

CultureTalk Bosnia and Herzegovina Video Transcripts:  
<http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>  
**The Charter of Ban Kulin**

**Bosnian transcript in Latin:**

I ono što je karakteristično za Bosance bilo, je to da, na primjer, sve svete knjige su prevedene mnogo prije nego što je to bilo u zapadnoj Evropi; prevedene na narodni jezik. Danas je praktično 822 godine od Povelje Kulina Bana. Povelja k'o povelja – to je trgovački ugovor između Bosne i Hercegovine i Dubrovačke Republike. Ali ono što je karakteristično za to vrijeme je to da je povelja napisana na narodnom jeziku. Ako uzmemo kompletnu Evropu, onda ćemo vidjeti da takve stvari uglavnom su bile ili na latinskom, ili na grčkom; na narodnim jezicima ne. Bosanci su zbog toga ponosni na to, jer u 12. vijeku praktično – to bi trebalo provjeriti – je to prva stvar, prvi ugovor na narodnom jeziku u Evropi. Dakle, naš Hamurabijev zakon.

**Bosnian transcript in Cyrillic:**

И оно што је карактеристично за Босанце било, је то да, на примјер, све свете књиге су преведене много прије него што је то било у западној Европи; преведене на народни језик. Данас је практично 822 године од Повеље Кулина Бана. Повеља к'о повеља – то је трговачки уговор између Босне и Херцеговине и Дубровачке Републике. Али оно што је карактеристично за то вријеме је то да је повеља написана на народном језику. Ако узмемо комплетну Европу, онда ћемо видјети да такве ствари углавном су биле или на латинском, или на грчком; на народним језицима не. Босанци су због тога поносни на то, јер у 12. вијеку практично – то би требало провјерити – је то прва ствар, први уговор на народном језику у Европи. Дакле, наш Хамурабијев закон.

**English translation:**

What was typical for Bosnians was that, for example, all holy books were translated much earlier than in Western Europe; translated to the national language, I mean. It's been 822 years since the Charter of Ban Kulin. It was a charter like any other – a trade agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>1</sup> and the Republic of Dubrovnik<sup>2</sup>. However, it was unique for those times because it was written in national language. If we take a

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<sup>1</sup> The speaker here refers to The Bosnian Kingdom. The Kingdom of Bosnia or the Bosnian Kingdom was one of the medieval kingdoms of the Balkans, existing between 1377 and 1463, and it did include the entire territory of Herzegovina. However, it did not contain “Herzegovina” in its name.

<sup>2</sup> The Republic of Dubrovnik was a maritime republic centered on the city of Dubrovnik (Ragusa in Italian and Latin) in Dalmatia (today in southernmost modern Croatia), that existed from 1358 to 1808. The Republic of Dubrovnik was an important trading post throughout its existence.

look at all of Europe, we'll notice that those documents were written mostly either in Latin or Greek and not in national languages. Bosnians are particularly proud of it, because – and this needs to be checked – back in the 12th century it was the first document, first contract in any national language of Europe<sup>3</sup>. So, it's our own Hammurabi's Code<sup>4</sup>. [laughter]

**About CultureTalk:** CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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<sup>3</sup> Although this is sometimes claimed by Bosnian-Herzegovinian historians, it is not fully accurate, as there were documents written in Old Church Slavonic prior to this date. However, since Old Church Slavonic is considered primarily a church language, the Charter of Ban Kulin is one of the first legal documents written in a national language that is not associated with any church in Europe.

<sup>4</sup> The Code of Hammurabi is a well-preserved Babylonian law code, dating to ca. 1780 BC. It is one of the oldest deciphered writings of significant length in the world. The Code consists of 282 laws with scaled punishments.