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## **IMPORTANCE OF DYNASTIC AND POLITICAL TIES FOR CROSS-CULTURAL CONNECTIONS OF NEMANIDE SERBIA WITH THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD AND CENTRAL EUROPE AROUND THE FIRST FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, AND ITS REFLECTIONS ON VISUAL CULTURE OF NEMANIDE SERBIA**

During the reign of the founder of the Nemanide dynasty *Grand Župan* Stephen Nemanja (1166–1198), Serbia (Rascia) finally achieved a certain degree of *independence* from the Byzantine Empire<sup>1</sup>. Twelfth-century Byzantium was a dominant political force in the Balkans whose pattern of foreign policy reflected in its continuous attempts to establish suzerainty all the way up North to the Danube frontier and the Kingdom of Hungary. The tensions between Hungary and Byzantium increased during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180). Within such political constellations, Serbia under Stefan Nemanja was between these two mutually confronted forces. The geopolitical *in-betweenness* of Serbia was reflected in the cultural development of the Nemanjid epoch and in the political ideology that attuned to the influences from both sides.

At first Stefan Nemanja fought against Byzantium, but after the collapse of the anti-Byzantine coalition, in which he participated, in 1172, Nemanja surrendered to the Byzantine emperor Manuel I and recognized him as his sovereign. The roots of Nemanjid dominance in Serbian lands were actually a consequence of Emperor Manuel's choice of Stefan Nemanja, the youngest among four brothers, as the one upon whom the supreme power within the family should be bestowed, and who would, in return, guarantee the strong and undisputed

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of independence here refers to the independence from acknowledgment of the formal Byzantine suzerainty over the Serbian polity (*Shepard J. The Byzantine Commonwealth 1000–1550 // The Cambridge History of Christianity. Vol. 5. Cambridge, 2006. P. 16*).

influence of the Emperor in the distant Balkan hinterland<sup>2</sup>. However, after the emperor's death in 1180, Nemanja again began attacking the Byzantine territory and expanding his rule to the surrounding Byzantine areas<sup>3</sup>.

Nemanja left the throne in 1196 to his second son Stefan. After Nemanja's death in 1200, his heir Stefan the First-Crowned had to defend his rights to the throne from his older brother Vukan, who was a prince and self-proclaimed king in Zeta. Thus began the war between two brothers which lasted from 1202 to 1204 or 1205. At first Stefan was losing battles and had to flee the country in 1202 to the Bulgarian-Kuman prince Kaloyan (prince 1196–1203; king 1204–1207)<sup>4</sup>. Stefan used this situation and in a counter-offensive, with the help of Prince Kaloyan, he returned to the throne in Ras in 1204, while Vukan retreated to Zeta. Fighting between the brothers stopped in 1205 and relations were established as they were before the outbreak of the conflict<sup>5</sup>.

The political situation on the Balkans in 1196, when Nemanja left the throne to his middle son Stephen and became a monk, was completely different than thirty years before, when Nemanja came to power. The collapse of Byzantine influence in the Balkans, which began in the 1180s, saw a shift in the balance of power to the Western Catholic powers, notably Venice and Hungary<sup>6</sup>. Venice and Hungary had intensive but frequently changing relations in the Middle Ages<sup>7</sup>. The second king of the country came from the Orseolo family. The rivalry between two forces led to intensified conflict because of Hungarian rule over Dalmatia in the time of King Béla III in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. This culminated during the Fourth Crusade. Control of the newly formed crusader army was taken over by the powerful Venetian doge Enrico Dandolo, who, to the surprise of all, including the pope himself, first sent an attack on Hungarian Zara in 1202, and then on Byzantium, whose capital Constantinople crusaders conquered in April 1204. On the other hand, commercial connections between Venice and Hungary were flourishing. Venice actually was the most important trading partner of medieval Hungary, especially after 1204<sup>8</sup>. After the fall of Constantinople, Venice started to play a key role in mediating goods from the Far East as well as from the Arabic and Byzantine world to Central Europe<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Vlada Stanković has pointed out that «The roots of Nemanjid dominance in Serbia were a consequence of Emperor Manuel's choice of Stephen Nemanja, the youngest among four brothers, as the one upon whom the supreme power within the family should be bestowed, and who would, in return, guarantee the strong and undisputed influence of the Emperor of the Romans in the Empire's distant Balkan hinterland» (*Stanković V. Beloved Son-in-Law: Charters of Byzantine Emperors to the Hilandar Monastery after the Marriage of King Milutin to Symonis // Scripta. 2013. No. 12. P. 57–68*).

<sup>3</sup> *Istorija srpskog naroda. Knj. 1. Beograd, 1981. S. 251–254.*

<sup>4</sup> At the same time Kaloyan was crowned by the papal legate for king in Trnovo (*Istorija srpskog naroda. Knj. 1. S. 270*).

<sup>5</sup> *Istorija srpskog naroda. Knj. 1. S. 270.*

<sup>6</sup> *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland, c. 900–c. 1300. Cambridge, 2013. P. 248; Eastmond A. Local Saints, Art, and Regional Identity in the Orthodox World after the Fourth Crusade // Speculum. 2003. Vol. 78. No. 3. P. 707–717.*

<sup>7</sup> *Szakács B. Z. From the Harbour of Venice to the Kingdom of Hungary: Art and Trade in the 11<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> Centuries // Hortus Artium Medicavalium. 2016. No. 22. P. 294.*

<sup>8</sup> *Szakács B. Z. From the Harbour of Venice... P. 294.*

<sup>9</sup> *Szakács B. Z. From the Harbour of Venice... P. 294–295.*

The situation also strongly affected the political situation in Serbian lands. Vukan made an alliance with Hungarian king Emerich (1196–1204) against his brother Stefan. Since Vukan had the support of the Hungarians, Stefan had to seek support elsewhere, and after Bulgaria, he finally found it in Venice. Due to its business interests, Venice did not like the eastern coast of the Adriatic to be controlled by Hungary, or by a Hungarian ally. The alliance between Stefan and Venetians, as was usual in Middle Ages, was confirmed through dynastic marriage. Stefan, who was already married, expelled his first wife Eudokia, a daughter of Alexios III Angelos, around 1200, and married Ana Dandolo, daughter of Ranier Dandolo, the vice doge of Venice and the procurator of San Marco, and the granddaughter of the famous doge Enrico Dandolo<sup>10</sup>. Soon after the conflict between two brothers ended in Stefan's favor. In 1217 Stefan got the crown from Pope Honorius the second, which symbolized his final victory over his enemies. Stefan became the first crowned king in the Nemanjic family.

Just two years after the coronation of Stefan the First-Crowned, in 1219 the Patriarchate, exiled in Nicaea, recognized his younger brother Sava as the first Serbian Orthodox Archbishop. Elevation of Stefan to king was perhaps the most powerful lure that the West could offer, and the autocephalous church was the most powerful lure that could be given by the Byzantium. This kind of politics balancing between the East and West, Orthodox and Catholic Christianity remained one of the striking characteristics of the Nemanjic politics. Despite the fact that Orthodoxy became the official state religion in 1219, the Catholic Church, especially on the Adriatic coast, continued to function<sup>11</sup>. Both Simeon Nemanja and Stefan I had first been baptized as Catholics before converting to Orthodoxy, and they continued to patronize Catholic institutions such as Benedictine monastery on the island of Mljet, in addition to their Orthodox foundations, such as Studenica and Žiča monasteries<sup>12</sup>.

The new king had to secure his position both in the country and internationally. In Medieval terms, the legitimacy of the king and his dynasty could not be secured by political connections alone, but also by proving divine right for him and his heirs to rule. It seems that archbishop Sava of Serbia at the same time secured the position of Orthodox church in Serbia, and the royal crown and the legitimacy for his brother and his dynasty to rule. It seems Sava's goal was to secure the position of his brother and his heirs by forming a *saintly dynasty*. Nevertheless, the concept of the Nemanjic saintly dynasty must be credited to Sava, but roots of that concept are closer to the Western precedents than Byzantine. The tradition of saintly dynasty familiar in Central Europe, and neighboring Hungary was never established in Byzantium. Actually, in the sphere of Byzantium no tradition of transfer of power was established. The reason for its considerable instability was that the dynasty itself never became stable, as the road to rulership was open to outsiders too<sup>13</sup>. However, during the reign of John II and his wife Irina Piroška, for the first time in Byzantine history, a common mausoleum of the ruling family, the monastery of Christ Pantokrator, was built. Emperor John II and Piroška created a joint, united imperial mausoleum, after the exclusively personal character of the previous churches and mausoleums of the members of the family (e. g. Anna Dalaseene, Alexios

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<sup>10</sup> Istorija srpskog naroda. Knj. 1. S. 299.

<sup>11</sup> Đurić V., Babić-Đorđević G. Srpska umetnost u Srednjem veku. Knj. 1. Beograd, 1997. S. 50.

<sup>12</sup> Stefan Prvovenčani. Sabrani spisi. Beograd, 1999. S. 124–125.

<sup>13</sup> Font M. The emergence of East Central Europe and approaches to internal differentiation // Medieval East Central Europe in a Comparative Perspective. From Frontier Zones to Lands in Focus. London; New York, 2016. P. 29.

and Irina Doukas). For the first time the Emperor and Empress were buried together in the same mausoleum built to emphasize the unity of the dynasty. John II Komnenos thus became the first founder of an exclusively imperial endowment that arose with the idea of emphasizing imperial power and authority of the ruling family, and the inheritance of the crown within his family branch<sup>14</sup>. Yet is it just a coincidence that such a dynastic endeavor began at the time when the Byzantine Empress was Irina Piroska, daughter of Ladislav I, from the saintly Arpad dynasty? After her father died, and before she became Byzantine Empress, Piroska became the ward of her cousin, King Coloman the Learned (1095–1116). King Coloman, was the first Hungarian king who chose to be buried in the vicinity of the first king of Hungary, St. Stephen and his son Emerich in the royal collegiate church of Székesfehérvár<sup>15</sup>. As Bela Zolt Szakács pointed out, the king's decision must have meant a large scale rebuilding of the old church at the time<sup>16</sup>.

In Hungary, the formation of saintly ruling dynasty began after 1083 when the first Hungarian King Stephen (997–1038) was canonized together with his son Emmerich. The process was initiated by King Ladislav I (1077–1095), but, only after his canonization in 1192, during the reign of the King Stefan II, the Hungarian sovereigns declared themselves as *progeny of the king of the saintly kings*<sup>17</sup>. At the time when Ladislav I was canonized, on Serbian throne was Stefan Nemanja. The Hungarian model must have been the great inspiration for him and his son Sava for the establishing of the saintly Dynasty. Before Stefan Nemanja came into power, rulers of Raška (Rascia) already had close family ties with Arpad dynasty. Hungarian King Bela II (Bela the Blind) (1131–1141) was married to Helena of Serbia, a daughter of the Serbian Grand Župan Uroš I (r. ca. 1112–1145). After the death of Bela the Blind, his oldest son Geza II (1141–1162) came to the throne. When his father died, Geza was still a child, so he started ruling under the guardianship of his mother and her brother, ban Beloš<sup>18</sup>.

At the time of death of his brother Stefan the First-Crowned, Sava has already finished with setting the scene for the inclusion of the Serbian first crowned king, among the saints. Complete, typological model of royal holiness, with all the important components — hagiographic, liturgical, ritual, as well as those that belong to the domain of the so-called «visual culture» Sava already accomplished by building the cult of his father Simeon Nemanja, the holy founder of the family line. Nemanja died in 1200 as a monk Simeon in the Monastery of Chilandar<sup>19</sup>. Almost immediately after his death, he was proclaimed a saint.

<sup>14</sup> *Stanković V.* 1) Komnenian monastic foundations in Constantinople: Questions of Method and Context // *Belgrade Historical Review*. 2011. No. 2. P. 47–73; 2) Komnini u Carigradu: (1057–1185): Evolucija jedne vladarske porodice. Beograd, 2006. S. 334–335.

<sup>15</sup> *Engel P.* Temetkezések a középkori székesfehérvári bazilikában // *Századok*. 1987. No. 121. P. 613–637.

<sup>16</sup> *Szakács B. Z.* What did Piroska see at Home? Art and Architecture in Hungary around 1100 // *Piroska and the Pantokrator. Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople*. Budapest, 2019. P. 50; *Marosi E.* A romanika Magyarországon. Budapest, 2013. P. 68.

<sup>17</sup> *Font M.* The emergence of East Central Europe... P. 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Kalić J.* Grand Župan Uroš II of Rascia // *Balkanica*. 2016. No. 47. P. 77.

<sup>19</sup> For understanding Nemanja's position between Byzantium and Hungary at the time, is important to mention the text of his Hilandar charter from 1198. In this charter Nemanja, already at that time monk Symeon, states that God created all and appointed people as rulers, and that Merciful God has made Greeks the emperors and Hungarians kings and furthermore he describes how he, as a

Sava decided not to leave the body of his father in Chilandar, but to transfer it to the Monastery of Studenica (Fig. 1) in the Bishopric of Ras<sup>20</sup>, and to bury it in its *katholikon* dedicated to the *Virgin Evergetis*<sup>21</sup>. After the translation (*translatio*) of relics, Studenica immediately became the center of the cult of Saint Simeon Nemanja, and the pivotal point of development of the Nemanide ideology as a saintly dynasty<sup>22</sup>. The *translatio* was depicted in the narrative images of St. Simeon's life created some twenty-five years later, in the exonarthex of the *katholikon* of Studenica, that was built by Simeon's grandson King Radoslav I (1227–1233)<sup>23</sup>. The south chapel of Radoslav's exonarthex was dedicated to St. Simeon, and its walls were decorated with the scenes of Simeon Nemanja's cycle. The cycle culminates with the scene of *Translatio* of the body of Simeon Nemanja from Chilandar to Studenica (Fig. 2). It shows the body of the Saint being carried on a bier. The right hand section shows the church of



Fig. 1. Studenica Monastery, Serbia. Photo by Nikola Piperski

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grand prince, united Serbian fatherland and now builds and donates holy monastery (*Sveti Sava*. Sabrani spisi. Beograd, 1986. S. 31–33).

<sup>20</sup> Following much scholarly debate, it has been determined that the *translatio* of Nemanja's body from Chilandar to Studenica took place in 1207 (*Maksimović Lj.* O godini prenosa Nemanjinih moštiju u Srbiju // Zbornik Radova Vizantoloskog Instituta. 1986. No. 24–25. S. 437–444).

<sup>21</sup> *Erdeljan J.* A Contribution to the Study of Marian Piety and Related Aspects of Visual Culture in Late Medieval Balkans: Several Notable Examples Recorder in Serbian Written Sources // *Ikon*. 2017. No. 10. P. 370.

<sup>22</sup> *Erdeljan J.* Studenica. A New Perspective? // Proceedings of the International Conference Held on 15 December 2008 at the University of Cologne. Frankfurt am Main, 2013. P. 33; *Popović D.* 1) Srpski vladarski grob u srednjem veku. Beograd, 1992. S. 24–47; 2) Svetiteljsko proslavljanje Simeona Nemanje: Prilog proučavanju kulta moštiju kod Srba // Zbornik radova Vizantoloskog instituta. 1998. No. 37. S. 27–40; 3) O nastanku kulta svetog Simeona // Stefan Nemanja — Sveti Simeon Mirotočivi: Istorija i predanje. Međunarodni naučni skup. Septembar, 1996. S. 41–73.

<sup>23</sup> The narthex of King Radoslav was created in the third decade of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, certainly until 1234, and painted during the 4<sup>th</sup> decade when Radoslav was no longer king (*Đurić V., Babić-Dorđević G.* Srpska umetnost... S. 136, 1821–1885).

Studenica, where a group of priests and monks led by Sava, accompanying the most holy icon of Mother of God, greet the body. The narrative depictions provide no visual signifiers



Fig. 2. The cycle culminates with the scene of Translatio of the body of Simeon Nemanja from Chilandar to Studenica, south chapel of Radoslav's exonarthex, Studenica. Photo by Nikola Piperski

of Simeon's regal status, nor do they make any reference to his activities as a ruler. As Antony Eastmond pointed out, this distinguishes the cult from its Western equivalent of royal saints, in which sanctity is largely determined by indicators of regal status, so the cycle presents an explicitly Orthodox image of regal sanctity (710, 10). Visual depiction served to reinforce the importance of the saint's body. The very existence of the cycle demonstrated Simeon's worth as a saint, not only were such cycles rare, but Orthodox theology believed that image of saint was itself a spiritual truth, rather than a mere depiction of it, and the presence of most holy icon of the Mother of God in the translation scene validates the power of the body as they greet each other on equal term and so are presented as similarly efficacious windows on the body. It establishes an implicit opposition between the East-Orthodoxy and the West-Catholicism. Antony Eastmond also pointed out that the absence of focus on the work of saint, his miracles, visions, and martyrdom from the paintings at Studenica casts the life of St. Simeon in very different light, and that the Iconographically closest comparison is the series of cycles, devoted to St. Mark in the dogal church in Venice<sup>24</sup>. These cycles also have the translation of the body of the saint as their climax. According to Eastmond, in the same way that possession of the body of the St. Mark determined much of the political identity of the Venetian republic, possession of the body of St. Simeon determined the Orthodox identity of the Nemanjid dynasty<sup>25</sup>, and we should add also that it builds up a particular image of St. Simeon that was to dominate the conception of the Nemanide dynastic cult, which, like in Hungary, has the body of its founding saint at its core.

The question is what was the role model for Studenica as a burial church of the founder of the dynasty. It seems curious, as Jelena Erdeljan pointed out, that the existing written sources, the Serbian medieval biographies of Nemanja composed by Sava, Stefan The First Crowned and Domentijan, make no mention at all of Studenica being founded

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<sup>24</sup> Eastmond A. Local Saints... P. 707.

<sup>25</sup> Eastmond A. Local Saints... P. 707.

as a mausoleum<sup>26</sup>. Studenica that was built after 1183, was visually quite different from Nemanja's endowments created during the good relations with Manojlo Komnen, the church of St. Nicholas and the church of the Mother of God at Kursumlija in Toplica<sup>27</sup>, which were built according to the Constantinople models. In Studenica the features of the Byzantine ground plan and structure of the space are imbued with the Romanesque exterior and the appearance of the red dome on Mount Athos<sup>28</sup>. Except for the dome, the building, looking from outside, had a Romanesque appearance. It is built of white and grayish marble carvings from nearby Rodočel, and all the openings and friezes of the arcades in the attic are of a purely Romanesque spirit. For such appearance of Studenica, one should thank the changed political circumstances and coastal artists, but also the willingness (and perhaps conscious intentions) of the founders to accept the crossing of two European artistic traditions<sup>29</sup>. Although churches with Byzantine and Western features already existed in Serbian lands in the pre-Romanesque period, Studenica, and a few years older church of Đurđevi Stupovi Monastery (1170–1171) introduced the custom of combining Romanesque stylistic features with the Byzantine church footprint and the Orthodox liturgical purpose of the space. This took root in the solutions that gave a special stamp to Serbian architecture by the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century<sup>30</sup>.

The monastery of Studenica wasn't bearing the same dedication, nor it looked alike the final resting place of the Byzantine ruling family, the Pantokrator Monastery in Constantinople. As Jelena Erdeljan pointed out, Studenica could, in the eyes of ktetors, procure an image of another church of Constantinople, the church of the Virgin of Pharos<sup>31</sup>, rather than an image of the Pantokrator Monastery. One crucial event that is known of from sources is the advent of a particle of the Holy Wood, incorporated into a personal pectoral, sent from Mt. Athos to Studenica by Nemanja in 1198 and, in the words of Stefan the First-crowned, repositied in a «place already prepared for it in the church of the Virgin». According to Jelena Erdeljan, «Studenica thus effectively became a reliquary and a place of cult of the Holy Cross to which the body of Nemanja was introduced as the warrant of dynastic salvation and the cornerstone of its royal legitimacy which, in turn, was placed under the protection of the Holy Wood. That act was the initial and key element of a program which revolved around the True Cross. The initial idea and act of raising a church dedicated to the Virgin, thus materializing iconic proof of the dogma of incarnation, was subsequently only amplified by the planting therein (1198 or possibly earlier) of the Holy Wood, thus defining Nemanja's lands, or the territory under his

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<sup>26</sup> *Erdeljan J.* Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 34; *Domenitjan.* Život Svetoga Save i život Svetoga Simeona. Beograd, 2019. S. 287; *Teodosije.* Žitije svetog Save. Beograd, 1984. S. 57.

<sup>27</sup> On the other hand, in investigations regarding the question of Nemanja's final resting place it appears that the church of St. Nicholas at Kursumlija in Toplica, one of his first foundations with highly significant political implications of deep impact on his personal and, thus, also the history of his state, systematically been left out of the picture. Could this church originally have been erected for that purpose? (*Stevović I.* 1) Historical and Artistic Time in the Architecture of Medieval Serbia: 12<sup>th</sup> Century // Архитектура Византии и древней Руси IX–XII веков: Материалы международного семинара 17–21 ноября 2009 года. СПб., 2010. С. 146–161; 2) Istorijски izvor i istorijskoumetničko tumačenje: Bogorodičina crkva u Toplici // *Zograf.* 2011. No. 35. S. 73–92; *Erdeljan J.* Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 34–35).

<sup>28</sup> *Đurić V., Babić-Đorđević G.* Srpska umetnost... S. 63.

<sup>29</sup> *Đurić V., Babić-Đorđević G.* Srpska umetnost... S. 62.

<sup>30</sup> *Đurić V., Babić-Đorđević G.* Srpska umetnost... S. 63.

<sup>31</sup> *Erdeljan J.* Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 43.

control, and at the same time the Bishopric of Ras, as a true Paradise with the lifegiving tree as its axis, a New Jerusalem»<sup>32</sup>. Besides that, the glistening white-gray marble of the facades of the church of the Virgin at Studenica, with its symbolism of the waters of the primaeval *Okeanos* frozen by primordial cold whereby light, the active principle of the Logos, was frozen into its very fabric<sup>33</sup> embodied perfectly the message of the triumph of Orthodox belief in the incarnation and the triumph of the Cross. Studenica, could, in the eyes of the ktetors, procure an image which was to suggest that this Serbian New Jerusalem echoes the ultimate universal Constantinopolitan example of a New Jerusalem, the church of the Virgin of Pharos<sup>34</sup> as the Holy Sepulcher<sup>35</sup>, precisely for the purpose of displaying the appropriation of dogmatic and ideological ideas contained therein<sup>36</sup>.

As it could be suggested for Studenica echoes the ultimate universal Constantinopolitan example of New Jerusalem, the church of the Virgin of Pharos, so it could be suggested for the church of the Virgin in Székesfehérvár, the final resting place of the first Hungarian king St. Stephen (1000–1038). The building was totally destroyed by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and it is known only from excavations, but some remaining of white-grayish marble, that reassembles the marble of Studenica, still exist<sup>37</sup>. King (Saint) Stephen began building the Church of the Virgin Mary, planned to be his own burial place, behind the church where his father was entombed in the second decade of the 11<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. After Saint Stephen's death, this church — originally intended as a private place of worship — was given an important public function. Hungarian rulers throughout the Middle Ages were crowned here, next to the tomb of the founder of the state. The first Christian King of Hungary after the loss of his only son and heir, dedicated his *people* to Mary, and placed his newly Christianized flock under her protection<sup>39</sup>. The significance of Virgin Mary as a protector of the state most probably was of a Byzantine origin since the Hungary lay in the zone of Byzantine influences although it was a part of Latin Christendom at the same time<sup>40</sup>. Nevertheless, the idiosyncratic cult of the

<sup>32</sup> Erdeljan J. Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 42–43.

<sup>33</sup> Barry F. Walking on Water: Cosmic Floors in Antiquity and the Middle Ages // Art Bulletin. 2007. Vol. 89. No. 4. P. 627–656.

<sup>34</sup> Erdeljan J. Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 43.

<sup>35</sup> Lidov A. M. A Byzantine Jerusalem. The Imperial Pharos Chapel as the Holy Sepulchre // Jerusalem as Narrative Space Erzählraum Jerusalem. Leiden; Boston, 2012. P. 63–104.

<sup>36</sup> Erdeljan J. 1) Studenica. A New Perspective? P. 43; 2) Studenica. An identity in marble // Zograf. 2011. No. 35. P. 93–100; 3) Studenica. All Things Constantinopolitan // Szmetika. Collection of Papers in Honor of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Institute for Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Belgrade, 2012. P. 93–101.

<sup>37</sup> About the marble of the church of the Virgin in Székesfehérvár (*Szakács B. Z.* From the Harbour of Venice... P. 298–299).

<sup>38</sup> The construction of the church was not completed by the death of the king in 1038, but despite this Prince (Saint) Emerich was buried here in 1031. The tomb of the founding king was placed in the middle of the nave, while prince Emerich's was located on the south side of the choir (*Buzás G., Laszlovszky J., Magyar K.* Medieval Royal Centers // Hungarian Archaeology at the Turn of the Millennium. Budapest, 2003. P. 350).

<sup>39</sup> Hartvik. The Hartvik Legend // *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum*. Vol. II. Budapest: Academia Litter, Hungarica, 1938. P. 363–400; *Domonkos L. S.* Mariology and Vernacular Literature in Late Medieval Hungary // *Hungarian Studies*. 1986. Vol. 2. No. 2. P. 227.

<sup>40</sup> For a general overview focusing Hungary's western ties see: *Maksimović Lj.* O godini prenoša Nemanjinih moštiju u Srbiju // *Zbornik Radova Vizantologskog Instituta*. 1986. No. 24–25, et al.; for



saintly king *Stephen* as palladium of the kingdom, under Virgin Mary's blessing had been of Hungarian provenance, and was most probably the trigger for the shaping of Serbian political ideology. The personal and the quickly spreading cult of Saint Stephen, like later the cult of Saint Simeon embodied the ideal Christian ruler. Both Simeon and Stephen, their Dynastic historiographies in Hungary and in Serbia become a powerful vehicle of Christian rulership<sup>41</sup>.

The main difference between Studenica and the royal collegiate church of Székesfehérvár is that the Serbian rulers were not crowned in Studenica, but in the church of the Savior in Žiča monastery. At first, Žiča was meant to be the final resting place of Stefan the First-Crowned, so Serbian kings would be, like in Hungary, crowned next to the tomb of their first king, but at the end it was decided, that Stefan should be buried in Studenica, next to his saintly father. In the Vita of St. Simeon written by Stefan the First-Crowned, Stefan Nemanja leaves to his son, «his temple of the Most Holly Mother of God Evergetis in Studenica to be governed solely and exclusively by him and his descendants»<sup>42</sup>. This was a clear narrative formulation of the dynastic cult which exclusive heir was Stefan the First-Crowned, instead of his elder brother Vukan<sup>43</sup>. Later, after the eldest son of Stefan, King Radoslav (at the time monk John), was buried in exonarthex of the katholikon of Studenica<sup>44</sup>, Studenica became the grave of the first three rulers from the Nemanjid dynasty. With the tomb of Saint Simeon, the holy founder of the dynasty, and the tombs of the two first kings of Nemanide, with its wall paintings with soteriological and dynastic accents, as well as a specially designed reliquary program, as the token of the ideology of the ruling family, Studenica became a prototype of all later Nemanjid mausoleums<sup>45</sup>.

Studenica established the framework within which all subsequent depictions of dynastic power had to be presented. It testifies also of the highly political implications of this act in the positioning of Nemanja and his heirs on the political scene of Balkans, Mediterranean world and Central Europe. Thus Studenica could be used for discussion about medieval cross-cultural and political exchanges and influences, as well as for opening the debate about the «Byzantine identity» of the newly emerging medieval polities and their elites. The young Serbian state, as well as the new ruling dynasty, had to establish a firm political ideology, which was inevitably constructed in relation to its neighbors. Scholars often tend to look on medieval Serbia as a peripheral state that imitated the political, visual and ceremonial language of Constantinople. Although patterns often were Byzantine in their provenance, they were idiosyncratic in their reception. A saintly dynasty with its saint founder buried in the church dedicated to the Mother of God links Nemanja with Hungary. Nevertheless, Hungary itself lied on the border between Eastern and Western Christianity therefore it was under similar artistic influences, but some

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an overview on Hungary's Byzantine connections see: *Moravcsik G. Byzantium and the Magyars.* Budapest, 1970. P. 18.

<sup>41</sup> *Font M.* The emergence of East Central Europe... P. 28–29.

<sup>42</sup> *Stefan Prvovenčani.* Sabrani spisi. S. 56–57.

<sup>43</sup> Also later, Stefan the First-Crowned, in his charter to the Benedictine monastery of the Mother of God on the island of Mljet, refers to Theotokos' as his special protectress and the one «who had chosen him to be the heir in his father's house, and who had raised him above his brothers to feed the father's flock» (*Stefan Prvovenčani.* Sabrani spisi. S. 124–125).

<sup>44</sup> *Istorija srpskog naroda.* Knj. 1. S. 310.

<sup>45</sup> *Popović D.* 1) Srpski vladarski grob... S. 24–47; 2) Svetiteljsko proslavljanje... S. 27–40; 3) O nastanku kulta... S. 41–73.

of those influences might come directly from Byzantium or through the Venice. All these territories were culturally comparable and that's why objects, ideas and tradesmen moved so easily between the harbour of Venice, Constantinople, Hungarian Kingdom and Serbia. Sometimes it is difficult to determine the exact directions from which certain influences came, given the intense cultural, political, dynastic, economic and other ties of all the mentioned parties. This is why it is complicated to decide where certain phenomenon or artistic tendency originated from.

#### Информация о статье

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**Заголовок:** Importance of Dynastic and Political Ties for Cross-cultural Connections of Nemanide Serbia with the Mediterranean World and Central Europe around the First Fall of Constantinople, and its Reflections on Visual Culture of Nemanide Serbia [Значение династических и политических связей в межкультурной коммуникации Сербии Неманичей со Средиземноморьем и Центральной Европой во время первого падения Константинополя и их отражение в визуальной культуре Сербии Неманичей]

**Резюме:** Автор ставит своей целью привлечь внимание к роли династических связей членов сербской династии Неманичей с византийскими, венецианскими и венгерскими правящими династиями, их роли в межкультурных отношениях средневековой Сербии и Балкан со Средиземноморьем и Центральной Европой, а также в визуальной культуре. Особое внимание уделено периоду истории, связанному с первым падением Константинополя, которое непосредственно отразилось на политических и династических отношениях Неманичей с правящими и знатными родами Византии, Венгрии и Венеции. Уникальным явлением в изобразительной культуре Балкан этого периода Стефана Немани в Сербии является монастырь Студеница с католической церковью, посвященной празднику Успения Богородицы. Эта достопримечательность Сербии Неманичей, основанная, построенная и украшенная фресками в годы непосредственно перед и после первого падения Константинополя, возможно, является лучшим примером того, как политические и династические связи того времени отражались на визуальной культуре. Настоящая статья является первым обращением к вопросу о переоценке визуальной культуры Сербии Неманичей и Балкан с точки зрения концепции современной глобализации, характеризующейся и являющейся результатом передачи знаний, технологических изменений и гомогенизации пространственных и технологических особенностей, путем сложения концепции общей культуры и отдельных индивидуальных и коллективных идентичностей. Значение династических связей в межкультурном взаимодействии средневековой Сербии со Средиземноморьем и Центральной Европой подчеркивает общий характер визуальной культуры этого периода. Представляется, что через призму династических отношений мы сможем лучше увидеть закономерности в развитии визуальной культуры как в этот период, так и в последующее время.

**Ключевые слова:** политические связи, династические связи, династия Неманичей, визуальная культура, византинизация, влияние Византии, монастырь Студеница, Балканы, Средиземноморье, Центральная Европа, история культуры, история Средневековья, искусство

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**Title:** Importance of Dynastic and Political Ties for Cross-cultural Connections of Nemanide Serbia with the Mediterranean World and Central Europe around the First Fall of Constantinople, and its Reflections on Visual Culture of Nemanide Serbia

**Summary:** The aim of this text is to draw attention to importance of dynastic ties of the members of Serbian Nemanide dynasty with the Byzantine, Venetian and Hungarian ruling dynasties to cross-cultural connection between medieval Serbia and The Balkans with Mediterranean and Central Europe, and its reflection on visual culture. Special attention will be focused on the period around the first fall of Constantinople, which directly affected on political and dynastic relations of the Nemanide with the ruling and noble families of Byzantium, Hungary and Venice. A unique phenomenon in the visual culture of the Balkans of the period is Stephen Nemanja's major foundation in Serbia — Studenica monastery, with its *katholikon* church dedicated to the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin. This landmark monument of Nemanide Serbia founded, built and decorated with frescoes in the years immediately before and after the first fall of Constantinople is possibly the best example of how the political and dynastic connections of the time reflected on visual culture. It is only the initial step of broader study intended to reassess the visual culture of Nemanide Serbia and The Balkans in view of the concept of premodern globalization characterized by and resulting from a transfer of knowledge, technological change and homogenization of spatial and technological particularities, by the concept of common culture and particular individual and collective identities. Importance of dynastic ties in cross-cultural interaction of medieval Serbia, with Mediterranean world and Central Europe opens a new perspective on the general nature of visual culture of this period. It appears that from this perspective we could better perceive the power and creative life of imagery and visual culture in general in this period as an essential element of an awareness of living in the present and looking towards a future.

**Keywords:** political ties, dynastic ties, Nemanide dynasty, visual culture, Studenica Monastery, Balkans, Mediterranean, Central Europe, Byzantium, art, cultural studies, medieval studies

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