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## THE HAGIOGRAPHIES OF SERBIAN MEDIEVAL RULERS AND COURTLY BODILY PLEASURES\*

**Abstract:** *This short paper contextualizes three levels of investigation. The aim of the first segment is to offer a general insight into the problem of contemporary studies of solemn royal festivities in medieval Serbia, which is an important part of the research area usually described by the term ‘the history of everyday life’. The second part explains the mutual antipodean relation of bodily and spiritual pleasures at the courts of royalties and highest clergy that may be found in the hagiographies of Serbian medieval rulers. This group of sources has been investigated in line with the latest research approaches in the most recent domestic literature based on the Theology of Creation Inspired by God and diffusion of the Words of God. On this occasion a special attention is paid to the term The Feast of Holy Wisdom. Finally, the last part attempts to link the above elaborated historical and literature data with the old domestic fresco painting representations and written theological templates of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. Special attention has been paid to individual proprieties of the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, which may be a key to decoding many structural elements of the old hagiographies of the Serbian rulers. Two first chapters of The Vita of Saint Sava written by the cleric Domentian are investigated in order to illustrate the proposed research method. Hopefully, the comparing method may help us to create the full image and start a new research line of this very important topic.*

**Keywords:** *Hagiography, Serbian Medieval Rulers, Bodily Pleasures, Festivities, History of Everyday Life, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, The Feast of Holy Wisdom, Saint Sava, Domentian, Theodosius*

The study of the old forms of festivities and entertainment belongs to a wide area of research commonly known as ‘the history of everyday life’. This field is relatively new to Serbian medieval studies.<sup>1</sup> The basic reason is a lack of sources. During centuries of Turkish occupation, all state and landlord archives were destroyed. The same happened to the records of towns in the inland as well as most settlements on the southern Adriatic coast. It was only about 1,500 domestic charters in Serbian, Greek, Latin and Italian that survived in monasteries

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<sup>1</sup> Bojanin 2005, 11-21.

in and outside Serbia and the archives of Dubrovnik. Almost all correspondence, official or private, can be printed in only a dozen of volumes.<sup>2</sup>

However, voluminous religious canon texts (for example, *Nomocanon*, dated the beginning of 13<sup>th</sup> century; *Syntagma of Matthew Blastares* - Full and the Abbreviated *Syntagma*, copied in a manuscript together with *The Code of Tsar Dušan* in 1335) can be used as valuable sources. Because the just stated texts relied heavily on much older canonic law, it is questionable how applicable they were in the late Middle Ages, unlike numerous breviaries (*Epithimial Nomocanons* and collections of penitentials) and monastic *typika*, which were created by the Serbian community and mostly reflected the true state in the country.<sup>3</sup> Different historical and chivalric novels (*Serbian Alexandrida*, *The Tale of Troy*, *The Romance of Tristan and Isolde*, *The Romance of Barlaam and Joasaph* or *The Life of Alexious the Man of God*) were set somewhere between historic-reality and literary fiction. Different apocrypha (*The Life of Aseneth* or *The Acts of Apostle Thomas in India*) reveal many details about the way of festivities and entertainment. Remnants of material culture offer interesting visual representations of everyday life which once was. We can find valuable fresco representations and illustrations in religious and secular manuscripts, but also medieval gravestones (*stećak*) in the western part of the Serbian ethnical space. Generally, the number of sources available for study of Serbian medieval life cannot be compared to material available in countries that did not go through such drastic and long disruptions in their state and social development.<sup>4</sup>

Despite many limitations, several generations of historians, literary historians, art historians, ethnologists, culture study experts and other researchers have investigated different aspects of this topic. Thanks to their efforts we are aware that in town squares and at country fairs and festivals all over southeastern Europe people gathered around professional and amateur entertainers (musicians, jugglers, imitators, magicians, acrobats, animal tamers...). In the late Middle Ages the gentry spent time taking part in luxurious tournaments, while well-to-do citizens participated in competitions, including horse races and archery. The omnipresent church issued numerous bans, which can serve as proof that ancient folk festivities survived at the time of seasonal changes.<sup>5</sup>

A need of people to celebrate life in those times of hardships and uncertainty through various festivities and celebrations was constant. A similar tendency was present at the courts of Serbian monarchs and high nobility. A few foreign narrative sources and diplomatic reports cannot be a substitute for a lack of domestic secular records, especially court chronicles. In such conditions, naturally the hagiographies of rulers and church officials offer the best insight into this topic. Since this literary genre was characteristic of Serbian medieval literature, it deserves some clarification. The Serbian Orthodox Church, formed in 1219, together with secular sovereigns canonized most rulers from Stefan Nemanja (later St Simeon) (1166-1196) to Stefan Lazarević (1389-1427). Despite the fact that the latter was enlisted to the circle of Serbian saints only in 20<sup>th</sup> century, an elaborated vita was dedicated to him soon after his death. The idealized representations of these monarchs were adopted to fit complex theological ideas and needs of the state. The authors of these texts were always highly educated clergymen, mostly participants in or witnesses to certain events or at least good experts in the customs of the era they wrote about. Therefore, we can say that these texts represent exceptional and rather reliable sources.

It should not come as a surprise that these manuscripts frequently showed that plentiful and merry feasts were part of everyday life at Serbian courts. The birth of the rulers'

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2 An overview available in: Stanojević 1937; Lemajić 2007.

3 Radojčić Kostić 2006, Subotin Golubović, 2013.

4 Bojanin 2005, 21-40. Compare, for example, with: Laudage - Leiverkus 2006.

5 Bojanin 2005.

children, their baptizing, wedding and the like were particularly festive occasions. Meetings with foreign rulers and dignitaries were also an opportunity to demonstrate the power of the state. The negotiations obviously went easier in a relaxed atmosphere. Moreover, great religious holidays and events were also accompanied by extremely secular activities. Charity and gathering of ordinary people at a free feast made the ruler's reputation among subjects of all classes greater. At the beginning of the reign of Stefan the First-Crowned (1196-1217), his late father's ring, containing a fraction of the Holy Cross, arrived in the country. During an elaborate religious ritual the ruler's insignia were laid in the church of the monastery of Studenica. Domentian, a mid-13<sup>th</sup> century leading Serbian spiritual person, says in the *Vita* of Saint Sava that the ruler: "created a spiritual holiday on that day and physically comforted the assembly of his people and did many graces to those who came on that day".<sup>6</sup> The translation of the relics of St Simeon from the Monastery of Chilandar on the Holy Mountain to Serbia in the glorious procession in 1207 actually symbolized the restoration of peace after the war between the sons of the late ruler. The *Vita* of Stefan Nemanja by Saint Sava says: "The Autocrator (the All holder) fed with enough love and graciously donated all the poor, whom many came, and so all of them went to their homes".<sup>7</sup>

This very characteristic of solemn church events reveals that one episode from the life of Sava Nemanjić was meticulously prepared, although the author of his *vita* put a lot of effort to show the opposite. Monk Theodosius wrote at the turn of the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. His more concise version of the *Vita* of Saint Sava was heavily dependent on Domentian's text, but with regard to the specific episode, it offers more details. The younger author Monk Theodosius delivers a brief description of a seemingly unplanned and short usual official visit of the head of the Bishopric of a nearby town of Ierissos to the Serbian monastery of Chilandar some time at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. First he presented the monk Sava Nemanjić with a deacon rank at the end of the liturgy performed during the first day of his stay. More importantly, the honored guest gave to his distinguished host even a higher priest dignity on the very next day. These two events were followed by a huge festivity in the presence of the Bishop and his escort and "many humble people". All of them left the Serbian monastic community only after they were presented with abundant gifts, most probably appropriate to the hierarchical position of each person. Literarily, this line goes: "After being treated (the Bishop - the author's comment) to a feast with brethren's and other nobodies, and after the nobodies were given gifts, the Bishop and those who accompanied him went home with gifts".<sup>8</sup> The attention given by the two writers was caused by the fact that the depicted church inaugurations, as well as later conducted acts of archimandrite investiture, were an important stage in the establishment of the independent Serbian Church in 1219.<sup>9</sup> Regarding our general historical knowledge of marginalized social groups in the medieval Balkans, it is presumed that the local vagrants in this very case may have been aware of the nature and real purpose of the bishop's future visit, thanks to the previous announcements made by both sides involved in its organization. Also, it might have been just a widely-spread custom, practised in order to provide wanderers with enough opportunity to sustain life. One may imagine groups of people

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6 "Духовно сатвори празник у тај дан, и телесно утеши сав сабор народа свога и ту сатвори многе милостиње онима који се обретоше у тај дан". Quote taken from Bojanin 2005, 100-101.

7 ".... самодржац довољно љубављу насити, и милостиво обасу даровима, и тако сви одоше кући" See Teodosije 1992<sup>3</sup>, 85.

8 "После тога добивши велико угошћење са братијом и многим ништима, и пошто су ништи обасути даровима, епископ и они који су са њим дошли, обдарени, отидоше кући." See Teodosije 1992<sup>3</sup>, 77.

9 Djurić 1979, 246.

in need moving from one solemn court festivity or church event to another in a permanent search for food and shelter.<sup>10</sup>

The coronation was also an occasion of celebration. A great festivity was organized in 1331, soon after Stefan Dušan dethroned and executed his father. According to the Student of Archbishop Danilo II “He (the King – the author’s comment) made a great holiday on that day filled with spiritual and corporal mirth in the presents of the Reverend (archbishop Danilo II – the author’s comment) and he had great celebration with the whole Council of his fatherland. He gave many gifts on that occasion”.<sup>11</sup> Quite a different occasion was the abdication of Stefan Nemanja, after he decided to become a monk in 1196. Theodosius described one aspect of the abdication in a literary way, supposedly using the words of the Serbian ruler, “Come and spend the last feast with me, and then I’ll renounce feasts and I will never sit with you at the table – fabulous and with great quantities of meat”.<sup>12</sup> His youngest son Rastko, who was to establish the Serbian Archbishopric in 1219, had abandoned secular life before him. The young prince secretly became a monk showing contempt for the company of his entourage. He openly discarded “empty complaints and inappropriate laughter, hating vulgar and immoral songs of young men’s desires which weaken the soul to its end”. After some time the prince secretly left his court and his shared principality of Hum resolute to completely leave behind the secular life by becoming a monk.<sup>13</sup> This rare occasion was the topic of many sad songs, as observed by Domentian in *The Vita of St Sava*. It is worth mentioning that the makers and singers of those songs, according to the above-mentioned author, were inspired by the *Holy Spirit*.<sup>14</sup> The high-positioned cleric with a vast experience in spiritual doctrine extensively elaborated the *Theology of Creation Inspired by God* in his literature. According to a recently proposed theory, Domentian’s entire opus was basically marked by the idea of personal transmission of the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, it seems that this concept may be additionally confirmed by the above revealed particularity. It can be noted that this clergyman, most educated of all Serbian known medieval theologians, wrote favorably about the secular songs dedicated to his spiritual model, although generally the Church used to allow exclusively spiritual and liturgical songs.<sup>16</sup>

*The Life of Hermit Petar Koriški* by Theodosius was not dedicated to a ruler. However, it expressed a young man’s disapproval of the way his peers behaved – especially of their going to town squares to have fun. The theme was additionally accentuated because he criticized parents, who encouraged this inappropriate behavior of youngsters.<sup>17</sup> This is most likely just one more case of successful mimesis, the practice so common in Christian

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10 This goes back to pagan times, when giving and gifts were obligatory within sacrificial and other similar rites. See Petrović 2006, 52; Krstić 2011A, 16-18. However, the spiritual feast held in the Temple of Solomon, the Jewish synagogues or the Christian churches had a different significance. See Bojović 2009A, 49-51; Krstić 2011A, 25-29, 55-56. According to the ancient Mediterranean common law, the participants in the joint feast were bound by strong relationship. See Krstić 2011A, 67.

11 Bojanin 2005, 96.

12 Bojanin 2005, 199; Bojović 2009A, 52; Krstić 2011B, 116-119. Colleague Darko Krstić suggested to me in written communication that the quoted lines may have referred to the real situation at the Serbian court as well as to the quote from Luke 22,16-20, which actually describes the Paschal feast of the Last Supper. We would like to express our appreciation of his kind support.

13 Radojčić 1982, 225; Bojanin 2005, 331-332, 268; Bojović 2009A, 51-52.

14 Bojanin 2005, 335.

15 Bojović 2009B, 62-80.

16 Though Domentian, as far as we know, exclusively wrote prose pieces, he was obsessed with holy poetry. He believed it was given or inspired by God. See Bojović 2011, 131-143.

17 Janjić 2007, 57; Bojović 2009A, p. 50 notes 99.

literature.<sup>18</sup> The verses 9,5 of *The Proverbs of King Solomon* powerfully remind the readers not to be foolish like an inexperienced boy. The young man, here an epitome of an "unwise" person, was not strong enough to resist the cunning temptations of stupid and wicked women. His weak decision to join her to her lascivious banquet brought him the death in nonliterary meaning. In other words, he broke the pledge to the Yahweh and returned to the old Canaanite religion practiced in Israel before Joseph. On the other hand, *The Feast of Holy Wisdom* was described as its antithesis. *The Feast of Holy Wisdom* was composed and described in a completely different way in comparison to the dinner of unworthy women. That is why it brings the eternal salvation to the participants. Besides, the Psalm stresses that the noble invitation of the *Holy Wisdom*, which basically was the call to obey the rules of God, was especially sent to foolish teenagers.<sup>19</sup> We strongly suspect that the episodes describing the correct behavior of young Rastko may have matched this powerful biblical idea or at least the occurrences from the life of the most prominent eremites coming from all over Christian ecumene – or the local background.<sup>20</sup>

Grigorije Camblak (Gregory Tsamblak in English transliteration - the author's comment) wrote *The Life of King Stefan Dečanski* (1321-1331) at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Although he adhered to hesychasm, an extremely strict monastic doctrine, his description of the celebration after the great victory at the Battle of Velbužd in 1330 contains the following, "And Stefan, victor, decorated with glorious victories, came back to his home, and people met him and celebrated in victorious songs, praised him in wonder and thanked God". This could have been a precursor of Serbian epic poems dating from the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, whose originality and literary impact moved even great Goethe.<sup>21</sup> In addition, according to the monk Theodosius, Stefan Nemanjić even indulged in feasts, "sitting at the head of the table, he entertained his guests playing drums and *gusle* (now the national one-string music instrument - the author's comment), as it was customary with a despot".<sup>22</sup> Two centuries later, Stefan Lazarević ruled over Serbia. His biographer says that heavy atmosphere reigned at his court, "loud voices, stumping feet, laughter or inappropriate vestments should not have even been mentioned. ... And the lord hated both (a woman's love and music – the author's comment) and even abandoned both. He allowed only as much music as was necessary to go to war". This text does not sound realistic and is completely refuted by the sources from 1408 in the archives about professional musicians at the court of this ruler.<sup>23</sup>

The historic study of this topic also reveals that, under the influence of the religious doctrine, the authors of the hagiographies of saints and rulers quite often juxtaposed carnal pleasures and spiritual advancement. This contrast was used to emphasize the Christian virtues of the main characters. Especially prominent in these efforts was Theodosius. His *Laud about St Simeon and St Sava* is not a hagiography, but it clearly makes a distinction between two worlds. Thus, "I've invited your souls to this spiritual joy... Before offering you food for your body, I've prepared a feast for your soul since the Holy Scripture calls words 'angelic food'. The soul, which aspires to reach them, intellectually savours and is refreshed by words just as

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18 On the strong dependence of this text on the *Life of Saint Anthony the Great* by Saint Athanasius of Alexandria See Aleksić 2007, 86; It has also been suggested that some elements of *The Life of Hermit Petar Koriški* may have been similar to the life of Joannicius the Great. See Aleksić 2007, 80-85.

19 Krstić 2011A, 29-39, 44, 55, 70. Accordingly, the Yahweh of the Old Testament was replaced with Jesus Christ, as described in John.21. See Krstić 2011A, 76-83, 97-98.

20 Hagiographies were structured not to show a person's complete biography, but to point out to the most important moments in his spiritual development. See Krstić 2011B, 124.

21 Quoted by: Bojanin 2005, 334-335.

22 Bojanin 2005, 71, 304.

23 Bojanin 2005, 306-307.

the body is by food".<sup>24</sup> This great topic can be shortly summarized best in the words from the introduction of the book by Prof. Bojović: "The Feast of Wisdom emphasizes two dimensions of the blessed presence of the Holy Spirit. Angels in the forms of girls stand at the table, symbolizing wisdom coming from Heaven, while bread and wine on the table or, on some occasions, words and the scroll, are used as symbols of Eucharist".<sup>25</sup> The Feast of Wisdom may be transmitted through the words and it may have had the soteriological function too.<sup>26</sup> Even more importantly, in Ezekiel.2,8-3.3 God himself strongly suggests to Ezekiel to eat the book which contains the foresights dedicated to disobedient Jews. In the same way as the Prophet Ezekiel was invited to eat the book of God's Words, the Christians were summoned to enjoy the feast made by Jesus' words in the Gospel of John.<sup>27</sup> This passage may offer an explanation to the theological and literary origin of the visual representation of the Feast of Wisdom in medieval Serbia fresco paintings, especially in the cases where the various symbols of literacy were illustrated.

However, according to the latest catalog containing the most detailed lists of the scene *The Feast of Holy Wisdom* in old Serbian paintings, it is obvious that the investigated motif may have been used to emphasize a whole range of various ideas regarding the rulers' ideology or simply spread the benefactors' spiritual messages hidden in a code language. It especially refers to the cases when frescos were spatially related to the portraits of the rulers or their distinguish ancestors, regardless of whether the kinship was real or imaginary, within the paintings of each individual churches. It was expected that an ideal Christian ruler should have been decorated with the qualities of wisdom and prophecy, in a way the biblical kings Solomon or David may have been. More precisely, the desired virtues of a Christian monarch should be identical to the seven *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*. This complex scenery and religious-ideological system was usually depicted as seven columns, literally following *The Story of King Solomon* 9,3-5 and the later exegesis of Saint Chrysostom. The temples related to Serbian medieval past that contained the mentioned fresco versions were: Holy Virgin Perivlepta in Ohrid (1294-1295); cathedral church of Gračanica (1318-1321); monasteries of Hilandar (1321 and repainted again in 1804) and Dečani (around 1340). However, in a half of other four cases - the Monastery of Rila (around 1340); Markov Manastir (1376-77); Morača (after 1617); Nikolje (1697) - the personification of the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit* in the form of partially or completely dressed angels can be seen.<sup>28</sup> Exceptionally, in the Book of Psalms of the high ranked nobleman Branko Mladenović dated 1346 the same Bible story was illustrated with seven stairs instead of seven pillars.<sup>29</sup> In many cases the above-mentioned visual representations simply characterized the adaptation of elaborated Christian literature. For example, *The Holy Wisdom* in Markov Manastir is nothing more but *The Word of God* or *The Son of God*, as the inscriptions in Greek explains.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the inscription on the scroll held by Prophet Isaiah in the Monastery of Morača and the content of Serbian Prophetologies foresaw the arrival of Jesus Christ. They

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24 Bojović 2009A, 47.

25 Bojović 2009A, Introduction, p. 5. See also: Radojčić 1982, 225; Krstić 2011A, 54.

26 Bojović 2009A, 53-54.

27 Krstić 2011A, 95-98, 100-101.

28 Đorđević 2008, 183-184, 195-196. The significance of stories attributed to King Solomon elaborated on: Krstić 2011A, 23- 29, where on pp. 27-28 an additional explanation regarding the number of columns is presented; Krstić 2011B, p. 118 notes 177 and 123. On King David See Krstić 2011B, p. 121 notes 179.

29 Radojčić 1982, 225-226. See also Bojović 2009B, p. 65 notes 130.

30 Đorđević 2008, 185; Bojović 2009A, 52-54; Bojović 2009B, 78-79. In general, the biblical *Holy Wisdom* is frequently compared with the supreme God, or it is described as the creature with the divine attributes. See. Krstić 2011A, 24, 39, 49, 51, 53, 57-63, 70, 74-75, 80, 94, 102-105.

told the story about the rod with flowers and branches sprouting from the stem of Jesse. Besides, both texts emphasize that the whole plant was blessed with the *Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, whose real nature was revealed on this occasion. Essentially, there were seven of them: Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of the Wisdom, Spirit of the Understanding, Spirit of the Counsel, Spirit of the Might, Spirit of the Knowledge, Spirit of the Fear of the Lord.<sup>31</sup> Having in mind this experience it is possible to additionally clarify the antipodean relation between spiritual and bodily pleasures. The desired features of medieval rulers may have helped them to try to perform heavy ruling responsibilities in accordance with the idealized depiction of the perfect Christian monarch. This tendency may be observed in historical and literary sources since the rule of Stefan Nemanja.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, it is assumed that further investigation may find the above-mentioned seven qualities of *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit* in the Serbian medieval hagiographies in a great number. Although it is not our job to complete this task in this paper because of the sheer quantity of work required, we tried to decode only the first two of 33 chapters in the older Vita of Saint Sava using the investigated model as a key.<sup>33</sup> This particular text is deliberately chosen as an example because the previous investigations confirmed that Domentijan was familiar with the teaching of the *Holy Spirit*. Therefore, it should not come as surprise that in this relatively short section it was mentioned at least nineteen times as a driving force that influenced the heroes to behave or act in accordance with the divine providence.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, its significance was emphasized when we take into consideration that the *Holy Spirit* contributed not only to the personal salvation of Saint Sava, but also to the definitive conversion of the Serbs to Christianity.<sup>35</sup> Occasionally, he was even vividly compared with a seed of his holy parents that was sowed and maintained to grow steadily by the help of God himself. Because of that and the presence of the Holy Spirit in Sava's fatherland, the real faith became stronger in the hearts of faithful Serbian people.<sup>36</sup> This narrative picture of a growing tree is strikingly similar to the content of the above-mentioned prophecy of Isaiah's, which was depicted as monumental fresco paintings in the Monastery of Dečani facing to the similar compositions showing the Family Tree of the Nemanjić dynasty. This last topic was not unique to old

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31 "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, See Isaiah 11:2. Because of the similarity, the last characteristic (ὁ φόβος τοῦ θεοῦ) includes also the piety to the God (ἡ εὐσέβεια), which is represented in some texts. See Đorđević 2008, 186-190. For Isaiah's prophecies See. Krstić 2011A, 13.

32 Krstić 2011A, 24; Krstić 2011B, 119-120, 126-130; Gavrilović 2000, 281-293. The last author delivered more papers on similar topics: [Gavrilović, *Divine Wisdom as Part of Byzantine Imperial Ideology. Research into the Artistic Interpretation of the Theme in Medieval Serbia. Narthex Programmes of Lesnovo and Sopoćani*, Zograf 11 (1980), 44-53, also available in: Same, *Studies in Byzantine and Serbian medieval art*, pub. Pindar, London 2001, pp. 44-69, and: *The Expansion of Orthodox Europe: Byzantium, the Balkans and Russia*, pub. Routledge 2007, ed. Jonathan Shepard, pp. 377-402.]; [Same, *The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste in the Painted Programme of Žiča Vestibule. Further Research into the artistic Interpretations of the Divine Wisdom – Baptism – Kingship Ideology*, Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik vol. 32, 5, pp. 185-194.]

33 Domentijan 2001, XV (Ljiljana Juhas-Georgievska).

34 As in notes 15. Domentijan 2001, 7, 9, 11, 21, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 37.

35 Domentijan 2001, 7, 23, 25, 27, 31. One may conclude the same for Stefan Nemanja by reading his vita written by Sava Nemanjić. See Bojović 2011B, 164-165.

36 As in notes 31. Domentijan 2001, 30-31. The family and the court were two most important ways to teach biblical sofiology. See Krstić 2011B, 118-119. On sophistic literature See Krstić 2011B, p. 121 notes 181; Artemi 2013; Meinert 2015.

Serbian fresco paintings only and it was not limited just to the medieval period or to the most prominent royal sacral foundation.<sup>37</sup>

In light of a theory which says that the *Feast of the Holy Wisdom* may have been established not exclusively for the Jews, Domentijan's double interpretation of the lines from Luke 1, 14-17 could be better understood. Domentijan claims that the Serbs were transformed to the perfect people worthy of God due to the endeavors of his hero and the might of the Lord. Accordingly, the parents of Saint Sava became the New Israel. One more version of the same idea may be found in Sava's general description of the results of his father's rule. According to him, Stefan Nemanja restored the political unity of his fatherland, reinforced Christianity, erected numerous churches and monasteries and ruled in peace for 37 years thanks to God-given wisdom. In addition, he was "*premudrosni nastavnik*, i. e. the teacher of the Holy Wisdom", which means that his intelligence was beyond common experience accumulated during his long life.<sup>38</sup> Such a comparison may have been possible because the Serbs pledged to God by accepting the virtues of the *Holy Spirit* in the same way as the Jews had done earlier by taking part in the Feast of Holy Wisdom. The life of righteous men and communities was nothing more but the strict obedience of the divine rules of the Feast of Holy Wisdom.<sup>39</sup>

Let us go back to the inspected chapters. It seems that the seven features of the *Holy Spirit* are not equally represented. The writer knowingly mentions at least a few times that Rastko, both as a young Prince or a still inexperienced monk, was guided by the *Spirit of the Understanding* in order to be able to perform such great achievements. For instance, "bogomisaoni" Sava - whose mind was inspired by God or at least devoted to the Lord - had an ability to "comprehend" future events "thanks to the Holy Spirit" or, even more, to spiritually "see" God by his "enlightened mind – svetlim umom". Similarly, "thanks to this capability of his, by God-inspired intellect he realized the might of his (the God – the author's comment) Guide" - I bogomisaonim umom razumeo je silu svoga voditelja. Not just the main characters, but even some minor ones, in the Vita were decorated with splendid epithets, such is "bgorazumni", i.e. a person capable of understanding God's will.<sup>40</sup> There are reasons to believe that the *Spirit of the Knowledge* and the *Spirit of the Wisdom*, which were actually excellences very similar to the *Spirit of the Understanding*, were mentioned for the same purpose. Accordingly, in his youth Sava should have foreseen the benefits of his future actions that were exclusively focused on heavenly values simply by following the wish of Jesus Christ.<sup>41</sup> Concerning the latter spirit, we have been informed that thanks to God the "celomudreni mladić" i.e. "an extraordinarily wise young boy" accidentally met a Russian monk at his court. "Inspired by God - bogoumno ispriča" this monk told the Prince about various spiritual advantages of the life on Mount Athos.<sup>42</sup>

Moved by the glowing stories, the young and disobedient Sava secretly left his court in Serbia with the aim to flee to the Russian monastery of Saint Panteleimon. Maybe the most striking episode of his entire life took place there. Heavily guarded by the soldiers sent after him by his father, he had to devise a cunning plan how not to be taken back

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37 Đorđević 2008, 189. On the Family Tree of the Nemanjić dynasty See Hausteijn 1984; Davidov Temerinski 1984, 249; Marjanović Dušanić 1994, 119-125; Vojvodić 2007, 281-293.

38 Krstić 2011B, 116-130, especially p. 120 and 127. The followers of *The Feast of Holy Wisdom* do not possess just ordinary human intelligence but they are also inspired by God. Therefore, they are like biblical Kings Solomon or David. See Krstić 2011A, 98-103.

39 Krstić 2011A, 17-22, 28, 39-41.

40 Domentijan 2001, 15, 17, 21, 27, 37, 39, 41.

41 Domentijan 2001, 23. The similarity of terms "Wisdom" and "Understanding" stressed in: Krstić 2011B, 120. The motif of the Holy Wisdom in the Old Testament was elaborated on in: Krstić 2011A, 101.

42 Domentijan 2001, 11.

to his distressed parents. However, at this time of extreme hardship the merciful God sent him "bogorazumni" advice how to trick his escort. It is not hard to conclude that he became a novice monk and finally concluded the miracle escape thanks to the interfering of the Spirit of the Counsel.<sup>43</sup>

The *Fear of the Lord* may have been the second prominent theme within two sections. It can be found at least eight times and it was supported by the verse from Psalm Ps112, 1, that precisely highlights the benefits of the attitude toward the life specified here.<sup>44</sup> The might of great God was feared for reason, as already seen in the example referring to the *Spirit of Understanding*. For that reason, the *Spirit of the Might* was mentioned at least a few times. It is worth mentioning that Domentijan meaningfully put emphasis on the triumph of Orthodox Christianity in Sava's fatherland thanks to the protective involvement of God's strength.<sup>45</sup> It has recently been pointed out that the Holy Wisdom may have had a prominent role in the history of salvation of the chosen people. *The Holy Wisdom* interfered in the life of prominent Jews indicating the way of salvation on many occasions.<sup>46</sup> It is not completely clear if the expressions such as "the inconceivable secrets of God were beyond comprehension" or "providence of the Lord" should be related precisely to the term 'Spirit of the Lord', or it was just the case of superficial similarity.<sup>47</sup> The same could be said for two statements which say that the parents "were gifted by God" with the young Rastko, or that God thankfully "delivered to him (to Sava – the author's comment) offerings" for his exceptional efforts and undivided loyalty.<sup>48</sup>

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43 Domentijan 2001, 17, 37. The adjective "bogorazumni" is explained above.

44 Domentijan 2001, 5, 7, 9, 11, 17, 21, 25, 31. Compare: Krstić 2011A, 32.

45 Domentijan 2001, 5, 19, 27.

46 Krstić 2011A, 56-60; Krstić 2011B, 124-125.

47 Domentijan 2001, 7, 37.

48 Domentijan 2001, 25, 33.

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## ЖИТИЈА СРПСКИХ СРЕДЊЕВЕКОВНИХ ВЛАДАРА И ДВОРСКА ТЕЛЕСНА УЖИВАЊА

Овај кратак прилог посвећен је трима, само на први поглед, међусобно неповезаним целинама. Задатак првог одељка је да уопштено прикаже савремено стање проучености проблема свечаних прослава и светковина на дворевима владара, велможа и духовних првака у средњовековној Србији. Ради се о појави која припада пољу истраживања обично називаном историја свакодневног живота. У другој целини аутор покушава да објасни антиподни однос између телесних и духовних уживања, с обзиром на добро уочену чињеницу да делови српских средњовековних житија често снажно истичу супростављеност два облика понашања у дворској средини. Описи који потичу из ове јако важне скупине извора су овде упоређени са истраживачким поступцима из најновије домаће и стране литературе о теологији Богонадахнутог деловања појединаца и етничких скупина и теологији Речи Божије. Посебна пажња је посвећена појму Трпеза Премудрости. У последњем делу тежи се повезивању сазнања који потичу из домаћих хагиографских врела и савремене библијске егзегезе са примерима старог фреско-сликарства, који су у вези са српском средњовековном државом, односно са домаћим писаним теолошким предлошцима о даровима Светог Духа. У последњем одељку претпостављено је да би седам појединачних својстава дарова Светог Духа могли бити кључ за разумевање суштине литерарне структуре извесних српских житија. У ту сврху проучена су прва два поглавља Доментијановог текста посвећеног Светом Сави. Наслућује се да је угледни српски духовник врло вешто и доследно користио седам својства дарова Светог Духа не само да би нагласио личне врлине свог јунака, већ и да би изградио носећи ток свог јако разгранатог и опширног приповедања. На крају, остаје нада да покушај усаглашавања резултата више наука (историја, књижевност, теологија, историја уметности) може допринети потпунијем сагледавању ове занимљиве теме.