

THE DANUBE IN SERBIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES

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The Serbian-Hungarian relations from 10th to the end of 13th century were not directly linked with the Danube. Common border was quite far from this river. Close connections between the Serbian dynasty of Nemanjići and the Hungarian dynasty of Árpáds in the last quarter of 13th century brought significant changes. Namely, King Dragutin (1276–1282), after his withdrawal from Serbian throne in 1282, governed the northern part of Serbian state along with the territories he had been given by his brother-in-law, king of Hungary. At the beginning of the last decade of 13th century he conflicted with Bulgarian noblemen Drman and Kudelin, the lords of regions of Kučevo and Braničevo, situated along the right bank of Danube, downstream from Belgrade. He succeeded to defeat them, most probably in 1292, with the assistance of his brother, Serbian King Milutin (1282–1321). From that time Kučevo and Braničevo were attached to Dragutin's state whose borders reached the banks of the Danube.¹ This was the first time that a Serbian state bordered with Hungary on the Danube. It must be emphasized once again that Dragutin held some territories as a vassal of the Hungarian king. Also, his state was observed as a separate entity within Kingdom of Serbia.²

After the death of Dragutin, King Milutin occupied territories of his nephew Vladislav, Dragutin's son, including the town of Belgrade in 1316 or 1317/1318.³ In such a manner, the common border between Serbia and Hungary was established on the Danube from Belgrade to the river Poreč. The situation on this part of the border was not crucially changed after the Hungarian attacks in winter 1317/1318 and in summer 1319. It is unknown whether troops of King Charles Robert of Anjou (1301–1342) reoccupied Belgrade during these campaigns.⁴ The lands around the Danube were an area of frequent conflict between Serbia and Hungary since the beginning of the reign of Serbian ruler Stefan (Stephen) Dušan. Hungarian charters testify that King Charles Robert led expedition against Serbia between November 1334 and January 1335.⁵ According to data from Danilo's Continuator (a collections of hagiographies), Serbian king Dušan was informed about the attack when the Hungarians crossed the Danube. He gathered an army and moved towards the enemy. When the Hungarians found out that Serbian

¹ Arhiepiskop Danilo 1866, p. 114–116; Smičiklas 1909, p. 309–310; Dinić 1978, p. 96–97; Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 14, 29; Uzelac 2009, p. 19.

² Dinić 1951, p. 65–66; Živković/Petrović/Uzelac 2013, p. 120–125.

³ Dinić 1955, p. 74; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 68–69; Ćirković 2008, p. 12.

⁴ Fejér 1832 (VIII–2), p. 200; Nagy 1881, p. 69–70; Dinić 1978, p. 98; Ćirković 1981, p. 38–44.

⁵ Nagy/Nagy/Véghely 1871, p. 446; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 11; Ferjančić/Ćirković 2005, p. 59.

troops are approaching, they escaped in disarray across the river Sava.⁶ Therefore, the Hungarian campaign finished without results. Some historians think that Serbian king conquered region of Mačva (Macsó) and Belgrade at that time.⁷ A few years later, circa 1339, as one Hungarian document suggests, Transylvanian voivode Stephen Laczkfi fought with the Serbs who held Belgrade where they constructed a fortress. Voivode Stephen defeated the Serbs and burned the citadel.⁸

During the first decade of the reign of Hungarian King Louis I (1342–1382) the relations between two states were relatively good. In one moment, probably between 1346 and 1348 Stefan Dušan and Louis I concluded a formal truce. This agreement also envisaged the marriage of one of kinswoman of the Hungarian king and the son of the Serbian ruler. However, this marriage never took place.⁹ Mavro Orbin in his *Realm of the Slavs* wrote that the negotiations between two aforementioned sovereigns were held on the Danube in 1343. When the arrangement was not achieved, the Hungarian king invaded Serbia. At the end of that action, the Hungarians constructed the castle of Belgrade. Two years later, in 1345, King Louis organised another campaign against Dušan. The attack was unsuccessful due to the illness which struck Hungarian troops. After returning in Hungary, King Louis's brother Stephen died from the same disease.¹⁰ Yet, the information from Orbin's report is in collision with the chronological data from other sources. It is known that Stephen died on 9 August 1354 from malaria during another war against Serbia.¹¹ Therefore, some historians think that Orbin's data on the campaign from 1343 should be linked to the year 1353.¹² We can only be certain that Orbin combined different events from various periods.¹³

A new Hungarian invasion certainly occurred in the summer of 1354. King Louis I was in Zemun on 12 June and four days later in Belgrade.¹⁴ Battles were fought during August 1354 in the area between Belgrade and the mountain Rudnik. However, the exact course of the military operations is not known.¹⁵ Writing about that war, Orbin said that Hungarian troops suffered heavy losses in manpower due to bad air from marches.¹⁶ Researchers deem that the Hungarian army had to retreat because of malaria.¹⁷ Our source did not mention whether cause of illness came from the Danube or Sava. The fighting continued in the first months of 1355.¹⁸ Two sides concluded truce in May 1355.¹⁹ Florentine chronicler Matteo Villani asserted that, after these battles ended, the Hungarian king did not have any possessions on Serbian territory.²⁰ On the basis of this statement we may deduce that in 1355 the Serbian-Hungarian border was on the rivers Danube and Sava. The Belgrade itself remained under Hungarian control.²¹

⁶ Arhiepiskop Danilo 1866, p. 227–231.

⁷ Marković 1903, p. 18–20; Ćirković 1981, p. 44–45.

⁸ Nagy 1889, p. 199; Ćirković 1981, p. 44.

⁹ Ćirković 2007, p. 411–414, 417.

¹⁰ Orbin 2006, p. 36–38.

¹¹ Fejér 1833a (IX–2), p. 501; Marković 1904, p. 166–167, Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 76, 363, photo 20; Ferjančić/Ćirković 2005, p. 295; Ćirković 2007, p. 415.

¹² Marković 1904, p. 162, 165; Ferjančić/Ćirković 2005, p. 294.

¹³ Ćirković 2007, p. 415.

¹⁴ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 75.

¹⁵ Arhiepiskop Danilo 1866, p. 379; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 75; Ferjančić/Ćirković 2005, p. 295; Bojanin 2005, p. 121, 123.

¹⁶ Orbin 2006, p. 38.

¹⁷ Marković 1904, p. 167; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 76; Ferjančić/Ćirković 2005, p. 295.

¹⁸ Fejér 1833a (IX/2), p. 438; Nagy 1887, p. 243.

¹⁹ Ljubić 1872, p. 270; Marković 1904, 174; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 76; Ćirković 2005, p. 301.

²⁰ Villani krónikája 1909, p. 280; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 76.

²¹ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 76.

After the death of Serbian King and (since 1346) Emperor Stefan Dušan in December 1355, Hungary seemed to gain the initiative in mutual relations. In May 1359 King Louis I crossed the Danube and defeated the Serbian forces. The attackers penetrated Serbian territory to the Rudnik. The whole campaign lasted more than two months.²² Matteo Villani gives more details about this conflict in his chronicle. He wrote that before Hungarian attack, the successor of Stefan Dušan, Emperor Uroš (1355–1371) did not succeed to reconcile two of his noblemen. The weaker of them, who had possessions along the banks of the Danube secretly crossed the river and requested aid from one Hungarian nobleman. He defeated his opponent with the assistance of Hungarian troops and became vassal of King Louis I.²³ The winner in this conflict was a member of the Rastislalić family, who were mentioned as the lords of Braničevo.²⁴ Through the Rastislalići Hungary acquired control over the right bank of the Danube once again. Rade Mihaljčić thought that the Rastislalići remained independent until 1365 when Hungarian king conquered Vidin.²⁵

The political situation on the right bank of the Danube was changed in 1379 when Serbian nobleman, prince Lazar, defeated Radič Branković, one of the Rastislalići and incorporated the regions of Kučevo and Braničevo in his state.²⁶ Prince Lazar, same as Radič, was a vassal of King Louis I and it is not known whether Lazar attacked Radič with or without approval of the Hungarian king. On the other hand, it is well known that, six years earlier, Louis I supported prince Lazar and Bosnian ban Tvrtko I when they seized the territory of župan Nikola Altomanović.²⁷ One charter from 1381 indicates that prince Lazar had possessions in the region of Mačva, which was, until then, the part of the Hungarian Kingdom. It is possible that prince Lazar, using the fact that King Louis was occupied in other parts of his state, captured this region.²⁸ Anyway, after 20 years, the Serbian-Hungarian border was once again on the Danube. From 1379 Prince Lazar included the mention of the Danube region (*Podunavlje*) in his formal title.²⁹ This notion was used in the title of Serbian rulers until 1413, which denotes the significance of this river for them.³⁰

Lazar tried to extend his territory after the death of King Louis I in 1382 and during the strife for the throne of Serbia's northern neighbour. Together with Bosnian King Tvrtko he supported the Neapolitan Angevin pretender for Hungarian crown. Some later Serbian annals and Mavro Orbin suggest that Lazar conquered and destroyed Belgrade.³¹ The contemporary sources, however, do not directly confirm that. Hungarian diplomatic material shows that the Horváti brothers, also rebels against Queen Mary (1382–1395) and King Sigismund (1387–1437) held Bitva, Kupinovo and Belgrade. Before July 1386 Stephen of Kórógy restored these cities to the crown.³² Sometime in the spring of 1388 Prince Lazar besieged Golubac, an important fortress on the Danube, but without success.³³ At the beginning of 1389 Lazar returned to the obedience to Hungarian King Sigismund through the mediation of his son-in-law Nicholas Garai the

²² Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 77; Mihaljčić 1975, p. 38.

²³ Villani *krónikája* 1909, p. 280–281; Dinić 1953, p. 143; Mihaljčić 1975, p. 25, 65.

²⁴ Dinić 1953, p. 143; Mihaljčić 1975, p. 25.

²⁵ Mihaljčić 1975, p. 65.

²⁶ Stojanović 1927, p. 214; Mihaljčić 1975, p. 217.

²⁷ More on this subject in: Mihaljčić 1975, p. 192–197; Orbin 2006, p. 60–61.

²⁸ Engel 2001, p. 162, 168.

²⁹ Mladenović 2003, p. 131, 148, 165, 172, 192.

³⁰ Veselinović 2006, p. 44–45, 52–53.

³¹ Šafarik 1853, p. 79; Srećković 1867, p. 253; Orbin 2006, p. 94.

³² Fejér 1833b (X–1), p. 368–369; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 78–79; Ćirković 1996, p. 61.

³³ Ortvyay/Pesty 1896, p. 299; Ćirković 2008, p. 12.

Younger. The conditions of this agreement were based on those from the period of the reign of Louis I.³⁴ It can be assumed that common border was on the Danube with exception of Belgrade and Golubac.

New complications in relations between Serbia and Hungary appeared after the Battle of Kosovo and death of Prince Lazar in June 1389. King Sigismund undertook two campaigns against Serbia as soon as in November of the same year. Military actions during these incursions took place in the region south of the Banat of Mačva and near the presently unknown river of Lomnica. Before and after the second brief attack King Sigismund stayed in Kovin (Kewe), which suggests that the King crossed the Danube when he attacked Serbia.³⁵ Therefore, it is logical that the fighting occurred in the area along the right bank of the Danube.³⁶ These incursions influenced decisively to the fact that the successors of Prince Lazar – his wife Milica and son Stefan (Stephen) – became the vassals of Ottoman sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402) before mid-1390.³⁷ This decision of Serbian rulers gave a chance to the Turks to pass the Danube and threaten the Kingdom of Hungary.

The first Ottoman attack occurred in the spring of 1390 in alliance with the Serbs. A charter of King Sigismund from August 1390 informs us that the Serbs and Turks attacked some areas of southern and south-eastern Hungary.³⁸ Without a doubt, that part of the campaign included the crossing of the Danube. As an answer to these attacks the Hungarian army launched their own incursions across the aforementioned river to the region of Braničevo. The Hungarians defeated the Serbs and Ottomans near the fortress of Vitovnica in the area of Ždrelo.³⁹ A few months later, probably in August 1390, Hungarian nobleman Stephen Losonczi clashed with the Turks and Serbs on one island in the river Sava.⁴⁰ In September 1390 the ban of Severin Nicholas of Peren (Miklós Perényi) went from Kovin to Serbia, where he fought with the Turks.⁴¹ The fighting may have, once again, occurred in Braničevo. It is possible that the Ottomans conquered Golubac during the same year.⁴² Finally, in November 1390 King Sigismund personally invaded the Serbian territory, but we do not know many details about his campaign.⁴³ During 1391 the Hungarians were defending Srem (Syrmia) from Turkish attacks. The King of Hungary responded with another invasion on Serbia in autumn.⁴⁴ King Sigismund crossed Danube once more in July 1392. Many prominent Hungarian nobles, such as Ladislaus Sárói, Nicholas Garai the Younger and Stibor Stiboricz participated in this campaign.⁴⁵ Explaining reasons for this military operation the King emphasized that the Turks wished to cross the Hungarian border and pillage throughout the land.⁴⁶ When the Hungarians passed the Danube a strong Ottoman army retreated. Hungarian troops penetrated to the town of Ždrelo in the region of Braničevo.⁴⁷

³⁴ Fejér 1833b (X-1), p. 517; Fejér 1841b (X-5), p. 665; Šišić 1938, p. 279; Ćirković 1996, p. 64–65.

³⁵ Fejér 1833b (X-1), p. 515–516, 601; Fejér 1834 (X-2), p. 432; Mályusz 1951, p. 146–147, 150; Trpković 1959, p. 98–99; Engel 2001, p. 203.

³⁶ Trpković 1959, p. 99–100.

³⁷ Trpković 1959, p. 100–102; *Istorija srpskog naroda* 1982, p. 47–48 (Ćirković).

³⁸ *Thallóczy/Áldásy* 1907, p. 27; Trpković 1959, p. 100–101.

³⁹ *Thallóczy/Áldásy* 1907, p. 28; Trpković 1959, p. 101, 107; *Miljković/Krstić* 2007, p. 30.

⁴⁰ *Thallóczy/Áldásy* 1907, p. 29; Trpković 1959, p. 103–106.

⁴¹ Fejér 1833b (X-1), p. 610–611; *Pesty* 1878, p. 12; Trpković 1959, p. 102–103, 107.

⁴² Trpković 1959, p. 118–119; Ćirković 1968, p. 10–11; *Miljković/Krstić* 2007, p. 30.

⁴³ Mályusz 1951, p. 194; Trpković 1959, p. 104–107.

⁴⁴ Mályusz 1951, p. 245–247, 249; Trpković, 1959 p. 108–110.

⁴⁵ Fejér 1841a (X-4), p. 666; Mályusz 1951, p. 278; Trpković 1959, p. 111.

⁴⁶ Fejér 1833b (X-1), p. 683; Fejér 1834 (X-2), p. 48; Trpković 1959, p. 111.

⁴⁷ Fejér 1834 (X-2), p. 419–420; *Thallóczy/Áldásy* 1907, p. 39, 99.

Probably in the course of this campaign they also besieged Golubac.⁴⁸ The campaign was finished after one month of warfare,⁴⁹ presumably without significant results.⁵⁰ For the next two years sources do not give any data on fighting on Serbian or Hungarian territory near the Danube.⁵¹ The centre of conflicts between the Ottomans and Hungarians during 1394 and 1395 was moved to Wallachia.⁵²

After the Battle of Nicopolis in September 1396 the Turks exploited Hungarian debacle. Their army launched an attack on Hungary and devastated the towns of St. Demeter (Sirmium, today Sremska Mitrovica) on the Sava and Zemun on the Danube.⁵³ However, from 1397 to 1402 Sultan Bayezid did not seriously threaten Hungary, because he had to fight with his enemies in Asia Minor.⁵⁴ Serbian prince Stefan Lazarević was a loyal vassal of the sultan during this period.⁵⁵ On the other hand, King Sigismund established a new system of military recruitment in a case of general mobilisation, at the Diet of Timișoara in 1397.⁵⁶ The disastrous defeat of the Turks in the Battle of Angora (Ankara) in July 1402 brought together Stefan Lazarević and King Sigismund. Stefan, who received Byzantine title of despot, became a vassal of Hungarian king at the end of 1403 or in the beginning of 1404. In return, Sigismund gave him the town of Belgrade and the region of Mačva.⁵⁷ Approximately at same time the despot acquired Golubac.⁵⁸ The capital of Serbia was transferred to Belgrade which gradually transformed into a great city.⁵⁹ From that time to 1427 Serbia controlled the whole right bank of the Danube, bordering Hungary. For the first time the Danube became the river of cooperation in Serbian-Hungarian relations, instead of the river of conflicts. The alliance between two states included military aid to both sides. Thus, the ban of Mačva John of Morović (János Maróti) and Pipo of Ozora crossed the Danube and assisted Despot Stefan in 1409, when he was campaigning against his brother Vuk Lazarević and the Ottomans. At the end of that conflict Belgrade was besieged by Turks.⁶⁰

The relations between Serbia and Hungary began to change after the death of Despot Stefan Lazarević in July 1427. In accordance with the articles of the Agreement of Tata (1426) the new Serbian ruler Đurađ (George) Branković, a nephew of Despot Stefan, had to return Belgrade, Golubac, the region of Mačva and some territories west of the river Drina to the Hungarian king.⁶¹ The implementation of that treaty was not easy in every segment. King Sigismund arrived to the vicinity of Belgrade before 17 September 1427⁶² and at the end of the same month he retook the city.⁶³ At the same time, Đurađ Branković accepted the supreme authority of King Sigismund who, in turn, recognized him as the ruler and "*despotum totius regni Rascie et*

⁴⁸ Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 40; Trpković 1959, p. 119; Istorija srpskog naroda 1982, p. 48 (Ćirković); Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 30.

⁴⁹ King Sigismund issued two charters in Braničevo on 12 and 13 July: Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 32–33. On 9 August the king was already in Kovin (Kewe): Fejér 1834 (X-2), p. 63; Trpković 1959, p. 111–112.

⁵⁰ Trpković 1959, p. 112.

⁵¹ Trpković 1959, p. 112.

⁵² Trpković 1959, p. 112–114.

⁵³ Filozof 1875, p. 271; Stojanović 1927, p. 219; Trpković 1959, p. 114–115.

⁵⁴ Imber 1990, p. 16–17; Inaldžik 2003, p. 25.

⁵⁵ More on the subject in: Istorija srpskog naroda, 1982 p. 58–63 (Ćirković).

⁵⁶ Held 1977, p. 131–132; Bak/Engel/Sweeney 1992, p. 22; Rady 2001, p. 149–151; Engel 2001, p. 205–206.

⁵⁷ Filozof 1875, p. 284; Radonić 1941, p. 140–149; Istorija srpskog naroda 1982, p. 71–72, 74 (Kalić).

⁵⁸ Ćirković 1968, p. 11.

⁵⁹ Veselinović 2006, p. 115.

⁶⁰ Filozof 1875, p. 281–282; Gelcich/Thallóczy 1887, p. 183–184; Antonović 1992, p. 19; Veselinović 2006, p. 117–118.

⁶¹ Fejér 1844a (X-6), p. 809–813; Radonić 1941, p. 179–191; Lemajić 2007, p. 443–448.

⁶² Krstić 2012, p. 118.

⁶³ Krstić 2012, p. 122–125.

Albanie.⁶⁴ The problems appeared in regard to the handover of Golubac. The commander of the fortress voivode Jeremija refused to surrender Golubac to King Sigismund. He demanded the payment of 12,000 ducats – the amount he was allegedly promised by Despot Stefan for holding the town. The mediation of Đurađ Branković was not successful and in the early November 1427 Jeremija gave Golubac to the Turks.⁶⁵ It should be underlined that Serbia was already at war with the Turks. The conflict started in 1425 and continued in the beginning of 1427.⁶⁶ Wanting to regain Golubac King Sigismund gathered a vast army in the spring of 1428. For the same reasons, the Hungarians constructed the fortress of Saint Ladislaus (Lászlóvár) across the river from Golubac. The siege began in the late April 1428. Some sources claim that Sultan Murad II personally arrived to the fortress with his troops. The Hungarian army had to retreat to the left bank of the Danube. Suddenly, the Turks attacked them during their retreat on 12 June and inflicted a heavy defeat on them.⁶⁷ Before this conflict, Đurađ Branković concluded a treaty with Ottomans. He accepted the supreme authority of the sultan and promised him the payment of an annual tribute (*haraç*).⁶⁸ This may be the reason why, during the siege of Golubac, Hungarian troops devastated Serbian territories near the Danube.⁶⁹

Regardless of the agreement with the sultan, Đurađ Branković (despot from 1429) tried to stay well-connected with Hungary. For this reason he built the new capital – Smederevo on the Danube from 1428 to 1430.⁷⁰ King Sigismund counted on military aid of Despot Đurađ in his defence plans from 1432/1433.⁷¹ The Despotate of Serbia was still an important buffer zone between Hungary and the Ottoman Empire. Nevertheless, the political situation had already developed to the detriment of Serbia. Turkish pressure forced Despot Đurađ to conclude a new treaty with the sultan in 1435. By this agreement he accepted the term that the Hungarians will not attack Ottomans over his territory.⁷² However, in mid-June 1437 a Hungarian army crossed the Danube and attacked Turkish fleet near the town of Stalać. On their way back these troops defeated an Ottoman army near Smederevo on the Serbian territory.⁷³ In revenge, the Turks plundered Serbia. Despot Đurađ had to surrender the town of Braničevo to them to conclude peace.⁷⁴ Next year Ottoman troops pillaged Serbian regions along the right bank of Danube (Kučevo and Braničevo). This time the despot gave them the fortresses of Ždrelo and Višesav on the Danube.⁷⁵ Finally, in the spring of 1439 the Turks besieged Serbian capital Smederevo. At the end of May or the beginning of June Despot Đurađ departed for Hungary with his wife and the youngest son to ask for help.⁷⁶ Hungarian King Albert of Habsburg failed to initiate a campaign against Turks. Without help from outside, Smederevo capitulated and the city surrendered to the Ottomans in August 1439.⁷⁷ Thereby, the Turks became lords of the entire Serbian part of

⁶⁴ Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 74–76.

⁶⁵ Filozof 1875, p. 322–323; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 112; Stojanović 1927, p. 228–229; Ćirković 1968, p. 13–14; Spremić 1994, p. 99; Krstić 2012, p. 123.

⁶⁶ Kalić 1983a, p. 14–16; Spremić 1994, p. 71, 90.

⁶⁷ Kalić 1983b, 111–112; Spremić 1994, p. 101, 103–105.

⁶⁸ Stojanović 1902, p. 82; Spremić 1994, p. 100.

⁶⁹ Stojanović 1902, p. 82.

⁷⁰ Stojanović 1927, p. 229; Spremić 1994, p. 122–135.

⁷¹ Held 1977, p. 136; Spremić 1994, p. 180.

⁷² Elezović 1932, p. 66; Spremić 1994, p. 192.

⁷³ Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 119–120; Stojanović 1927, p. 230; Spremić 1994, p. 206–208.

⁷⁴ Restii 1893, p. 271; Spremić 1994, p. 209. On the town of Braničevo near Danube see: Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 75–77.

⁷⁵ Stojanović 1927, 231; Spremić 1994, p. 212.

⁷⁶ Fejér 1844b (XI), p. 295–296; Spremić 1994, p. 213–214; Orbin 2006, p. 110–111.

⁷⁷ Stojanović 1927, p. 232; Imber 1990, p. 118; Spremić 1994, p. 215; Engel 2001, p. 280.

the Danube region from which they planned major attacks against Hungary. They besieged Belgrade as soon as in 1440.⁷⁸ Two years later the Ottomans built the fortress of Žrnov on the Avala Mountain with the aim to control the vicinity of Belgrade.⁷⁹

In the fall of 1443 Hungarian King Wladislas I, John Hunyadi and Despot Đurađ organized Crusading campaign against Ottomans. Their army crossed Danube at the end of September or the beginning of October 1443. This success campaign finished in the end of January, when Christian troops arrived in Belgrade.⁸⁰ Sultan Murad II was forced to negotiate with King, Hunyadi and Despot. The preliminary treaty between two sides concluded on 12 June 1444 in Edirne. The most significant regulations predicted renovation of Serbian Despotate with cities Smederevo and Golubac. Hungarians and Ottomans obliged that will not pass Danube and attack the other side. The agreement was supposed to last ten years.⁸¹ King Wladislas I finally ratified treaty in mid-August. Seven days later, Despot Đurađ entered in Smederevo.⁸² Serbian state again took significant place on right bank of Danube.

Despite the treaty, Hungary launched another Crusade against the Ottomans in late fall of 1444. The despot, who renewed his peaceful relations with the Turks did not join this expedition, even condemning it as imprudent. Hungarians decided to cross the Danube outside of Serbian borders, near Orșova. The severe defeat of Christian army at Varna on 10th November 1444, in which king Wladislas was killed, proved despot was right.⁸³ However, his decision not to engage in uncertain campaign against the Ottomans led to growing enmity between Đurađ and John Hunyadi who soon became the governor (gubernator) of Hungary, virtually the head of the state on behalf of the child-king Ladislas V of Habsburg. While despot was temporarily living in peace with the Turks, Hunyadi devised new plans against sultan Murat II.⁸⁴ Despite the Szeged agreement from the summer of 1444, which stipulated that Hungarians and Turks should not attack each other through Serbia, the governor planned a campaign on that route in 1447.⁸⁵ It failed then because of the lack of support, but the plan was renewed, this time successfully, in the late summer of 1448. A large Christian army, led by Hunyadi, came to Kovin. In September, he crossed the Danube and made a camp on the confluence of Morava, near the village of Subotica. His negotiation with despot Đurađ failed, since Serbian ruler once again did not want to join the governor's army. Hunyadi left his camp on the banks of Danube in late September and in mid-October clashed with Turkish army on the field of Kosovo. After three-day fighting, Christians suffered another heavy defeat.⁸⁶ Fleeing governor was captured by the despot and detained in Smederevo. After Hunyadi agreed to fulfil some conditions made by the Serbs, he was released in December 1448. One of the conditions was, once more, that Hungarians must not enter Serbia when they attack the Turks, except when they come to aid despot and his son against the Ottomans.⁸⁷

In May 1449, Đurađ tried to mediate in efforts which aimed at signing the peace treaty between the Hungarians and Ottomans. Among other proposals, his charter included a paragraph

⁷⁸ Stojanović 1927, p. 232; Imber 1990, p. 119; Spremić 1994, p. 236–238; Engel 2001, p. 280.

⁷⁹ Stojanović 1927, p. 233; Spremić 1994, p. 265.

⁸⁰ Stojanović 1927, p. 234; Imber 1990, p. 122–125; Spremić 1994, p. 278–283; Engel 2001, p. 285–286.

⁸¹ Inalcik 1965, p. 281–289; Doukas 1975, p. 183; Spremić 1994, p. 287–290.

⁸² Stojanović 1927, p. 234–235; Inalcik 1965, p. 297–305; Engel 2001, p. 287.

⁸³ Stojanović 1927, p. 235; Babinger 1968, p. 37; Spremić 1994, p. 292–293, 301–304.

⁸⁴ Spremić 1994, p. 312, 326.

⁸⁵ Gelcich/Thallóczy 1887, p. 465–466.

⁸⁶ Restii 1893, p. 297–298, 304; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 149–152, 377–379; Kostić 1925, p. 79–91; Stojanović 1927, p. 236; Kalić 1983b, p. 115; Imber 1990, p. 139–141; Spremić 1994, p. 326–342; Engel 2001, p. 291; Orbin 2006, p. 120–122.

⁸⁷ Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 152–153; Spremić 1994, p. 342–347; Orbin 2006, p. 122–123.

which stipulated that Turkish merchants should be allowed to trade in Belgrade, Kovin (Keve), Haram (today Banatska Palanka), Severin and Caransebeş, while the despot would find suitable places for Hungarian merchants to trade on Ottoman territory. However, this draft was not accepted by neither Hungarian Parliament nor Bosnian king, who was also to be included in it. Distrust between regionally powerful Hunyadi and Serbian despot deepened even more.⁸⁸ The former came to the Danube in the spring and summer of 1450, planning to attack Đurađ from Belgrade or Kovin and thus annul the agreement from December 1448, but ultimately withdrew his forces. A new peace treaty between Hunyadi and despot was finally concluded in August 1451.⁸⁹ Soon after, a formal 3-year truce between Hungary and Ottoman Empire was arranged.⁹⁰

The fall of Constantinople in May 1453 brought on a new wave of Turkish conquering enthusiasm. Just a month later, the sultan requested from despot to surrender Smederevo and Golubac to the Ottomans. Belgrade, in Hungarian hands, was one of the fortresses emperor Mehmed II wanted to gain too. Although despot rejected the demands, it was clear that the policy of young Mehmed would be offensive.⁹¹ In early 1454, in Hungarian Parliament in Buda, despot offered his help to renew a treaty made between Hungary and the Turks in 1451. He sent his envoy Vukosav, voivode of Smederevo to the Ottoman Porte, but his mission was only temporarily successful.⁹² Mehmed II decided to take Serbia for himself, claiming it did not belong to the Branković family, but to the extinct dynasty of the Lazarevići. In late spring Turkish ships were sailing from Vidin to Belgrade and in July the full Ottoman attack started. The area around the Danube and Sava was pillaged and despot fled to his manor in Bečej. A large part of Serbia was occupied and sultan came under Smederevo. Fearing the attack against Belgrade, Hunyadi brought his army to the Danube, putting the area between Belgrade and Kovin under his control. In reaction to this, Mehmed II lifted the siege and left.⁹³ This time, despot Đurađ decided to join forces with Hunyadi. In September 1454 the Hungarian troops crossed the Danube near Belgrade during the night, surprised Turkish army near Kruševac, defeated it and captured Feriz-bey. His campaign continued and he reached Niš, Pirot and Vidin before returning to Belgrade. However, this success was temporary.⁹⁴ The sultan declined the offer of peace and re-launched his attack in the spring of 1455, taking the mining town and marketplace of Novo Brdo and most of Kosovo region in June. In September 1455 the Turkish vessels were still on the Danube and despot, failing to secure help from Hungary and Western Christendom, decided to make a truce with the Turks.⁹⁵

In the fall of 1455 there was fallout between Hunyadi clan and despot who supported king Ladislas V and the Cilli (Celjski) family. Đurađ clashed with governor's brother-in-law Michael Szilágyi who started building some fortresses between Belgrade and Smederevo. Defeated at first, Szilágyi and his men attacked despot on his estates in Srem in December 1455, wounding and capturing him, and also demanding a ransom. Đurađ was released soon, but his and Hunyadi's

⁸⁸ Teleki 1853, p. 243–244; Spremić 1994, p. 348.

⁸⁹ Fejér 1844c, p. 149–157; Teleki 1853, p. 305–312; Gelcich/Thallóczy 1887, p. 506, 513; Restii 1893, p. 298, 311; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 379–380; Spremić 1994, p. 349–351, 364–367; Orbin 2006, p. 124.

⁹⁰ Imber 1990, p. 145; Spremić 1994, p. 366–367.

⁹¹ Rački 1867, p. 151–152; Stojanović 1927, p. 237; Babinger 1968, p. 68–85; Spremić 1994, p. 398–406.

⁹² Lukcsics 1931, p. 238–239; Ćirković 1971, p. 103–111; Spremić 1994, p. 417–418.

⁹³ Rački 1867, p. 152–155; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 185–187; Stojanović 1927, p. 237; Zachariadou 1964, p. 837–839; Kalić 1983b, p. 115; Spremić 1994, p. 418–421.

⁹⁴ Makušev 1882, p. 81–84; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 186–190; Stojanović 1927, p. 238; Spremić 1994, p. 421–425; Orbin 2006, p. 125–126.

⁹⁵ Gelcich/Thallóczy 1887, p. 583; Stojanović 1927, p. 238; Zachariadou 1964, p. 837–840; Spremić 1994, p. 428–433, 451–460; Orbin 2006, p. 126.

troops were not ready to cooperate any longer.⁹⁶ Although Christian princes all around Europe were summoned to join the Crusade against the Turks, those initiatives failed and Mehmed II once again entered Serbia. This time, his goal was to capture Belgrade. Along with lots of equipment and armed forces, the sultan also brought about 150 ships with him. They came through the rivers of Velika Morava and Danube and were an integral part of the great siege of Belgrade in July 1456. Hunyadi and Franciscan priest John Capistrano came to the aid of defenders of the city. They set their camp in Zemun and crossed the Danube near the confluence of the Sava, joining the garrison of Belgrade. After weeks of fighting, Christian forces prevailed on 22 July. A week earlier, on 14 July, using small vessels and flammable materials, Hunyadi's troops destroyed heavy ships of the Ottoman fleet. After the sultan was wounded under the walls of Upper Town, Turkish army retreated.⁹⁷ Although despot's forces did not take part in the defence, local Serbs most certainly did. Soon later, both Hunyadi and Capistrano died from the plague in Srem, while in December 1456 the 80-year-old despot followed them.⁹⁸

In Serbia, Đurađ's heir, despot Lazar Branković, reached the agreement with the sultan in January 1457, gaining formal recognition by the Ottoman authorities who wanted to deepen the differences between the Hungarians and Serbs. On the other hand, the dynastic strife in Hungary threatened to evolve into civil war. King Ladislas V collided with the supporters of the Hunyadi clan.⁹⁹ Formally supporting the king, despot Lazar, contacted his supporters in south-western Banat and took over the so-called "pobreški gradovi" ("towns on the under bank") between Smederevo and Golubac (Kovin, Lászlóvár, Haram, Požežena–Pojejena, Dombo) in April 1457. Serbian army continued its campaign until it was defeated by the Szilágyi's allies in May. Despite this defeat, he kept the aforementioned towns until his death. They were probably retaken by Szilágyi in March 1458.¹⁰⁰ In November 1457, Hungarian king Ladislas V died at the age of 19. Two months later despot Lazar suddenly passed away (in January 1458).¹⁰¹

While the situation in Hungary gradually stabilized (the process was finished by the election of Matthias Corvinus, John Hunyadi's younger son for the king), Serbian Despotate was living its last years. Pro-Hungarian and pro-Ottoman clans were fighting over power in Smederevo. Late despot's blind brother Stefan ruled along with Lazar's widow Jelena and Mihailo Anđelović, brother of the Ottoman distinguished commander and grand vizier Mahmud-paša.¹⁰² Szilágyi, who commanded Belgrade, Mačva and practically the defence of Hungarian borders with Serbia was planning to liquidate the remains of the Despotate and include Smederevo in his march. Although he regained the fortresses on the left bank of the Danube, he failed to conquer Golubac. The Hungarians wanted to bring Bosnian prince Stefan Tomašević to the throne of Serbia to facilitate its transition to Hungarian system of defence. They counted on the support of pro-Hungarian clan led by despina Jelena who put Mihailo Anđelović in prison.¹⁰³

⁹⁶ Teleki 1853, p. 548; Stojanović 1927, p. 238–239; Spremić 1994, p. 471–474; Orbin 2006, p. 128.

⁹⁷ Fejér 1844c, p. 291–292; Teleki 1853, p. 527; Makušev 1882, p. 110–111; Gelcich/Thallóczy 1887, p. 588–592; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 200–201, 204–206, 383, 470; Stojanović 1927, p. 239; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 127–173; Babinger 1968, p. 117–121; Kalić 1983b, p. 116–118; Imber 1990, p. 166–169; Spremić 1994, p. 474–483; Engel 2001, p. 295–296.

⁹⁸ Fejér 1844c, p. 294–296; Makušev 1882, p. 110–111; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 211, 213, 217–218, 470; Lukscics 1931, p. 249; Stojanović 1927, p. 239–240; Spremić 1994, p. 483–494; Engel 2001, p. 296; Orbin 2006, p. 128.

⁹⁹ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 168–180; Spremić 1994, p. 489–494, 502–504.

¹⁰⁰ Stojanović 1927, p. 241; Ćirković 1970, p. 85–86; Spremić 1994, p. 503–504.

¹⁰¹ Stojanović 1927, p. 241–242; Spremić 1994, p. 514–516; Orbin 2006, p. 128.

¹⁰² Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 19–21; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 222–223, 230–232; Stojanović 1927, p. 242; Spremić 1994, p. 515–520.

¹⁰³ Teleki 1853, p. 565; Stojanović 1927, p. 242; Spremić 1994, p. 517–520.

Lazar' death, Szilágyi's campaign and the coup in Smederevo were direct cause of another Turkish attack which practically terminated the Serbian Despotate. The rumours of great Ottoman fleet being built in Vidin and Kruševac frightened the Hungarians who send Szilágyi to secure Belgrade, since the Turks were in control of the nearby fortress of Žrnov.¹⁰⁴ The Serbs tried to regain despot Đurađ's possessions in Hungary in exchange for Golubac, but the negotiations ultimately failed and the Serbian garrison surrendered Golubac fortress to Mahmud-paša Anđelović in August 1458.¹⁰⁵ The Ottoman commander withdrew from the Sava and Danube rivers after attacking Hungarians in Srem, but Serbia was practically conquered by autumn 1458. The campaign of cardinal Carvajal across the Danube in late 1458 was ultimately unsuccessful.¹⁰⁶ Serbian capital – Smederevo, after the deposal of blind despot Stefan, came under the control of pro-Hungarian Bosnian prince, despot Stefan Tomašević, in March 1459, but it was surrendered to the Turks as early as in June of the same year.¹⁰⁷ A year later, Michael Szilágyi led a semi-successful campaign against the Turks near Lászlóvár, Belgrade and Kovin, only to be captured by the Ottoman troops near Požežena on the Danube (in November 1460) and afterwards executed in Istanbul.¹⁰⁸

In the years following the fall of Serbian Despotate the border between Hungary and Ottoman Empire on the Danube stabilized. On the right bank of the river, the Hungarians controlled only Belgrade and its vicinity. The periods of peace were often interrupted by the periods of war and no formal truce or treaty was signed before 1483.¹⁰⁹ Serbian nobility and people along the main roads and borderline were important elements in the fighting on and across the border. Some of them changed sides and allegiances, depending on the situation in the field or the offers given by Hungarian or Turkish authorities.¹¹⁰ Formerly Serbian part of the Danube from Belgrade to confluence of the Poreč River (near today's town of Donji Milanovac) was one of main routes of the warring parties. In this area, some of the settlements had obligation to guard Ottoman bank of the Danube (Ustje, Kisiljevo, Hram, Požežena etc.).¹¹¹

The Turks attacked Wallachia crossing the Danube on several places (1462). Some of the ships carrying the Ottomans came from Velika Morava.¹¹² In the summer of 1463 and January 1464 both Turks and Hungarians were campaigning along the river.¹¹³ In 1460's king Matthias formed the Banat of Belgrade to protect the border.¹¹⁴ During 1476, a grandson of despot Đurađ – Vuk Grgurević and Wallachian prince Vlad III Dracula fought against the Turks on the Danube and Sava. In the same year, Turkish ships are mentioned in the rivers of Drina, Sava and Danube and at the confluence of Moravica (probably Velika Morava). Some of them may have been trapped by the frozen water during the harsh winter. In June 1476 the Turks headed

¹⁰⁴ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 5–6, 10–33; Makušev 1882, p. 219–220; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 223, 231, 237; Stojanović 1927, p. 243; Spremić 1994, p. 520–527.

¹⁰⁵ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 28, 35–36; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 238–242; Ćirković 1968, p. 24; Kalić 1983b, p. 118–119; Spremić 1994, p. 522–523, 530–532.

¹⁰⁶ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 35–40; Fraknoi 1902, p. 114; Stojanović 1927, p. 243–244; Spremić 1994, p. 531–536.

¹⁰⁷ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 49–50; Stojanović 1927, p. 244; Babinger 1968, p. 141; Spremić 1994, p. 536–547.

¹⁰⁸ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 67, 79; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 247, 249–250; Olesnicki 1943, p. 37–40, 100–113; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 187–189; Kalić 1983b, p. 120; Spremić 1994, p. 546.

¹⁰⁹ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 189–200; Engel 2001, p. 308. The treaty was signed in October 1483 and renewed in 1488 for two more years.

¹¹⁰ Lemajić 2006, *passim*.

¹¹¹ Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 67–68.

¹¹² Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 142; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 189.

¹¹³ Teleki 1855, p. 60; Fraknoi 1893, p. 45–50; Thallóczy 1915, p. 13–14; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 189–191.

¹¹⁴ Kalić 1983b, p. 120.

by Ali-bey Mihaloğlu invaded Banat, but were defeated near Požežena on the Danube by the Hungarians and the Serbs serving in their army.¹¹⁵

Early 1480's were very tumultuous in the area of our concern. A small but effective Hungarian army led by Pál Kinizsi crossed the Danube and attacked the Turks in November and December 1480, reaching the town of Kruševac.¹¹⁶ A year later, after death of sultan Mehmed II, both Hungarians and Moldavians launched an incursion against the Ottomans in the area controlled by Ali-bey Mihaloğlu. In the summer and fall of 1481, Stephen Bathory, Pál Kinizsi, Vuk Grgurević, Dmtar Jakšić and László Rozgonyi joined their forces. They established their camp near Haram, reinforced by many ships. Turkish fleet of 24 ships was defeated on the Danube by Hungarian vessels that came from Haram and Belgrade. Christian army once again reached Kruševac, attacked Smederevo and captured Golubac (which they had to relinquish soon).¹¹⁷ The Turks crossed the Danube to attack Timisoara in September 1482, but were swiftly suppressed by Kinizsi.¹¹⁸ Although king Matthias's campaigns were not long-term victories, Turkish sultan and commanders decided to strengthen the borderline by building the forts of Kulič, Haram (today's Ram) and, probably at the same time, a minor fortress Pek (today's Veliko Gradište) on their side of the Danube in 1483.¹¹⁹ Mutual attacks continued periodically after the end of truce in 1491, with varying outcome, but the time worked for the Turks who were gradually gaining the upper hand. Their raid across the Danube in 1491 reached Timișoara and Oradea.¹²⁰ The campaigns continued in the years that followed (1492, 1494). Kinizsi launched the attack on Smederevo in February 1494, pillaging its vicinity. He withdrew soon later and the Turks could not follow him because of high water level. Belgrade was kept secure by supplies delivered from the counties along the Danube.¹²¹ Another Hungarian attack aimed at looting of Smederevo took place in November 1494. After fulfilling this mission Kinizsi died.¹²² Three-year truce was concluded in 1495 and prolonged in 1498, but it was not entirely respected. In 1500 the hostilities broke out again. Both sides were attacking each other across the Danube in 1501, 1502, pillaging border towns. Final periods of formal, but uneasy truce lasted from 1503 to 1512 and from 1519 to 1521, but with many incidents against peace.¹²³

Most of the Serbian nobles, who did not want to convert to Islam or join sultan's army, relocated to Hungary by the end of the 15th century. That included all members of the Branković family, titular Serbian despots, as well as the Jakšići, Belmuževići etc. Some of them became marcher lords who defended Hungarian borders.¹²⁴ The last stages of the war were fought on the banks of the Danube. The conquest of Belgrade, Zemun and Slankamen by the army of sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in August 1521 practically gave the Ottomans full control of the right bank of the river from the confluence of the Sava to the Black Sea.¹²⁵ The final campaign against

¹¹⁵ Nagy/Nyáry 1877, p. 309, 317; Nagy/Nyáry 1878, p. 326; Fraknoi 1893, p. 354–360; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 268–269, 469–470; Stojanović 1927, p. 250–251; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 195–197; Kalić 1983b, p. 121–122.

¹¹⁶ Nagy/Nyáry 1878, p. 339–342; Fraknoi 1895, p. 79, 86–90; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 198; Kalić 1983b, p. 122.

¹¹⁷ Nagy/Nyáry 1878, p. 362; Makušev 1882, p. 51–52; Fraknoi 1895, p. 185, 190, 196–197; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 282; Stojanović 1927, p. 253; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 198–199; Kalić 1983b, p. 122.

¹¹⁸ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 199, p. 527.

¹¹⁹ Stojanović 1927, p. 254, 257; Zirojević 1967, p. 233–246; Zirojević 1971, p. 15; Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 76–77, 242.

¹²⁰ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 204–205, 415; Kalić 1983b, p. 123.

¹²¹ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 205–211, 417–418; Kalić 1983b, p. 123.

¹²² Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 214–215, 419–420; Kalić 1983b, p. 123–124.

¹²³ Stojanović 1927, p. 258; Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 217–238; Kalić 1983b, p. 124–125; Engel 2001, p. 360, 366–367.

¹²⁴ Spremić 1994, p. 547–559; Lemajić 2006, *passim*.

¹²⁵ Kalić-Mijušković 1967, p. 239–268; Kalić 1983b, p. 126.

medieval kingdom of Hungary which resulted in Louis II's defeat near Mohacs in 1526 was also launched via three improvised "bridges" on the Danube, of which the most important was the one near Belgrade.¹²⁶

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As it was demonstrated, the military and strategic role of the Danube was most important in Serbian-Hungarian relations. However, the river was also a major location of traffic and trade. Not only military ships, but also those carrying people and merchandise sailed along the Danube. Local population used small boats for crossing the river for various purposes, but also for fishing and banditry.¹²⁷ Main crossing-points on this part of the Danube were located near major towns or fortresses (Belgrade, Smederevo, Kovin, Kulič, Braničevo, Haram, Golubac), connected by the „Great Road“. The Velika Morava River and its valley were also important roads and they led to the Danube, coinciding partly with the greatest, so-called Constantinople Road, dividing two large Serbian regions of Kučevo and Braničevo. Almost every road in northern Serbia was linked to the Danube River. Among main "arteries" were the routes that led from Braničevo and Golubac to inner parts of the state.¹²⁸ It must also be noted that Serbian despots and some nobles acquired vast possessions from their Hungarian suzerains during the 15th century. Many of them were located in southern Hungary, mainly in the region of Srem and they included some of the main passes over Danube (i.e. Slankamen and Zemun).¹²⁹

The trade between Hungary and Serbia (and afterwards between Hungary and Ottoman Empire) was also conducted on the Danube. Beside major cities of Belgrade and Smederevo, main trading centres included marketplaces Subotica (located at the confluence of the Velika Morava into Danube) and Kisiljevo, and village fair in Petka.¹³⁰ Kisiljevo was given to the Wallachian monasteries of Tismena (Tismana) and Vodița by prince (*knez*) Lazar Hrebeljanović, while the same ruler gave Petka fair (held in late June), probably near Braničevo, to his own endowment and mausoleum – the Serbian monastery of Ravanica.¹³¹ Some other villages on or near the Danube were also given by Lazar to monasteries (i.e. Kostolac, Biskuplje and Trstenik were given to Gornjak/Ždrelo monastery; Kumani to Ravanica, Gospođin Vir to monastery in Zvižd etc.).¹³²

In Smederevo, especially after 1444, the commerce of precious metals (mainly silver) was highly developed.¹³³ Almost every marketplace in Serbia had colonies of merchants from Dubrovnik (Ragusa) who were traditional economic partners of the Serbs, since at least late 12th century. The Ragusans were present even in the towns on the left bank of the Danube. For instance, their presence in Kovin was noted since 1362.¹³⁴ As it was already said, the draft of peace between the Turks and Hungary, proposed by despot Đurađ in 1449, included a clause which envisaged that Turkish merchants could trade in Belgrade, Kovin, Haram, Severin and Caransebeș. However, the draft was rejected.¹³⁵

¹²⁶ Pray 1805, p. 245, 265, 268; Thallóczy/Hodinka 1903, p. 513.

¹²⁷ Kalić 1983b, p. 120–121; Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 242.

¹²⁸ Nagy/Nyáry 1875, p. 77; Thallóczy/Áldásy 1907, p. 152, 378, 463; Rokai 1983, p. 159–160; Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 242–247.

¹²⁹ Rokai 1983, p. 167–168.

¹³⁰ Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 86, 242–247.

¹³¹ Mladenović 2003, p. 54, 83; Miljković/Krstić 2007, p. 86.

¹³² Mladenović 2003, p. 32, 37, 54, 80, 83.

¹³³ Kovačević-Kojić 2004, p. 191–203.

¹³⁴ Čirković 1970, p. 84; Veselinović 1997, *passim*.

¹³⁵ Teleki 1853, p. 243–244; Spremić 1994, p. 348.

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THE DANUBE IN SERBIAN-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS IN THE 14TH AND 15TH CENTURIES (Abstract)

Serbian state reached the banks of Danube in the last decade of the thirteenth century, establishing a common border with Hungary along the line from Belgrade to the river Poreč. The lands around the Danube were an area of frequent conflict between Serbia and Hungary since the beginning of the reign of Serbian ruler Stephen Dušan. After Dušan's death Hungary acquired control over the right bank of the Danube through the noble family of Rastislalići. Prince (*Knez*) Lazar took over Braničevo in 1379 and since then his formal title included the mention of the Danube region (*Podunavlje*). This notion was used in the title of Serbian rulers until 1413, which testified to the significance of this river for Serbian rulers. After the first Battle of Kosovo in 1389, the Ottomans carried out incursions in southern Hungary

through the Serbian territory. In answer to these actions, Hungarian King Sigismund started his own incursions across the Danube to the area of northern Serbia. The borderline between Serbia and Hungary was fairly stable in the period from 1402 to 1427, during the rule of Despot Stephen Lazarević. After the death of Stephen in 1427 this border became "porous". By occupying Golubac (1428) the Turks gained their first important stronghold on the banks of the Danube, while in the period from 1437 to 1439, they got hold of the entire Serbian part of the Danube region from which they planned major attacks against Hungary. Belgrade was first besieged in 1440, while the fortress Žrnov was built in 1442. The Hungarian-Serbian offensive of 1443 was launched over the Danube. When the peace was concluded, an important demand of the victorious Christian side was the return of Golubac to the restored Serbian Despotate. Although it was a part of the treaty, a clause that the Turks and Hungarians should not attack each other over Serbian territory was not respected, which was clearly demonstrated by the situation on the eve of the second Battle of Kosovo in 1448. When another Turkish attack against Serbia was launched, John Hunyadi came to help despot George in 1454, crossing the Danube near Belgrade. During the Turkish siege of Belgrade in 1456, this river proved to be of a great strategic importance for the beleaguered city since the Ottomans used navy too. Despot Lazar managed to gain a few settlements on the left bank of the Danube in 1457 (so-called "towns of the other bank"). Turkish-Hungarian border on the Danube was finally established in 1459, after the collapse of the Serbian Despotate. Conflicts between the Hungarians and Turks in the Danube area continued until the end of the fifteenth century, and even later (until 1526) with significant participation of the Serbs on both sides (major campaigns took place in 1462, 1476, 1480, 1481 etc.). The most important locations for crossing the Danube during this period were in the vicinity of fortified towns (Belgrade, Smederevo, Golubac, Kovin, Haram). Beside Belgrade and Smederevo, the main trading centres included marketplaces Subotica and Kisiljevo and village fair in Petka. In Smederevo, especially after 1444, the commerce of precious metals was highly developed. A draft of peace between the Turks and Hungary, proposed by despot George in 1449 included a clause which envisaged that Turkish merchants could trade in Belgrade, Kovin, Haram, Severin and Caransebeş. In the Danube area of southern Hungary Serbian despots acquired vast possessions from their Hungarian suzerains, including some of the passes over Danube (i.e. Slankamen and Zemun).

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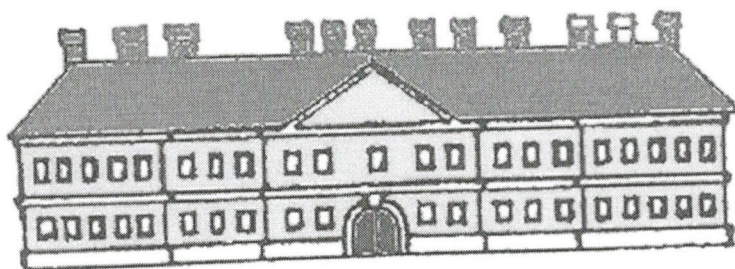
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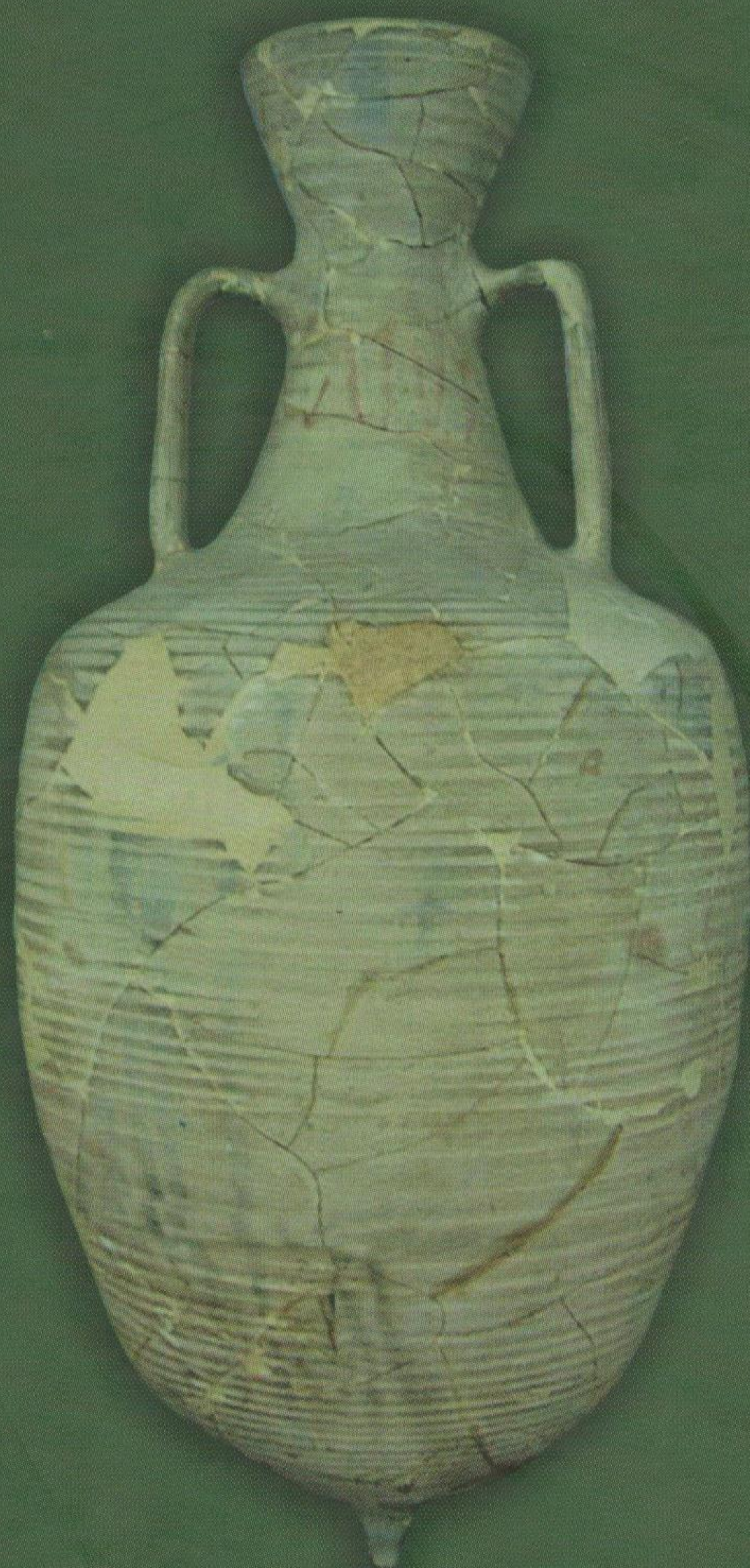
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