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FOREIGNERS IN THE SERVICE OF DESPOT ĐURAĐ BRANKOVIĆ ON SERBIAN TERRITORY*

*Miloš Ivanović***

Keywords: Despot Đurađ, Byzantines, Ragusans, service, court
Cuvinte cheie: despotul Đurađ, bizantini, raguzani, slujbă, curte

During 13th and 14th century in the service of Serbian rulers were being a large number of foreign mercenaries. Some of them had an important role in the conquest of new territories and decisive battles.[1] However, they have usually lived temporarily in Serbia and didn't have possessions on its territory. The situation changed in the 15th century. In the first place that was due to the new political circumstances. Namely, Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427) become in 1403 or 1404 vassal of Hungarian King Sigismund of Luxembourg (1387–1437).[2] Also, he was member of The Order of Dragon which was founded in 1408 by same Hungarian ruler.[3] Therefore it is no surprise that many Hungarians were in his service.[4] However it is unknown that whether they had estates on Serbian territory. On the other hand during the Ottoman civil war from 1402 to 1413 some prominent Turkish

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1 Андрија Веселиновић, *Држава српских деспота* (Београд: Завод за уџбенике и наставна средства, 2006[2]), 181–184; Aleksandar Uzelac, "Foreign Soldiers in the Nemanjić state – A Critical Overview," *Belgrade Historical Review* VI (2015): 69–83.

2 Михаило Динић, "Писмо угарског краља Жигмунда бургундском војводи Филипу," Зборник Матице српске за друштвене науке 13–14 (1956): 93–98; *Историја српског народа* II (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1982), 70–74.

3 Georgius Fejér, *Codex diplomaticus Hungariae ecclesiasticus ac civilis*, t. X, vol. 4 (Budapest, 1841), 682–694; Милош Антоновић, "Деспот Стефан Лазаревић и Змајев ред," *Историјски гласник* 1–2 (1993): 15–24.

4 Ватрослав Јагић, "Константин Филозоф и његов живот Стефана Лазаревића деспота српског," *Гласник Српског ученог друштва* XLII (1875): 312, 319–320.

commanders moved to the side of Despot Stefan.[5] Since 1413 he again became an Ottoman vassal.[6]

Despot Đurađ Branković (1427–1456) hired foreigners to an even greater extent than his predecessor and uncle Despot Stefan. This particularly applies to the Byzantines and Ragusans. The most influential among them were close associates of Despot Đurađ. The increasing power of foreigners is one of the characteristics of the reign of Despot Đurađ, especially after 1439. One of objective of this paper is to try to explain the causes of this phenomenon. It is necessary to stress that I will not analyze position and actions of Despot's officials on his estates in Hungarian Kingdom.

The appearance of the Byzantines in the service of Despot Đurađ was the result of few factors. The first of these is that Serbian ruler was married to Irine Kantakouzene who belonged to the Thessaloniki branch of famous family.[7] Another reason was Ottoman conquest of Byzantine territories. Thomas Kantakouzenos, brother of Irene settled into Serbia probably after fall of Thessaloniki in 1430.[8] He was mentioned first time in Serbia in 1433. Then, one document note that Thomas seized houses of some Ragusans in mining town Srebrenica. The Ragusan's emissaries supposed to complain to the Despot because of this act.[9] On the basis of this data cannot be concluded that Thomas lived in Srebrenica. It is more likely that he only did business in mention city. Two years later envoys of Ragusan Republic were received instructions by his government that to address to Irene and Thomas Kantakouzenos, on the occasion of new customs in Novo Brdo and Srebrenica. The emissaries could to express their willingness to do anything for him, with a request to influence his sister in their favor.[10] They continued to refer to Irene and Thomas when Despot Đurađ returned from Hungary. According to the deputies, Thomas did not want to help them, because he did not receive a gift.[11] At the beginning

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5 Ibid, 276, 301, 308.

6 *Историја српског народа* II, 90.

7 That marriage was concluded in 1414. See: Момчило Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба* (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1994), 63–64; Божидар Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији прве половине XV века," *Зборник радова Византолошког института* 26 (1987): 174–178.

8 Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији", 193; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 142.

9 Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servire a l' histoire des croisades au XVe siècle*, vol. II (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899), 316; Михаило Динић, *За историју рударства у средњовековној Србији и Босни* I (Београд: Научна књига, 1955), 81; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 142, 182, 593.

10 Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 325; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 181–182.

11 Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 329; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији", 194; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 613.

of 1436 Ragusans sent a new mission to the Serbian court and predicted up to 250 ducats for presents for family of Despot Đurađ. Thomas Kantakouzene was considered as a member of the family.[12] These data indicate that Thomas become one of the most important person on the Despot's court. At the same time its show that Thomas was ready to help them from personal interests. On one occasion, the Turks also stressed that he was corrupted.[13]

The growth of his impact reflects in the fact that he began to perform important military tasks. In 1439 together with Grgur, the oldest son of Despot Đurađ, he commanded the defense of the Serbian capital Smederevo. The relevant sources indicate that they handed over city to the Ottomans because lack of food supply.[14] It is unclear where Thomas lived immediately after the fall of Smederevo. In an unknown way he arrived in Dubrovnik during 1441.[15] He left there for safekeeping some silver treasure.[16] With their arrival in Ragusa, he confirmed loyalty to his master. Certainly thanks to that Thomas kept important role on Despot's court after renewal of Serbian Despotate in 1444. The Serbian annals noted that in September 1448 he defeated army of Bosnian King Stefan Tomaš. The consequence of this victory was re-entry of Srebrenica and nearby region along the river Drina in the Serbian state.[17] It is possible that Despot Đurađ entrusted command to Thomas because his business contact with Srebrenica. Indeed, in autumn 1448 the Ragusans sought for him old

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[12] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 657–658; Динић, *За историју рударства* I, 81–83.

[13] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 182.

[14] Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium to The Ottoman Turks, An Annotated Translation of "Historia Turco-Byzantina" by Harry J. Magoulias* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975), 177; Љубомир Стојановић, *Стари српски родослови и летописи* (Сремски карловци: Српска краљевска академија, 1927), 232; Мавро Орбин, *Краљевство Словена* (Београд: Sezam Book, 2006), 111; Laonic Chalcocondil, *Expuneri Istorice*, ed V. Grecu (Bucarest: Editura Academiei, 1958), 151–152; Глиша Елезовић, "Турски извори за историју Југословена. Два турска хроничара из 15 века," *Братство* 26 (1932): 68–69; Константин Михаиловић, *Јаничареве успомене или турска хроника*, ed. Ђорђе Живановић (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1986), 105; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 214–215; Маја Николић, *Византијски писци о Србији (1402–1439)* (Београд: Византолошки инситут, 2010), 105–106, 110–112.

[15] Љубомир Стојановић, *Старе српске повеље и писма* I–2 (Београд-Сремски Карловци: Српска краљевска академија,1934), 24–29; Константин Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, Културна историја (Београд: Научна књига, 1952), 371; Ферјанчић, *Византинци у Србији*, 195; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 257–258.

[16] Стојановић, Повеље и писма I–2, 24–29; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 371; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 195; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 257–258.

[17] Стојановић, *Родослови и летописи*, 235–236; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 334; Сима Ћирковић, *Историја средњовековне босанске државе* (Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, 1964), 289–290; Динић, *За историју рударства* I, 78–79.

trading privileges.[18] Despot's troops were led again by Thomas Kantakouzenos in September 1452. Then nobleman from Zeta (southern part of Serbian Despotate) Stefanica Crnojević defeated his army, while he barely avoided capture.[19] There is an opinion that he managed to the successful defense of Smederevo in 1454 during campaign of Sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481) against Serbian Despotate.[20]

The position of Thomas Kantakouzenos started to change when Despot Lazar took power at the end of 1456 after death of Despot Đurađ. New ruler was not good terms with his mother Irene. Under mysterious circumstances she died on the 3 May 1457 in the town of Rudnik. After that, together with Grgur and Mara Branković he left Serbia and went to Sultan Mehmed II.[21] On that way Thomas Kantakouzenos ended his political career in the Serbian Despotate. The next few years until death in June 1463 he lived on Mara Branković's estates near town Serres on Ottoman territory.[22]

Another brother of Irene, George Kantakouzenos has also lived in Serbia. Allegedly, he managed the construction of the Smederevo fortress.[23] This fact is unreliable, since it is known that George was in the service of Despot Constantine Palaiologos until 1437[24], while the main part of fortress was built from 1428 to 1430.[25] Whatever it is certain that he was in Smederevo in

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[18] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 430; Динић, *За историју рударства* I, 79; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 371; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 348–349, 621.

[19] Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*, vol. IX (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1890), 450–451, Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*, vol. X (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1891), 151; Nicolae Iorga, *Notes et extraits pour servire a l' histoire des croisades au XVe siècle*, vol. III (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1902), 273; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 381.

[20] Lajos Thallóczy, Antal Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára,* vol. II. *A Magyarország* és *Szerbia kőzti osszekőtterések oklevéltara 1198–1526,* (Budapest, 1907), 186–187; Franjo Rački, "Prilozi za sbirku srspkih i hrvatskih listina," *RAD Jugoslavenske akademije znanosti i umjetnosti* 1 (1867): 152–155; Doukas, *Decline and Fall of Byzantium*, 243; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 420–423.

[21] Стојановић, *Родослови и летописи*, 241; Орбин, *Краљевство Словена*, 128; Георгије Сфранцес, *Хроника. Пад Византијског царства*, ed. М. Станковић (Београд: Предањске студије, 2011), 168–169; Chalcocondil, *Expuneri Istorice*, 241; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 504–506; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 188–192.

[22] Стојановић, *Родослови и летописи*, 246; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 197; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 547.

[23] Theodore Spandounes, *On the origin of the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Donald Nicol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1997), 35.

[24] Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 198, 200.

[25] Гордана Томовић, *Морфологија ћириличких натписа на Балкану* (Београд: Историјски институт, 1974), 110; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 124–130.

1453.[26] In the autumn of same year Despot Đurađ arranged marriage between George's daughter Ana and Vladislav, son of Duke (Herceg) Stefan Vukčić Kosača. However matrimony was officially concluded in September 1455.[27] Theodore Spandounes recorded that George Kantakouzenos commanded the defense of Smederevo at beginning of 1456 when forces of Michael Szilágyi and Janos Hunyadi besieged Serbian capital. In that time, Despot Đurađ was in captivity of Szilágyi together with George's son Theodore. According to same author Theodore unsuccessfully tried to collect money for the redemption. During the siege Hungarians threatened to kill Theodore, but his father refused to surrender the town.[28] These are the latest information about George and Theodore Kantakouzenos. It is probably that Theodore was released at the same time as Despot Đurađ. Serbian historian Božidar Ferjančić supposed that George died between 1456 and 1459.[29]

It is likely that Manuel, who mentioned in 1441 as Chancellor (*logotet*) of Despot Đurađ, was also Byzantine.[30] Certain voivode Manuel stayed in Ragusa five years later as one of the wedding guests of Lazar Branković, son of Despot Đurađ. During that stay together with voivode Radič he took over deposit of Thomas Kantakouzenos and silverware dishes of Despot Đurađ Branković.[31] The sameness of the names does not mean that he is identical with personality of Chancellor Manuel. Some historians thought that he was son of Thomas Kantakouzene[32], while others considered that he was son of Byzantine merchant Calojan Rusota, who lived in Novo Brdo.[33] After 1446 there is no information about voivode Manuel.

Also, Some Ragusans had significant positions at the court of Despot Đurađ Branković. They are primarily performed diplomatic and financial jobs for him. First place among them belongs to Paskoje Sorkočević (Pasqualus de Sorgo). Since from 1419 he has operated in Serbia, first in Priština and then in

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[26] Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 198–199; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 405.

[27] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 412, 461.

[28] Spandounes, *On the origin of the Ottoman Empire*, 35; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 199; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 473–474.

[29] Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 200–201.

[30] Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 157; Андрија Веселиновић, *Држава српских деспота*, 245–246.

[31] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 415–416; Медо Пуцић, *Споменици српски* II (Београд: Друштво Србске Словесности,1862), 101–102; Владимир Ћоровић, "Женидба деспота Лазара," *Глас Српске краљевске академије* 156 (1933): 151–153; Брана Недељковић, "Дубровник у сватима кнеза Лазара Ђурђевића," *Зборник Филозофског факултета у Београду* VIII/2 (1964): 507, 518–519; Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 203; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 317–318.

[32] Ћоровић, " Женидба деспота Лазара," 153; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 372.

[33] Ферјанчић, "Византинци у Србији," 203–204; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић,* 318, 662.

Novo Brdo. Paskoje entered in the service of Despot Đurađ in 1439 after fall of Smederevo, when Serbian ruler was in Hungary. At the same time another Ragusan, Damjan Đurđević became official of Serbian Despot.[34] It is logical to assume that Đurađ Branković hired them because of his specific political position. Namely, he lost the largest part of his country. Therefore he strived to strength his diplomatic contacts. Very soon, Paskoje has gained the trust of the Despot. In the summer of 1440 he was responsible for the security of Despot as captain of a ship which was supposed to rescue Despot and his family in emergency case.[35] In January 1441 together with metropolitan bishop Atanasije brought to Ragusa part of the deposit of Despot Đurađ.[36] Presumably, he was with Despot Đurađ during the famous "Long campaign" against Ottomans.[37] In this way he proved his loyalty to the Serbian ruler. The future events indicate that Despot knew how to appreciate his conduct.

When Serbian Despotate restored in August 1444 he settled in Smederevo. Next year Paskoje became steward of the ruler finance with title "čelnik riznički".[38] He was the only Ragusan in despot service who wore Serbian title. In addition to the activities related to finance he performed many other tasks for Despot Đurađ. Consequently it is not surprising that Ragusan chronicler Junii Restii designated him as "first minister of Despot".[39] Together with Damjan Đurđević he organized in Ragusa arrival, stay and departure of Helena Palaiologina, future wife of Despot Lazar Branković in the autumn of 1446.[40] Bosnian King Stefan Tomaš (1443–1461) has complained to the Ragusans in 1448 that Pascoe and Damjan prevented him to conclude peace with Đurađ Branković. Therefore the Ragusan Senate warned them to take care not to harm their city. They replied that as despot's *servants* they must obey his orders, but Senate wrote off that they must primarily serve to their town.[41] In September 1448 he negotiated with Hungarian Governor Janos Hunyadi about participation of Despot Đurađ

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[34] Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 366; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 219, 234.

[35] Андрија Веселиновић, *Дубровачко Мало веће о Србији: (1415–1460)* (Београд: Историјски институт САНУ, Историјски архив Краљево, Историјски архив Чачак, 1997), 453; Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 369–370; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 240–241; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 366–367.

[36] Стојановић, *Повеље и писма* I–2, 21–23; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 248.

[37] Веселиновић, *Дубровачко Мало веће о Србији*, 482; Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 401; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 279; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 367.

[38] Стојановић, *Старе српске повеље и писма* I–2, 21, 32.

[39] Joannis Gundulae, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (ab origine urbis usque ad annum 1451)* (Zagrabiae: Ex Officina Societatis Typographicae, 1893), 304.

[40] Недељковић, "Дубровник у сватима кнеза Лазара," 482; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 315–316, 322.

[41] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 427; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 327–328.

in campaign against Ottomans.[42] After the battle of Kosovo in October 1448 Hunyadi was captured by Despot's men. Hunyadi wrote to the Ragusans, after liberation that he was captured at the instigation of Paskoje and Damjan. The Senate of Ragusa apologized to him, since their investigation revealed that they are guilty. That was reason why the Senate issued three-year ban their nobles to go abroad as emissaries of foreign rulers. Also, the same institutions forbade to his subjects in the Despot's service that together with his army get out from the Serbian state.[43] The specificity of their position once again showed. In summer of 1450 Paskoje and Damjan had to come to his hometown to justify their actions in connection with the abolition of trade privileges of Ragusan merchants in four Serbian towns.[44] The above prohibition did not strictly respect. Namely, Despot sent Paskoje to the new Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in March 1451. However emissary did not find Sultan in Edirne and he returned to Serbia before 10 of May.[45] The next month Republic of Ragusa again allowed its citizens in Despot's service can go abroad as Serbian ambassadors. Such a decision was due to the fact that Ragusa was preparing for war with Bosnian Duke Stefan Vukčić Kosača in which expected the support of Serbian ruler.[46] It seems that he was member of the Despot's mission to the Sultan Mehmed II which has contributed to conclusion of the Turkish-Hungarian truce in November 1451.[47] In late summer 1452, Despot sent Paskoje to Mehmed II to work for the benefit of Vladislav, who was in conflict with his father Duke Stefan Vukčić. About results of his mediation he reported Serbian ruler in October 1452.[48]

Shortly after the fall of Constantinople in summer 1453 Paskoje Sorkočević decided to withdraw from the Despot's service. Nevertheless, he stayed in Smederevo for a few months. His decision was a result of several factors. First of all, his brother Damjan, who led all his affairs in Ragusa, was died. Further he realized that the Ottomans will attack Serbia, after the conquest of Constantinople.[49] In the late September or early October of 1453 Sultan regained regions Toplica and Dubočica[50], where Pascoe Sorkočević had possessions.[51]

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[42] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 337–339.

[43] Joannis Gundulae, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, 298, 304–305; *Спремић, Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 345–346.

[44] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 440; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 354.

[45] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 445–446; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 361.

[46] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 448–449; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 367–368.

[47] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 366–367.

[48] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 472, 475; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 375–377.

[49] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић,* 413.

[50] Олга Зиројевић, Исмаил Ерен, "Попис области Крушевца, Топлице и Дубочице у време прве владавине Мехмеда II (1444–1446)," *Врањски гласник* 4 (1968): 378.

[51] Franjo Rački, "Iz dijela E. L. Crijevića, Dubrovčanina," *Starine Jugoslavenske akademije*

Taking into account that Despot Đurađ got mentioned areas from Sultan in May 1451, it can be concluded that Paskoje had estates on Serbian territory at the most little more than two years. After returning to Ragusa he has maintained connections with Despot Đurađ. He died on 4 August 1454.[52] Paskoje Sorkočević was one of the closest associates of Despot Đurađ who had full confidence in him. According to Mavro Orbin Despot Đurađ put the coat of arms of Paskoje Sorkočević on the tower of Smederevo fortress.[53] Shortly after Pascoe death, his son Junije went to Smederevo, where he did business next three years. Unlike his father he was not in service of Serbian Despots.[54]

The career of Damjan Đurđević (Damianus de Georgio) at the court of Despot Đurađ had a similar course to Paskoje Sorkočević. Like him he traded in Priština and Novo Brdo and became official of Serbian Despot in 1439.[55] Presumably, his first tasks were associated with Despot's desire to reach the Hungarian crown for himself or his son, after death of King Albert II in October 1439.[56] He followed the Despot during the whole "Long campaign" showing in this way devotion to the Serbian ruler. After Crusade during 1444 he also stayed in Buda when the Despot negotiated about the conclusion of peace with Ottomans.[57] In August 1444 he settled in Smederevo after restoration of Serbian state. Different from Sorkočević, he has never had any Serbian title. Regardless of this fact, Đurđević was influential person at the Despot's court. Ragusan chronicler Junii Restii marked him as "the chief adviser of the Despot".[58] In a certain sense he participated in the war that was waged in 1448 between Despot Đurađ and Bosnian King Stefan Tomaš (1443–1461). It is noted that he redeemed for 50 ducats Bosnian nobleman Radoje Bubanić, who was captured in mentioned war. Then, Damjan asked four times more money for the liberation of prisoner. Therefore, in May 1449 he was criticized by authorities of Ragusa, which demanded from him to seek only how much he gave and not to interfere in such affairs.[59] The last recommendation likely related to the prohibition of the Republic to its citizens that together with Despot army get out from the Serbia. In August 1451 Despot sent Damjan Đurđević to the Sultan Mehmed II to inform him of his own agreement with Janos Hunyadi. At the same time he was supposed to work against Duke Stefan Vukčić, who was

znanosti i umjetnosti 4 (1872): 194; Орбин, *Краљевство Словена*, 115–116; Михаило Динић, "Дубровчани као феудалци у Србији и Босни," *Историјски часопис* IX–X (1959): 146–147.

52 Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 414.

53 Орбин, *Краљевство Словена*, 115–116.

54 Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 415.

55 Ibid., 234; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 366–367.

56 Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 234–235.

57 Ibid, 279, 288–289, 291.

58 Joannis Gundulae, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, 304.

59 Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 431; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 334.

in war with Ragusa.[60] In connection with this conflict he was again in Edirne in autumn 1452 as emissary of Despot Đurađ.[61] When Sorkočević left Despot's service Damjan Đurđević became the most important Ragusan at the Serbian court. The Despot Đurađ had confidence in him to the end of his live. During November 1455 he took over Despot's gold that was stored in Ragusa.[62] The death of Despot Đurađ in December 1456 did not changed position of Damjan Đurđević. First, he was in service of Despot Lazar and then his brother Stefan and widow Jelena.[63] Damjan Đurđević died on 7 November of 1458 in Hungary, where he lived last few months. Afterward, four of his sons who lived with him in Smederevo, entered in the service of Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus (1458–1490).[64] It is interesting that Damjan Đurđević was mentioned in one epic poem as Voivode of Despot Đurađ under name Damjan Šainović. Also, one tower of the Smederevo fortress was called "Šain tower".[65] His testament testifies that he had a house in Smederevo, which was bequeathed to Despot Lazar.[66] There are indications that Damjan had estates in western part of Serbian Despotate. On the mountain Cer he possessed certain number of mining shafts.[67] It is possible that Damjan sold his immovable property at the end of 1457 when he disbanded commercial company, which had with members of family Crijević.[68]

Ragusan nobleman Alviz Rastć (Alovisius de Resti) was also in the service of Despot Đurađ. He belonged to the group of prominent merchants who operated in Novo Brdo.[69] In the autumn of 1446 he was commander of galleys which drove from Glarentza to Ragusa Helena Palaiologina, future wife of Despot Lazar Branković.[70] At the beginning of next year together with Marin Đurđević he was emissary of Ragusa on the occasion of wedding between Despot Lazar

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[60] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 453–454; Gundulae, *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii*, 307; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 366, 371.

[61] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 378.

[62] Медо Пуцић, *Споменици српски* II (Београд: Друштво Србске Словесности,1862), 101.

[63] Стојановић, *Повеље и писма* I–2, 29, 156–161; Iván Nagy, Albert Nyáry, *Magyar diplomácziai emlékek Matyás király korából (1458–1490)*, I (Budapest, 1875), 18; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 511, 520.

[64] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 528–529; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 368.

[65] Стојан Новаковић, "Велики челник Радич или Облачић Раде (1413–1435)," in С. Новаковић, *Историја и традиција* (Београд, 1982), 107.

[66] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 528–529.

[67] Момчило Спремић, "Јадар у средњем веку," in М. Спремић, *Прекинут успон. Српске земље у средњем веку* (Београд, 2005), 24–25; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 593–594.

[68] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 511, 529.

[69] Веселиновић, *Дубровачко Мало веће о Србији*, according to the index of book.

[70] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 417; Ћоровић, "Женидба деспота Лазара," 149; Недељковић, "Дубровник у сватима кнеза Лазара," 493–505, 509–510, 514–518; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 316.

and Helena Palaiologina. They had a duty to perform other tasks in favor of the Republic.[71] Certainly no later than 1448 Alviz Rastć entered in Despot's service.[72] Similar to Sorkočević and Đurđević, he also fulfilled diplomatic tasks for the Despot. During March 1450 he was in Ragusa, when took over a larger amount of Despot silver from deposit.[73] One Ragusan document from August 1451 designated him, Sorkočević and Đurđević as members of the Despot's secret council.[74] That fact indicates that he quickly gained trust of the Despot. Together with Serbian Voivode Jakša he took over in Ragusa trunk with documents of Despot Đurađ in summer of 1452.[75] The first months of 1453 Despot sent him to the Bosnian King Stefan Tomaš. His mission was probably related to the war between Ragusa and Duke Stefan Vukčić.[76] Alviz Rastć picked up treasure of Despot Đurađ from Ragusa on 2 October 1455.[77] It is unknown until when he was in the service of Serbian rulers. The last period of live he spent in Bosnia where composed his testament in September 1459.[78]

Among Ragusans, who were in the service of Despot Đurađ Branković, Nikola Radulinović (Nicola de Radulinovich) left the slightest trace in the sources. As merchant he worked in Belgrade, Srebrenica, Novo Brdo, Priština and Smederevo.[79] Certainly since 1448 he was in Despot's service. Always he was mentioned together with other Ragusans who served Despot. It seems that Nikola was tied to Đurađ Branković until 1451.[80]

From 1453 to 1456 Ragusan Junije Gradić (Junius de Gradi) went several times to the Italy as emissary of Despot Đurađ. He was hired by Despot, but practically did not reside at his court. After the fall of Constantinople 1453, Despot Đurađ sent the first time Junije to Italy. In October 1453 Junije visited the King of Naples Alfonso V Aragon (1442–1458) and Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455). However, his mission has not brought concrete result.[81] At the end of 1454,

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[71] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 421; Недељковић, "Дубровник у сватима кнеза Лазара," 521–523; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 321–322.

[72] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 353.

[73] Ibid, 353.

[74] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 371; Веселиновић, *Држава српских деспота*, 243.

[75] Пуцић, *Споменици српски* II, 101; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 374–375.

[76] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 482–483; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 409.

[77] Пуцић, *Споменици српски* II, 101.

[78] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 542; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 369.

[79] Iorga, *Notes et extraits* II, 440; Веселиновић, *Дубровачко Мало веће о Србији*, according to the index of book; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 353.

[80] Веселиновић, *Дубровачко Мало веће о Србији*, 557; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 353; Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 370.

[81] Thallóczy, Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára,* vol. II, 171–172; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 407–409.

after unsuccessful negotiations with Sultan Mehmed II, Despot Đurađ again engaged Gradić. From February to October 1455 he spoke with authorities of Venice, the Duke of Milan Francesco I Sforza (1450–1466), Pope Calliixtus III (1455–1458) and Marquis of Mantua to find rulers, who are ready to organize campaign against Ottomans. This mission has remained without effect.[82] The following year Junije Gradić unsuccessfully sought military assistance from the Pope and King Alfonso V for the Serbian Despot.[83] The end of his mission in Italy seems to have coincided with death of Despot Đurađ. The new Serbian ruler Despot Lazar Branković (1456–1458) made with Sulatn Mehmed II in January 1457 and therefore he did not need to engage Junije Gradić.[84] Other Ragusans in the service of Despot Đurađ were not directly related to his court.

Foreigners in the service of Serbian despots also descended from other coastal towns on the Adriatic Sea. Latin chancellor of Despot Stefan Lazarević and Despot Đurađ Branković was Nikola Arhilupis (Nicolaus de Archilupis) from Kotor (Cattaro). As a public notary and clerk of Despot Stefan and Đurađ Branković, he was first mentioned in August 1423.[85] Together with Nikola Vitomirović and Voivode Altoman he was member of Despot delegation at the negotiations with Venice in November 1433.[86] Nikola Arhilupis and Venetian notary Johannes de Reguardatis composed a peace treaty between Despot Đurađ and Republic of Venice in August 1435.[87] After fall of Smederevo in 1439 he followed Despot who was over him maintained communication with Venice during May and June 1440.[88] A few months after restoration of Serbian Despotate, Nikola Arhilupis died in Smederevo. Among witnesses in his testament are listed Paskoje Sorkočević and Alviz Rastić. He left behind large amount of money, jewelry, expensive cloths and many valuable books.[89] The personality

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[82] Вићентије Макушев, *Историјски споменици Јужних Словена и околних народа из италијанских архива и библиотека*, књ. 2, Ђенова, Мантова, Милано, Палермо, Турин (Београд: Гласник Српског ученог друштва, 1882), 86–87; Thallóczy, Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára,* vol. II, 191; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 427, 457–459.

[83] Макушев, *Историјски споменици*, 197; Thallóczy, Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára,* vol. II, 217; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 475–476.

[84] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 508.

[85] Sime Ljubić, *Listine o odnošajih između Južnoga Slavenstva i Mletačke Republike*, vol. VIII (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti, 1886), 253.

[86] Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 80; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 164.

[87] Ljubić, *Listine* IX, 84–85.

[88] Ibid., 119–120; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 239.

[89] Десанка Ковачевић-Којић, "О библиотеци Николе из Котора канцелара на двору срспких деспота," *Zbornik radova Filozofskog fakulteta u Sarajevu* 7, *Spomenica S. Nazečića* (1972): 415–419; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 309–310, 353.

of Jovan, who was mentioned in 1452 as Latin notary of Despot Đurađ, it is not known closer.[90]

Finally, it is necessary to mention Turks Ibrahim who was courtier of Despot Đurađ. In 1441 he was with Despot in Ragusa.[91] It is interesting that Ottomans controlled large part of Serbian territory in this moment.

During the reign of Despot Đurađ Branković foreigners had a significant role at his court. The prominent Byzantines have gained power thanks to Irene Kantakouzene, Despot's wife. Her brothers Thomas and George proved to be capable military commanders. On the other hand Thomas was marked by Ragusans as a corrupt man. The Serbian folk traditions also had negative attitudes toward the Byzantines.[92] Despot Đurađ hired Ragusans primarily because of their diplomatic skills. He chose merchants who have long did business in Serbian towns. The sources stressed that they had a great influence on the politics of Despot Đurađ. The actions of Ragusans in Despot's service were sometimes limited by the political interest of their hometown. Unlike the previous period, some foreigners had an estates on territory of Despotate and because that they were considered as Serbian noblemen.

STRĂINI ÎN SLUJBA DESPOTULUI ĐURAĐ BRANKOVIĆ PE TERITORIUL SERBIEI

Rezumat

În timpul domniei despotului Đurađ Branković (1427–1456), influenţa străinilor a crescut în Serbia. După căderea Tesalonicului în mâinile otomanilor, mulţi bizantini de seamă au decis să vină în Serbia. Printre aceştia s-a aflat şi Irene Kantakouzene, soţia lui Despot Đurađ. Spre sfârşitul celui de-al patrulea deceniu al secolului al XV-lea, fratele său, Thomas Kantakouzenos, a devenit cel mai puternic om de la curtea despotului din Smederevo. Raguzanii aflaţi în serviciul despotului au îndeplinit mai ales sarcini diplomatice pentru acesta. Adesea, acţiunile lor erau limitate de hotărârile autorităţilor din Ragusa. Raguzanul Paskoje Sorkočević a fost singurul străin care a deţinut un titlu sârbesc, în calitatea sa de administrator al finanţelor domnitorului. Nicola Arhilupus din Cattaro a fost cancelarul latin al despotului. În sfârşit, turcul Ibrahim a fost curtean al lui Đurađ. Străinii au avut un rol important datorită poziţiei politice specifice a statului sârb pe durata existenţei acestuia, în secolul al XV-lea. Unii dintre aceştia au deţinut moşii pe teritoriul Serbiei şi datorită acestui fapt aparţin clasei nobilimii sârbe.

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[90] Thallóczy, Áldásy, *Magyarország melléktartományainak oklevéltára,* vol. II, 165–166; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 498.

[91] Јиречек, *Историја Срба* II, 379–380; Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 750.

[92] Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић*, 662–663.