

BYZANTINE HERITAGE AND SERBIAN ART |



PROCESSES OF BYZANTINISATION
AND SERBIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

BYZANTINE HERITAGE AND SERBIAN ART I



BYZANTINE HERITAGE AND SERBIAN ART I-III

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PROCESSES OF BYZANTINISATION AND SERBIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

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This book is an endeavour – on the occasion of the 23rd International (World) Congress of Byzantologists in Belgrade on August 22nd – 27th, 2016 to offer a comprehensive, analytic, and synthetic overview of Byzantium's influence on Serbian culture of the medieval period, and of the times that followed it. It deals not only with the Byzantine models for their own sake, but also with their creative adaptation to Serbian needs – the basic idea being to present the true results of the union of adopted Byzantine and indigenous Serbian traditions, and the cultural influences of the West.

As much as this topic is familiar to connoisseurs of history, the importance of the occasion demanded that it be fully researched in an unprecedented manner, with scholars of all generations taking part. A large team of

researchers responded to the challenge of accomplishing such a goal. It is our singular pleasure to observe that not one of the crucial themes has remained untouched.

Unfortunately, a set of circumstances has arisen, preventing the initial idea of the Congress organisers from setting up exhibitions that would visually and materially support this collection of papers.

It is therefore essential that all the papers presented herein be as relevant and as complete in content, as lively in expression, and as persuasive in argument, as possible. If this collection has attained such excellence, the praise goes to its numerous authors of all specialties, as well as to its editors – both groups having jointly invested an enormous effort and knowledge to bring this endeavour to successful fruition.

Ljubomir Maksimović

PREFACE

The reception of the Byzantine legacy in European culture from early times through to the contemporary period is a phenomenon of great complexity and multiple connotations if only for the fact that the very term *Byzantinism* carries different meanings depending on different historical perspectives and ideological standpoints. Millennium-long Byzantine civilisation has bequeathed the world a legacy that transcends centuries and nations – a distinctive spirituality, a living liturgical and monastic tradition, and art works of timeless beauty.

This legacy has a particular importance and meaning in the regions or countries that used to be part of the Byzantine commonwealth. A sense of belonging to its civilisation and of spiritual kinship with it has been strongly present in Serbia as well, finding its point of support in the Orthodox faith and the distinctive worldview that proceeds from it, in historical memory, and in myths that have, over time, become part of common consciousness. It has also been inspired by the fact that the Byzantine legacy has profoundly permeated the everyday surroundings and life of the Serbs – through liturgical worship and music, architecture, and painting; and it has always been maintained and strengthened by the presence of authentic medieval monuments that form an integral part of the local cultural landscape. To the Serbs, therefore, the Byzantine legacy is not merely a living tradition, it is perceived as the backbone of their identity and as something of a ‘national patrimony’.

Historically, however, Serbian attitudes towards the cultural legacy of the Byzantine Empire have not been unequivocal and linear. Although essentially keeping an upward course, they have always remained very complex and subject to change. Their nature and dynamics through the centuries have been determined by a number of factors, most of all by powerful influences of other

cultural patterns, West European in particular, but also by the Serbs’ marked tendency to make use of the medium of art in building and asserting their individuality both as a people and in ecclesiastical and state terms. The main purpose of this three-volume publication therefore is to present the creative interactions of Serbian art with the Byzantine cultural legacy in the historical and phenomenal framework of its development over more than twelve centuries. We believe that such a broad historical-phenomenological approach is the only meaningful one. Only such an approach can hope to lead us to truly understanding the paths, dynamics, nature and outcomes of those interactions, without failing to provide an at least summary reconstruction of the geopolitical circumstances in which that cultural exchange was taking place and which also involved West-European and Ottoman civilisations. Understandably, the desired breadth of approach could not be achieved without the participation of many prominent experts specialising in different periods and aspects of Serbian art, who readily agreed to join this complex and challenging cooperative effort. They based their contributions on the current state of understanding of the defined research problems. The result is a composite publication which may be read both as a history of Serbian art in the key of one of its pivotal phenomena and as a manual which, perused with ample further reading listed, elucidates a number of more narrowly defined topics. The reason for dividing it into three volumes has been the sheer span of time involved and the highly diversified nature of the subject matter.

Volume I is presenting the material cultural heritage based on the archaeological record and against the background of political ideology, military and ecclesiastical organisation, and economic activity. The complex processes of getting Byzantine “models” in medieval Serbia are viewed in the light of representative archaeological

sites of various types – fortresses, settlements, monastic complexes – of trade flows and practices, and of the artisanal and craft production processes. The reception of Byzantine patterns, which directly depended on the nature and dynamics of Byzantine-Serbian relations in different periods, played a very important role, but it did not act as an obstacle to stylistic influences of Central-European Romanesque and Gothic art or of the subsequent Islamic tradition of Asia Minor.

Constant exposure to impulses from various cultural spheres – predominantly Byzantine but also West European, mainly Roman Catholic – resulting from frequent change of state territory and political status, determined the character of Serbian religious art in its glorious medieval period, which is the focus of Volume II. During the middle ages, the Serbs established an autochthonous ideological vertical that made it possible for them to draw from traditions of different civilisations in building their own identity. At the core of that ideology were the concepts of the holy dynasty and the holiness of the national church, which received their very learned and thorough elaboration in literature and the visual arts. The defining features of medieval Serbian religious art did not amount to stylistic and typological borrowings, mainly from Byzantium, but rather, they stemmed from this carefully built ideological foundation, resulting in outstanding monuments which constitute a unique and distinct phenomenon in medieval European culture. The resilience and creative power of this tradition are compellingly demonstrated by the art and literature which, founded on medieval tenets, were cultivated under the auspices of the restored Patriarchate of Peć in the period of Ottoman rule.

A fundamentally different living environment in the modern period and the adoption of different cultural models decisively influenced the attitude towards the Byzantine legacy. The complex question of its recognition, reception and interpretation in the period from the 18th century to the present day is the focus of Volume III. The manifestations and functions of the Byzantine artistic pattern during that time varied greatly from period to

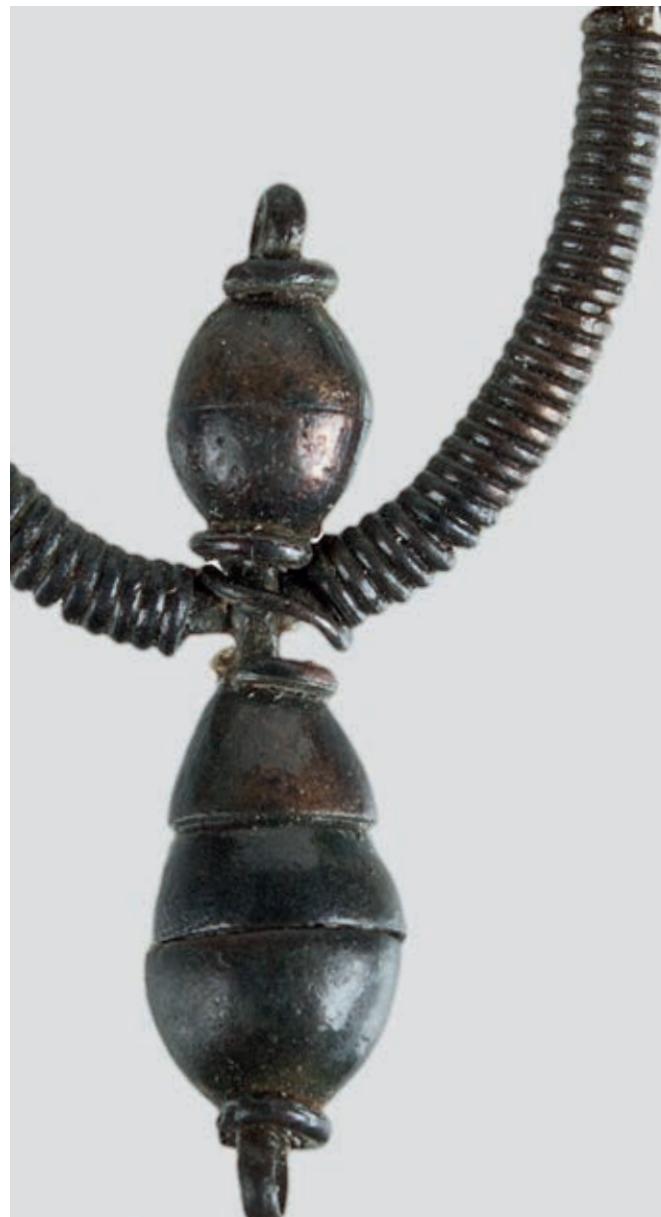
period. In the 18th century the awareness of the Byzantine legacy all but vanished, becoming submerged in the idea of the Serbian middle ages as a factor of relevance to the political status of the Serbs. Continuity with the epoch perceived as the golden age of national history was therefore purposely emphasised. The interpretation and uses of the medieval tradition were in the service of state-building ideas and a national programme at the time of the creation of the modern Serbian state in the 19th century as well. Within the dominant culture of historicism, the rediscovered Byzantine legacy came to be identified with the Serbian medieval heritage. This constructed tradition lost little of its currency even in the early decades of the 20th century. A programmatic expression of this tendency was the codification of the ‘national’, Serbo-Byzantine style, developed through the medium of a new artistic ideology and language. The modernist artistic interpretation of the middle ages in the second half of the 20th century involved very interesting explorations of the relationship between ‘new’ and ‘old’ art. A particularly creative contribution to the interpretation of the Byzantine artistic idiom was made by postmodernism. Devising a number of methodological matrices and structural solutions mostly based on intertextuality, quotation and appropriation, postmodernism, imagining the middle ages, succeeded in producing a new artistic reality, and a new and original artistic identity.

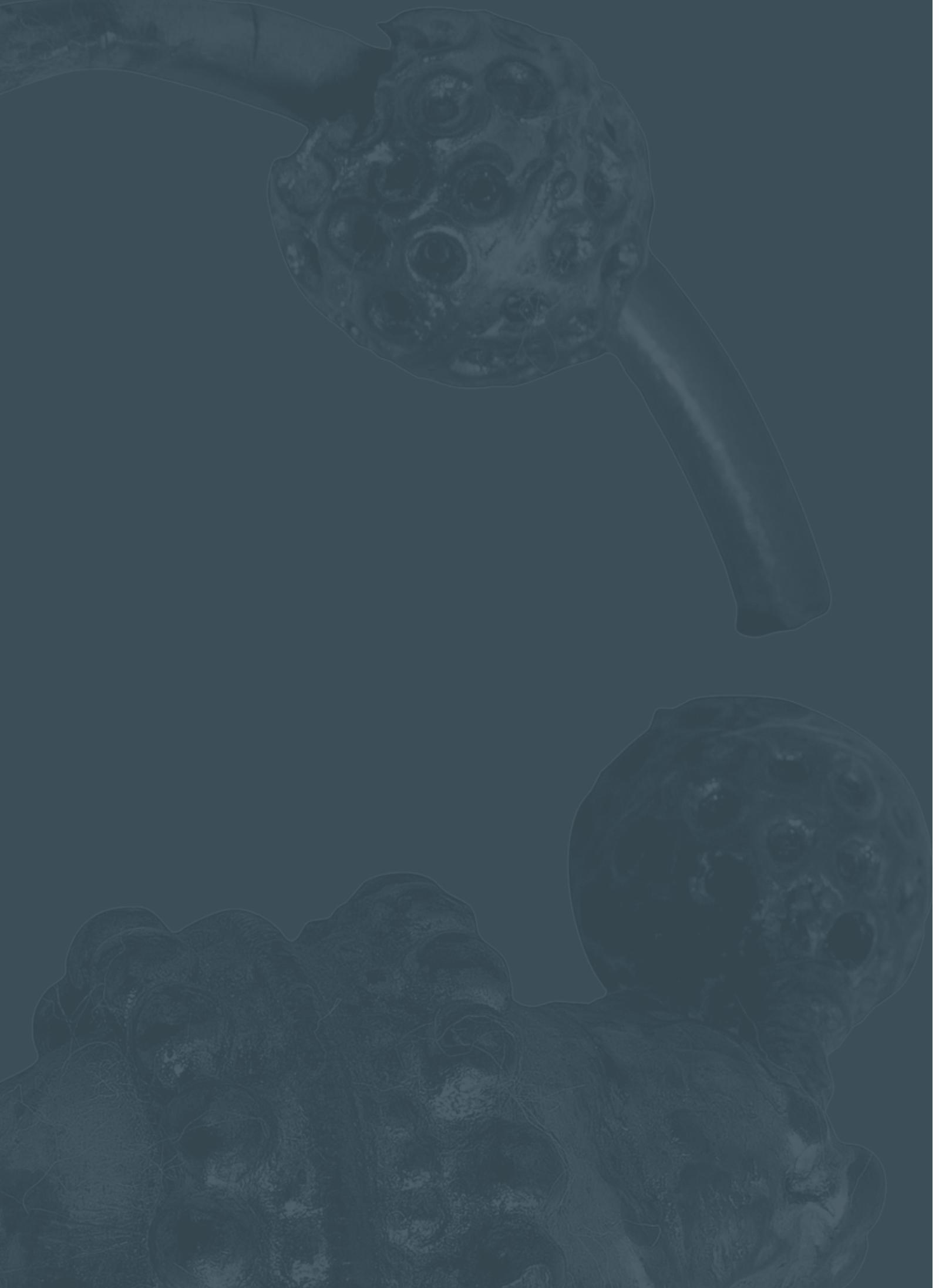
The 23rd International Congress of Byzantine Studies, which has occasioned this three-volume publication, presents a worthy opportunity to remember how significant Byzantine civilisation has been for the Serbs, most notably for their spirituality and art. We hope that thanks to the contributions in all three volumes, this significance will be presented more comprehensively and explained more clearly than before, and that we shall thus repay at least some of our ‘debt to Byzantium’. We also believe that they will help shed more light on the long-standing striving of the Serbs not to be passive users of the achievements of great civilisations, but rather to produce, inspired both by Byzantine and by Western cultural models, a largely new art, an art expressive of their own being and of the changing needs of their society.

Editorial Board



BYZANTINISATION IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT





THE DYNAMICS OF BYZANTINE–SERBIAN POLITICAL RELATIONS

SRĐAN PIRIVATRIĆ

The multilateral relations of the Roman–Byzantine Empire and the Serbs represent a historical frame for the appearance of various archeological monuments within a changeable Serbian historical space which have been attributed to a civilisation, conventionally known as Byzantine. It would be favorable to recall on this occasion that the generally accepted term Byzantium, which was used to denote the Eastern part of the Roman Empire with its capital in Constantinople, was introduced as a ‘terminus technicus’ by West European humanists in the 16th century and that the inhabitants of the millennial Empire never used it themselves in this manner. Apart from the established term Byzantium, ‘a term of convenience when it is not a term of inconvenience’, and its derivatives, the expressions Roman Empire, the Empire of the Romans and related phrases will be used in the text, which on a semantic level authentically reflect its political identity and self-awareness.¹ The purpose of this paper is to present the general lines of development of Byzantine–Serbian political relations, taking into consideration their dynamic component, as an introduction to the chapters that follow, which are dedicated to a more detailed analysis of the archeological aspects of the cultural spreading of Byzantine civilisation, also in its variable space, a spreading that marked the long medieval period in Serbia, with influences that survived in the times which followed. Political relations, complex in their syndromic and synergic nature, due, understandably, to the limited space of the volume, have been constrained to the exposition of the main elements concerning relations between the states and rulers in the field of political practice and political conceptions, as well as to the important events from state and church history. For the same reason, the bibliography has been reduced to

the more recent historiographical production in which older references and the knowledge of previous generations have been incorporated.²

The dynamics of Byzantine–Serbian political relations were, on a more general scale, for the most part determined by the concrete presence of the Roman–Byzantine state or by various expressions of its influence in the area of Illyricum, comprehended in its widest geographical, mainly associative meaning to denote a territory of the first Serbian settlements within the boundaries of the Roman Empire and the most important area of Byzantine–Serbian mutuality, which, in modern terminology, is designated preferably as the Balkans or South-eastern Europe.³ Roughly speaking, the Roman–Byzantine component of these relations depended on the periods of the rise and decline of the Empire, on the rhythm and scope of imperial renewals undertaken from Constantinople. Local social and political development in the areas of the Serbian medieval states was their second interactive component. Nowadays, the relations of these two unequal factors are assessed using diverse source material in which it should be remembered, with some risk of simplifying things, that, within that manifold corpus, narrative sources of Byzantine provenance, more precisely – the works of Constantinopolitan historiography – occupy a central place. In other words, the modern historiographical construction of Byzantine–Serbian relations is mostly dependant on the way in which the Byzantine historians, and partially rhetors, dealt with them in their own time, as well as on our understanding of Constantinopolitan

² For older references cf. especially related chapters in: ICH I-II. For a wider historical context of Byzantine–Serbian relations cf. the still unsurpassed synthesis of Ostrogorsky, *The Byzantine Empire*, which will not be specifically cited.

³ Dagron, *Les villes*, 1–20; Koder, *To Βυζάντιο ως χώρος*, 110–114, 143–150.

¹ Mango, *Introduction*, 2; Kaldellis, *Ethnography After Antiquity*, 106 sq; idem, *The Byzantine Republic*; Haldon, *Res publica Byzantina?*, 4–16.

historiographical, rhetorical and, in general, ethnographic discourse and its Serbian topics. It is understandable that, when it comes to the narrative sources, contemporary Serbian historiography, conceived in the Nemanjić state in the form of hagiography, i. e. a holy history focused on the rulers and archpriests, contained its Byzantine, 'Greek' topic. Needless to say, its meaning in establishing the positive facts about the Byzantine–Serbian past, and foremost in comprehending the way in which the environment of the Serbian rulers created its image of a holy history, can in no way bring into question the conclusion about the predominant significance of Constantinopolitan historiography for all the modern approaches to this and similar topics. Besides, a considerable number of Byzantine narrative sources dealing with Serbian history were translated and commented long ago.⁴ Their significance already becomes clear by looking at the very beginnings of Byzantine–Serbian relations. Present-day notions about these relations are almost completely constructed and based on the well-known Byzantine treatise on neighbouring peoples, compiled by Constantine Porphyrogennetos in the mid-10th century, and partly on other works written in the circles close to the emperor.

The beginnings of Byzantine–Serbian relations are currently accepted as dating from the period of the emperor Heraklios (610–641) and, in the wider historical framework, of the migration of peoples and the struggle of the Roman–Byzantine Empire for survival against many foreign enemies – the Lombards, Avars, Slavs, Persians and Arabs. It was the time of the Empire's internal transformation as a military state that was marked by the gradual development of a system of unified civil–military provincial administration. One should bear in mind that it was also a period when the political predominance of Constantinople, the New Rome, over the Old Rome, as the only imperial capital and the principal bearer of the political tradition of the Roman Empire had already been established. Namely, the rule of Justinian I (527–565) was marked by the emperor's efforts in the renewal of the Empire, in the territorial sense, by conquering those areas in the West, Italy with Rome among others, which had been occupied by various 'barbaric kings'. This was not, however, marked by the renewal of the dual concept established by Theodosios I (379–395) with the division of the Roman Empire into eastern and western parts, with their capitals in the New and the Old Rome, which lasted until the fall of Rome and the rest of the

Western Empire in 476. In the background of this magnificent but rather short-lived restoration of the Empire under Justinian I (527–565), the attacks by the Slavs on the territory of Roman Illyricum, undertaken either independently or under the leadership of the Avars, were becoming more frequent. In the time of Heraklios' heirs, especially the emperor Phokas (602–610), the Slavs began to settle in that area. They represented, together with the Romanised inhabitants of the prefecture of Illyricum, an ethnic substratum the Serbs encountered when, according to the data from the said later tradition, they started settling in the Roman province of Dalmatia on the orders of the emperor Heraklios, provided that they perform military duties.⁵

The Serbs, therefore, found themselves, on the one hand, in the sphere of the power and political influence of the Roman emperor whose capital was the City of Constantine – the New Rome – whereas, on the other hand, they were in the territory belonging to the church diocese of Illyricum, in the sphere of the theoretical church jurisdiction of the Pope, the archbishop of the Old Rome, whose political influence, stemming from his religious authority, was at its mere beginnings. In the time when he settled the Serbs in Late Roman Dalmatia, following the kind of pattern applied in the times when this involved the inclusion of the barbaric rulers and peoples in the Byzantine civilisational sphere, the emperor undertook the conversion of the Serbs to Christianity, which was performed by the clergy from Rome, an act most probably limited to the ruler and his circle. The decline of the Roman–Byzantine Empire during the next two centuries, followed by a considerable reduction of state territory, its focus on the battle for survival in the face of the military threat brought on by the emergence of Islam and the foundation of the Caliphate, as well as internal struggles in the Church and state, caused by the Iconoclastic movement, led to the Serbs practically disappearing from the Constantinopolitan perception. Finally, the expansion of Bulgaria to the West during the first half of the 9th century reduced the Byzantine–Serbian zone of contact to the Adriatic coast. After the creation of the Frankish Roman Empire in 800, the imperial ideology of the New Rome was challenged by the papal interpretation of the Byzantine Roman Empire as the 'Greek

⁴ ВИИНЈ I–IV, VI.

⁵ ИЧН I, 109–124 (Ј. Ковачевић), 141–155 (С. Ђирковић); Ferjančić, *Invasions et installations des Slaves*, 85–109; Живковић Т., Јужни Словени, 271–314; Curta, Southeastern Europe; Živković, *De conversione Croatorum et Serborum*.



Fig. 1. Map, Byzantium and the Serbian lands, around the year 950

Empire' during the second half of the century.⁶ Imperial ideology would constantly be present on the Eastern Adriatic coast and in its hinterland and, in this respect, the maritime bishoprics must have played a certain role.

The rise of Byzantine power, which commenced after the restoration of the cult of icons in 843, in the time of the emperors Michael III (842–867) and especially Basil I (867–886), paved the way for strengthening direct

imperial power over a significant part of the Eastern Adriatic coast, where the rest of the possessions were re-organised into a separate administrative unit – the Byzantine theme of Dalmatia. The same process enabled the penetration of more powerful Byzantine influences in the Serbian regions – in the hinterland, the continental area of Late Roman Dalmatia, most of which was governed by Serbian princes, along with part of the coast and some islands. The most important political–geographical units, as an area of the early Serbian ethnogenesis, had already been created by that time, which, depending on the case,

⁶ Louughn, 'Begrenzten Ökumene', 117–128; Nehrlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften*.



Fig. 2. The Chronicle of Skylitzes, 'Driving the Romans into a gorge, the Serbs pursue and kill them', National Library, Madrid

represented a more or less important factor of Byzantine-Serbian relations – Serbia with Bosnia, Zachlumia, Travunia and Diocletia, as well as the unstable areas of Konavle and Neretva. The Empire's political influence was, from the time of Basil I, reflected in the special relations of the Serbian princes and the Byzantine maritime cities, which paid to them an annual tribute. The new stage of the evangelisation and Christianisation of Serbia is linked to his rule, performed by priests from the Coast, an area under the temporary jurisdiction of Constantinople, but otherwise in the traditional region under the jurisdiction of Old Rome.⁷

The rise of Byzantine political influence on Serbia was checked and even ended with the onset of the Byzantine-Bulgarian wars (894–927) in the time of Leo VI (886–912), Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos (913–959) and Romanos I Lakapenos (920–944) on one side, and the Bulgarian khan, prince and later emperor Simeon

(893–927), on the other. The rulers of both states fought over which of them would have more influence on Serbia by overthrowing and appointing their own protégés, who would then often change sides themselves. By concluding a peace with Bulgaria in 927, the ground was laid for the renewal of Serbia, devastated several years earlier in one of Emperor Simeon's campaigns, and with the help Emperor Romanos Lakapenos gave to Prince Časlav, he was confirmed as the ruler of Serbia (fig. 1). The nature of the political relationship of the Empire and Serbia is summed up in the typical terms of the Byzantine ideological vocabulary – the Serbian archon was perceived as a 'servant', to whom the emperor of the Romans, in official correspondence, sent 'orders'. A number of prominent rulers became the emperor's courtiers – Prince Michael of Zachlumia, once an ally of the Bulgarian ruler, received from the capital the exalted titles of anthypathos and patrikios.⁸ After the conquest of Bulgaria in 971 and the creation of the Katepanate in Ras, in the border zone towards Serbia, and all of this at the beginning of John I

⁷ ИСН I, 147–155 (С. Ђирковић); Максимовић, *Покришавање Срба и Хрвата*, 155–174; Живковић Т., *Јужни Словени*, 341–444; idem, *Црквена организација*, 73–84; Коматина П., *Црквена историја*, 261–285.

⁸ ИСН I, 156–168 (С. Ђирковић); Живковић Т., *Јужни Словени*, 341–424; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 18–46.

Tzimiskes' reign (969–976), an epoch of even stronger imperial influences could be expected in the Dalmatian hinterland. However, the uprising of the so-called kometopouloi in the region of Prespa and Ohrid, which broke out immediately after the sudden death of the emperor at the beginning of 976, as well as the restoration of the destroyed Bulgarian Empire, symbolised by the coronation of Samuil as emperor in 997, heralded a period of crisis of Byzantine power in the greater part of the Balkans, during the next few decades. Direct Byzantine power in Ras ended, as it seems, with a local coup immediately after the emperor's death. Emperor Basil II (976–1025) received a Serbian embassy during the wars with the Bulgarians, which can only be assumed to have come directly from Serbia and not from some other Serbian principality. Viewed on the whole, Serbia had once again disappeared from the Constantinopolitan sphere of interest during the Byzantine–Bulgarian wars (976–1018). Meanwhile, a rise in regional importance began for Diocletia – a principality governed by the offspring of the Serbian dynasty from Travunia, sometime from the half of the 10th century. The emperor Samuil was able to seize control of Diocletia during one of his military campaigns, which he consolidated with his daughter's marriage to Prince Vladimir. The final Byzantine conquest of Bulgaria in 1018 opened an epoch of increasing Byzantine power in the Balkans.⁹

At the beginning of Basil's political reconstruction of the Balkans after 1018, the imperial plans regarding the said areas, as far as one can judge, for the most part, remained identical. Attempts were made to include them in the imperial state organism, i. e. in the thematic administrative system. The katepanate of Bulgaria was founded, with its centre in Skopje, as well as the themes of Diocletia and Serbia, whose position is still debatable in scholarly circles (In short, one may assume that the term Serbia, in different sources from 10th to 12th century including the writings of Constantine Porphyrogennetos, in political terms refer to the same area, with certain changes of the territorial scope). It soon became manifest that the survival of Byzantine officials was impossible in Diocletia, Serbia, Travunia and Zachlumia and that the Empire was forced to rely on the local aristocracy in order to preserve its predominant position, therefore it included them in the system

of the state administration and virtual imperial court. A certain Ljutovid was a hypatos and strategos of Serbia and Zachlumia in 1039, and he took part in the unsuccessful suppression of an uprising led by Prince Stefan Vojislav (Dobroslav), who by 1042 had taken control of Diocletia, Serbia, Travunia and Zachlumia (fig. 2), while his son Michael was shortly afterwards acknowledged as a 'friend and ally' of the emperor, who awarded him the court title of protospatarios. The semi-dependent, i. e. semi-independent position of the Serbian rulers, as seen from the capital made them an almost equal factor of the Empire's internal and foreign policies. During the years from 1019–1020, Basil II took considerable steps in terms of church reorganisation, by establishing the boundaries of the archbishopric of Bulgaria with its seat in Ohrid, whose jurisdiction included the bishopric of Ras as its westernmost see. Also, in 1024, the emperor sent a proposal to the Pope for a consensual demarcation of the jurisdictions of Rome and of Constantinople. The demarcation line left Diocletia in the area of the metropolitan of Dyrrachion, i. e. of the patriarch of Constantinople, whereas Serbia, Zachlumia and Travunia were joined to the archdiocese of Dubrovnik, i. e. the jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome.¹⁰

The consequences of the great division in the Christian world in 1054 for Byzantine–Serbian relations were seen in the strengthening of papal power on the one hand, and, on the other, in the weakening of the Byzantine Empire on all fronts, including in the interior of the Balkans during uprisings and foreign incursions in the period of 1066–1073, as well as in several usurpations during the years of 1078–1081. Diocletia became a kingdom sometime before 1077, and its ruler, Michael, probably received the papal flag, while the bishop of Bar became an archbishop in 1089 within the Roman jurisdiction. Certainly, these circumstances could only have strengthened the mentioned ideological perception of the Constantinopolitan Empire as Greek and not Roman in the territory belonging to the Diocletian rulers. The Empire made attempts to hold onto Bodin of Diocletia as its ally, by recognising his status as king and with the bestowal of the court title of *protosebastos*. However, his inconstancy was especially manifested during the Norman campaign on Dyrrachion and the operations in its hinterland and,

⁹ Пириватрић, *Самуилова држава*; Живковић Т., *Јужни Словени*, 424–444; Krsmanović, *The Byzantine Province in Change*, 128–145, 191–210.

¹⁰ Максимовић, *Организација византијске власничи*, 31–44; Коматина П., *Србија и Дукља*, 159–186; Крсмановић, *О односу управне и црквене организације*, 17–39; Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, 77–79, 117–135; Pirivatić, *Between Constantinople, Rome and Ohrid*, 655–664; Коматина И., *Црква и држава*, 91–132.

after the withdrawal of the Norman troops from the east coast of the Adriatic sea, Bodin conquered the territory of Ras, as well as Bosnia, sometime around 1085. As it would emerge, this conquest had important consequences. Ras was an episcopal seat of Byzantium, which was, in all probability, included in the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic cathedral in Bar, at that time.¹¹

The Byzantine emperor, Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118) sought, either through his *doux* in Dyrrachion or with the campaigns he himself led, to establish control over the Serbian territories, i. e. of Bodin and Vukan, whom the king of Diocletia had appointed as the local ruler in Raška. As master of Serbia, with Raška as its central region, Vukan conducted a series of military campaigns in the territories within the Byzantine Empire, encompassing Lipljan, Vranje and the city of Skopje. The conflicts ended with the meeting of Emperor Alexios Komnenos and Župan Vukan in 1094, with the acknowledgment of Byzantine supreme power, the dispatching of Serbian hostages to Constantinople and with the demarcation of the boundaries. This, too, must have brought to an end the previously established model of political relations between Diocletia and Serbia. The Byzantine emperor was the supreme lord of both states and his sovereign rights extended to choosing or confirming the heirs of the two rulers. This was accomplished in Diocletia, first of all, by temporarily taking Bodin captive, and later in military campaigns, one of which was led by the future emperor John Komnenos, but it is not certain whether Byzantine forces were permanently garrisoned in the region.

On the other hand, sometime at the beginning of his reign, around 1122, Emperor John II Komnenos (1118–1143) brought Ras back into the fold of the Empire and the Ohrid Archbishopric, and left a Byzantine garrison in the area. This enabled the Byzantine bishop in Ras to exert an influence on local circumstances, depending conceivably, on the Byzantine military presence, as well as on the nature of his relations with the local aristocracy. The so-called ‘second baptism’ of the future grand župan, i. e. the anointment of Stefan Nemanja in his boyhood, which was performed by the then bishop of Ras (fig. 3), is an event that can be dated, with some measure of caution, to the initial years of the new period of the Byzantine presence in that region, and which is probably the earliest known trace of a Byzantine

bishop’s relations with the local ruling family. On a wider scale, the Byzantine influence in Serbia clashed with the influence of Hungary, whose rulers, during the Byzantine–Hungarian conflicts in 1127–1129, 1149–1155 and 1162–1167, incited the Serbian archons on several occasions to rebel against the Emperor, whose vassals they had been.¹² It is not possible to reliably reconstruct the history of the Byzantine military presence in the Raška region during these years. During the conflict of 1127–1129, the Byzantine strategos was driven out of Ras and the grand župan Uroš I married his daughter Jelena to the Hungarian heir to the throne, Bela. After that war, Byzantium managed to return the Serbian ruler to the imperial fold, and made him pledge to supply auxiliary troops for the imperial campaigns. However, it is impossible to determine how long the Byzantine imperial garrison remained in the region of Ras – it is last mentioned in the context of the 1149–1155 war. This was a time when Bosnia was already separated from Serbia, with its own administration and under Hungarian influence, beyond the reach of Byzantine politics.

Apart from the regional context of Byzantine–Hungarian relations, from the middle of the 12th century Byzantine–Serbian relations also unfolded within the wider, universal context, marked by the universalist aspirations of the rulers of the two Roman Empires – the Byzantine and the German. The fact that the successors of Uroš to the throne of the grand župan, his sons Uroš II, Beloš and Desa, were uncles of several Hungarian kings, was a special challenge to Byzantine politics. Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) in the course of ten years, approximately between 1155 and 1165, arrested Uroš’s branch of the ruling family from Serbia and Zachlumia, including Travunia, and promoted the members of Zavida’s lateral branch as rulers – his sons Tihomir, Stracimir, Miroslav and Nemanja. A later trace concerning the granting of ‘imperial dignity’ to Stefan Nemanja is probably just part of a broader set of circumstances, in which the Byzantine emperor promulgated his own authority by promoting the lateral members of a ruling family as local hereditary rulers, who, in return, pledged allegiance to him as their sovereign lord.¹³

¹¹ ИСН I, 180–195 (С. Тирковић); Lešny, *Studia*; Калић, *Црквене јарилке*, 27–53; Коматина И., *Византијска штампала Константина Богдана*, 61–76; Pirivatić, *Between Constantinople, Rome and Ohrid*, 655–664; Коматина И., *Црква и држава*, 132–144.

¹² ИСН I, 195–196 (С. Тирковић); 197–208 (Ј. Калић); Коматина И., *Српски владари у Алексијаду*, 173–194; Папауеоргίου, *Βυζάντιο και Σέρβοι*, 353–366; Blangez–Malamut, Cacouros, *L’image des Serbs*, 97–122; Калић, *Жујан Белош*, 63–81; Станковић, *Срби у поезији Теодора Продрома*, 437–450.

¹³ Makk, *The Árpáds and the Comneni*; Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos*; Stephenson, *Byzantium’s Balkan Frontier*, 239–274; Пириватрић, *Манојло I Комнин*, 89–118.



Fig. 3. Ras, Church of St. Peter

An important consequence of introducing Zavida's sons into the line of rulers was the appearance of monumental endowments on their territory, which gives their epoch, at least at the level of material but also written testimony, the character of a great turning-point in Serbian and regional history, as well as in Byzantine–Serbian relations. The most impressive ktetorial activity is linked with the name of Stefan Nemanja (1166–1196), and it began immediately after he was installed as a regional power-sharing prince, and continued after his rise to power as grand župan in 1166, in a coup, the outcome of which Manuel Komnenos acknowledged a little later. Ktetorial activity involved Stefan Nemanja cooperating with the local bishops, which placed him in the position of defending the western border of the Ohrid Archbishopric, itself an outpost of the imperial policy in the interior of the Balkans, which was once the territory of Illyricum. The ktetorial activities of Stefan Nemanja were connected, more or less, on many levels, to Byzantine models, depending on the case; starting with political–theological and expanding to

other, more practical aspects related to the architecture and, in general, artistic patterns, as such, they were factors of Byzantine cultural expansion but also of a very concrete political context. This context was, however, ambiguous and it was, on the one hand, marked by the Empire's efforts to maintain the status quo and the successes which Emperor Manuel Komnenos and his generals achieved in the central areas of the Balkan Peninsula during the military campaigns of 1162–1167, which, in one way or another, brought Dalmatia, Croatia, Bosnia and Srem under the emperor's rule (fig. 4). On the other hand, the aspiration of Stefan Nemanja to become an independent ruler was a constant in his policy, which was expressed in the appropriate international context (1172, 1182–1186, 1188–1191) and in his search for allies in the West, in Venice, Hungary or the German–Roman Empire.¹⁴

¹⁴ ИСН I, 208–211, 251–262 (Ј. Калић); Калић, *Охридска археолошка област*, 197–208; Калић, *Два царства*, 197–212; Максимовић, *Byzantinische Herrscherideologie*, 174–192; Пириватрић, *Between Constantinople, Rome and Ohrid, 660–663*.



Fig. 4. Map, the Byzantine Empire and Serbia, around the year 1180

Seen from a longer perspective, the changes in the nature of relations between Byzantium and Stefan Nemanja developed in several stages and can be seen in several aspects. After the death of Manuel Komnenos and the murder of his son and heir Alexios II (1180–1183), Nemanja's obligations as a vassal ceased to exist, the Serbian grand župan perceived the new emperor, Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–1185), as a usurper, and soon the mention of the ruling emperor in the newly conquered territories, such as Diocletia with Dalmatia, former 'Greek land' ceased, as well. With his victory at

the Morava in the autumn of 1191, Emperor Isaak II Angelos (1185–1195) regained some of the territories that had been lost. He reinstated the obligations of vasalage for the Serbian ruler, this time without the requirement to supply auxiliary military troops, and the marriage of the emperor's niece, Eudokia, to Nemanja's heir, Stefan, meant their inclusion into the system of family rule of the Angeloi, i.e. the Komnenoi. The erection of the Studenica monastery, in a special way, indicated the nature of the new relations between the emperor and the grand župan: Nemanja, as can be

reconstructed, issued a chrysobull sealed in gold for his endowment and signed it as autokrator of all the Serbian and maritime lands. Constantinople accepted the disappearance of Nemanja's brothers from the historical scene, as it accepted the appropriation of the Byzantine title of autokrator, which the grand župan used in its literal translation into Old Serbian, for purposes of internal communication to express the imperial quality of his rule over the entire state, including his right to appoint and invest his heir.¹⁵

The accession of Alexios III Angelos to the Byzantine throne (1195–1203), brought about a change on the Serbian throne, as well – Stefan Nemanja abdicated in 1196 and appointed his younger son Stefan (1196–1227) to be grand župan, whereas his older son, Vukan, continued to rule as grand prince of the maritime lands, i. e. a titular of Diocletia and Dalmatia. The emperor's in-law was soon granted the exalted court title of sebastokrator and the former relations of real dependance shifted to a new level of an ideal hierarchy of independent rulers. The outcome of Byzantine–Serbian relations at the end of the 12th century, as well as the Byzantine–Hungarian struggle for domination over Serbia, can be summed up in the fact that Stefan Nemanja, now the monk Simeon, together with his son, the monk Sava – who will both be recognized as saints later, received permission to rebuild the abandoned monastery of Hilandar on Mount Athos. The often-quoted introductory lines of Nemanja's charter issued to Hilandar in 1198, speak very eloquently about the new quality of this relationship, stressing the divine origin of power of the Byzantine emperor, the Hungarian king and the Serbian grand župan, as well as the hierarchy of rulers.¹⁶ The court in Constantinople must have perceived Serbia at that time, as being part of the system of imperial dynastic rule, even though it did not have actual power over the state – Stefan and Eudokia were theoretically co-rulers, and their state was mostly in the jurisdictional area of an Orthodox archpriest, the Archbishop of Ohrid, whose bishop in Ras had constitutive importance in the state, while the newly-built monastery of Hilandar represented the pledge of a strong



Fig. 5. Mileševa, King Stefan the First Crowned

connection of Serbia to Mount Athos, the most significant spiritual centre outside the imperial capital. Being in this kind of relationship with the Empire, Serbia could have been expected to advocate Byzantine interests and values. However, the desintegration processes in the Byzantine Empire, the restoration of the Bulgarian Empire in 1185, the rise of the Papal monarchy and its principally political and rather less ecclesiastical influence in the interior of the Balkan Peninsula in the time of Innocent III (1198–1216), as well as the outcome of the Fourth

¹⁵ Maksimović, *L'idéologie du souverain*, 35–49; Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија*, 100–110; Радујко, *Благослов и венчање*, 253–283; Пириватрић, *Хронологија и историјски концепт*, 47–56.

¹⁶ Живојиновић, *Историја Хиландара*, 43–72; Krsmanović, *Mount Athos and Political Thought*, 145–166; Maksimović, *L'idéologie du souverain*, 35–49; Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија*, 60–69.



Fig. 6. Map, the fragmented Byzantine Empire and Serbia, around 1220

Crusade – the conquest of Constantinople in 1204, the fragmentation of the Byzantine and the creation of the Latin Empire and other states under the rule of Western lords – all of this together, led to instability and resulted in a long-lasting crisis of the Byzantine world and its prevailing order.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ferjančić, *Les états et les rapports internationaux*, 639–668; Cheynet, *Pouvoir et contestations*; Maksimović, *La Serbie et les contrées voisines*, 269–282; Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеолођија*, 70–75; Божилов, Гюзелев, *История на средновековна България*, 419–464 (И. Божилов).

The state of Nemanja's successors oscillated in the two worlds and the two monarchical conceptions – that of the Byzantine emperor and the Pope of Rome, and those oscillations were relatively frequent. When the Prince, Vukan received the pallium for the archbishop in Bar in 1199, Grand Župan Stefan is believed to have also addressed the Pope, requesting that his state be turned into a papal monarchy. The Pope accepted and appointed a legate to perform the coronation, which, however, did not take place because of opposition from the Hungarian king. Soon, in 1202, with the help of Hungary, Vukan

overthrew Stefan, whose marriage to Eudokia had by then ended. The Pope authorised the archbishop of Kalocsa to take an oath of allegiance from Vukan, but it is questionable whether or not this actually took place, given the fact that the Hungarian king himself assumed the title of king of Serbia, which would henceforth become a part of his regular title. Stefan soon retrieved the throne and the reconciliation between the two brothers was the work of the third brother, Archimandrite Sava. He reinstalled ‘the Byzantine order’ in Serbia, in which the deposed emperor Alexios III Angelos, the last Orthodox Roman emperor to have been crowned in Hagia Sofia, had a constitutional meaning. The belief that Alexios III was still the rightful emperor, though without a throne, was widespread in one part of the Byzantine world. The appearance of Cyrillic inscriptions and the Church Slavonic language in the iconographic program of Studenica, instead of the Greek language and script, had the nature of a cultural–political turning–point. On the plan of *Realpolitik* in a fragmented Byzantine world, Byzantine–Serbian relations were then limited to the State of Epiros and to the mostly unsuccessful marital policy of the Nemanjić court (fig. 6).¹⁸

However, a series of foreign factors, as well as the death of Emperor Alexios III, led to new significant changes in Serbia. The papal legate in 1217 crowned Stefan Nemanjić as king (fig. 5), in the year in which his marriage to the Venetian princess, Anna Dandolo, was signed. The coronation, of course, raised his rank and introduced him into the hierarchy of papal kings and rulers of the Western world. After all, the Serbian ruler considered Henry of Flanders, the Latin emperor in Constantinople, to be the ‘Greek emperor’ at that time, and not Theodore I Laskaris (1204–1221), who was, sometime earlier in 1208, crowned emperor by the Ecumenical Patriarch in Nicaea. Sava’s enterprise in the following years, commenced from Mount Athos, not only led to the creation of the autocephalous church and rethinking the position of the Serbian king within the hierarchies of the Western and Byzantine worlds, but also proved to be an important factor in the endeavours of the Nicaean Empire to be acknowledged as an authentic ‘Byzantine’ Empire, which, on an ideological plan, lacked only Constantinople as its old and only true capital, for its full renewal.

Sava’s request for the consecration of an archbishop in the state ruled by his brother, included the promise of the liturgical commemoration of the emperor Theodore Laskaris, in return, as an expression of his recognition as an Orthodox ‘Greek emperor’. An essential factor of the agreement was the mutual kinship of both rulers, Nicaean and Serbian, through their former father-in-law, the late emperor Alexios III Angelos. A puzzling portrait of the Byzantine emperor in the katholikon of the Mileševa monastery, possibly the only one of its kind in the old Serbian churches, positioned opposite the fresco of the Serbian king, regardless of today’s dilemmas as to who the portrayed emperor was, represented most certainly the result of the agreement between Sava and Theodore Laskaris in Nicaea. This agreement established the hierarchical relation of the two rulers, between whom there was no real dependence. In Serbia, this agreement did not bring into question perceptions established long ago, which would, from the aspect of terminology, deny the Nicaean, as well as any other Byzantine Empire, its Roman character by calling it Greek, thus remaining within the Western, papal discourse of the Roman–Byzantine Empire. The agreement also envisaged the mention of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the liturgy, as an expression of the relationship of the new local autocephalous church with the mother-church.¹⁹

The *cheirotonēa* of Sava as archbishop of ‘all Serbian and maritime lands’ and the separation of the episcopal sees in Ras, Lipljan and Prizren from the areas belonging to the Ohrid archbishop, Demetrios Chomatenos, provoked his severe protest in May 1220, along with a fruitless threat of excommunication. Around the same time, the betrothal and then marriage of Anna, the daughter of the lord of Epiros, Theodore I Angelos (1215–1230), and Stefan Radoslav, the eldest son and presumptive heir of Stefan Nemanjić, was concluded. The rise of Theodore Angelos, his conquest of Thessaloniki and coronation as emperor of the Byzantines placed this ruler in the position of becoming a restorer of the Empire, even though he himself acknowledged the higher hierarchical rank of the Nicaean emperor John Vatatzes (1221–1254), the heir of Theodore Laskaris. The influence of the emperor of Thessaloniki on circumstances in the state of his son-in-law, King Radoslav (1227–1233), was indicated, it seems, in the temporary acknowledgment of the spiritual jurisdiction of the archbishop of Ohrid over Serbia, which should be

¹⁸ ИСН I, 263–272 (Б. Ферјанчић); Ферјанчић, *Србија и византијски свети*, 103–148; Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, 115–172; Ферјанчић, Максимовић, *Свети Сава и Србија*, 13–25; Тирковић, *Свети Сава*, 27–37; Коматина И., Црква и држава, 222–228; Пириватрић, *Византијски свети*.

¹⁹ Пириватрић, *Византијски свети*. On the specificity of ethnical terminology cf. Максимовић, *Значење речи Грк и Јелин*, 215–227.

linked with Archbishop Sava's brief period of absence from Serbia, certainly before the lost battle against the Bulgarian emperor John II Asen (1218–1241) on the Klokotnica in 1230 put an end to the regional predominance and ambitions of Theodore Angelos. A specific Byzantine factor was the imperial ancestry of King Radoslav, which this ruler emphasised on special occasions by referring to himself as Stefan Doukas.

The history of the liturgical commemoration of the Byzantine, i. e. Orthodox emperor in the state of the Serbian king is impossible to follow, but it makes sense to pose this question on a more hypothetical level. Hence, one may assume that the period of Theodore Angelos' influence in his son-in-law's state may have led to certain short-term changes in this respect, which would, in that case, also refer to the mention of the Nicaean patriarch. On the whole, many aspects of Byzantine-Serbian political relations in the broader international context, an essential factor of which were the aspirations of the emperors of Nicaea, Thessaloniki and Bulgaria for the restoration of the Empire, are not known in full, both during the rule of King Radoslav, and during the reign of his brother and heir, King Vladislav (1233–1243).²⁰ His marriage to the daughter of the Bulgarian emperor meant the uncoupling of the Serbian kingdom from the Byzantine sphere in the domain of practical policy, which applies even more in regard of the next Serbian king, Uroš I (1243–1276), who, upon his accession to the throne, married Jelena, daughter of a reputable Hungarian nobleman, the lord of Srem and the surrounding lands. Nevertheless, at the court of Nicaea in the mid-13th century, the relationship of the Emperor towards the Serbian king was perceived as a position of his subordination as a type of vassal.²¹ The Serbian ruler was considered to be the emperor's 'servant' and, just like in the time of Manuel Komnenos and Stefan Nemanja, he was obliged to supply military troops. It must be that this had to do with the rhetorical interpretation of a somewhat different reality in which the king, Uroš, was an unreliable ally of the emperor, although the liturgical mention of the Nicaean ruler in Serbia as an Orthodox emperor, as well as the king's ktetorial action in Hilandar, gave certain grounds for such rhetorical exaggerations. Indeed, the Nicaean Empire in 1257 suffered some

²⁰ Максимовић, „Византинизми” краља Стефана Радослава, 139–147; Мильковић, Сава, Стефан Радослав и Димитрије Хомаћин, 259–275.

²¹ Станковић, Бујарска и Србија, 179–200; Пириватрић, Византијске претставе о Србима, 62–100.

minor territorial losses in Macedonia precisely because of a rapprochement King Uroš initiated with the rival lord of Epiros, Despot Michael. On the other hand, the king's troops took part in the Battle of Pelagonia in 1259, a crucial battle for supremacy in Macedonia, on the side of the victorious troops of the Nicaean Empire.²² It is possible, however, that they were sent into battle as one of the obligations, established at about that time, which Uroš had as a vassal of the Hungarian king, an ally of the Nicaean emperor. It is another question of whether the new political circumstances influenced the liturgical commemoration of the Byzantine emperor.

At the time when the Nicaean troops liberated Constantinople from Latin rule in the summer of 1261, and Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) returned the Empire to its old capital, the Serbian kingdom was outside the sphere of Byzantine direct political influence. Serbia's attachment to Hungary only became stronger after the unsuccessful attempt by King Uroš to free himself from the obligations of vassalage to the Hungarian king, as well as after the marriage of his son Dragutin to a Hungarian princess. The attempt by Michael Palaiologos to marry his daughter Anna to the king's younger son, Milutin, and to secure a change in the order of succession in Serbia in favour of his future son-in-law failed because of the interference of the Hungarian king. The emperor's marital diplomacy had also an ecclesiastical-political dimension, which is insufficiently known today, and his charter from July 1273, whereby he renewed the jurisdictional area of the Ohrid Archbishopric from the time of Basil II, and thereby questioning the jurisdiction and the autocephaly of the Archbishopric of Žiča, is understood as a direct consequence of the mentioned diplomatic failure.

These events were certainly connected with the wider historical context, leading to the Council of Lyon in 1274. Rejecting the Union, the Serbian Archbishopric stressed in those years that it based its devotion to the Orthodox Christian creed, in the historical sense, on the covenant of the Constantinopolitan episcopal see.²³ It is understandable that in the newly established situation, Michael Palaiologos could not be mentioned in Serbian churches as an Orthodox Christian ruler, nor could his Ecumenical Patriarch. The rejection of the Union placed the new Serbian king, Dragutin (1276–1282), in the

²² ИСН I (С. Тирковић) 341–356.

²³ Тодић, *L'apôtre André*, 449–474; Пириватрић, *Византијске претставе о Србима*, 160–187.



Fig. 7. The King's Church in Studenica, King Milutin

ranks of the emperor's enemies, and it was only the death of Michael Palaiologos that enabled his heir Andronikos II (1282–1328) to abandon his father's church policy and officially restore Orthodox Christianity as the state religion. The abdication of Dragutin and Milutin's succession to the throne (1282–1321) resulted in a consensual division of the former territory of the kingdom, and singling out a particular region that Dragutin would continue to govern independently (1282–1316), aligning itself in the main with Hungary.

At the very start of his rule, King Milutin (1282–1321) (fig. 7) and his brother, launched a series of campaigns in the territory of the Empire and his chief conquests were the cities of Dyrrachion and Skopje, which, along with the surrounding lands, changed masters several times over, during the second half of the 13th century. In order to halt the Serbian conquests in the West, which would enable the Empire to confront the Turkish invasions in the East in greater strength, the solution was to conclude a peace treaty, which would be consolidated by the

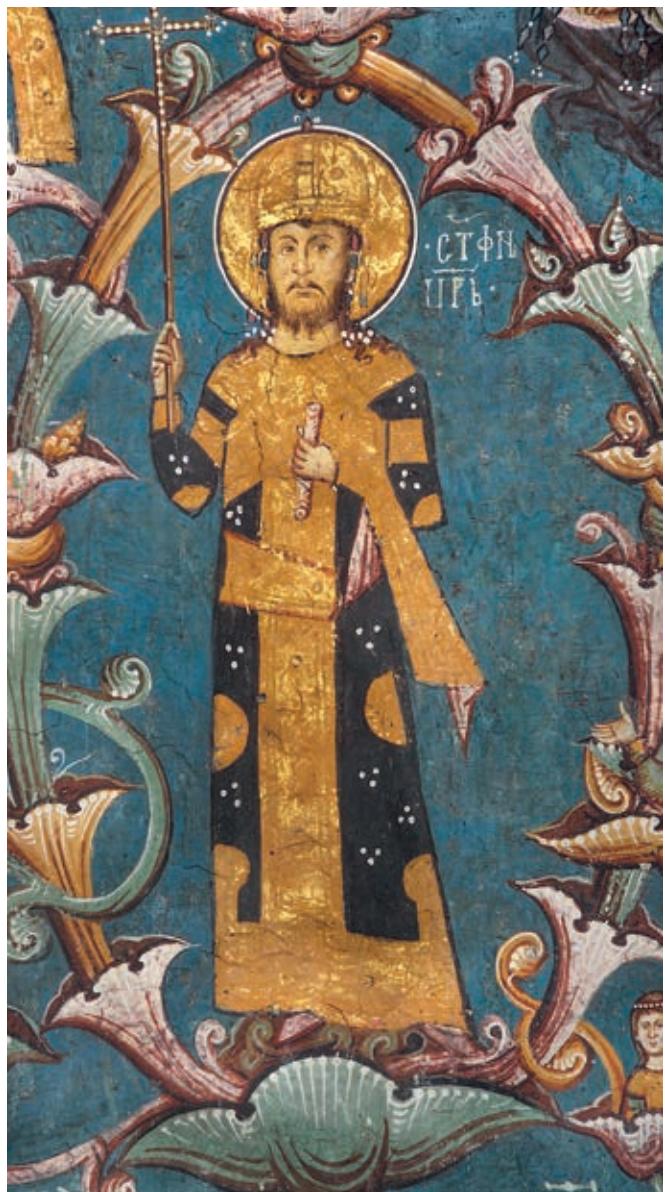


Fig. 8. Dečani, Nemanjić Family Tree, Emperor Dušan

powerful tool of Byzantine diplomacy – political marriage. Circumstances would have it that the negotiations ended unexpectedly with the marriage of the emperor's under-age daughter Simonida to the very much older Milutin, in the spring of 1299. The Serbian king became 'the beloved son and son-in-law' of the Byzantine emperor, and the emperor became the 'parent' of the king. The act of adoption resulted in the recognition of earlier conquests in the form of a bridal dowry. Considering the

nature of this relationship, the question arises about the possible liturgical mention of the emperor as an Orthodox ruler in the state of his adopted son. (There is no reliable answer to this because of the lack of sources, which is also valid for the following periods). The demarcation of the state was, apparently, followed by the demarcation of the church jurisdictions of Ohrid and Peć, which also implied the appropriate liturgical mention of the Ecumenical Patriarch.²⁴

The Byzantine hopes that the interests of the Empire would be protected for a longer period of time with the accession of progeny from the imperial dynasty to the throne of the Serbian kings proved fruitless in the decades to come. Milutin and Simonida had no offspring, the king proclaimed his illegitimate son, Stefan, as his heir sometime before March 1306 and, in the ensuing years, he turned away from the Empire to the West. The battle for domination in the long civil war against his brother Dragutin, the rapprochement with Andronikos and his irresolution concerning the question of the succession, led to an unsuccessful rebellion by Stefan at the beginning of 1314, and his seven-year long confinement in Constantinople. The attempt to proclaim one of the queen's brothers as successor to the throne failed, just as the expectations of this dynastic marriage producing an heir proved to be in vain. The ascent of Stefan Dečanski (1321–1331) to the throne, now as a Byzantine protégé, his marriage to Maria Palaiologina and his status as the emperor's 'beloved son-in-law', as well as the birth of his son Simeon, all went in favour of the efforts by the Empire to install offspring of the Palaiologan dynasty on the Serbian throne. The large-scale ktetorial activities of Milutin and Stefan Dečanski in Hilandar were ventures in the context of that very same imperial policy. However, a violent change on the throne and the arrival of Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) (fig. 8), the king's son from his first marriage, marked the final failure of the Byzantine marital policy, just at the time when the foundations for the future regional predominance of the Serbian rulers were being laid, albeit short-lived, with the victory over the Bulgarian emperor in Velbuzhd, in 1330. The nobility stood behind this shift on the Serbian throne, whose members, interested in conquests and the acquisition of new domains, had already played an important role in Byzantine–Serbian relations in the course of two

²⁴ ИСН I (Љ. Максимовић) 437–448; Mavromatis, *Le kralj Milutin*; Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија*, 118–126; Пириватрић, *Византијске представе о Србима*, 100–160, 187–202.

generations. During the reign of Andronikos III (1328–1341) important conquests by the Serbian king followed, which included Ohrid among other cities, and the emperor's ever less successful attempts to stop them.²⁵

The outbreak of civil war in the Empire, after the death of Emperor Andronikos III in 1341, at first, provided the Serbian king with the prospect of seizing new territories. However, the attempts by the belligerent parties to win Stefan Dušan over as a 'friend and ally', first of all, by the emperor John Kantakouzenos, and subsequently by the regency in the capital under the formal leadership of Patriarch John and the empress-mother, Anna – both of whom were acting on behalf of the under-age emperor John V Palaiologos (1341–1391) – led to many other significant consequences, one of which concerned the former dual conception of the king's power, summed up in the traditional political-geographical components of the 'Serbian and maritime lands'. This change can already be discerned in the ambiguous terms of the treaty between Dušan and Kantakouzenos from the summer of 1342, and it is visible from the king's agreement with the regents in the summer of 1343, which included the betrothal of the king's son, Uroš, to the emperor's sister Maria, which was later broken off. With this agreement, Dušan became the 'brother of the Empire' and ruler of 'Greek lands' – as it would appear – formally in the name of the under-age Palaiologos. The king's agreement with the administration of Mount Athos at the end of 1345 envisaged mentioning the name of John Palaiologos before the name of the king during the liturgical services. This was followed, at Easter in 1346, by the coronation of Dušan as emperor of one part of the Empire, i. e. Emperor of the 'Serbs and Greeks' or 'Serbia and Romania', as this newly created state conception was manifested in his signatures in the official documents of his chancellery. It is not possible to give a reliable explanation of the genesis of Dušan's imperial ambition, but his seven-year stay in Constantinople with his father must have had a significant role in these events. An especially important phenomenon of that time was the bestowal of high court titles to prominent local lords within the scope of efforts by the imperial authorities to bind the local aristocracy to themselves. Thus, John Oliver, the master of important areas in north-eastern Macedonia, first received the title of sebastokrator from John Kantakouzenos, only to



Fig. 9. Lesnovo, Despot Jovan Oliver

be assigned the highest court title of despot by the regents, sometime later, whereas he remained, during all that time, a nobleman of the King and Emperor Dušan (fig. 9).²⁶

The involvement of the Serbian king in the civil war enabled him to seize vast territories of the Empire (Macedonia without Thessaloniki, Epiros and Thessaly) and numerous important cities (Serres, Veroia, Edessa, Arta, Ioannina,

²⁵ ИСН I (С. Тирковић) 496–510; Марјановић-Душанић, Владарска идеологија, 126–151; eadem, Свени краљ; Пириватрић, Византијско-српски односи; Živojinović, La frontière serbo-byzantine, 57–66; Maksimović, Η ανάπτυξη κεντροφύγων ροπών, 282–290.

²⁶ ИСН I, 511–556 (Б. Ферјанчић, М. Благојевић, С. Тирковић, Р. Михаљчић); Радић, Време Јована V Палеолоја, 78–247; Ферјанчић, Тирковић, Стјепан Душан; Ćirković, Between Kingdom and Empire, 110–120; Oikonomides, Emperor of the Romans, 121–128; Марјановић-Душанић, Владарска идеологија, 81–96; Maksimović, L'empire de Stefan Dušan, 415–428; Пириватрић, Улазак Стјепана Душана у Царство, 381–409; Пириватрић, Византијске штапуле Јована Оливера, 713–724.



Fig. 10. Patriarchate of Peć, narthex, throne of St. Sava ‘The First Serbian Patriarch’

Kroia, Berat, Larissa, Trikala and others), and create a kind of personal union of the Kingdom (Serbia) and part of the Empire (Romania), as well as perform legislative activity in the imperial manner, represented as part of the tradition of the ‘Greek emperors’ initiated by Constantine, the first Christian emperor. The victory of John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354) in the civil war at the beginning of

1347 brought the legitimacy of Dušan’s steps into question – firstly, his imperial coronation, including the anointment of the archbishop Joanikios as the patriarch of the Serbs and Greeks, the appointment of bishops in the conquered territories, as well as the majority of his territorial gains. Thus, after unsuccessful attempts to reach an agreement, sometime in the autumn of 1352, the Ecumenical Patriarch Kallistos, supported by the emperor, excommunicated Dušan, Joanikios and all the bishops. Kallistos’ anathema eliminated Dušan from the last stage of the civil war, in which until that time, he had fought on the side of the young emperor, John V, but the fall of Kantakouzenos and the victory of Palaiologos at the end of 1354 did not lead to the abrogation of the anathema.²⁷

For the Empire, Dušan’s sudden death in 1355 signified a respite, all the more so because, with his death, both his power and his imperial idea gradually vanished, while the territories he had ruled, both Byzantine and Serbian, entered a process of fragmentation and frequent conflicts broke out among the local lords. Some of them, like Dušan’s son and heir Uroš (1355–1371) or his co-ruler King Vukašin and his son-in-law Toma Preljubović or Dušan’s widow Jelena, and later her heir, Despot Jovan Uglješa, they all had incorporated in their ruling ideology an unequivocally Byzantine component as rulers of ‘Greeks’, ‘Romans’ or ‘Romania’.²⁸ The Empire was able to retrieve only a small portion of its territorial losses and, as time went on, the Muslim Osmanlis, a dynasty of Turksih rulers who began to consolidate their territorial gains on the European continent in 1354, proved to be a far more dangerous adversary of the Christian Empire than Dušan had been. The Turkish threat galvanised the Byzantine efforts, supported by the monk Joasaph – the former emperor, John Kantakouzenos – directed to establishing overall church unity, both in terms of the area under papal jurisdiction, and with regard to the still schismatic jurisdiction of Peć. The schism terminated first in the territory of Hlapen in 1364, then in Uglješa’s state in 1371, and finally in the entire area of the Patriarchate of Peć in 1375, whereas the dispute over the titles of the emperor and Serbian archbishop, which lay at the very core of Kallistos’ anathema, was handled by reaching a compromise – Dušan’s imperial title was acknowledged

²⁷ Марјановић-Душанић, Елементи царској иројрама, 3–20; Пириватрић, Византијске иредијаве о Србима, 208–218, 225–269, 279–325.

²⁸ ИСН I, 566–592 (Р. Михаљчић); Pirivatić, *Death of Stefan Dušan*, 285–302; Михаљчић, Крај српској царства; Radić, Ο Συμεών Ούρεος Παλαιλόγος, 195–208; Ферјанчић, *Византијски и српски Сер.*



Fig. 11. Resava (Manasija), Despot Stefan Lazarević



Fig. 12. The Byzantine Empire and Serbia, around the year 1400

posthumously and it was limited to Serbia (John V, calling him the ‘uncle of the Empire’, had already acknowledged this title in 1351), the head of the church was addressed as the Archbishop of Serbia in official communication, whereas the title of Patriarch was only tolerated within the boundaries of his region.²⁹ The church reconciliation

also required the mention of the Ecumenical Patriarch in the liturgical services in the regions under the jurisdiction of the patriarchate in Peć (fig. 10).

The reconciliation enabled Despot Uglješa and King Vukašin to take independent action against the Turks, which ended in disaster on the Maritsa in 1371, placing the Byzantine emperor John V Palaiologos in the position of a vassal, although he himself had not taken part in the battle. However, the disappearance of Despot Uglješa enabled the Empire to briefly regain the region of Serres,

²⁹ Баршић, *О измирењу српске и византијске цркве*, 159–182; Ферјанчић, *Византија према Српском царству*, 155–171; Пириватрић, *Византијске прегиставе о Србима*, 269–277, 325–343; Мурешан, *Le patriarchat oecuménique*, 203–242.

before it was finally conquered by the Turks. The heir to the royal title, Vukašin's son, Marko, became a less significant, regional lord in Macedonia, and parallel with the disappearance of the Nemanjić dynasty in 1371 and with the Bosnian Kotromanić dynasty assuming the title of the Serbian king in 1377, among the other regional rulers, Prince Lazar began his rise to power. Although the initiative for reconciliation had come from Mount Athos, Prince Lazar's support for the Church's reconciliation was vital, and it was followed by his ktetorial act in the Hilandar monastery. However, reduced and weakened by Osmanli conquest, the Empire remained outside of Lazar's attempt in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389 to halt their advance into the interior of the Balkans (fig. 12).³⁰

The church reconciliation also meant a kind of criticism of Dušan's imperial programme within more influential Serbian circles, which laid the ground for a new, important change in Byzantine–Serbian political relations. This change was related to the next generation of rulers, to the successors of Serbian Prince Lazar and Emperor John V Palaiologos – Prince Stefan Lazarević and the emperors Manuel II and John VII. In the circumstances that occurred after the Battle of Ankara in 1402, when the Turkish Sultan Bayezid, was killed, Stefan Lazarević (1392–1427) received the title of despot in Constantinople from Emperor John VII Palaiologos, which was later confirmed by Emperor Manuel II Palaiologos (1391–1425), in 1410. The relation of ideal hierarchy was established between the Byzantine emperor and the Serbian ruler, who at the time styled himself as "lord of all Serbs", which continued in the next generations and lasted until the end of the Empire. Such a relationship would give substance to the assumption regarding the mention of the Byzantine emperor's name in the liturgical service in Serbia (especially considering the well-known opposite example from the end of the 14th century, when the mention of the Byzantine emperor's name was omitted in the services in Russia), which could have been introduced already after the Church's reconciliation. For this, the perception of the emperor as an Orthodox ruler had to be an indispensable condition, which did not exist in cases when the emperors agreed to the Union of the Church. Apart from the investiture of the Serbian rulers in the imperial court hierarchy, political relations were also strengthened by marriages. Đurađ Branković

(1427–1456), nephew and later, heir of Despot Stefan (fig. 11) was married to the emperor's niece, Irene Kantakouzena, in 1414. Emperor Manuel was himself previously married to Jelena, the daughter of Constantine Dragaš, a Serbian regional lord in Macedonia. This marriage, an indubitable sign of the decline of the Empire and unique in the history of Byzantine–Serbian relations, in which the bride was a Serbian princess, had no significant consequences for Byzantine–Serbian relations, unlike all the other reversed cases, even though it produced the two last Byzantine emperors – John VIII Palaiologos (1425–1448) and Constantine XI Palaiologos (1448–1453). The marriage of Đurađ and Irene brought the Serbian ruler the crown of a despot, and Irene's brother, Thomas Kantakouzenos, was in charge of the construction of the *Mali Grad* in Smederevo from 1428–1430. However, the practical political consequences of the marriage of Đurađ's son and heir Lazar (1456–1458), to Helena, the niece of Emperor John VIII Palaiologos, were simply reduced to awarding the emperor's son-in-law with the title of despot, in 1446.

The relation of the Byzantine emperors and their Serbian despots somewhat reminds one of the distant beginnings of the creation of a Byzantine Serbia in the time of the first members of the Nemanjić family and the emperors from the dynasties of the Komnenoi and the Angeloi. However, its fruits on the political plane were insignificant – the Ottoman Sultanate was spreading ever more between the two distant states, and the rulers of Constantinople together with the remnants of the Empire and the state of the Serbian despots were already themselves part of other hierarchies of more powerful rulers. Their common sovereign was the Ottoman Sultan, while the Serbian despots, at the same time, belonged to the court of the Hungarian kings and occasionally, to the court of the German–Roman emperors. Despot Đurađ did not accept the Union proclaimed at the Council of Florence in 1439. He helped with the restoration of the walls of Constantinople, but his army did not participate in the last defence of the city.³¹ The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, followed by the fall of Smederevo and the conquest of the rest of the Empire, brought an end to Byzantine–Serbian political relations.

³⁰ ИСН I, 593–602 (Р. Михаљчић); ИСН II, 21–46 (Р. Михаљчић); Радић, *Време Јована V Палеолоја*, 358 sqq.

³¹ ИСН II, 47 sqq. (С. Ђирковић, Ј. Калић, М. Спремић); Ђурић, *Сумрак Византије; Ферјанчић, Византијинци у Србији, 173–215; Спремић, Десиош Ђурађ Бранковић; Калић, Срби у њозном средњем веку; Николић, Византијски иписци о Србији.*

CHRONOLOGY

527–565	Reign of Emperor Justinian I.	913–959	Reign of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos.
527–530	First incursions by Slavic tribes from the lower Danube into Thrace.	c. 926	Temporary occupation of Serbia, until 927, by the Bulgarian army led by Tsar Simeon.
548	Slavic tribes from Pannonia cross the Danube and ravage the central parts of the Balkan Peninsula.	c. 933–c. 950	Reign of Prince Časlav.
	From mid-6 th century, forays of Slavs into the Balkan Peninsula become more frequent.	c. 950	Dubrovnik diocese elevated to archdiocese, with jurisdiction over the regions of Serbia, Travunia and Zachlumia.
582	Avars seize Sirmium.	1018	Byzantine Emperor Basil II establishes the Catepanate of Bulgaria and Theme of Serbia, following the collapse of the Bulgarian Empire.
582–602	Reign of Emperor Maurice. Last attempts at defending the northern border of the Empire from Avar and Slav assaults.	1019–1020	Byzantine Emperor Basil II designates the territorial size of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, also comprising the Bishopric of Ras.
626	Avars and Slavs lay siege to Constantinople.	1039–1042	Prince Vojislav seizes control of Serbia and Diocleia, and subsequently of Travunia and Zachlumia.
634	Serbs and Croats arrive at the invitation of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) to fight as allies of Byzantium against the Avars; in return, they are allowed to settle in Illyricum.	1064	Hungarians seize Byzantine Belgrade.
680	Bulgarians under Khan Asparuh settle east of the Danube.	1072	Aborted uprising against Byzantine rule in the theme of Bulgaria. The rebels proclaim Konstantin Bodin, son of Prince Mihailo of Diocleia, Tsar of Bulgaria.
c. 780–800	Reign of Serbian Prince Višeslav.	1077	King Mihailo of Diocleia seeks the papal flag from Pope Gregory VII.
c. 800–820	Reign of Serbian Prince Prosigoj.	c. 1085	King Bodin of Diocleia seizes the region of Ras and appoints Vukan and Marko to govern it.
c. 850	Battles with Bulgarians successfully led by Prince Vlastimir, and, in later years, by his sons Mutimir, Strojimir and Gojnik.	1089	Diocese of Bar elevated to the status of an archdiocese.
c. 820–851	Reign of Serbian Prince Vlastimir.	1094	Meeting of Emperor Alexios Komnenos and Raška Župan Vukan.
851–891	Reign of Serbian Prince Mutimir.	1096	The Crusader army passes through the territory of present-day Serbia, taking the military route from Belgrade, through Niš and Sofia, to Constantinople, while one part of the army makes its way along the roads towards the Adriatic coast.
867–886	Reign of Emperor Basil I.	1118–1143	Reign of Emperor John II Komnenos.
854	Bulgarian Khan Boris attacks Serbia again. After the conclusion of peace, prisoners of war exchanged at Ras, when the place is first mentioned as a settlement or fort.		
Between 867 and 874	Conversion to Christianity of the Serbian ruling families from the ecclesiastical centres on the Adriatic coast. Serbian princes accept the supreme power of the emperor.		
892–917	Reign of Serbian Prince Petar Gojniković.		

c. 1122	Emperor John Komnenos conquers Ras.	1217	Coronation of Stefan Nemanjić as the first crowned king ‘of all the Serbian and maritime lands’ – by means of a legacy sent to him by Pope Honorius III.
1127	During the Byzantine-Hungarian war, Serbs seize the fortress of Ras. Grand Župan Uroš I marries his daughter Jelena to the Hungarian heir and future king, Bela the Blind.	1219	The consecration of Archimandrite Sava Nemanjić as the first Serbian archbishop ‘of all Serbian and maritime lands’ in Nicaea; the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Council in Nicaea give the Serbian Archbishopric the right to autocephaly. The Monastery of Žiča becomes the seat of the archbishop and the coronation church.
1129	The Byzantine army conquers Ras. Grand Župan Uroš I recognises the emperor’s supreme authority, and pledges to supply military forces.	1236	Archbishop Sava (Nemanjić) dies in the Bulgarian town of Trnovo; the following year, his remains are transferred to the Monastery of Mileševa.
1143–1180	Reign of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos.	1243–1276	Reign of King Stefan Uroš I.
1147	Two large Crusader armies, led by German Emperor Konrad III and French King Louis VII, pass through Serbia, following the old military road from Belgrade through Niš and Sofia to Constantinople.	1259–1282	Reign of Michael VIII Palaiologos.
1166–1196	Reign of Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja.	1261	Restoration of the Byzantine Empire at Constantinople.
1172	Stefan Nemanja’s attempt to renege on his allegiance to Byzantine authority. Emperor Manuel I Komnenos enters Raška and the defeated Grand Župan marches in the emperor’s triumphal procession in Constantinople.	1274	King Uroš rejects the Union of Lyon.
1180–1183	Reign of Emperor Alexios II Komnenos; after his assassination Stefan Nemanja refuses to recognise the new emperor Andronikos I Komnenos and sets out to conquer the Byzantine regions.	1276–1282	Reign of King Stefan Dragutin.
1185–1195	Reign of Emperor Isaac II Angelos.	1282–1328	Reign of Andronikos II Palaiologos.
1189	During the third passage of the Crusaders through Serbia, Stefan Nemanja and Friedrich Barbarossa meet at Niš and discuss forming an alliance.	1282	At the Council of Deživo, King Dragutin abdicates in favour of his brother, Milutin, and receives his own, separate lands. The same year, the Serbs launch an attack on Byzantium and take Skopje, Polog, Ovče Polje and areas around the Bregalnica River. The following year they advance to the Aegean Sea.
1191	In a battle on the South Morava River, the Serbian army suffers defeat by the Byzantines. Nemanja returns a small part of the territories he seized to the Byzantine emperor, and marries his middle son and heir apparent, Stefan, to the emperor’s niece, Eudokia.	1282–1321	Reign of Stefan Uroš II Milutin.
c. 1191	Rastko Nemanjić goes to Mount Athos, takes monastic vows and becomes known as the monk, Sava.	c. 1291	Kuman-Tartar invasion of Serbia; Žiča is burned down. The seat of the Serbian Archbishopric is moved to Peć.
1195–1203	Reign of Emperor Alexios III Angelos.	1298–1299	Byzantine-Serbian negotiations. Peace concluded in 1299, and strengthened by the marriage between King Milutin and Simonida, the daughter of the emperor, Andronikus II Palaiologos. Milutin’s conquests till then, the most important among them, northern Macedonia with Skopje, are recognised in the form of a dowry.
1196	Stefan Nemanja abdicates in favour of Stefan, now a nephew-in-law of the Byzantine emperor, and withdraws to the Monastery of Studenica as the monk Simeon, and subsequently to Mount Athos, the following year, where he stays until his death in 1199.	1314	King Milutin captures, nearly blinds and exiles his son Stefan Dečanski because of the latter’s revolt against his authority. Stefan with his sons spends nearly seven years in Constantinople.
1198	The monks Simeon and Sava reconstruct the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos.	1321–1331	Reign of Stefan Uroš III Dečanski.
1204	Fourth Crusade, the Crusaders sack Constantinople and divide the Byzantine Empire.	1324–1337	Administration of Serbian Archbishop Danilo II.
1204–1261	Empire of Nicaea. The house of Nemanjić considers it to be the successor to the old Byzantium.	1328–1341	Reign of Andronikos III Palaiologos.
1204–1221	Reign of Nicaean Emperor Theodore I Laskaris.	1330	Battle of Velbuzhd – victory of the Serbian army led by Stefan Dečanski over Bulgarian Tsar Michael. Stefan Dušan, the young king, demonstrates great courage in battle.
		1331–1355	Reign of King Stefan Dušan.

1334	King Dušan conquers regions in central Macedonia, including Ohrid and Prilep.	1365	Vukašin Mrnjavčević receives the title of king and becomes the co-ruler of Emperor Uroš.
1341–1354	Civil war in Byzantium, between the regents of the under-aged Jovan V Palaiologos, and John Kantakouzenos, who proclaims himself emperor and protector of the Palaiologoi.	1371	Battle of the Maritsa, King Vukašin and Despot Uglješa Mrnjavčević are killed. Vukašin's son, Marko, until then the 'young king', gains the title of king. With the death of the emperor Uroš, the male line of the Nemanjić family is extinguished.
1341–1391	Reign of John V Palaiologos.	1372–1389	Reign of Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović.
1342	Alliance between John Kantakouzenos and King Dušan. The king's conquests in south-western Macedonia and northern Epiros.	1375	Reconciliation of the Serbian and the Byzantine churches. The Ecumenical Patriarchate pardons Dušan, Uroš, Joanikije and the bishops, the Peć archbishop's title of patriarch is recognised in internal communication, and Dušan's title of the emperor of Serbia is posthumously recognised.
1343	Alliance of regents with King Stefan Dušan, who, from that time, in his traditional title of ruler ' <i>of all the Serbian and maritime lands</i> ', adds ' <i>of the Greek lands</i> '.	1376–1379	Reign of Andronikos IV Palaiologos.
1345	King Dušan seizes control of Serres, south-eastern Macedonia and the Holy Mount.	1377	The Bosnian ban Tvrtko I Kotromanić is crowned as the king of the Serbs, Bosnia, the Pomorje (maritime) and western lands.
End of 1345 / beginning of 1346	King Dušan proclaims himself as the emperor of Serbia and part of the Byzantine Empire; he most often uses the title ' <i>vasilevs and autokrator of Serbia and Romania</i> ' (in Greek) and ' <i>emperor of the Serbs and Greeks</i> ' (in the Serbian language).	1389	Battle of Kosovo, the death of Prince Lazar and Sultan Murat.
1346	Imperial coronation of Stefan Dušan in Skopje. The Serbian Church is elevated to the status of a patriarchate, and Archbishop Joanikije is consecrated as the first Serbian patriarch.	1391–1425	Reign of Manuel II Palaiologos
1347–1354	Reign of John VI Kantakouzenos.	1402	The Battle of Ankara, in which Stefan Lazarević wages war as the vassal of Sultan Bayazit. On his return from the battlefield, in Constantinople the Byzantine emperor awards him the highest title, that of 'despot'.
1347	Emperor Dušan takes control of Epiros.	1402–1427	Reign of Despot Stefan Lazarević.
1348	Emperor Dušan takes control of Thessaly.	1403–1404	Belgrade becomes the capital of the Serbian state (till 1427).
1349	Dušan's Code proclaimed at a state assembly in Skopje. (The Code is later amended and proclaimed at an assembly in Serres in 1354).	1408	Despot Stefan Lazarević is awarded the title of Knight of the Order of the Dragon, established by Hungarian King Szigismund.
1352	Constantinopolitan Patriarch Kallistos and the Synod pronounce an anathema against Emperor Dušan and Patriarch Joanikije and the Serbian bishops (the so-called Kallistos' Anathema) because of Dušan's coronation as Byzantine Emperor and the raising of the Serbian Church to the status of a patriarchate.	1425–1448	Reign of John VIII Palaiologos.
1352	The Battle at Demotika, in which Emperor John VI Kantakouzenos and the Turks defeat the supporters of John V Palaiologos, the Serbs and the Bulgarians.	1428–1430	The building of Smederevo, the new capital of the Serbian state.
1354	Turks seize the city of Gallipoli, and establish their first stronghold in Europe.	1439	Despot Đurađ rejects the Florentine Union. Smederevo falls the first time.
1355	Emperor Dušan dies of unknown causes. The dissolution of his state soon leads to an epoch of internecine conflicts among the numerous regional overlords.	1440	First Ottoman siege of Belgrade (ruled by Hungary).
1355–1371	Reign of Emperor Stefan Uroš.	1449–1453	Reign of Constantine XI Dragases Palaiologos.
		1453	Turks seize Constantinople. On 29 th May, Sultan Mehmed II makes a ceremonial entry into the city, which becomes the capital of the Ottoman Empire – Istanbul.
		1455	Turks seize Novo Brdo.
		1456	Second Ottoman siege of Belgrade (ruled by Hungary).
		1459	Smederevo falls to the Turks; the end of the Serbian medieval state.

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ЗМСЛУ = Зборник Матице српске за ликовне уметности, Нови Сад

ЗНМ = Зборник Народног музеја у Београду, Београд

ЗРВИ = Зборник радова Византолошког института, Београд

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ПКЈИФ = Прилози за књижевност, језик, историју и фолклор, Београд

РВМ = Рад Војвођанских музеја, Нови Сад

ХЗ = Хиландарски зборник, Београд

ААС = Acta Archaeologica Carpathica, Krakow

АР = Arheološki pregled, Beograd

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