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**A Contribution to the Study of Marian Piety and Related Aspects
of Visual Culture in Late Medieval Balkans
Several Notable Examples Recorded in Serbian Written Sources**

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The aim of this text is to draw attention to instances of Marian devotion displayed by members of Serbian royal families in late medieval Balkans, in the period between 12th and 15th century and the days of the Nemanjić and Lazarević dynasties. Particular attention will be assigned to those related by Serbian medieval written sources and, in particular, *vitae* texts of Serbian rulers. Based on these examples, this text discusses the intertwining of official and private aspects of Marian devotion among members of ruling families in the Balkans and the Byzantine cultural sphere, from Komnenian times on, as well as models of expressing Marian piety which span and bring together both the Western and Eastern Christian devotional practice of the era.

Keywords: Marian piety, Balkans, visual culture, icon, Serbian written sources, devotional practice

Although relics of the veil and girdle of the Virgin Mary arrived to Nemanide Serbia as part of the most venerable treasure brought from the East and were posited in the church of the Holy Saviour at the monastery of Žiča in the early 13th century by the founder of the Serbian autocephalous church and its first archbishop, saint Sava the Serbian, instances of veneration of Mary among members of Serbian royal families, from Nemanide times to the Lazarević and Branković despotate, recorded in Serbian medieval written sources, which are the main subject of this text, are for the most part those focused on her holy images. This type of Marian veneration relies on the traditional Byzantine manner of icon veneration and pertaining cognitive and performative activities and perceptions, demonstrated in their highest sum through the creation of sacred spaces dedicated to the Mother of God, from the sacred space of the icons themselves through churches raised in her name to entire cities delivered unto the hands and divine protection of the Virgin.¹ This text will thus present several such instances of Marian devotion in late medieval Balkans and pertaining aspects of visual culture. Significant *per se*, these examples also offer insight into the broader phenomenon of intertwining of official and private aspects of Marian piety in the late Middle Ages, noted among members of ruling families in the Balkans and the Byzantine cultural sphere, from Komnenian times on, as well as into the specificities and official and personal implications of Marian devotion among royal (wo)men of the era.

The first *vitae* of Symeon Nemanja, dating from the very beginning of the 13th century and produced by his sons, Sava the Serbian² and Stefan the First Crowned (Stefan Prvovenčani),³ as well as the text of his vita written by Domentijan,⁴ Chilandar monk and pupil of St Sava, commissioned by king Uroš I, grandson of Nemanja, and written in 1263-1264, present us with data of Nemanja's founding of a number of churches and monasteries dedicated to the Mother of God as part of his royal building program, the major foundations being the Athonite monastery of Chilandar and the monastery of Studenica in the bishopric of Ras, in central Serbia. These *vitae* texts also offer testimony of Nemanja's personal devotional practice and expressions of dedication to Mary, above all tied to the luxury mosaic icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in the presence of and unto which he delivered his soul at

his deathbed in the Serbian monastery of Chilandar on Mount Athos. Feeling that the hour is upon him ("the hour of my leave is near"), Nemanja asks his son Sava to bring forth to him the icon of the Virgin so that he could fulfill his vows of committing his spirit into her hands ("Bring to me, child, the mother of my Lord Jesus Christ, so that I can, as I promised, commit into her hands my spirit.") while lying on the ground on a simple straw mat, his head resting on a stone, in utter monastic humility.⁵ Teodosije does not relate the act of bringing the icon forth before Nemanja but speaks rather of the emotional and spiritual effect of his contact with this holy icon. He speaks of the fact that in the hour of his death Nemanja's face was "bright and he looked with joy at the most pure *eikon* of Christ and at his most pure mother..."⁶ Historiography has identified this icon of the Mother of God with Christ into whose hands Symeon Nemanja committed his spirit as the mosaic icon of the Virgin Hodegetria with Christ child, an exceptional work of Komnenian icon painting in the luxury medium of gold mosaic, produced at the very end of the 12th century, around 1198, most probably in Constantinople or Thessaloniki (fig. 1). It was highly revered as patron and protectress of Chilandar, the *katholikon* of which was dedicated to the Virgin and the feast of the Introduction of the Virgin to the Temple. As such she was given a highly prominent place within the hierotopical ensemble of the church and kept in the altar or by the iconostasis of the monastery *katholikon*.⁷

Whats more, at the time of death of Symeon Nemanja, and in the Komnenian world in general, of which Serbia of Nemanja's day was an integral part, close, personal and emotional, sensory experience of the holy was a hallmark of piety and of both state and private devotion and cult. It was already the mother of the *genos* and of the emperor Alexios I Komnenos, Anna Dalasena, who, as attested by Nikephoros Bryennios, expressed her own personal deep connection and dedication to Christ, certainly not without political implications for the dynasty, by wearing an icon of the Lord on her body at all times.⁸ Most telling in that respect is, however, the development of the cult and ritual of veneration of the palladium of capital and Empire, the holy miracle-working icon of the Virgin Hodegetria in Constantinople under the Komnenoi.⁹ In the Komnenian period, in accordance with this general trend of elevation of private devotion to a status of public, state-sponsored religion, the Pantokrator Monastery, as the main endowment and burial church of the Komnenoi in Constantinople, was at the same time the focus of the dynastic cult and the sacral center of the capital and the Empire. The high point of this phenomenon, as stipulated by the *Typikon* of the monastery, is the integration of public procession with the Hodegetria icon in the commemorative services for the emperors.¹⁰ The text of the *Typikon* of John II Komnenos specifically stipulates that "the holy icon of my most pure Lady and Mother of God Hodegetria", should be taken into the monastery on the days of the commemorations of the *ktetors* and be set in the church of Saint Michael near their tombs.¹¹ With the entrance of the icon of the Theotokos Hodegetria into the Pantokrator Monastery, this endowment of the Komnenoi would mystically be transformed into the scene of a real encounter of the Mother of God with her Son in the metaphorically real environment of a new Holy Sepulcher and New Jerusalem.¹²

Nemanja's own devotion to Mary, as well as that of his wife Ana, of uncorroborated yet possibly Byzantine imperial origin, is, of course, most directly demonstrated by his two most prominent foundations dedicated to the Mother of God - the monastery of Studenica with its *katholikon* dedicated to the Virgin Evergetis and the feast of the *Dormition* and the monastery of Chilandar and its *katholikon* dedicated to the Entry of the Virgin into the Temple.¹³ One should not, however, overlook the fact that a most significant place among his endowments in both devotional and the interconnected political aspect is assumed by his very first endowment dedicated precisely to Mary, the Virgin's church in Toplica near Kuršumlija in the southeast of Serbia (fig. 2). Its architectural modelling on major Marian Constantinopolitan shrines of the Theotokos, the Blachernae and the Peribleptos, the use, as *spoliae*, of bricks from Iustiniana Prima in its construction, indicating the continuation of a strong Marian cult at this location, possibly also originally transferred from Constantinople while more locally probably connected to a nearby Justinianic era structure a mere 100 meters away from Nemanja's 12th century church, and, most of all, its direct chronological historical connection to the demonstration of Nemanja's "chosen" status among his brothers bestowed upon him by the Byzantine emperor Manuel I upon their fateful meeting in Niš around 1163, all speak of Nemanja's, and Ana's, official as well as personal connection to the widespread imperial cult of Mary.¹⁴

It testifies also of the highly political implications of this act in the positioning of Nemanja on the political scene of the Balkans towards the close of the Komnenian era - as a prime ally of the emperor Manuel I, possibly also a newly introduced kinsman through his dynastic marriage to Ana. As rightly pointed out by Vlada Stanković: "The roots of Nemanjić 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".¹⁵

Indicative of the origins and nature of Marian piety of both Nemanja and Ana, of its Constantinopolitan roots and (imperial) implications, and tied to the church of the Virgin in Toplica, is actually a unique example of a small scale steatite icon of the Virgin Hymeoutes found *in situ*, in the northern conch of the triconch church building near Kuršumljija (fig. 3). The center of veneration of this holy icon of the Theotokos, one of the holy defenders of the capital of the Empire, was the Chalkoprateia church, yet another major Marian shrine of Constantinople. The icon from the church of the Virgin near Kuršumljija, kept today in the National museum of Belgrade, dated roughly to the 12th-13th centuries, bears formal and devotional resemblance to a small scale icon of corroborated Constantinopolitan origin, now in the Metropolitan museum of art, of a somewhat later date (c. 1350).¹⁶ This is an icon of Christ Antepheotes (fig. 4), a copy of another miracle working icon from the Chalkoprateia which, according to Psellus, was the focus and object of exceptional and fervent personal devotion of the empress Zoe Porphyrogenita in the first half of the 11th century. She had personally commissioned its small scale copy which she kept with her at all times. In the *Chronographia* Michael Psellos records the manifestations of imperial devotion towards the icon of Christ Antepheotes from the Chalkoprateia of the sort that may well have also been attached to the steatite icon from Kuršumljija. "I will give an example of this piety of hers. She had made for herself an image of Jesus, fashioning it with as much accuracy as she could (if such a thing were possible). The little figure, embellished with bright metal, appeared to be almost living. By changes of colour, it answered questions put to it, and by its various tints foretold coming events. Anyway, Zoe made several prophecies with regard to the future from a study of this image. So, when she had met with some good fortune, or when some trouble had befallen her, she would at once consult her image, in the one case to acknowledge her gratitude, in the other to beg its favour. I myself have often seen her, in moments of great distress, clasp the sacred object in her hands, contemplate it, talk to it as though it were indeed alive, and address it with one sweet term of endearment after another. Then at other times I have seen her lying on the ground, her tears bathing the earth, while she beat her breasts over and over again, tearing at them with her hands. If she saw the image turn pale, she would go away crestfallen, but if it took on a fiery red colour, its halo lustrous with a beautiful radiant light, she would lose no time in telling the emperor and prophesying what the future was to bring forth."¹⁷ We have no way of knowing whether the steatite icon of the Virgin Chymeoutes found in Kuršumljija had been in the private possession of Nemanja's wife, Ana, but one can imagine that this object may well have been the focus of the type of close personal devotion similar to that attached to the icon in the possession of empress Zoe.

Dating from the early 14th century, archbishop Danilo II presents us with an account of another highly venerated icon of the Virgin which became the focus of pilgrimage and, in the 15th century, figured as the major token of Mary's presence and divine protection over Belgrade as the capital of the despotate under Stefan Lazarević, thus also a major cornerstone of the construction of this city's identity as New Constantinople and New Jerusalem.¹⁸ In the *vita* text of king Dragutin, the Serbian archbishop renders in full detail the pilgrimage undertaken to venerate the holy icon of the Virgin of Belgrade (Bogorodica Beogradska) by the Serbian queen Simonis, daughter of emperor Andronikos II and wife of Serbian king Milutin. Danilo II offers a detailed description of her royal entourage which set off to Belgrade in 1315, following a reconciliatory meeting between kings and brothers, sons of king Uroš I, Dragutin and Milutin, at Milutin's residence at Pauni in Kosovo held shortly after their mother's, queen Jelena's death and burial in 1314. With an intention to further rectify the strained relationship between the two brothers and rulers of Serbia, and with Milutin's blessings, Simonis, accompanied by a splendid and regaly



1 Icon of the Virgin Hodegetria from Chilandar monastery, Mount Athos (courtesy of Institute for Art History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade)



2 Church of the Virgin near Kuršumljija, Serbia (Wikimedia Commons)



3 Steatite icon of the Virgin Hymeoutes found at the church of the Virgin near Kuršumljija, today at the National museum, Belgrade (courtesy of National Museum, Belgrade)



4 Steatite icon of Christ Antephonetes, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City (© Metropolitan Museum of Art)

bedecked entourage, set off to meet with her sister in law, queen Katelina and her brother in law, king Milutin's brother, king Dragutin. The archbishop says that she "arrived in the glorious and magnificent city called Serbian Belgrade, which lies at the bank of the river Danube and the Sava" whereupon "in the great cathedral metropolitan church she venerated with love the miracle-working icon of the most holy Virgin."¹⁹

This icon has not survived to this day. Like the Hodegetria of Constantinople, the icon of the Virgin of Belgrade shared the fate of the city and its people. Following the Ottoman conquest of the city in 1521, it was translated to Istanbul along with other relics kept in Belgrade and the Serbian population it had once protected. As for its iconography, various sources have given ground for its identification with a number of Constantinopolitan highly venerated holy icons of the Mother of God, miracle working and in functioning as the Byzantine capital's

holy guardians - from the *dexiokratousa* Hodegetria type to the *acheiropoitos* Virgin of Lydda, i.e. the icon of the Virgin of Jerusalem which had, since the time of emperor Leo VI, been a constituent part of the hierotopy of the Royal Doors at the entrance to the naos of the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It has also been identified with the Virgin of Rome which (following the exile in the iconoclastic period and stay in Rome where it found refuge) was laid in the church of the Theotokos in Chalkoprateia where the Virgin's girdle was kept. It is presumed that during the period of Byzantine rule, in the 11th century, it was the palladium of Belgrade. As such, according to the contemporary Byzantine practice, could also have been of the iconographic type of Panagia Blachernitissa, which Michael Attaleiates mentioned as watching over the city as an impenetrable shield.²⁰ Accordingly, it is possible to assume that, in a way, the icon of the Virgin of Belgrade carried implications of several icons of Mary's protection over the capital of the Empire and acted as their protective sum in a place relegated, like Constantinople, to the care of the Theotokos.

It is well known that Stefan Lazarević dedicated his capital city to the Mother of God: of this he testified in the preserved autobiographical excerpt from his charter issued to the city of Belgrade: "... I found the most beautiful place, from antiquity the most great city of Belgrade, by chance destroyed and derelict, raised it and dedicated it to the most holy Mother of God".²¹ Belgrade was, namely, dedicated to and identified with the Mother of God, and its metropolitan church which celebrated the feast of the Dormition had a location which in the sacral topography of the Serbian capital (quite in accordance with the dedication of the church) had been likened to the Kydron Valley and Gethsemane (fig. 5).²²

The chapter of Dragutin's *vita* recounting Simonis's visit to Belgrade and veneration of the holy icon of the Virgin of Belgrade concludes with an account of a pilgrimage undertaken by the royal wives of both Serbian kings, the brothers Milutin, as the reigning monarch, and Dragutin, as the ex-king (*prežde bivši kralj*), Simonis and Katelina, to the grave of their mother in law, queen Jelena in Gradac. Upon their arrival to the queen's endowment Danilo makes a point of stressing that they first venerated the holy icon of the Virgin there and then, ultimately, the grave of queen Jelena in the monastery *katholikon* dedicated to the Annunciation to Mary.²³ Thus, the rhetoric of the *vita* text completes an arc and mirrors the first and the ultimate destination of pilgrimage of Serbian royal women, Belgrade and Gradac, both focusing around the *Theotokos*, in effect juxtaposing and uniting the cult of the Virgin Mary with that of the dynastic saint, the holy queen Jelena.²⁴ The implications and messages, theological and political, of this passage are manifold.

The image this description constructs - royal women and their entourages in acts of devotion, particularly those addressing the Mother of God, as well as a place of dynastic cult likewise dedicated to the Virgin in both the consecrations of the church, the holy icon of the Mother of God as the focus of pilgrimage and the assimilation of queen Jelena to Mary - is one of "court of heaven" here and now, a concept popular in European courts and in particular those of Central Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries.²⁵ It was a metaphor of functioning of royal power, a highly significant agenda of the Serbian court of the day, following the reconciliation of king Milutin with his brother, Dragutin. The key role model of this new, mendicant order inspired and organized, emphatic piety and personal devotion among women of noble birth and queens of European courts and noble families, was saint Elizabeth of Hungary and, following in her steps, her cousin, Saint Margaret. That this model found its direct route and application in Nemanide Serbia in the early 14th century is no rare coincidence but rather a product of complex dynastic relations between royal courts in Eastern and Central Europe and the Byzantine Empire as well as the politics of the Serbian court at a diplomatically very complex moment for the Nemanide state. Namely, queen Katelina, wife of king Dragutin, was directly related to both saint Elizabeth and saint Margaret. Saint Margaret the Younger was the sister of her father, king Stephan V of Hungary, and Saint Elizabeth the sister of her grandfather, Bela IV. Thus, by lineage, she was deeply immersed in the model of courtly devotion, inspired by mendicant piety and practice, which her paternal aunt and grand-aunt established and which, through their *exempla*, was widely accepted and emulated especially among noble women of the Hungarian, Polish, German and Bohemian courts.²⁶

On the other hand, the emphasized role in such devotional practice assigned to a Byzantine princess Simonis, queen of Serbia, wife of king Milutin and daughter of emperor Andronicos II, by king Milutin and recounted in the *vita* text of his brother, on Milutin's request, by a former Athonite monk and one of the brethren of Chilandar monastery and subsequent Serbian archbishop Danilo II, speaks mostly of Milutin's political prowess and successful positioning with the major power of the day, the Byzantine empire.²⁷ By the end of the 13th century, Serbian rulers from the Nemanjić dynasty had already for many generations, since the days of Stefan Nemanja and his son Stefan Prvovenčani, who was married to the daughter of emperor Alexios III Angelos, been closely connected with the Byzantine imperial family and were deeply involved in the internal political disputes within the Empire. They belonged to the highest echelons of the Byzantine – and regional Balkan – elite with significant influence in Constantinople, the capital of the Empire itself. Milutin had planned his marriages carefully and in view of the balance of power on the scene of the tumultuous last quarter of the 13th century, making several attempts to forge dynastic ties with the ruling Plaiologan family. Through his marriage to Simonis, daughter of Andronikos II, in the spring of 1299 he finally succeeded in becoming the beloved son in law of the emperor of the Romans and thus sealed his precedence over his brother and other stakeholders on the political competition in the Balkans at the close of the 13th and beginning of 14th century.²⁸

Viewed against this historical backdrop, instances and modes of display of Marian piety among members of Serbian dynasties from the 12th to the 15th century discussed in this text clearly correspond to the general tendencies in the Balkans of that period and indeed point to the significance of royal Marian piety in the political context, a feature of both the Byzantine and Western cultural spheres which were in constant interaction and communication in all aspects of life in medieval Serbia.

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- 1 On the veneration of Mary in Byzantium and the Byzantine cultural sphere, as well as on pertaining manifestations in visual culture, see *The Mother of God. Representations of the Virgin in Byzantine art*, M. VASSILAKI (ed.), Milan, Skira, 2000; *Images of the Mother of God. Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, M. VASSILAKI (ed.), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2005; B.V. PENTCHEVA, *Icons and power: The Mother of God in Byzantium*, University Park, Pa., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006; B.V. PENTCHEVA, *The sensual icon. Space, ritual, and the senses in Byzantium*, University Park, Pa., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010; *The cult of the Mother of God in Byzantium: Texts and images*, L. BRUBAKER-M.B. CUNNINGHAM (eds.), Aldershot, Ashgate, 2011. On the relics kept at the monastery of Žiča see D. POPOVIĆ, *Pod okriljem svetosti. Kult svetih vladara i relikvija u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd, Balkanološki institut SANU, 2006, pp. 207-232.
 - 2 SVETI SAVA, „Žitije Svetoga Simeona Nemanje“, in: *Sabrani spisi*, D. BOGDANOVIĆ (ed.), Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1986, pp. 95–119, in particular p. 113.
 - 3 STEFAN PRVOVENČANI, „Život svetog Simeona“, in: *Sabrani spisi*, LJ. JUHAS-GEORGIEVSKA (ed.), Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1988, pp. 61–101, in particular p. 83.
 - 4 DOMENTIJAN, „Život svetoga Simeona“, in: *Život Svetoga Save i Život Svetoga Simeona*, R. MARINKOVIĆ (ed.), Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1988, pp. 236–325, in particular p. 294.
 - 5 STEFAN PRVOVENČANI, *op. cit.* Citations from Stefan the First Crowned translated into English by J. Erdeljan.
 - 6 TEODOSIJE, „Žitije Svetoga Save“, in: *Žitija*, D. BOGDANOVIĆ (ed.), Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1988, pp. 99–261, in particular p. 144. Citation from Teodosije translated into English by J. Erdeljan.
 - 7 V.J. ĐURIĆ, „Mozaička ikona Bogorodice Odigitrije iz manastira Hilandara“, in: *Zograf*, 1, 1966, pp. 16–20. Aspects of sensory experience related to the devotion to this icon have recently been published in S. BRAJOVIĆ-J. ERDELJAN, „Praying with the senses. Examples of icon devotion and the sensory experience in medieval and early modern Balkans“, in: *Zograf*, 39, 2015, pp. 57-63.
 - 8 On the emergence this and other expressions of private devotion, most notably on the ktetorship of members of the Komnenian dynasty, see: V. STANKOVIĆ, *Komnini u Carigradu. Evolucija jedne vladarske porodice*, Beograd, Vizantološki institut SANU, 2006, pp. 270–288, on Anna Dalasena and the icon of Christ especially p. 280.

- 9 A. LIDOV, „The Flying Hodegetria. The Miraculous Icon as Bearer of Sacred Space“, in: *The Miraculous Image in the Late Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Papers from a Conference Held at the Accademia Di Danimarca in Collaboration with the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Max-Planck-Institut Für Kunstgeschichte), Rome, 31 May-2 June 2003, E. THUNØ-G. WOLF (eds.), Rome, Erma di Bretschneider, 2004, pp. 273–304.
- 10 B. PENTCHEVA, *op. cit.*, 2006, p. 165. Cf. E. CONGDON, „Imperial Commemoration and Ritual in the Typikon of the Monastery of Christ Pantokrator“, in: *REB*, 54, 1996, pp. 161–199.
- 11 M.N. BUTYRSKIJ, „Vizantijskoe bogosluženie u ikony soglasno tipiku monastyrja Pantokratora 1136 goda“, in: *Čudotvornaja ikona v Vizantii i drevnej Rusi*, A.M. LIDOV (ed.), Moskva, Martis, 1996, pp. 145–158, in particular pp. 146–147. For the passage in the text of the Typikon: *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founders' Typika and Testaments*, J. THOMAS-A.C. HERO (eds.), with the assistance of G. CONSTABLE, Washington, D.C., Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000, p. 756.
- 12 On the monastery of the Pantokrator in Constantinople as an image of New Jerusalem: J. ERDELJAN, *Izabrana mesta. Konstruisanje Novih Jerusalima kod pravoslavnih Slovena*, Beograd, Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet, 2013, pp. 116–126. On the similar encounter, in semantic terms, which took place during the annual procession between the Lateran and the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome see H.L. KESSLER-J. ZACHARIAS, *Rome 1300. On the Path of the Pilgrim*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2000, pp. 126–157.
- 13 On the endowments of Nemanja, from a new perspective, see J. ERDELJAN, „Studenica. A New Perspective?“, in: *Serbia and Byzantium: Proceedings of the International Conference Held on 15 December 2008 at the University of Cologne*, M. ANGAR-C. SODE (eds.), Studien und Texte zur Byzantinistik 8, Herausgegeben von Claudia Sode, Peter Lang GmbH Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften, Frankfurt am Main, PL Academic Research, 2013, pp. 33–43, with all previous bibliography.
- 14 On the history, visual identity, Constantinopolitan models and significance in Nemanja's day of the church of the Virgin in Toplica, as well as on the historical circumstances surrounding its construction under Nemanja's ktetorship, in the 1160's, see I. STEVOVIĆ, „Istorijski izvor i istorijskoumetničko tumačenje: Bogorodičina crkva u Toplici“, in: *Zograf*, 35, 2011, pp. 73–92. To fully perceive her personal and official involvement in the life of Nemanja's first foundation and pertaining monastery, it should be noted that Nemanja's wife, Ana, took the office of *ephoros* of this endowment; *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- 15 V. STANKOVIĆ, „Beloved Son-in-Law: Charters of Byzantine Emperors to the Hilandar Monastery after the Marriage of King Milutin to Symonis“, in: *SCRIPTA*, 12, 2013, pp. 57–68, in particular p. 57.
- 16 *Mirror of the Medieval World*, W.D. WIXOM (ed.), New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1999, p. 95.
- 17 *Fourteen Byzantine Rulers. The Chronographia of Michael Psellus*, E.R.A. SEWTER (trans.), Penguin Books, Bungay 1966, p. 188.
- 18 In-depth analysis of the history of the cult and possible iconography of Bogorodica Beogradska was published in M. TATIĆ-ĐURIĆ, „Ikona Bogorodice beogradske“, in: *Godišnjak grada Beograda*, 25, 1978, pp. 147–160, in particular p. 148. On Mary as the holy defender of Belgrade as the capital of the Serbian despotate under despot Stefan Lazarević and the means of its transformation into New Constantinople and New Jerusalem see J. ERDELJAN, *op. cit.*, 2013, pp. 169–189.
- 19 On the adoration of the icon of Bogorodica Beogradska by the Serbian queen Simonis in 1315 see DANILO II, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih*, G.M. DANIJEL-D. PETROVIĆ (eds.), Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1988, p. 105, citation translated into English by J. Erdeljan; J. KALIĆ-MIJUŠKOVIĆ, *Beograd u srednjem veku*, Beograd, Srpska književna zadruga, 1967, pp. 67–68.
- 20 On the various possible iconographic types of the Virgin of Belgrade see M. TATIĆ-ĐURIĆ, *op. cit.*, 1978, p. 150. On Belgrade under Byzantine rule in the 11th and 12th centuries see M. POPOVIĆ, „Prilog proučavanju topografije vizantijskog Beograda u XI i XII veku“, *ZRVI*, 50, 2013, pp. 461–478.
- 21 DESPOT STEFAN LAZAREVIĆ, *Književni radovi*, Đ. TRIFUNOVIĆ (ed.), Beograd, Srpska književna zadruga, 1979, p. 166.
- 22 „And the great church stands on the east side of town, where one descends similar to the Kedron Valley, towards Gethsemane“, KONSTANTIN FILOZOF, *Žitije despota Stefana Lazarevića*, Beograd, Prosveta, Srpska književna zadruga, 1989, p. 102, citation translated into English by J. Erdeljan. On the metropolitan complex, see the monograph study M. POPOVIĆ-V. BIKIĆ, *Kompleks srednjovekovne mitropolije u Beogradu - istraživanja u Donjem gradu Beogradske tvrđave*, Beograd, Arheološki institut, 2004, on the location of the church of the Dormition pp. 12–13.
- 23 DANILO II, *op. cit.*, p. 106. On the monastery of Gradac and the grave of queen Jelena see D. POPOVIĆ, *Srpski vladarski grob u srednjem veku*, Beograd, Institut za istoriju umetnosti Filozofskog fakulteta, 1992, pp. 80–85; O. KANDIĆ, *Gradac*.

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- 24 For a recent study of the various aspects of the life and cultural and political impact of queen Jelena in Serbia of the 13th and 14th centuries see *Jelena. Kraljica, monahinja, svetiteljka, op. cit.*, 2015. On questions of identity of queen Jelena and its presentation in text and image see J. ERDELJAN, „Two inscriptions from the church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus near Shkodër and the question of text and image as markers of identity in medieval Serbia“, in: *Texts, Inscriptions, Images. Art Readings*, vol. 1, Old Art, E. MOUTAFOV-J. ERDELJAN (eds.), Sofia, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Art Studies, 2016, pp. 129-143.
- 25 G. KLANICZAY, *Holy Rulers, Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 2002, especially pp. 195-294.
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- 27 For a broadly positioned and novel insight into the life and politics of king Milutin see V. STANKOVIĆ, *Kralj Milutin (1281-1321)*, Beograd, Freska, 2012.
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Jelena Erdeljan

**Prilog proučavanju marijanske pobožnosti i uz to vezanih elemenata vizualne kulture
kasnosrednjovjekovnog Balkana
Nekoliko značajnih primjera zabilježenih u srpskim pisanim izvorima**

Cilj ovoga rada je ukazati na primjere marijanske pobožnosti koja se javlja kod članova srpskih kraljevskih obitelji kasnosrednjovjekovnog Balkana, u razdoblju između 12. i 15. stoljeća, odnosno u vrijeme dinastija Nemanjića i Lazarevića. Posebna pozornost posvećena je primjerima povezanim sa srpskim srednjovjekovnim pisanim izvorima, ponajprije životopisima srpskih vladara. Izdvojeno je nekoliko amblematskih primjera koji se raspoznaju kao žarišta prema kojima je pobožnost usmjerena, poput mozaičke ikone Djevice Hodegitrije iz manastira Hilandar, ikone Djevice *Hymeoutes* iz Kuršumlje i ikone Djevice iz Beograda. Pobožnost prema njima očituje se kroz primjere Stefana (Simeona) Nemanje koji na samrtnoj postelji cjeliva ikonu hilendarske Bogorodice, zatim hodočašća srpske kraljice Simonide, kćeri cara Andronika II i supruge srpskog kralja Milutina, ikoni Bogorodice u Beogradu te u posveti Beograda kao glavnoga grada srpske države od strane despota Stefana Lazarevića Bogorodici, čiji se kult ondje razvio upravo oko spomenute ikone te oko čudotvornog ukazanja dvaju ikona Krista i Djevice Marije na nebu iznad Beograda u trenutku despotove smrti, što je protumačeno kao konačna potvrda Bogorodičine zaštite nad srpskom prijestolnicom. Polazeći od ovih primjera, u članku se razmatra ispreplitanje službenih i privatnih aspekata marijanske pobožnosti među članovima vladarskih obitelji na Balkanu i u bizantskome kulturnom krugu, počevši od vremena Komnena, te izrazi marijanske pobožnosti, koja se širila objedinjujući zapadne i istočne devocionalne običaje toga vremena.

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