

## Vlachs and *Stećak* Tombstones\*

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**Abstract:** On the basis of data from preserved archival sources and epigraphic inscriptions that provide information on the deceased individuals who were buried under the *stećak* tombstones, the author confirms the presumptions and insufficiently elaborated positions that Vlachs were, among others, also buried under the *stećak* tombstones in medieval Bosnia. The text emphasises the Vlahovići, Plišćići, Predojevići, Bobani and Drobnjaci groups that confirm the thesis entirely.

**Key words:** Vlachs, *stećak*, medieval Bosnia

Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones are a mixture of two separate and unequally treated thematic strands in historiography. Generally, it could be stated that the more meticulous researchers of the *stećak* tombstones paid attention to this issue, but the same cannot be said for researchers of the Vlachs. The explanation stems from the main sources at the disposal to both, and which dictate the framework of research, and, most importantly, from the abundance of research and inclusion of different disciplines. Although these two thematic frameworks have most frequently been observed separately, and although both are rather controversial, the *stećak*-related research is a phenomenon which is more diverse, more present, more important. Among other, problematising the *stećak* tombstones has been recognised as a space where certain issues pertaining to the religious history of medieval Bosnia could be solved and proven, and it is known that this kind of literature is fairly abundant. However, through the prism of the Vlachs and *stećak* tombstones theme, literature consulted shows the characteristic of historiography that equally approaches the

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issue, since, in both instances, researching the issues of the relationship of Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones or the *stećak* tombstones and Vlachs has mainly been outside the scope of the basic research.

The *stećak* tombstones' researchers, through their sources that are, most frequently, the preserved material evidence from which they observed the external characteristics, would rarely find evidence that would enable them to discover a connection with Vlachs, while the researchers of Vlachs, who are not many, have found in their basic material – the archival sources – little cause or current need expressed in literature to more frequently deal with the issue of the Vlachs and *stećak* tombstones connection. Vlachs have been difficult to reach through the material remains, while the same applies to the *stećak* tombstones in written sources. Lacking clear solutions, interpretations of symbolism, presentations, motifs, lines, etc. as the basic external characteristics of the *stećak* tombstone that imply the presence of Vlachs, the researchers have not gone beyond the level of proposing such a possibility, which would normally be easily and immediately relativized, together with other attempts to recognise, through the symbolism, other segments, especially the “revolutionary” interpretations of the complex religious situation in Bosnia. Opposite to that, archival news that confirm the inscriptions on the *stećak* tombstones of Vlachs seem justifiably important. Essentially, such a position was enabled once the *stećak* tombstones' researchers paid more attention to the inscriptions, especially since Marko Vego published a catalogue of the famous inscriptions on the *stećak* tombstones. We will here emphasise the approaches by Marko Vego, Šefik Bešliagić, Bogumil Harabak and Đuro Tošić, who significantly contributed the understanding of the connection between Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones by positioning the historical context. We will also pay attention here to the archival news of Vlachs contained in the inscriptions on the *stećak* tombstones and precisely present instances of the “Vlachian *stećak*” in the area of Herzegovina.

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Extraordinary researchers of the older generation, Bogumil Hrabak and Marko Vego linked the inscriptions in Boljuni near Stolac and that of Tarah Boljunović to the Boljuni Vlachs (“Я се лежи Богдаваць Тарахъ Болдновичъ сьеме. Я се съече Грѣбачъ молѣ се боже помилди ме милости твоѣ”) [Here lies Bogavac, son of Tarah, of the Bolunovič seed. This is carved by Grubač. Please God grace me with your mercy].<sup>1</sup> The archives contain several other Boljunović members who were also Vlachs, but from the 14<sup>th</sup> c. / Brajan Boljunović, Vlah ‘de catono Grubeč Saraych’

<sup>1</sup> Vego 1964, 19; Vego 1962, 210.

(1376),<sup>2</sup> Ljepčin Boljunović (1376), Vlach of Vukašin Milatković,<sup>3</sup> Brajko and Vranoje Boljunović (1382).<sup>4</sup> However, the famous master Grubač who engraved the Boljuni tombstones in the later period (сѣче Грѣбачъ) [carved by Grubač] cannot be periodically placed to the 14<sup>th</sup> century and linked to these individuals. The connection between Vlachs and the inscriptions was proposed through the information obtained in the archival material from 1477, which mentions Miliša Taraković, the *katunar* (broad description: *head of the Vlach katun (colony) – t/n*) of the Boljun Vlachs. According to Bogumil Hrabak, he may have been the son of Tarah Boljunović.<sup>5</sup> This was, for a long time, the only relevant connection of Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones through the prism of the primary written sources.

There are other possibilities of connecting Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones. Some names on the *stećak* tombstone inscriptions coincide with archival data, but a definite confirmation from another source is lacking, however. The two inscriptions from Boljuni near Stolac are such examples. The first inscription is that of Radič Vladisalić (15<sup>th</sup> / 16<sup>th</sup> c.), which reads: *A se leži Radič Vladisalić a siče na me otac. Bože ti ga pomози* [Here lies Radič Vladisalić. This (stone) is carved upon me by my father. God help him].<sup>6</sup> There are some insufficient options. This could be the same person as the Vlach mentioned in the archival news in 1468: *contra Radicium Vladissaglich Vlachum*.<sup>7</sup> It could be Boban, the Vlach of the same name, mentioned in December 1493 (*Radičius Vladissalich de Bobana*).<sup>8</sup> The other inscription is that of Vlađa (Vlać) Vladisalić, a Godun Vlach, (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> c.), which reads: *A se leži Vlađ Vladisalić. Piše Semorad, siče Vuk na oca* [Here lies Vlać Vladisalić. Written by Semorad. (The stone is) carved by Vuk upon his father].<sup>9</sup> We found in the archives Vlađ Vladisalić, a Godun Vlach, from the period of May 1476 (*Vlag Vадisalich*).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>2</sup> “Grubeç Soraych, Brayan Bollunouich, Medos Michoeuich, Borouina Milchanich} de catono Grubeç Soraych, Chranеç Vragouich frater Riegoe, Vitchus Borinouich, Petroe Medoeuich} de catono Vragouich” (18 August 1376), DAD, Div. Canc., XXIV, 170.

<sup>3</sup> “Milatchus Surmanich, Stiepoє Ratchouich, Drusina Ratchouich, Brayssa Brancouich, Stoyslaus Radostich et Milçin Surmanich} Moroblachi Volcassini Milatchouich ... Liepçin Bolunouich Moroblachus dicti Milatchi fuit confessus simili mode ut supra” (30 April 1376), DAD, Div. Canc., XXIV, 139v.

<sup>4</sup> “Dudoe Yliaseuich, Milos Terdich, Vranoe Bolunouich} Vlachi faciunt manifestum quod se constituunt plegios pro Braycho Boglunouich Vlacho” (13 April 1382), DAD, Div. Canc., XXV, 87v.

<sup>5</sup> “De Bolluni de chatun de Milliss Tarcahouich” (1 June 1477), DAD, Privata, XIX/3b, 60v; Hrabak 1953, 325.

<sup>6</sup> “Я се лежи Радич Владисалић а сиче на ме отац. Боже ти га помози”, Vego 1964, 27.

<sup>7</sup> (28 November 1468), DAD, Lam. de foris, XL, 264.

<sup>8</sup> (23 December 1493), DAD, Deb. Not., LVI, 23.

<sup>9</sup> “Я се лежи Влађ Владисалић. Пише Семорад, сице Вѣк на оца”, Vego 1964, 21.

<sup>10</sup> (21 May 1476), DAD, Privata, XIX/3b, 49.

However, in the two inscriptions for both Radič Vladisalić and Vlač Vadsalić, additional research is required and a more certain contextualisation should be proposed. These separate examples are not the only ones. The professional practice indicates other inscriptions as well and brings them to the same level with the archival sources, but they too need additional confirmations. The analysis on the *stećak* inscriptions of the Bobani, Pliščić, Predojevići, Vlahovići and Drobniak Vlachs clearly indicate that Šefik Bešliagić's proposition that Vlachs were part of a wider medieval community that had used the *stećak* tombstone is justified.<sup>11</sup>

### The Pliščić Vlachs

The Pliščić Vlachs (Plescich, in catono de Pliescha, de Plische) were situated in the area around Gacko (the necropolis near Veliko groblje, Stepen), Samobor, Cernica and Rudine, north of the Ljubomir and Trebinje areas, and their main settlement was 'Modrič' (in villam de Pliesche in loco dicto Modrice).<sup>12</sup>

Among the more significant inscriptions about the Vlach representatives buried under the *stećak* tombstones are certainly two inscriptions on the *stećak* tombstones in the Veliko groblje near Gacko necropolis. Near Cernica and Gacko, on the Ključ-Gacko road, in the Stepen village area (about 10 kilometres flying distance south of Gacko), west of Pusto polje (Pustopolje), east of Zborna gomila, in the Veliko groblje necropolis that contains 17 *stećak* tombstones, there were two *stećak* tombstones we will pay attention to. One grave contains the inscription of Knez Vukoslav Pliščić, and reads: *Ase leži knez Vukosav Pliščić pisa Sračin Vukosalić*.<sup>13</sup> The second inscription was on a *stećak* tombstone next to Vukoslav Pliščić's grave, and is preserved today in the courtyard of the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. The inscription speaks of the grave and of Viganj, the son of Vukoslav Pliščić. It reads: *A se leži Vig(a)n Vukosava Pliščića sin pisa Sračin Vukosalić*.<sup>14</sup> Both the monuments were "written" by Sarcin Vukosalić. These two inscriptions and their content have been subjects to different interpretations, but also analogies. Inscriptions themselves show a clear connection with Vlachs, apart from the last name – Pliščić. Characteristics of the letter were also taken into consideration for the purpose of chronological dating, as well as the analogue names and last names mentioned by other, primarily archival sources. Marko Vego linked these inscriptions to the Pliščić Vlachs, but was still inclined to thinking those were the persons who were not Vlachs, but spatially relatively distant vassals

<sup>11</sup> Bešliagić, 1982, 520-527.

<sup>12</sup> On the Pliščić Vlachs, see: Kurtović, 2008, 241; Kurtović 2011, 650-652.

<sup>13</sup> "Асе лежи кнезь Вѹкосавъ Плишчићъ писа Срачинъ Вѹкосалићъ", Slijerčević 1928, 62; Vego 1964b, 32-33.

<sup>14</sup> "А се лежи Виг(а)нъ Вѹкосава Плишчића синъ писа Срачинъ Вѹкосалићъ", Vego 1964a, 58-59.

of the Radivojević and Kosača noble families, hence, his proposals have remained rather indistinct and mixed. The archival material on Vojin Sracinović from July 1419 seemed critical to Vego, but it did not concern Vlachs,<sup>15</sup> while the newly-found source by Sima Ćirković about Vucko Vignjević from 1449 caused Marko Vego to additionally amend his famous and precious album.<sup>16</sup> The confusion and changes to the understanding of the situation show how the archival sources can influence the contextualisation and dating of the *stećak* tombstone, including the inscriptions, hence, in this case, the characteristics of the script.<sup>17</sup> That creates a general disturbance since only one shift in dating causes the shift in all previously analysed aspects of the scripts. For the purpose of stability of epigraphic findings on the *stećak* tombstone, a more reliable database of inscriptions is necessary in order to monitor characteristics of the scribe. The names, as well as symbolism, may be space for all kinds of assumptions, especially if the general context is neglected and the selected information is observed in isolation. Muhamed Hadžijahić brought Sracin Vukosalić, who wrote the inscriptions, into the connection with the traces of Islam in medieval Bosnia: Sracin, apparently Saracen, from which follows the Saracen – a person of colour on a Bosnian emblem.<sup>18</sup> Hence, not much is needed within these parameters to shift the point of view and go into an extreme, as desired.

Both these inscriptions show that not much is unknown. The inscriptions' mystery has been solved. All the aforementioned actors have been found in the archival materials which provide a basis for a more comprehensive chronological dating of these *stećak* tombstones. Vukoslav Pliščić, the aforementioned duke (кнезь Вѣкѡсавъ Плишчићъ) was a Vlach Pliščić that appears in the 1375 (*Volchoslauo Plesčich*)<sup>19</sup> and 1382 (*Volcoslauo Pleschich comite Vlacorum omnium domini regis Rassie et Bossine*) sources<sup>20</sup>, and his son Viganj (Vukosalić) Pliščić is mentioned in 1403 (*Vigegli Pileschi*).<sup>21</sup> Sracin Vukosalić, the son of Vukoslav Pliščić and, as it follows, the brother of Viganj Pliščić, wrote both the inscriptions. He is mentioned in the 1408 (and 1411) sources as Srcain

<sup>15</sup> “госпоги Владици и воєводи Павла ... како сте ђалј примили одъ Воина Страциновиќа и како ње ђхватаи Валтка и Николађ” (17 July 1419), Stojanović 1929, 416; Kurtović 2008, 221-222.

<sup>16</sup> Ćirković 1964, 273; Vego 1970, 170.

<sup>17</sup> Vego 1962, 195; Vego 1970, 170.

<sup>18</sup> Hadžijahić 1991, 27.

<sup>19</sup> “Bogich Balich et Craneç Deyanouich} Morulachi de catuno Dobreçi Visulouic ... Volchoslauo Plesčich et Pulnossio Negouanich” (3. August 1375), DAD, Div. Canc., XXIV, 59.

<sup>20</sup> “Ego quidem Maroe condam Rusini de Glauato confieor michi esse solutum et plenerie satisfactum a Volcoslauo Pleschich comite Vlacorum omnium domini regis Rassie et Bossine pro parte sua de omnia et tota robaria quam ipse Volcoslauus commiserit seu fecissit in animalibus seu bonis olim Russini patris mei” (15. February 1382), DAD, Deb. Not., IX, 106; Kovačević 1963, 134.

<sup>21</sup> “Prima pars est de affiando turmas Vigegli Pliescha, Millichi Peruetinich et Vlachorum presentialiter volentum venire Ragusium” (15 August 1403), DAD, Ref., XXXII, 164.

Pliščić (*Vlaci Strazini Pleszichia/homines Strazin Plescich/homines Strazini Plesicich*)<sup>22</sup>, in 1410 as Sracin Pliščić Vukosalić (*Strascine Pleslicich Vocoslauich*)<sup>23</sup>, and in 1414 as Sracin Vukosalić (*Stracinum Volchoslaglich*).<sup>24</sup> Still, postulated like this, all what has so far been said would be a matter of greater or lesser estimate and probability had there not been for the March 1425 document that cast most light to the lineage of the chief Pliščić *katun* representatives, concerning the inscriptions on *stećak* tombstones near Zborna gomila. The document, among other, states that the Vlach Sracin, recorded as the son of Vukoslav Pliščić, asked Ivan Gundulić, a nobleman from Dubrovnik, to return his silver belt handed to him on a previous occasion by his (Sracin's) nephew Grubač Vignjević.<sup>25</sup> The document reveals three consecutive generations. Vukoslav Pliščić's sons were: Sracin and Viganj Vukosalić, while Grubač Vignjević was the son of Viganj Vukosalić and the nephew of Sracin Vukosalić. Sracin Vukosalić had a son, Vukša Sracinović, mentioned in 1436, together with Vukac Vignjević. Both men were mentioned as *katunars*, which indicates that the previous generation had come off the historical stage.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> "Bogoslauus Crancich et Dubrauez Bogdanich Vlaci Strazini Pleszichia" (16 May 1408), DAD, Div. Canc., XXXVII, 51; "Pribio Milatchouich coram domino Andrea de Volcio Rectore conqueritur supra homines Strazin Plescich ... Peruinez et Radoslauus Bogaucich} homines Strazini Plesicich" (11 April 1411), Lam. de foris, II, 44.

<sup>23</sup> "Bogdan, homo ser Marini de Chaboga in Zunchetto coram domino Nathale de Procullo conqueritur supra Budez Ninçich, hominem Vochotte de Buban Vlachum de cathono Nincich, dicens quod dictus Budez cum Braticho et Bosidar fratribus uterinis Murgolich hominibus Strascine Pleslicich Vocoslauich prope Prapatano prope villam Pribez Dobroman accepit per vim unum bouem ad arandum jam sunt quindecim dies proxime elapsis" (12 October 1410), DAD, Lam. de foris, II, 2.

<sup>24</sup> "Glubissa Vesselchouich coram domino Michaele de Resti conqueritur supra Stracinum Volchoslaglich, Rugia Bogoslaglich, Lucaz cum filio, dicens quod de presenti mense in Gazecha in plano per vim acceperunt sibi yperperos quindecim et unum ensem" (5 July 1414), DAD, Lam. de foris, III, 143v.

<sup>25</sup> "Seraçin filius Volchosau Cliesich, Vlachus voiuode Sandagl, coram nobili et sapienti viro domino Rectore ser Natali de Proculo et juratis iudicibus ser Michaele de Resti, ser Clemente de Bodaça et ser Mateo de Gradi, comparuit petens a ser Johanne I. de Gondola unam suam cinturam de argento sibi ser Johanni danta per manus Grubaçii Vighgneuich, nepotis dicti Serazini nunc sunt sex anni vel circa. Qui ser Johannes, ibi presens, negabat se habuisse unquam cinturam predictam. Quapropter cum ideo dominus Rector cum iudicibus interrogasset dictum actorem si potit probare per aliquos testes vel scriptura de dicta cintura super dictum ser Johannem et ille responderet quam non, scilicet, quod volebat quod deferretur sacramentum dicto ser Johanni. Ideo idem ser Johannes ibidem constitutus ad delationem dicti domini consulis et iudicum et de voluntate et requisitione dicti Seraçini iuravit ad sancta Dei euangelia scripturus compaliter tactis se nunquam habuisse a dicto Grubaçio vel a dicto actore aut aliqua alia persona eius nomine cinturam predictam presente et intelligente dicto actore et dicto Grubacio, nepote suo. Et ea propter fuit absolutus dictus ser Johannes de Gondola per sententiam dicti domini Rectoris et iudicum a petitione predicta" (7 March 1425), DAD, Div. Canc., XLIII, 99v.

<sup>26</sup> "Brayanus Merginouich, Iuanus Radissich et Radchus Dabisich et Brayanus Branetich et Radoaz

To conclude: Vukac Pliščić and his sons Viganj and Sracin Vukosalić, who were recorded on the *stečak* tombstones in Veliko groblje near the village Stepen, were the Pliščić Vlachs. Following the broadest framework of dating for both the inscriptions, which is the period when the “writer” Sracin Vukosalić lived (testified 1408-1425), we have here proposed he uppermost limit for both the inscriptions, and the latest year is 1436, when his son, *katunar* Vukša Sracinović, is mentioned.

### The Predojević Vlachs

The Predojević Vlachs (*de cathono Predoe, Vlachus de catono Predoeuiç, apud Vlachos dictos Predoeuich, Vlacchos de Predoeuich, de Vlachis Priedoeuichii, de Pridoeuichi, de Morolacchis Predoeuich*) lived in the Bileća area, and their main settlement was situated there (*de villa de Predoeuich*). The Predojević Vlachs’ *katun* was mentioned in 1372 and his name is linked to *katunar* Predoje (*de cathono Predoe*).<sup>27</sup>

The Jezerine necropolis is situated in the Podubovci settlement near Bileća, and it contains about 40 *stečak* tombstones, including one containing the name of a Zagorac Brajanović. It reads: *A se leži Zagorc Brajanović. Bratie koi vidi sie zlamenie bratie ja sam bio kako vi a vi ćete bti kako i ja* [Here lies Zagorc Brajanović. Brothers who see this sign, brothers, I was as you are and you will be as I am].<sup>28</sup> Nothing more specific could have been said about the historical context in the period when Marko Vego conducted his analysis.<sup>29</sup> Together with the name of the deceased, a rather general message is inscribed about the passing of time. Such instances are many. Still, the Zagorčić patronymic line helped establish the connection between the specific name Zagorac Brajanović with the Predojević Vlachs from Bileća. It was established that Zagorac Brajanović, whose name was inscribed on the *stečak* tombstone in Podubovci near Bileća, was a relative of *katunar* Predojević Čepnja Brajanović (1417-1436). Zagoran Brajanović was the father of Juraj Zagorčić (1433-1434), and his grandsons were Obad (1464-1470), Vukota (1465), Radić (1466), Ivaniš (1466), Radoje (1471-1477), Vukić (1477), Mladien (1478-1481) and Dragić Jurjević Zagorčić (1479).<sup>30</sup>

Bogaucich coram domino Rectore ser Marino Mi. de Restis conqueruntur supra Vocxam Sracinouich et eius catunam et supra Vochaz Vicgneuich et suam catunam. Eo quia dicti acusati per vim acceperunt dictus acusatibus castronos treginta et libras centum viginti cere et brachia LXXXX rasse albe et nigre et duos biretos albos et unum par bissaciarum nouarum et viginti sogatias et perperos treginta in moneta que erant in uno marsupio et unam clamidem rasse albe et unam cohoperuam ab equo et unam aliam clamidem albam rasse. Testes: Obrad Caloyugneuich” (1 February 1436), Lam. de foris, XI, 28.

<sup>27</sup> (16 August 1372), DAD, Div. Canc., XXIII, 129v; Kovačević 1963, 127; Kurtović 2011, 675-677.

<sup>28</sup> “Я се лежи Загорѣцъ Браѣновићъ. Братіе кои види сіе зламение братіе ꙗ самъ био како ви а ви ćete бти како и ꙗ”, Vego 1964a, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Vego 1962, 188.

<sup>30</sup> Kurtović 2011a, 243-254.

## The Vlahović Vlachs

The *Vlahović* (*Vlacouich Vlachus*, *Vlachi Vlachouich*, *Vlachouichi*) Vlachs are from the area of Vlahovići settlement near Ljubinje, named after them. Their territorialisation is also defined by the settlement “Bioska” mentioned together with Vlahovići in 1462.<sup>31</sup> Three gravestone inscriptions belonging to the Vlahović Vlachs are found in the Vlahovići village near Ljubinje, in a necropolis next to St. Lazarus’s Church. The inscriptions are those of Vukac Vučihnić<sup>32</sup>, Vlač Bijelić<sup>33</sup> and Vukoslav Vladević.<sup>34</sup>

Marko Vego did not have at his disposal enough archival material on Vučihna Vlahović, hence, he dated “his” inscription broadly – from 15<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> c. He paid more attention to the inscriptions of knez Vlač Bijelić and voivode Vukosav Vladević, since more archival material was available.<sup>35</sup> Šefik Bešlagić did the same, stating that Vukac Vučihnić’s inscription “most probably dates back to the late 15<sup>th</sup> c.,” younger than knez Vlač Bijelić’s and voivode Vukosav Vladević’s inscriptions.<sup>36</sup> Seeing the data on Vučihna Vlahović, who is an undisputable archival fact (from 1420 and 1423), Đuro Tošić recently assumed that Vukac Vučihnić, whose name is on the *stećak* tombstone, was his son.<sup>37</sup> Although he did not explicitly emphasise, he did imply that the Vukac Vučihnić’s inscription was older than his predecessors Vego and Bešlagić claimed.

Đuro Tošić’s presupposition was right as per lineage between the father, Vučihna Vlahović, and son, Vukac Vučihnić. Vučihna Vlahović was mentioned in a 1417 document concerning a transport of merchandise to Prača and Podvisoki,<sup>38</sup> as well as later, on several occasions in 1420 and 1421.<sup>39</sup> Information on the Vučihna Vlahović lineage is contained in a 1423 document. Bijelna, the wife of Prvoje Radosalić,

<sup>31</sup> Kurtović 2005, 49-58. Kurtović 2011, 652-654.

<sup>32</sup> “Я се лежи Вѣкаць Вѣч(и)хнїиѣ ..... Види се злaмениѣ ѿтїо(ѿе) (Помни)те а вась в(о)гъ благосло(вио) (Я се писа) Привисавъ”, Vego 1964, 42-43.

<sup>33</sup> “Я се кнезь Влаћъ Биелїиѣ ѿ свои цркви ѿ светом Лазарѣ ѿловѣ тако да ниеси проклетъ не тикаи ѿ ме”, M. Vego 1964, 42-43.

<sup>34</sup> “Ясе лежи Вѣкосавъ воевода Влаћевїиѣ с момъ дрѣвовахъ дрѣжиномъ и сагивохъ на размирнои Краине ко мога господина и донесоше ме дрѣжина на свою племенитѣ баштинѣ и да е проклетъ тко ѿе ѿ ме такнѣти”, Vego 1964, 42-43.

<sup>35</sup> Vego 1962, 223-227.

<sup>36</sup> Bešlagić 1965, 161.

<sup>37</sup> Tošić 2002, 96; Tošić 2004, 87.

<sup>38</sup> “Vucicna Vlacouich promisit et se obligavit ser Martolo de Zrieua, ser Simoni de Resti et Andrusco Nemagna ferre omnes salmas eorum et quecumque voluerint ferre cum equis suis habendo pro singula salma iperperos quinque et grosos quatuor partim in Sotouisochi et partim in Prača secundum voluntatem dictorum conductorum” (25 May 1417), DAD, Div. Canc., XLI, 115.

<sup>39</sup> Kurtović 2005, 51.



brought charges against Vučihna Vlahović and his sons Vukac, Vukota and Bijelo Vučihnić, as well as the accomplices from their *katun* (*cum tota catuna eorum*), for stealing a herd of cattle.<sup>40</sup> The document is a written evidence of Vukac Vučihnić, whose name is inscribed on the *stečak* tombstone. The last known mention of him was in a June 1435 document.<sup>41</sup> Hence, that year is the earliest possible to accurately date his *stečak* tombstone. The 1423 document is also important for identification of Bijelo Vučihnić, who is, according to the patronymic line, the father of Vlač Bijelić from another inscription. Vlač Bijelić is also the father of Vukosav Vladević who is mentioned in a third inscription. Vukac Vučihnić (1423-1435), Vlač Bijelić (1466-1468) and Vukoslav Vladević (1476-1477), whose names are contained on the *stečak* tombstones, are all relatives and *katunars* of the Vlahovići Vlachs. They were all the Vlahovići Vlachs and were documented as such in the archives.<sup>42</sup>

### The Boban Vlachs

Some important information exists on the Boban Vlachs buried under the *stečak* tombstones. The *Boban* Vlachs (*de Vlachis Bobani, Vlachi de Iubani*) were located in the area of Žakovo, Lug, Šćenica, Prosjek and Tuhelj.<sup>43</sup> There was a tombstone in the orthodox cemetery in Žakovo near Popovo, which read: *A se leži D(o)brilo Boban i brat mu Viganj sin Ivanišem. I ovo legosmo na soi baštinoi* [Here lies D(o)brilo Boban and his brother Viganj (with) his son Ivaniš. Here we lied on our patrimony].<sup>44</sup> In a short note, Ćiro Truhelka observed an interesting name – Boban, which he connected to the contemporary name of the settlement.<sup>45</sup> Marko Vego

<sup>40</sup> “Bielna, uxor Peruoe Radosaglich, coram nobili et sapiente viro domino Rectore ser Martolo de Crieua conqueritur supra Volcicnam Vlachouich et Vulčač et Vuchotam, fratres Volcicnich et Bieglam eorum tertium fratrem, cum tota catuna eorum” (25 November 1423), DAD, Lam. de foris, V, 234v.

<sup>41</sup> “Biela Vocicnich, Stiepcho Vochasinich, Stiepan Radonich, Peruosau Branchouich et Vlatchus Doberchouich}, omnes Vlachi Vlachouich voiuede Radossau, super se et omnia cuiuslibet ipsorum bona ad meliustenentem promiserunt et se obligauerunt Francho Vlachote Cranchouich, presenti et contentanti ad omnem voluntatem ipsius Franchi de Ragusio Sub Borač portare salmas centum quinquaginta salis ... Et hoc precio et mercato quibus Nalchus scriptus se conuenit cum Vočač, fratre suprascripti Biela, quas salmas pelaminum et cere conduxisse teneantur ad tardius usque ad medietatem mensis julii proxime futuris” (24 June 1435), DAD, Div. Not., XX, 23.

<sup>42</sup> Kurtović 2005, 49-58.

<sup>43</sup> Kurtović 2011, 665-667; Kurtović 2012; “Natalis Marini de Dobrich, ex una parte et Iuanus Baiuloulouich et Smogliano Bulinouich, ambo de Tucaglia de Bobani, ex altera parte” (12.7. 1512), DAD, Div. Not., XC, 65v.

<sup>44</sup> “А се лежи Д(о)брило Бобанъ и брат њ ѡ Виганъ синъ Иванишемъ. И ово легосмо на сон баштинои”, Vego 1964, 51.

<sup>45</sup> Truhelka 1892, 218.

dated the inscription to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>46</sup> As far as it is known, there have been no further advancements in the research of this inscription, which itself had been destroyed before the Second World War.

The Boban Vlachs were related to the Žakovo settlement, as directly evidenced by several archival examples: *Stiepanum Zuietcouich de Bobani de villa Xacoui* 1460, *Radossauam filiam Bogdani Dobrassinouich de Bobane de loco dicto Xacoua* 1488, *Radossauus Vuchichieuich de Bobana de loco dicto Xachou* 1492.<sup>47</sup> All the aforementioned individuals from the missing inscription have been identified in the archival material. The information about two brothers and one son may be ambiguous in identifying whose son that was: *D(o)brilo Boban i brat mu Viganj sin Ivanišem* [D(o)brilo Boban and his brother Viganj (with) his son Ivaniš]. According to the available material that we analysed it is clear that Ivaniš's father was Dobrilo, not Viganj. Genealogy that clarifies the situation will be explained in the following lines. The aforementioned Dobrilo (1427-1469) and Viganj (1427-1436) were Vukotićs, the sons of *katunar* Vlach Boban Vukota Nenčić. There is archival material that clearly indicates that those were Vlachs Bobani and that they were brothers (1427).<sup>48</sup> The case is the same with their descendants Dobrilovićs and Vignjevićs who can be found in the archival material. The only Ivaniš mentioned among them was Ivaniš Dobrilović (1443-1456), the son of Dobrilo Vukotić.<sup>49</sup> The last tome one of the three was mentioned was in 1469: Dobrilo Vukotić. That year is the approximate timeframe to which this inscription can be ascribed.<sup>50</sup> Hence, it was certainly the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Although missing, the Žakovo inscription gained significance as a corrective for the connection between Vlachs and the *stećak* tombstones.

### The Drobnjak Vlachs

The *Drobnjak* Vlachs (*Drobignačich*, *Drobnach*, *Droggnaz*, *Dropgnach*, *Drupin-ach*, *Idobrnach*) come from the Jezera area. An example from 1423 shows that the

<sup>46</sup> "most probably the 15<sup>th</sup> century", Vego 1964, 50.

<sup>47</sup> (Die ultimo februarii 1460), DAD, Lam. de foris, XXXIII, 199v; (3 December 1488), Div. Not., LXVIII, 192; (11 July 1492), Deb. Not., LIV, 178.

<sup>48</sup> "supra Budez Ninčich, hominem Vochotte de Buban Vlachum de cathono Nincich" (12 October 1410), DAD, Lam. de foris, II, 2; "supra Vochotam Nincich, Pocrayaç Radosaglich, Vochxa Bogaucich, Petchum Xorcich Vlachos Bobani ... in Papauo Xachouo" (4 January 1411), Ibid., 25; "supra Volchottam Ninčich et Dobrillum eius filium" (4 July 1411), Ibid., 67v; "supra Volcoctam [tako] Nincich et Dobrillum eius filium" (19 May 1423), Ibid., V, 172v; "Nos Dobrillum Volchotich et Viganj Vochotich} fratres de Bobane Vlachi" (31 May 1427), Deb. Not., XIV, 120v.

<sup>49</sup> "supra Iuanis Dobrilouich de Bobanin" (13 October 1443), DAD, Lam. de foris, XVII, 68; "supra Dobrilum Vochotich et Iuanis eius filium" (21 January 1449), Ibid., XXII, 6v; "supra Iuanis Dobrilouich de Bobani" (27 November 1450), Ibid., XXIV, 27; "contra Iuanissum Dobrilouich" (26 August 1456), Ibid., XXIX, 251v.

<sup>50</sup> (18 January 1469), DAD, Lam. de foris, XLI, 73.

Drobnjak Vlachs could be found in Prijepolje, while the 1443 example mentions the Bijela settlement for the Drobnjak Vlachs.<sup>51</sup>

A newly found inscription on a *stećak* tombstone near the church in the Makov Val settlement near Cernica (Gacko) in Herzegovina, is highly important for the history of a wider area, especially because of a problematic essence of the relationship between Vlachs and *stećak* tombstones. The inscription mentions a duke Nikola Rašković Drobnjak (Я се лежи кнезь Никола Рашковићъ Дробњакъ) [Here lies knez Nikola Rašković Drobnjak].<sup>52</sup> Nikola Rašković is also mentioned in the archival material. In June 1453, a long list of people in a small one-ducat debt contains the name of Nikola Rašković Drobnjak (*Nicola Raschouich Drobnach duc. 1, gr. 0*). The list of over 90 people is mentioned in the testament of Bogiša Bogčinović and, apart from Nikola Rašković, other Drobnjak Vlachs mentioned are Vuk Bogavčić, Herak Heraković, Branko Grubačević and Paskoje Heraković.<sup>53</sup> Nikola Rašković's (Никола Рашковић) legatees have been mentioned in the archives: Pavao (1473-1488), Miloš (1487-1488), Jurak (1483-1498) and Vlatko Nikolić (1490-1505).<sup>54</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The *stećak* and gravestone inscriptions are an insufficient source for a more quality contextualisation, keeping in mind the presence of Vlachs, their burial and, in general, any connection between them and the *stećak* tombstones. The scarce inscriptions found on the stone surfaces do not provide enough space for a more detailed analysis. They do not contain almost any signs, starting points or possibilities for the registration of the burial of Vlachs under the *stećak* tombstones. So far, it has been shown that the identification of the words Boban (from the Žakovo near Popovo inscription) and the Drobnjak inscription (in the church in the Makov Val settlement near Cernica, Gacko) are, for the time being, exceptions. However, the inscriptions combined with the preserved archival data are a solid link, helping to find an answer to many questions, including the ones related to the Vlachs and *stećci* framework. Through the mentioned examples, we determined that the persons from the inscription were members of the Vlach groups: Boban, Pliščić, Predojević, Vlahović and Drobnjak. It is absolutely clear that they were part of a wider medieval community that used the *stećak* tombstones. It is also clear that the assumption of the best expert of the *stećak* tombstones, Šefik Bešliagić, was correct. That is especially seen in the area where Vlachs had their *katun* settlements,

<sup>51</sup> Kurtović 2011, 671-672; Kurtović 2015, 303-316.

<sup>52</sup> Komar 2015, 148-149.

<sup>53</sup> (7 June 1453), DAD, Div. Not., XXXVII, 75v-78.

<sup>54</sup> Kurtović 2015, 308-314.

or permanent residences. As far as the *stećak* inscriptions are concerned, we may add that those were all instances of dignitaries in certain Vlach groups.

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