

# SPORT, GAMES AND CHIVALRY IN MEDIEVAL SERBIA

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## SUMMARY

Sports games held during the ancient times were an important factor that influenced the entire social life of the era. During the greatest sport events such as the Olympic Games, all hostilities and war conflicts ceased and the winners of the games were considered to be equal to gods. Although developed on the foundations of the Greek culture and Roman state, the Middle Ages, under the influence of Christianity, banned the Olympics considering them a pagan relic, making most sports undesirable. The invasion of barbarians, which destroyed the remnants of the old society, accelerated this process. Yet, not all sports activities died out. The ones related to everyday activities, fighting and warfare continued to live. Serbian medieval state originated in the area between Byzantium and Western Europe and was exposed to influences from both sides, both the East and West. These influences were also manifested in sports, games and chivalry. The influences' paths varied, though, and were connected to population's travelling and mixing. Thus, the Eastern influence came from the Byzantine neighboring cities, and the Western from the Westerners – the Sas (Saxon) miners who worked and lived in Serbia, merchants and craftsmen from the coastal region, as well as mercenary military squads hired by the rulers. Sports activities, games and knightly competitions in medieval Serbia were connected with other social events and could be found in mixed environment such as urban settlements, as well as at gatherings at certain religious buildings. Gatherings in the cities were connected with organization of trade fairs and trade shows, and at monasteries and churches with religious festivals held almost every day. Preserved onomastic materials testify about sports activities: igrište (arena), potecište (starting point), strelište (shooting range) and others. Sports activities and knightly competitions were of a competitive nature, whereas the games were for fun.

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The paper discusses the presence of sports activities, games and chivalry in medieval Serbia, their origin, venues and social significance.

**Keywords:** Serbia, middle Ages, sports, games, chivalry, influences, fairs, festivals, cities.

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From the earliest times, human existence has been accompanied by sports and games. With the change of epochs and civilizations, the form and character of these activities changed: each period left a specific trace and gave a special kind of development. Knighthood, which is contained in the title of our work, is characteristic of the feudal era, ie the time of the Middle Ages, so that its very appearance defined the time frame of the work. However, for the sake of precision, it should be emphasized that our topic deals with the history of sports (in the broadest form) in the area that was inhabited by Serbs during the middle Ages - from the 7th to the 15th century. As social activities are always in interaction with neighboring communities, so our presentation, in order to better understand the mentioned issue, touches on neighboring nations and states - those who could and who influenced the development of sports among Serbs.

## METHODOLOGY

During the preparation of the paper, we used the historical method, which we, in order to better understand the problem, significantly supplemented with a comparative method. The problem in understanding this topic is multiple, but it can mostly be reduced to the lack of historical sources. The lack of sources, on the other hand, is significant both from the point of view of history as a science, and from the point of view of influencing the events themselves. Namely, they wrote literary works about knightly feats, life and death. Since there was no such original literature in Serbia, the spread of knightly culture was slowed down. Its slower development was also influenced by the fact that chivalry is a phenomenon that originated in the Middle Ages and is associated with Christianity. As the Serbs received Christianity relatively late (in relation to other European nations), the chivalry (as it is celebrated by Western literature) was less accepted.

The situation is the same with sports and games. Their presence in medieval Serbia is unquestionable, but the lack of written sources does not allow this picture of social life to be seen most clearly. Rare data, written and artistic, show that sports and games developed under the influence of neighbors, but that there are also those that Serbs practiced even before their consolidation in the Balkans.

## INTRODUCTION: ANCIENT ROOTS

Sports activity has been an important aspect of human life since the appearance of the earliest civilizations. Ancient culture is at the heart of modern civilization: many institutions, not to mention all, have their origins in antiquity. Ancient civilization developed in the Mediterranean basin as a symbiosis of Greek, Hellenistic and Roman culture and its direct successors are the states of Europe. However, through the expansion that Europeans undertook from the end of the 15th century, the civilization they inherited spread to other parts of the world, primarily to the newly discovered continents of North and South America, as well as to Australia. In this way, the legacy of ancient civilization spread to most of the world. The second part, which includes the countries of Africa and Asia, he adapted to the situation, so today the presence of the heritage of ancient civilization is dominant around the globe.

One of the aspects of that civilization is the Olympic Games. The first games were held in 776 BC and represent the boundary stone of the development of the Greek state (Christesen, 2007, 15-21). The importance of the Olympic Games is also indicated by the fact that they were a chronological landmark according to which the dates of certain events were determined. Namely, the calendar based on following the cycle of the Olympic Games was accepted by numerous Greek states, which had their own calendars (Hannah, 2014, 1565-1566). It was the first case of joint counting of the time of several different countries (Allen & Lantinova, 2012, 6). The first Olympic Games were for the Greeks, as was the founding of Rome for the Romans, the birth of Jesus Christ for the Christians or the transfer of Muhammad from Mecca to Medina for the Muslims.

As everyone knows, the Olympic Games are a sporting competition in various sports. They confirm the importance of sports for the development of Greek and, later, Roman and modern civilization. At the time of their holding, all hostilities between the warring Greek states were interrupted and athletes were free to come to Olympia, where competitions took place (Young, 2004, 59). The winners of the competitions were considered equal gods; they were respected and given great recognition. In the period of classical Greece, only they, besides the gods, were represented in fine and other arts.

From antiquity, the Olympic Games have come to us in recent times. It is known that they were re-established in 1896 and that their motto was and remains the same as in antiquity. Today's winners of the Olympic Games experience fame and honor almost the same as those from antiquity. Considering our topic, it is worth mentioning one curiosity that happened during the first modern Olympic Games. Namely, at the opening of the Games on April 6, 1896, the only ruler of a country who was present, besides the host - the King of Greece, was the King of Serbia Aleksandar Obrenović (Politika, 2012). To the state visitor, the Serbian anthem of God of Justice was sung.

The number of disciplines in which competitors competed at the Olympic Games has changed and increased over time. It is important to mention that one of the competitive disciplines, in terms of popularity immediately after Pancratiun, was the Pentathlon, which became part of the Olympic Games in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BC. n. e. This discipline is the basis of today's all-around. The Pentathlon was an all-around competition consisting of five disciplines: long jump, running, discus throwing, javelin throwing and wrestling (Smith, 1859, 883). We singled out this discipline because of its popularity in antiquity, but also because its components will be part of sports competitions during the middle Ages.

## **THE MIDDLE AGES**

The Western Roman Empire has long lived as a periphery of the former state, pressed by numerous barbarian peoples, so that its fall in 476 AD. did not surprise anyone. The old capital - Rome was no longer the center of the Roman state, much less the world. The two falls of Urbsaeterna in 410 and 455 foreshadowed the final fall of 476 AD, from which he did not recover quickly (Peinter, 1997, 34-36). Although he no longer had the role he had before when he was the center of the world, the fall of Rome, ie. the overthrow of the last emperor usually takes the end of antiquity and the beginning of the Middle Ages (Udaljcov, Kosminski, Weinstein, 1950, 54). The middle Ages understood in this way lasted from 476 to 1492, when great geographical discoveries began. These two dates were turning points in social events.

Although there were other important dates that could be taken, and are taken, for the beginning of the middle Ages, it is most often accepted that it was the fall of Rome, although this city did not have the old splendor or significance for a long time. His fall was a symbol of the destruction of old pagan values and the establishment of new ones. The values that came in the beginning were significantly below the ancient ones, but they were the basis for the emergence of new ones. These new, different values will develop over the next ten centuries, going through different phases.

## **BYZANTIUM**

The fall of the Western Roman Empire did not mean its disappearance. As early as 330, a new capital of the Empire was built on the shores of the Bosphorus, named after the founder Constantinople, or as the Serbs and other Slavs called it Constantinople, which moved the center to the east (Magdalino, 2001). With its founding, it was planned to replace the obsolete Rome, which is why it was called

the New Rome. The fall of ancient Rome also destroyed the Western Roman Empire, but its eastern part with Constantinople managed to be preserved and survive for the next ten centuries. The inhabitants of that empire called their state Imperium Romanum - Roman Empire, and themselves Populous Romei - Roman people. They spoke Greek, which has become the official language of the country since the 6th century. Historians have called this country Byzantium.

The survival and development of the eastern part of the Empire - Byzantium is based on three principles: Greek culture, Roman law and Christianity (Ostrogorski 1996: 48). Without one of these three principles, Byzantium would not have survived. The western part of the empire lacked Christianity and therefore fell under the onslaught of barbarians. These three principles date back to the time of antiquity, with the fact that Christianity gained affirmation only from the 4th century. However, it is Christianity that has made radical changes in the entire society, including sports.

The first thing that came under attack from church authorities was games in their broadest form. In their opinion, every game originated from the devil (Bojanin, 2005, 366), and especially dangerous are those that take place with the help of weapons, which endangers the lives of other people, even the closest ones.

In accordance with such an understanding, in 393, the Byzantine emperor Theodosius I abolished the holding of the Olympic Games in the Empire. However, the ancient tradition was still strong, so the games continued, of course of much lower intensity. They took place in Daphne near Antioch in Syria, today Turkey, until 521, when they were held for the last time (ODB, 1991, 1939; Young, 2004, 136-137).<sup>1</sup>

## **SPORTS IN THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE**

It has already been said that the church did not look favorably on games, especially those that could endanger human life. However, not all games were in the same position: church law allowed: wrestling, boxing, running, jumping and discus throwing. In addition, many competitions, despite the negative church attitude, took place publicly with the participation of a large number of people: competitors and observers. The highest state dignitaries, even the emperors themselves, took part in such gatherings. It is known that Vasilije I (867-886) was an exceptional wrestler in his youth, while Jovan I Cimiskije was known as an extraordinary archer (Leo Diac. 1828, 97, 4-10).

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<sup>1</sup> The authors disagree when the Pentathlon became part of the Olympic Games. It was previously thought to have been at the 18th Olympic Games in 708 BC. (Smith 1859: 883), while recent research shows that this was somewhat later - at the games held in 688 BC. n. e. (Kyle 2014: 26).

Equestrian sports were very popular in Byzantium. Among them are carriage and two-wheeler races, which were held at the Hippodrome in the center of Constantinople and were very well attended and followed. In addition to hunting, their popularity was threatened by three other games: tsikanion, tornemen and đustra. They all belong to equestrian sports.

Tsikanion comes to Persian thsu-gan and is a game that resembles modern polo. So, she played with the ball on horses as well. It is believed that the game in Byzantium came from Persia and that it gained special popularity during the reign of Theodosius II (408-450), who built a stadium in Constantinople, where matches were played. The stadium was called Tsikanistirion. The game could also be held in the open field with the participation of two teams on horses. The players were equipped with long nets to try to throw an apple-sized leather ball into the opponent's team's goal. The game was especially popular at court and among the nobles. The already mentioned Tsar Vasilije I, in addition to wrestling, was also exceptional in this sport. His ascent on the social ladder also speaks of the dexterity of this emperor: thanks to his strength and skill, he reached the position of emperor. He began his career at court as a groom and servant, and ended as emperor and founder of a new dynasty. He demolished the old Tsikanistirion and built a new and bigger one (Janin, 1950, 119; Magdalino, 2007, 62–63). The ruler of the Trapezoid Empire, John I Comnenus, also competed successfully in Tsikanion, but he was tragically killed during one match.

Tornemen and đustra come from the Old French language and can be related to military skill, ie exercise. Tornemen is a group competition in which the competitors are divided into two teams, while đustra is an individual competition. Byzantine historians have noted the participation of Emperor Manoel I Comnenus (1143-1180) in a tournament in Antioch, where a team of Byzantines competed against Western knights. Jovana (ODB, 1991, 1939–1940).

It has already been said that sports competitions in Byzantium were held in stadiums whose size resembled ancient coliseums (arenas). As sport in Byzantium did not have the same position as in antiquity, so the number of stadiums from the medieval period is much smaller. The most famous among them is the Hippodrome in Constantinople, built at the end of the 3rd century on the model of the Circus Maximus in Rome, but which received its final shape during the reign of Constantine the Great (306-337). It was damaged, remodeled and renovated several times, and was finally left to nature after the crusade of Constantinople in 1204. The hippodrome was located in the immediate vicinity of the church of Hagia Sophia and the imperial court, with which it formed the core of Constantinople and Byzantium.

The audience came to the Hippodrome to cheer on the teams and competitors, but it was also a place where dissatisfaction was expressed due to various situations, most often political ones. The events are very similar to modern events

on the field, but they surpass them in their strength. The most famous protest that originated from this stadium was the Rebellion of Nika, which took place in 532. The fans, who were, by the way, divided into two groups: Blue and Green, united and went against the emperor (Ostrogorski 1996, 85-86, 91-92). At the head of Byzantium at that time was Emperor Justinian, one of the greatest rulers of the thousand-year-old Byzantine Empire, and he was ready to flee Constantinople and leave the throne, but his wife Theodora prevented him from doing so (Dil, 1991, 52).

## SERBIA IN THE MIDDLE AGES

In the middle Ages, the Serbian people inhabited the area through which numerous demarcation lines passed. Certainly the most important among them are the borders between the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, as well as the one that divided Christianity into Eastern Orthodox and Western Roman Catholic. This area was also a place where various influences and cultures met. All that influenced the emergence of the Serbian medieval state. The aspirations of the Serbs, as well as other peoples who came in numerous waves from the end of the 4th century, were directed towards the east and Constantinople, which was the center of the world. Greatness and wealth left everyone who came from afar in front of its walls breathless. This aspiration will remain present until the very end of the Middle Ages, when the Ottoman Turks will occupy Constantinople, and soon after that the entire Balkans and half of Central Europe.

With the arrival of Serbs, Croats and, later, Bulgarians, Byzantium lost most of the Balkan Peninsula. During early middle Ages, ie. the period until the end of the 12th century was spent in the struggle and effort of the Serbs to finally become independent and Byzantium to return to the original borders on the Danube and Sava. In that mutual struggle, with different phases that changed, there was a specific relationship. Long ago, historians noticed that the Slavs physically conquered Byzantium, but that it culturally conquered them (Purković, 1937, 192). In that exchange of influence, the borders of the states changed.

The Serbian medieval state reached its peak during the late middle Ages. Economic progress was visible with each passing year and did not stop even when the Turks occupied a part of the territory (Ćirković, 1997, 37). Economic and with it every other progress in Serbia was due to mining and production of precious metals. Although there are no precise data, rough calculations lead us to the assumption that Serbia produced more than half of silver in Europe in the first half of the 15th century (Ćirković, Kovačević-Kojić, Ćuk, 2002, 118). This brought people to Serbia who lived on the Adriatic coast and were naturally aware of the influences of the West, primarily the Italian communes. Thus, Serbia, ie its cities, became a multicultural center (Zarković, 2014). In urban settlements of Serbia

lived, in addition to Serbs, Saxons, inhabitants of coastal cities up to Split in the north, Ancona, Florence, and Arbanassi, as well as Bulgarians and Greeks, especially during the 15th century.

## **SPORTS IN MEDIEVAL SERBIA: TERMINOLOGY**

Strong Byzantine influence spread in Serbia along with how it expanded its borders to the south. The influence of Byzantium and Byzantinization are best reflected in the field of state administration, but also in the entire social life. This process has been accelerating since the reign of King Milutin at the end of the 13th century.

Medieval terminology related to sports activities differs significantly from modern ones and requires additional clarifications, because it is not easy to translate them into modern languages. Sports events in medieval Serbia were not terminologically separated from other public performances. The starting point was that the event was public, accessible to others and that it was even held for the attention of others. Such events, that is, everything that was performed in public and that was intended for viewing, was called a scene, in the modern Serbian language it is a scene. The term is general Slavic and comes from the verb *zreti*, which means to observe, to watch. From the same basis, the noun theater was created, by adding the suffix *-ište*, which signifies a place, a space, in our case where something is observed, seen (Miclosich, 1862-1865, 606). This terminology entered the oldest texts and translations of the Bible into Old Slavonic as well as Old Serbian and was noted in the *Nomocanon* of Saint Sava where it is said: "... or come to any other theater to watch" (Bojanin, 2005, 239). The term is semantically related to the Greek *θέατρον* and the Latin *theatrum*, which also refer to seeing, observation (Skok, 1971, 449).

This was not the only case present among Serbs and peoples in (south) Eastern Europe. Etymologically, the same terminology was used in Western Europe. Thus, at that time, theater in Western Europe meant "every public place, in a building or outside, where parties took place." It was a "place to look" (Tydeman, 1978, 46).

It should also be said that in the Old Serbian language there is no clear distinction between the terms scene and theater and that they often appear as synonyms. Thus, the medieval term theater is much broader than the modern one and means a place where something takes place, but also the act itself, which is, the event. Accordingly, in the Middle Ages, a large number of scenes were associated with the play, while, again, various plays were held in the theater. According to the *Nomocanon* of Saint Sava, people went to the theater to watch games (Bojanin, 2005, 244).

Another source, which was translated from Greek and which constantly followed the Code of Tsar Dušan - *Syntagma* of Matija Vlastar, has a chapter

entitled: "On scenes and various acting games" (Novaković, 1907, 320-323). Here we come to another term that exists in the modern Serbian language, but its meaning differs significantly, it is the actor. This term in the middle Ages basically means entertainer in the broadest sense of the word (LSSV, 1999, 117); to that we would add that, in the simplest terms, it meant every participant in the events in the theater. It is not only performances performed by professional or amateur actors, but also all other games, whether they are entertaining or competitive in nature, such as horse and foot races, duels or animal fights. A player whose etymology is completely clear appears as a synonym for an actor. In addition, there are other terms with a narrower meaning and which are more intended to denote an actor whose role is similar to today's actor. These terms are *špilman* - it comes from the German language, but it was noticed very early in Serbian, as well as *skomrah*, which is found in Russian. This does not exhaust the terms for the entertainer in the narrower sense of the word, but we will not list the others because they unnecessarily distract us from the given topic.

From a semantic point of view, the terms play and theater are intertwined when it is assumed that play is a social activity, ie a scene intended for the views of others. Therefore, it is not unusual when medieval texts note that horse races take place in the theater.

It should be pointed out that in addition to these meanings, attention and theater have others, and they were used to denote punishments and the place where they were executed. These were public humiliations, tortures, executions, as well as the place where they were carried out.

Events, ie. the scenes, in addition to the theater, took place on the playground or, as the *Nomocanon* collectively states, the playgrounds. Playgrounds are a place where there are more theaters, that is, as we would say today, more stages where events take place. Medieval sources are often used as synonyms for sight and play for an event, happening, as well as theater and playground for the space where games are played - sports or any other without a clear distinction (Bojanin, 2005, 244-246). Although medieval texts usually do not distinguish terminologically between the game in the narrow sense and the competition, it can still be noticed, although rarely. So for the game, ie. the play was performed without a competitive character by the theater, while the competition, ie. competition used the term *horse uristanije* or *horse uristanija*, which translated into modern language means - horse racing.

## **A REFLECTION OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES IN MEDIEVAL SERBIA**

It is important to know that Serbian writers of the middle Ages knew about the existence of the Olympic Games, which are often called the Olympic Theater (Trifunović, 1995, 311). A writer from medieval Smederevo, whose name is not

known to us, noted the disciplines that were present at the Olympic Games. Based on the terminology used, we come to the conclusion that the mentioned sports disciplines were from the Middle Ages and that the list shows those games that were practiced at that time. According to him, there were five groups of games:

1. Poetry
2. Fighting (armed)
3. Racing: competition in running and trotting races
4. Jumping
5. Stone throwing.

## **SPORTS (COMPETITIVE) GAMES**

Sports competitions in medieval Serbia were diverse, and we will only look at those that left their mark in written sources, which, unfortunately, are quite few. The main thing that characterizes these games is competition. On them, the competitors showed their skill and strength. The origin of the games in Serbia is various, but we can basically say that some of the games were brought by Serbs, and some were accepted by their neighbors. As they were at the crossroads of east and west, the influences came from these two directions.

The most popular and most represented sports games in Serbia were:

- Racing
- Taking off gloves,
- Tournament, and
- Shooting.

Racing was one of the favorite sports competitions. The competitions took place in a free space which was called the starting point after the competition (LSSV, 1999, 84). The name of the space comes from the Old Serbian verb *potešti*, which means to run, race or run (Miklosich, 1862–1865, 644).

Serbian sources most often mention three speed competitions: horse races, trotting races and pedestrian races, ie running.

The central place for holding these activities in Constantinople, so we can say in the entire civilized world, was the Hippodrome. There is no such sports field in Serbia, but it is known that on the outskirts of Pristina, as well as in Novo Brdo, there was a space where such competitions took place (Zarkovic, Gasic, 2020, 259). They were the two largest cities in Serbia in the second half of the 14th and the first half of the 15th century. The circular terrain where the competitions took place was called *kolo*.

Serbian medieval sources call racing *uriskanije* or *uristanije*, and horse racing horses' *uriskanije* / *uristanije*. In Serbia, it was known that the races in Constantinople took place at the Hippodrome, which entered the Serbian language as a racetrack or basement (Bojanin, 2005, 344-345).

Although the races were often fun and competitive, it should be said that there was a division in them that reflected social status. Not all strata of Serbian, and medieval society in general, participated in all the races. Only the upper classes of society, i.e. those who owned horses could take part in horse races. Eventually, the Vlachs could afford that, i.e. dependent population engaged in animal husbandry. Dependent rural population engaged in agriculture was not able to participate in these races, but they competed in walking races, throwing stones, singing, competing in dancing, and even archery. emphasize that participation in races most likely meant showing (military) skills in handling weapons, which distinguishes them from modern games.

## REMOVING GLOVES - RINGS

One of the favorite games in urban centers of Serbia was removing gloves (rings). This competition consisted of the following: the competitors ran from one end of the field on horseback, with a long spear in their hands. At the other end of the field, on a wooden stake, hung a glove that the competitors had to take off at full speed. This game is very reminiscent of the demolition of the ring, which is still practiced in Dalmatia, in the city of Sinj (the so-called Sinjska ring). This game is held in Sinj every year as part of the victory over the Turks in 1715. The game has been on the UNESCO list of intangible world heritage in Europe since 2010.<sup>2</sup>

Historical sources note that this game was also practiced in Pristina and that the competition took place in a field called Poteciste. The games took place every year at Christmas. In 1435, there was a conflict between the competitors who pulled out their weapons as well. There were a lot of local and foreign merchants in the field, nobles and commoners, who followed the competition and actively cheered for their favorites.

A similar game was played in Byzantium, an example from Constantinople was recorded in 1430. The game was partially different from the one in Serbia and the cities of the Littoral, because the riders used poles instead of spears, which hit the board attached to the stake in full swing. Due to the force of the blow, the pole broke and it took the right skill to keep the rider unharmed (Brokijer, 1950, 102-

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<sup>2</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/sinjska-alka-a-knights-tournament-in-sinj-00357>.

103). This game confirms that similar competitions have taken place across the Balkans.

## TOURNAMENT

The next type of sports competition that was recorded throughout Serbia was tournaments. The name of the competition itself comes from Old French, from which, together with the game, it spread to other languages. There were two groups of these competitions:

- tournament, and
- justra.

The tournament was a competition in which two groups of competitors (mostly on horseback) fought among themselves. This term is noted in Old Serbian as *turnai*, and the verb *tornati se* is also noted (LSSV, 1999, 84). Unlike him, *justra* was the same competition, but in which two individuals participate, who can be on horseback or on foot. In order to prevent injuring and endangering the lives of the participants, blunt weapons were used, without a tip, or a hollow spear that was easier to break. All this shows that the intention of the participants was a spectacle, not a real fight.

The writer Mavro Orbin in his work *Il Regno degli Slavi*, published in Pesaro in 1601. It is written that tournaments were regularly held at the court of Tsar Dušan and that he rewarded the winners (Orbin, 2006, 34). Tournaments, both group and individual, have been held in other places, primarily in cities such as Kotor (Bojanin, 2005, 355).

Tournaments were also held at the court of the despot Stefan Lazarević, who was a member of the Knights of the Order of the Dragon, formed at the Hungarian court (Antonović, 1990–1992, 15–23). The participants in the tournament at the Serbian court proudly pointed out that the despot rewarded them with chivalry (Filozof, 1989, 119).

## ARCHERY

Archery was widespread in the middle Ages, as it was a period of armed men. This type of competition, unlike horse racing, was practiced by a wide range of people. They competed in archery and crossbow shooting.

Shooting was a sport, but also an obligation. Addicted people were obliged to practice shooting, which was necessary for the defense of the country. Accidents also happened at such parties. In the first half of the 13th century, a tragic case was recorded during such a competition in the vicinity of Prosek in the Vardar

Valley. Namely, then a certain shepherd named Dragan mistakenly killed his son by hitting him with an arrow, when the unfortunate young man was already on his way to pick up the previously fired arrows (Bojanin, 2005, 363).

In order to be as qualified as possible, shooting competitions with both hands took place alternately, and the place where these competitions took place and where people had fun was called the shooting range.

During the middle Ages, the shooting competition in Serbian, as well as in Latin and Greek, was called igra. Since there were several games, they differed by talking about throwing (Old Serbian - vrgnet) different things. An arrow, a tree, a stick, a stone were thrown. The stick could have been made of metal, and in that case it was shooting with a mace, or wooden when thinking of a similar device, only made of wood - a pole, a mallet or similar. The list of targets shows that they were various weapons and that it was a test of ability in certain war skills during the period of peace.

## **KNIGHTHOOD**

Knighthood was a way of life that originated in the middle Ages, which is why this period is sometimes called the Age of Knighthood (Chivalry) (Bloch, 1993, 135). The features and characteristics of chivalry were created gradually, accepting the changes brought by time. Knighthood as a phenomenon is not only related to war, games and sports, but refers to the entire life, encompassing all its pores (Gračev, 2006). It was a moral code of conduct long before knights in Western Europe were formed as a class. It is significant that sports activities, which in the Middle Ages were strongly and directly related to military exercises, influenced the formation and behavior of knights. It is clear that without their participation, there would be no tournaments and riots. Their participation influenced such games to be called knightly and to be, somewhat unjustifiably, brought into exclusive contact with knights. Examples of sports competitions in Serbia show that not only the aristocracy, but also the ordinary population participated in the competitions and what followed them. We played knight games elsewhere (Zarković, Gašić, 2020, 253–260), so we will not repeat ourselves here.

## **PLACE AND TIME**

Sports events took place in different, designated places. Those places were named differently in accordance with the competition. We have already mentioned that the place in Pristina where competitions in taking off gloves and races took place was called Poteciste. The gathering place where numerous games took place was called the playground. There is a village near Kursumlija called by

that name. As the village is on the eastern slopes of Kopaonik, it is most likely that numerous miners from this ore-bearing mountain gathered in that area and competed in sports games. The shooting range was an area where people competed in archery. It was a place where, in addition to competitions, people gathered for entertainment and socializing.

Various games, including sports competitions, took place in church and monastery gates, at ceremonies called fairs in the Middle Ages. These ceremonies were on the occasion of the monastery's glory and included events much wider than the sports competition. Parties with sports competitions also took place at fairs (fairs) organized by rulers and high dignitaries. Competitions as a form of entertainment are organized both in cities and villages.

Sports competitions, especially the big ones, took place on the occasion of important days, whether they were church holidays that were repeated every year, or they were days on the occasion of celebrating certain events: the birth of a child, wedding, victory, accession to the throne and the like.

## EPILOGUE

Sports competitions in medieval Serbia were an important part of the everyday life of the entire population, both the free - the nobility, and the dependent peasantry. The number of games is significantly lower compared to the ancient period, which is the result of the opposition of the church.

During the middle Ages, sports were especially appreciated and practiced, which could be used as part of martial arts. Their practice was, at the same time, training for the war. Therefore, most of the sports activities, in addition to entertainment, were also an obligation. Their role models were holy warriors, who were represented on frescoes and icons in all churches. This way of life led to the formation of a specific code of conduct called chivalry.

The fact that the rulers also actively participated in sports events and competitions shows that they have been prepared for these activities since childhood, ie. that during their upbringing, essential attention was paid to physical education. The example of the ruler was followed by others, especially aristocratic classes.

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## СПОРТ, ИГРЕ И ВИТЕШТВО У СРЕДЊОВЕКОВНОЈ СРБИЈИ

### САЖЕТАК

Спортске игре одржаване током антике биле су важан чинилац који је утицао на целокупни друштвени живот. Током највећих спортских манифестација – олимпијских игара, престајала су сва непријатељства, чак и ратни сукоби, а победници су сматрани равни боговима. Иако се развио на темељима грчке културе и римског државног уређења, средњи век је, под утицајем хришћанства, забранио олимпијске игре сматрајући их паганским реликтом, па је и већина спортова постала непожељна. Томе је допринела и најезда варвара која је рушила остатке старог друштва. Ипак, све спортске активности нису замрле – одржале су се оне које су биле у вези са свакодневним делатностима, са борбом и ратовањем. Српска средњовековна држава настала је на простору између Византије и Западне Европе и била је изложена утицајима са обе стране, са истока и са запада. Ти утицаји су присутни и на пољу спорта, игара и витештва, а путеви којима су долазили разноврсни су и повезани са путовањима и мешањем становништва. Источни утицаји долазили су из византијских градова у окружењу, а западни преко Западнака који су живели и радили у Србији: рудара (Саса), трговаца и занатлија из Приморја, као и најамничких војничких одреда ангажованих од стране владара. Спортске активности, игре и витешка надметања у средњовековној Србији повезани су са другим друштвеним дешавањима и

срећу се у мешовитим срединама, каква су била урбана насеља, као и на окупљањима при поједним верским објектима. Окупљања у градовима су повезана са одржавањем трговачких вашара и сајмова, а при манастирима и црквама са верским светковинама. О спортским активностима сведочи сачуван ономастички материјал: игриште, потетиште, стрелиште и други. Спортске активности и витешка надметања била су такмичарског карактера, док су игре биле у циљу забаве. У раду се говори о присуству спортских активности, игара и витештва у средњовековној Србији, њиховом пореклу, местима одржавања и друштвеном значају.

**Кључне речи:** Србија, средњи век, спорт, игре, витештво, утицаји, сајмови и вашари, светковине, градови.

## СПОРТ, ИГРЫ И РЫЦАРСКИЕ ТУРНИРЫ В СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ СЕРБИИ

### АННОТАЦИЯ

Спортивные игры, проводимые в древности, были важным фактором, влиявшим на всю общественную жизнь эпохи. Во время величайших спортивных событий, таких как Олимпийские игры, прекращались все военные действия и военные конфликты, а победители игр приравнялись к богам. Несмотря на то, что в средние века Олимпийские игры развивались на основе греческой культуры и римского государства, они были запрещены христианством и считались языческим пережитком, что привело к вытеснению большинства видов спорта. Вторжение варваров, уничтоживших остатки старого общества, ускорило этот процесс. Тем не менее, не все виды спорта исчезли. Те, которые были связаны с повседневной деятельностью, борьбой и войной, продолжали развиваться. Сербское средневековое государство возникло на территории между Византией и Западной Европой и находилось под влиянием обеих сторон, как Востока, так и Запада. Это проявлялось в спорте, играх и рыцарских соревнованиях. Однако влияние прослеживалось и в кочевом образе жизни, и обуславливало смешение населения. Так, восточное влияние шло из соседних византийских городов, а западное – от западных жителей: саксов – саксонских шахтеров, которые работали и жили в Сербии, купцов и ремесленников из прибрежного региона, а также наемных военных отрядов, нанятых правителями. Спортивные мероприятия, игры и рыцарские состязания в средневековой Сербии были связаны с другими общественными событиями, которые были характерны для городских поселений, а также для мероприятий, проводившихся у определенных культовых сооружений. Многолюдные мероприятия в городах были связаны с организацией ярмарок и торговых выставок, а в монастырях и церквях – с религиозными праздниками, которые проводились почти каждый день. Сохранившиеся ономастические материалы свидетельствуют о спортивных мероприятиях: игриште (арена), потетиште (стартовая площадка), стрелиште (стрельбище) и др. Спортивные мероприятия и рыцарские состязания носили соревновательный характер, в то время как

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игры проводились в развлекательных целях. В статье рассматриваются спортивные занятия, игры и рыцарские турниры средневековой Сербии, их происхождение, места проведения и социальное значение.

**Ключевые слова:** Сербия, средневековье, спорт, игры, рыцарство, влияние, ярмарки, фестивали, города

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