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## **OTTOMAN DOCUMENTS IN THE “COLLECTION OF GIFTS AND REDEMPTIONS” OF THE ARCHIVES OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

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### **Abstract:**

*The paper talks about documents from the period of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1463-1878) that are kept by the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It presented general information about this archival material, as well as its digitization and usage. The author selected a few older and interesting documents from the 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries for presentation to the public.*

### **Keywords:**

*Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ottoman documents, 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries*

### **Izveček:**

#### **Osmanski dokumenti v Zbirki daril in odkupov Arhiva Bosne in Hercegovine**

*Prispevek govori o dokumentih iz obdobja osmanske vladavine v Bosni in Hercegovini (1463-1878), ki jih hrani Arhiv Bosne in Hercegovine. Predstavljene so splošne informacije o tem arhivskem gradivu v arhivu ter o njegovi digitalizaciji in uporabi. Za predstavitev javnosti je avtor izbral nekaj starejših in zanimivih dokumentov iz 16., 17. in 18. stoletja.*

### **Ključne besede:**

*Arhiv Bosne in Hercegovine, osmanski dokumenti, 16.–18. stoletje*

## 1 Ottoman documents of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina keeps archival records from the Ottoman period of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1463-1878). These Ottoman documents are part of the archival unit entitled "*Collection of Gifts and Redemptions*" of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among these Ottoman documents and manuscripts are *berats* and *fermans*, *buyuruldis*, *ilamis*, *hujets*, *vaqufnames*, and other documents from the period between the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and the first years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, some of these documents and manuscripts were destroyed in February 2014 during protests and a fire in the building of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Archives is located. Some Ottoman documents were completely destroyed by fire and water, and some were badly damaged.

In addition to this archival collection, we should also mention Ottoman documents created after 1878, after the departure of the Ottoman administration from Bosnia and Herzegovina. These documents also belong to the Ottoman cultural heritage. Such documents include those created on the territory of the Ottoman Empire until 1918, as well as documents of the *Supreme Sharia Court in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1879-1946)*. Also, the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina owns a collection of newspapers in the Ottoman language. These are magazines - *Basiret*, *Bosnian Herzegovinian calendar*, *Vakit*, *Sabah*, *Takvim-i vekayi*, *Hurriyet* and *Seadet*.

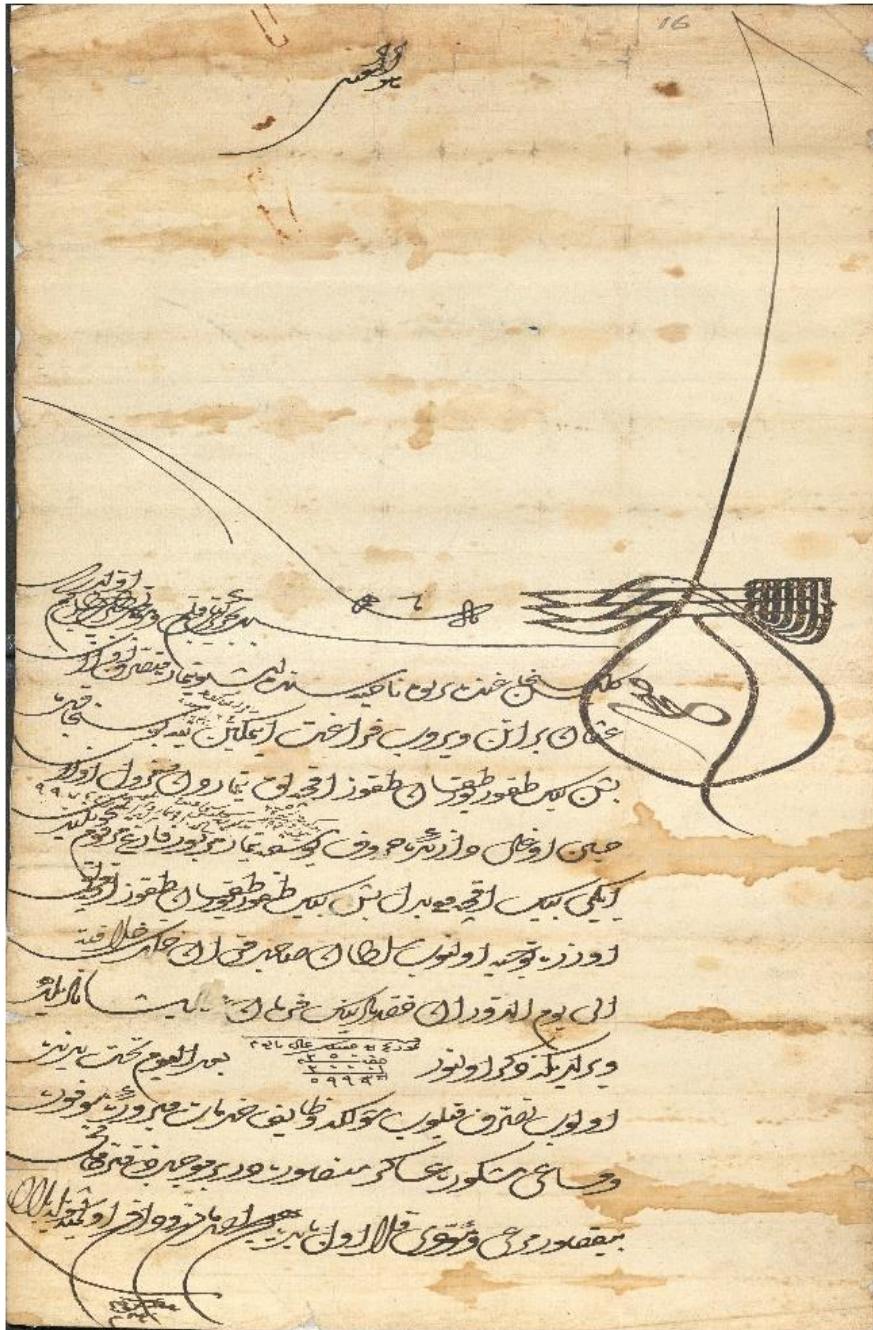
Documents from the Ottoman period of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1463-1878), from the "*Collection of Gifts and Redemptions*" (ZOP) were digitized as part of a cooperation project with the Directorate of State Archives of the Republic of Türkiye (Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı). Digitized material from the Ottoman period (737 archival units) is stored on the server in the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Almost 200 researchers visit the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina every year. They mostly research the period after the departure of Ottoman administration, after 1878. A small number of researchers use Ottoman archival material, and the reason is the difficulty of language and script. The Ottoman or Old Turkish language contains a lot of Arabic and Persian words and is written in different styles of the Arabic script.

As a result of cooperation with the Directorate of State Archives of Republic of Türkiye, the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as other public archives in Bosnia and Herzegovina, received modern scanners for the digitization of this archival material. Ottoman documents from the "*Collection of Gifts and Redemptions*" was digitized with this equipment.

This archival material provides important information about the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Ottoman rule.

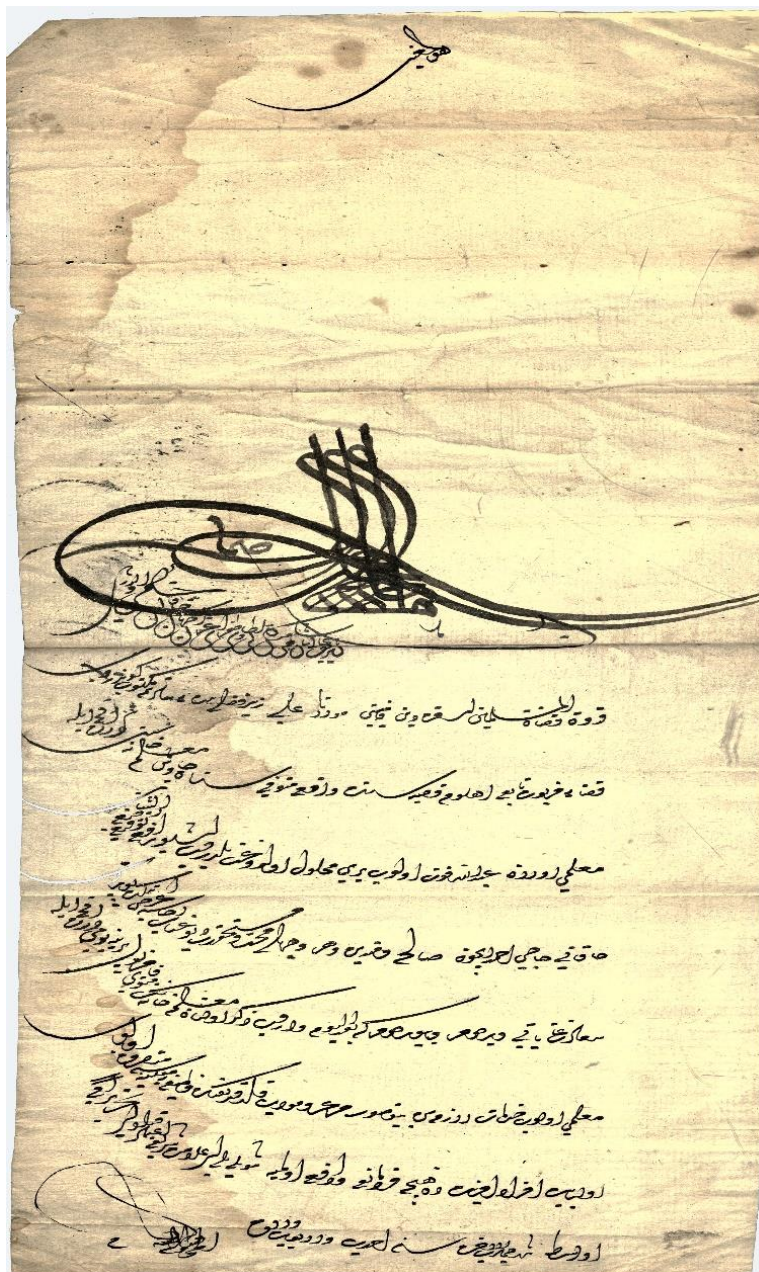
Among the documents kept in the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the oldest document is the *tezkira* of the Bosnian beglerbey (ottoman governor) Šehsuvar-pasha from 1588/89, related to some timar in Klis Sanjak (*sancak*). This document refers to the allocation of land property (*timar*) with an annual income of 5,999 silver *akchas* (*akça*<sup>1</sup>) in the area of Neretva in Klis Sanjak (Collection of Gifts and Redeptions, ZOP-3, 39).



ZOP-3, 39, Tezkira of Šehsuvar-pasha (1588/89.)

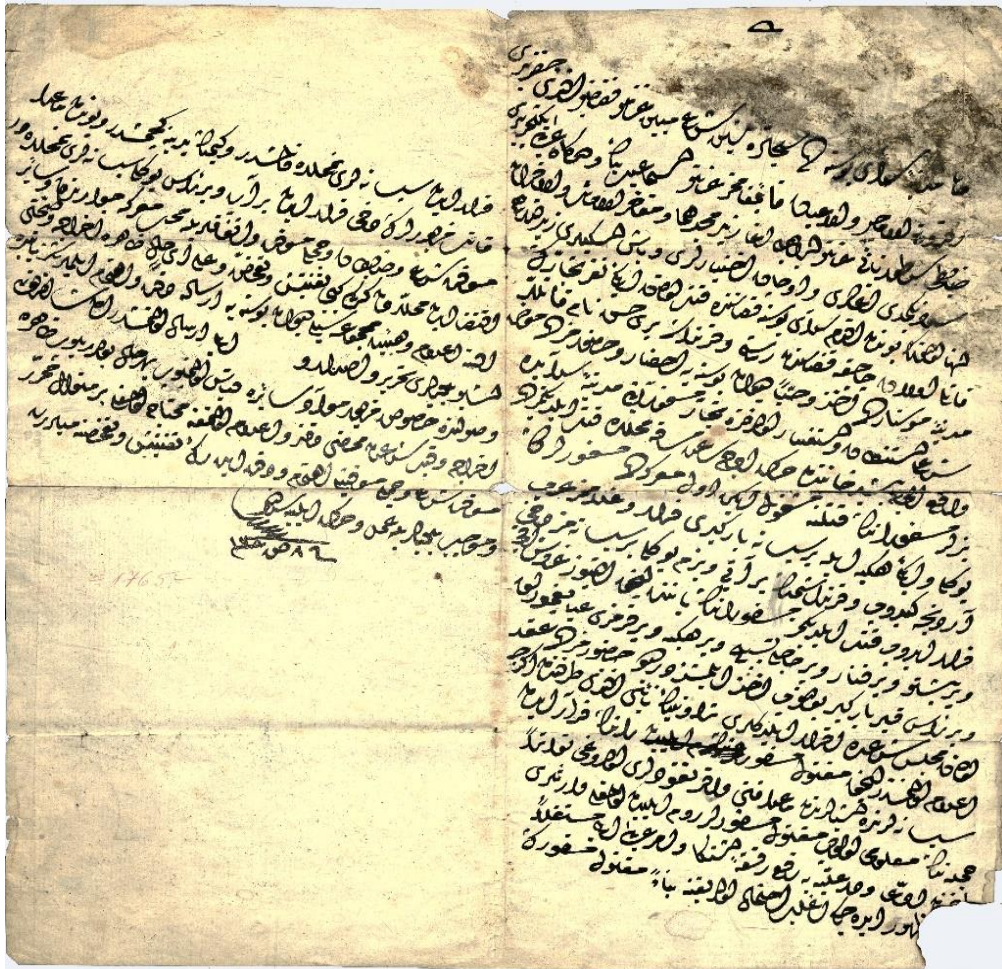
<sup>1</sup> Ottoman silver coin.

Also, this collection contains about 50 sultan's berats and firmans. Among the older ones are two berats of Sultan Murat IV from the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. One document is from the year 1630 and is related to the land holding - *timar* in Klis Sanjak (Collection of Gifts and Redemptions, ZOP-9, 313). The second sultan's document is from 1632 about the appointment of Haji Ahmed as the new teacher at the school in Livno after the death of the previous teacher Abdullah (Collection of Gifts and Redemptions, ZOP-9, 314).



ZOP-9, 314, Berat of Sultan Murat IV, 1632.

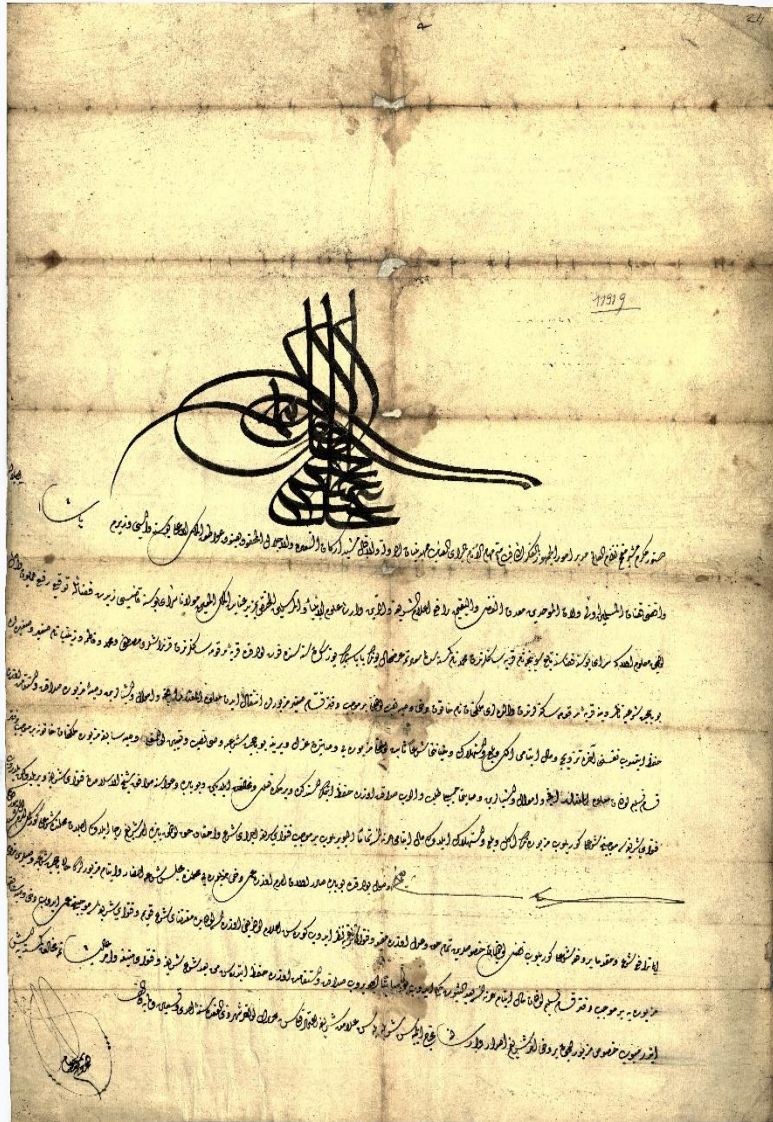
The Ottoman collection of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina mostly contains documents from the period from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. Document *buyuruldi* dated August 7, 1764, is a testimony about the murder of two merchants in the center of Sarajevo, in Baščarija, near *Morića han*. This murder was committed by two men from Čačak<sup>2</sup> judicial district (*kadiluk*), who were sentenced to death for this murder. According to this document, the authorities in Bosnia conducted an investigation in 1764 about the money and property stolen by the killers. The killers of the merchants admitted that the merchants had 600 *akchas* and one horse. It was found that a pack horse ran away during the attack, and that the merchants had more money than the killers had said. Therefore, further investigation was requested (Collection of Gifts and Redemptions, ZOP-12, 395).



ZOP-12, 395, *Buyuruldi*, 1764.

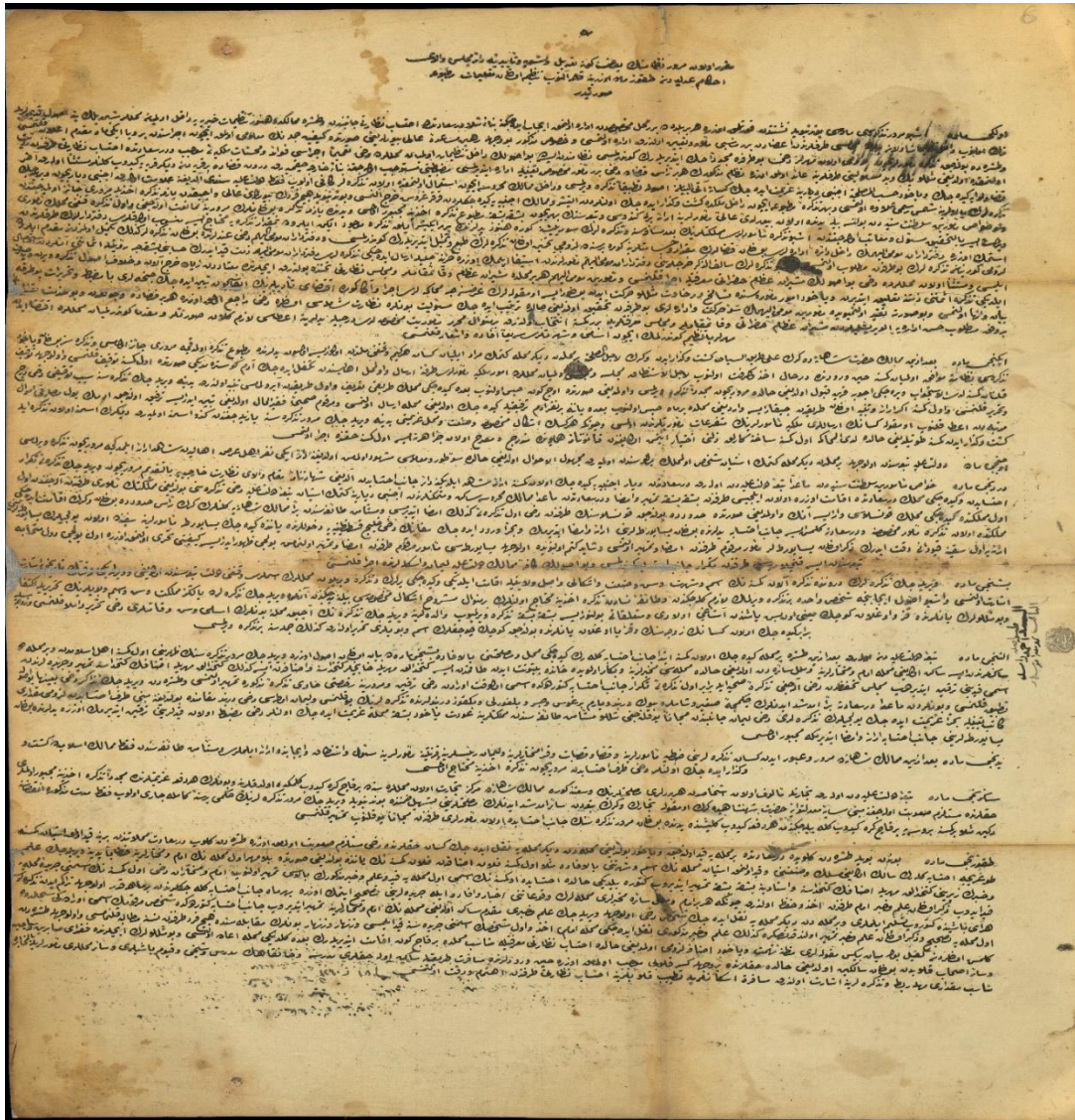
<sup>2</sup> In Serbia today.

Among the Ottoman documents of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an interesting document about family relations, a *ferman* (sultan's written order) of Sultan Abdulhamid I, from the end of December 1777, addressed to the judge (*kadi*) of Sarajevo. The Sultan requests the Sarajevo *kadi* to investigate the case of abuse of patrimony and orders to act according to the law. One of the heirs accused his mother of spending and selling the patrimony and remarrying after that (Collection of Gifts and Redemptions, ZOP-4, 43).



ZOP-4, 43. Ferman of Sultan Abdulhamid I, 1777.

One of the documents talks about travels in the first half of the 19th century - a copy of a printed travel guide dated December 29, 1844, issued by the Supreme Council of Justice (*Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliye*). The transcription was done by Sejjid Ahmed Rashid in Mostar. This instruction describes the rules for travelers, for business trips, commercial trips within the Ottoman Empire, the obligations of those who travel outside the borders of the Ottoman State, as well as those who enter this country. Also, penalties are prescribed for those who try to travel without a passport, as well as for those who try to use someone else's passport (Collection of Gifts and Redemptions, ZOP-5, 109).



ZOP-5, 109. Travel guide, 1844.

As a conclusion, most of these documents in Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina refer to the allocation of land holdings and military duties, mostly from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Due to the difficulty of the language and script, only few researchers have used the information from these documents. The legibility of documents depends on a good knowledge of different styles of the Arabic script and the Old Turkish Ottoman language. In addition, it also depends on the degree of preservation of the documents. Aesthetically, sultan berats and fermans are particularly beautiful. There are about fifty of them in the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because of their *tugras* – sultan's signatures, they are of special interest to visitors and researchers. These documents were sent to Bosnia from the top of the Ottoman state, so they represent a piece of the old oriental East in this part of Europe. Although small, this collection of Ottoman documents is an important historical source for researching Bosnian history during Ottoman rule.

### Sources:

Collection of Gifts and Redemptions. (ZOP). Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina

## POVZETEK

### OSMANSKI DOKUMENTI V ZBIRKI DARIL IN ODKUPOV ARHIVA BOSNE IN HERCEGOVINE

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Arhiv Bosne in Hercegovine hrani tudi arhivsko gradivo iz obdobja vladanja Osmanov v Bosni in Hercegovini (1463–1878). Ti osmanski dokumenti so del arhivske zbirke, tj. Zbirke daril in odkupov Arhiva Bosne in Hercegovine. Med dokumenti in rokopisi zbirke so berati in fermani, bujuruldije, ilamiji, hujeti, vakufname in drugi dokumenti, ki segajo v obdobje med drugo polovico 16. stoletja in začetkom 20. stoletja. Žal je bilo nekaj teh dokumentov in rokopisov uničenih februarja 2014 med protesti, ko je izbruhnil požar v stavbi Predsedstva Bosne in Hercegovine, kjer domuje arhiv. Del osmanskih dokumentov je bilo zaradi ognja in vode popolnoma uničenih, del pa jih je bilo hudo poškodovanih.

Dokumenti iz obdobja osmanske oblasti v Bosni in Hercegovini (1463–1878), skupaj gre za 737 arhivskih enot Zbirke daril in odkupov, so bili digitizirani v okviru projekta sodelovanja z Državnim arhivom Republike Turčije, ki se je začel poleti 2020. Digitizirano gradivo iz osmanskega obdobja je shranjeno na strežniku v Arhivu Bosne in Hercegovine. Vsako leto obišče Arhiv Bosne in Hercegovine skoraj 200 raziskovalcev, večinoma pa preučujejo obdobje po odhodu osmanske uprave leta 1878. Le majhno število jih raziskuje arhivsko gradivo iz časa Osmanov, v glavnem zaradi težavnosti jezika in pisave. Osmanski ali staroturški jezik vsebuje namreč veliko arabskih in perzijskih besed ter je zapisan v različnih slogih arabske pisave.

Kot rezultat sodelovanja s turškim državnim arhivom so tako Arhiv Bosne in Hercegovine kot tudi drugi arhivi v Bosni in Hercegovini prejeli sodobne skenerje za

digitizacijo arhivskega gradiva. S to opremo je bilo digitizirano tudi osmansko arhivsko gradivo. V bližnji prihodnosti pričakujemo, da ga bomo še bolj približali raziskovalcem. To delo bomo izvedli s pomočjo kolegov iz Državnega arhiva Republike Turčije.

### **About the author:**

**Fuad Obranović, M. Sc.**, was born in 1985. He has a master's degree in history from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo, Department of History. From 2009 to 2021, he worked at the Sarajevo Historical Archives. From April 2021 he is the deputy director of the Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **O avtorju:**

**Mag. Fuad Obranović** se je rodil leta 1985. Ima magisterij iz zgodovine na Filozofski fakulteti Univerze v Sarajevu, smer zgodovina. Od leta 2009 do leta 2021 je delal v Zgodovinskem arhivu Sarajevo. Od aprila 2021 je namestnik direktorja Arhiva Bosne in Hercegovine.