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THE BAKIĆES AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE SOCIAL RISE OF VLACH FAMILIES IN THE EARLY OTTOMAN PERIOD

Abstract: During the period of Ottoman penetration and stabilization in the Balkans, one community within what was then Serbian society gained importance. They were pastoralists who were referred to in documents of the time as Vlachs. Vlach communities that specialized in extensive pastoralism are recorded in the oldest documents related to medieval Serbia from the end of the twelfth and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries. Over time, these groups took on a Serbian ethnicity. The collapse of classical feudalism and the specific Ottoman system, especially in the hinterlands and sparsely populated areas, gave the Vlach communities opportunities for meaningful social progress. The paper analyzes the rise of the Vlach Bakić family, who rose to power during the second half of the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries, first within the Ottoman Empire and then later within Habsburg Hungary.

Keywords: Vlachs, Bakići, pastoralism, migrations.

The Ottoman invasion of what is now the Balkans ended several states, including the medieval Serbian successor states of Nemanjić Serbia. The Ottoman government replaced the higher social strata, which had grown out of the centuries-old development of Serbian medieval society, including their economic, cultural, and value systems. From the ruins of that medieval world, only remnants of the medieval church remained, leaving the area without significant protectors. Minor Christian nobles, who tried to fit into the new circumstances brought about by the Ottoman state, and the Vlach population emerged during this period and underwent significant social and economic expansion. Some representatives of Vlach families attained important positions in the social hierarchy of the new state, and among them one of the most important, if not the most important, was Pavle Bakić, a member of a family who began to rise within the Ottoman Empire and continued to do so later within the rival Habsburg monarchy.

1. The Vlachs

Mentions of the Vlachs of in the Balkans date to the early Middle Ages. Questions

about their origins, social organization, language, ethnic structure, and many others still remain unanswered. The reasons for this are twofold. The first is due to the small number and poor quality of historical sources that make reference of them, and the second is that for a long time they were not considered to be of much interest for the national histories of the various Balkan countries that created themes, directions, and research methodologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in which there was not much room for the study of Balkan Vlach communities.¹

With the arrival of the Ottomans and the introduction of a specific kind of administration through census books created to serve the fiscal needs of the state, which have been preserved in large numbers, it became possible to gain a sense of the scope and importance of the Vlach communities in this area. Moreover, for various reasons, these communities experienced a true expansion in the early Ottoman period, and some Vlach families made significant advancements within the new society.

Experts now agree that the Vlachs were descendants of the Balkan Peninsula's Romanized pre-Slavic population. Over time, they were slavized, but over time, this process was very uneven, and cannot be traced through historical sources. Most of the Vlachs were absorbed into Slavic culture, but some smaller groups have, until recently, maintained their linguistic and ethnic distinctiveness.

The first reliable mentions of Vlachs date from the eleventh century. They are mentioned as a very important group in Thessaly that took part in the Greek, Vlach and Slav uprising.² A brief description from mid-twelfth century of their area by the Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela still survives.³ During the Bulgarian uprising against Byzantium at the end of the twelfth century and in the following decades, the Vlach element proved to be a very important factor in the restoration of the Bulgarian state.⁴ According to several historical sources, the Vlachs occupied large parts of Thessaly at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁵

Vlachs were first mentioned in the medieval Serbian state at the end of the twelfth century, but since there are no diplomatic sources predating this period, this does not necessarily mean they were not present earlier.⁶ Moreover, existing documents, which include the charters issued by the rulers of the Nemanjić Dynasty to various monasteries, indicate the process of slavization was fairly advanced by then. Judging by the names of the Vlachs mentioned at that time, those in the Nemanjić state had already been slavized.⁷

¹ For a review of literature about the Vlachs see: Mirdita 2002: 201–218; 2004; 2009; Mužić 2010; Miljković 2010: 5–22.

² VIINJ, III, 2007, 213–215. This information is valuable not only because the Vlachs are mentioned as a significant ethnic group, but also because of descriptions of transhumance in the Balkans during this period.

³ Adler, N, M, 1907, 11.

⁴ VIINJ, III, 2007, 154–156, 158–159, 161–162, 170–171.

⁵ Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe, 102–103 and 155–156. provides a more detailed overview of sources and literature on this issue.

⁶ Zbornik, 2011, 69. Vlachs are mentioned in one of the oldest medieval diplomatic Serbian documents, *the Chrysabull/Golden Bull of the Monk Simeon to the Hilandar Monastery* issued sometime between June 1198 and February 13, 1199.

⁷ Monumenta serbica, 12–13, and 58–61. Zbornik, 2011, 91–92, 230, 279–280, 371–375, Fostikov 2014. In the late twelfth-century *Žiča Charter*, the mid-thirteenth century *Chrysabull/Golden Bull of King Stefan Uroš to*

Analyses of the territorial distribution of the Vlachs in the Nemanjić state show they lived in an area stretching from modern-day North Macedonia, through Kosovo, and into Herzegovina and Montenegro. Since the surviving church charters provide the most information about the eastern areas of the Nemanjić state, it can also be assumed that there were a significant number of them in the westernmost areas, as can be seen from the earliest Ottoman documentation dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. Material from the Dubrovnik archives, from the time when the documentation of the Republic was kept in more detailed series, records Vlachs in the wider vicinity of Dubrovnik in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁸ Information about the Vlachs in medieval Croatia from the beginning of the fourteenth century confirm their very early presence in the westernmost parts of the Balkan Peninsula.⁹

The decline of medieval feudalism and the Ottoman state's need for multiple forms of expansion greatly affected the Vlach's then already partially feudalized and territorialized organization, which became predominant in some areas and expanded significantly in others.

The brutal war with which the Ottomans conquered some areas of the Balkans and the Pannonian Plain left a vacuum, which the Vlachs filled with significant support from the state. The Ottomans' need to stabilize the new regions economically, demographically, and in terms of security greatly benefited the demographically strong Vlach communities from Herzegovina, Stari Vlach, and other areas. In a short period of just a few decades, the Vlach *katuns* (pastoralist villages) from these areas expanded into the Sanjak of Smederevo, areas of the former Bosnian state and, in the first decades of the sixteenth century, into southern Hungary, the Dalmatian Hinterland, Lika, today's western Slavonia and other areas.¹⁰ Thus, according to a census of the Sanjak of Herzegovina from the second half of the fifteenth century, 7,000 Vlach households lived there. A census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1476 recorded 7,600 Vlach houses in comparison to 15,000 households located on other types of holdings. According to the 1516 census, there were around 12,000 Vlach houses in this sanjak. Internal Vlach self-government became more organized in the early Ottoman period. During the colonization process, the organization of *knežinas* was strengthened. Its leaders were referred to as *knez* or *primikür* and sometimes as *katunar* or *voyvoda*. *Filuri* privileges, which consisted of paying taxes per house rather than by the number of adult males, were a significant social advantage that was maintained during colonization process.¹¹

During this process, powerful Vlach families emerged who not only progressed economically as resettlement organizers, but also managed to find places in the Ottoman security and administrative structures. At the end of the fifteenth and in the first decades of

the Monastery of the Church of the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul on the river Lim, and in the *Chrysobull/Golden Bull of King Stefan Uroš II Milutin to Hilandar* (probably from 1282) and its transcript in the mid-fourteenth century *Collective Charter of Kings Milutin and Stefan Dušan to the Hilandar Monastery*, most of the Vlach names have a Slavic basis.

⁸ Skok 1919: 306. The Vlachs were mentioned twice in 1305.

⁹ Klaić 2010: 9–18. The Vlachs were a significant military factor in Mladen Šubić's army, which clashed with a coalition of Croatian feudal lords near Bliska in 1322.

¹⁰ Vasić 2005a: 33–50. Hrabak 1990: 84–85.

¹¹ Vasić 2005a: 102–103.

the sixteenth centuries, the Bakić family also rose to prominence.

The earliest information concerning this family comes from the period when the Ottomans delineated the Sanjak of Smederevo in the area where the former Serbian Despotate had been.

The Ottomans fully applied their policy of tolerance toward the conquered Christian population while they organized the sanjak. Various groups from the local population were included in the Ottoman feudal system and were used for further military expansion. Numerous Serbian petty feudal lords and soldiers then received small *timars* (land possessions). The process of integrating into the new Ottoman state was gradual and without a radical transformation in the basic system of spiritual values.¹²

In many areas, and especially in the western parts of the Balkans, the Ottomans faced a serious shortage of peasants, and in some parts it took almost a full century after the conquest to resolve these issues.¹³ Because of their mobility and way of life, entire groups of Vlach pastoralists were an ideal element for colonizing depopulated areas. This process, despite not taking place evenly and simultaneously, ended with large groups of the population being relocated closer to the northern and western borders of the Ottoman state.¹⁴

The Ottoman Empire made a great effort to demographically and militarily strengthen the areas of Bosnia and the former Despotate, which had been conquered in the middle of the fifteenth century. It was a rather difficult task. Many areas were sparsely populated, and it was necessary to increase revenues and strengthen the empire's military power. At that time, the Vlach communities were practically the only demographic source, and at the same time were quite powerful. The link between the Ottoman administration and the Vlach leaders established during this period would prove to be of crucial importance as well as mutually advantageous. These processes took decades to complete, and the results would provide mutual benefits: the Ottomans attained well-populated and militarily strong border areas, and the Vlach knezes and other elders advanced socially and were included in the Ottoman administrative and military apparatuses.¹⁵

Given that it was located in the hinterland, the Sanjak of Smederevo would be designated as the *serhad* until the fall of Buda in 1541. During the second half of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, the Ottoman regime was quite successful in settling the population in the semi-deserted areas of this regions and creating an efficient administration that was accepting of newcomers. During this period, the Vlachs settled in the sanjak, mostly from the mountainous areas in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula. The settlement of the Vlachs in lowland counties throughout the Balkans happened spontaneously as a result of changes in herding and a weakening of the feudal organization, which had begun even earlier. Planned Ottoman colonization would give the process wider ramifications by using it to serve the needs of the state. This was especially pronounced in the Sanjak of Smederevo.¹⁶ Because they had entered into resettlement agreements, the Vlachs would begin the process of resettlement within the Ottoman feudal system as a group

¹² Inaldžik 2003: 20–21.

¹³ Inaldžik 2003: 174.

¹⁴ Vasić 2005a: 176–177.

¹⁵ Vasić 2005a: 34–35, and 297. Đurđev and Vasić 2005: 108–117.

¹⁶ Vasić 2005c: 71–84.

rather than individually while retaining their clan, *katun*, and their sometimes almost tribal organization. The settlement of the Vlachs in the Sanjak of Smederevo happened in waves that cannot be fully traced in terms of exactly when and where. After the arrival of one of those waves, a significant Vlach organization of knezes was created in this sanjak, which even had a high chieftain with a timar that produced an income of more than 10,000 *akçe*. It was ruled by knezes and lower chieftains, *premikürs*. Out of the many chieftain-led families, numerous dependent villages, *katuns*, and the development and territorial scope of the *knezin*as, the Bakić family and some others emerged.

2. Rise of the Bakić Family

Something of the family's original development can be gleaned from the early Ottoman *defters* (administrative registers). Thus, the *defters* lists for the Sanjak of Smederevo from the second half of the fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century also include information about Vlach communities and a wide range of information about the Bakić families.¹⁷ The *defters* themselves vary significantly from each other in terms of census methodology and structure. Some of them do not include the Vlach population organized into *knezin*as, while others do not contain information about the chieftain-led clans among the Vlachs, which, of course, makes it difficult to draw conclusions, especially when trying to follow the dynamics of various processes.¹⁸ Deciphering the Turkish form of the Perso-Arabic script presents a significant problem for locating toponyms. Different sounds can be written in the same way, and the absence of diacritics and reference letters for vowels are also complicating factors. These limitations result in inaccuracies in reading the names of most of the places mentioned, including personal names, even when researchers use toponomastic and onomastic analyses as aids. For these reasons, different editions of the same *defters* differ greatly from each other when the material is transcribed.¹⁹ At the beginning of the reign of Suleiman the Conqueror, a new

¹⁷ The known *defters* for the Sanjak of Smederevo still have not been published in full. Sections referring to Belgrade and its surroundings were published by H. Šabanović in 1964, and sections referring to some areas of western Serbia by Aličić 1984–1985.

¹⁸ Experts are aware of several *defters* for the Sanjak of Smederevo:

- a) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo 1476, Ottoman Archives of the Turkish Prime Minister's Office, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (hereinafter BBA), N° 16.
- b) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1516, BBA, N° 1007
- c) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1525, BBA, N° 978.
- d) Summary census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1523, BBA, N° 135.
- e) List of names of Vlachs in the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1528, BBA, N° 1011 and No. 144.
- f) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo compiled between 1525 and 1559 (two manuscripts have been preserved), National Library in Vienna, MHT 629 and BBA, N° 187.
- g) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1559/60. years BBA, N° 316.
- h) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo from 1572, BBA, No 517.
- i) Detailed census of the Sanjak of Smederevo compiled after 1572, National Library in Vienna, MHT 608.

¹⁹ The Ottoman census of three Bakić *knezin*as (which are known from detailed *defters*), published by M. Vasić, 2005. The census of Radovan Bakić's *knezina* was later published by Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 70–102, and *knežine* Vuksana Bakića, Šabanović 1964: 92–104. There are significant differences in the transcriptions of personal names, and, in particular, of place names. For these reasons, there are several possible locations, so

type of detailed defter appeared, which did not mention the names of *spahis*, Vlach knezes and other Ottoman feudal lords, or information about their incomes. This is a significant limitation when investigating the dynamics of the development of estates, including the knezinas and the influence of the Bakić family. However, information from later defters concerning members of the Bakić family who were ordinary Vlachs or had some lower function leaves some room to draw conclusions.

Researchers have noted the existence of five knezinas ruled by members of this family in Ottoman and Christian documents.²⁰ These were the knezinas of Radovan, Pavle, Herak, Vuksan and Nikola Bakić. Some are only mentioned incidentally, as is the case with knezina of Nikola Bakić, and there is a lot of information about others. Thus, we know about the knezina of Pavle Bakić indirectly through documents of Christian origin. The remaining three knezinas are listed in detail in the Ottoman administrative registers.

The Bakić knezina is first mentioned in the 1476 defter for the Sanjak of Smederevo. Among the twenty or so of the largest knezinas listed, the knezina of Radovan Bakić was the largest in many elements.²¹ In addition to knez Radovan, his two sons, Selak and Herak, are also listed. The knezina included around seventy villages scattered over a wide area around the present-day towns of Užice, Požega, and Arilje. From the census, we also learn about the entire administrative apparatus of the knezina, which was made up of numerous premikürs (37) and *ratays* (28 in separate villages and 38 with premikürs and knezes). Knez Radovan had the village of Rupeljevo under his direct administration. Also, a part of the population of the villages of Drežnik and Zborišnica were designated as Radovan's ratays. The remaining part of the village of Drežnik belonged to his premikür, Todor Đurđević, and the village of Zborišnica to a premikür under knez Pribikar.²²

Due to its size, this knezina had a significantly higher number of premikürs than the others listed in this sanjak. Some primikürs were obviously very influential and had more villages and people under their control than knez Radovan Bakić himself had. Thus, the premikür Vukašin, the son of Radonja, controlled seven villages, and Selak, the son of Oliver, oversaw five. However, most of the premikürs controlled only one village (21 premikürs). The jurisdictions of certain premikürs were even smaller. Thus, Šobat's brother Šain and Milosav Velisalić held half of the villages of Mišnik and Konević. Resan Gostišić controlled half of the village of Trnavica, which he shared with Grubac Gostišić (most likely his brother), who had jurisdiction over three other villages. Premikür Vukša, son of Raca, had four ratay houses with three *tâbi'as* in the village of Veljanovci.²³

At that time, the knezina of the prominent Vlach knez Maloga, who was the leader of the Vlachs in the Sanjak of Smederevo, had several villages fewer than Radovan Bakić's the knezina.²⁴ Not all knezina were so populous and contained so many villages. Thus, the

it is impossible to determine exactly where the knezina was located. In this paper, translations from all authors have been used, which is stated precisely in the notes.

²⁰ Vasić 2005a: 229–255 and Lemajić 2006: 209–336.

²¹ Radovan was among the few knezes with a recorded last name. For almost all others, only the father's name is mentioned. He had more villages than the Vlach leader knez Maloga.

²² Aličić 1984–1985 vol. I: 86 and 135.

²³ This is more than the number of ratay for most knezes.

²⁴ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 28–64.

smallest knezina, which was under the jurisdiction of Miloš Bojovčević, had only two villages with 22 houses and 18 *tâbi'as*.²⁵ There were a total of 828 houses with 510 *tâbi'as* in Radovan's knezina. In addition, 24 more *tekliçes* and two widowed households were recorded. All the villages of his knezina belonged to the Brvenik kadiluk. A geographical analysis of the knezina also reveals its initial core and, indirectly, the original area from which the inhabitants of this and later Bakić knezinas spread.²⁶ The largest number of villages was concentrated to the south and southeast of Užice, between the Moravica and Detinja Rivers. The villages extended further to the north, but became more sparse.²⁷ The villages of the knezina were quite densely located at its core, although there were some further away, which would seem to indicate expansion to the north. Many of these places are not mentioned in later censuses, which indirectly confirms that they were deserted and the inhabitants moved to other areas. Information on a very small number of *tâbi'as* in relation to the number of houses confirms that a large patriarchal *zadruga* had not yet been formed, and that the inhabitants of the knezina had not been subject to the Ottoman tax system for very long. It is not possible to determine whether the inhabitants of the knezina were indigenous to the area, or if they had settled there around the time of the census. Due to geographical characteristics and information from the time of the Serbian medieval state, it can be assumed that this area (Stari Vlah) had been inhabited by Vlachs even before the census. This first known of Bakić knezina could have been created through Ottoman rule, but most likely the clan had already branched out and had been powerful and influential even before this period.

The next known census of this knezina wasn't conducted until 1528. During this period of over fifty years, the knezina underwent significant changes. At that time, this knezina was ruled by the knez Herak Bakić. It's not certain if he was the son of the Radovan Bakić mentioned in the census from 1476 or a later descendant. Also listed along with Herak were his four brothers, Todor, Pavko, Mihail, and Vujica. This is the same knezina that was listed fifty-two years earlier. It now had a significantly smaller number of villages than Radovan Bakić's knezina, did not have a smaller number of inhabitants and households, and had even surpassed it in some indicators of development. An examination of the changes that took place in the knezina during this period shows the number of villages decreased to forty, among which only five had been mentioned in the previous census as being part of the knezina. As mentioned previously, the new villages had spread throughout the area of the older knezina, but now there was no clear center. Contrary to the usual development, the knezina was not territorialized, and its population spread out into a larger area. This most likely is because part of the population probably went to northern Serbia, which in the meantime had become densely populated. Administratively, the knezina was no longer part of the Brvenik kadiluk, and was now within the Užice kadiluk, which was a result of a new administrative division carried out after the initial 1476 census. The knezina in Herak Bakić's estate had intertwined with other knezinas, and in some places the villages were inhabited by different groups of settlers, as was the case in the village of Karan, where three

²⁵ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 69–70.

²⁶ This pattern is what points to Stari Vlach rather than to Herzegovina, c.f. *Istorija srpskog naroda*, II: 474.

²⁷ Vasić 1957: 228.

houses with nine *tâbi*'as belonged to the Herak's knezina, and six houses with fifteen *tâbi*'as and four *baštinas* belonged to the knezina of knez Vuk, son of Vojin.²⁸ The increase in the number of inhabitants and the enlargement of families are the main differences that stand out when comparing the knezina with the information from the census carried out fifty years before. The changes were also reflected the knezina's administrative system, which had been altered from the previous system. There were fewer *premikürs* before (21), there are more *ratayas* (from 54 to 68 *tâbi*'as), and there were no *tekliçs* at all. The first traces of Islamization were also apparent within this knezina (a total of three houses with nine *tâbi*'as). Although the number of houses decreased, the number of *tâbi*'as in houses increased significantly (635 houses with 1,480 *tâbi*'as compared to 828 houses with 510 *tâbi*'as in the older census). The census of the knezina also records a large number of *baštinas* (112 ordinary and 17 *ratay*), which had not existed earlier, along with two *mezra*'as, two *mukâta*'as and one monastery. Unlike his predecessor, Herak Bakić had a large number of villages under his direct administration, namely Katiće, Rečice, Ismokrenik (?), Donji Dražić, and Grdoviće. It is certain that the Ottoman tax system largely caused the changes that took place in the knezina during these fifty years. Vlach privileges were essentially reflected in the fact that the basic unit on which they paid taxes was by house rather than by the number of male inhabitants, and over time the number of men in one house increased significantly. This tax condition led to other changes in the knezina's internal organization. The patriarchal *zadruga* became the basic form for how inhabitants were organized.

In the area of Stari Vlach, in addition to these two knezinas, there was probably also a knezina belonging to Nikola, son of Vuk Bakić. No direct documentation concerning this knezina has survived, and it could be indirectly concluded that the knezina could have been located near Požega, based on information about Nikola's *timar*, which included the village of Opaljenik most likely located nearby. According to some hypotheses, this information dates from 1540–1545.²⁹

In addition to the of Bakić knezinas located in Stari Vlah, we also know from a somewhat later period about the knezinas in Šumadija. Their origin is certainly connected with the extensive settlement of Vlachs in Šumadija. The precise period when these numerous Vlach settlements in northern Serbia and Šumadija occurred cannot be completely reliably determined. Some demographic calculations indicate that the Sanjak of Smederevo had 17,700 houses (0.95 per square kilometer) in 1491, and between 1520 and 1530 there were 106,861 houses (5.74 per square kilometer).³⁰ Over a period of about thirty years, the number of households increased sixfold. No such quantitative demographic changes took place in any of the other sanjaks in the Balkan Peninsula. In several sanjaks, the number of households even remained completely unchanged. The sudden population increase in the Sanjak of Smederevo can be explained by its position on the border and the need to concentrate many auxiliary troops of *martolos*, *voynuks*, and Vlachs for the Ottoman expansion into Pannonia and Central Europe.

²⁸ Vasić 1957: 232.

²⁹ Bojanić 1974: 48. Šabanović dates this defter to 1536 (Šabanović 1964: p. VIII), and Aličić believes it was created after 1525 but before 1559. Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 19).

³⁰ Todorov 1960: 211–213.

Many aspects concerning what the relationships and connections were like between the knezinas led by the Bakić family in Stari Vlah and Šumadija remain unclear. Observations of the Bakić knezinas in Šumadija (those of Pavle and Vuksan Bakić) and the knezinas in Stari Vlah, lead to a reasonable assumption of some level of interconnectedness. The largest part of the Vlach population in Sanjak of Smederevo had moved there from Stari Vlach or Herzegovina. The geographical structure of the first Vlach knezinas to be recorded in a census suggests it is somewhat probable that the Bakićes had been in the area long before the 1476 census, but this certainly does not exclude a second possibility that they had recently arrived from Herzegovina.³¹ This, of course, makes it difficult to understand relations between the Bakić knezes. It's not possible to determine whether all the Bakić knezinas originated from the oldest knezina of 1476, or if they had an even earlier base. One possible and quite probable hypothesis is that after 1476, a part of the population led by some members of the Bakić family moved from the Bakić knezina to modern-day Šumadija. We know that the oldest known knezina was under the jurisdiction of Radovan Bakić and his sons, Selak and Herak. The later census of this knezina mentions knez Herak Bakić and with him four brothers, Todor, Pavko, Mihailo, and Vujica. A comparison of the given names of the Bakićes from Šumadija, those known from both Ottoman and Hungarian sources, shows some similarities to the names of Bakićes in Stari Vlah.³² The name of Radovan, the chieftain of the knezina from 1476, does appear among the Bakićes of Šumadija, and neither do those of his sons, Selak and Herak. This would be very unusual if this was the same family, considering the custom of repeating personal names in the second generation, and especially considering the possible importance of Radovan in the family's rise. This would lead to a hypothesis that perhaps one of these branches of the family did not descend directly from Radovan. These two branches could be from one extended clan, part of which was not recorded in the first known census for the Sanjak of Smederevo, perhaps because it had not yet settled at that time, or for some other reason.³³

The Bakić family knezinas mentioned in Šumadija in the sixteenth century most likely came from their original homeland, whether it was the knezina in Stari Vlah, or the powerful, extended clan from an earlier area not recorded in documents.

Along with the knezina in Stari Vlah, the census of 1528 also recorded the knezina in the Belgrade *nâhiye*, and was governed by Vuksan Bakić.³⁴ The 1476 census, created

³¹ A review of the oldest known census of Herzegovina did not reveal anyone with the surname Bakić among either the Vlach headsmen or among the Vlachs and other dependent categories of the population, Aličić 1985.

³² Radovan, Selak, and Herak are mentioned in Stari Vlah in 1476, and Herak, Todor, Pavko, Mihail, and Vujica in 1528. In Šumadija and Hungary, the following names associated with Bakić are mentioned: "Pavle, Petar, Komnen, Manojlo, Dimitrije, Mihajlo, Vuksan."

³³ The Bakić genealogies in the Ottoman Empire and Hungary cannot be reliably connected. If we accept the assumption that Radovan Bakić is the direct ancestor of all the Bakićes from the knez families, it is possible to create a connected family tree. This can only be done if certain hypotheses are assumed to be correct. Thus, Herak Bakić is mentioned in the censuses from 1476 and 1528, but it's not clear if these refer to one or two people. If one accepts the assumption that the Herak mentioned in 1528 is the grandson of an older Herak, and his brother Todor was also Todor, son of Dimitrij Bakić, who is mentioned in 1516 as the owner of a timar, it is possible to connect the Hungarian and Ottoman Bakićes. Petar Bakić's father, the cousin of Pavle Bakić, was also named Dimitrije. By equating these two Dimitrijes, the following family tree is obtained (Fig. 1).

³⁴ It is not known what kind of relationship this knezina had with Pavle Bakić's. It is more likely that it existed

more than fifty years earlier, did not include this area. It was apparently uninhabited, or perhaps not listed for some other reason. At the time, nearby Belgrade was still in the possession of Hungary. The settlement of the Vlachs most certainly occurred between 1476 and 1528. The new Bakić knezina was located around today's Mladenovac and Ralje and was made up of thirty villages. Six Vlach knezinas were listed in this *nâhiye*. In all of these knezinas, there were three premikürs. Vuksan Bakić's knezina was of medium size. The largest knezina in this area, which was governed by Rusmir Raičević, had about 900 houses. None of knez Vuksan Bakić's immediate family members were listed. For some reason, premikürs, ratays, and tekliçs were not recorded, which, of course, does not mean they weren't there. All the villages in the knezina were located very close to each other, and perhaps this concentration of villages in a smaller area also influenced the reduction of the knezina's administrative apparatus. The knezina had a total of 252 houses with 315 baštinas, 9 widowed households and three Muslim houses with three tâbi'as. The families in this knezina were significantly smaller than the families in the Herak Bakić's knezina. It's likely that parts of families from overly large patriarchal zadrugas with sufficient earnings from their given lands to cover their tax burden took part in the formation of these new knezinas.



Fig. 1. Genealogy of The Bakić Family

Pavle Bakić's knezina was located in the region of modern-day Šumadija, probably somewhat south of Vuksan Bakić's knezina, at least according to somewhat ill-defined Hungarian sources. This knezina is not recorded in any of the surviving Ottoman census books, because those compiled in this period before it passed to Hungary included a list of timars but no Vlach knezinas. Information from Hungarian sources show that his knezina was quite large and included around fifty villages.³⁵ The entire area was referred to as "Bakić's land". However, it's not possible to determine the exact location of Pavle's estates from the available sources. Pavle Bakić's estates were also mentioned by Vrančić, a travel writer who passed through the area in 1553 on his way to Constantinople.³⁶ A delegation that included Vrančić traveled along the right bank of the Morava and arrived in the village

at the same time as Pavle's knezina, rather than being a remnant of it.

³⁵ Fraknoi 1882: 87–88.

³⁶ Matković 1884: 22.

of Livada in the Lomnica forest on the Jasenica River. Vrančić noted that, while passing through, they discovered they were near the house of Pavle Bakić, called Venčac, where he had lived before he fled to Hungary. Venčac is not particularly close to Lomnica, and Vrančić certainly did not come by this information accidentally. He was personally acquainted with many Bakićes, so it would not have been odd for him to inquire along the way about their estates in Serbia. This certainly refers to the Venčac mountain not far from today's Arandjelovac, which is quite far from the Morava river valley. Folk tradition provides some indirect confirmation of this by identifying some ruins at the top of Venčac as Bakićes castle.³⁷ During the Ottoman campaign in Hungary in 1526, the vanguard made camp in some estates that had previously belonged to Pavle Bakić and were located two short days' walk from Šabac.³⁸ This would seem to confirm information about Venčac as the center of the knezina. It is not possible to determine how this knezina was connected to the other Bakić knezinas, but it is certain that they were related. Pavle himself mentioned several times that he had left many relatives behind in Turkey.³⁹ A document from the late sixteenth century mentions the names of Pavle and Petar Bakić's fathers.⁴⁰ Pavle's father was Komnen, and Petar's was Dimitrije, but even they cannot be linked to the Bakićes mentioned in the Ottoman sources.⁴¹ One exception is information about the timar belonging to Todor, son of Dimitrij Bakić. The timar was located near the area where Pavle Bakić's estates were.⁴² However, there is nothing else to confirm that these were Petar Bakić's brother and father.

As part of their social progress, the Bakićes were not only knezes; some are also mentioned as owners of timars. Some were known to be both knezes and timar holders. For example, it was noted that the aforementioned Todor, son of Dimitrije Bakić, was in possession of a timar in 1516.⁴³ It consisted of the village of Manulovac (Manojlovci) with six Christian and three Muslim houses, one baština and six mills, and the village of Kudreša, which had only three houses. Manulovac is probably today's village of Manojlovci, located to the north of Kragujevac. In 1523, the timar of Herak, son of Bakić, was recorded.⁴⁴ This probably is referring to the knez Herak Bakić. His timar was recorded as the crossroads in the villages of Rača and Podralje. Half of the income from Rača belonged to Herak. The

³⁷ Milićević 1876: 231.

³⁸ *Relationes* 1884: 399.

³⁹ Radonić 1909: 1–2.

⁴⁰ Ivić 1929: 438. (As part of the notes in this book, Aleksa Ivić published a large number of documents, mostly from the Viennese archives, which had been previously unknown.) A history of the family was submitted to the Diocese of Győr by Nicholas Báthory on May 6, 1582, based on a presentation by Martin Cobor, grandson of Angelina, daughter of Pavle Bakić.

⁴¹ Unless if one does not accept the extremely hypothetical family tree presented in footnote 33.

⁴² Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 297, believes the village of Manojlovac northwest of Kragujevac is identical to the village of Manulovac mentioned as part of the timar. Vasić 1957: 238, lists both villages that made up the timar: Mano(j)lovce, which he locates near Orašac, and Kudreš near Golubac.

⁴³ It was noted that Vlachs were living in the village of Mano(j)lovce who paid their taxes to the department. Mention is also made of Muhammad, Karadžoz, and Mahmud, sons of Abdullah, who were probably Islamicized Vlachs with specific obligations.

⁴⁴ Aličić 1984–1985 vol. I: 26–27. Vasić reads these places as Rača, Nova Dralja, and Korsovica (Vasić 1957: 232–233).

Kruševica mazra'a also belonged to this timar and the total revenue was 4,060 *akçes*. Nikola, son of Vuk Bakić and a knez and timariot, is mentioned in an undated census from some time between 1525 and 1529.⁴⁵ The village of Opaljenik near Požega is registered as his timar, with an income of 3,000 *akçes*.⁴⁶ As mentioned earlier, there is no other information about this knez's knezina. The mention of several Bakićes as timariots clearly illustrates that not a small number of Vlach knezes were part of the timar system in the Sanjak of Smederevo as a new level of upward mobility within this sanjak's Ottoman structures.

Some Bakićes are mentioned in other military ranks. Hence, the census of the inhabitants of Železnik from 1528 also mentions Nikola Bakić. In this census, the population is divided into *odas*, as a military order. There were a total of seventeen *odas* in Železnik. Nikola Bakić was also mentioned as an *oda-bashi*, the commander of one of the *odas*. In addition to Nikola, Vuk Bakić and nineteen other people are mentioned as belonging to this *oda*.⁴⁷ In the next census, the population was divided into eighteen *mahalas*, but there is no one among them with the surname Bakić.⁴⁸ In a list of Christians in Rudnik, Stepan Bakić is mentioned.⁴⁹ Several Bakićes were also noted as having the status of ordinary Vlachs. Thus, in 1476, Radohna Bakić and his son Božin, who lived in the village of Lisica, were mentioned.⁵⁰ In 1525, probably in the same village of Lisica (Vinkovice), it was mentioned that the *baština* of a certain Radosav, son of Bogdan, was located in the estate of Todor Bakić.⁵¹ In 1528 Bakićes were also recorded in the village of Vranice, where Nikola, son of Bakić, lived, and with him Radovan, his brother Petko, his brother, and his son Voje.⁵² In the same census, Voja, son of Bakić, and Jakša, son of Bakić, were recorded in the village of Hrbočevo.⁵³ A census conducted between 1525 and 1529 mentions Petrosav, son of Bakić, and Radosav, son of Bakić, in the village of Grabovac, whose inhabitants guarded the Trisatica mountain pass.⁵⁴ In 1559/60, in the village of Bakila, the *baština* of Radivoje, son of Bakić, is also mentioned.⁵⁵ The last two mentions of Bakić who were identified as Vlachs were in the village of Donja Kamenica. Pava, son of Bakić, unmarried, and the *baština* of Dragojl, son of Bakić, were recorded in 1559/60.⁵⁶ This *baština* was mentioned again in 1572.⁵⁷ Bakićes are also mentioned as the founders of a monastery. We know this from a vague mention of a certain Andonij Bakić, whose father's name was Petar and whose mother, Alinka, appears to have donated a book and some money

⁴⁵ Bojanić 1974: 48, dates the defter to the period between 1540 and 1545.

⁴⁶ Vasić 1957: 238. The village is entered in the defter under two names: Opaljenik and Donja Isvetica. Probably a village eight kilometers southwest of Ivanjica.

⁴⁷ Šabanović 1964: 118–119.

⁴⁸ Šabanović 1964: 247–251.

⁴⁹ Aličić 1984–1985 vol. I: 23.

⁵⁰ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 150. This is probably the village of Lisice, north of Guča.

⁵¹ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 538.

⁵² Aličić 1984–1985, vol. II: 229.

⁵³ Šabanović 1964: 237–238. This is probably today's village of Ropočevo in the Sopot municipality.

⁵⁴ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. I: 454. Today's village of Grabovac near Čajetina.

⁵⁵ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. III: 59. Today the village is unknown, unless it is the village of Jakalj in the Bajina Basta municipality.

⁵⁶ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. III: 24. This is probably today's village of Kamenica east of Gornji Milanovac.

⁵⁷ Aličić 1984–1985, vol. III: 239.

to the monastery of St. Paul on Mt. Athos, according to the teacher Avramije.⁵⁸ Although we do not know his social position, it is certain that he was wealthy. He lived in the village of Latvica, which, in turn, we know was owned by Radovan Bakić in 1476. It is probable there was a connection between him and the branch of Bakić with a knezina in Stari Vlah.

3. Pavle Bakić, the Most Prominent Member of the Family

The rise of Pavle, the most well-known member of the Bakić family, to extremely important positions in the administrative and military structures of the Sanjak of Smederevo along with the respectable place held by the entire family is connected to the arrival of Ferhad Pasha, who had been one of the *viziers* and had been appointed sanjak-bey of Smederevo.⁵⁹ Ferhad replaced Bali-beg Jahjapašić in 1523.⁶⁰ Ferhad Pasha reached the most important positions in the state hierarchy through his marriage to sister of Sultan Suleiman. During these years he built a significant career. He was *beglerbeg* of Rumelia, governor of Damascus, took part in the capture of Rhodes and became third vizier of the empire. He then fell into disfavor because he allegedly compromised himself in Asia Minor through robbery and blackmail. At the request of his mother and sister, Suleiman gave him the governorship of the Sanjak of Smederevo with an annual income of seven hundred thousand *akçes*.⁶¹ Ferhad remained there in 1523 during the Ottoman campaign in Srem, when they were defeated by the army of Pavle Tomori. By then he had most likely become acquainted with Pavle Bakić.⁶² It is certain that Pavle Bakić quickly became someone Ferhad placed exceptional trust in. Even before then, Pavle's abilities had attracted attention, and it can be indirectly concluded that he had participated in some of Sultan Selim's military campaigns.⁶³ During this period, the Vlach population was an important element in the military structures of Sanjak of Smederevo and other areas along the Hungarian border.⁶⁴ They served as *martoloses*, *derbendcis* and *voynuks*, and the more prominent leaders also had timars. Pavle's knezina was certainly the foundation on which he built his influence and power in the Sanjak of Smederevo. The center of his knezina was located in Šumadija near Mount Venčac, and it included about fifty villages.

Even before coming to the Sanjak of Smederevo, Ferhad Pasha was known as a man who aspired to personal wealth and because of that, he exploited the areas he would be given to administer through excessive and illegal taxation. Certainly, he found in Pavle Bakić someone through whom he could fulfill these aspirations. Pavle must have been fully aware of opportunities in the Sanjak of Smederevo, so it is not all surprising that he became Ferhad Pasha's secretary and even a close friend.⁶⁵ He also served as treasurer and collected

⁵⁸ Stojanović 1983, vol. II, 440. It cannot be reliably concluded from the text that Petar was his father.

⁵⁹ On Ferhad Pasha see Öztuna 2006: 233 and Süreyy 1996. The Ottoman writer İbrahim Peçevi states that he was of Albanian origin, Peçevi, İ.

⁶⁰ Zirojević 1974: 262, Šabanović 1964: 21.

⁶¹ Hammer 1979: 357–358. Hammer claims he came from Šibenik.

⁶² On the Ottoman campaign in Srem in 1523, see Kubiny 2000: 71–115.

⁶³ Istvánffi 1758.

⁶⁴ Vasić 2005b: 60, 90.

⁶⁵ *Relationes* 1884: 304–305.

royal tributes.⁶⁶ It was also noted at the time that Pavle was also a *voyvoda*.⁶⁷ It is not known if Pavle performed some of these duties even before Ferhad's arrival, but it is certain that the position of his secretary enabled him to achieve a meaningful reputation, among both Serbs and Turks. Although Ferhad's administration in the Sanjak of Smederevo hadn't lasted very long, it provoked many new complaints to the sultan. For these and other reasons, Ferhad was executed on Suleiman's orders, most likely on October 19 or November 1, 1525.⁶⁸ Ferhad's execution and the return of Bali-bey Jahjapašić to the Sanjak of Smederevo had a significant impact on Pavle Bakić's position. As a close friend of Ferhad, he could not help but arouse the suspicions of Bali-bey, who returned as sanjak-bey after a two-year absence. Fearing that his life and his property in Turkey could be endangered in the near future, Pavle decided to prepare for a safe escape to Hungary. He was well aware of the situation in southern Hungary and managed to connect with the most important people in the area in a short time, and most importantly with Pavle Tomori. Tomori had been named captain of the Lower Regions in the spring of 1523. Capable and energetic, he had managed in a relatively short time to achieve many victories against the Ottomans. It is difficult to say when cooperation between Tomori and Bakić began, but it certainly existed in the summer of 1525, and perhaps had begun much earlier.⁶⁹

Immediately after Ferhad's execution, Pavle's life and reputation were endangered due to a rebellion that broke out at the imperial court among the Janissaries. It seems that Pavle had encouraged some of the Janissaries either to rebel, to avenge the death of his friend Ferhad Pasha or, even more likely, to protect his positions. A few years later, before Ferdinand's envoys in Constantinople, the Grand Vizier Ibrahim accused Pavle of treason and of withholding money and silver which should have been confiscated for the imperial treasury after Ferhad Pasha's execution.⁷⁰ Sometime before Pavle Bakić's arrival in Hungary, a council was held at the imperial court, which was attended by permanent members, sanjak-beys, and voyvodas from the sanjaks on the Hungarian border. Among them was Pavle Bakić.⁷¹ The issue of which direction the army should move in the event of an attack on Hungary was discussed.⁷² After receiving the news of Ferhad Pasha's execution

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 300–301 and 370–371.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 279, and in several other places; Aleksa Ivić's claim that Pavle Bakić remained with Hungary until the fall of Belgrade and Mačva and then approached the Turks (Ivić 1929: 59) has no basis in the sources, unless Istvanffi is used, who mistakenly marked 1522 as the year the family defected to Hungary.

⁶⁸ Hammer 1974: 357–358, states that Ferhad was executed on November 1, 1524, but recent literature places this event one year later, c.f., Öztuna 2006: 233 and Süreyya 1996: 217.

⁶⁹ Fraknói 1882: 86–87. Only one letter from Tomori to Pavle Bakić from October 1525 has been preserved, from which it can be concluded that there had been a connection between them at least a few months earlier. Having defected to Hungary, Pavle claimed the reason for his arrival was that he had long served the king by sending reports, 'and now he has almost been betrayed, which has put him in jeopardy, and is why he has fled to safety'; Pray 1806, pars I: 213.

⁷⁰ Pray 1806, pars: 213–214; *Relationes* 1884: 304–305; during negotiations with Ferdinand's envoys Nogarol and Lamberg in June 1531, Ibrahim Pasha said of Pavle Bakić that he had been a thief in Turkey and that's why he had fled, which was probably a reference to the money Pavle kept after Ferhad Pasha's death (Gevay 1838, vol. I: 29).

⁷¹ Pray 1806: 211–212.

⁷² Pray 1806: 212–213. A detailed report on the council, based on Pavle's information, was sent by Bourgeois, the papal nuncio to Rome, on January 28, 1526.

in Jedren, Pavle began planning an escape. He hid his silver and other possessions, which could barely fit into three wagons, in the mountains.⁷³ He also sent five trustworthy people to Hungary with their wives and all of their belongings. He maintained contact with Tomori through them. After extraordinary efforts and tormented by food shortages, the group reached Tomori. One of these five, Kostadin, conveyed to Tomori Pavle's intention to flee soon to Hungary.⁷⁴ Although negotiations concerning the Bakić and his men's defection had been conducted earlier, these developments came as a surprise to Tomori. At that time, he had not yet managed to secure the property he would need to give to Pavle and his family. This was certainly a condition for defection that Pavle had set earlier. Because of this, Tomori immediately sent two of Pavle's men to Buda, along with letters in which Pavle described the state of affairs in the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁵ These letters were sent from Buda to Rome through a papal nuncio.⁷⁶ At the same time, Tomori demanded from the king's advisers to urgently secure some estates for Bakić. Tomori also said of Pavle Bakić at the time: "He is a great personage, as Belmužević once was, or as the Jakšićes are now. May your lordships work with His Majesty in the name of God, to give them places to settle, because the whole of Turkey will tremble if that man comes forth."⁷⁷ In a letter sent to Pavle at the same time, Tomori invited him to come to Hungary if his life was in danger, although he could not provide him with even one serf, but the answer to his request could be received within in fifteen days. At the same time, Tomori begged Pavle to remain in Turkey as long as possible, where he could more usefully serve the king and Christianity.⁷⁸ Following Tomori's advice, Pavle Bakić tried to remain among the Ottomans for some time, but as soon as the news arrived that some estates would be given to him, he prepared for the journey (the decision to allocate the estates to Bakić was probably made in mid-November and he could have been notified of it in mid-December).⁷⁹ Pavle managed to defect to Hungary due to his connections with the commanders of Serbian *martoloses* and other military formations. He was accompanied on this dangerous journey by his brothers Manojlo, Komnin, Dimitrije, and Mihajlo, his cousin Petar, his wife Teodora, his daughters Marija and Angelina, and fifty cavalry. They also took numerous valuables with them. This all took place at the very end of 1525, when the defectors reached Pavle Tomori, the commander of the Hungarian southern border. News of their defection was sent to Buda on January 14, 1526⁸⁰ and ten days later it was learned that Bali-bey had executed many "Rascians" because of Pavle Bakić's escape and that he had ordered places on the rivers where ships could easily pass to be guarded by true Turks, not "Rascians".⁸¹ It seems that,

⁷³ Fraknói 1882: 87–88.

⁷⁴ Fraknói 1882: 87–88. Vasić cites a letter from Hadi Sulejman-pasha which may refer to Pavle Bakić, compare Vasić 1957, 237.

⁷⁵ Fraknói 1882: 86–87.

⁷⁶ *Relationes* 1884, 279.

⁷⁷ Fraknói 1882: 87–88.

⁷⁸ Fraknói 1882: 86–87.

⁷⁹ *Relationes* 1884: 284.

⁸⁰ *Relationes* 1884: 300–301.

⁸¹ *Relationes* 1884: 309; documents could not be located from which it can be seen that, during the course of Pavle's defection, he was followed by a group of Serbs who were cut off by the Turkish army, as Ivić 1929: 61 claims and was taken up in later writings. The mistake was due to a misunderstanding of a letter from

because of this incident, Bali-bey had even intended to force all of the Serbs out of the army. This part of the Bakić family's escape to Hungary was only the first obstacle they successfully overcame. The issue of their estates had only been resolved in principle, and the family initially went through some difficult times.

Pavle Bakić and his brothers' defection to Hungary did not seem to have an effect on the position of other successful families from this clan.⁸² Of the four remaining Bakić knezinas recorded in documents, as many as three were known of in the period after his escape to Hungary. These included the two knezinas listed in the 1528 census, Herak Bakić's very large and developed knezina and Vuksan Bakić's somewhat smaller knezina, along with Nikola Bakić's knezina, for which there is no detailed information, except that it was in existence around 1540–1545. In the Ottoman state, the absence of later information about the Bakić family does not in any way confirm that it had lost its significant position within the Vlach knezinas. The main reason for why such information was not saved is a change in the way detailed defters were created. From the time of the early reign of Suleiman the Magnificent, summaries about the spahis and the knezes were recorded as summaries rather than in detailed defters, as was done previously. Other causes for the lack of documentation are related to the general loss of Vlach privileges in the Sanjak of Smederevo, and perhaps also the process of Islamization in the higher echelons of the Vlach knezinas.⁸³

The Bakić family is the best example of the rise of Christian families in the early Ottoman period. Even though they belonged to the Christian part of the population, they took advantage of the Ottomans using the Vlach communities to strengthen the demographics in the area and to solidify the empire's military potential. As significant members of the Vlach groups, the Bakićes distinguished themselves as settlement organizers for the Sanjak of Smederevo as well as through serving various military and administrative capacities. Pavle Bakić, the most prominent of them, took advantage of favorable circumstances that led him to becoming the most prominent Serb in the Sanjak of Smederevo and later a powerful Hungarian feudal lord who earned the title of Serbian despot in 1537, which symbolically linked this social group to the traditions of the already long-gone Serbian medieval state.

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⁸² This, in a way, again confirms that the Bakićes who remained in Turkey were not close relatives of Pavle Bakić, and that the Ottoman regime considered this act to be a personal betrayal.

⁸³ On the process of Islamization, see Filipović 1983 and Vasić 2005a.

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БАКИЋИ - ПРИМЕР ДРУШТВЕНОГ УСПОНА ВЛАШКИХ ПОРОДИЦА У РАНОМ ОСМАНСКОМ ПЕРИОДУ

Резиме

У периоду продора и стабилизације Османлија на Балкану једна заједница унутар тадашњег српског друштва добија на значају. Били су то сточари које тадашњи документни називају Власима. Влашке заједнице које су се специјализовале за екстензивно сточарство забележене су у најстаријем документима о средњовековној Србији с краја XII и почетка XIII века. Временом су ове групе добиле српски етнички карактер. Слом класичног феудализма и специфично османско уређење поготово у пограничним и слабо насељеним крајевима пружио је влашким заједницама прилику за значајан друштвени напредак. Једна од најуспешнијих влашких породица током друге половине XV и прве половине XVI века били су Бакићи. Они су се из масе влашког становништва издвојили у деценијама пошто су Османлије освојиле Деспотовину. Многобројни сукоби Угарске и Османске државе су на простору смедеревског санџака веома редуковали становништво. Бакићи су се тада истакли као покретачи пресељења значајних сточарских група највероватније из области Старог Влаха а можда и из Херцеговине у чему су имали институционалну подршку Османског царства. Први познати кнез из ове породице је био Радован чија се кнезина углавном простирала јужно од данашњег Чачка. Касније се кнежине Бакића померају ка северу у околину планина Рудник и Венчац па до под сам Београд. Веома познати члан ове породице Павле Бакић прећиће непосредно пред битку код Мохача на страну Угара. Он, његови рођаци и потомци ће у служби Хабзбурговаца постати веома угледно племство. Сам Павле ће у кратком периоду 1537. носити и титулу српског деспота везујући на симболичан начин своју породицу са традицијама средњовековне српске државе.

Кључне речи: Власи, Бакићи, сточарство, миграције.

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