that King Tvrtko and the other Bosnian nobles did not dare to oppose them. They further wrote that the Turks had invaded Croatia from Bosnian territory at least twice, and they had captured many people there.⁷² However, King Sigismund was already aware of this because the Bosnian king had informed him of the attack a couple of months earlier. Thus in June 1426, King Sigismund wrote to the bishop of Winchester, Henry Beaufort, the newly elected cardinal and papal legate for Germany, Hungary and Bohemia, that the Bosnian king had told him about the everyday 'infestations' of the Turks which caused immeasurable and irreparable damage, invading Croatia and Slavonia twice, from where they captured many thousands of both sexes. The Bosnian king also told Sigismund that the Ottoman Emperor, with all his military might, wanted personally to lead a campaign to subjugate Hungary, and that he could not prevent the passage of this army through his land, as could be seen from the recent everyday intrusions into Bosnia.⁷³

The Bosnian king saved his kingdom in the usual way, by paying tribute, and was subsequently not bothered by Turkish invasions. A few years later, after the unsuccessful siege of Golubac, in February 1429 King Sigismund made a three-year peace with the Turks.⁷⁴ But as soon as the peace expired, in February and March 1432, the Turks renewed their attacks on Dalmatia through Bosnia. The Ragusans wrote to Sigismund informing him that 3,000 Turks, led by the marcher lord of Skopje, Ishak-bey, passed through Bosnia towards Luka and Zadar, where they seized a lot of cattle. However, they could not capture many people who, seeing the movement of the army, managed in good time to hide in unreachable places.⁷⁵

After this the incursions of the Ottomans into Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia declined, stopping almost completely for a long period of time. It is most likely that this was caused by their preoccupations in Serbia and Bosnia, where they undertook many campaigns with the aim of undermining local rule and nobility, weakening those states and preparing them for final conquest. The next far-reaching Turkish invasion into Dalmatia came in the spring of 1449, a year after they established their first permanent strongholds in Bosnia. This raid was somewhat larger than the previous ones, with contemporaries estimating that around 10,000 Turks devastated and plundered the lands of Ban Petar in Cetina.⁷⁶

The need to devise some kind of common strategy against the Ottomans was especially pressing after the collapse of John Hunyadi's effort at Kosovo and the recent attacks on Bosnia and Dalmatia. The Bosnian king Stjepan Tomaš met with the ban of Macso John of Korogy on 11 November 1449 to discuss mutual responsibilities regarding the Ottoman threat. An agreement was reached, but only the obligations from the Bosnian side are outlined in the surviving charter.⁷⁷ The king promised the Hungarians that he would not invite the Turks against them or give them aid, and that he would prevent those Turks who were residing in his kingdom from crossing the rivers into Hungary. However, if such a force was to invade the Bosnian kingdom and if the king was not able to resist their impact and defend those river crossings and boats, then he would inform the governor and

Hungarian nobles immediately and he would act according to their orders.⁷⁸ The text of this agreement leaves the distinct impression that the Hungarians considered Bosnia to be practically under complete Ottoman control, and that they could do nothing to stop the inevitable demise of this state.

On the other hand, the Turks themselves were also aware of Bosnia's strategic location in their struggle against the Hungarians. In preparation for the upcoming siege of Belgrade in 1456, the Sultan asked his vassals, King Tomaš, Duke Stjepan and Duke Petar, to join him with their armies. All declined, stating that they would only pay their dues, as they had done until then.⁷⁹ However, the king was faced with one additional, but crucial demand. The Sultan requested that he surrender four fortifications, of which Bistrički, located in the westernmost part of the country, was important for further advance towards Dalmatia and Istria. King Tomaš complained to Venice, warning the republic that after Bosnia, its own possessions would be next in line.⁸⁰ A few years later, the king was in such a serious position that he was required to comply with everything that the Turks ordered him to do. In the beginning of May 1460 Simon, the ban of Macso and captain of Belgrade, wrote that a certain Hasan-pasha came to Bosnia and forced Tomaš to cede him passes over the river Sava for further advances towards Srem and Vukovska county.⁸¹ In such conditions, it was not difficult to predict that it would only be a matter of time until the Ottomans eliminated the hindrance that was the Bosnian king, and entirely included Bosnia into their Empire.

Conclusion: the outcome of the Ottoman conquest of Bosnia

The Ottoman conquest of Bosnia and the events which followed soon after destabilized the whole region for the following half a century. The territory of the former Bosnian kingdom became a zone of permanent war between the Hungarians and Turks. Even though King Matthias had reclaimed a lot of the lost territory by Christmas of 1463, and organized a new defence system around those forts he captured, creating the southernmost defensive formations of his kingdom,⁸² the Turkish raids only increased, being repeated almost on an annual basis. In the first decade after the Bosnian conquest, the Turks attacked Zadar, Šibenik and Modruš in Dalmatia and Croatia, undertaking pillaging in Slovene lands.⁸³ One of the key events was the Ottoman conquest of Počitelj in 1471, and Ljubuški not long after; these completely opened all the routes towards Dalmatia, allowing it to be attacked with increasing frequency.⁸⁴ Seven years later a diet was held in Zdenči in Slavonia which passed laws concerning obligations for the defence of Croatia against Turkish incursions. One of the articles stipulated that the army was to do battle only south of the River Sava, and not further, as was the usual custom during the Turkish wars.⁸⁵ This meant that the war now became a purely defensive one and that Croatian and Hungarian nobles did not even contemplate reclaiming Bosnia for the Christians. It is safe to say that the conquest of Bosnia tipped the scales of power in the Balkans in the Ottomans' favour.

Gaining a firmer foothold in Bosnia allowed the Turks to venture deeper than ever before. During the 1480s Turkish raiding parties regularly wreaked havoc

in Carniola and Styria,⁸⁶ and by the end of the fifteenth century more and more attacks were recorded in Friuli.⁸⁷ While returning from one of such raids in 1493, the Turks encountered resistance from Croatian nobility but managed to inflict a savage defeat on them at the battle of Krbava, killing and enslaving many of the most prominent nobles.⁸⁸ Just 15 days after the battle, on 27 September 1493, Juraj Divnić, the bishop of Nin in Croatia, sent a detailed report to Pope Alexander VI, expressing his thoughts on the recent events:

The first and most important reason why the Turk invaded these provinces, I think, is this: the insatiable spirit which craves the slaughter of the faithful and greedily wants to appropriate the whole world. And then, the copious amount of men and things which fertile Bosnia nourishes and nurtures, Bosnia, I say, the best of all provinces which can compete with any from ancient times, rich and abounding in all things necessary for human life. To this can be added the freedom to go where he wants, for wherever he extends his flag from Bosnia into these parts, he finds very safe openings. Bosnia, alas, is too close to the wretched Croats. The Turk inhabits it whole, and comes out from it safely whenever he wants, running around and pillaging the neighbouring provinces at his will; he penetrates Illyria and traverses Liburnia⁸⁹ and the Teutonic borders all the way to the spring of the river Sava, setting down his standards as he pleases. Nobody comes to meet him, and no one opposes him, Holy Father, and there is nobody whose strength could equal and be compared with his. He resides safe in Bosnia, and is protected wherever he goes.⁹⁰

The whole letter is tragic and distressing, but it paints a clear picture of what Bosnia meant to the Ottomans. They turned it into a 'stronghold' of their military might in the Balkans, from where they could undertake further attacks and conquests towards the West and North. So instead of being Christendom's 'shield' and protecting other Christian lands from Ottoman incursions, Bosnia came to serve first as a 'gateway' through which the neighbouring regions were desolated, and then finally as an Ottoman 'bastion' which guaranteed their supremacy in the region. It seems that by obtaining Bosnia, the Ottomans truly gained the 'key' to unlock Christendom's 'gate', and despite the fact that the Empire's power diminished with time, Bosnia still remained its westernmost province until the end of the nineteenth century.

Notes

- 1 'Boznam quippe totius Christianitatis, ut ita dicam, clavem et portum [sic], et unde quaquaversum in occidentem et septentrionem aditus patet, gravio meo labore nuper recuperatum, quasi pensitans, quid amiserit, rursus invasit et omnia illic castra apud manus nostras habita semel obsediti ...': *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae Regis epistolae ad Romanos Pontifices datae et ab eis acceptae 1458–1490*, ed. Vilmos Fraknói (Budapest, 1891), 30–31, hereafter cited as *MCH*; *Mátyás Király levelei. Külügyi osztály*, ed. Vilmos Fraknói, 2 vols (Budapest, 1893–95), 1:54, hereafter cited as *MKL*.

- 2 'Ad utramque autem augendam talis ordo, taliaque principia parata sunt, ut ex eis vulneri huic, quod Christiano corpori ex ruina Bozne inflictum erat, facilius, quam ante, salubriusque remedium parari poterit; quandoquidem sane vulnus non iam angulos Europe, non latera sola, sed precordia ipsa attigerit, potuissetque ad omnes eius partes infesta correptione dilatari': *Mathiae Corvini Hungariae Regis epistolae ad Romanos Pontifices*, 28; *MKL*, 1:48.
- 3 Attila Barany, 'The Crusading Letters of King Matthias', in *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Vol. 5 (1350–1500)*, ed. David Thomas and Alexander Mallett (Leiden, 2013), 574–88. On the authorship of the king's letters: Gyula Mayer, 'Philologisches zu den Briefen von König Matthias Corvinus', in *Pietas non sola Romana. Studia memoriae Stephani Borzsák dedicata*, ed. Anita Czeglédy et al. (Budapest, 2010), 602–08. The standard work on King Matthias is still Jörg K. Hoensch, *Matthias Corvinus – Diplomat, Feldherr und Mäzen* (Graz, Vienna and Cologne, 1998), but see also Gyula Rácz, 'Die Türkenpolitik Matthias Corvinus', *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32 (1986), 3–50; Norman Housley, 'Matthias Corvinus and Crusading', in *Church Union and Crusading in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, ed. Christian Gastgeber et al. (Cluj Napoca, 2009), 239–51.
- 4 Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom. Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge, 2001); eadem, 'Hungary, "the gate of Christendom"', in *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Aldershot, 2002), 195–215; eadem, 'Défense de la Chrétienté et naissance d'une identité. Hongrie, Pologne et péninsule Ibérique au Moyen Âge', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 58 (2003), 1009–27.
- 5 Norman Housley, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat, 1453–1505* (Oxford, 2012), 40–50. See also J. Janos Varga, 'Europa und "Die Vormauer des Christentums". Die Entwicklungsgeschichte eines geflügelten Wortes', in *Europa und die Türken in der Renaissance*, ed. Bodo Guthmüller and Wilhelm Kühlmann (Tübingen, 2000), 55–63; Urszula Borkowska, 'The Ideology of "Antemurale" in the Sphere of Slavic Culture (13th–17th Centuries)', in *The Common Christian Roots of the European Nations: An International Colloquium in the Vatican*, vol. 2 (Florence, 1982), 1206–21; Paul Srodecki, 'Antemurale Christianitatis', in *Religiöse Erinnerungsorte in Ostmitteleuropa: Konstitution und Konkurrenz im nationen- und epochenübergreifenden Zugriff*, ed. Joachim Bahlcke et al. (Berlin, 2013), 804–22.
- 6 Norman Housley, 'Frontier Societies and Crusading in the late Middle Ages', *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10/1–2 (1995), 104–19, at 108.
- 7 '... considerando che lo signore Despotto stagando nella signoria de Schiauonia della qualle chazato essere bono schudo alla Ungaria et anche alla Bosina ...' (7 March 1441), Dubrovnik State Archives, hereafter DSA, *Lettere di Levante*, 13, fol. 14.
- 8 One of the earliest examples of Hungary being considered as a bulwark of the faith is to be found in a letter of Pope John XXIII to King Sigismund of Luxemburg in 1410, in which he describes Hungary as 'scutum atque murus inexpugnabilis nostreque et christianae fidei fortitudinis brachium': *Vetera Monumenta Historica Hungariam Sacram Illustrantia*, ed. Augustin Theiner, 2 vols (Rome, 1859–60), 2:289, hereafter cited as *VMH*. Another notable instance, among many, is when Pope Pius II in 1463 referred to the famous kingdom of Hungary as the 'invulnerable shield of Christendom': *ibid.*, 2:378. Most of these documents were gathered and published in the collection: *Hungary as 'Propugnaculum' of Western Christianity: Documents from the Vatican Secret Archives (ca. 1214–1606)*, ed. Edgár Artner et al. (Budapest and Rome, 2004). See also Janos M. Bak, 'Crusading in Hungary in the Fifteenth Century' in *Crusading in the Fifteenth Century: Message and Impact*, ed. Norman Housley (Basingstoke, 2004), 116–27; Norman Housley, *Religious Warfare in Europe, 1400–1536* (Oxford, 2002), 29 and *passim*; idem, *Crusading and the Ottoman Threat*, 40–46.
- 9 Paul W. Knoll, 'Poland as *Antemurale Christianitatis* in the Late Middle Ages', *The Catholic Historical Review* 60/3 (1974), 381–401; Wiktor Weintraub, 'Renaissance

- Poland and *Antemurale Christianitatis*', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* III-IV/2 (1979–80), 920–30; Jadwiga Krzyżaniakowa, 'Poland as Antemurale Christianitatis: The Political and Ideological Foundations of the Idea', *Polish Western Affairs* 33 (1992), 9–15; Małgorzata Morawiec, "'Antemurale christianitatis". Polen als Vormauer des christlichen Europa', *Jahrbuch für europäische Geschichte* 2 (2001), 249–60.
- 10 Ivo Žanić, 'The Symbolic Identity of Croatia in the Triangle Crossroads-Bulwark-Bridge', in *Myths and Boundaries in South-Eastern Europe*, ed. Pål Kolstø (London, 2005), 35–76; Norman Housley, 'Christendom's Bulwark: Croatian Identity and the Response to the Ottoman Advance, Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 24 (2014), 149–64.
- 11 Alexandru Simon, 'The Use of the "Gate of Christendom". Hungary's Mathias Corvinus and Moldavia's Stephen the Great, Politics in the Late 1400s', *Quaderni della Casa Romana di Venezia* 3 (2004), 205–24; Liviu Pilat, 'Between Ottoman Empire and Latin Christendom: Moldavia as Frontier Society in the Late Middle Ages', in *Europe and the Ottoman World. Exchanges and Conflicts (Sixteenth to Seventeenth Centuries)*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Radu G. Păun (Istanbul, 2013), 171–93; Lovro Kunčević, 'The Rhetoric of the Frontier of Christendom in the Diplomacy of Renaissance Ragusa (Dubrovnik)', *Dubrovnik Annals* 17 (2013), 37–68.
- 12 Much like the principality of Moldavia whose rulers claimed that they shielded Transylvania and Hungary from Ottoman attacks, Housley, 'Christendom's Bulwark', 152. See also Simon, 'The Use of the "Gate of Christendom"', 205–24; Pilat, 'Between Ottoman Empire and Latin Christendom', 171–93.
- 13 '... ad ipsum regnum Bosne, scutum et deffendiculum predictorum meorum Dalmatie et Croatie regnorum ...': *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, ed. Tadija Smičiklas, 18 vols (Zagreb, 1904–90), 18:345.
- 14 Vilmos Fraknoi, 'Kardinal Carvajal u Bosni 1457', *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini* 1 (1890), 9–12, at 11. Carvajal was ordered to go to Bosnia in April and to talk to the king about the action against the Turks, as well as to undertake all that was necessary for the campaign to succeed, *VMH*, 2:292.
- 15 Đuro Tošić, 'Bosna i Turci od Kosovske do Angorske bitke', *Zbornik za istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine* 1 (1995), 85–97.
- 16 Momčilo Spremić, 'Turski tributari u XIV i XV veku', *Istorijski glasnik* 1–2 (1970), 9–58. See also *The European Tributary States of the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, ed. Gábor Kármán and Lovro Kunčević (Leiden and Boston, 2013).
- 17 Setton, *Papacy*, 1:166.
- 18 Angeliki Laiou, 'Marino Sanudo Torsello, Byzantium and the Turks: The Background to the Anti-Turkish League of 1332–1334', *Speculum* 45/3 (1970), 374–92, at 385.
- 19 Setton, *Papacy*, 1:194.
- 20 DSA, *Lettere di Levante*, 10, fol. 57v–58, 59–59v.
- 21 See: Franz Babinger, *Beiträge zur Frühgeschichte der Türkenherrschaft in Rumelien (14.–15. Jahrhundert)* (Munich, 1944).
- 22 *MKL*, 1:82–4. Indicating the importance of Jajce, in a letter sent to Emperor Frederick III in 1464, after the Sultan had laid siege to the erstwhile Bosnian capital for the second time, King Matthias wrote: 'Nos qui fere soli scimus, quanti momenti locus ille sit toto nomini christiano...': *MKL*, 1:48.
- 23 *Magyar Diplomacizai emlékek. Mátyás Király korából 1458–1490*, ed. Iván Nagy and Albert Nyáry, 4 vols (Budapest, 1875–78), 2.185, hereafter cited as *MDE*; Housley, 'Christendom's Bulwark', 152.
- 24 *MDE*, 2:301–2. Cf. Pilat, 'Between Ottoman Empire and Latin Christendom', 182; Simon, 'The Use of the "Gate of Christendom"', 218.
- 25 *Hungary as 'Propugnaculum' of Western Christianity*, 112. Housley, 'Christendom's Bulwark', 152.

- 26 'Cum iste Christi persecutor, christianorum occisor, per regnum Bozne, federe et tributo ei obnoxium, facile in Germaniam potest copias suas adducere': Nicolae Iorga, ed., *Notes et extraits pour servir a l'histoire des croisades au XV^e siècle*, 6 vols (Paris and Bucharest, 1899–1916), 4:125.
- 27 *Monumenta historica Slavorum Meridionalum vicinorumque populorum*, ed. Vicentio Macuscev, 2 vols (Warsaw and Belgrade, 1874–82), 2:158, hereafter cited as *MSM*.
- 28 *Pii Secundi Pontificis Maximi Commentarii*, ed. Ibolya Bellus and Iván Boronkai, 2 vols (Budapest, 1993), 1:534–5.
- 29 *Listine o odnošajih između južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke republike*, ed. Šime Ljubić, 10 vols (Zagreb, 1868–91), 10:237–8. Cf. Marko Šunjić, 'Venezia e gli ultimi re della Bosnia', *Radovi Hrvatskog društva za znanost i umjetnost* 3 (1995), 45–54, at 53.
- 30 Hans J. Kissling, 'Venedig und der Islamische Orient bis 1500', in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. Agostino Pertusi, 2 vols (Florence, 1973–74), 1:361–88, at 375; Setton, *Papacy*, 2:240.
- 31 Roberto Lopez, 'Il principio della guerra Veneto-Turca nel 1463', *Archivio Veneto* 29–30 (1934), 45–131, at 55.
- 32 Emir O. Filipović, 'Ardet ante oculos opulentissimum regnum... Venetian Reports about the Ottoman Conquest of the Bosnian Kingdom, A.D. 1463', in *Italy and Europe's Eastern Border (1204–1669)*, ed. Iulian Mihai Damian *et al.* (Frankfurt am Main, 2012), 135–55.
- 33 'Bosna porta Italiae de Thurcibus, hostibus inimicissimis totius Christianitatis ... occupata est': Rázsó, 'Die Türkenpolitik Matthias Corvinus', 13, n. 34.
- 34 *Listine*, 10:250–1; *MDE*, 2:217.
- 35 *MSM*, 1:532–4; *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città Toscane coll' Oriente Cristiano e coi Turchi fino all'anno mdxxxi*, ed. Giuseppe Müller (Florence, 1879), 199.
- 36 *Ungedruckte Akten zur Geschichte der Päpste vornehmlich im XV., XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert*, vol. I, ed. Ludwig Pastor (Freiburg, 1904), 185.
- 37 *MSM*, 1:309.
- 38 See Panagiotis Kourniakos, *Die Kreuzzugslegation Kardinal Bessarions in Venedig (1463–1464)*, unpublished dissertation defended in 2009 at the University of Cologne, Germany. The full text of the cardinal's report to the Pope, written on 26 July 1463, was published in *Urkundliche Nachträge zur österreichisch-deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter Kaiser Friedrich III.*, ed. Adolf Bachmann (Vienna, 1892), 18–21.
- 39 'Turchus multo penitus in viscera christianorum ingressus, vicinior factus esset portis et traiecto Italiae...': *Listine*, 10:260.
- 40 *Urkundliche Nachträge*, 18–19.
- 41 Hungary and Venice signed an offensive alliance against the Turks on 12 September at Petrovaradin. The text of the agreement was published in *VMH*, 2:380–82, and *Listine*, 10:272–4.
- 42 Emir O. Filipović, 'Minor est Turchorum potentia, quam fama feratur ... Contributions to the History of Bosnia in the Second Half of 1463', in *Pad Bosanskog kraljevstva 1463. godine*, ed. Dubravko Lovrenović *et al.* (Belgrade, 2015), 195–226.
- 43 *MCH*, 30–1; *MKL*, 1:54.
- 44 *MDE*, 2:262.
- 45 Heath W. Lowry, 'Some Thoughts on the Meaning of Gaza and Akin in Early Ottoman Usage', in *The Ottoman Empire: Myths, Realities and 'Black Holes' (Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber)*, ed. Eugenia Kermeli and Oktay Özel (Istanbul, 2006), 47–50.
- 46 Dubravko Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti (sveta kruna ugarska i sveta krana bosanska), 1387–1463* (Zagreb and Sarajevo, 2006), 67–8.
- 47 See the letters sent to Sultan Bayezid and Timurtaş Pasha from October 1392, and a Venetian report about a Turkish envoy who was travelling to Apulia in August of the following year in order to arrange a marriage between Ladislaus and Bayezid's daughter. *Magyar diplomacizai emlékek az Anjou-Korból*, ed. Gusztáv Wenzel, 3 vols (Budapest, 1874–76), 3:720–2. For the first Turkish attacks against Hungary see Pál

- Engel, 'A török-magyar háborúk első évei 1389–1392', *Hadtörténelmi Közlemények* 111 (1998), 561–77; idem, 'Ungarn und die Türkengefahr zur Zeit Sigimunds (1387–1437)', in *Das Zeitalter König Sigimunds in Ungarn und im Deutschen Reich*, ed. Tilmann Schmidt and Péter Gunst (Debrecen, 2000), 55–71.
- 48 Dubravko Lovrenović, 'Modelle ideologischer Ausgrenzung. Ungarn und Bosnien als ideologische Gegner auf der Basis verschiedener Bekenntnisse des Christentums', *Südost Forschungen* 63–64 (2004–05), 18–55.
- 49 *Listine*, 5:139. See also Vjekoslav Klaić, *Krčki knezovi Frankapani* (Zagreb, 1901), 199.
- 50 *Listine*, 5:173.
- 51 Ibid., 7:123–4.
- 52 See his letter to Queen Barbara written in the summer of 1413: *Alsó-Szlavóniai okmánytár (Dubicza, Orbász és Szana vármegyék)*, ed. Lajos Thallóczy and Sándor Horváth (Budapest, 1912), 147–50.
- 53 Neven Isailović and Aleksandar Jakovljević, 'Šah Melek (Prilog istoriji turskih upada u Bosnu 1414. i 1415. godine)', in *Spomenica akademika Sime Ćirkovića*, ed. Srđan Rudić (Belgrade, 2011), 441–63.
- 54 DSA, *Reformationes*, 34, fol. 223v.
- 55 *Diplomatarium relationum Reipublicae Ragusanae cum Regno Hungariae*, eds Lajos Thallóczy and Jozsef Gelcich (Budapest, 1887), 245, hereafter cited as *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*.
- 56 Heinrich Finke, ed., *Acta Concilii Constanciensis*, 4 vols (Münster, 1896–1928), 1:260.
- 57 In Constance, on 17 January 1415, Pope John XXIII freed the parishes of Oštra Luka in the diocese of Zagreb and Gezth (probably Várgesztes) in the diocese of Kalocsa, from paying tithes to their bishop because these villages had been completely devastated by the Turks, *Povijesni spomenici Zagrebačke biskupije*, ed. Andrija Lukinović, vol. 5 (Zagreb, 1992), 470.
- 58 Franjo Rački, 'Notae Joannis Lucii', *Starine Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 13 (1881), 211–68, at 265.
- 59 *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 248.
- 60 *Listine*, 7:207–08.
- 61 Finke, ed., *Acta Concilii Constanciensis*, 4:443.
- 62 Iorga, ed., *Notes et extraits*, 1:235.
- 63 Theodoricus de Niem, 'De Vita ac factis Constantiensibus Johannis Papae XXIII. usque ad fugam & carcerem ejus', in *Rerum concilii oecumenici Constantiensis*, ed. Hermann von der Hardt, 7 vols (Frankfurt, 1695–1700), 2:416–17. Cf. Wladimir Levec, 'Die ersten Türkeneinfälle in Krain und Steiermark', *Mitteilungen des Musealvereines für Krain* 16 (1903), 169–200, at 183; Stanko Jug, 'Turški napadi na Kranjsko in primorsko do prve tretjine 16. stoletja', *Glasnik Muzejskega društva za Slovenijo* 24 (1943), 1–61, at 5.
- 64 Levec, 'Die ersten Türkeneinfälle', 196; Jug, 'Turški napadi', 5–6.
- 65 Dubravko Lovrenović, 'Bitka u Lašvi 1415. godine', in *Raukarov zbornik*, ed. Neven Budak (Zagreb, 2005), 275–95.
- 66 De Niem, 'De Vita ac factis Constantiensibus Johannis Papae XXIII. usque ad fugam & carcerem ejus', 417–18.
- 67 Levec, 'Die ersten Türkeneinfälle', 198–200.
- 68 *Zsigmondkori oklevéltár*, ed. Elemér Mályusz, vol. 5 (Budapest, 1997), 329–30, no. 1155.
- 69 Iorga, ed., *Notes et extraits*, 1:235 n. 3.
- 70 'Habemus etiam per mercatores nostros de Sclavonia, qualiter unus caporalis nominatus Isach Theucer congregat ad Scopiam gentes Theucras, qui his diebus expectatur in Bosna pro eundo ad raubarías versus ponentem extra regnum Bosne, in quo regno nil depredantur. Que omne contrate sunt ad ipsorum obedienciam, dando tributum domino imperatore Theucrorum pro se conservando': *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 250.

- 71 Elizabeth A. Zachariadou, 'Ottoman Diplomacy and the Danube Frontier (1420–1424)', *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 7 (1983), 680–90.
- 72 *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 317–19.
- 73 Nicolae Iorga, ed., *Acte și fragmente cu privire la istoria românilor*, 3 vols (Bucharest, 1895–97), 3:80–1.
- 74 See Sigismund's letters to Duke Witold of Lithuania and Paul of Rusdorf, the grand master of the Teutonic Order: *Codex epistolaris Vitoldi Magni Ducis Lithuaniae 1376–1430*, ed. Antonius Prochaska (Krakow, 1882), 818–19, 821.
- 75 *Diplomatarium Ragusanum*, 367–8. See also Bogumil Hrabak, 'Turske provale i osvajanja na području severne Dalmacije do sredine XVI stoleća', *Radovi Zavoda za hrvatsku povijest* 19 (1986), 69–100, at 71.
- 76 Marko Šunjić, *Bosna i Venecija (odnosni u XIV. i XV. st.)* (Sarajevo, 1996), 245; Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 316.
- 77 Lovrenović, *Na klizištu povijesti*, 318.
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