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EIGHT PARADISES CHRONICLE ABOUT THE SULTAN HUNTING: SOURCES OF ORIENTAL PROVENANCE FOR STUDYING THE INTERACTION OF HUMANS AND NATURE

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ABSTRACT

This paper will present the eco-narrative about the hunting of Sultan Bayazid II, in the hunting grounds of Uzunova (Uzundžovo) near Plovdiv, as well as his report on species and quantity of the catch, and the number of participants in hunting. The analysis of Hasht Bihisht (Eight Paradises) chronicle illustrates how the author depicted the structure of the institution of hunting at the Ottoman Court, at the same time using the royal hunt as a framework for presenting the image of a powerful but benevolent ruling authority. The paper will be the basis for a historiographical comparison with the same and similar ceremonies in other cultures and countries of the Mediterranean region.

Keywords: eco-history, Idrīs Bidlīsī, Hasht Bihisht Chronicle, sultan's hunting, fifteenth century

LA CRONACA DEGLI OTTO PARADISI SULLA CACCIA DEL SULTANO: FONTI ORIENTALI PER LO STUDIO DELL'INTERAZIONE TRA UOMO E NATURA

SINTESI

Questo articolo presenta una eco-narrazione della caccia del sultano Bayazid II, sul terreno di Uzunova (Uzundžovo) vicino a Plovdiv, nonché la sua relazione sul tipo e sulla quantità delle prede e sul numero dei partecipanti alla battuta. L'analisi della cronaca Hasht Bihisht (Otto paradisi) mostra come l'autore abbia presentato l'organizzazione dell'istituzione della caccia presso la corte ottomana, utilizzando allo stesso tempo la caccia reale come quadro per costruire l'immagine di un'autorità dominante potente ma benevola. L'articolo costituirà la base per un confronto storiografico con cerimonie uguali e simili presenti in altre culture e Paesi dell'area mediterranea.

Parole chiave: ecostoria, Idrīs Bidlīsī, cronaca degli Otto Paradisi, caccia del sultano, quindicesimo secolo

INTRODUCTION¹

The concepts of hunt and hunting are associated with all natural aspects investigated by eco-history, which, being a scientific discipline, studies forests, rivers, agricultural areas and activities in them. Hunting can also be defined as multiple exploitation of nature using animal resources.

This narrative in chronicle *Hasht bihisht* about hunting is analyzed from the point of view of ecocriticism, where the relationship of human to the environment is considered through the literary-historical text, taking into account the moral, philosophical and political aspects of this relationship (cf. Bate, 1991; Barry 2009; Abolfotoh, 2021). The description of the hunt and all the activities that were carried out is an interesting narrative in the chronicle of Idris Bidlisi, but such narratives are very rare and precious for the history of the Balkans, because they give a picture of how nature and the natural world as well as the activities in it are imagined and how they are presented in the narratives these old chronicles from the beginning of the 16th century.

Idris Bidlisi (Idrīsi Bidlīsī)² is a renowned author of the chronicle entitled *Hasht Bihisht/Eight Paradises* (Bajraktarević, 1959, 75–130), a valuable primary historical source offering data and information related to eco-history. According to the evaluation criteria of historical works at the time, the Chronicle was viewed equally as a literary and artistic work and as a multi-thematic historical data source. Bidlisi's style, theoretical approach and manner of presentation, as well as linguistic and cultural sophistication largely determined the fame and recognition of *Hasht Bihisht* (Fleischer, 1986, 249). On the other hand, the refinement of the language of the Chronicle was difficult to read; however, it was appreciated for its depiction of events, people and surroundings from the reign of Mehmed II (d. 481) and Bayazid II (d. 1512), especially considering that Bidlisi was Bayazid's chronicler (Dimitriadou, 2000, 67).

The institution of hunting at the Ottoman Court existed since the first rulers. Hunting in the Ottoman society was a part of the state organization which had a pragmatic side to it as a preparatory military exercise, while the regular practice of hunting and the number of hunted animals were perceived as

symbols of the ruler's power. Owning a trained hunting bird and hunting dog was considered a symbol of status and pride. By organizing hunting, sultans came into contact with the people and in this way kept abreast of the developments in the country and among the people, while inspecting civil servants at the same time. In this respect, the hunting ceremony had its significance in the ruling of a land. Early Ottoman sultans such as Murad I (d. 1389), Yildirim Bayezid (d. 1403) and Chelebi Mehmed (d. 1421) are represented in miniature hunting scenes (Alkan & Gökbuğa, 2015, 24).

The Sultan had to go outside the city for larger hunting, so extensive hunting grounds and reserves were established throughout the Empire. Some hunting grounds were so large that thousands of people were employed to maintain them. The area around Edirne (Edrena) was particularly attractive to sultans. It is said that sultans often stayed there, even conducted state affairs and received diplomatic delegations (Alkan & Gökbuğa, 2015, 24).

Hunting in continental areas, which until the Ottoman Empire had been accepted as a tradition and a small-scale military maneuver, occupied an important position in social life beyond war activities. Such hunting expeditions were the most important part of the entertainment on the occasion of the beginning of the spring season. On such hunting expeditions organized by the Sultan, a number of dangerous animals were slaughtered, but also the nutritional needs of the people and the army were met with the meat of food animals (Işık, 1991, 115).

Sultan Murad I and Yildirim Bayezid had an excellent hunting organization (Çelik, 2002, 2). During the time of Yildirim Bayezid, a passionate and skilled hunter, hunting became common throughout the country and whenever he had the opportunity he hunted with trained dogs and birds, especially falcons (Bojanić, 1974; Amedoski, 2014, 237–250). According to preserved records, Bayezid Yildirim had 6.000 *sekbans* (dog handlers) and 7.000 *doganji* (falconers) who participated in the hunt only during the hunting ceremony (Kutluk, 1966, 211–212). In this regard, subsequent sultans inherited the organization of hunting, which we will illustrate by reference to a narrative source, the *Hasht Bihisht* Chronicle, about the organizational structure and one hunting expedition of Sultan Bayazid II.

¹ This scientific article was financially supported by the SARAJEVO CANTON budget program for scientific research projects for 2023.

² Hakīmuddīn Idrīs ibn Husāmuddīn or Idrīs-i Bidlīsī (b. Rayy/Iran 1457 – d. Istanbul 1520), bureaucrat and historian of Iranian origin, is undoubtedly one of the most significant intellectual figures in the Ottoman-Iranian milieu in the sixteenth century (hereinafter referred to as only Idris Bidlisi). In Iran, he was a scribe and state secretary at the court of the Aqqyunlu Sultanate, and after their fall (1501), he came under the patronage of Safavid Shah Ismā'īl. Chaos and instability under Safavid patronage forced him to leave Iran around 1503–1504 and after a long journey enter the service of the Ottoman sultan Bayazid II. Apart from a transitional period (1511–1513) spent in Hijaz, he remained in the service of the Ottoman sultans (Bayazid II and Selim I) until his death (1520, Istanbul) (Yildiz, 2012, 403–411).

DESCRIPTION OF THE HUNTING OF SULTAN
BAYAZID II IN HASHT BIHSHT

Narrative sources describing the Sultan's hunt are useful in many ways, as they offer a wealth of information and details regarding the social and political circumstances. One of the hunting expeditions of Sultan Bayazid II is described in the eighth book of *Hasht Bihsht*, in the third story (*destan*), where the author of the chronicle, Idris Bidlisi, describes under a special title his hunt in the vicinity of Plovdiv (Filibe), in the Veliko polje hunting ground (Uzunova), today known as Uzundžova. The Sultan organized the hunt in 889/1484, on his journey from Edirne to Sofia. The aforementioned short story about the Sultan's hunting records interesting details illustrating the Sultan's passion for hunting, but also other important details related to state affairs. Transcription is according to the F. Steingass *Persian--English Dictionary*.

Adapted translation of the hunting narrative (*al-qissa*):

When the winter came to the mountains and plains, and the spring had long ended and the season of wintering and hunting approached, the Sultan set off to Edirne [Edrene], but changed his mind in his original intention and headed for the regions around Plovdiv (be navahī u sahrā-ye šahr-e Filibe), where he erected grandiose tents. Then they headed towards the Great Field (Uzun ova), their destination, since there were large hunting grounds in the lowlands and hills. The Sultan intended to make a great imperial hunt there, since in the fall there is a game passage (gozari jānverāni šikārī) and an excellent place with a number of game species. The catch is guaranteed in the mountains and valleys there, the hilly brushwood due to a number of mouflon (kabsh) and aurochs (gāvkoḥī), and because of the deep tranquility and peace the mountain is also crowded with gazelles (ghazlān) to the extent that it seems that the treetops (shāksāri dirakhtān) are made of the horns of wandering deer (gavaznāni vahshī) and mouflon (qūchhā), while the trees leaves are shaped like the tongues of aurochs (lisānu ṭh-thavri gāvkoḥī), ears of rabbits (goshhā-yi arānib) and foxes (tha'ālib). Valleys full of wild and timid mouflon (gosfandāni vahshī) and herds of timid gazelles (ghazlān) jostling at the watering holes at the watering time, as well as other wild game (jānvarān) such that you may think it is a pasture filled with flocks of sheep owned by Turkmen nomads

(aghnāmi ghanāyimi turkāni sahrā-nishīn), or a wide area with fields of wild hyacinth (margh u chamani sumbul-zārī) for the *Khotenan musk gazelles* (āhvāni khitā u chīn). (Bidlīsī, 1571, 568a–b)

According to Bidlisi, hunting was a type of entertainment for the sultan in between state affairs, based on Islamic tradition as prescribed by the Sharia:

Experienced hunters and wise men always give priority to the period of falling leaves and the season of autumn, because all wild animals and quadrupeds are very fattened on pasture (farbiḥī) and beautiful in appearance (ra'nāyī) and the best way for a walk, enjoyment and the success of the exalted sultan is hunting in company according to the rules. The proper way is based on the verse: [When pilgrimage has ended] you are allowed to hunt [Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah, 2] where hunting is ordered in a way that is praiseworthy and this is an ancient rule according to the Prophet's tradition passed on by the companions of the Prophet and the God-pleasers. (Bidlīsī, 1571, 568b)

Bidlisi's account of the catch, the species and count of game was detailed, which indicates a reliable source of information – probably a participant in the hunt or a written report as a source:

On that occasion, rich prey was caught, a lot of food game, mouflon (gosfand) and aurochs (gāvi kohī) and foxes (tha'ālib) and a variety of species of large (nakhchīri bozorg) and small game (nakhchīri kūchaktar), as well as rabbits (arānib), small wildlife (jānvarāni sahrāyī), caught with the help of a number of trained hunting dogs (sagāni mu'allam) barking with a lion's strength and running endlessly. Hunters also took advantage of their opportunities (sayyādan), the tamers (fahhādān) and hunting dog handlers (sagbānān) in places for ambush and traps [...] there was exactly six hundred aurochs (shash sad sar gāvi kohī), a thousand mouflon and chamois (yak hazār gosfand u bozkohī) and three hundred quails (sī sad gorg). As for rabbits (khargosh), foxes (rūbāh), bears (khirs), wild boars (khūk), they were not taken into consideration, and therefore, they were not counted. (Bidlīsī, 1571, 569a)

The Sultan also carried out his duties as a statesman during hunting expeditions, and pardons were particularly popular due to the Sultan's satisfaction after a successful hunt and his desire

to show nobility and benevolence towards his subjects as a ruler:

On every occasion when the successful sultan, whose nature was friendly, fully attained the pleasure of hunting and rejoiced in the success achieved, in that very place of joy he ordered the imperial representatives to grant amnesty and pardon to the state officials and famous military leaders who had been deposed while he was in Edirne [...] The Sultan once again graciously granted Davud Pasha the position of minister. And he appointed Mehmed Pasha son of Hizir Bey, who was the commander-in-chief (dar mamāliki Rūmelī amīru 'l-umarā) in the lands of Rumelia, as a vizier; he generously appointed Iskender Pasha as the commander-in-chief of Rumelia (amīru 'l-umarāyi Rūmelī), while reappointing Ahmed Pasha of Hersekoğlu to the post of Commander-in-Chief of Anatolia (amīru 'l-umarāyi anātūlī). (Bidlīsī, 1571, 569a)

In the same epic, Bidlisi mentioned important events in the family sphere, as well as those concerning family policy:

In addition to these state affairs, the Sultan's family was blessed with the arrival of a shehzade, a son of the shehinshah. There was great rejoicing over this, although family ties are not always strong, for example Kasim-bey Karamanoğlu broke his alliance and rebelled against the Muslims. In any case, often, during these years, all the events related to his brother [Jam] took place according to the Sultan's wishes, and all his wishes came true with God's help. After the news of shehzade's escape from Karaman, shehzade Sultan Abdullah became the Sultan's representative. All these events happened in 889.H. [1484 AD]. (Bidlīsī, 1571, 539b)

In a separate section, which follows the chronology of events, in the left wing (*janāhi yusrā*) (Bidlīsī, 1571, 642a) under the title Activities, Education and Life of State Officials (*dar zikri kayfiyyat u kamiyyati tartībi arkāni daulati sultānī*), Idrisī Bidlisi gave a brief account of the organization of officers in charge of hunting at the Court of Bayazid II:

The master of hounds and hunters (amīri šikārān u sayyādāni sultān). Hunting was one of the most valued institutions for Arab and Persian kings. The master of hunting performs a noble duty and has many superiors and game animals under his command. It is passed on in books from the Prophet and God-pleasing pe-

ople that hunting is a way to acquire allowed food and it is in accordance with God's order When pilgrimage has ended, you are allowed to hunt [Qur'an, Al-Ma'idah, 2]; according to the interpretations experts in tafsīr and ta'vīl, it is understandable from the context that land and sea catch are used in human nutrition [...] Among all the prized hunting animals for the sultan, the most prominent category is the hunting bird (qismi parandhā), and the most beautiful among them is the falcon (zībāterīn hame shāhbāz ast). Anyone who was a breeder and trainer of birds (bāzdār) can gain the Sultan's attention (husnu 'l-iltifāti sultān) and thus be promoted to governorships in provinces and cities (bar marātibi amārati mamālik u buldān). About three to four thousand people are employed to organize this type of hunting in the vilayets and hunting grounds. Their leader is known as chakirji-basha and he is above all other emirs of hunting in rank (mīr-shikārān). Below him is the elder falconer who is known as shahanjibasha, below him the elder hawker or mirshikar bashik (mīr-shikār-bāshaq u tarmotāy). This group of falconers is mostly in Rum. A great number of people are employed in supporting and maintaining the gracefulness of the cubs and adult game animals for this hunt, as well as the masters of the hunters, known as atmajibashas. Servants were appointed for these tasks by firman. There are also many guards of desert wild animals, such as cheetahs (pārs) and trained dogs (kullābi mu'allam). Under the fortunate Sultan Bayezid Yildirim, there were 12000 such dogs led by segbans on silver chains and collars and their costs were very high, but now there are only 3000, and the daily cost for each dog, including the salary and food of the dog keeper, is about 3 Ottoman coins [...] The commanders in this group are men from among the sultan's servants and can be appointed to positions in the divan and as janissary commanders. There are about 3-4000 people in that service who are selected from among the sultan's servants. (Bidlīsī, 1571, 660a–b)

THE VALUE OF BIDLISI'S CHRONICLE AS A NARRATIVE SOURCE WITH REGARD TO THE INSTITUTION OF HUNTING

After an integral reading of the narratives related to hunting in the third right epic of the eighth book of *Hasht Bihisht*, we extracted the following data, which are subject to further interpretation.

- a. The time frame of the described events, which is winter and spring of 889. H./1484. AD.

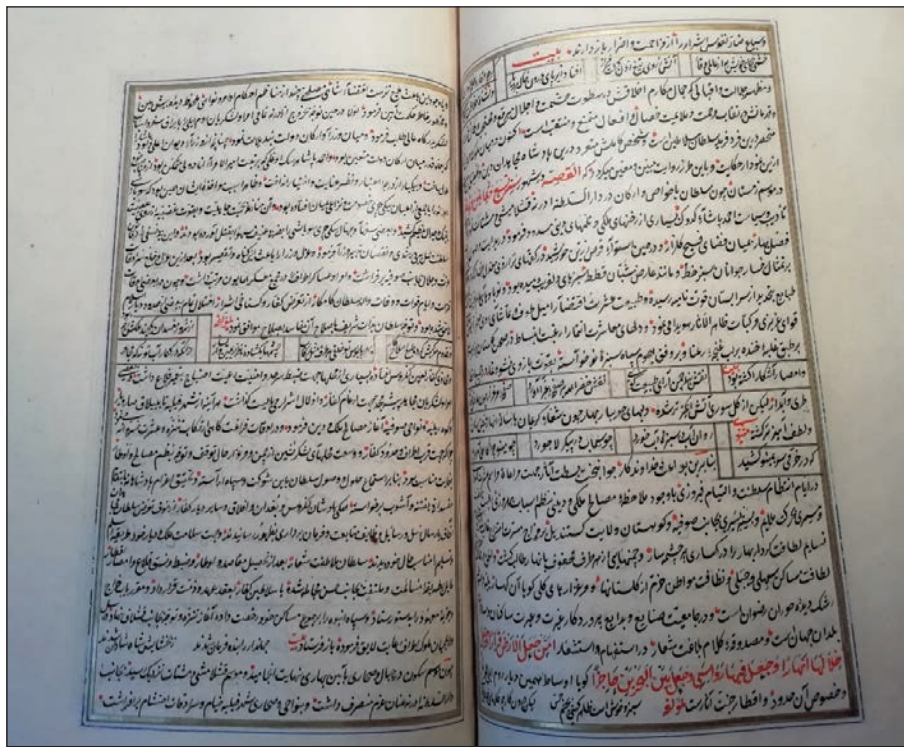


Figure 1: Bidlisi, 1571: Hasht bihisht, State Archive in Zagreb (HR-HAD-750, 568a). On left is the narrative about the episode of the Sultan's hunting.

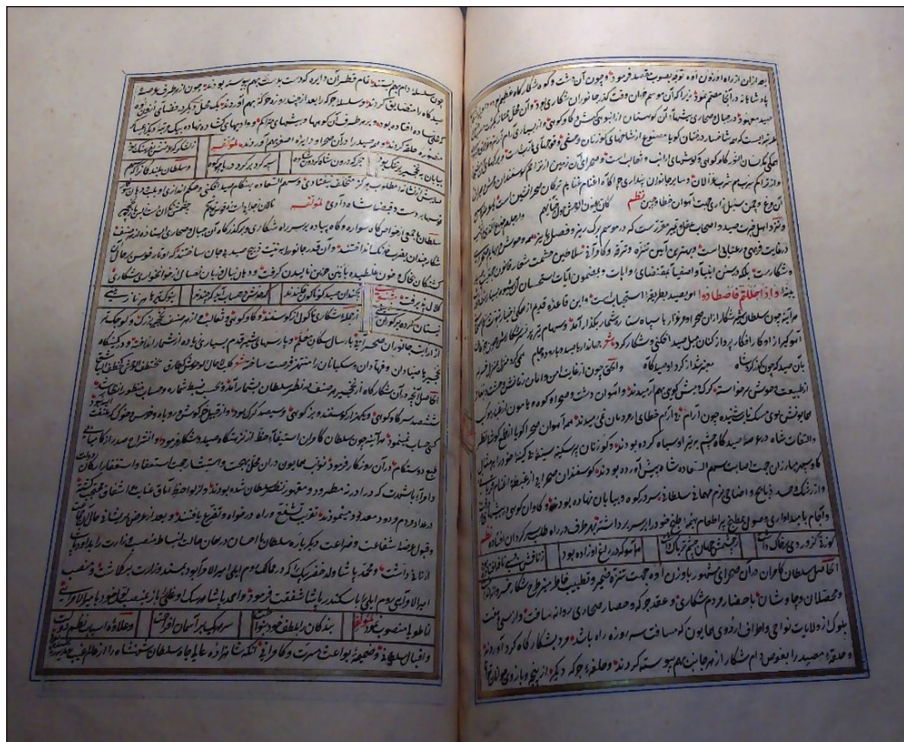


Figure 2: Bidlisi, 1571: Hasht bihisht, State Archive in Zagreb (HR-HAD-750, 568b). On right is the narrative about the episode of the Sultan's hunting.

- b. With the topos of the royal hunt, Bidlisi created the image of the sultan-hunter (Artan, 2008, 300), a concept that was supposed to profile the image of the sultan as a warrior (*mujāhid*), which depicted his military prowess both in hunting (*shikār u sayd*) and in battle (*jihād*). A grandiose hunting camp with sultan tents is described, a loud and large retinue of royal hunters with drums, affirming their presence to the subjects, which gave the ruler the opportunity to emphasize his greatness and skills, as well as his dominance and control over the conquered territories. This hunt also demonstrated the ruler's ability to organize and rule, through the size of groups from hordes to smaller groups, which accentuated the hierarchical structure and the sultan's status and exclusivity of the ruler.
- c. According to the sultan's tradition in the plain near Plovdiv (Filibe), the sultan's camp was decorated with numerous grandiose tents, where the sultan gathered a large entourage, which was to symbolize the sovereignty but at the same time a well-designed war game serving to prepare the participants for war, both from the physical and the psychological point of view. The number of courtiers, soldiers, hunters and others who participated in the hunt was huge: thirty-seven groups from neighboring vilayets and sultan's hordes from a distance of three days' walk and a large number of other groups which completely closed the hunting area and chased the game into a smaller circle. The same as the Ottoman battles, the hunting grounds were prepared several days in advance, a large number of hunting participants helped to chase the animals inside nets or, as Bidlisi says, with a hoop hand in hand. In addition, the sultan, with hunters on horseback, with dogs, falcons and hawks and a bow and arrow that always hits the target, dominated the hunt, which is especially emphasized in the report.
- d. Right before this narrative (*al-qissa*), references are given about the career of Gedik Ahmed Pasha, his imprisonment and execution (İnalçık, 1986, 282–283). Next, that is, at the beginning of this story, the author makes a point in this context with the portrayal of Sultan Bayezid II as a merciful and just ruler, but also strict in punishing when necessary. In addition, by pointing out Ahmed Pasha's shortcomings, Bidlisi presents all the events in a way that promotes the ideals of exemplary statesmen and the need for absolute obedience to the sultan.
- e. After the hunting ceremony, the sultan reappointed the pashas who were out of favor, that is, Davud Pasha and Ahmed Pasha Hersekoğlu, and promoted Mehmed Pasha, son of Hizir Bey to the position of vizier, and Iskender Pasha to the position of commander of the Rumelia army.
- f. From Bidlisi's description of the hunting grounds of Uzunjova (today, Узунджово, a village in the district of Haskovo in Bulgaria) it is perceived that it was a hilly area that was extremely densely forested,³ so it must have been abundant with hunting game. He described the hunting ground as a field surrounded by mountains, forests and wide valleys, which leads to the conclusion that these are his personal observations as a traveler, considering that he stayed for some time in the vicinity of Sofia and that he passed through these regions on his journey through Bulgaria to Edirne or to Istanbul.
- g. The report on how the hunting expedition was carried out, the number of participants and the amount of the catch that Bidlisi gives indicates the assumption that he had in his hands the official report from the court, as well as the oral report of the participants of the hunt – Iskender Pasha. The fact is that he personally knew Iskender Pasha, who was his oral source of information for various described events and battles, even comments related to Gedik Ahmed Pasha (Genç, 2019, 524). From the narrative, it can be seen that Iskender Pasha accompanied the Sultan, and that he was appointed commander of the army of Rumelia. Correspondence between Bidlisi and Iskender Pasha has been preserved in the archives, which speaks in favor of the fact that Bidlisi had first-hand data and information about numerous events in which Iskender Pasha was a participant.
- h. The hunting report shows the type and number of games caught, which speaks of an extremely rich hunting ground. It was stated that it was about catching noble game, but also those that are pests – rabbits, hares, bears, wolves, wild boars, foxes and badgers, in order to protect property and livestock. Hunting provided additional sources of food, more precisely meat, primarily from large game

3 Topçular Katib also writes about Uzundzova; that it is a passage through mountain pastures and that the geographical features of Uzundzova, as well as its rich game, made it one of the sultan's favourite hunting grounds (Yılmaz, 2003, 17).

such as aurochs (mountain cattle), mouflons, chamois, deer, gazelles, as well as from small and feathered game – rabbits, hares, wild ducks, quail, pheasant and others. There was a particularly large catch of mountain cattle or aurochs (*tur*),⁴ which in the past were also present in the Balkans, as indicated by toponyms in the territory of Bosnia (*Turovi* – a village at the base of Treskavica; *Turjanica* – the right-hand side of the Vrbas River, *Turija* village near Lukavca and a stream, the left tributary of the Spreča River, as well as *Turjak* – the left tributary of the Ljubina) and of Croatia (*Turopolje* – part of Posavina and *Turopoljski lug* – former huge forest, Magna Silva).

- i. In the narrative, Bidlisi referred to Sharia regulations derived from the Qur'an and the Prophet's tradition that relate to the Islamic principles of hunting. The legal regulations were based on the interpretations of the Hanafi School of Law, which were later codified in the legal work of *al-Multaqā* (Bāb al-sayd, fol. 127a–128b) Ibrāhīm al-Halabī.⁵ Briefly, to summarize the provisions of the Sharia, hunting was permitted with the help of hunting dogs and hunting birds, such as falcons and hawks and with the use of iron weapons (arrows, swords, spears, sabers) in order to obtain the meat of game which is permitted by the Sharia or for the purpose of obtaining skins, hair, feathers and bones of game that is not eaten. Hunting is also allowed for defense purposes. In general, according to the law, everyone was allowed to hunt game, that is, the right to hunt was general and unlimited, everyone could hunt where and as much as they wanted, provided that they did not harm others.
- j. In a separate narrative, Bidlisi gave an overview of the official positions at the court, and among others he mentioned the semi-military structure in charge of hunting and hunting grounds. He emphasized the participation of hunting dog trainers and highly respected *falconers* (*bāzdārān*) who belonged to the population category with a special status (Bojanić, 1974; Amedoski, 2014). He also states that the sultan reduced the number of dogs to 3.000, unlike Sultan Bayezid Yıldırım, during whose rule the court financed the keeping of

12.000 hunting dogs with silver collars and leashes. It was stated that the daily cost for one dog was 3 Ottoman *akçe*. An important fact is that three to four thousand people were employed in that service from the ranks of the sultan's chosen servants, who had an opportunity to advance to high positions at the Court (janissary ages, governors of the *sandjak* and positions on the *Divan*).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bidlisi's *Hasht Bihisht* chronicle is a very valuable primary historical source for eco-history too. According to the evaluation criteria of historical works at the time, the chronicle was viewed equally as a literary and artistic work and as a multi-thematic historical source of data. Its style, the theoretical approach and method of presentation as well as the linguistic and cultural sophistication of the work largely determined the fame and recognition of *Hasht Bihisht* (Fleischer, 1986, 249). On the other hand, the sophistication of the chronicle's language was difficult to read, but it was appreciated for its portrayal of events, people and environments from the period of reign of Mehmed II and Bayezid II. As Bayezid's chronicler (Dimitriadou, 2000, 67), he is considered a unique source for depicting the personality of Sultan Bayezid II. Through the analysis of Bidlisi's narrative about the hunt, a wider picture of the Ottoman Court and of the presentation of the sultan's sovereignty is zoomed in. Idrisi Bidlisi, who already had the experience of the chief court scribe, a master of his work and a chronicler of the *Ali Osman* (House of Osman) dynasty, is aware that the iconography of the royal house (cf. Necipoğlu, 1989, 401–427; Yelçe, 2009, 150–153), among other prerogatives, includes the hunting ceremony with all the associated elements of royal protocol. With the metonymy of the hunting ceremony of his patron, the Sultan, he added a new dimension to the 'image' of the sultan, intended to impress his entourage and subjects (and potentially foreign emissaries) with the authoritative figure of a skilled hunter in non-combatant circumstances without the pressure of war and fighting, which would be a counterpart to the image of the sultan-warrior in combat circumstances. All the data and descriptions of geographical areas, animals, hunting method, the catch count, description and number

4 *Aurochs* (*Bos primigenius*) is an extinct cattle species, ancestor of today's domestic cattle. The last animal of this kind died in Poland in 1627. Aurochs were spread across almost entire Europe and their habitat were mostly steppes, moist swamp forests and river valleys (Skok, 1973, 524; Mažuranić, 1908–1922, 1474).

5 Halabī, Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad (died in 1549), author of *Multaqā al-abhur* (*Confluence of the seas*), which was an integral part of the Ottoman jurisprudence canon, i.e. the standard manual of the Hanafi School of Law in the Ottoman Empire (Mülteka'l-ebhur, 2024).

of participants, report on the hunting administrative structure and the political and social context of hunting are an outstanding source not only for eco-historical research but for multidisciplinary considerations too. The narrative is enriched with another layer – the poetic forms that metaphorically emphasize the hunting endeavors and add an additional extension to the ‘ruling image’.

Hunting was, among other prerogatives, a symbol of sovereignty for the sultans. Hunting was an imitation of war, a well-designed war game, which prepared the participants for war, both physically and psychologically. The sultan’s procession with his retinue and hunters, in which the sultan rode on horseback through towns and villages to the sultan’s hunting grounds, was a performance of sovereignty and power, as it was witnessed not only by those in the entourage but also by the subjects who watched and to a lesser extent participated in the hunt. The Sultan’s great

hunting ventures required organization and planning as did military campaigns, and a successful campaign was a sign of the ruler’s ability (Taner, 2009, 6).

Sultan’s hunting is a framework for the construction of the idea of an ‘extraordinarily skilled hunter Sultan’ (Taner, 2009, 71). Hunting (*shikār u sayd*) and fighting (*jihād*) are the two references’ links that connect the eight Ottoman sultans described in the chronicle. At the same time, hunting is also a metaphorical means of the sultan’s emotional intelligence in terms of justice, empathy, fair use of power, generosity, as well as piety.

This account of the hunt by Bidlisi is a possible source for discourses with very subtle compositional references to which different layers of interpretation can be added. In this sense, as a narrative source it has a significant advantage over dry archival sources as it allows visualization and multi-layered interpretations.

KRONIKA O SULTANOVEM LOVU OSEM RAJEV: VIRI VZHODNEGA POREKLA ZA
PREUČEVANJE INTERAKCIJE NARAVE IN ČLOVEKA

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POVZETEK

Srednjeveške kronike s konca 15. in samega začetka 16. stoletja so večtematski viri za raziskovanje interakcije narave in ljudi ter načinov rabe naravnih virov, tako navadnih ljudi kot tistih z dvora. Lovske dejavnosti ponazarjajo to interakcijo: od potrebe po hrani do obrednih elementov. Kroniko *Hasht Bihisht* (Osem rajev) Idrīsa Bidlīsīja lahko obravnavamo skozi pluralistične zgodovinske kontekste in v tem smislu v ekozgodovinskem kontekstu interakcije ljudi, obdobj in krajev. Med številnimi eko-pripovedmi, ki jih Idrīs Bidlīsī vključuje v svojo kroniko, so čudoviti opisi regij, flore in favne Balkana in Sredozemlja v osvojenih regijah. Prispevek bo predstavil njegovo ekološko pripoved o lovu sultana Bajazida II., v loviščih Uzunova (Uzundžovo) pri Plovdivu, ter njegovo poročilo o vrsti in številu ulovov in številu udeležencev. Bidlīsī je bil Bajazidov kronista, zato njegova kronika velja za edinstven vir za prikaz osebnosti sultana Bajazida II. Zato se preko analize njegove pripovedi o lovu lahko razume širša slika otomanskega dvora in načina predstavitve sultanove suverenosti. Idrīs-i Bidlīsī, tedaj uveljavljen dvorni pisar, se kot mojster svojega dela in kot kronist dinastije Al-i Osman (Osmanova hiša) zaveda, da ikonografija kraljeve hiše, med drugimi prerogativi, zajema tudi lovski obred z vsemi pripadajočimi elementi kraljevega protokola. Z metonimijo lovskega obreda je pomagal zgraditi pomembno dimenzijo »imidža« sultana, s katerim naj bi navdušil svoje spremstvo in podložnike (verjetno tudi tuje odposlance). Ustvarja se podoba avtoritativne figure in veščega lovca v času miru, torej vzporednica podobi sultana–bojevnika v vojnem času. Vsi podatki in opisi geografskih območij, živali, načina lova, poročilo o številčnem ulovu, opisu in številu udeležencev, poročilo o upravni strukturi lovne mreže ter političnem in družbenem kontekstu lova so odlični viri ne le za ekozgodovinske raziskave temveč za interdisciplinarne raziskave na sploh. Kot vir je bil uporabljen eden najlepših primerkov *Hašt bihista*, izvod avtografa iz leta 1571 iz Ottenfelsove orientalistične zbirke (št. 2), ki se hrani v Hrvaškem državnem arhivu v Zagrebu.

Ključne besede: ekozgodovina, Idrīs Bidlīsī, kronika *Hašt bihišt* (Osem rajev), sultanov lov, 15. stoletje

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