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TWO YEARS IN THE HISTORY OF THE BOSNIAN BORDER  
REGIONS (1479 AND 1480) – ACCORDING TO IBN KEMAL

Ibn Kemal or, to use his full name, Şemsuddin Ahmed b. Suleyman b. Kemal Pasha left an indelible mark on the cultural life of the Ottoman Empire, not only of his time (1468–1534) but of the whole of the 16th century, too. As a true oriental man of letters he left behind him an impressive series of literary and scientific works on various topics.<sup>1</sup> As a writer and scientist he was recognised and imitated; he was also considered to be an authority on such matters because of the social status he enjoyed as a teacher in the most renowned *medrese* in Istanbul and, finally, as the *Şeh-ul-Islam*.

He began to write his most important work, the mammoth *History of the Ottoman Dynasty* in ten volumes, on the order of Beyazit II. The first eight volumes deal, in chronological order, with the reigns of the first eight Ottoman Sultans, ending with the final years of the reign of Beyazit II. This part of the history appears to have been completed in 916 according to the Moslem calendar (1510–1511). Ibn Kemal wrote the ninth and tenth volumes on the wish of Suleyman the Magnificent. The ninth volume deals with the reign of Selim I and the tenth with that of Suleyman the Magnificent up to the conquest of Buda. The original copy of the history or, more precisely, of the histories has not been preserved but some sections (the whole of the fifth and part of the sixth and ninth volumes) have not yet been discovered. As a result of this, one or two volumes of Ibn Kemal's history had, even until recently, been considered as separate works. This is the case with the tenth volume translated into French with the title, *The Book On Mohacz*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As an illustration of the number of Ibn Kemal's works, most of which are preserved in manuscript form today, one could cite the *risalas* (essays and discussions) of which there are over 200. For his other works see I Parmaksizoğlu, *Kemâl Paşa-zâde*, *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, cüz 62, İstanbul, 1954, pp. 561–566.

<sup>2</sup> M. Pavet de Courteille, *Histoire de la Campagne de Mohacz*, Paris, 1859.

One of the most important sources for the political history of the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror is, without doubt, Ibn Kemal's recently published seventh volume of his history.<sup>3</sup> It is this volume which deals with events which are, in time, very close to the author, so that the latter was able to use the testimonies of living participants and their immediate descendants. In addition to this, Ibn Kemal himself came from a distinguished military family. His grandfather, Kemal Pasha, was one of the commanders under Mehmed the Conqueror and the personal tutor of Prince Beyazit II and his father, Suleyman Çelebi, was a *sancakbey* (ruler of a sanjak, i.e. administrative region) in Anatolia. The testimonies of these participants lend special value to Ibn Kemal's history and the fragments containing them often have the character of prime historical sources. Amongst his narrators in the seventh volume, Ibn Kemal mentions by name only a few – mainly the more distinguished military and political personalities: Çandarlı Ibrahim Pasha, the Crimean *han* Mengli Giray and Özgüroğlu İsa bey (whose surname is written "Zgurović" in Yugoslav chronicles). Ibn Kemal does not mention the other narrators by name but he often indicates that quite a lot of material resulted from their testimonies.<sup>4</sup>

One of such fragments of the seventh volume of Ibn Kemal's history relates to the military operations of the Bosnian *sancakbey*, Davud, in the frontier regions in 1479 and 1480. It contains material unmentioned in any contemporary Turkish chronicle, in other words it was written on the basis of original source material at the author's disposal.

The central figure in this fragment is Koca Davud Pasha, an Albanian by origin, who, in the reign of Mehmed the Conqueror was the Çrno-men and Anakara *sancakbey* and later the *Beylerbey* of Anatolia and Rumelia. He reached the height of his career under Beyazit II when he was the Grand Vizier for a full 15 years (1483–1497). Two years after his replacement in 1499 he died, very old, leaving behind him vast wealth and a rich endowment. Even today a series of buildings, formerly belonging to his endowment, are linked with the name of Davud Pasha. In Yugoslavia these are the *bezistan* in Bitola and Davud Pasha's *hamam* (Turkish bath) in Skopje.<sup>5</sup> The endowment itself was in Istanbul and there is a quarter

<sup>3</sup> Dr Serrefettin Turan: *Ibn Kemal, Tevârîhi-i Al-i Osman*, Defter VII, Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınlarından I seri, No. 5, Ankara 1954 – a facsimile publication; the same author and publication, III seri, No. 5, Ankara 1957 – a transcribed publication in modern Turkish with a preface and publisher's note.

<sup>4</sup> In the preface the publisher, Dr S. Turan, focuses, in particular, on the analysis of the figures given by Ibn Kemal who got them from Mengli Giray. The importance which Turkish historiography attaches to Crimea's being part of the Ottoman Empire must be borne in mind.

<sup>5</sup> Other public buildings in Yugoslavia have not been preserved. In Davud Pasha's endowment in Skopje there was a huge double hamam in front of the Vardar bridge, a small hamam near the river Vardar, a prison near the Grand Hamam and a mint near the

still bearing Davud Pasha's name. In the military history of the Ottoman Empire Davud Pasha's name has been standing consistently in one place. This is the famous Davud Pasha field (Davud Paşa Sahrası) near Istanbul, the first overnight stopping place for the Ottoman army departing on European campaigns, as far as which the Sultan was obliged to accompany the army, even if he himself was not leading it.<sup>6</sup>

Ibn Kemal devoted numerous pages and whole chapters of his history to depicting such colourful personalities. In the six, for us, most interesting chapters, which are also chosen here for the reason that they represent a whole, Ibn Kemal describes: two *akinci* (raider) attacks led by the then sancakbey, Davud Pasha, in the land of the Hungaro-Croatian king and the German kaiser; a smaller scale campaign for the purposes of capturing booty (*haramlik*) and finally the counterattack of Mathias Corvin which brought him to Sarajevo.<sup>7</sup>

We shall separate out and compare the survey of each of these operations with available contemporary sources. Such an analysis will contribute to knowledge of the frontier regions of Bosnia in the 15th century. No less interesting is the picture that can be built up, on the basis of this fragment, of Ibn Kemal as a historian; a historian whose work must be thoroughly studied as a prime source for the history of the Yugoslav nations.

## I

The author begins this part of his chronicle with a description of Davud Pasha's fall into disfavour. Immediately after the Scutari campaign, in which Davud Pasha took part as the Rumelian beylerbey, Mehmed II replaced him and appointed him, instead, to the post of sancakbey of Bosnia — this after the inducement and as a result of the intrigue of the Grand Vizier, Mehmed Pasha Karamani, maintains Ibn Kemal.<sup>8</sup> The former Bos-

prison. Cf. M. Tayyib Gökbilgin, XV–XVI asırlarda Edirne ve Paşa Livasi, Istanbul 1952, pp. 407–408.

<sup>6</sup> More detailed information about the life of Davud Pasha is given in *İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 3 cilt, 1st. 1945 (under Davud Pasha). The author of the article, I. H. Uzunçarşılı did not use Ibn Kemal's history as source material and this explains why he fails to make any mention of his tour of duty as a sancakbey in Bosnia.

<sup>7</sup> This chapter is on pp. 527–562 of the facsimile and pp. 473–500 of the transcribed copy prepared by Ş. Turan. In this paper we will refer to the transcribed copy because it contains, in addition to its own pagination, the pagination of the original and/or the facsimile. We shall use the abbreviation, Ibn Kemal TAO, VII.

<sup>8</sup> The Scutari campaign ended with the signing of a peace treaty between Venice and the Ottoman Empire on 26th Jan. 1479. (Cf. J. Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches* I, Pesth, 1834, p. 545). A more exact date for the replacement of Davud Pasha can be found if one bears in mind that Mehmed II left the area where the campaign was being conducted in the night between 8th and 9th Sept. 1478 (Hammer GOR, I, p. 542) leaving behind, according to Ibn Kemal, the Rumelian and Anatolian beylerbey to blow

nian sancakbey, Skender, became the beylerbey of Rumelia.<sup>9</sup>

In this way, the man with already proven qualities as a military commander and with great personal authority, came, in this way to be the head of the Bosnian frontier sanjak. In keeping with the duties of frontiersmen in this region to "plunder Hungarian territory", Davud Pasha, soon after his arrival, sought general permission from the Sultan to initiate such a campaign. He subsequently called together his soldiers and made preparations for an attack.

"...He sent a man to the Porte, the refuge of the world, and gained permission from the Sultan to go on a campaign of conquest to plunder Hungary. In order to inform the *ghazis* (warriors) the forthcoming raid (*akin*) was announced in towns and workshops and the news of the ensuing war of conquest was spread far and wide. Town criers went everywhere and news of the raid was heard by the old and young alike. *Akincis* (raiders) in the vicinity turned their horses in that direction. Armed with weapons for attack and defense and well equipped horses, more than ten thousand were prepared for the clash with the warlike enemy horsemen who were equally prepared. A multitude of warriors who had volunteered to annihilate the enemy, came to Sarajevo field which was completely filled with this mass..."<sup>10</sup>

"When preparations for the campaign had been made, one morning the drum indicating the start of the war of conquest was beaten. The noisy jostling of the horses, like a stormy Nile and roaring like a torrent, was heard — an unprecedented noise. Horsemen, swift as the wind, scattered the ash left from the camp fires with their stone hooves. The glinting horseshoes of the quick-footed dappled horses filled the heavenly mist with sparks and set the firmament ablaze. The riders reached the waters of the river Una. One who has not seen it, cannot understand what this river is like; if a horse plunges into it only its ears can be seen. There is no place

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up two fortresses, one on either side of the river Bojana, in front of Scutari, in order to prevent Venetian aid reaching the besieged there. On the Sultan's departure a *firman* (Imperial decree) arrived ordering, once the reconstruction of the fortresses was complete, both beylerbeys to leave their barracks, return home and leave behind only the Albanian *spahi* with his adviser, Ahmed bey Evrensobegović in front of Scutari. The army, pleased at receiving such a *firman*, reconstructed the fortresses in twelve days, after which the beylerbeys set off, having previously handed over their weapons to those who were going to remain behind. (Cf. Ibn Kemal TAO VII, p. 458). According to Hammer (*op. cit.*) Davud Pasha left Scutari at the beginning of winter ("Anfang des Wintermonathes"). As soon as he got back he received the "defeating news" that he had been replaced as beylerbey and that Skender, the former Bosnian sancakbey, had taken over the position. Cf. Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 473.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Hazim Šabanović, *Bosanski sandžakbeg Skender*, Istorijski Glasnik 1/1955, pp. 111–128. The life story of this Bosnian sancakbey is considered in detail in the paper. Ibn Kemal also gives fresh and interesting information on his life on pages 436–437 and 473–474.

<sup>10</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 474.

to support the legs or to get a grip. They arrived and plunged in like a torrent and, whistling like the wind, crossed the Una. They poured down the valleys like a mountain stream in spring."

The author's lines of verse run:

"Many days having passed since their departure,  
They reached the waterway called the river Kupa;  
This river flowed so fiercely and wildly,  
It could have uprooted the very mountain."

"And they found a crossing point and waded across. In this land there is another river called the Sava. On days when it rises and waves appear on it even if it were to run into the stormy Nile it would not be perturbed. The horses reached and surrendered themselves to the water, crossing it like lightning and continuing on their way. They arrived in the region known and remarkable for the language of its inhabitants, namely the Slav language.<sup>11</sup> As they rode down the valleys and mountains of the above mentioned region, the author writes in Turkish verse:

"A waterway cut across their path,  
They call this the river Drava,  
When the mountain hears its powerful roar  
It is overcome with fear."

"The river's water sometimes prevented a crossing in winter and summer alike unless boats were used. No one was able to wade across it. They asked the old folk of the land and discovered that they were unable to find anyone who knew of a crossing. The ghazis on their Arab steeds had, for some time, been flitting up and down these valleys like a whirlwind and were vacillating. Finally, seeing that there was no alternative, they threw themselves into the water and like little bubbles crossed over it..."<sup>12</sup>

Ibn Kemal, as we can see, lays special emphasis on the difficult and dangerous river crossing. It is interesting that precisely in this year it has been noted that there was a severe drought in these regions as a result of which the rivers were shallow and easily traversable.<sup>13</sup>

This disagreement with respect to the situation of the rivers (and the situation of the rivers was a factor of immense importance to the

<sup>11</sup> The original reads, "Islovin". This is the national name for Slavonija of the Middle Ages, which comprised the area between Gvozde and the Drava. In the 15th and 16th century this name still only referred to the region between the Kupa and the Drava: (Cf. *Istorija naroda Jugoslavije*, I, Zagreb, 1953, p. 178 and p. 756). Ibn Kemal's chronicle confirms that this toponym was used in 1479 for the area between the Sava and the Drava. The Turkish publisher explains (p. 475 note 2) that this toponym is of Illyrian origin!

<sup>12</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 475.

<sup>13</sup> "Fortuna Turcae audaciam sequitur fovetque: nam tanta siccitate is annus exaruerat, ut ad 7. Kalend. usque Aprilis numquam pluerit, quantum sitibundum terrae dorsum parumper aspergare potuisset." Ant. Bonfinii Asculani Rerum Hungaricarum decades libris XLV comprehensae, Ed. septima Lipsiae 1771, p. 620.

movements of the akinci army), can be explained by the fact that Ibn Kemal knew what these rivers were normally like.

In the crossing of the Drava "many horses and people came to grief." Ibn Kemal, with regard to this maintains that "the unfaithful of the land" were amazed by such heroism displayed by the Islamic army. This is characteristic of the mentality of the frontiersmen who felt it important to praise heroism especially if that praise was deserved by the enemy.

Having crossed the river, the horsemen launched a sudden attack on the surprised inhabitants.

"The akincis drove the old and the young, women and children to one place in crowds. They killed their cattle, the horses' hooves ruined their meadows, they plundered, looted and destroyed."<sup>14</sup>

Then the horsemen of the "commander of this land" made an unexpected counter attack. The skirmish is described by Ibn Kemal, vividly, in oriental fashion and at first glance very dramatically. In fact his description is composed of conventional and often used metaphors and provides no information from which one might be able to conclude anything more definite about who the leader of the opponent's "countless horsemen" was. Western sources fail to mention this event at all.

The akinci army, on fresh horses seized from the enemy but with their own horses in their train, then attack "a beautiful region."

"There was a town in this region by the name of Nedelište, where the king's mother (sometimes — D.B.) used to rest."<sup>15</sup> She chose this place as a stopover because its surroundings were attractive and its climate pleasant."<sup>16</sup>

Ibn Kemal describes Nedelište in Međumurje (near Čakovec) as a large and progressive town (şehir-i ma'mur, şehristan) emphasising its opulence.

The ghazis, on entering Nedelište, performed their customary attacks on the inhabitants, some of whom they killed and some of whom they robbed, while they pillaged their homes. They spent the night here in the town gardens.<sup>17</sup>

At dawn the akincis attacked the fortress (the expression "kaçdal" is used to indicate that this was a wooden fortress) near Nedelište. A few hundred inhabitants, of whom some "had left the house of Islam and switched from the enlightenment of religion to the darkness of atheism and settled in the region", had taken refuge in the fortress.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 476.

<sup>15</sup> The Hungarian queen really did have property in Međumurje. Cf. Dr Rudolf Horvat, *Povijest Međumurija*, Zagreb, 1944, p. 15. However, it is not certain if this property was in Nedelište itself.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 477.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 478.

<sup>18</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, *loc. cit.*

This detail shows that, even at this time, Slavs were living so far from Bosnia – Slavs who at an earlier period had adopted Islam and had later escaped. Renegades, according to Islamic law, were committing a crime which was punishable by death preceded by severe torture.<sup>19</sup>

Only after several repeated attacks were the akincis successful in storming the fortress but for some time the defenders were able to repulse their attackers, pelting them with stones and showering them with explosives and oil. Fearful revenge, described in detail, was taken on the surviving defenders on the command of Davud Pasha.

"When they had taken this fortress and burned the unfaithful who had been inside it, and had completely destroyed the afore-mentioned thriving town, they turned away healthy and merry, with endless booty and, again, broke out into the lands of the kaiser. Like a fast flowing river and a quickly spreading fire, they razed to the ground areas inhabited by the unfaithful which happened to be in their path; now they whirled like a whirlwind, now they hurtled like a torrent down the mountain slopes and along the river valleys and, finally, annihilating a multitude of unfaithful people on their way back, succeeded in returning to the region of Bosnia."<sup>20</sup>

At the end of this chapter Ibn Kemal has written six lines of verse in which he describes how a Hungarian fortress was razed to the ground "between Ključ and Kamengrad, two fortified towns." Unlike the verse of other authors, which is usually a comment on the foregoing, or is at least related to the narrative, this poem is connected with events which are not mentioned in the prose text. It is difficult to tell whether Ibn Kemal shortened the text himself, here omitting the prose section describing the final episodes in the campaign, or whether the omission was due to the negligence of the transcribers.

Ibn Kemal gives the date of all the stages in this campaign he describes as being 884 (Moslem calendar) i.e. from 25 III 1479 to 12 III 1480.

The Austrian chronicle of the Austrian monk, Jakob Unrest, one of the fundamental sources on Turkish invasions in the years 1477–1479, can be compared with this section of Ibn Kemal's chronicle.<sup>21</sup>

Unrest only mentions the attack on Nedilište (Nedelitz), the date of which he gives as 24th August 1479. That day happened to be the holi-

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Heffening's article "Murted" in the Encyclopedia of Islam (Islam Ansikl. 89 cüz, Ist. 1960, pp. 812–814.

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII p. 479.

<sup>21</sup> Jakob Unrest, *Österreichische Chronik, Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores rerum germanicarum*, new series, vol. XI, Weimar 1957, pp. 100–101. Cf. the evaluation of this extract of Unrest's chronicle presented by the editor, Karl Grossmann, in his preface, p.xxii and also the study by Wilhelm Neumann, *Die Türkeneinfälle nach Kärnten, Südost-Forschungen*, Munich, 1955, XIV, I, pp. 84–109.

day of St. Bartholomew and was the annual fair in the place; this would explain the idea the Turks got of a large and wealthy town. He also briefly reports on the capture of the tower where 50 horsemen guarded the revenue from the thirty per cent tax.<sup>22</sup>

Unrest, however, provides some further information which is not to be found in Ibn Kemal's account. This is related to the further development of the campaign but it is, except for the description of the crossing of the Drava below Ptuj, insufficiently colligated for one to be able to draw a more coherent picture of the movements of the akinci army. Nevertheless, it is interesting that he mentions the following, autumn campaign of the akincis in the same year (1479) – something absent in Ibn Kemal's chronicle; in the course of the campaign there is a skirmish with Jurje, Prince of the Zagorije ("graff Jorg aus dem Sager"), who seized their horses.<sup>23</sup>

## II

The description of the following campaign begins with the statement that Davud Pasha called for another raid (*akin*) in 885 (1480). This time the author does not give an estimate of the number of participants but says that "a good thirty one *alays*" (regiments) were gathered together for the campaign. Preparations lasted for several days, during which time "defects in the horses, arms and equipment were eliminated." Then the signal was given to move off.

The initial aim of the campaign was to plunder Croatia, (Hrvad Vilâyeti) and then to continue on, crossing again the rivers Una, Kupa, Sava and Drava.<sup>24</sup>

In the course of the campaign, which developed along the usual lines of plunder and devastation, Davud Pasha's son, sent ahead of the army with a patrol, comes across a unit (*alay*) of the Hungarian army in a ravine which was on its way to capture a fortress in the lands of the kaiser. In the unexpected encounter which took place at night, the akincis overwhelm the Hungarian force; those who managed to get away sought refuge in the very fortress which they were intending to go and take. The akincis

<sup>22</sup> Unrest, *Österreichische Chronik*, p. 100: "In demselben jar, als dy ober zall sagt, umb sannnd Bartolomestag kamen die Turckhen an die Nedelitz; da was jarmarckht, da uberfyellen sy das volckh mit leyb und guet; des funden sich gar vill. Sy gewunen auch daselbst den turn, darynn der dreyssigist was und zweden zeyten warn funftzig gerayssiger da."

<sup>23</sup> This campaign is described in more detail in Vj. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, book 2, part 3, Zagreb, 1904, p. 118.

<sup>24</sup> This again confirms that the toponym "Croatia" was used, amongst the people at this time, predominantly for the area south of the Kupa.



pursue them right up to the ramparts and then plunder the surrounding area and continue their campaign.

The Turkish army then crosses the Mura and for four days loots the area on the left bank of the river where "never before had so many warriors attacked" and where "the unfaithful of the region had never heard of the akincis." The chronicler describes how the local population approach the Turks credulously and inquisitively and are then seized and led away as slaves.

"The victorious army found the square deserted and so they calmly collected themselves together and left. In this land of the unfaithful they did not pass by of leave untouched one nook, not one hearth without utterly destroying it."<sup>25</sup>

The akincis "with countless prisoners and endless quantities of booty" re-cross the Mura and return along a different route. On the way they destroy a town (only those who fled to the nearby fortress were able to save themselves) and devastate a big monastery whose "interior was decked with statues with silver torsoes like a polytheistic Chinese temple or pagan shrine in Kandahar."

Thus Davud Pasha "enriched the houses of the ghazis and destroyed the houses of the enemy."<sup>26</sup>

The description of the campaign, as given by Ibn Kemal, well reflects the real position of this part of Europe at that time. King Friedrich III and the Hungarian king, Mathias Corvin, had, since 1477, been in dispute over the inheritance of the Czech throne after the death of King Podêbrad; this had resulted in frequent attacks on the lands of the kaiser (i.e. King Friedrich III) by Hungarian units. The Turks exploited these favourable conditions and stepped up their incursions. In order to secure their southern flank and have their hands free to do battle with Friedrich, Corvin concluded a peace treaty with the Turks, on the basis of which Turkish forces could cross his territory freely, providing they promised not to do any harm there.

The well-known letter which Mathias sent to Mehmed II in the second half of 1480 also bears witness to the existence of such an agreement. In the letter he complains to the Sultan about Davud Pasha, who, violating his promise, refrains from plundering regions under Corvin's suzerainty on his way to attack the lands of the Holy Roman Emperor, but who, on his way back plunders this very place, sets fire to the whole region and carries off lots of people as slaves.

A comparison of Ibn Kemal's description of this campaign (which is seen as the most devastating Turkish attack in Carniola and Styria) with Jakob Unrest's chronicle, above all confirms the detail that, for the popu-

<sup>25</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 483.

<sup>26</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 484.

lation in Styria, this attack was a complete surprise.<sup>27</sup> Unrest gives a further description of an unexpected akinci attack on a Hungarian unit, off on a campaign against the German King's towns. According to Unrest, the force was led by Crni Haugvič (der Schwartz Hawgwitsch) who, at the end of July 1480 had besieged Numarkt in Styria (near Judenburg) with cannons and was negotiating with the garrison about the surrender of the town, when the Turks launched a surprise attack. Haugvič was able to persuade the garrison to allow him and his men into the town, promising that he would conclude a peace treaty with the powers in the land, so that resistance could be offered to the Turks. However, states Unrest, there was never a peace treaty nor any common resistance but Haugvič remained in the town and did not want to leave it.<sup>28</sup>

In Unrest's version there are no details about a battle between Hungarians and Turks around Neumarkt. Only a brief clash is mentioned. Otherwise the description of events, in its basic outlines, coincides with that of Ibn Kemal. Unrest is, however, far more precise in his description of the movements of the akinci army. The Austrian chronicler, unlike Ibn Kemal who in his generalised account hardly mentions toponyms, gives the names of places plundered by the Turks and even gives exact dates.<sup>29</sup> He even informs us that amongst the prisoners there were about 500 priests alone, not to mention others and invites the reader to draw his own conclusions as to how many people were actually taken away as slaves.

### III

The next chapter of Ibn Kemal's history is interesting on several counts: he describes the small scale akinci raids, the *haramliks*,<sup>30</sup> he gives a detailed account of a battle with the Hungarian army and mentions on this occasion for the first time, Gerzelez,<sup>31</sup> the often sung hero of the folk poetry of the frontier regions.

<sup>27</sup> "Sy ubereylden das volckh undwissentlich," Unrest, *op. cit.* p. 110, line 32.

<sup>28</sup> Unrest, *op. cit.* p. 110, lines 2–15.

<sup>29</sup> Examples are his mention of an encampment of Turks near Judenburg, 6. VIII 1480, the pillage of the surrounding areas, advance towards Ragona and the looting throughout almost the whole of Styria, the plunder and burning of Laboška valley, especially between Volšperk and St. Pavel (where only a few houses were left standing); the capture of many people from Grebinje (Greifenburg), Haberberg and Djekša (Diex) as slaves; the attack on Velikovec and St. Vid, the burning down of Gospa Sveta and the return (of the akincis) through Podjuma (Jauntal). Cf. Unrest, *op. cit.* pp. 110–111.

<sup>30</sup> A *haramlik*, unlike an *akin* which involved up to several tens of thousands of horsemen and for which the Sultan's permission was necessary, was a small raid involving several hundred people which, by its very nature, could be organised by the local sancakbey.

<sup>31</sup> He is well known in the Yugoslav folk tradition by the name of Đerzelez Alija. I shall use the name Gerzelez which in fact is derived from Gerz Ilyas, mentioned in the history.

On his return from the preceding campaign, Davud Pasha gives permission to one of his men, the akinci chief, Voivode Junus,<sup>32</sup> to collect his warriors together for a *haramlik* in the "Hungarian vilayet". Gerzelez, whose heroism and strength the chronicler depicts in numerous epic hyperbolies, is assigned as his companion.

Under the leadership of these two, five to six hundred horsemen pillage the area where "recently" as Ibn Kemal states, the akincis had not attacked. They return with a large number of prisoners to the banks of the river Sana. From here Gerzelez with 100 do 200 warriors sets off towards Bosnia with the prisoners in his train and Junus remains behind encamped with the vast majority of the force "because the ghazis were tired and their horses sluggish." At night, while asleep, they are surprised by "one of the most famous *bans* (governors) of Hungary, the frontier commander known by the name of Çavlioğlu"<sup>33</sup> with three thousand men in arms<sup>34</sup> and he drives them away so they "were broken up into groups and scattered like a flock of sheep in the presence of a wolf." Driving the Turks from the river Sana, the Hungarian army comes up against Gerzelez who, having heard about the change in fortunes, turns to meet them with his men; he had already left the prisoners in Kamengrad.

There follows a description of the battle in which the chronicler is not sparing with epithets praising the heroism of the Hungarian ban and even portrays the duel between him and Gerzelez. The battle takes place between the river Sana and the fortress of Kamengrad. Several times the initiative passes from one to the other ("many times the opposing forces drove each other across the square and re-emerged"). Just when it seems there is a stalemate, Junus, who in the intervening period has managed to collect his warriors together, enters the fray and utterly defeats the ban's army. Hungarian flags and military instruments are amongst the booty captured by the Turks, states Ibn Kemal. The trophies of war are sent to the Porte after the campaign. These include the prisoners, the captured flags and the heads of the enemy dead.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV

The last event connected with Davud Pasha's war expeditions in the frontier regions in this year which is described by Ibn Kemal is the

<sup>32</sup> There is some foundation in the suggestion that this Voivode Junus was a freed slave of Davud Pasha. Cf. M.

<sup>33</sup> This, presumably, is Egervari *Laclav*, i.e. Ladislav of Egervar "ban of Croatia, Slavonija and Dalmatia" whose folk name (*Laclav*) the Turkish chronicler has distorted.

<sup>34</sup> One can be reasonably sure that this figure is considerably exaggerated, perhaps to de-emphasise Voivode Junus' defeat.

<sup>35</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, pp. 484-488.

famous incursion of the Hungarian army into the sanjak of Bosnia and the sacking of Sarajevo.

After presenting an idyllic description of Sarajevo field in the spring of 1480 and of Davud Pasha resting without his army, surrounded only by his slaves, the chronicler gives his version of the motives for the Hungarian attack. He says it was retaliation for the akinci raid of the previous year on Nedelište in Medjumurije, "the town of the king's mother." For this attack on his mother, the Hungarian king, in revenge, gathers his army for an attack on Sarajevo:<sup>36</sup> seven thousand tried warriors ("decked out with the most modern equipment and covered in armour from head to foot") while at the same time an emissary is sent out to Davud Pasha to negotiate a phony peace. The army is led by "seven of the most celebrated bans." It is interesting that Ibn Kemal attempts to quote by name all seven of the military commanders. These are: Dolosi Peter (i.e. the Bosnian ban Petrus Dolci or Petar Dojčin), then the ban of Jajce,<sup>37</sup> the ban of Blagaj, Mikloš, "an unfaithful Croat" (here the chronicler failed to identify his son Čaviloğlu, Ladislav of Egervar, ban of Croatia and Slavonija), then "one Janoš", Ivan Kurjaković (Kuryakoğlu Ivan) and "one who was a ban in Zrinska." Despot Grgurović (Girgiroğlu Despot), Zmaj Ognjen Vuk of Yugoslav folk poetry, the titular Serbian despot, was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army. There follows an impressive survey of the strength and ferocity of the Christian warriors (likened to bears and wild boars) "each of whom was capable of swallowing a living lion") and especially that of Vuk the Despot.

Breaking through into Bosnia – Turkish border regions, the army receives a report from one of the personal servants of Davud Pasha, a deserter, that there are no *spahis*, "protectors of the land", in the region of Sarajevo. However, an old man, caught on the road to Sarajevo, informs Grgurović, in front of whom he is led, that there is a powerful Turkish army lying in ambush ready to attack him. This slows down the advance of the attackers, who are now burdened by caution and this enables the inhabitants of Sarajevo (Saray) and the neighbouring settlements to flee and take refuge in the nearby mountains. After the king's emissary is tied up and sent to the fortress (*hisar*) and heralds are dispatched to call together the spahi army, Davud Pasha also takes to the mountains.

Seeing that there is no resistance, Grgurović enters Sarajevo and stays there three days. The first day the army pillages the town, the second day the surrounding settlements and the third day, before they leave, they set fire to and destroy the town.

<sup>36</sup> It is very probable that such an explanation of the motives for the Hungarian campaign sprung initially from the akincis themselves who, for the exceptional action on the part of the Hungarian king, sought a correspondingly exceptional reason.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Kemal is mistaken here: this is, again, the ban of Bosnian or "the ban of Jajce" Petar Dojčin, i.e. the same person.

In the meantime, the Turkish army begins to re-group and the Višegrad *kadi* (chief judge) Begović (Beyoğlu) and the *kadi* of Brod,<sup>38</sup> Husamović, (Hüsamoğlu) arrive with 500 horsemen each. Their arrival is followed by that of Gerzelez and Davud Pasha's son, Suleyman bey.

Grgurović gives the order for them to return and sends Peter Dojčin ahead with the booty while he covers Dojčin himself at the rear. Davud Pasha, for his part, sends Gerzelez to secure the entrance to the Mile-drež (Milodraž)<sup>39</sup> gorge to cut off the Hungarian army. The Pasha himself, with most of his force, surrounds Grgurović who organises his warriors into the classical "hedgehog" defensive formation, with spears pointing outwards on all sides and archers in the middle.<sup>40</sup>

"From whichever side one looked, nothing could be seen except the sharp points of the spears; they could not be approached because of their wasp – like defences and they could not be attacked because of their spear formation resembling a thorn bush. This magnificent throng was like a mountain whose interior was solid rock and whose exterior was prickly thorns."<sup>41</sup>

After the battle, which lasted until dawn (and in which Despot Begović, the Višegrad *kadi*, was amongst those killed), the army retreated into the gorge. An interesting epic sequence is woven into the chronicle at this point – Grgurović, at the southernmost place in the gorge, personally awaits Gerzelez.

"When Grgurović arrives at the most critical passing point, he looks around and sees: a tiger, like a giant lion is standing in his path. The countenance and the figure of the man, the awe which he inspires and the wild flaming breath... the colour of his skin resembles fire, his face a bare rock, his moustache like a black mountain. His head is like a red hot cauldron, his eyes like bowls flowing with blood. He was standing without his horse, legs apart. His fearful countenance occupied the pass, as if the summit of the mountain had fallen down and filled the gorge."<sup>42</sup>

When he sees who is in his path and realising, according to Ibn Kemal, that he could not save himself by fighting, Grgurović resorts to cunning and reproaches Gerzelez, saying that it is not appropriate for him as a

<sup>38</sup> The *kadilik* (area under the jurisdiction of a *kadi*) of Brod in the sanjak of Bosnia was called the *nahiye* (Serbo – Croat, *župa*) of Brod. In the *nahiye* of Brod in the second half of the 15th century the most important trade centres were Zenica and Kakanj. Cf. H. Šabanović, *Bosanski Pašaluk*, Sarajevo, 1959, pp. 147–150. The *kadis* had *timars* in the 15th century and here we see that they are collecting their timar fiefs from the *kadiliks* and leading them off on a campaign.

<sup>39</sup> Today there is a village called Milodraža in the district of Fojnica on the right hand side of the Sarajevo – Travnik road.

<sup>40</sup> This formation, in favourable conditions, could only be adopted against more poorly equipped enemies.

<sup>41</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 494.

<sup>42</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 496.

celebrated hero to guard the gorge like an *arami* (ordinary watchman). The Despot, regarding Gerzelez as an equal, challenges him to a duel and asks him to accept the challenge. Gerzelez consents and then, seeing that he has been tricked (the Despot is leaving the gorge without waiting for the duel), calls after Grgurović to keep his word and come back:

"Eh ban, what has happened to your oath? Come here and stand by your word so that we can face one another like men and talk!"<sup>43</sup>

Then he chases after the Despot (but does not catch up with him). After this scene, in which only these two protagonists are mentioned and not the two armies, the narrative of the chronicle is taken up again.

Davud Pasha catches up with Petar Dojčin's detachment, defeats it and seizes the booty which the latter was carrying off to Croatia. Mikloš, the ban of Blagaj, falls in this battle and his head is sent to the Porte as an especially valuable trophy.

The description of this event ends with the chronicler saying that the joyful news of victory is sent to the Sultan.<sup>44</sup>

Despot Vuk Grgurović and the bans Ladislav of Egervar and Petar Dojčin send similar joyful news of the victory they achieved with the attack on Sarajevo to King Mathias in a joint report. The version of events given in this report differs from that of Ibn Kemal in its estimation of the results of individual skirmishes and in the whole course of the operation. Both, however, to a great extent coincide in relation to the temporal and spatial structure of events. The report of the three military leaders is dated with days of the week and not dates, presumably because it was written immediately on their return to Jajce not far from where Mathias himself was encamped while he waited for the return of the expeditionary force.<sup>45</sup>

It is stated in the report that the king's army left Jajce on Tuesday and arrived at the gates of Vrhbosna (Sarajevo) as early as Wednesday, enabling them to surprise the Turks; the Pasha with a few of his men escaped into the mountains. The army is encamped in front of the town for three days, first pillaging it and then setting it on fire. On Friday morning the Pasha attacks "with many Turks" but is repulsed and the king's army sets up camp. The report goes on to allege that the Pasha collected together horsemen and infantry "from Bosnia, from around the Drina and from other areas" and then sends the infantry with his son into a gorge to block the path with trees and rocks and to destroy the bridge there.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 498.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, pp. 499–500.

<sup>45</sup> V. V. Makušev, *Prilozi k srpskoj istoriji XIV i XV veka*, Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva, XXXII, Belgrade, 1871, pp. 204–208.

<sup>46</sup> Here the report coincides with the allegations in Ibn Kemal's chronicle not only in the capture of Sarajevo but also concerning where the Pasha got his spahis ("and from around the Drina") and in the detail concerning the presence of the Pasha's son. It is interesting

On Saturday the battle in the gorge took place. This lasted a whole day and many died on both sides; the report says, "neither us nor our horses were able to carry on the fight." At night both armies are encamped near to each other while one part of the king's army are driven to flight: Petar Dojčin, sent to bring back the deserters, becomes, after the Turkish attack of the same night, separated from the main body of the army and is unable to rejoin it.<sup>47</sup>

On Sunday there is first an attack by the Pasha's son, who is repulsed and then an encounter with the Pasha near Travnik. The report explicitly states that in this last battle not one man in the king's army failed to stand his ground, whereas "many Turks, with their Pasha, were forced into hiding so that we could claim a victory." Prior to this last battle with the Pasha, the command is given to execute all the Turkish prisoners.

The report was drawn up in Jajce "on Tuesday morning in the year of our Lord 1480" and signed by the three military leaders.

A similar description of events — although worded with significantly less critical insight and accuracy — is presented in a letter which Mathias Corvin sent to Pope Sixtus IV from Zagreb on 14. XII 1480.<sup>48</sup>

However, there is a more interesting second letter, already mentioned, in which Mathias explains to Mehmed II his reasons for the future campaign. Mathias explains that, in reply to the Sultan's suggestion of a peace treaty (which alledgedly was the initiative of Davud Pasha) he sent his emissary via the Bosnian ban Petar Dojčin "to Captain Daut Pasha." The emissary returned with the Pasha's letter in which the latter promised that, on the occasion of the attack on the lands of the German king, he would not touch regions under the suzerainty of Mathias. It was on the basis of this promise that Corvin gave the order to allow the Turkish army to pass through his territory unharmed. Because the Pasha, on his return from the campaign, broke his promise and looted the king's territory, Mathias set out to drive him and his army away but the Pasha managed to elude him. The Pasha then wrote again seeking a peace agreement. However, in addition to this, the king's emissary had been waiting in vain six weeks in Jajce for the Pasha to send the hostages which were to be exchanged for him. Consequently, Mathias decides to turn his army, which had previously been engaged on other business,<sup>49</sup> on the Pasha and get his revenge on him for the damage the Pasha had caused. In his letter he begs

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that, with reference to the infantry being sent to defend the gorge, a certain obscure parallel can be found with the allegory (in Ibn Kemal's chronicle) about Gerzelez, who awaited Despot Vuk in the gorge "without his horse".

<sup>47</sup> Here the report of the military commanders, even concerning the outcome of the battle, coincides to a large extent with the version in the Turkish chronicle.

<sup>48</sup> Fraknói Vilmos, *Mátyás király levelei*, II, Budapest, 1895, pp. 76–80.

<sup>49</sup> He means the war against Friedrich.

Mehmed to understand that his actions are intended merely to punish the Pasha and reiterates his desire to live in peace with the Sultan whom he calls his "old brother" and reminds him that the two of them are not unrelated.<sup>50</sup>

Here, except to a certain extent with regard to the motives for the campaign (which Ibn Kemal sought in the earlier burning of the "town of the King's mother"), Mathias' version also differs from that of the chronicler in its review of the peace negotiations – the initiative for which Corvin ascribes to Davud Pasha and Ibn Kemal to the king. According to the letter, the emissary was not with Davud Pasha during the raid on Sarajevo either. (According to Ibn Kemal he had been sent, tied up, to the fortress when the Despot began raiding Sarajevo field with his army).

#### V

An analysis of this fragment and its comparison with contemporary western sources dealing with the same events provides elements for an objective evaluation of Ibn Kemal as an historian. Although he has a perfectly understandable tendency of systematically overestimating the strength of the enemy and of exaggerating, in his descriptions, the difficulties confronting the ghazis – with the obvious aim of making out that their exploits are greater than they really are – he does also record their defeats, at least the ones which follow victories. This probably explains why Ibn Kemal fails to mention at all the attack of autumn 1479 which, according to Unrest, ended unfavourably for the akincis.

However, these exaggerations cannot be ascribed wholly to Ibn Kemal. It can be assumed that they, at least in part, reflect the impressions (and memories) of the witnesses of the events described.<sup>51</sup> This raises the problem of the sources used by the author, especially in the writing of the seventh volume, i.e. the fragment here under discussion. He relies on a narrator (*ravi*), whose name he does not mention.<sup>52</sup> It remains unclear whether the testimony of a participant in the events was used here directly or whether it was culled from some written source, unknown to us today. Some believe<sup>53</sup> that Ibn Kemal used the poem with which the poet Hay-

<sup>50</sup> Fraknói Vilmos, *Mátyás király levelei*, II, Budapest, 1895, pp. 388–390.

<sup>51</sup> Dr Ş. Turan, the publisher, in his preface to the transcribed edition (p. XLV, LXXXIII) supposes that Ibn Kemal used written and/or oral memories of the akincis as source material for his chronicle.

<sup>52</sup> Ibn Kemal, TAO, VII, p. 481, fourth line from the top. In all six chapters this is the only place that the narrator is mentioned.

<sup>53</sup> H. Inalcik supports this theory in his work: *The Rise of Ottoman Historiography* (Historians of the Middle East, ed. by B. Lewis and P. Holt, London, 1962), p. 167. This poem by the Edirne poet Hayreddin had, allegedly, 15,000 distichs. Only Şehî in his *Tezkira* mentions its existence. Cf. A. S. Levend, *Gazavatnâmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Beyin Gazavatnamesi*, TTK Yayınları, Ankara, 1956, p. 22.



reddin of Edirne (whose *nom de plume* was Sabâyi) glorified Davud Pasha's exploits in Bosnia. At first glance this theory seems acceptable enough but it is impossible to prove because Hayreddin of Edirne's poem has not been preserved. The following, however, can be brought against it. As we have said, Ibn Kemal writes about Davud Pasha, whom it appears he knew personally, in many places, in great detail and with a lot of sympathy throughout the seventh volume.<sup>54</sup> However, Ibn Kemal also writes everything he knows about other commanders of the border regions, Ali bey Mihalogoğlu, Bali bey Malkoçoğlu and Isa bey, his father Ishak bey and Yiğit bey Pasha.<sup>55</sup>

This shows that the question of which sources Ibn Kemal used cannot be tackled in regard to the fragment about Davud Pasha alone but must be investigated by looking at all Ibn Kemal's writings.

Ibn Kemal's desire to prevent the exploits of the border region commanders, the creators of the Empire, from being forgotten distinguishes Ibn Kemal from other Ottoman historians who, at best, only briefly record those events which are not directly connected with the personality of the ruler. There is a clear tendency in Ibn Kemal's chronicle to transcend the narrow framework of the dynastic chronicle written to the glory of the sovereign and he presents a history of political events in the Empire. Although later Ottoman chroniclers were powerfully influenced by Ibn Kemal's style and language,<sup>56</sup> his conception of history remained unrepeatable. Obviously only such a powerful personality, determined largely by his social origin<sup>57</sup> from which he acquired a social status which allowed him with relative impunity to tear down the barriers of convention, could come up with such a new conception.

Although the question of Ibn Kemal's sources remains open, this paper significantly erodes the hypothesis that Ibn Kemal, used exclusively Sabayi's poetry in the writing of this fragment of his history.

<sup>54</sup> The basis for this assertion is the fact that Ibn Kemal was the author of the Arabic plaques on Davud Pasha's mosque (part of his endowment) and on his tombstone. Cf. *İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (under Davud Pasha).

<sup>55</sup> Especially important to us is the original version which Ibn Kemal gives of the conquest of Skopje by the border region commander Yiğit bey Pasha because, in it, he talks about the armed resistance to the Turks by the inhabitants of Skopje. There is more about this in a separate paper on Ibn Kemal's description of the Skopje border warriors, which we are preparing for the "Glasnik" of the Skopje town museum.

<sup>56</sup> We must emphasise here that this influence was not a particularly favourable one, because Ibn Kemal's language is flowery, overburdened with stylistic niceties, full of Arabic and Persian loan words and exaggerated rhyming prose whose sole undisputed quality is in that it contains a series of pure Turkish expressions which, later, with time, fell out of usage.

<sup>57</sup> One should not forget that Ibn Kemal was a descendent of ghazis on his father's side— a bey and a Pasha. On his mother's side, however, he belonged to the scientific elite, for his mother's father, Ibn Küpeli, was among the most vaunted scientists. It is clear that because of this, he could never feel himself to be a paid court historian.

From the point of view of Yugoslav historiography, the fragment here analysed can serve as a complementary source, throwing new light on events already well documented. Ibn Kemal's expose fits into a relatively solid chronological framework and presents a rounded version of events. He thus gives us an interesting contribution to our knowledge of the Bosnian border regions in the 15th century, a contribution which is fresh as far as facts and details are concerned and convincing.

Nevertheless, for us most valuable of all is his way of portraying the protagonists in the events described. Ibn Kemal attempts, like a literary writer, to present each new character to the reader the moment he enters the story and to present him as comprehensively as possible. In this fragment he does just this with the two heroes of Yugoslav folk poetry – Despot Vuk Grgurović<sup>58</sup> and Ali Gerzelez. It is thanks to this that the historical figure of Gerzelez has been more clearly defined. It is not an exaggeration to say that Ibn Kemal returns historical character to this legendary personality. One could even assert that the national folk imagination created a poetic image of Gerzelez as a prototype of the Moslem hero, basing its portrayal on those very events, for the detailed description of which, we are indebted to Ibn Kemal. It is well known that in the folk tradition Despot Vuk and Gerzelez, at the head of their respective camps, confront one another in an epic duel which takes place at the scene of battle around Sarajevo.<sup>59</sup> It is of interest that the description of the physical and other qualities which folk poetry ascribes to Gerzelez coincides almost to the last detail with the portrait of him depicted by Ibn Kemal.<sup>60</sup>

We should pay due respect to Ibn Kemal for supplementing our knowledge of the picturesque character of Gerzelez; in doing this he has once again confirmed the importance of the epic tradition as an historical source.

<sup>58</sup> S. Turan, the publisher of Ibn Kemal's volumes, has caused considerable confusion with toponyms and personal names in the commentary of the fragment which we have analysed. But while he cannot be criticised for thinking that Nedelište in Prekomurje is "perhaps Villach," it is unforgivable that he ascribes all the exploits of Despot Vuk Grgurović to Gregor Labatan. Ibn Kemal himself calls the Despot, Girgireoğlu Despot (TAO, VII, p. 490) or simply Girgireoğlu (TAO, VII, pp. 491–492) and when he mentions him for the first time in his seventh volume, he presents him to his readers with the words: "Grgurović was a famous Hungarian *serdar* (military commander). He was the military commander of the above mentioned *vilayet* which was plundered. He became famous amongst his contemporaries for his heroism. Word of his bravery spread throughout the world. He inherited the island of Srem from his grandfather (also called Despot). He himself chose to accept Hungarian suzerainty and made himself a subject of the evil king." (TAO, VII, p. 401).

<sup>59</sup> Duš. Marjanović's article, *Problem Đerzelez Alije*, (Prilozi proučavanju narodne poezije, god. III, 1936, books 1–2, pp. 90–95) examines in detail both the poetic and the historical Đerzelez Alija.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Duš. Marjanović, *op. cit.* p. 91.

## R e z i m e

DVIJE GODINE ISTORIJE BOSANSKOG KRAJIŠTA (1479. i 1480)  
– PREMA IBN KEMALU

Sedmi tom *Istorije dinastije Osmana* čiji je autor Ibn Kemal i koji je posvećen vladavini Mehmeda II, sadrži svjedočanstva savremenika o turskim pohodima u jugoistočnoj Evropi u drugoj polovini XV stoljeća.

Ovaj rad posvećen je analizi jednog fragmenta iz ovog toma koji se odnosi na krajiško ratovanje bosanskog sandžakbega Davuda (1479. i 1480) godine. Slikanju centralne ličnosti, Davud-paše, Ibn Kemal je posvetio čitava poglavlja, od kojih je ovdje odabrano šest najzanimljivijih i čiji je sadržaj upoređen sa raspoloživim savremenim izvorima.

Posebnu pažnju zaslužuje njegov opis dviju poznatih ličnosti, junaka naših narodnih pjesama – despota Vuka Grgurevića i Alije Đerzeleza. Svojim načinom prikazivanja protagonista događaja koje opisuje, Ibn Kemal je dao istorijski karakter ovih ličnosti čije se fizičke i druge osobine iz narodne poezije gotovo do detalja podudaraju sa portretom koji slika Ibn Kemal. Time je on, upotpunivši naša znanja o jednoj takvoj ličnosti kakav je Đerzelez Alija, potvrdio značaj epske tradicije kao istorijskog izvora.

## S u m m a r y

TWO YEARS IN THE BOSNIAN BORDER AREA (1479 AND 1480)  
ACCORDING TO IBN KEMAL

The seventh volume of *The History of the Ottoman Dynasty* by Ibn Kemal, dedicated to the rule of Mehmed II, contains testimony of contemporaries about Turkish campaign in the south-east Europe in the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> c.

This paper is devoted to the analysis of an abstract from the mentioned volume referring to the Bosnian sangakbey Davud's waging in the border area in 1479 and 1480. Ibn Kemal devoted whole chapters to portraying of the central personality – Davud-paša. Six most interesting chapters have been chosen for this paper and their contents has been compared with available contemporary sources.

His descriptions of two famous men, heros of our folk songs, deserve particular attention – descriptions of Vuk Grgurević and Alija Đerzelez. By his way of presenting the protagonists of the described events, Ibn Kemal gave historical characters of these men whose physical and other characteristics agree almost in every detail with those in our folk poetry. Completing our knowledge of such a personality as Đerzelez Alija, he acknowledged the importance of epic tradition as a historical source.