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BOSNIA BOGOMIL'S IN THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE OF MEDIEVAL BOSNIA ¹

Summary

The report: Bosnia-Bogomil's in the Social and Political Life of Medieval Bosnia, seeks to establish, using available historical sources, opinions and schools of thought in historical literature, the basic characteristics of Bosnian heretics (also known as dualists, Bogomil's, patarens katars) and their connection with socio-political life of medieval Bosnia.

The intention of the report is to identify historical relations and confirm unequivocal links Bosnian heretics had with all segments of medieval Bosnian society; the links which, because of certain, often tragic ideological and political goals were unfortunately ignored or marginalised.

There are numerous historical sources referring to the presence of Bosnian Bogomil's in medieval Bosnia, its society, political life, culture and diplomacy; these sources are unequivocal and paint much better and livelier picture than dry and formal chronicles.

The relationship between Bosnian Bogomil's and medieval state Bosnia should not be treated as a classic relationship between a state and a religion. There are numerous reasons why this relationship was unique, most of which are often overlooked due to tendencies which tempted many researchers to make final judgements on the place Bosnian Bogomil's occupied in the social and political life medieval Bosnia.

All recorded historical sources related to medieval Bosnia point that, in the long period from the end of twelfth century till the political fall of medieval Bosnia the Bosnian Bogomil's occupied

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important, often deciding position in political, social and statehood matters of medieval Bosnia. They represented the most respected society layer and played an extraordinary role in the medieval Bosnian society.

All these facts give a different picture of the position of Bosnian Bogomil's which had a profound effect on nearly all segments of medieval Bosnia society.

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The Bosnian heretic appeared in the precisely defined socio-economical and political circumstances, so they were the interest of the feudal lords and rulers, in the long period from the end of twelfth century till the political fall of medieval.

The Bosnian Bogomil's are the most important event and the most interesting occurrence in a long history of medieval Bosnia in the socio-political, state, religious, ideological and economical domain. Discussions on the Bosnian Bogomil's origin, roots, links, contacts and relations, essence of the religious teachings, organisation and the role in the society and the state, have been held over more than one century. Franjo Rački, laid the scientific foundations in his work called "Bogomili i patareni" whose results are still the basis for research of this historical occurrence. Authentic historical material about the Bosnian Bogomil's includes almost all manuscripts written in the Bosnian, Latin, Greek, Italian, Turkish, Slavic languages, from the transcripts, letters and orders of the popes, church and secular dignitaries, over different polemically intoned theological debates, reports of missionaries and inquisitors, Catholic and Orthodox monks and priests, the inscriptions, accounts of the travels, works of historical contents, legal documents, and church's synods till the various diplomatic documents, scribes notes of native and foreign provenance. This historical material that has been identified and preserved in quality and quantity, on the whole or in some details is unequal in the historiographic sense, but it unambiguously asserts that the Bosnian Bogomil's are dual movement and authentic and native occurrence in medieval Bosnian society.

Many dilemmas concerning the Bosnia Bogomil's have been noted in the historical survey, above all the dilemmas about the genesis that contain one important and essential question of the roots and the religious teaching of the Bosnian Bogomil's.

According to the results of the latest research, the Bosnian Bogomil's appeared in the Historical sources as a separate and authentic social and religious rebellion at the end of the twelfth century with their special and specific organisation and religious belief. They had already at that time been recorded in the historical sources under different names (faith of good Bosnians, the Bosnian Church, our faith, the Bogomil's, heresy, Cristian's), however it is all about medieval Bosnian particularity that had strong and precise connections with similar European and Asian movements. It is important to point out that the Bosnian Bogomil's appeared in one specific socio-economical period of medieval Bosnia as religious and theological thought and free peasantly spirit who lost a part their freedom through the introduction of strong feudalism and etatism. In respect of the politics and state establishment, the Bosnian Bogomil's were the synonym of fight for free medieval Bosnia. The Bosnian Bogomil's separated themselves from the Orthodox and the Catholic's with their theological understanding of genesis and the nature of good and evil. One more general and basic question that is contained there is the question of the relation between God's perfection and imperfect human nature.

According to the religious teaching of the Bosnian Bogomil's if God is perfect, his work, the world we live is full of chaos, suffering and evil. It is up to the most religious soul, too, to conclude either that God is the creator of that evil which leads to the fact that He is not the source of perfection, and so not the real god either, or to conclude the opposite, that He is not the creator of evil, so the origin of evil should be sought in someone and something that is more independent of deity.

Considering man himself to be a product of evil and condemning everything material, the Bosnian Bogomil's were trying to avoid evil by a religious life condemning the glow of the Catholic and Orthodox Church, killing the animals and people. They despised icons, sacred secrets, religious service, while partly they were against the powerful and the rich.

The hierarchical organization of the Bosnian Bogomil's was firmly established where at the highest position is did, on the lower gost, and at the lowest position are starac and congregation. They lived in hiža's (houses of the Bosnian Bogomil's) which are the houses of faith but whose vicinity was cultivated. In essence and

determination, the Bosnian Bogomil's were divided in two groups: "the real Christian's without sins" and "sinners".

Through the interpretation of the social foundation it is difficult to say who were majority of believers and adherents of the Bosnian Bogomil's. It is assumed that they were peasants and farmers who attached to the land not active in socio-economical sense, especially in times of social changes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

In the history of medieval Bosnia the Bosnia Bogomil's had an extremely important role since, beside other roles, they specifically shaped and marked its feudalism, so it was different from the feudalism in the neighbouring states (Catholic and Orthodox states). The Bosnian Bogomil's appeared in the precisely defined socio economical and political circumstances, so they were the guardians and guarantee for the interest of the feudal lords and rulers, with one important characteristic of the neighbouring states and the Catholic Church.

During the whole Middle Ages Bosnia Bogomil's represented the domain and the only socio-political force in medieval Bosnia that resisted the penetration from everywhere (whether it was the military political one the Hungarian rules or the religious one by the Catholic or Orthodox Church). According to the available historical material it can be concluded that there was no anti-feudal manifestation in the activities of the Bosnian Bogomil's, because according to all the indications, the teaching, the organization of their community and the way they performed their rituals explicitly show that they were the historical necessity, the spirit and breeze of the time when all that occurred.

All historical sources, a part of the narrative material and different secondary documents conform that the Bosnian Bogomil's were not the Bogomil's exiled from the medieval Serbian state, nor the Bogomil's and the heretic exiled from Split, Trogir or Zadar, nor they come from the medieval Hungarian kingdom but they are the native population, "good Bosnian's" inspired by one specific religions teaching that can be and should be compared with many similar ones in the European or Asian medieval societies that are called: the heretical movements. The claim closer to the truth is that the Bosnian Bogomil's were inspired by the heretical, mystic teaching from the east that the Catholic and Orthodox Churches rejected and persecuted its adherents. There is confirmation about the importance of the Bosnian Bogomil's in

the medieval European heretical scope, whether it is about the religious teaching, the organization or help in many manifestations. The question of the religious schools in medieval Bosnia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is still the subject that requires a researcher.

The anathema of the Catholic and Orthodox Church made an influence on the Bosnian Bogomil's so that already during the reign of the Bosnian ban Stjepan Kotromanić II (1322-1353) in medieval Bosnia they became a public and legitimate religious movement. Their indisputable and omnipresent authority in the internal politics affairs of medieval Bosnia is also confirmed by the two undated charters of the Bosnian ban Stjepan Kotromanić II from the third decade of the fourteenth century. Sometime later, during the reign of the ban and king Tvrtko Kotromanić I (1353-1391) their influence even increased. So in 1377, the pope wrote to the archbishops and bishops of Dalmatia, Croatia, Albania and Bosnia that king Tvrtko I permitted the Bosnian Bogomil's "the heretic and the Bogomil's whose protector he is, to go to the religious service" and when the Franciscans stop the service, the secular priests who had been sent there or who volunteered were to continue the service. Within the historical sources there are enough strong pieces of evidence that can identify and confirm the position and the role of the Bosnian Bogomil's in the social structure of medieval Bosnia, in almost all segments especially in the system of organization of the government. One special feature that characterizes the influence of the Bosnian Bogomil's is the religious one which is usually emphasized in a pretentious way or sometimes minimized. However, it is all about the particularities of the medieval being that in communication with the east and the west had many relations with a number of the European heretical communities, managed to impose itself as an equal member of the community of those who were deprived of their rights and who fought against the inconsistency of medieval.

Being founded on the Bosnian Bogomil's were not, as it had been assumed, only passive observers and registers of everything that happened around them, but they were the interpreters and very active participants in all important events from the history of medieval Bosnia. According to the information from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries they also offered the physical resistance to each foreign intervention or they participated in the state, political, diplomatic, cultural and public life.

One of the characteristic questions related to the Bosnian Bogomil's is also the question of the way they supported themselves when they, as their enemies said, despised any physical work. They worked as scribes, transcribers, illustrators and calligraphers, counselors and diplomats at the courts of the rulers and the prominent Bosnian feudal lords, preaching their religious teaching. They were famous for promotion of literacy and literary creativity, because they signed the margins as the Bosnian Bogomil's (Christian Hval, Christian Radosav).

With the conquests in fourteenth century the regions with the Catholic and Orthodox population become a part of medieval Bosnia but the Bosnian Bogomil's did not lose their precedence in the society. In the fifteenth century the society came into contact with Islam and that was to initiate the acceptance of Islam by a number of the Bosnian Bogomil's, which caused their gradual disappearance.

It has already been mentioned that the Bosnian Bogomil's are the most valuable occurrence in the history of medieval Bosnia and with many of their manifestations they have an important role in creating the religions, social, political and cultural life.

They are remembered for the various interesting connections, strong support of common people, they have remained faithful of good Bosnians, independent and free like the state they lived in and protection of the medieval Bosnian state.

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Sažetak

U referatu *Bosansko-humski bogomili u društvenom i političkom životu srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma* nastojalo se, prema raspoloživim historijskim izvorima i mišljenjima u historijskoj literaturi, ustanoviti temeljne vrijednosti bosanskih heretika (dualisti, *krstjani*, bogomili, patareni, katari) i dovesti ih u vezu s društvom i političkim životom srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma.

Namjera je bila identificirati historijske relacije, potvrditi nedvosmislene veze bosanskih heretika sa svim segmentima srednjovjekovnog bosanskog društva, koje su, zavisno od određenih, često pogubnih, ideološko-političkih tretmana, nažalost, često prešućivane ili marginalizirane.

Historijski izvori o prisutnosti bosanskih bogomila u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni i Humu, njenom društvu, političkom životu, kulturi, diplomaciji, nedvosmisleni su i potvrđuju mnogo više toga nego što to često suhoparni hroničarski zapisi kazuju.

Bosanski bogomili su predstavljali dominantnu, a možda i jedinu, društvenu i političku snagu u srednjovjekovnoj bosanskoj državi koja se suprotstavila nadiranjima sa svih strana (bilo da je riječ o vojno-političkim od strane Mađara, ili crkveno-krstaškim od strane Katoličke ili pravoslavne crkve). Bili su i ostali garanti i utemeljitelji državnog i društvenog uređenja tokom cijelog srednjovjekovnog razdoblja.

Odnos bosanskih bogomila, njihovo mjesto u ukupnoj strukturi srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma ne može se tumačiti kao klasični odnos srednjovjekovne države i državne vjere. Razlozi tome su brojni, posebno što se često problem državne vjere u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni i Humu pojednostavljuje, te brojne istraživače stavlja u kušnju pri izricanju konačnog suda o položaju bosansko-humskih bogomila u društvenom i političkom životu srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma.

Svi evidentirani historijski izvori koji se odnose na srednjovjekovnu Bosnu i Hum ukazuju da su u dugom vremenskom intervalu - od kraja XII vijeka do političkog sloma srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma - bosanski bogomili zauzimali važno, često i odlučujuće mjesto u političkom, društvenom i državnom životu srednjovjekovne Bosne i Huma. Predstavljali su onaj ugledniji i reprezentativniji dio društva i u srednjovjekovnoj državnoj zajednici imali odgovornu ulogu koja nije imala premca u srednjovjekovnom društvu Bosne i Huma.

Sve ovo postavlja društvenu i političku poziciju bosanskih bogomila na drugojačiju i kvalitetniju raven, što je imalo i poseban uticaj na bezmalo sve segmente srednjovjekovnog bosansko-humskog društva.

U historiji srednjovjekovne Bosne bogomili su odigrali izvanredno važnu ulogu, pošto su bosanskom feudalizmu dali jedan poseban i specifičan oblik i obilježje, po čemu će se razlikovati od feudalizma u katoličkim i pravoslavnim zemljama. Bogomili su se tačno javili u određenim društveno-ekonomskim okolnostima te su bili čuvari i garant takvog uređenja, samo uz jednu opasku - što su u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni, posebno u prvoj polovini XIII vijeka, pojačavali i borbu za nezavisnu i slobodnu državu.

Treba napomenuti da se uvidom u izvore, kao i mišljenja u literaturi, stiže sve više utisaka da se, kada se proučavaju bosanski bogomili, ne može govoriti o anticrkvenom niti o antifeudalnom pokretu, nego o autentičnom i autohtonom pokretu. Prema svim pokazateljima pojava *bosanske hereze*, karakter njenog učenja, organizacija i način obreda imaju toliko posebnog i autentičnog da se teško mogu osporiti takvi argumenti i moraju se poštovati okolnosti, duh i dah vremena u kome se sve to zbivalo.

Danas je sigurno da bosanski bogomili nisu ni krivovjernici prognani iz srednjovjekovne srpske države, niti patareni iz Splita i Trogira, već domaće stanovništvo, *dobri Bošnjani*, nadahnuti jednim specifičnim vjerskim učenjem, koje se može uporediti sa mnogim dualističkim i neomanihejskim pokretima u tadašnjem srednjovjekovnom svijetu. Pretpostavlja se da je bogomilstvo bilo nadahnuto i heterodoksnom mistikom koju su katolička i pravoslavna crkva odbacivale.