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# The Serbs and the Overlapping Authorities of Rome and Constantinople (7<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> Century)

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The political and ideological relations of the Serbs with Rome and Constantinople should clearly be analyzed bearing in mind the general context, character and rhythm of wider relations between these two political, ecclesiastical and ideological centres. Such analysis must never lose sight, however, of how inextricably these aspects were intertwined in the old Roman province of Illyricum – the often mutable historical and geographical term used to describe the territory of the original Serbian settlement in the Roman empire. The extent of the influence of Rome and Constantinople in the region depended, naturally, on many factors. Among these, four main vectors of structural character and of longer duration can be discerned. One is the rhythm and intensity of the imperial renewals of Rome and Constantinople as the two main centres from which the conception of *Romanitas* and the corresponding political and ideological influences were generated.<sup>1</sup> The next is the problem of church jurisdiction, which, until 1054, was usually resolved, theoretically and practically, by demarcation of the spheres of interest of the regional churches. After the division of the Christian world, however, the question of jurisdiction was additionally complicated by the two different conceptions of ecclesiology and Orthodoxy. The third factor is related to the four most important ‘Roman’ institutions: that of the Constantinopolitan (the Byzantine, including the Latin) emperor, the Pope, the Constantinopolitan Patriarch and the Western (Frankish and German) emperor, and to their perplexed mutual relations, especially with regard to their ambition and capacity to act as either theoretical or actual sources of earthly or spiritual authority and as the heads of corresponding, though often opposing, political

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<sup>1</sup> The Roman identity of Byzantium has recently been discussed in several studies, see I. Stouraitis, *Roman identity in Byzantium: a critical approach*, in *BZ*, 107/1 (2014), p. 175–220; A. Kaldellis, *The Byzantine Republic: People and Power in New Rome*, Harvard, 2015; J. Haldon, *Res publica Byzantina? State formation and issues of identity in medieval east Rome*, in *BMGS*, 40/1 (2016), p. 4–16. For the genesis of the ‘two empires conflict’ s. D. Nehrlich, *Diplomatische Gesandtschaften zwischen Ost- und Westkaisern 756–1002*, Bern, 1999; for the post-1204 period s. D. Angelov, *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought In Byzantium, 1204–1330*, Cambridge, 2006; F. Van Tricht, *The Latin ‘Renovatio’ of Byzantium: The Empire of Constantinople, 1204–1228*, Leiden – Boston, 2011.

hierarchies of earthly rulers. The fourth vector is local, related to the dynamics of Serbian social and political development and their relations with the different ‘Roman’ authorities.

The Roman administrative unit of Illyricum, which in its widest extent only partially corresponds to the modern day geographical terms ‘the Balkans’, ‘the Balkan peninsula’ or ‘South-East Europe’, is viewed here as a contact zone, a zone of mutual cooperation, coexistence, overlapping, opposition and conflict between the different authorities of Rome and Constantinople.<sup>2</sup> These contacts had a decisive impact on many aspects of the Serbian past in the period from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and it must be understood that here we can only hope to trace their general outlines, while drawing attention to certain particularly important facets of the problem. The main focus of this text will centre around the two peculiar problems: 1. The transition of the territories inhabited by the Serbs from the period of the Byzantine imperial restoration established after the successful wars of Basil II from 1018, into the period of the first twilight of the Byzantine empire from 1180 to 1204; 2. The emergence of the Serbian kingdom and autocephalous Greek-Orthodox church in the fragmented Byzantine world from 1204 to 1220. An examination of the cultural components of these relations, although many of them were of powerful political and ideological significance, has intentionally been omitted from this overview. These issues have recently been incorporated into another similar synthesis of somewhat wider scope.<sup>3</sup> Due to limits on space the bibliography will be restricted to more recent works which nonetheless contain references to earlier scholarship.<sup>4</sup> We shall also only briefly review the problem of the liturgical commemoration of the Byzantine emperor in the Serbian lands as an ecclesiological manifestation of current political relations and conceptions on the

<sup>2</sup> For the late-Roman and Byzantine notions of Illyricum, see G. Dagron, *Les villes dans l’Illyricum protobyzantin, Villes et peuplement dans l’Illyricum protobyzantin*, Rome, 1984, p. 1–20; J. Koder, *Το Βυζάντιο ως χώρος. Εισαγωγή στην ιστορική γεωγραφία της Ανατολικής Μεσογείου στην βυζαντινή εποχή*, Θεσσαλονίκη, 2004, p. 110–114, 143–151.

<sup>3</sup> G. Subotić, Lj. Maksimović, *La Serbie entre Byzance et l’Occident*, in *XXe congrès international des études byzantines, Collège de France – Sorbonne, 19–25 août 2001, Prés-acts I. Séances plénières*, Paris, 2001, p. 241–250; see also Lj. Maksimović, *The Byzantine ‘Commonwealth’: an Early Attempt on European Integration?*, in E. Chrysos, P. Kitromilides, C. Svolopoulos (ed.), *The Idea of European Community in History*, I, Athens, 2003, p. 99–109 (= *Византијски „Комонвелт“: један рани покушај европских интеграција*, in *Византијски свет и Срби*, Београд, 2008, p. 207–216).

<sup>4</sup> A significant number of the questions covered by the title of this paper are addressed in earlier general works of Serbian history, notably in the relevant chapters of the *History of the Serbian People*, to which we will not refer directly here, see С. Ћирковић (ed.), *Историја српског народа*, I, Београд, 1981; Ј. Калић (ed.), *Историја српског народа*, II, Београд, 1982. This review includes also the results of my own research, conducted during the preparation of my unpublished doctoral thesis, *Byzantine Views of the Serbs at the time of the first Palaiologoi (c. 1261–c. 1371)*.

Constantinopolitan emperor's role in the Church, by highlighting certain characteristic moments or problems of its almost unknown history.<sup>5</sup>

Early medieval Serbian political geography has been taken as the starting point, namely the territories of Diocletia, Travunija, Zahumlje, Neretva and Serbia including Bosnia. The account of the arrival of the Serbs as federates in areas belonging to the Roman empire, of their settlement in the province of Dalmatia and the Christianization performed by priests sent from Rome at the time of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) forms part of the much later Byzantine-Roman historiography, written within the circle of Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenetos (944–959).<sup>6</sup> The baptistry of prince Višeslav (which dates from approximately the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> or the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century) most probably testifies, taken together with elements of Latin church terminology and toponomy in the Serbian lands, to the fact that the Serbs belonged to the jurisdiction of the maritime church centres, and therefore to the jurisdiction of Rome, during the first centuries of their settlement in the territory of the Byzantine empire. This was interrupted, again most probably, by their ephemeral inclusion into the sphere of the patriarchate of Constantinople, in the time of Patriarch Photios and Emperor Basil I.<sup>7</sup> As far as can be reconstructed, the activity of the Bishopric of Dubrovnik (from approximately the mid-10<sup>th</sup> century an archbishopric) was of special importance, since the archonties of Serbia, Travunija and Zahumlje were within its jurisdiction. The weak, and most probably very discontinuous political bonds between the Serbs and their communities (archonties), and Constantinople after they had been settled in Dalmatia depended, in the centuries to come, on the rhythm and intensity of the Byzantine imperial restoration in the Balkan peninsula. Imperial influences, manifested in the recognition of the supreme authority of the emperor in Constantinople, experienced a temporary increase in the times of Basil I (867–886), Roman I (920–944), Constantine VII

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<sup>5</sup> The issue of the commemoration of the secular authority during the liturgy as served in the churches of the Serbian lands has not been specifically researched, leaving aside the identification of the value as sources of the old Serbian breviaries, see: И. Ђурић, *Поменик светогорског Протата с краја XIV века*, in *ZRVI*, 20 (1981), p. 139–169. On the issue of the commemoration of the secular authority in the liturgy see, R. F. Taft, S.J., *The Diptychs*, IV, *A History of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 238), Rome, 1991. Some general comments on the issue are made here, on the basis of our initial research.

<sup>6</sup> Т. Џивковић, *De conversione Croatorum et Serborum. A lost source*, Belgrade, 2012; id., *The Urban Landscape of Early Medieval Slavic Principalities in the Territories of the Former Praefectura Illyricum and in the Province of Dalmatia (ca. 610–950)*, in S. Rudić (ed.), *The World of the Slavs*, Belgrade, 2013, p. 15–35.

<sup>7</sup> Т. Живковић, *Црквена организација у српским земљама (рани средњи век)*, Београд, 2004, p. 73–84; П. Коматина, *Црквена политика Византије од краја иконоборства до смрти цара Василија I*, Београд, 2014, p. 261–285; С. Пириватрић, *Ђирилометодијевске традиције и српске области пре постанка аутокефалне цркве у краљевству Немањића 1219. године*, in Ј. Радић, В. Савић (ed.), *Свети Ђурило и Методије и словенско писано наслеђе (863–2013)*, Београд, 2014, p. 103–124, 103–107.

(944–959) and John I (969–976), but waned during the occasional Byzantine-Bulgarian wars (894–927).<sup>8</sup> The theoretical question of the church commemoration of the Byzantine emperor in the Serbian archonties, can only be hypothetically answered in this way: the commemoration was continuous from the time of Basil I, with the exception of a short-term Bulgarian occupation of Serbia, whereas a certain discontinuity can be supposed for the earlier periods.

The renewal of direct or indirect rule from Constantinople after the demise of the Bulgarian empire at the hands of Basil II (976–1025) in 1018, included Serbian regions as well. The manner in which Byzantine-Roman control was exerted over Diocletia, Travunija, Serbia and Zahumlje presupposed their ephemeral inclusion into the administrative (thematic) system of the Empire and constant cooperation with the local ruling dynasties. The weakening of the Empire in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the strengthening of the local dynasty of Travunian descent in Diocletia, Serbia and Zahumlje by 1042, were connected processes, the consequences of which were the cessation of direct Byzantine administration, followed by the granting of court titles to the local rulers and their inclusion into the virtual court of the Constantinopolitan emperor.<sup>9</sup> With regard to the church administration, in 1019–1020 Basil II reorganized the territory of the former Bulgarian Patriarchate as an archbishopric with its seat in Ohrid, while in 1024 he moved to achieve a demarcation of the church spheres of Rome and Constantinople. As far as can be reconstructed, the demarcation line left Serbia, Travunija and Zahumlje within the frames of the Roman church, i.e. the Archbishopric of Dubrovnik, whereas Diocletia belonged to the sphere of the Constantinopolitan metropolis, i.e. the metropolis of Dyrrachion. Both of these areas were adjoined to the Archbishopric of Bulgaria with its centre in Ohrid, and its western bishoprics in Prizren, Lipljan, Ras and Sirmium.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier. A Political Study of the Northern Balkans, 900–1204*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 18–58; Т. Живковић, *Јужни Словени под византијском влашћу*, Београд, 2002, p. 341–444; И. Коматина, *Црква и држава у српским земљама од XI до XIII века*, Београд, 2016, p. 51–91. Cf. also S. Pirivatrić, *The Dynamics of the Byzantine-Serbian relations*, in D. Popović, D. Vojvodić (ed.), *Byzantine Heritage and Serbian Art*, I–III, vol. I: V. Bikić (ed.), *Process of Byzantinization and Serbian Archaeology*, Belgrade, 2016, p. 17–35, 19–21 (also for further periods).

<sup>9</sup> Љ. Максимовић, *Организација византијске власти у новоосвојеним областима после 1018. године*, in *ZRVI*, 36 (1997), p. 31–44 (= *Огледи о политичкој моћи у Византији*, Београд, 2013, p. 119–136); P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, p. 77–79, 117–135; Lj. Maksimović, *To Βυζάντιο και οι Σέρβοι τον 11<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα: ζήτημα εσωτερικής ή εξωτερικής πολιτικής*; in V. Vlysidou (ed.), *Η Αυτοκρατορία σε κρίση (·). Το Βυζάντιο τον 11<sup>ο</sup> αιώνα (1025–1081)*, Αθήνα, 2003, p. 75–85; П. Коматина, *Србија и Дукља у делу Јована Скилице*, in *ZRVI*, 49 (2012), p. 159–186.

<sup>10</sup> Б. Крсмановић, *О односу управне и црквене организације на подручју Охридске архиепископије*, in Б. Крсмановић, Љ. Максимовић, Р. Радић (ed.), *Византијски свет на Балкану*, I, *Охридска архиепископија у византијском свету*, Београд, 2012, p. 17–39; Ј. Калић, *Црквене прилике у српским земљама до стварања архиепископије 1219. године*, in В. Ђурић (ed.), *Сава*

In the mid-11<sup>th</sup> century two convergent processes – one of general, another of local importance – made regional church jurisdiction a distinctive mark of belonging to one or another of two increasingly alienated worlds – that of Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism: the schism of 1054 happened at the moment when the power of Diocletia had started to grow. With the rise of the rulers of Diocletia and their independence from the Byzantine emperors also came the title of king, recognized by the Pope. A former ally of the emperor, King Mihajlo, the ruler of Diocletia and the adjacent Serbian regions, abandoned the hierarchy of the Constantinopolitan court, where he held the rank of protospatharius, and joined the western system, where emperors and popes were engaged in mutual rivalry, bestowing crowns and royal titles. In 1077 Mihajlo requested that the Pope send him a flag, which at the time was considered a sign of a ruler's loyalty and obedience. Mihajlo's son and successor King Bodin, styled as ruler of Diocletia and Serbia, was included as an unstable ally into the Constantinopolitan hierarchy by Alexios I Komnenos (1081–1118), most probably at the beginning of the Emperor's reign. Bodin was addressed as *exousiastes*, a Byzantine equivalent of his royal title, and was granted the court title of *protosebastos*. However, in ca. 1085 he seized control of the region of Ras from the Empire, where the most remote of the western bishoprics that belonged to the Orthodox archbishopric of Ohrid were situated. The creation of an ephemeral archbishopric in Bar by (anti) Pope Clement III in 1089, with authority stretching to Serbia, Bosnia and Travunija, should also be attributed to his political aspirations.<sup>11</sup> The Serbian perception of the Romans – Romaioi as “Greeks” and the Byzantine empire as the “Greek empire”, visible in the Serbian sources from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, is most probably the result of Roman propaganda at the first place, conceived within the context of the papal project concerning the restoration of the Roman empire with the cooperation of Charlemagne, after 800, appreciable from the epoch of Pope Nicolas I (858–867).<sup>12</sup> This phenomenon was to be a lasting consequence of the inclusion of the Serbian lands into the Roman jurisdictional area, and it is most likely that it was strengthened in the Serbian political perception through the connections of Diocletia with the Roman See. With respect to all these circumstances the commemoration of the Byzantine emperor at

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*Немањић – Свети Сава. Историја и предање*, Београд, 1979, p. 27–53 (= *Европа и Срби*, Београд, 2006, p. 113–152); S. Pirivatrić, *Between Constantinople, Rome and Ohrid: A Short Survey of Church organization in the Serbian principalities 1019–1219*, in A.-E. Tachiaos (ed.), *Cyril and Methodius: Byzantium and the World of the Slavs*, Thessaloniki, 2015, p. 655–664; И. Коматина, *Црква и држава у српским земљама*, p. 91–123.

<sup>11</sup> J. Leśny, *Studia nad początkami serbskiej monarchii Nemaniczów (połowa XI–koniec XII wieku)*, Wrocław – Warszawa – Kraków – Gdańsk – Łódź, 1989, p. 79–96; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, p. 138–150; П. Коматина, *Византијска титула Константина Бодина*, in *ZRVI*, 48 (2011), p. 61–76; S. Pirivatrić, *Between Constantinople, Rome and Ohrid*, p. 659–660; И. Коматина, *Црква и држава у српским земљама*, p. 132–144.

<sup>12</sup> *PG* 119, 4; *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Epistolae VII, 82, p. 433.

church service within the realm of Diocletia had most probably been abolished sometime before Mihajlo became a king.

The conquest of Ras broke the control of the Byzantine emperors over that region for decades, and proved to be the crucial precondition for a future turnover. Emperor Alexios I tried afterwards to establish control over the Serbian territories, i.e. over Bodin and Vukan, who was appointed local ruler in Raška by the king of Diocletia. During a confrontation Bodin was defeated and captured, but remained in power, undoubtedly with the emperor's approval. On the other hand, as the master of Serbia, now with Ras as its central region, Vukan led a series of military incursions into the territories of the Empire. The conflicts were ended with the meeting of Emperor Alexios Komnenos and Župan Vukan in 1094 and with the acknowledgment of Byzantine supreme power, the dispatch of Serbian hostages to Constantinople and with the demarcation. The feeble control of Byzantium over the Diocletia of Bodin's descendants was confirmed in later military campaigns, one of which was led by future Emperor John Komnenos. So Alexios I gradually imposed himself as the supreme lord of both states, at least for a while. The model of the Byzantine emperor's dominance included exercising his supreme rights to choose or confirm their rulers. In ca. 1122 Emperor John II Komnenos (1118–1143) retook the region of Ras for the Byzantine realm, a fact that meant the return of an Orthodox bishop and also a reincorporation of this bishopric into the jurisdiction of the Archbishopric of Ohrid. Power was shared between the Byzantine generals and members of the local dynasty of Vukan's relatives and descendants. During the first half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Serbia, now with its core in the region of Ras, became much more important than the other regions of Bodin's former kingdom – that of Diocletia, Zahumlje, Travunija or Bosnia, which was already politically separated from the rest of Serbia by this time.<sup>13</sup>

However, in the area where the two Roman empires – the Byzantine of the Komnenoi and the German of the Hohenstaufens – confronted each other, with their unstable allies Hungary and Serbia, the existence of the Orthodox Bishop in Ras must have depended on a concrete Byzantine presence in the region. The Byzantine domination in Ras was challenged several times during the Byzantine-Hungarian wars of 1127–1129 and 1149–1155 with several consequent apostasies on the part of Serbian rulers – of Uroš I and his sons Uroš II, Beloš and Desa, who inclined more towards their Roman-Catholic Hungarian cousins than to the Greek-Orthodox Byzantine emperor. Namely, they were vassals of the Byzantine emperor, but they also had close family connections to the ruling dynasty of Hungary – Jelena, a daughter of Grand Župan Uroš I was married to Bela, the future king, in the context of the 1127–1129 conflict. The Byzantine garrisons were finally withdrawn from the region of Ras

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<sup>13</sup> И. Коматина, *Српски владари у Алексијади – хронолошки оквири деловања*, in *ZRVI*, 52 (2015), p. 173–194; Т. Живковић, *Дукља између Рашке и Византије у првој половини XII века*, in *ZRVI*, 43 (2006), p. 451–466. Αγγ. Παπαγεωργίου, *Βυζάντιο και Σέρβοι: Το ζήτημα των εκστρατειών του Ιωάννη Β' Κομνηνού εναντίον των Σέρβων*, in *Εἶσα και Εσπέρια*, 8 (2012), p. 353–366.

after 1155, leaving power exclusively in the hands of the local ruling family of the grand župan, who was nonetheless forced to acknowledge the Byzantine emperor as his master, was invested by him and became his pronoiar of a kind.<sup>14</sup>

It was Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180) who reaffirmed the imperial authority in Serbia. His arbitration between two candidates to the throne of the Grand Župan in 1155 before German, French and Turkish emissaries was a scene calculated to impress and to show to the rival empire and others the nature of his imperial sovereignty over the Serbs.<sup>15</sup> He also started to change the negative balance of power towards a predominant Byzantine influence in Serbia by investing the secondary branch of Vukan's family into the position of local 'power-sharing' rulers, being his vassals as well. The appearance of Stefan Nemanja and his brothers in that capacity should be seen as part of the emperor's enterprise to diminish Hungarian influence in Ras and Serbia and to strengthen that of Byzantium. Manuel I finally eliminated the pro-Hungarian branch in the Serbian ruling family by the deposition of Grand Župan Desa in 1165, during the new Byzantine-Hungarian conflict in 1162–1167. The year 1167 marked the peak of Byzantine power after the epoch of successful wars, controlling the regions of Dalmatia, Croatia, Srem, Bosnia, Serbia and Diocletia, in one way or another, as parts of the Empire. After he became grand župan, Stefan Nemanja (1166–1196) demonstrated a tendency to liberate himself from dependence on the Byzantine emperors on several occasions during his long rule (in 1172, from 1183–1191).<sup>16</sup> His growing independence, as well as the conquest of the Byzantine province of Diocletia and Dalmatia, was followed by the abolition of the liturgical commemoration of the Byzantine emperor as a ruling sovereign and the introduction of Nemanja's own name into this practice.<sup>17</sup> During the Third Crusade, in 1189 Nemanja established a friendly relationship with the German

<sup>14</sup> F. Makk, *The Arpads and the Comneni. Political relations between Hungary and Byzantium in the 12<sup>th</sup> century*, Budapest, 1989, p. 31–62; P. Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143–1180*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 41–95; P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, p. 211–247; J. Калић, *Жупан Белаш*, in *ZRVI*, 36 (1997), p. 63–81 (= *Европа и Срби*, p. 623–642); Lj. Maksimović, *Byzantinische Herrscherideologie und Regierungsmethoden im Falle Serbien. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis des Byzantinischen Commonwealth*, in C. Scholz, G. Makris (ed.), *ΠΟΛΥΠΛΕΥΡΟΣ ΝΟΥΣ. Miscellanea für Peter Schreiner zu seinem 60. Geburtstag*, München – Leipzig, 2000, p. 174–192 (= *Византијски свет и Срби*, Београд, 2008, p. 159–177); С. Пириватрић, *Манојло I Комнин, „царски сан“ и „самодрици области српског престола“*, in *ZRVI*, 48 (2011), p. 89–118.

<sup>15</sup> P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, p. 245–247; E. Blangez-Malamut, M. Casouros, *L'image des Serbes dans la rethorique byzantine de la seconde moitié du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in K. Fledelius (ed.), *Byzantium. Identity, Image, Influence, XIX International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Copenhagen, 18–24 August 1996, Major Papers*, Copenhagen, 1996, p. 97–122; В. Станковић, *Срби у поезији Теодора Продрома и Анонима Манганског*, in *ZRVI*, 43 (2006), p. 437–450.

<sup>16</sup> P. Stephenson, *Byzantium's Balkan Frontier*, p. 247–274; J. Калић, *Два царства у српској историји XII века*, in *ZRVI*, 38 (1999/2000), p. 197–212 (= *Европа и Срби*, p. 563–581).

<sup>17</sup> Стефан Првовенчани, *Житије светог Симеона, Сабрана дела*, ed. Т. Јовановић, trans. Љ. Јухас-Георгиевска, Београд, 1999, p. 14–129, 36–41.



Roman emperor Frederic I Barbarossa (1152–1190), appearing also as his potential voluntary vassal. However, being defeated by Isakios II Angelos (1185–1195) in the important battle of the Morava in 1191, he had to acknowledge again the supreme power of the emperor, but without the obligation to send him auxiliary troops, while the marriage of the emperor's niece, Eudokia, to Nemanja's future heir, Stefan, signified his inclusion into the system of family rule of the Angeloi i.e. Komnenoi. The foundation of Studenica monastery shows, in a special way, the nature of the new relation between the emperor and the grand župan: Nemanja, as can be reconstructed, issued a chryssobull for his endowment and signed it as an "autokrator of all Serbian and maritime lands" (in Serbian). A Slav translation of the Byzantine title 'autokrator', the title 'samodržac' described the quasi-imperial capacity of his rule over the entire territory of his state, including the right to appoint and invest an heir, as indeed he did in 1196 when he abdicated in favour of Stefan, calling on everyone, in particular his eldest son Vukan, to submit to the new ruler, who was soon invested with the court title of sebastokrator.<sup>18</sup> An important difference between the family of Nemanja and the previous generation of grand župans was the establishment of what have been termed monumental church endowments. His ktetorial activity presupposed cooperation with local bishops, which made him the defender of the western border of the Archbishopric of Ohrid, itself an outpost of the imperial policy in the interior of the Balkans. His ktetorial devotion reached its highest point after he abdicated and became the monk Simeon, with the renovation of the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos carried out together with his youngest son, the monk Sava, as the result both of their Christian zeal and the high political interests of the imperial court.<sup>19</sup> The foundation of a Serbian Hilandar summarized in a way the outcome of Byzantine-Serbian relations at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, as well as the Byzantine-Hungarian struggle for domination over Serbia. The introductory lines of Nemanja's charter for Hilandar, issued in 1198 reflect the new quality of this relation, in which the divine origin of the power of the Byzantine emperor, the Hungarian king and the Serbian grand župan, and their hierarchical relation, are specially indicated.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Lj. Maksimović, *L'idéologie du souverain dans l'État serbe et la construction de Studenica*, in V. Kopaň (ed.), *Студеница и византијска уметност око 1200. године*, Београд, 1988, p. 35–49, 36–41 (= *Византијски свет и Срби*, p. 113–131); С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија Немањића. Дипломатичка студија*, Београд, 1997, p. 100–110; С. Пириватрић, *Хронологија и историјски контекст подизања манастира Студенице*, in *Зограф*, 39 (2015), p. 47–56.

<sup>19</sup> Ј. Калић, *Охридска архиепископија и Србија XII века*, in *ZRVI*, 44/1 (2007), p. 197–208; М. Живојиновић, *Историја Хиландара*, Београд, 1998, p. 43–72; В. Krsmanović, *Mount Athos and Political Thought in the Slavic World*, in I. Ilyev et al. (ed.), *Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Sofia, 22–27 August 2011, Volume I, Plenary papers*, Sofia, 2011, p. 145–166.

<sup>20</sup> Lj. Maksimović, *L'idéologie du souverain dans l'État serbe et la construction de Studenica*, p. 36–37; С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија Немањића*, p. 60–69.

The court in Constantinople must have perceived Serbia at that time as its bastion towards Hungary and a part of the system of the imperial family rule – Grand Župan and Sebastokrator Stefan and his wife Eudokia were theoretically co-rulers, their state was mostly in the jurisdictional area of the Orthodox Archbishop of Ohrid, whose bishop in Ras had constitutive importance in the state, whereas the newly built monastery of Hilandar on Mont Athos represented a pledge of strong commitment from Serbia to the most significant spiritual centre of the Empire. However, this state of affairs did not last long. The rise of papal power during the time of Innocent III (1198–1216) and especially the outcome of the Fourth Crusade in 1204 with a further fragmentation of the Byzantine empire, a continuation of the process that had already started in the 1180s, brought about numerous short-term oscillations in the politics of the Serbian rulers of that time.<sup>21</sup> The duality, in terms of church jurisdiction, within the state of “all Serbian and Maritime Lands” that Nemanja had left to his two sons contributed significantly to this. The coastal regions remained mostly under the jurisdiction of the Archbishops of Dubrovnik and Split, i.e. the see of Rome, while the jurisdiction of Dubrovnik over the old church province of Serbia was at that time already limited to Bosnia (*regnum Servilie quod est Bosna*), i.e. the rest was within the territory of the Orthodox Bishop of Ras. The de facto division of the ecclesiastical province of Serbia into Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic jurisdictions was clearly an event with extremely important long term consequences. However, leaving aside the state of the bans of Bosnia, we will concentrate our attention here on the state of the grand župans, with the center in the region of Ras. The jurisdictional area of Dubrovnik was additionally limited by the tendency of separation of the episcopal see of Bar, which culminated in 1199 when, after an initiative started by Vukan, the ruler of the so-called “Maritime Lands” (the former Byzantine province of Diocletia and Dalmatia), Pope Innocent III recognized the rank of archbishopric for the throne of Bar (entrusting him with the jurisdiction over the nearby coastal cities and regions of Diocletia and Arvanon) and sent a pallium for the archbishop. At the same time, Grand Župan Stefan (1196–1227) asked the Pope for a crown which he did not get due to the opposition of the Hungarian king, while his marriage to the daughter of the Byzantine emperor was ended. After the very short reign of Vukan (1202–1205), who also hoped to obtain a crown, but did not get one, again because of the opposition of the Hungarian king, Stefan returned to the throne of Serbia. The reconciliation between brothers was consecrated on the relics of their venerable father who had died in 1199 and been translated from Hilandar to Studenica in 1207, while a few years later the Myrrh streaming from his grave was accepted as a sign of his sanctity. A period followed in which the influence of their younger brother archimandrite Sava, the future

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<sup>21</sup> B. Ferjančić, *Les états et les rapports internationaux après 1204*, in *The 17<sup>th</sup> International Byzantine Congress, Major papers, Dumbarton Oaks/Georgetown University, Washington, D.C., 3–8 August 1986*, New York, 1986, p. 639–668; id., *Србија и византијски свет у првој половини XIII века (1204–1261)*, in *ZRVI* 27/28, (1989), p. 103–148; Lj. Maksimović, *La Serbie et les contrées voisines avant et après la IV<sup>e</sup> croisade*, in A. Laiou (ed.), *Urbs Capta. The Fourth Crusade and its Consequences, La IV<sup>e</sup> Croisade et ses conséquences*, Paris, 2005, p. 269–282 (= *Византијски свет и Срби*, p. 417–432).

Saint Sava was strong, marked by the predominance of his political conceptions which rested on the institution of the deposed Emperor Alexios III (1195–1203), who was still considered the rightful Byzantine (“Greek”, in the local parlance of the time) emperor in Serbia.<sup>22</sup> However, ca. 1215 a further change occurred when Grand Župan Stefan recognized Henry of Flanders, the Latin emperor of Constantinople, as the Byzantine (“Greek”) emperor, obviously slighting the imperial dignity of Theodore I Laskaris (1205–1221), who in 1208 was crowned as the emperor of the Romans in Nicaea.<sup>23</sup> Further steps included Stefan’s turn towards Venice and the papacy, followed by his marriage to Anna Dandolo and his coronation as king of “all Serbian and maritime lands” in 1217 with the crown sent to him by Pope Honorius III (1216–1227) through his legates.

Thus, the Serbian ruler entered into the order of the papal kings and became a part of the hierarchy of Western rulers, much as was the case at the time of the King of Diocletia Mihajlo, to whose precedent, it seems likely, Stefan appealed in his pretensions to the crown. It would be reasonable to assume that the next step, which never ensued, would have been the appointment of a Roman Catholic archpriest for those areas of the king’s state that were not under the jurisdiction of one of the coastal archbishops (a similar case occurred in Bulgaria a few years earlier, when the Pope appointed his primate there). The enterprise of archimandrite Sava, who had withdrawn to Mount Athos sometime earlier, led to the redefinition of the church and political circumstances in the state of his brother in the next few years, as well as to the relation of the church and state with regard to the different ‘Roman’ authorities.<sup>24</sup>

Sava first travelled to Nicaea where he asked Emperor Theodore I Laskaris to have the Ecumenical Patriarch consecrate an archbishop for the state ruled by his brother Stefan. It is important to point out that the figure of Emperor Alexios III, who in the meantime had died, played an important part in the negotiations, all the more so, because Sava referred to the kinship between Nemanjić and Laskarids before the Nicaean emperor, established by the marital diplomacy of the Angeloi, i.e. Komnenoi, by marrying the emperor’s daughters to Stefan Nemanjić and Theodore Laskaris. More importantly, Sava’s appeal to the emperor

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<sup>22</sup> Г. Суботић, Б. Миљковић, И. Шпадијер, И. Тот (ed.), *Натписи историјске садржине у зидном сликарству, I, XII–XIII век*, Београд, 2015, р. 35–44 (Б. Миљковић); С. Пириватрић, *Византијски свет и постанак краљевства и аутокефалне цркве све српске и поморске земље* (forthcoming).

<sup>23</sup> Стефан Првовенчани, *Житије светог Симеона*, р. 100–105; С. Пириватрић, *Византијски свет и постанак краљевства и аутокефалне цркве*.

<sup>24</sup> D. Obolensky, *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford, 1988, р. 115–172 (= *Шест византијских портрета*, Београд, 1991, р. 121–173); Б. Ферјанчић, Љ. Максимовић, *Свети Сава између Епира и Никеје*, in С. Ћирковић (ed.), *Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији*, Београд, 1998, р. 13–25; С. Ћирковић, *Свети Сава између Истока и Запада*, in *Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији*, р. 27–37; Ј. Калић, *Држава и црква у Србији XIII века*, in *ZRVI*, 46 (2009), р. 129–137; И. Коматина, *Црква и држава у српским земљама*, р. 192–228.

as a person with the power to intervene in the church affairs of the archbishopric of Ohrid was an acknowledgment of Theodore I as an authentic Byzantine (“Greek”) emperor. Along with his request, Sava offered the promise of the future liturgical commemoration of the emperor by the newly consecrated archbishop.<sup>25</sup> This diplomatic card should be perceived as part of Sava’s endeavors to reestablish the old political order, with the Byzantine emperor at its head, which had, presumably, been embodied, only a few years before, in the liturgical commemoration of the then living emperor, Alexios III Angelos, and which was reestablished in the time of Isaak II Angelos and Stefan Nemanja. Be that as it may, the emergence of the portrait of a Byzantine emperor in the iconographic program of the Mileševa monastery, possibly the only one of its kind in the Serbian church art of that time, placed just opposite the portrait of the ruling Serbian king, should be understood, in spite of recent controversy as to the exact identity of the painted figure, as a consequence of Sava’s agreement with Emperor Theodore. The older, as well as the later history of the church commemoration of the Byzantine emperor in the Serbian lands, which was an important expression of the conception of the hierarchy of the Orthodox rulers and of the true Emperor as the guardian of the faith, can be reconstructed mostly in a hypothetical way. Even though Sava’s mission led to the acknowledgment of Theodore I Laskaris as a true Orthodox emperor, the ethnic interpretation of his title in Serbia emphasized the Greek and not the Roman element, and thus remained within the context of the Western, papal discourse on the Byzantine Roman empire.<sup>26</sup> After 1219 the Nicaean emperor was perceived in Serbia as a “Constantinopolitan emperor”, which was, understandably, a case quite the opposite of the one valid only a couple of years earlier, when the Latin Emperor had been presented as the “Greek emperor” and also a significant indicator of a sui generis current theory of the *translatio imperii*. Consecrated as an archbishop in Nicaea, Sava was given the right of autocephaly, i.e. an independency in choosing and consecrating the archbishops at the territorial church council without the need to obtain confirmation of the synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Sava apparently justified his request by highlighting the autocratic, quasi-imperial character of his brother’s rule, who also did not need the consent of other earthly authorities in choosing and investing his heir. The agreement included the obligation of liturgical commemoration of the Ecumenical Patriarch, which symbolized wider church unity and a parental relationship between the new autocephalous church and the mother-church.<sup>27</sup>

In his relations towards Old Rome, Archbishop Sava minded the apostolic tradition and the primacy of the episcopal cathedra, as well as the royal dignity of “the Pope and the great Roman state”, as he addressed Pope Honorius III in his letter, which was brought to Rome

<sup>25</sup> Доментијан, *Житије светог Саве*, ed. Т. Јовановић, trans. Љ. Јухас-Георгиевска, Београд, 2001, p. 195–196.

<sup>26</sup> Љ. Максимовић, *Значење речи Грк и Јелин у српским средњовековним изворима*, in *ZRVI*, 38 (1999/2000), p. 215–227 (= *Византијски свет и Срби*, p. 219–231).

<sup>27</sup> Доментијан, *Житије светог Саве*, p. 201–202.

by his envoy, Bishop Methodios, in spring 1220. As can be reconstructed, archbishop Sava requested that Pope Honorius acknowledge the newly created situation – the existence of an Orthodox archbishop, who would, with the blessings of the Pope as the person who “shares his throne with the holy apostles” (Saint Peter and Saint Paul), crown the ruler with the king’s wreath sent also by him, the Pope. In his request, Sava appealed to the tradition of Diocletia as an old, i.e. first kingdom.<sup>28</sup> Sava’s diplomatic address to Honorius III was based on his respect for the Pope’s prerogatives and his dual character as Roman Bishop and ruler, which was followed by Sava’s acceptance of the Byzantine theory of the symphony between the church and the state in canon law, as well as by a careful avoidance of everything that was viewed as dogmatic deviation and novelty introduced by those outside the Orthodox Church, i.e. “the Pope and the Christians in the Western parties”.<sup>29</sup>

Archbishop Sava finally crowned his brother Stefan in the coronation church of the Žiča monastery, which became a pattern for the sanctification of earthly rulers in Serbia over the coming decades. The hybrid political system, created by Archbishop Sava, determined the position of the Serbian ruler and archbishop in the political and church hierarchies of the two Romes. When compared to the state of affairs in 1019 – the year of the previous major intervention of the Roman Byzantine emperor in the church affairs in Illyricum – the situation in 1219 showed a significant difference. There was no possibility for an exact delimitation of the church jurisdictions to be made. Now the Orthodox see of Žiča overlapped with the three maritime catholic archbishoprics – that of Split, Dubrovnik and Bar. This overlapping was real in the coastal regions and more theoretical deeper in the interior of the country. Furthermore, during the thirteenth century the Catholic maritime archbishops fought each other because of their conflicting claims to jurisdiction over the interior, thus continuing the process that had begun earlier. Duality of legal theories, real or invented ancient rights on one side, and the reality of state and church powers on the other, would endure throughout the entire period of the Nemanjić dynasty and would continue into later epochs.

Challenges to the new position of the secular and ecclesiastical authorities in Serbia came from various sides. Initially, in 1220, the Archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatinos challenged the legality of Sava’s ordination as Archbishop, as well as the separation of certain bishoprics from his dominion, threatening Sava with excommunication. King Stefan Radoslav Doukas (1227–1233), married to the daughter of Despot Theodor I Angelos (1215–1230), the lord of Epirus and later emperor in Thessaloniki, temporarily acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Archbishop of Ohrid, which represented only a momentary departure from the earlier political and church orientation towards the Nicaean-Byzantine empire. The reign of King Stefan Vladislav (1233–1243), married to the daughter of the

<sup>28</sup> Доментијан, *Житије светога Саве*, p. 247–250.

<sup>29</sup> М. М. Петровић, *Црквендржавне идеје светога Саве између Цариграда и Рима*, in С. Терзић (ed.), *Европа и Срби*, Београд, 1996, p. 99–114, 108 n. 33.

Bulgarian Emperor John II Asen (1218–1241), was ensued by a certain dissociation of the Serbian kingdom from the two Byzantine empires in the domain of practical policy, which continued into the first years of the rule of King Stefan Uroš I (1243–1276), married to the daughter of an important Hungarian nobleman. However, at the court of Nicaea in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbian king was considered to be the emperor's vassal, although this must have been only an exaggerated rhetorical interpretation based on the liturgical mention of the Nicaean emperor in Serbia and the current political alliance of the two rulers.<sup>30</sup>

At the moment of the restoration of the Orthodox Empire of the Romans, i.e. the Greeks in Constantinople in 1261, which strengthened the authority of Michael VIII Palaiologos (1259–1282) as an Orthodox emperor, King Uroš I was already a vassal of the King of Hungary. The efforts of Michael VIII in renewing the jurisdictional area of the Ohrid Archbishopric in 1273 and his acceptance of union with the Roman Church in Lyons in 1274 led to a crisis in the political and church relations of Serbia and the Byzantine Roman empire, manifested in the omission of the name of the heretical Ecumenical Patriarch Joseph from the dyptichs of the Serbian Archbishop during the reign of Stefan Dragutin (1276–1282), which may subsequently have been reintroduced upon the restoration of Orthodoxy after the death of Michael Palaiologos.<sup>31</sup> At the level of the relations between the rulers, the crisis lasted even longer, perhaps, with certain pauses, until the making of the peace between King Stefan Uroš II Milutin (1282–1321) and Emperor Andronikos II Palaiologos (1282–1328) in 1299, which stopped, at least for a while, the long standing war in Macedonia and significant territorial losses for the Empire. The axis of the peace contract was the marriage of Milutin to the emperor's daughter Simonis, which established a bond of kinship between emperor and king, analogous to that of 'the parent' and 'the beloved son and son-in-law'. Taking into account the nature of this relationship, a question arises about the possible liturgical mention of the emperor as an Orthodox ruler in the state of his adoptive son. The peace agreement included the recognition of earlier conquests in the form of a bridal dowry.<sup>32</sup> 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 and an abandonment of the earlier attempt to renew the old jurisdictional area of the See of Ohrid to its full scale.

Rejecting the Union of 1274, 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 episcopal see of New Rome. Occasional politically motivated negotiations with the

<sup>30</sup> Љ. Максимовић, „Византинизми“ краља Стефана Радослава, in *ZRVI*, 46 (2009), p. 139–147; Б. Миљковић, *Сава, Стефан Радослав и Димитрије Хоматин*, in *ZRVI*, 52 (2015), p. 259–275.

<sup>31</sup> Теодосије Хиландарац, *Живот светога Саве*, ed. Ђ. Трифуновић, Београд 1973, p. 130–132, ex silentio argument, cf. Доментијан, *Житије светога Саве*, p. 201–202.

<sup>32</sup> М. Živojinović, *La frontière serbyzantine dans les premières décennies du XIV<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in *Ευ. Παπαδοπούλου, Δ. Διαλέτη* (ed.), *Βυζάντιο και Σερβία κατά τον ΙΔ' αιώνα*, Αθήνα, 1996, p. 57–66.

Popes about the acceptance of the papal primacy and the creed of the Roman Church would remain a characteristic of the politics of Serbian rulers towards Old Rome i.e. Avignon during the reign of King Milutin and his son and successor King Stefan Uroš III 'Dečanski' (1321–1331). These negotiations were connected with some other important considerations of realpolitik, dynastic marriages and the question of the royal succession. Ultimately, the Byzantine ambition of seeing a descendant of the Paleologos line on the Serbian throne was not crowned with success, but neither was the western hope of seeing an offspring of the Angevins, the titular candidates for the position of the Latin emperors of Constantinople, to take the same seat.<sup>33</sup>

The reign of Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) brought important changes to the political system established by Saint Sava. During his gradual entry into the system of Byzantine imperial power in the first years of the civil war that started in Byzantium after the death of Andronikos III Palaiologos (1328–1341) and lasted, with interruptions, up to 1354, Dušan became the de facto ruler of important parts of the Empire (Macedonia without Thessaloniki, Epiros and Thessaly). However, a lot of questions relating to his formal status must remain open, as there are some indicators which suggest that he acted not only as an ally but as a practical co-ruler with the minor John V Palaiologos (1341–1391). Namely, his agreement of August 1343, with the regents of the young emperor meant recognition of his sovereignty over the lately occupied territories and a change in the traditional Nemanjić title of "King of all Serbian and Maritime lands" with the addition of a third, Byzantine element of the "Greek lands", designating a part of the Empire which he ruled as the "participant in the Greek realm" or "particeps Romaniae" – a factual participant in imperial dominion. The king's agreement with the administration of Mount Athos at the end of 1345 envisaged mentioning the name of Emperor John Palaiologos before the name of the king during the liturgical services.<sup>34</sup> 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 of "Serbia and Romania", as this newly created state conception was manifested in his signatures in the official documents of his chancellery, reflecting the dual concept of his state, a factual personal union of Serbia and (part of) Byzantium under his scepter (his son and heir Uroš

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<sup>33</sup> Б. Тодић, *Апостол Андреја и српски архиепископи на фрескама Сопоћана*, in Љ. Максимовић, Н. Радошевић, Е. Радловић (ed.), *Трећа југословенска конференција византолога*, Београд – Крушевац, 2002, р. 361–379; М. Антоновић, *Срби и Лионска унија: неуспео покушај приближавања* in Р. Поповић, монах Давид (Перовић) (ed.), *950 година од великог раскола (1054) и 800 година од пада Цариграда у руке крсташа (1204)*, Београд, 2005, р. 113–131; С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Свети краљ. Култ Стефана Дечанског*, Београд, 2007, р. 221–268; С. Пириватрић, *Византијско-српски односи из друге половине владавине краља Милутина (1299–1321) у делима савремених цариградских историографа*, in *Манастир Студеница – 700 година Краљеве цркве*, Београд, 2016 (forthcoming).

<sup>34</sup> *Грчке повеље српских владара*, ed. А. Соловјев, В. Мошин, Београд, 1936, V, р. 29–36 (= Variorum Reprints, London, 1974).

was simultaneously granted the courtesy title of king of Serbia). The basic elements of his imperial act, the coronation for the emperor, which was performed by the patriarchs of Serbia and Bulgaria, with the blessing of Mount Athos and certain Greek archpriests too, as well as the previous consecration of the Archbishop of Peć for the Patriarch as a necessary pre-condition for the ceremony of his imperial coronation, were at first treated by Byzantine political actors with a degree of nuance. But later, imperial and patriarchal promulgation were tightened by the excommunication of Dušan, the Serbian Patriarch and his bishops by act of the Patriarch of Constantinople Kallistos I and its synod, probably in the autumn of 1352, in the wider picture of the civil war and the politics of John VI Kantakouzenos (1341–1354), who, as victor in the first phase of this war in 1347, reached a position to challenge with all his imperial authority everything that Dušan had achieved earlier as an ally of the regents.<sup>35</sup> In Constantinople Dušan was seen as a usurper who aped Roman customs such as wearing the imperial diadem. It is not possible to give a reliable explanation of the genesis of Dušan's imperial ambition, but his seven-year residence in Constantinople, from 1314 onwards, with his father (later to become King Stefan 'Dečanski'), must have had a significant influence.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, when he promulgated his imperial law code, inspired by the jurisprudence of Byzantium and Rome, Dušan styled himself as one of the "Greek emperors" in the succession from Constantine the Great. He was usually careful to avoid calling himself emperor of the Romans, insisting rather on the term "Romania", thus stressing the shared nature of his imperial sovereignty, and recognizing the position of John Palaiologos at the apex of the hierarchical pyramid. Thus, the two main elements of his Byzantine title, the "Greeks" and the "Romania" have their roots in Western discourse, which opens speculation on a host of possible motives for their very consistent usage.<sup>37</sup> In 1354 Dušan initiated negotiations with Pope Innocent VI on the union, asking to be nominated as the captain of the Christians against the Muslim Turks, but this unsuccessful action should be conceived also as an attempt to overcome the deadlock in relations with the Emperor and Patriarch in Constantinople. His position in 1355 was certainly unenviable,

<sup>35</sup> S. Ćirković, *Between Kingdom and Empire: Dušan's State (1346–1355) Reconsidered*, in *Βυζάντιο και Σερβία κατά τον ΙΔ' αιώνα*, p. 110–120 (=J. Shepard (ed.), *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe. Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, Aldershot – Burlington, 2007, p. 365–375); N. Oikonomides, *Emperor of the Romans – Emperor of the Romania*, in *Βυζάντιο και Σερβία κατά τον ΙΔ' αιώνα*, p. 121–128; С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Владарска идеологија Немањића*, p. 81–96; Lj. Maksimović, *L'empire de Stefan Dušan: genèse et caractère*, in *ТМ*, 14 (2002), p. 415–428 (= *Византијски свет и Срби*, p. 191–206); С. Пириватрић, *Улазак Стефана Душана у Царство*, in *ZRVI*, 44/2 (2007), p. 381–409.

<sup>36</sup> J. Shepard, *Manners maketh Romans? Young barbarians at the emperor's court*, in E. Jeffreys (ed.), *Byzantine style, religion and civilization. In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, Cambridge, 2006, p. 135–158 (= *Emergent Elites and Byzantium in the Balkans and East-Central Europe*, Variorum Reprints, Farnham, 2011, XII).

<sup>37</sup> С. Марјановић-Душанић, *Елементи царског програма у Душановој повељи уз „Законик“*, in *Прилози за књижевност, језик, историју и фолклор*, LXV–LXVI/1–4 (1999/2000), p. 3–20.



and this lends some credence to certain much later stories of how he died, allegedly during an attempt to conquer Constantinople, although it should again be stressed that no decisive proof of the veracity of such tales is possible.<sup>38</sup>

After Dušan's death in 1355 his imperial idea gradually faded away, while the state inherited by his son Stefan Uroš (1355–1371) fell apart into several larger or smaller areas. Among the local lords, his son Uroš, widow Jelena, half-brother Simeon Uroš Palaiologos and the brother-in-law John Asen Komnenos, as well as a few others, maintained a Byzantine component in their rule, expressed in characteristic terms such as “Romans”, “Romania” or “Greeks”.<sup>39</sup> The most difficult problem, however, remained the excommunication and the factual schism between the Sees of Peć and Constantinople, which was only ended in 1375. The reconciliation led to the official posthumous recognition of the imperial title of the late Dušan by the Byzantine authorities, although limited to Serbia (John V, calling him the “uncle of the Empire”, had already acknowledged this title in 1351), as well as of the right to hold the title of Patriarch of Serbia in the internal correspondence for the Archbishop of Peć.<sup>40</sup> The Serbian traditions of the Empire vanished with the male line of the Nemanjić, whereas the tradition of their Kingdom continued with King Vukašin, who was invested with the title by Emperor Uroš, all up to his death at the battle of Marica in 1371, they continued with his son and heir King Marko, who was actually just a local lord in Macedonia and vassal of the Ottoman sultans, and ended with the death of the latter in 1395. At the same time, the traditions of the Serbian kingdom were taken over to Bosnia by Ban Tvrtko I Kotromanić (1353–1391) who was crowned King of the “Serbs and Bosnia” in 1377.

The downfall and dissolution of Dušan's empire, the migration of the kingdom to Bosnia, and the critics of the his imperial program within Serbian political and church circles contributed at an ideological level to the new entry of certain Serbian rulers into the system of the Byzantine political and virtual court hierarchy. First Emperor John VII and then Manuel II (1391–1425) and John VIII (1425–1448) Palaiologoi invested Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427), Đurađ (1427–1456) and Lazar Branković (1456–1458) – who otherwise styled themselves most frequently as “lords of all Serbs” – with the title of despot in the first half

<sup>38</sup> S. Pirivatrić, *Death of Stefan Dušan. Contribution to the problem*, in M. Kaimakamova, M. Salamon, M. Smorag Rozicka (ed.), *Byzantium, New Peoples, New Powers: The Byzantino-Slav Contact Zone, from the Ninth to the Fifteenth Century*, Cracow, 2007, p. 285–302.

<sup>39</sup> Р. Михальчић, *Крај српског царства*, Београд, 1975 (repr. 1989, 2000); R. Radić, *Ο Συμμεών Ούρεσης Παλαιόλογος και το κράτος του μεταξύ της βυζαντινής και της σερβικής αυτοκρατορίας*, in *Βυζάντιο και Σερβία κατά τον ΙΔ΄ αιώνα*, p. 195–208; Б. Ферјанчић, *Византијски и српски Сер у XIV столећу*, Београд, 1994.

<sup>40</sup> Ф. Баришић, *О измирењу српске и византијске цркве 1375*, in *ZRVI*, 21 (1982), p. 159–182; Б. Ферјанчић, *Византија према Српском царству*, in *Глас САНУ*, 384/Одељење историјских наука, 10 (1998), p. 155–171; D. I. Mureşan, *Le patriarcat oecuménique et les patriarchats balkaniques (Tarnovo, Peć). Enjeux ecclésiastiques et impériaux au XIV<sup>e</sup> s.*, in M.-H. Blanchet, M.-H. Congourdeau, D. I. Mureşan (ed.), *Le patriarcat oecuménique de Constantinople et Byzance hors frontières (1204–1586)*, Paris, 2014, p. 203–242, 228–242.

of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> The relationship of an ideal hierarchy would give substance to the assumption regarding the mention of the Byzantine emperor's name in the liturgical service in the land ruled by the despots, which could have been introduced as early as the church reconciliation of 1375. We should also consider the well-known opposite example from the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the mention of the Byzantine emperor's name was omitted in services in Russia.<sup>42</sup> However, the perception of the Emperor as an Orthodox ruler had to have been an indispensable condition for the liturgical mention, and this did not exist in cases when the emperors had agreed to the Union of the Church. The Byzantine emperor and the Serbian despot split at that point in 1439, since Despot Đurađ Branković did not accept the Union proclaimed at the Council of Florence.

In the intertwined relations of practical politics, dependence and ideal hierarchies, the despots were simultaneously courtiers of the Byzantine-Roman Emperor and vassals of the Ottoman sultans and Hungarian kings. At the time when the Hungarian kings were also the rulers of the Holy Roman empire, as was the case with Sigismund I of Luxembourg (1433–1437), the despots of Raška also entered their hierarchical system. The naming of the despots continued even after the fall of the Serbian despotate in 1459, in Hungary, where the kings invested the descendants of Branković and other noble families with the title of despot, as well as after 1527, in Austria, where Roman Emperor Charles V of Habsburg (1519–1556) continued for a while this practice in his new capacity as the king of Hungary. From the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century this practice ceased as a consequence of the collapse of the Hungarian kingdom, the Ottoman conquest of Budim and the retreat of the Habsburgs from the Serbian territories.<sup>43</sup> After the Ottoman conquests the remaining Byzantine and Serbian lands were included into the Rum-milet whose leadership was entrusted to the Ecumenical Patriarch in Constantinople. The discontinuing history of the Patriarchate in Peć after the fall of Serbia in 1459 is difficult to follow with precision, whereas the renewal of the Patriarchate and the definition of its new territory in 1557 came as a result of the politics of Suleiman I (1520–1566) in response to post-Trent Roman Catholic action in the Balkan peninsula.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> И. Ђурић, *Сумрак Византије. Време Јована VIII Палеолога*, Београд, 1984, 2008 (= *Il crepuscolo di Bisanzio, I tempi di Giovanni VIII Paleologo (1392–1448)*, Roma, 1995, 2001, 2009; *Le crépuscule de Byzance*, Paris 1996); Б. Ферјанчић, *Византинци у Србији прве половине XV века*, in *ZRVI*, 26 (1987), p. 173–215; М. Спремић, *Деспот Ђурађ Бранковић и његово доба*, Београд, 1994; Ј. Калић, *Срби у позном средњем веку*, Београд, 1994.

<sup>42</sup> F. Miklosich, I. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca*, II, Vindobonae, 1862, CCCCXLVII, p. 188–192, 190–192.

<sup>43</sup> С. Ђирковић, *Поствизантијски деспоти*, in *ZRVI*, 38 (1999/2000), p. 395–406.

<sup>44</sup> Р. Самарцић, *Српски народ под турском влашћу*, in id. (ed.), *Историја српског народа*, III, Београд, 1993, p. 7–114.

### Concluding remarks

The political and ideological relations of the Serbs with the ‘universal authorities’, political and ecclesiastical, of the Old and the New Rome, naturally depended on the highly changeable relationship between these two centres, but also on the constantly fluctuating capacities of various Roman institutions to exert real influence over the part of Illyricum, i.e. South-eastern Europe where the Serbs had settled and established their own institutions of society and governance. Given the context of these complex and multi-faceted relationships, the role of local actors in shaping these relationships was, initially, of secondary importance. The ideologically motivated ethnic interpretation promoted in the West, of the Byzantine Roman empire as the Empire of the Greeks rather than of the Romans also became established over time in the Serbian lands as a lasting conception of political ideology, independent of the character and strength of the Byzantine imperial authority. The periodic crises in the imperial power of Constantinople made a redefinition of the relationship between the rulers of Serbia and the Roman authorities unavoidable. Taking an overview of the period as a whole, this phenomenon is most obvious in certain characteristic cases and at particular times. First there was the creation of the ephemeral papal kingdom of Diocletia and Serbia around the year 1077, then the somewhat longer-lasting synthesis of church and state under the Nemanjić dynasty that took shape in about 1217–1220 and which later partially collapsed in the set of circumstances surrounding their unsuccessful attempt to enter the system of Byzantine imperial government between 1342 and 1375, but which nonetheless laid the foundation for a newly conceived relationship which lasted from 1402 until the death of the last Byzantine Roman emperor, only to be taken over, however briefly, by the Germanic Roman emperors in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, in their capacity as kings of Hungary. The picture of ecclesiastical relations is only superficially less complex because in the theoretical and practical overlapping of the competing ‘Roman’ jurisdictions following the Schism of 1054, the foundation of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church in 1219 turned out to be a long lasting phenomenon on the foundations of which a great revival was to be based in 1557. On the other hand, early local examples of the *cuius regio eius religio* principle were the cause of a permanent division in the one-time Roman dioceses of Serbia into Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic parts, a division cemented, and to some extent symbolised by the emergence and historical role of the Nemanjić and Kotromanić dynasties of Ras and Bosnia. As a form of counterpoint to the papal appellation of the Byzantine Roman empire as the Greek empire which spread throughout the Serbian lands, was the liturgical commemoration of the “Greek emperor” as the ‘Emperor of the true faith’, (re)introduced after 1219 in the state of “all Serbian and Maritime Lands”, which at that time the descendants of Nemanja already ruled as “autocrats”, i.e. those who chose and invested their own successors. This practice, which placed the Greek but not the Roman emperor at the centre of the political universe in the Church, certainly was not continuous. Unfortunately, it can only be discussed occasionally on the basis of original data and more often can only be assumed from the political context. Be that as it may, the commemoration of the secular rulers in the churches of the Serbian lands throughout the Middle Ages, seen as a kind of encapsulating political and ecclesiastical statement, is a subject worth further examination.