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**GRDAN'S UPRISING IN THE PLANS AND ARCHIVES
OF THE APOSTOLIC SEE***

Abstract: This study of the uprising of the voivode Grdan (1596–1597) was conducted within a wider context of the Apostolic See and Pope Clement VIII's plans for missionary work by Franciscan Observants and Jesuits in the regions ruled by the Ottomans that was intended to strength Catholic congregations. In the years preceding the Long War (1593–1606), a belief emerged that the Ottoman Empire had weakened enough to easily collapse in the face of an attack by united Christian states backed by major uprisings among the Christians under their rule. The Apostolic See believed this would pave the way for mass conversion of Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Such beliefs were promoted by various adventurers and self-proclaimed servants of several royal courts. This paper is primarily based on the correspondence of Clement VIII and Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini with Patriarch Jovan II Kantul and Archbishop Toma Ursini, as well as on statements by Lazzaro Soranzo in his work *L'Ottomanno*. The paper will also pinpoint more precisely voivode Grdan's uprising in comparison to what historiography has told us. Also, the names of some leaders of the people that supported him will be identified.

Keywords: Apostolic See, Clement III, Patriarch Jovan II, Metropolitan Visarion, Grdan, church union, church missions.

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The Long War (1593–1606) between Austria and the Ottoman Empire influenced, among other things, the destiny of the Serbian people under Ottoman, Habsburg, and Venetian rule. The Serbian troops in service to the parties at war participated in battles fought in an area extending from the region of Senjska krajina and Dalmatia to upper Hungary, Transylvania, and Wallachia. In the sixteenth century, the great Serbian families with claims based on old rules and medieval traditions, along with the legitimacy resulting from them to represent the Serbian question in international politics, had for the most part been toppled. Toward the end of the sixteenth century, the Serbs again emerged as an important factor in the struggle against the Ottomans. However, a lack of centralized rule and strong individuals who could establish themselves as leaders among people along with military leaders able to stand out in the eyes of general population, was sorely felt at the first such attempt, which was the 1594 Serbian uprising in Banat. Even the actions taken by leaders who had already proven themselves with their military skills, such as Deli Marko, Starina Novak, and others, remained localized and received no substantial support from other Serbs or Church prelates. Aid and support from foreign rulers or prominent individuals was even less likely to be forthcoming.¹ Voivode Grdan, who was primarily the head of the Nikšić tribe, was one of the rare, if not the first, *narodni prvak* (local leader) mentioned in international correspondence as being a representative of the Serbian people after the Branković family in Srem, the Crnojević family, and other Serbian ruling families lost power. He was supported by the patriarch of Peć, Jovan II Kantul (1592–1613). During a period of two decades in the late sixteenth and early the seventeenth century, the name of Voivode Grdan was mentioned in Rome, Prague, Naples, Turin, Madrid, and Milan. The seasoned Kantul was fully aware that the European rulers would prefer the Serbian uprising to be led by a voivode and a man of the people, rather than a Church dignitary such as himself.²

After the War of Cyprus (1570–1573) and the start of the Long Turkish War, the Apostolic See took a keen interest in the Christians, and primarily the Catholics, under Ottoman rule, but they also kept a close eye on the Orthodox world in general, and this revived plans to establish a union between the Roman and the Eastern churches. In addition to their concern for the souls of the Christian faithful, the Curia also pointed to a need to form a strong anti-Ottoman coalition that would bring together all the important European courts and rulers.³ Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) entrusted his secretary Tolomeo Galli and Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro with the first missions to the Balkans and Hungary. The first missionaries were the Bishop Pietro Cedolini of Hvar, Bonifazio Drakoliza, and Aleksandar Komulović. They had established contacts with many Catholic congregations in various parts of the Ottoman Empire. They all indicated that, in time, they would need to adapt their missionary work to the difficult circumstances they witnessed in the field.⁴

During this period, there is also a report sent by a civilian, a knight from Bar (Antivari), Marco Samuel, to Gregory XIII in 1583. Marco Samuel described in detail the region around Lake Shkodër and the location of the town of Shkodër between the lake and

¹ *Istorija srpskog naroda* III-1 2000³: 214–335; Jačov 2001: 57–98.

² Tomić 1903: 72–74; *Istorija srpskog naroda* III-1 2000³: 322–323.

³ About Uniate policy of the Apostolic See after the Council of Florence general ref. to Halecki 1958.

⁴ Molnár 2019: 33. For more on Aleksandar Kumulović, see: Rački, Pierling 1882: 83–124; Trstenjak 1989: 44–86.

the Bojana River. This was a region filled with lakes, fertile fields, deep forests, and extremely high mountains in the shape of half-moons (“*detto catena mundi*”) that extended to the town of Krujë. He mentioned the fortifications of Podgorica, Žabljak, Drivasto, Lezhë and Krujë. There were various Christian congregations that had become quite militant as a result of constant Ottoman attacks and especially during the *devshirme*. They had no leader, but they had placed all their hopes in God that one day they could come together under a banner bearing a cross. Among them, about 40,000 good fighters could be recruited. Samuel emphasized that Shkodër, which was a sixteen-day journey from Constantinople across “two” Serbias (“*Misie*”), Bulgaria, and Thrace, was key to Ottoman power in leader” were to be made leader of the rebellious Christians, the “*perfidia mahometana*” would be destroyed within fifteen days. Samuel suggested this could be King Phillip II of Spain, whose galleys were anchored in Genoa, Naples, and in Sicily. The plan would also include Archduke Carl of Austria, who would approach Albania through Ancona or Hungary via Croatia and Bosnia. Finally, Samuel warned the pope of the danger posed by the Venetians who, admittedly, could be useful, but not at a time when they were at peace with the Ottomans, even if the whole endeavor was to be carried out across “their sea.”⁵

At this time, the missions were managed by the Roman Inquisition, which had been renamed and expanded in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V (1585–1590) as the *Congregatio Romanae et Universalis Inquisitionis seu Congregatio Sancti Officii*. Missionaries were given directions from the Apostolic See, but the *facultas apostolica* were assigned to them by the *Congregatio Sancti Officii*, who supervised the liturgical, dogmatic, organizational and other challenges confronting the missionaries.⁶ The plans for comprehensive, well-organized, and skillfully led missionary work were developed by Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, a learned legal expert with knowledge of the Curia’s judicial matters, who was later elected Pope Clement VIII on January 30, 1592. The new pope was already acquainted with the Austrian archdukes Ferdinand, Mathias, and Ernest. The defeat of Hasan-pasha Predojević at Sisak at the start of the war between the Austrian and the Ottoman Empires in 1593 had fortified his idea that the goal of destroying the Ottomans could easily be attained, so long as the Christian rulers were united, which was why he pressed them to provide the Habsburgs with military and financial assistance. The bishop of Hvar, Pietro Cedolini, a Dalmatian knowledgeable in the workings of the Ottoman Empire, assured Clement VIII that an alliance of Christian rulers could not only halt Mehmed III’s advance on Vienna but could also bring about the collapse of Ottoman rule in Europe. Bishop Cedolini articulated his ideas in a speech (*oratio*) on January 28, 1593. Interestingly, he tried to persuade the pope to approach the tsar in Moscow and work toward an alliance between Russia and Poland in the struggle against the Ottomans. Furthermore, Cedolini had previously traveled to Constantinople on several occasions, during which he had met with western diplomats.⁷

The best account of Clement VIII’s personality was most likely provided by the Venetian ambassador Dolfino, who said that the pope wanted “to know everything, read

⁵ Marco Samuel wrote his report in Rome, where he found refuge with his wife, four children and other family members. Horvat 1909: 10–13.

⁶ Molnár 2019: 31–32.

⁷ Tomić 1903: 12–13, 15–16.

everything and arrange everything.” And indeed, he mostly personally answered his correspondence, compiled documents and made decisions. He entrusted important tasks to his two nephews, the cardinals Pietro and Cinzio Aldobrandini. Generally speaking, the pontificate of Clement VIII brought many benefits to the papal state, but the pope achieved the least success in politics due to his obsession with destroying the Ottoman Empire, which he believed would result in the conversion of large numbers of both Orthodox Christians and Muslims and unification with the Eastern churches.⁸ For the most part, Western rulers mostly did not share his enthusiasm about fighting the Ottomans: Henry IV followed France’s traditionally amicable policy toward Turkey; Spain was busy with events in the Netherlands; the Polish king Sigismund III feared animosity between the Habsburgs and Moscow; the Venetians did not wish to take on new battles and endanger their lands and commercial routes; and Rudolf II’s intentions were unclear due to his unstable character.⁹

Clement VIII continued Pope Sixtus V’s policy regarding missionary work among the Christians. The first *missionaries* were the Benedictines sent to Albania and South Hungary in 1587, 1589, 1592, and 1598. Abbot Antonio Velislavi, vicar for the chapter of the Diocese of Shkodrë (Scutari), wrote a report on September 27, 1606, about his work. The Curia depended on reports from Bosnian Franciscan observants. Petar Zlojutrić, a former Bosnian provincial minister, sent the first Franciscan mission to Bulgaria in 1595, although the *Congregatio Sancti Officii* did not issue the *facultas apostolica* until the following year. A series of Franciscan missions followed, so Clement VIII named Zlojutrić bishop of Sofia in 1601 under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Bar (Antivari). Jesuits were dispatched to Transylvania, Wallachia, Moldavia, and Belgrade. In May 1660, Bishop Girolamo Bucchia of Kotor laid out a plan to establish a seat for Jesuit missions in Kotor, which would be entrusted with converting the Balkan Orthodox Christians and Muslims. Between 1599 and 1605, the first Congregation in charge of the propagation of faith, was founded by Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro.¹⁰ It is, therefore, no wonder that the Apostolic See maintained a strong interest in the conditions among the Serbs, and especially in the rebel movements around Dubrovnik and the Bay of Kotor.

The first known mention of Grdan’s uprising in documents from the Apostolic See was in a letter sent from Dubrovnik by a Franciscan named Toma Ursini to Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini on September 2, 1597. In the letter, Fra Toma wrote that he had traveled to Rome and waited eight days for an audience with the Pope. Finally, he was received by Cinzio Aldobrandini, who explained that there was nothing more to be done since “that duke” had made peace with the Ottomans. Toma was considerably discouraged by this reply, concluding that “our lord the Pope and his imperial highness” had thus betrayed the promise given to rebels to help them in any way possible, as was evident from letters sent to the bishop and the “leaders of the duchy” (*conti del ducato*.) Letters in hand, the bishop and his party showed them to the duke, after which, the duke and his rebels rose against “the

⁸ At the council in Brest-Litovsk in 1596, Ruthenian bishops under the rule of Polish-Lithuanian union confirmed their earlier decision to split from the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and unite with the Church of Rome, Rački, Pierling 1882: 88; Welykyj, Athanasius 1970: 67–75; Gudziak 1998: 209–244.

⁹ About Clement VIII v. Borromeo 2000. About papal policy toward the Ottomans, especially at the start of the Long War, v. Jačov 2001: 57–64.

¹⁰ Molnár 2019: 33–37.

enemies of Christ,” ready to give up their lives and their properties. The voivode and his soldiers were still willing to carry out God’s will, but they needed help from the Pope and from Cinzio Aldobrandini himself. Since the reply he received was contrary to what had been promised earlier, Fra Toma returned to Dubrovnik devastated, very much disheartened, and at a loss as to how to “tell the bishop and so many Serbs” why there had been a change of plans, and why, even though they had submitted to the pope and the emperor, they had been deceived and placed in mortal danger.

The letter goes on to say that earlier, the bishop had sent a merchant named Nikola, “an exquisite man,” as an emissary to the Pope to personally notify the Pope about the rebel forces’ troubles and their further plans. Clement VIII received Nikola on June 22 of that year. The Pope’s obvious reservations and Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini’s reluctance to receive him convinced Nikola that he had spent a great deal of money for nothing. Fra Toma told the cardinal that he had made a mistake by not heeding Nikola, since he had a proposal for how redirect their effort in favor of the “*repubblica christiana*,” with very little cost to the Church. Fra Thomas expected Rome to permit him to visit Emperor Rudolf II, since he had believed that Rudolf had forgotten his written promise to the bishop. Fra Thomas written this letter to be a letter of commendation for two Serbian monks who were on their way to Rome. He begged Cinzio Aldobrandini to listen to them, enable them an audience with Clement VIII, and influence the Pope to give them due attention, as they only wished to humbly submit to him and receive what had been promised earlier, not only in words but also in deeds.¹¹ By then, the monks had probably already arrived in Dubrovnik.¹²

Without a doubt, the *voieuodda* and *vescouo* who had been mentioned several times, were in fact the voivode Grdan and Visarion, the Metropolitan of Herzegovina. When war broke out between Austria and the Ottoman Empire, the Serbian people saw an opportunity to improve their standing and were supported by their spiritual leaders: Patriarch Jovan II; Ruvim I, the metropolitan of Cetinje; Visarion, the metropolitan of Herzegovina; and Bishop Teodor Tivodorović of Vršac. The Habsburgs had incited Metropolitan Ruvim to encourage the people to rise up through Franjo Brtučević, a Knight Hospitaller,¹³ while Clement VIII searched for allies in Patriarch Jovan and Metropolitan Visarion.¹⁴ Prelates and tribal leaders from east Herzegovina met in 1596 at Trebinje Monastery. Dominik Andrijašević had brought them the letters from Rome, so they concluded that help from the Pope was not to be relied on. They contacted Rudolf II on April 24, also through Dominik Andrijašević, whom they endorsed as their sole emissary.¹⁵

According to a note written in Latin in *Branković letopis* (the Branković Chronicle) in Bosnia, “*in Miksiche et Onogosti*,” Voivode Grdan rose up against the Turks. A bey was dispatched to the region, who then attacked the rebels with all his might. A battle was fought

¹¹ Horvat 1909: 55–56.

¹² Stanojević 1970: 120.

¹³ Franjo Brtučević was born in Hvar, and he was taken into the service by Austrian court as an exile from the Venetian territories, Tomić 1903: 26–27.

¹⁴ Tomić 1903: 19–20, 60–62; Radonić 2017: 13–16; Stanojević 1970: 120–121; *Istorija srpskog naroda* III-1, 322–326; Mikavica, Vasin, Ninković 2013: 34–35.

¹⁵ Dominik Andrijašević was a Franciscan Observant, who was born in Herzegovina and resided in Dubrovnik, Vinaver 1959: 365–383.

at “*Gacskopolye*” on January 10, 1597. Grdan fled the battlefield, and those of his soldiers who were unable to retreat were cut down. After that, Kadum Ahmet-pasha made peace with Grdan.¹⁶ Today, historiography holds that the Bjelopavlići, Drobnjaci, Nikšići, Pivljani, Piperi, Kuči, and Klimenti tribes rose up under the leadership of Voivode Grdan in 1597, but the fighting soon died down after the defeat near Gacko.¹⁷ These were the same events that Fra Toma Ursini described in his letter on September 2, 1597.

Fra Toma Ursini, a Franciscan Observant born in Popovo polje, was close to the rebels in Herzegovina, and might have easily been related to some of them or connected as a family friend or godfather. Thus it is no wonder that his letter to Cardinal Aldobrandini was full of strong emotion, and particularly concern over the fate of the rebels. According to his own admission, at the time he wrote this, he was sixty-four years old, and he “had spent” his youth preaching and administering holy sacraments to those living among the “Turks, heretics, schismatics, and Serbs.”¹⁸ Rome appreciated his missionary work, so much so that Clement VIII named him archbishop of Bar (Antivari)¹⁹ on February 17, 1599, and then named him as administrator of the bishoprics in Budva and Koron on September 27 of that same year.²⁰ Fra Toma pointed out that the Ursinis were not only the rulers of Popovo polje but also nobility from the town Krujë, which they had also ruled after the disappearance of Kastrioti family.²¹ Toma himself may have invented these family legends, but they obviously inspired him to fight the Ottomans.

An interesting piece of evidence of Grdan’s uprising comes from the pen of Lazzaro Soranzo. In his *L’Ottomanno*, he claims the Serbs, a people living from the Albanian mountains to the Danube, aspired most of all to free themselves from Turkish rule. According to him, the tribes living in Dardania, which was not far from these mountains, were able to make a move. These included the Piperi, Kuči, Klimenti, Bjelopavlići and other tribes from the land of “*Plaua*.” Among them were many Albanians who lived “*alla Romana*,” which probably meant they adhered to the Roman rites and Latin culture. These people were by nature extremely harsh and brutal. Not long before, they had tried to free themselves from the Ottoman tyranny, since they believed that Mehmed had been defeated and killed at the siege of Egar in Hungary. They rose up under the leadership of Duke Grdan, and after they had slaughtered a great number of Turks in their own lands, they tried to march onward, but when they realized things were not as they had believed, they retreated to their mountains.²² This detailed information about a popular uprising against the Turks was transcribed in thousands of copies and was read with enthusiasm all across Europe.

Clement VIII was determined to disseminate all the knowledge he had acquired, so the University of Rome brought in esteemed professors of botany, physiology, medicine, and

* now known as Gatačko polje—Trans.

¹⁶ Stojanović 1927: 302 (№ 1280).

¹⁷ Vinaver 1953: 49–55; Stanojević 1970: 118–120; *Istorija Crne Gore* III-1 1975, 73–88; Mikavica, Vasin, Ninković 2013: 35.

¹⁸ Horvat 1909: 55.

¹⁹ Gauchat 1935: 86.

²⁰ AAV, Sec. Brev. 287, f. 241r–242r.

²¹ For more on Toma Ursini, see: Farlati 1817: 107–109.

²² Soranzo 1599: 166–167.

philosophy. He instigated a reform of the liturgical books and promulgated a revision of the Sixtine Vulgate. He also held that the struggle against the Ottomans must also be fought with such inspiring writings. Thus a number of *avvisi*, or handwritten newsletters, were circulated under his auspices between 1594 and 1601. These argued for the necessity of rallying the Christian states to fight against the Ottomans. One of the writers of these was Lazzaro Soranzo, and he dedicated his work to Clement VIII. *L'Ottomanno* was written in Italian and Latin and tells of the efforts of Christians—the rebels of Senj, Serbs, Albanians, Wallachians, Moldavians, Bulgarians, and others—to rid themselves of the Turkish yolk. The Venetian Republic was mentioned in very bleak terms for its attempts to hinder the Christian's efforts so that it could remain on friendly terms with the Turks. Soranzo was condemned by the Venetian Republic to permanent exile, and a bounty was placed on his head. The work was published in Ferrara between 1598 and 1599. This was mostly symbolic, since it was Clement VIII who had brought the city under the wing of the papal state.²³

The most information related to Grdan's uprising has been preserved in letter, unnoticed until now, implicitly mentions Fra Toma Ursini. The letter was written in Serbian, and probably compiled in the late summer of 1597, and brought to Rome by two monks from Mileševa, Damjan and Pavle, and most definitely with the blessings of Patriarch Jovan and Metropolitan Visarion. The original letter is kept in the *Archivio Apostolico Vaticano*, in the *Fondo Borghese, Serie I-V*, which contains documents from the reigns of Clement VIII Aldobrandini (1592–1605) and Paul V Borghese (1605–1621). This collection includes the two popes' official correspondence with cardinals, legates, and prelates of the Roman Church, and also with foreign rulers and diplomats. The letter had been translated into Italian.²⁴ The fact that all anthroponyms and toponyms were transcribed with great precision indicates that the translator must have been someone whose mother tongue was one of the South Slavic languages. At that time, there were a number of clergymen and missionaries of South Slavic origin working at the Curia.²⁵ Perhaps Damjan and Pavle brought the translation to Rome along with the original. If this was the case, the translator could have easily been Fra Thomas Ursini himself, who had recommended the monks to Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini.

This letter is interesting for multiple reasons. It contains a what it refers to as a “short chronicle” of medieval Serbian rulers with an abundance of interesting details. Regarding this moment in history, the letter first offers a well-developed plan on how to liberate “all the Serbian lands” from the Turks. A “nobleman” to be sent by pope with an army to attack Novi, and those armies would be met by Grdan from the mainland. The Novi defenses were weak, which meant the town could easily fall to rebel forces. From Novi, they would move on to Onogošt, where this “nobleman” would be joined by the heads of other tribes, as well as of “all Montenegro and the Dukadjin lands.” In Onogošt, they would decide how to proceed. The letter then continued by listing all of the tribes and their leaders: Rade Vukašinović of the Zupci, voivode Grdan of the Riđani and Nikšići, Ivan voivode Petrović of the Banjani, Miloš Vitković from Trebinje, Milko Vučetić from Rudine, Đuro Tomašević

²³ Tomić 1903: 64–66; Borromeo 2000.

²⁴ AAV, Fondo Borghese, Serie I, 913, 484r–485v; Horvat 1909: 57–58.

²⁵ Jačov 1987: 259–262, 262–265; Molnár 2019: 33.

from Gacko, voivode Raosav of Piva, Ivan Kaluđerović of the Drobunjaci, voidvode Radoica of Morača. In Plana, the leader of the Kolašinovići and Nikšići was Prince Radič. Further on, places were listed: Nikoljac, Vraneši, Mileševa, Komarani, and in the valleys: Senice, Ras, and Novi Pazar, where there were many silver mines. Further down from Novi Pazar, the district of Ibar was mentioned, which also had many mines, and then Toplica where there were “many mines.” After Novi Pazar, the letter names Kosovo, Novo Brdo, Trepča, and Janjevo, with gold and silver mines. Next were lands that extended to Skoplje, Ovče Polje, and Morava,²⁶ after which were Samokov and Sofia, where there were “great monasteries holy relics contained therein.” Beyond Novi Pazar there were the “Albanian lands” of Bradulovci, Korita, Gornji and Donji Has, Šavice, Peć, Hvosno, Dečani, Plav, and Prizren. Between Bosnia and Novi Pazar, there were Stari Vlah and Studenica, with the main leaders, the voivodes Rajko and Vukašin, who “these lands obeyed.” Further on, there was Morava.²⁷ Further down from Trebinje, there were districts of Popovo, Donji Vlasi, Drina, Banija and in “Donji Vlasi” the “heads of Hrabreni.”

According to the author of the letter, around a hundred thousand seasoned warriors could be gathered. First, mines would have to be conquered to ensure the financing for the war. The monks Damjan and Pavle did not miss the opportunity to mention that the Turks, having taken the bones of Saint Sava from Mileševa, had brought the wrath of God down upon them, they had grown very agitated, and had subsequently suffered defeat to the Christians. In retribution, they had attacked churches and monks, accusing them of praying to God for the death of all Turks. Gripped by fear, they would say, “The empire is no longer ours.” Damjan and Pavle, as co-signatories of the letter, informed the pope that all “godly men and all people, great and small,” prayed that pope would send them his champion who would become the lord of their lands. He would have to be “a good Christian” who would love the Church and embrace all Christians. In return, they committed to becoming subjects of “Mother Church” and beseeched the pope to let them mention his name in the liturgies, just as they always had done with the first popes and all the saints, and they also wished for “the names of our bishops to be listed in the great Church of Rome.”²⁸

It is clear from this paraphrased section that the authors of the letter had a firm grasp of geography, demographic and economic circumstances, and of the mood of the people in the Serbian lands. Since this letter was written immediately after Grdan’s uprising was suppressed at the start of 1597, it is valuable evidence that the Serbian people had not given up the fight and were just biding their time. Toward the end of 1597, when the letter was compiled, the Serbs were ready to rise again and were hoping for greater support from the pope and his allies. It mentions thirteen local leaders, heads of clans and tribes, princes, and dukes.

It has been established that in late medieval Herzegovina, the heads (*knezovi* and *primičuri*) of the Vlachs were held in high esteem and some of them managed to gain further prominence. In the first centuries of Ottoman rule in these regions, the status the Vlachs received had significantly contributed to a larger degree of independence within the internal organization of local communities, which also made it possible for the tribal leaders to form

²⁶ It is an obvious reference to Južna Morava and the upper Velika Morava.

²⁷ Referring to Zapadna Morava.

²⁸ AAV, Fondo Borghese, Serie I, 913, ff. 157r–157v.

their own social class. The Vlach leaders started being referred to as voivodes as early as the end of the fifteenth century.²⁹ In all probability, this meaning of this title was connected to military leadership, with some changes, for a very long period of time. In addition to Grdan, four more local leaders were listed with the title of voivode.

Based on this letter, it is possible to determine which settlements participated in Grdan's uprising. First, it lists the leaders from the Herzegovinian settlements of Dračevica, Zupci, Banjani, Trebinje, Rudine, Gacko, and Popovo polje. Drobnjaci, Pivljani, and Morača, Plana and Kolašinović lands, Stari Vlah and the areas deeper within the Serbian principalities were most likely also caught up in the uprising. These were the lands of Stara Herzegovina and partly Brda.³⁰ According to the letter, the battles could have easily spread to other Serbian lands from Bosnia to Prizren, Ovče polje, Skoplje, Sofia, Samokov, the Great and West Morava river valleys. What is most striking from this is that these mostly areas that had been part of the Nemanjić state. The letter is infused with the idea of a unified medieval state and an aspiration to revive the medieval Kingdom of Serbia. They were just waiting for definitive military aid from Rome or Prague, as well as someone worthy of leading the liberation forces, who would then become the lord of these lands by being crowned in some of the archbishoprics, such as Ras, Žiča, or Peć, where the coronations of Serbian kings were once held, as documents from the old rulers documents had always described.³¹ The letter concluded with the statement, "And all these lands were once under Roman rule," as an attempt to make it clear to the pope and the Apostolic See that they had a moral obligation toward the Serbs and the Serbian people dating back centuries, and that those obligations should be given precedence over the ongoing negotiations about unification.³²

It also appears that, in Rome, Damjan and Pavle were granted an audience and Clement VIII himself read the Italian translation of the letter. In a letter to Patriarch Jovan dated April 10, 1598, the pope stated that he had received two monks sent as the patriarch's emissaries with much affection. The pope urged the patriarch to unite with the Church of Rome, which presided over all the churches, as their mother and teacher, outside of which there was no salvation, for it was the only one safeguarding the integrity of the teachings of salvation, the splendor of the divine cult, the correct, and the purity of the Apostolic tradition. The patriarch was meant to follow the example of his predecessors who, according to previous popes of Rome, had expressed their humility and deep respect. In addition to invoking divine assistance, patience, and spiritual acts, as were the obligations of each Christian, the pope only promised the patriarch that he would seek support from "the Catholic rulers, our sons." Although he was well aware of the patriarch's hardships, the pope mentioned no specific forms of aid at all. He ordered him to heed his monks, who were to report in more detail about the conversations held in Rome, and bestowed upon him and all the clergy and the people his fatherly love and the papal blessing.³³ It would appear that Damjan and Pavle returned directly

²⁹ Mišić 1996: 172–186.

³⁰ For the old historiographic view, see note 17 of this paper.

³¹ Kalić 1997: 77–87.

³² Issues concerning ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the regions inhabited by Serbs before a Serbian autocephalous archbishopric was established are beyond scope of this work. For this, see: Kalić 1979: 27–53; Živković 2004; Komatina 2016.

³³ Theiner 1875: 90–91.

to the patriarch from Rome, carrying this letter and verbal messages. Voivode Grdan was mentioned nowhere in the pope's letter nor was there anything about assistance for the rebels. Still, for security reasons, such information could have been included in the verbal messages the Serbian monks relayed to the patriarch. The fact that the pope sent an answer to the patriarch was a clear indication that he was certainly one of, if not the most important, organizer of the uprisings in Herzegovina and surrounding lands.

A year later, on April 24, 1599, the pope sent a letter to Patriarch Jovan and Metropolitan Visarion informing them that he received the monk Damjan, who had delivered their letters. Another emissary was sent to Rome with Damjan, but he fell ill during the journey and failed to reach his destination. This was most likely the same monk Pavle as before. Clement VIII granted Damjan an audience, listened to him benevolently and read the letters Damjan presented to him. This time, there was no mention of the pope putting any effort into sending aid to Patriarch Jovan, Metropolitan Visarion, and their people. Moreover, the letter contained numerous references to the primate of the Church of Rome as "leader, mother, and teacher, beyond which there was no salvation to be found." The pope expressed his readiness to accept the Serbian hierarchs as "our brethren and our helpers in Christ," and invited them to accept the Catholic faith illuminated by the light of Christ, and renounce all their schismatic transgressions. The pope sent them with instructions to confess their faith as prescribed by the Apostolic See, and claimed there were no reasons, including the envy of their enemies, that would prevent them from unification with the Church of Rome.³⁴

In all probability, Damjan took these instructions to Patriarch Jovan. Clement VIII contacted the Archbishop Toma Ursini of Bar on October 1, 1600, and reminded him that he had recently granted him a pallium and the full spiritual authority that came with it. He wished to inform him that, as *Servianae provinciae es primas*, their bishops had sent monks as emissaries to Rome multiple times, and that he had received them each time with good will and listened to them. From their letters and messages, he had been given the impression they were willing to accept union with the Church of Rome. For this reason, the pope expected Toma Ursini to continue negotiations with the "bishops and archbishops" of Serbia, and to convince them that accepting union with the Catholic Church would bring them salvation. The pope's reasoning was exclusively spiritual.³⁵ The explanation for this was that Toma Ursini had, from the very start, been the primary mediator in the negotiations between Clement VIII, Patriarch Jovan, and Metropolitan Visarion.

In the spring and early summer of 1601, Damjan visited Rome once again, this time bearing letters of unknown content. According to Clement VIII's reply on July 3, 1601, it followed that Damjan had been granted greater authority from the patriarch regarding the acceptance of unification with Rome. To this effect, he had rejected heresy in his own name and in the name of the patriarch, and he had sworn on the Gospels to accept the true faith. He also confirmed and guaranteed with his own signature that what had been promised would be implemented. This act was witnessed by Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santoro, who acted as an interpreter and who was known as a protector of the "Greek nation."³⁶ The monk Damjan,

³⁴ *Ibid.* 92–93.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 94–95.

³⁶ Radonić 2017: 14–15. As far as we know, the letter from July 3, 1601 has not been published, so we have

who was mentioned in papal letters from the end of the sixteen century was in fact Damjan Ljubibratić, the primary mediator in the negotiations between the Serbian Church and the civil leaders with the Apostolic See and the courts in Gratz, Naples, Madrid, Turin, and Milan. The Ljubibratić family was an old noble family from Trebinje, and Damjan was definitely a well-informed communicator who could give a true rendering of the rebel mood in Herzegovina.³⁷

Grdan's uprising should not be seen as an isolated incident. The Catholic Albanians stated on June 1, 1593, that they could mobilize about 40,000 warriors from their ranks. They were ready to make a move at the pope's signal, and hoped that Orthodox Albanians and other Christians would join them. They expected the pope to send them the Habsburg Emperor, the Polish king or *quello di Moschovia*, after which they would direct their army toward Constantinople. Along with a letter, they sent a leader to Rome to inform the pope in more detail about the circumstances. The letter was sealed with a stamp bearing a princely crown and an inscription reading *Sigillum regni Macedoniae et Albaniae*.³⁸ In early 1595, one of the most active agents in the negotiations between the Albanians and the Apostolic See was a knight of Saint Mark, Tommaso Pelessa,³⁹ born in Lezhë, who arrived in Rome via Budva and Venice. Lodovico Taverna, the bishop of Lodi and the papal nuncio in Venice was also involved, as he used to report to Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini regularly about the mood of the Venetian rulers. At night, he would secretly meet in with Pelessa Venice. On September 30, 1595, Taverna wrote to Aldobrandini that Lunardo Donato, a Venetian emissary traveling to Constantinople, had discovered during his stay in Dubrovnik that an uprising was being planned in Albania, of which he immediately notified his brother Nicolo, a member of the Council of Ten. The bishop of Korčula was accused of having revealed these strictly guarded secrets to Donato.⁴⁰ There were plans for the Albanians in Apulia to join the uprising, as they could easily cross the sea. Wasting no time, the rebels would arrive in Serbian lands (*Serwie sopradette*).⁴¹ In summer 1596, the people of Chimara rose up with an idea of liberating not only their city but also to take Shkodër and Ulcinj. They enjoyed the assistance and support of Archbishop Atanasije of Ohrid who had traveled for their benefit to Naples and Rome. The *Chimarioti* uprising was soon extinguished.⁴² At this stage of the rebels' attempts, Grdan's followers and those from the Albanian lands probably did not cooperate much. However, at a later period, their joint interests and anti-Ottoman sentiment connected them more closely. At the start of the seventeenth century, in their letters to the pope and the courts of Europe, and even in folk and church gatherings, the heads of Albanian tribes appeared regularly next to the Serbian leaders.⁴³

This all shows that the movement of Patriarch Jovan, Grdan, and other tribal leaders from Herzegovina and Brda was accompanied by serious diplomatic correspondence with

referred to its content based on Jovan Radonić's publication.

³⁷ Tomić 1903: 60–63, 87–88, 99–101; Vinaver 1953: 55–66; Vinaver 1959: 365–383; Srpski biografski rečnik 5: 697–698 (Nataša T. Perović)

³⁸ Horvat 1909: 13–14.

³⁹ *Ibid.* 17, 18–19, 23–25, 26, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 27.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 27–31.

⁴² *Ibid.* 38–39; Tomić 1903: 27–35.

⁴³ Tomić 1901: 28–42; Id. 1903: 120–139.

the Apostolic See. Although characterized in historiography as an uprising, the military scope of the revolt remained modest. The Grdan's uprising was well considered and evaluated—there was no point raising a large armed rebellion with no military aid from the West, not even during the Long Turkish War. It is interesting to note that the Serbian patriarch and the tribal leaders had expected more help from Pope Clement VIII than from the Austrian court and other anti-Ottoman rulers.

After 1601, relations between the Apostolic See and Patriarch Jovan were interrupted. Based everything presented here, a conclusion can be drawn that both sides delayed executing what had been negotiated. Clement VIII was not in a position to send military and financial support, while the Serbian clergy headed by Patriarch Jovan did not see their promise of union with the Church of Rome as something obligatory.⁴⁴ Circumstances soon changed. First, Pope Clement VIII died on March 3, 1605,⁴⁵ and then on November 11, 1606, Austria and the Ottoman Empire signed a peace treaty for a period of twenty years.⁴⁶ The Serbian church and secular leaders turned to the Spanish king Phillip III and his allies in Italy, including the viceroy of Naples, Duke Carl Emmanuel I of Savoy, and even Duke Vincenzo I Gonzaga of Mantua and the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II Medici.⁴⁷ The Albanians also turned to the Spanish. The best evidence for the fruitlessness of these efforts can be found in a letter from Archbishop Minuccio Minucci of Zadar, dated May 8, 1602 and addressed to Cinzio Aldobrandini: The rebels may have turned to the Spanish for help, but their spirit lay, as ever, with the Venetians as their masters of old, with whom they still maintained a robust trade.⁴⁸

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⁴⁴ Radonić 2017: 13

⁴⁵ Borromeo 2000.

⁴⁶ *Istorija srpskog naroda* III-1 2000³: 275–276.

⁴⁷ *Istorija srpskog naroda* III-1 2000³: 326–335; Mikavica, Vasin, Ninković 2013: 36.

⁴⁸ Horvat 1909: 84.

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Резиме

У раду говоримо о устанку војводе Грдана (1596–1597) у контексту планова и извесних акција Апостолске столице. У годинама које су претходиле избијању Другог рата (1593–1606) у Европи су се шириле гласине о томе да је Османска империја толико слаба да би је њени властити поданици хришћани могли срушити ако би се масовно подигли на устанак уз војну и материјалну помоћ и моралну подршку хришћанских држава окупљених у коалицију са циљем да се Османлије заувек протерају из Европе. Један од највећих заговорника тих идеја био је папа Климент VIII (1592–1605), који је у слому османске владавине видео шансу за проверавање великог броја не само православних хришћана већ и муслимана. Пред почетак рата мисије фрањеваца опсерваната и језуита деловале су у многим деловима Османског царства, пре свега међу католичким заједницама. Они су курију редовно извештавали о приликама на терену чиме су подстицали нереалне планове. Грданов устанак био је један у низу покрета са којим се у Риму у прво време рачунало. Излагање се темељи на кореспонденцији Климента VIII и кардинала Чинција Алдобрандинија са пећким патријархом Јованом II Кантулом и барским надбискупом Томом Урсиним. У обзир су узети и подаци које доноси Лазар Соранцо у делу *L'Ottomanno*. Ипак, најзначајнији извор чини малопознато писмо које су пред крај 1597. године у Рим донела двојица милешевских калуђера, Дамјан Љубибратић и Павле. Захваљујући вестима папских извора допуњена су постојећа знања о устанку Срба у Херцеговини и деловима Црне Горе. Пре свега, установљено је да су после пораза устаника у јануару 1597. код Гацка, планови о подизању новог устанка уз помоћ папе и његових савезника и даље постојали. Поред Грдана, поменуто је још 13 народних првака, кнезова и војвода. Реч је о старешинама херцеговачких области: Драчевица, Зупци, Бањани, Требиње, Рудине, Гацко, Попово поље. Устанак је неспорно захватио и Дробњаке, Пивљане, Морачу, Плану и Колашиновиће, Стари Влах, али и простор дубље ка унутрашњости. Према наводима поменутог писма, борбе би се лако могле проширити и на остале српске земље, од Босне до Призрена, Овчег Поља, Скопља, Софије, Самокова, Велике и Западне Мораве. Пада у очи да су то углавном територије које су чиниле државу Немањића, што сведочи да је постојало живо сећање на некадашње државно јединство, а осећа се и тежња ка обнови српског краљевства. Чекало се само да из Рима и Прага стигне конкретна војна помоћ и личност достојна да се стави не само на чело ослободилачког покрета, већ и да постане *господин овој земљи*, тј. да буде крунисан у некој од архиепископских цркава које су према *списима старих владара* биле крунидбена места српских краљева – Расу, Жичи или Пећи. Услов који је Апостолска столица

непрекидно постављала био је да патријарх Јован II заједно са свештенством и народом прихвати црквену унију. Неколико година трајало је одмеравање снага. У том раздобљу Климент VIII није упутио никакву конкретну помоћ устаницима, док патријарх Јован није показао истинску спремност да приступи канонском јединству са римском црквом. Српски устаници су се временом окренули шпанском краљу и његовим вазалима и савезницима у Италији. Напоследку, смрћу главних актера – Климента VIII (1605), војводе Грдана (1612) и патријарха Јована (1614) – ови планови постали су беспредметни.

Кључне речи: Апостолска столица, Климент VIII, патријарх Јован II, владика Висарион, војвода Грдан, црквена унија, црквене мисије.