

Ignis Ardens: A Partial Exoneration of the Bosnian Church

### Abstract

Some historians assume that the medieval Bosnian Church was Bogomilist in doctrine and created by Bogomils. Bogomilism was a Christian heresy that rejected or despised the image of the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and matter. This study refutes the claim that the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist, as the Bosnian Church did not reject or despise the image of the Cross, the Old Testament matter, and the Saints. This study also refutes the claims that the Bosnian Church was created by Bogomils. The Bosnian Church was instead created by a monastic house and broke from Catholicism. Anthropological evidence is used to suggest that Catholic officials may have mistaken some Bosnians who absorbed pagan or magical practices to be heretics. This study concludes that the Bosnian Church became partially heretical around the fifteenth century because of its autonomy and the tendency of Bosnians to absorb aspects of other religions.

*Keywords:* Bosnian Church, heresy, Bogomils, Patarins, asceticism, syncretism, peasants

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Historians have been divided over whether or not the medieval Bosnian Church was Bogomilist. Bogomilism is a form of Gnosticism that loathed the Cross's image, spurned the Old Testament, failed to recognize Saints, and hated the material world (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; Runciman, 1960, p. 74; Vlasto, 1970, p. 234). On the one hand, papal sources offer evidence that the Bosnian Church was heretical (Fine, 2007, p. 234). Scholars such as Franjo Rački and Steven Runciman (1960) have assumed that the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; p. 103). On the other hand, evidence that absolves the Bosnian Church of Bogomilism includes letters, charters, canonical Gospels, and the last will of a Church official, as this evidence reveals the Bosnian Church's acceptance of the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and the material world (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994, p. 39). Meanwhile, Runciman (1960), Rački, and Alexis P. Vlasto (1970) claim that the Bosnian Church was created by Bogomils (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; p. 100; p. 230). On the contrary, revisionist scholars, such as Noel Malcolm (1994) and John Fine (2007), reply that the Bosnian Church did not have Bogomilist doctrines and was not created by Bogomils.

Amidst these various claims that have been put forward, I affirm that the Bosnian Church was not Bogomilist, based upon evidence that exonerates it of rejecting or despising the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and the material world (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994, p. 39). Additionally, I agree with Fine (2007) that the Bosnian Church was created by an order of Catholic monks (p. 135). However, I posit that the Bosnian Church was partly heretical in the fifteenth century, based on four independent accounts of the Church's heresy in the fifteenth century (Fine, 2007, p. 235). Part of the Bosnian Church was not heretical in the fifteenth century, based upon the will of a Church official (Fine, 2007, p. 289). Thus I diverge from Fine's

(2007) assertion that the Bosnian Church was not heretical in the fifteenth century (p. 235). Furthermore, I assert that the tendency of peasants to include practices and beliefs of other religions into their practices and beliefs made it likely for Inquisitors to mistake the Bosnian Church as heretical. Lastly, I suggest that some Catholic sources are not reliable, as the accusation of heresy has been loosely and politically.

*1.1: The Bosnian Church and Bogomilist doctrines: The Bosnian Church accused of  
Bogomilist doctrines*

Scholars who link the Bosnian Church with Bogomilist doctrines assume it rejected or hated the image of the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and the material world (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; Runciman, 1960, p. 74; Vlasto, 1970, p. 234). Steven Runciman (1960) of Cambridge argues that the Bosnian Church had Bogomilist doctrines in *The medieval Manichee: A study of the Christian dualist heresy*. Runciman (1960) believes that the "creed of the Bosnian [Church] seems . . . to have been that of any of the . . . Bogomil churches" (p. 108). Secondly, Walter Leggett Wakefield and Austin Patterson Evans (1990) refer to the Bosnian Church as having "doctrines comparable to . . . the Bulgarian order" (p. 17). Wakefield & Evan's (1990) "Bulgarian order" refers to the "official Bogomil or 'Bulgarian' church" centered in Bulgaria (p. 17; Runciman, 1960, p. 79). Additionally, Malcolm (1994) suggests that "[Rački] gathered together the available evidence and attempted to prove that the Bosnian Church was an offshoot of the Bogomils" (p. 27). Furthermore, Bogomilist doctrines entailed a rejection of the image of the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and the material world (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994; Runciman, 1960; Vlasto 1970).

*1.2: The Bosnian Church and Bogomilist doctrines: Bogomilist doctrines explained*

Bogomils rejected the image of the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and matter (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994; Runciman, 1960; Vlasto 1970). First, Bogomils believed that "the Cross should be detested, not worshipped" (Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Additionally, Malcolm (1994) presents Rački's assertion that Bogomils rejected the Cross (p. 27). Rački's works do not exist in English, yet Noel Malcolm (1994) of Cambridge offers Franjo Rački's assumptions Bogomil doctrines. In *Bosnia: A short history*, Malcolm (1994) writes, "the Cross itself became a hated symbol of false belief [to Bogomils]" (p. 27). As the image of the Cross was rejected, so too was the Old Testament (Runciman, 1960, p. 76; Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 15).

Secondly, Bogomils spurned the Old Testament (Runciman, 1960, p. 76; Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 15). Runciman (1960) suggests that "[The Bogomil's] theory of Cosmogony naturally involved a rejection of most of the Old Testament" (p. 76). Additionally, Wakefield & Evans (1991) concur that the Bogomils rejected the Old Testament (p. 15). They write, "In Bogomil belief, [Satan] was the author of the Old Testament . . . Only the New Testament, especially the Gospels, could be credited as the word of God" (Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 15). While Bogomils also rejected most of the Old Testament Saints, as they only accepted "those mentioned in the genealogies in Matthew and Luke," Bogomils rejected later Catholic Saints as well (Runciman, 1960, p. 77).

Additionally, Bogomils rejected Catholic Saints (Malcolm, 1994, p. 36; Runciman, 1960, p. 88; Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 15). Initially, Malcolm (1994) mentions that "Bogomils rejected the calendar of Saints" (p. 36). Secondly, Runciman (1960) concurs that Bogomils

"disrespect[ed] . . . the Saints" (p. 88). Finally, Wakefield & Evans concur that the Bogomils rejected Catholic Saints. They write, "The customary ritual of the Church [was rejected]: . . . [this included] veneration of the Saints" (Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 15). Perhaps Catholic Saints were rejected because Catholic Saints were once part of the material world.

Lastly, Bogomils rejected the material world (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Initially, Runciman (1960) suggests that "demanded as complete a renunciation of the world as was possible" (p. 74). Additionally, in preserving Rački's claims, Malcolm (1994) writes, "[Bogomils] preached [that] . . . men could free themselves from the taint of the material world only by following an ascetic way of life . . . various ceremonies involving material substances, such as baptism with water, had to be rejected" (p. 27). Finally, Alexis P. Vlasto (1970) of Cambridge suggests that the Bosnian Church despised matter in *The entry of the Slavs into Christendom*. Vlasto (1970) writes, "By its nature [the Bosnian Church] . . . did not encourage the building of religious artifices" (p. 234). Bogomils "rejected all material aspects of [church] service (e.g. church buildings)" (Fine, 2007, p. 105). However, what it meant to hate matter must be elaborated upon.

It is important to mention that hating matter meant that Bogomils rejected baptism, John the Baptist, icons, the use of churches, wealth, and politics (Malcolm, 1994, p. 39; Fine, 2007, p. 105). Bogomils hated matter because Bogomils believed that Satan created the Earth (Lavrin, 1929, p. 273). In *The Bogomils and Bogomilism*, Janko Lavrin (1929) of Nottingham describes the origin of the Bogomils' detestation of matter. "The Bogomils," writes Lavrin (1929), "all agreed on one point--on the rejection of everything physical" (p. 275). Lavrin (1929) assumes that "no matter [how] they looked upon Satanail . . . [Bogomils] all saw in him the actual creator of the material world" (p. 273). Satanail refers to "Satan . . . [and] the suffix 'el [or il]' indicate[s]"

divinity" (Runciman, 1960, p. 75). Additionally, John V. A. Fine Jr. (2007) describes what it meant to hate matter in *The Bosnian Church: A new interpretation*. Fine (2007) writes, "In practicing their religion, [the Bogomils] rejected all material aspects of the service (e.g. church buildings, icons . . . baptism with water--hence their hatred of John the Baptist)" (p. 105). Lastly, Malcolm (1994) suggests that Bogomils did not engage in politics or amass wealth, as Bogomils "were opposed to the wealth and secular power of the established Churches" (p. 39). Runciman (1960) concurs, as the Bogomils "adopted a policy of passive resistance, maddening to the authorities" (p. 74). However, there is little evidence linking the Bosnian Church to Bogomilist doctrines such as the hatred of matter.

*1.3: The Bosnian Church and Bogomilist doctrines: Evidence suggesting that the Bosnian Church had Bogomilist doctrines*

There is little evidence linking the Bosnian Church to Bogomilist doctrines. The only evidence of Bogomilist doctrines in Bosnia at all comes from a papal source. A papal legate noticed the absence of crosses at the monastery of Bilino polje (Runciman, 1960, p. 104). Runciman (1960) recalls the legate's findings, writing, "[the monks] promised to restore . . . crosses to their place of worship" (p. 104). The monks, however, did not renounce heresy (Malcolm, 1994, p. 33). Malcolm (1994) notes that a renunciation of heresy is absent, and writes, "The most striking thing about [the legate's] declaration is that it is not an abjuration of heresies . . . The only specific mention of heresy is the promise not to give shelter to heretics, which rather suggests that these Bosnian ecclesiastics were not themselves viewed as heretics by the legate" (p. 33). Additionally, Fine (2007) agrees with Malcolm (1994) in the monks' innocence, writing,

"Our document is not a renunciation of [heresy] . . . In fact, this document never touches on matters of belief at all" (p. 118). On the other hand, Runciman (1960) suggests that the lack of a renunciation is because "Rome was too careful to risk a long theological debate such as Greek churchmen would have loved" (p. 104). However, I am doubtful that Bilino polje's monks and the Bosnian Church had Bogomilist doctrines.

I am skeptical that the Bosnian Church had Bogomilist doctrines, since no source mentions the Bosnian Church having a specific Bogomilist doctrine. In Catholic sources, one would "expect [the popes] on occasion to give . . . a specific suggestion about correcting a doctrinal error that might convey some specific information about the [Bosnian] heresy," yet "they never did" (Fine, 2007, p. 55). Additionally, the Bilino polje incident is the only evidence suggesting that the Bosnian Church hated the Cross (Runciman, 1960, p. 104). The papal sources do not mention the rejection of the Old Testament and the detestation of matter (Fine, 2007, p. 55). Furthermore, Malcolm (1994) mentions the absence of Catholic sources linking the Bosnian Church to Bogomilism, and writes, "The one fact which has become quite clear is that the Bosnian Church was not identified as 'Bogomil' at the time. No Bosnian or Catholic source ever uses that term about the Bosnians" (p. 31). On the one hand, the absence of evidence means the papal sources did not believe that the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist. On the other hand, the evidence suggesting the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist may not be extant. Basing accusations on missing evidence, however, creates a suspicious argument. Lastly, I do not agree that the monks at Bilino polje were heretics, as the papal legate did not force the monks to renounce heresy (Malcolm, 1994, p. 33). Legates or Inquisitors historically forced heretics to abjure or "put [them] to death" (Runciman, 1960, p. 117). On the other hand, the legate may have been wary of entertaining a controversy with "Greek Churchmen," yet I dispute that the monks or



Bosnians in general were "Greek churchmen" (Runciman, 1960, p. 104). Bilino polje's monastery was Catholic, and the Orthodox Church had an insignificant presence in medieval Bosnia, as "Bosnia (unlike Orthodox Hum [in modern Hercegovina]) was a Catholic country" (Malcolm, 1994, p. 15). Alternatively, if Runciman meant that the Bilino polje monks were able to debate theology, then I reply that the monks were too ignorant to debate theology. If the monks were ignorant enough to fail displaying a Cross in their monastery, then they were probably not educated enough to debate theology (Malcolm, 1994, p. 33). In the absence of evidence that the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist, evidence that the Bosnian Church was not Bogomilist is overwhelming.

*1.4: The Bosnian Church and Bogomilist doctrines: Evidence against the Bosnian Church possessing Bogomilist doctrines*

Evidence involving the Bosnian Church contradicts Bogomilist doctrines (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994). Charters involving the Bosnian Church, historical chronicles about its members, a Gospel crafted by the Bosnian Church, and the last will of a Bosnian Church official accept the Cross, the Old Testament, the Saints, and matter (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994). The aforementioned evidence is compiled in *The Bosnian Church: A new interpretation* by John V. A. Fine Jr. (2007), and in *Bosnia: A short introduction* by Noel Malcolm (1994).

*1.4.A: Charters contradict Bogomilism*

Charters involving the Bosnian Church depict its acceptance of matter, as it used buildings and was involved in politics (Fine, 2007; Malcolm, 1994). One charter was drafted in a church building (Fine, 2007, p. 149). Fine (2007) describes the charter, writing, "The charter states that [its] act was carried out . . . before all the Bosnian Church. This charter concludes with the statement that [its] deed was enacted and written in Mostre at the monastery of Gost Radoslav" (p. 149). Additionally, a second charter reveals the Church's involvement in politics (Fine, 2007, p. 203). Fine (2007) writes, "In 1432 peace was negotiated between Radoslav and Dubrovnik. A key role in the peacemaking was played by Krstjanin Radin" (p. 203). Radoslav was a Bosnian noble, Dubrovnik is a city in modern Croatia, and Krstjanin Radin was a Bosnian Church cleric. Furthermore, Malcolm (1994) suggests that the involvement in charters indicates that the Bosnian Church accepted matter. Malcolm (1994) writes, "The general character of the Bosnian Church was also very different from what we associate with the Bogomils or Cathars. Those heretical sects were ascetic and puritanical; they were opposed to the wealth and secular power of the established Churches . . . The Bosnian Church in its heyday . . . enjoyed considerable power, and its dignitaries were used to sign charters" (1994, p. 39). The Cathars descended from Bogomils, as "Bogomils . . . [had] a decisive influence on the Cathars" (Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 18). Thus worldly charters involving the Bosnian Church contradict Bogomilism.

I claim that the evidence offered by charters contradicts Bogomilist doctrines. It is difficult to imagine the otherworldly Bogomils using monastic houses and practicing diplomacy, as these were worldly acts. Monastic houses were definitely religious buildings. On the one hand, it is possible that Bogomils did not abstain from using buildings in general. Cathars, who were "decisive[ly] influence[d]" by Bogomils, hated matter yet conducted rituals in buildings

(Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 18). For instance, the Cathar's "Consolamentum [ritual] took place in the room of some sympathizer's house" (Runciman, 1960, p. 154). On the other hand, using a house is not the same as using a religious building. Secondly, I agree that diplomacy indicates worldliness, as Bogomils rejected politics (Runciman, 1960, p. 88). Bogomils were able to "adopt a practice fully consistent with their doctrines [of hating matter], that of passive resistance [to authorities]" (Runciman, 1960, p. 88). If the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist, perhaps it set aside hating matter in favor of politics, yet it is difficult to imagine convicted heretics betraying their faith. Ordained Cathars, for example, were burned by Inquisitors in absentia because Inquisitors learned that ordained Cathars would not abjure (Runciman, 1960, p. 145). Runciman (1960) recalls this, writing, "The [Cathar] fortress [of Montsegur] was destroyed. The Perfect, to the number of about two hundred, were burnt without trial [by Inquisitors]. The rest of the [non-ordained] defenders were imprisoned" (p. 145). Once the Cathars became ordained, the "Perfects . . . condemned themselves to the fires of the Inquisitors" (Runciman, 1960, p. 145). Ordained Cathars were "called the Perfect" while "others were called the believers" (Wakefield & Evans, p. 239). On the other hand, Bogomils may have differed from Cathars in commitment to their faith. Likewise, chronicles contradict the Bosnian Church's hatred of the material world (Fine, 2007, p. 184).

#### *1.4.B: Historical chronicles contradict Bogomilism*

Historical chronicles involving Bosnian Churchmen contradict the Bogomils' rejection of the Cross and matter, and also of its general heresy (Fine, 2007). Resti, a chronicler, gives an account of the Bosnian Church noble Hrvoje giving oath over a crucifix and Sainly items (Fine,

2007, p. 184). Fine (2007) considers this significant, and he writes, "Hrvoje swore by the cross and the relics of a saint. Thus this man who would be called a 'Patarin' had no objection to swearing by these two items, which . . . Catholic sources . . . have us believe his Church did not accept" (p. 184). 'Patarin' refers to a Bosnian Churchman. A second chronicler, Lucius, suggests Hrvoje was not a heretic. Fine (2007) uses Lucius' chronicle, and writes, "[The Hungarian king] allowed the 'Patarin' Hrvoje to be a member of [a] knightly order established to defend Catholicism from heretics and pagans." (p. 194). However, while Hrvoje's oath and knighthood contradict Bogomilism, he was not a cleric.

I agree that Hrvoje's oaths and his knighthood contradict Bogomilism, yet Hrvoje was not a cleric. It is significant that a prominent layman of the Bosnian Church would swear over a Cross and icons, as this means Hrvoje was not a Bogomil (Fine, 2007, p. 184). Bogomils were iconoclastic and rejected the image of the Cross (Fine, 2007, p. 105; Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Hrvoje was not a general heretic, as the knightly order was "established to defend Catholicism from heretics" (Fine, 2007, p. 194). Hrvoje's status as a layman, however, makes his non-Bogomilism less convincing. Hrvoje, as a noble, could have easily forsaken his religious convictions for political gains. For example, Fine (2007) believes that "Hrvoje [played] with religion to serve his own ends" (p. 195). On the other hand, it may have been detrimental to himself if Hrvoje had forsaken the Bosnian Church. If the Bosnian Church was heretical, the initiation of one of its nobles into a Catholic, anti-heretical order would have alienated the Bosnian Church. The most comprehensive evidence that the Bosnian Church was not Bogomilist, however, was the Hval Gospel.

#### 1.4.C: *A Gospel contradicts Bogomilism*

The Hval Gospel, crafted by the Bosnian Church, contains parts of the Old Testament and suggests that the Bosnian Church accepted the Cross, the Old Testament, and the material world (Fine, 2007, p. 181). The Hval Gospel, in the words of its scribe, was "completed in the year of Christ's birth 1404 in the days of the Bishop and instructor . . . of the Bosnian Church, the lord Djed Radomer" (Fine, 2007, p. 181). The Hval Gospel is a "complete New Testament" with "the Ten Commandments [and] the Psalms" (Fine, 2007, p. 181). Fine (2007) analyzes the Hval Gospel, writing, "Because it is illustrated and has a complimentary picture of John the Baptist, it shows the Bosnian Church was not opposed to religious art and was not opposed to John the Baptist. It also has a picture of Christ on the Cross. It contains the Ten Commandments, the Psalms, and some Old Testament songs" (p. 181). Hating matter means that Bogomils "rejected . . . icons", yet the Hval Gospel had icons of Christ and John the Baptist (Fine, 2007, p. 105). Bogomils also possessed a "hatred of John the Baptist" for baptizing with matter (Fine, 2007, p. 105). Additionally, Fine (2007) suggests the Hval Gospel is not Bogomilist:

These Gospel texts refute much that has been written about the Bosnian Patarins in the Inquisition sources. First the New Testaments are complete . . . We find religious pictures in them, which shows that the Bosnian Christians were not iconoclastic. We find flattering pictures of John the Baptist . . . [who] according to the Inquisition [was] supposedly condemned by the 'Bosnian Patarins.' By including the Ten Commandments, the texts show that the Bosnian Church did not condemn all the Old Testament. (p. 86)

By 'Patarins,' Fine (2007) refers to Bosnian Churchmen. Summarily, the Hval Gospel significantly contradicts Bogomilist doctrines.

I agree with Fine (2007) that the Hval Gospel contradicts the claims that the Bosnian Church rejected the Cross, icons, and the Old Testament (p. 86). The Hval Gospel was used "in their church services," and it is difficult to imagine a Church using apocryphal texts in services (Fine, 2007, p. 86). For example, the Catholic Church would not likely include the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas in a service, which suggests that "finding the kingdom of God requires undergoing a solitary process of self-discovery" (Pagels, 1995, p. 74). The Gospel of Thomas contradicts the "simpler message" of the New Testament that "one attains to God not by spiritual self-knowledge, but by believing in Jesus the Messiah" (Pagels, 1995, p. 74). Additionally, Bogomils "only admitted the New Testament," into their canon (Runciman, 1960, p. 76). Including parts of the Old Testament into the Hval Gospel is against Bogomilism. On the one hand, if the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist, perhaps its scribes did not know that the Old Testament was not canonical to Bogomils (Runciman, 1960, p. 76). On the other hand, it is unlikely that the scribes would unwittingly honor the images of the Cross and John the Baptist (Fine, 2007, p. 86). Additionally, I agree that the icons of Christ and John the Baptist in the Hval Gospel contradict hating matter, as hating matter meant hating icons (Fine, 2007, p. 86; Fine, 2007, p. 105). Furthermore, John the Baptist, who was "supposedly condemned by the 'Bosnian Patarins,'" is depicted, and this means that the Bosnian Church did not hate matter (Fine, 2007, p. 86; Fine, 2007, p. 105).

#### *1.4.D: A cleric's last will contradicts Bogomilism*

Gost Radin, an official of the Bosnian Church, rendered a will that absolves him and his possible monastery of rejecting the Cross, the Saints, and matter. Gost Radin occupied the

second highest rank in the Bosnian Church (Fine, 2007, p. 135). Fine (2007) describes the rank of gost, writing, "We shall find this Church headed by a single djed, below whom were a number of gosti, many of whom headed Bosnian Church monastic houses" (p. 135). Thus Gost Radin likely headed a monastery, but this is not historically certain (Fine, 2007, p. 135). Initially, Fine (2007) mentions the images of crosses in the will, saying, "[Gost Radin's will] has a large cross down the left margin of the first page . . . At the head of the text is a second cross" (p. 289). Secondly, Malcolm (1994) believes that the will means that the Church did not reject Saints, and writes, "Cathars and Bogomils rejected the calendar of Saints; [yet] Bosnian Church documents, including Gost Radin's will, refer to the celebration of several saint's-days" (p. 39). The wealth indicated by Gost Radin's will contradicts a hatred of matter. Malcolm (1994) observes Radin's wealth, and writes, "The best-known Bosnian Churchman, Gost Radin . . . [was] clearly a magnate in his own right: in his will he left more than 5000 ducats in cash, together with horses, silver or gold plate, a 'fur-trimmed gown with gold' and a 'red fur-trimmed gown of six-stranded silk, trimmed with sable'" (p. 39). Bogomils "denounce[d] the wealthy," so Gost Radin could not have been a Bogomil (Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Thus I suppose that Gost Radin was not a Bogomil.

I concur with Fine (2007) that Gost Radin's will means Radin and his potential monastery accepted the Cross, Saints, and matter (p. 289). Perhaps Gost Radin was corrupt, as simony occurred in medieval Bosnia (Fine, 2007, p. 124). For example, a Bishop of Bosnia was deposed in 1232 because "[he] had received his episcopal office through a certain open heretic by the crime of simony" (Fine, 2007, p. 124). Venality, however, would not explain Radin's adoration of the Cross and recognition of Saints. On the one hand, perhaps Radin concealed his heresy. Vlasto (1970) suggests that Bosnian heretics were adept at concealing heresy, and writes, "The

[Bosnian] heresy was difficult to pin down. When in danger its adherents had always assumed the outward mask of Orthodox or Latin Christians" (p. 232). Additionally, Runciman (1960) mentioned that Bogomils concealed their heresy, writing, "Such dissimulation was, indeed, their practice. They maintained that Our Lord bade them save themselves by what means they could, by art or by deceit" (p. 78). On the other hand, Radin's concealment would have significantly contradicted Bogomil doctrines (Runciman, 1960, p. 74). For example, adorning his will with crosses to hide heresy is not the same as amassing wealth (Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Lastly, Radin's contradictions of Bogomilism do not extend to the entire Bosnian Church, as he only could have oversaw a monastery. The clerics under him, however, would have been theologically influenced by him.

### *2.1: The creation of the Bosnian Church: Accused of originating from Bogomils*

Some scholars suggest that Bogomils created the Bosnian Church (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27; Runciman, 1960, p. 101; Vlasto, 1970, pp. 230-232). Runciman (1960) describes the origin of the Bosnian Church, writing, "It is unknown at what date Bogomil doctrines first entered Hum and Bosnia. They came through . . . Bulgaria through Serbia. The Bosnian heretic church . . . was in close touch with the Bulgarian church" (p. 101). The Bulgarian church was the "official Bogomil or 'Bulgarian' church" centered in Bulgaria (Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 17). Secondly, Rački assumed that "the Bosnian Church was an offshoot of the Bogomils" (Malcolm, 1994, p. 27). Additionally, Vlasto (1970) mentions that "Bogomilism spread into . . . Bosnia" and calls the Bosnian Church the "Bogomil Church" (pp. 230-232). If the Bosnian Church was created by Bogomils, then the evidence of the Church accepting the Cross, the Old Testament,



the Saints, and matter contradicts that the Church arose from Bogomilism. Thus Malcolm (1994) and Fine (2007) suggest that the Bosnian Church broke off from Catholicism and was created by Catholic monks (p.119; pp. 34-35).

## 2.2: *The creation of the Bosnian Church: Created by Catholic monks*

Bilino polje's monks were the creators of the Bosnian Church, because the structure of the Bosnian Church is reminiscent of Bosnian monasteries and the Hval Gospel lists the names of Bilino polje's monks as bishops (Fine, 2007, p. 119; Malcolm, 1994, pp. 34-35). Malcolm (1994) compares the titles of Bosnian Church clerics to those of Catholic and Orthodox monasteries, writing:

The keeper of a hospitum [of a monastery] was a *hospitalarius* . . . [or] *hospes*: a host. And this is the literal meaning of the title *Gost* which we later find used by prominent members of the Bosnian Church . . . The head of the whole Church was known as the *djed* [or grandfather] . . . *Nonmus*, the Latin word with the same meaning, was used in both Eastern and Western monasticism to refer to senior priors or abbots. The other two titles used in the records referred to senior members or officials of the monasteries: *starac* ('elder') and *stronjnik* ('steward'). (pp. 34-35)

*Djed* means the senior abbot of a monastery, and *nonmus* is the equivalent Latin term for *djed* (Malcolm, 1994, pp. 34-35). Laura Saetveit-Miles, a researcher of the Syon Abbey at the University of Michigan confirms that *nonmus* may have referred to a senior abbot (Email communication, July 24, 2012). Saetveit-Miles writes, "*Nonnus/nonna* means monk or non. In the idiom [of a senior abbot, *nonmus/nonna*] may certainly be correct" (Email communication,

July 24, 2012). Furthermore, Fine (2007) concurs that the Bosnian Church was structured like a monastery, and writes, "The situation [at Bilino polje] parallels . . . that of the fourteenth century when we shall find the Bosnian Church based upon a monastic organization, whose clergy bear the Slavic rendering of the world Christian, *krstjanin*" (p. 119). Fine (2007) suggests that the Bosnian Church clergy called themselves '*krstjanin*,' and Malcolm (1994) believes this meant 'monk' (p. 119; p. 34). Malcolm (1994) writes, "As several later references indicate, the basic meaning of '*krstjanin*' was 'monk'" (p. 34). Furthermore, the Hval Gospel corroborates that the Bosnian Church descended from monks (Fine, 2007, p. 180).

Additionally, the Hval Gospel's references to Bilino polje's monks suggest that the Bosnian Church originated from Bilino polje's monks (Fine, 2007, p. 180). Fine (2007) suggests that the appearance of the monks in the Hval Gospel means they created the Bosnian Church, and writes, "On the [list of bishops] three of the sixteen names are the same as three of the seven priors at Bilino polje in 1203 (numbers 13-15, Dragic, Loubin, and Drazeta). And we must assume the list refers to them, for the coincidence would be too great . . . This confirms our theory that the Bosnian Church was a continuation of the Catholic monastic order" (p. 180). Thus I agree that the Bosnian Church descended from Bilino polje (Fine, 2007, p. 180).

I concur that the Bosnian Church descended from Bilino polje, as it integrated monastic titles into the Church's structure and listed its monks as bishops in the Hval Gospel (Fine, 2007, p. 119; Malcolm, 1994, pp. 34-35). On the one hand, if the Bosnian Church was Bogomilist, then it would not have a monastic structure (Malcolm, 1994, p. 28). Bogomils used "two essential ranks . . . ordinary believers, and the purified 'elect,'" and thus a Bogomilist organization would have probably used two ranks (Malcolm, 1994, p. 28). On the other hand, it is possible that a Bogomilist organization distributed ranks, yet Bogomils "rejected . . . the entire organizational

structure of the traditional Church, especially its wealthy monasteries" (Malcolm, 1994, p. 28). If Bogomils rejected monastic structure, then a Bogomil church would not have used a monastic structure. Additionally, I agree that The Hval Gospel suggests that the Bilino polje monks created the Bosnian Church (Fine, 2007, p. 119). On the one hand, it is possible that the monks acted as bishops. On the other hand, the monks could have shared the same names as Bosnian Church bishops. However, it is unlikely that coincidence this occurred, as the monks are listed successively (Fine, 2007, p. 180). Lastly, I agree with Malcolm (1994) that the Bosnian Church can be compared to other medieval Catholic monasteries (pp. 34-35). On the other hand, medieval Catholic monasteries could have differed so vastly in structure that the Bosnian Church cannot be compared to a Catholic monastery. I reply that while all medieval Catholic monasteries did not have the same structure, monastic structure remained roughly the same across Catholicism during the time of the Bosnian Church (Saetveit-Miles, email communication, July 24, 2012). Saeveit-Miles (2012) suggests that medieval monasteries had some degree of similarity, and writes, "As periods of reform came and went - especially the twelfth-century . . . hierarchies within houses may have been adjusted to adapt to the reforms . . . There was some measure of uniformity of monastic structure within specific orders, but . . . differences did arise among the various [Catholic] orders . . . between various countries and regions" (Email communication). Since certain monastic orders kept a "uniformity of structure," the Bosnian Church is able to be compared to a rough sketch of medieval Catholic monasteries (Saetveit-Miles, Email communication, July 24, 2012). However, it must be explained how the monastically structured Bosnian Church broke from Catholic authority.

### *2.3: The creation of the Bosnian Church: Breaking from Catholic authority*

The Bosnian Church dissolved from Catholic authority after the Bosnians had no bishop to refer to, and due to the Bosnian's animosity towards Catholics after a crusade into Bosnia (Fine, 2007, pp. 134-135). Bosnians deferred to the Bishop of Bosnia or the Archbishop of Dubrovnik (Fine, 2007, p. 134; Malcolm, 1994, p. 15). From 1232 to 1252, the Hungarian Archbishop of Kalocsa became the Bishop of Bosnia, yet the Hungarian Archbishop did not oversee Bosnia (Malcolm, 1994, p. 16). Malcolm (1994) suggests that the Hungarian Archbishop was inactive in Bosnia, writing, "Hungary persuaded the Pope in 1252 to place the bishopric of Bosnia under the authority of an archbishopric inside Hungary; however the main effect of this change was that . . . the leverage which any outside authority could exert over the Catholic Church in Bosnia was reduced to nothing" (p. 16). Additionally, Fine (2007) agrees that the Archbishop of Kalocsa had no authority in Bosnia (p. 134) He also suggests that the Archbishop of Dubrovnik, who the Bosnians also used, was absent (Fine, 2007, p. 134). Fine (2007) writes, "there is no evidence in these years that the Archbishop of Kalocsa had any authority in the banate nor is there evidence that [the Archbishop of] Dubrovnik . . . was supervising religious matters in Bosnia" (p. 134). The "banate" meant Bosnia (Fine, 2007, p. 134). "Bosnia . . . came under the authority of the Archbishop of Ragusa" as well as the Bishop of Bosnia, and Ragusa means Dubrovnik (Malcolm, 1994, p. 15). Thus a power vacuum emerged in this period, as the Bosnians had no Archbishop as an overlord (Fine, 2007, p. 134; Malcolm, 1994, p. 16).

Fine (2007) supposes that "the Bosnians must have been themselves administering religious matters and churches within Bosnia" (p. 134). He suggests that "in these violent years 1234-52 . . . in defiance of the pope and the papally sponsored foreign bishop appointed to govern them, the Bosnians severed relations with foreign Catholicism and established their own

autonomous Church" (Fine, 2007, p. 135). Lastly, the pope launched a crusade into Bosnia in 1235, and Fine (2007) believes it brooded animosity among Bosnians towards Catholicism (Fine, 2007, p. 130). Fine (2007) suggests the "crusade presumably began in 1235 and continued through 1236 . . . [and] it is generally assumed that in these years the crusaders ravaged Bosnia proper" (p. 126). Additionally, he posits that "the crusade . . . increased the rupture between the Bosnians and official Catholicism, and was an important factor in mustering support in Bosnia behind one or more anti-Catholic local movements" (Fine, 2007, p. 130). Thus I find it likely that the Bosnian Church dissolved from Catholic authority during the power vacuum.

I agree with Fine (2007) that the power vacuum of the mid-thirteenth century forced the Bosnian Church to govern itself (p. 134). On the one hand, there is no evidence of the Bosnian Church diverting from Catholicism. On the other hand, an event must have caused the Bosnian Church to separate from Catholicism, as the Church was not Bogomilist in doctrine and thus was not created by Bogomils. Additionally, the Bosnian Church did not crumble without the Archbishops. Thus the Bosnian Church likely divulged from Catholicism when the Bosnians had no contact with their religious overlords. I also concur with Fine (2007) that the Hungarian crusade into Bosnia helped create a schism, as a Christian-on-Christian crusade has been a factor of a schism in the past (p. 130; Runciman, 1955, p. 151; Ware, 1990, p. 146). Historically, the Eastern Orthodox Church broke from unity with Catholicism partly due to the Fourth Crusade (Ware, 1990, p. 146). Kallistos Ware (1990), who wrote *Eastern Christendom within Oxford's illustrated history of Christianity*, suggests that the destruction of Constantinople in Fourth Crusade was unforgivable to Greek Orthodoxy (p. 146). "The Sack of Constantinople," writes Ware (1990), "by the Fourth Crusade in 1204 is something that Greek Christendom has never forgiven nor forgotten" (p. 146). Additionally, Runciman (1955) observes in *The eastern schism*

that the Fourth Crusade was the final cause of the East-West schism (p. 151). Runciman (1955) writes, "The Fourth Crusade could never be forgiven nor forgotten by the Christians of the East. Thenceforth there was definite schism between the Greek and Latin Churches" (p. 151). On the other hand, the East-West schism might not apply to Bosnia, as the East-West schism's causes differ (Runciman, 1955, p. 100). "The fundamental cause" of the East-West schism, to Runciman (1955), "was the establishment of Crusader colonies where the Patriarchs presided" (Runciman, 1955, p. 100). I reply that the Bosnians had endured a power vacuum that forced them to assume autonomy, whereas the Greeks had not. Greek Orthodoxy assumed its own autonomy, whereas the Bosnian Church was forced to assume autonomy. Thus the origin of the Bosnian Church may have been mistaken by Catholic sources.

### *3.1: Mistaking heresy: Catholic sources*

If the Bosnian Church did not possess Bogomilist doctrines and was not created by Bogomils, then Catholic sources could have been mistaken about the Church's heresy. I concur that an unspecified heresy existed in medieval Bosnia based on independent Catholic sources (Fine, 2007, p. 54). On the other hand, I concur with Fine (2007) that some Catholic sources could have mistook ignorance and syncretism, the process of absorbing religious practices and doctrines, for heresy (p. 56). As an example, Medieval Bosnians were ignorant of the use of churches and the sacraments of marriage and baptism (Fine, 2007; Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Additionally, Christians in medieval Bosnia also incorporated pagan practices and beliefs into their religious practices and beliefs (Fine, 2007, p. 31). Furthermore, I suggest that the accusation

of heresy should not be taken for granted as true, as Catholic sources have loosely used the word 'heretic' and accused Christians of heresy for political motives (Turberville, 1964, p. 239).

Catholic accounts mention an ambiguous heresy in medieval Bosnia, yet the accounts offered by some Catholic officials may have been mistaken. In absence of Catholic accounts, "there would be little reason for the historian to suspect that there was any [heresy] in Bosnia" (Fine, 2007, p. 54). These accounts are reliable because they are independent of one another (Fine, 2007, p. 54). "Catholic sources," writes Fine (2007), "include documents of several different categories written over a period of several centuries" (p. 54). However, the Catholic sources never specify the exact that heresy existed in Bosnia (Fine, 2007, p. 55). Fine (2007) suggests that "even if the papal [sources] knew very well what the heresy's nature was, we would expect the popes at some point to refer to it by a name suggesting that nature (e.g. Cathar) instead of constantly saying only 'heresy'" (p. 55). Many Catholic sources, such as papal letters, are based on the correspondence with "papal agents" in Bosnia (Fine, 2007, p. 55). These agents were papal legates and Inquisitors (Fine, 2007, p. 54). Furthermore, some papal agents may have mistaken syncretism and ignorance for heresy (Fine, 2007, p. 56). Fine (2007) suggests that "an educated Italian could well have taken for heresy the pagan practices which the Bosnian peasant mingled with his Christianity" (p. 56). Bosnia's medieval peasantry was generally ignorant of enough Christianity to appear as heretics (Fine, 2007).

### *3.2: Mistaking heresy: The ignorance of medieval Bosnian peasants*

Bosnian Christians were often oblivious of the use of churches and the sacraments of marriage and baptism, and Catholic officials may have mistaken their ignorance for heresy (Fine,

2007). In medieval Bosnia, "the number of priests of any sort in Bosnia was miniscule," meaning the number of churches was low (Fine, 2007, p. 32). Fine (2007) recalls that "travelers visiting Bosnia in Turkish times frequently noted the absence of churches and the custom of holding mass in private houses or under open skies" (p. 33). Bogomils did not build or use churches, and thus Catholic officials may have supposed that Bogomils were in Bosnia (Vlasto, 1970, p. 234). Likewise, "marriage was discouraged" by Bogomils (Runciman, 1960, p. 74). Bosnians rejected the sacrament of marriage, as they married by Bosnian custom, and this could have been mistaken as heretical (Fine, 2007, p. 43). Fine (2007) writes, "Bosnians did not consider marriage a sacrament but took women on the condition that they promised to be good wives . . . with the intention of dismissing them when they choose" (p. 166). Thus the Bosnian custom of marriage "could well have been the basis for the anti-heretical Catholic tracts' statements that the Bosnians 'reject matrimony' or 'the sacrament of matrimony'" (Fine, 2007, p. 43). Lastly, the sacrament of Baptism may have been ignored by Bosnians. A Catholic Bishop of Bosnia was deposed partly because "this bishop did not know the baptismal formula" (Fine, 2007, p. 29). If a Bishop of Bosnia was ignorant of the process of baptism, then Bosnian Christians under him may have been ignorant of baptism and mistaken as heretics by Catholic officials (Fine, 2007, p. 29).

I agree that mistaking naiveté for heresy is possible, but not all Catholic officials mistook ignorance for heresy. For instance, the monks found by a Catholic official at Bilino polje were ignorant of displaying crosses, yet the Catholic official did not believe the monks were heretics, as he did not make them renounce heresy (Fine, 2007, p. 118; Malcolm, 1994, p. 33; Runciman, 1960, p. 104). Additionally, Fine (2007) alludes to some sources which believed the Bosnian custom of marriage was heretical (p. 43). Thus some Catholic officials must have encountered



ignorance of Catholic doctrines and branded it heretical. Additionally, syncretism may have been deemed heretical.

### *3.3: Mistaking heresy: Syncretism in medieval Bosnia's peasantry*

Catholic officials may have mistook syncretism for heresy in Bosnia, yet peasants couldn't have been serious heretics, since peasants placed an importance on practice over doctrine (Fine, 2007, p. 30; Wolf, 1966, p. 99). Syncretism is the absorption of beliefs and practices of another religion. Bosnian peasants absorbed non-Christian practices and beliefs (Fine, 2007, p. 31). "In addition," writes Fine (2007), "to regular rites to guarantee health and welfare, magic practices were employed on specific occasions" (p. 31). Secondly, peasants place a significance on practice over doctrines (Fine, 2007, p. 30; Wolf, 1966, p. 99). If Bosnian peasants absorbed heresy, they may not have been sincere, devout heretics. Fine (2007) suggests that peasants are only concerned with practice, and medieval Bosnian peasants were especially concerned with practice (p. 30). "Among most peasants," Fine (2007) writes, "and certainly among Bosnian ones, practice is much more important than belief" (p. 30). Eric R. Wolf (1966), an anthropologist from the University of Michigan, concurs that peasants are occupied with practice over belief (Wolf, 1966, p. 99). In *Peasants*, Wolf (1966) writes, "We have seen that peasant ceremonial focuses on action, not on belief . . . Embodied in rules, such moral imperatives render action predictable, and provide a common framework for its evaluation. Not the examined life, but social order is the objective. Peasant religion is both utilitarian and moralistic, but it is not ethical and questioning" (p. 99). This would mean that peasants focus on practice over doctrine. An anthropologist, Munro S. Edmonson (1960) of Tulane University,

suggests that peasants ignore the meaning of beliefs or practices that they absorb in *Nativism, syncretism, and anthropological science* (p. 195). Edmonson (1960) writes:

The analysis of syncretism requires the identification of cultural elements in terms of the historical complexes in which they are embedded. Much of the "meaning" of such elements, indeed, rests on their involvement in [historical] complexes, and our judgment is that a given cultural development is syncretistic implies that elements originally constituent of two historically distinct systems have become associated in a new context, thus changing their meaning. (p. 195)

In other words, absorbed practices or beliefs lose their original meanings. Thus the loss of original meanings absolves the Bosnian peasants of sincere heresy if they absorbed a heretical practice or belief.

I concur with Fine (2007) that some Catholic officials in Bosnia could have mistaken syncretism for heresy (p. 56). Furthermore, if some Catholic officials encountered syncretic peasants, they would not have been serious, believing heretics (Edmonson, 1960, p. 195; Wolf, 1966, p. 99). On the other hand, heretical peasants would be focused on heretical practices. Additionally, if Bosnians acquired non-Christian practices, I agree that some "educated Catholic foreigners looking at Bosnia . . . would have seen heretics everywhere, for almost no one . . . would have met the standards for being a good Catholic according to Rome's doctrine" (Fine, 2007, p. 35). On the other hand, many Catholic officials would have been intelligent enough to distinguish sincere heresy from syncretism. For example, a seventh century pope understood syncretism enough to convert British peasants with syncretism (Wolf, 1966, p. 103). The pope, Gregory the Great, rededicated pagan "temples . . . from devil worship . . . to the service of the true God" (Wolf, 1966, p. 103). On the other hand, this example does not apply to Christians

deviating from Christian practices. If some Catholic officials were ignorant of syncretism, perhaps others were insincere or corrupt.

#### *3.4: Mistaking heresy: Insincere accusations of heresy*

Some Catholic officials may have insincerely accused Bosnians of heresy, as some Catholic officials have historically used the word 'heretic' loosely and some Inquisitors have wrongly accused subjects of heresy (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). The accusation of heresy has been used loosely and politically (Turberville, 1964, p. 241). A. S. Turberville (1964) has noted how loosely the accusation of heresy has been use in *Mediaeval heresy and the Inquisition*, and writes, "Not only Alberto-Thomists in their attacks upon the Averrhoists, but secular clergy warring with regulars, Franciscans inveighing against Dominicans, all glibly brought the convenient accusation of heresy against their opponents" (p. 239). "Alberto-Thomists . . . [and] Averrhoists" were philosophical rivals (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). Some Alberto-Thomists called Averroes' followers heretics, as they were philosophical rivals (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). The accusation of heresy was thus occasionally used as an epithet between schools of Christian philosophers (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). Turberville's mentioning of "Franciscans and Dominicans" alludes to the conflict between two monastic orders who were once Inquisitors (p. 239). Franciscans and Dominicans even "quarreled over which had inquisitorial rights in Bosnia" (Fine, 2007, p. 153). Political rivals inside Catholicism thus used 'heretic' loosely (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). Additionally, Turberville (1964) recalls the Inquisition's occasional political corruption (p. 241). He writes:

Secular princes discerned [the Inquisition's] remarkable potential utility to themselves . . . Its methods had a satisfactory efficiency found in no other court . . . The charge of heresy could therefore be preferred against political enemies with the happiest prospects . . . The destruction for purely political ends was achieved by the use of inquisitorial [sic] methods of the Templars, Jeanne d'Arc, [and] Savonarola. (Turberville, 1960, p. 241)

As an example, Turberville (1964) recalls the imprisonment of Hugh Aubryot (p. 163). Aubryot was a victim of "the efficacy of the Inquisition . . . [as he] incurr[ed] the animosity of the University of Paris, found himself brought up on a flimsy charge and [was] condemned to perpetual imprisonment" (Turberville, 1964, p. 163). In summation, accusations of heresy in Catholic sources cannot be taken for granted as true. Thus I suggest that some accusations of heresy against Bosnians are not true.

I suggest that the looseness of the accusation 'heretic' implies that some accusations against Bosnians were insincere. This does not mean that many reports of Catholic officials are insincere. It is possible that some reports are perfidious, as the accusation of heresy has been used on intellectual and political grounds (Turberville, 1964, p. 239). While there are no specific examples of Bosnians suspiciously framed for heresy, Catholic sources should not be taken for granted as true. Catholic sources liberally accuse Bosnians of heresy, as Fine (2007) writes, "Even though it is likely that there were at least . . . the Bosnian Church and a small . . . heretical current [in Bosnia] -- the papal correspondence . . . generally makes no distinctions and lumps all deviants together as 'heretics'" (p. 58). Yet the unreliability of some Catholic sources does not explain for the evidence of part of the Bosnian Church's heresy in the fifteenth century (Fine, 2007, p. 234-235).

*4.1: The fifteenth century: The Bosnian Church partially succumbs to heresy*

The Bosnian Church partly absorbed heresy around the fifteenth century. Thus I diverge from Fine (2007), as he maintains that the Bosnian Church was not heretical in the fifteenth century (p. 235). The medieval state of Bosnia existed until it was "conquered . . . by the Turkish army in . . . 1463" (Malcolm, 1994, p. 43). Before the fifteenth century, "the existence of [heresy] in Bosnia is suggested only by a small number of sources, most of which are Italian" (Fine, 2007, p. 234). Part of the Church was not heretical in the fifteenth century, as Gost Radin left his will in 1466 (Fine, 2007, p. 289). Gost Radin's will contains images of the Cross and reveals his wealth (Fine, 2007, p. 289; Malcolm, 1994, p. 39). Additionally, *Gosts* commonly had monasteries, so the monks potentially under Gost Radin would not have been heretics (Fine, 2007, p. 135). Thus if Gost Radin was not a heretic, then part of the Bosnian Church was not heretical. Yet "four documents, all independent of one another, whose testimony about the Church being dualist is very hard to reject" appear in the fifteenth century, and one uses the term "Bogomils" to refer to Bosnian Churchmen (Fine, 2007, p. 235). Dualism could refer to dualist heretics such as one Bogomilist sect and all of the Cathars (Runciman, 1960, p. 178).

Initially, a letter mentions "Bogomils being influential at the court of Herceg Stefan," a ruler south of Bosnia in Hum (Fine, 2007, p. 235). Secondly, a version of the Cathar's Consolamentum ritual appears in a Gospel crafted by the Bosnian Church in the 1450s, and Fine (2007) suggests it was "brought to Bosnia by dualists" (p. 243). This Gospel is called the "Radosav Gospel" (Fine, 2007, p. 243). Thirdly, a trader from Dubrovnik, Bosnia's Catholic ally, used "the term 'Manichee' . . . for Bosnian Churchmen" (Fine, 2007, p. 235). Finally, three Bosnian nobles were "sent to Rome as 'Manichees' by the . . . bilingual Bishop of Nin [in

Croatia]" (Fine, 2007, p. 235). These sources are reliable because they are independent of one another and were written around the same time as one another.

I suggest that a wing of the Bosnian Church became heretical in the mid-fifteenth century. Part of the Church was not heretical, as evidenced by Gost Radin's will (Fine, 2007, p. 289). Gost Radin may have been the head of a monastery, so the monks under him would have not been heretics (Fine, 2007, p. 135). Four fifteenth century accounts, however, use the term 'Manichee,' 'Bogomil,' or 'dualist,' and they are independent sources (Fine, 2007, p. 235). The Dubrovnik merchant had nothing to gain by accusing the Bosnian Church of heresy, as he could have lost business. Additionally, the Cathar's Consolamentum in the Bosnian Church's Radosav Gospel is inexplicably heretical, as "the Consolamentum could not be compared with any contemporary Catholic sacrament" (Runciman, 1960, p. 153). Cathars descended from Bogomils, as "Bogomils . . . [had] a decisive influence on the Cathars" (Wakefield & Evans, 1991, p. 18). On the one hand, the ritual is not heretical, as "the ceremony itself was conducted in words and actions that almost all might have been written by Catholics for Catholics" (Runciman, 1960, pp. 153-154). On the other hand, the ritual appeared contemporarily only among Christian heresies (Runciman, 1960, p. 153).

It is not likely that the Bosnian Church was suddenly heretical. It is likely that such a lapse did not happen in a decade. I suggest that the autonomy of the Bosnian Church and the syncretism of Bosnians fractioned the Church with heresy over time. The Bosnian Church, filling the void for Dubrovnik and the Bishop of Bosnia, was subject unto itself (Fine, 2007, p. 134). Since Bosnians exhibited syncretism and ignorance, and even a bishop was ignorant of baptism, the Bosnian Church did not likely regulate itself and search for heretics, since they would simply not know what to look for (Fine, 2007). The monks from Bilino polje, for example, who founded

the Church were once too ignorant to display a Cross, and they would not likely recognize that despising the Cross was a heretical practice (Runciman, 1960, p. 104). Thus the Bosnian Church could easily have had sections lapse into heresy, as they did not have a regulatory body like the Inquisition to prevent heresy from entering the Church. Additionally, Bosnians were remarkably syncretic, and I suggest that part of the Church could have absorbed the practices or beliefs of heretics (Fine, 2007, p. 30). Heretics likely existed in medieval Bosnia, and their implementation into the Church is not impossible, especially since the Bosnian Church was probably too ignorant of Catholicism to recognize and root out heretics (Fine, 2007, p. 54). While it is possible that the Church did not sincerely absorb heresy, monks were more educated about Catholicism than peasants. On the other hand, the monks at Bilino polje and the deposed Bosnian Bishop displayed ignorance of fundamental Christian practices, and thus the Bosnian Church's heretics could have been naive heretics instead of convicted heretics. Thus it is likely that the Bosnian Church went the way of all things in medieval Bosnia, shambling and imbibing until the state silently vanished into the shroud of the Crescent of the Ottoman Empire in 1463.

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