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Saint Sava Nemanjić as a Messenger and Founder of the Eastern Church Tradition in the Serbian Church

During the history of the Serbian Christian church and especially in the Middle Ages, certain personalities have influenced and left a mark on the Serbian people. One such emblematic personality is undoubtedly Saint Sava Nemanjić (1175-1236)¹.

His presence is directly linked to the foundation and evolution of the Serbian Church, which was for centuries in a tug of war between the East and the West. The newly-born church organization of the Slavs who recently converted to

¹ There is no question that Saint Sava's personality was the subject of various researchers of different eras and scientific fields. His church, administrative, political, social and theological accomplishments were thoroughly studied, in the degree the sources could support such an endeavor. Dometijan, *Život Svetoga Simeona i Svetoga Save*, (μτφ. L. Mirković), Beograd 1938 and Teodosije Hiladarac, *Život Svetoga Sava*, (trans. L. Mirković), Beograd 1984. Вл. And Jevtić At., *Bogoslovlje Svetog Save*, Vrnjačka Banja 1991, passim: cf. the presentation of the Saint by the History professor in the Belgrade University, Radomir Popović (protojerej-stavrofor), *Sveti Sava – Svetitelj i Prosvetitelj, Srpska Crkva u Istoriji, Zbirka studija iz istorije Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, Beograd 2007, 155-164: Veselinović R., *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve sa narodnom istorijom*, II (1219-1766), Beograd 2010, 19-21. Also Obolensky D., *Six Byzantine Portraits*, Oxford 1988, 115-172: Fine V., *The late medieval Balkans, A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, University of Michigan, 1994: Богдановић. Д., Кратко житије светог Саве, *Зборник Матице српске за књижевност и језик* 24-1 (1976), 5-32: Ђирковић С., *Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији*. Београд 1998.

Christianity (7th – 9th century) followed a rudimentary ecclesiastical organization chart, with certain jurisdictional elements that expressed the ecclesiastical environment under which they fell. In other words, there were archdioceses that fell under the influence of the Church of Rome, and archdioceses that were closer to Constantinople, with all that this entails². However, it is apparent that, until the 12th century, the Serbian populations in the Central Balkan Peninsula had not managed to constitute a united and solid ecclesiastical and political body³. The Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja (12th century) realized in time that the progress and political renewal of his people would be achieved through the unity and the cultivation of the Christian principles of the Gospel⁴. We should also take into consideration the fact that idolatry was deeply rooted in the

²Split and Drač belonged to those ancient archdioceses, which declared their dependence on the Western Church. Whereas, later on the 11th century, the fairly extended archdiocese of Ohrid with dense inland Slav populations emerged, expressing its support to Constantinople. Cf. Tarnanidis I., *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, Thessaloniki 1985², 21 and Šanjek Fr., *Kršćanstvo na Hrvatskom prostoru, Pregled religiozne povijesti Hrvata (7.-20. st)*, Zagreb 1996², 44-51 and 95-101. Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, Knjiga A', Beograd 1991², 45-51.

³Up to the emergence of Saint Sava, the church organization in the Serbian countries was within the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Ohrid. As such, only three Serbian provinces are mentioned: Ras, Prizren and Lipljan. Cf. Popović R., *Kratak pregled Srpska Crkve kroz Istoriju*, Beograd 2000, 17. Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 45-49.

⁴ Regarding the role of the Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja and his contributions to the Serbian people cf. Puzović Pr., *Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva, Prilozi za istoriju*, 2, Beograd 2000, 3-8. В., Торовић, «Стеван Провенчани, Житије Симеона Немање», *Светосавски зборник II*, Београд 1939, 3–76. Калић Ј., *Стефан Немања – Свети Симеон Мироточиви. Историја и предање*. Београд 2000. Also cf. the picture provided by bishop Nikolaos Belilmirović *Sveti Sava*, (ad. Vel. Đomić), Beograd 2013, 11-13.

lives of the Slavs in general, and of the Serbians in particular⁵. For that reason, the ruler Stefan Nemanja engaged in a double struggle: to politically impose himself, and to spread Christianity in his realm.

With a Synod decision, he turned against heresies, and more specifically, against Bogomilism, a heresy that reacted against the political administration and the Christian ecclesiastical class⁶. He aimed to create such a religious environment that could strengthen his political aspirations to form a powerful political state.

Thus, in the first decades of the 13th century, taking advantage of the internal conflicts in Byzantium between the Despot of Epirus, Theodore I Angelos (1215-1224) and Theodore Laskaris (1175-1222), Emperor of Nicaea, the Serbian political administration appeared to defend the latter, while simultaneously raising the issue of the recognition of its ecclesiastical independence. At this point, a personality that would *forever* mark the course of that church, the second-born

⁵ *Tactica Leonis*, PG 107, v. 969· Kašić D., *Istorija Srpske crkve sa narodnom istorijom*, I, Beograd 2010, 7-9· also cf. Čajkanović V., *Mit i religija u Srba*, Beograd 1973, 440-453· Protić Dr., «Religija Starih Slovena», *Teološki pogledi*, 1-4 (1995), 46-49· Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 23-31· Aggelopoulos Ath., *To πολυθειϊστικόν θρησκεισμα των αρχαίων Σλάβων*, Thessaloniki 1967.

⁶ In 1186, a clergy-laity Synod was convened on behalf of Stefan Nemanja in Raška, where Bogomilism was condemned as a heresy. Cf. Petrović M., *Pomen bogumila-babuna u zakonopravilu svetog Save i "Crkva bosanska"*, Beograd 1995· Dragojlović Dr., *Bogomilstvo na Balkanu i u Maloj Aziji*, Beograd 1973· Glušac V., *Istina o bogomilima*, op. cit., 127-195· Obolensky D., *The Byzantine Commonwealth*, op. cit., v. I, 209-216. Regarding the relations of Bogomils and the contemporary muslim residents of Bosnia see Athanasiadis Ath., "Sects in the Balkans. Views of the "Bosnian church" and Bogomilism in the Bosnian Islam from the Middle Ages until today", *Fragmenta Hellenoslavica*, 2 (2015), 58-93.

son of Stefan I Rastko, known as (Sava) Nemanjić would intervene.

It is the story of the young prince who, denying his imminent marriage, fled to Mount Athos, in the St. Panteleimon Monastery, in order to lead a monastic life. He refuses to return to the palace and chooses to live as an ascetic in the Athonite State's steep caverns, practicing virtue, fasting, and praying⁷. For 16 years, he resided in Mount Athos and gained an in-depth understanding of the monastic life⁸. This fact influenced deeply and in many ways his life and way of thinking; not only did he come to know the spiritual terms and rules under which he was living as a citizen of the Athonite Commonwealth, but he also adopted high values and ideals that he would later pass on to his country as the products of mature spiritual labor. A milestone in the effectuation of his future plans for his country's national uplift, as we shall see later on, was his father's, Stefan Nemanjava's, decision to retire from the world in 1196 and to pursue the salvation of his soul, embracing the monastic order in the Studenica Monastery, taking the name Symeon⁹. His decision would be proven to contain a deeper symbolism. Just a few years after his tonsure, Symeon would turn to his son, the

⁷ Cf. Velimirović Nik., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 23-26 and 32-33.

⁸ Cf. Popović R., *Srpska Crkve u istoriji*, Beograd 2013, 16-17 · Grujić R., *Pravoslavna Srpska Crkva*, Beograd 1921, 15-17, Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 56-62. Regarding the deep influence that Mount Athos, Constantinople, Sinai, and the eastern spiritual tradition in general had in Saint Sava's thinking, cf. Jevtić At., (episkop), «Sveti Sava kao prosvetitelj, Sveti Sava i Kosovski Zavet», *SKZ*, Beograd 1992, p.23-26.

⁹ Cf. Grujić R., *Pravoslavna Srpska Crkva*, op. cit., 14-15 · Popović R., *Kratak pregled Srpska Crkve kroz Istoriju*, Beograd 2000, 16 · Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 38-39 · Костић Д., «Учешће Св. Саве у канонизацији Св. Симеона», *Светосавски зборник I*, Београд 1936, 129–209.

Vatopedian monk Sava¹⁰, and together they would lead an ascetic life, but they would also put the cornerstone on which the new Church would be founded. It is apparent that the Serbian-born monks of Mount Athos at that period were several (considerable), but scattered throughout the various monasteries of Mount Athos. However, the seed of their national origin¹¹ was present, resulting in the birth of an idea between the Nemanja monks; an exclusively Serbian monastery that would of course follow the Typikon of Mount Athos, according to the Eastern Church tradition¹². It is considered that the mutual decision-making and action of the two monks not only made their vision of a Serbian monastery a success, but even more so, it laid the ground for the now acclaimed and distinguished monk Sava's following request to the Ecumenical Patriarchate to found the Serbian Church. Having a lifelong experience in the eastern church traditions regarding worship, doctrine and everyday administration, Symeon and Sava

¹⁰ Monk Sava stayed in Vatopedi monastery for ten years, experiencing the ascetic spiritual wealth of fathers in the monastery and the wider monastery region, something that matured him spiritually and made him a capable spiritual child of the Mount Athos community. Cf. Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 34-37.

¹¹ Cf. Mylonas Ch., *Serbian Orthodox Fundamentals. The quest for an Eternal Identity*, 2003, 35-72 · Velimirović N., «Nacionalizam Svetoga Save», Kragujevac 1938, *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 215-227.

¹² Bishop Velimirović identifies the end of the 12th century as the period when the idea was hatched to create a national Serbian Church, following the practices of Byzantium; an organized Church that would unite the Serbian tribes, with its own Head of Church, and educated priests who would be capable of shepherding the Serbian people. For two years, Sava was spiritually preparing himself to quickly prepare his endeavor. Finally, he traveled to Nicaea with a group of virtuous monks, in order to raise the subject with Patriarch Manouel Sarantenos (1215-1222) and emperor Theodore Laskaris. Cf. Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 88-93.

helped to shape the features that would guide the new church. As such, they founded the Hilandar monastery, which became the ecclesiastical model of the Serbian Church, the life of which it continues to brighten, being represented in the hagiographies of its monasteries and churches, as well as in its worshiping hymns¹³. We should also take into consideration in our analysis the fact that the period from 1199, when Hilandar monastery was founded and started operating, until 1219, when the Church of Serbia achieved autocephalus status¹⁴, was a long test of its founders' faith, devotion and obedience to the institutions,

¹³Regarding Hilandar monastery and its place in the spiritual life of the Serbs cf. Богдановић Д., Ђурић В., Медаковић Д., *Манастир Хиландар*, Света Гора 1997; Медаковић Д., *Откривање Хиландара*. Нови Сад 2001; Ђоровић В., *Света Гора и Хиландар до XVI в.* Београд 1985. Also cf. Dimitrijević D., «L'importance du monachisme serbe et ses origines au monastère athonite de Chilandar», *Le Millénaire du Mont Athos I*, Chevetogne 1963, 265–277; Živojinović M., «Hilandar in the Middle Ages (Origins and an Outline of its History)». *Хиландарски зборник* 7 (1989), 7-23.

¹⁴ Tarnanidis I., «Koliko je sv. Sava kao ličnost mogao da utiče na ostvaranje avtokefalnije Srpske crkve», *Sava Nemanjić Sveti Sava Istorija i predanje*, Beograd 1979, 55-62; Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 73-78; Janković Ž., *Srpska Crkva 1219-1920*, Beograd 2006, 19-26; Veselinović R., *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, op. cit., 14. Stefan's first marriage was with the daughter of Alexios Angelos, Eudokia, a fact that brought him closer to the environment of the Byzantine court. Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 83; Tarnandis I., *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 27; also Evangelou Ilias, *Ιστορία της Μεσαιωνικής Γραμματείας των Ορθόδοξων Σλάβων*, Thessaloniki 2017, 294. Cf. for the Serbian monasteries' role in the structure of the social and ecclesiastic life in the medieval ages in the excellent study by Marković V., *Pravoslavno monaštvo i manastiri u srednjevekovnoj Srbiji*, Sremski Karlovci 1920, also Tarnanidis I., *Τα μοναστήρια ως κέντρα πολιτιστικής ακτινοβολίας του Βυζαντίου στον Σλαβικό Κόσμο*, Reprint, Αφιέρωμα στον Εμμανουήλ Κοιραρά, Thessaloniki 1988.

the organization of the monastic community of Hilandar on the basis of the eastern ecclesiastic class¹⁵, the spiritual relations' development between the endeavor's leaders, the respect towards the Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as the interpersonal relationships of Sava himself with the people of the palace; he obviously made diplomatic and efficient moves, thanks to his excellent grasp of the Greek language.

A predominant element in all the testimonies and sources on which we draw for the contribution of Sava Nemanjić's presence is his deep spirituality that had shaped the figure of a saint¹⁶. This element alone should be considered of key importance, not only in order to interpret the historical importance of his actions in his time, but also subsequent influences that shaped the grate spiritual and cultural

¹⁵The deep relationship of Hilandar monastery with the administrating Church of Serbia is demonstrated even nowadays, with the election of hegumens or hieromonks in episcopal administration positions. Hilandar is a spiritual seminary and an index of the correct doctrine in the Serbian Orthodoxy. To name but a few archbishops of the Serbian throne: Joanikije I (1272-1276), Nikodim (1317-1324), Danilo II (1324-1337). It should be noted that in the Mount Athos typikon contained elements from the Jerusalem Typikon, also known as "Sabaites", which was later perfected by Philotheos Kokkinos. Cf. Skrettas N., «Εισαγωγή» *Τυπικόν αγίου Σάββα*, In Jerusalem 2012, 23· cf. Evangelou Ilias, *Σλαβική Ορθοδοξία, Από τον Κύριλλο και τον Μεθόδιο στους ησυχαστές (9^{ος} – 15^{ος} αι.)*, Thessaloniki 2015, 241-252· Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op. cit. 21. For the eastern tradition's general influence in the Serbian Church see Mirković L., «Ein Typikon des serbischen Erzbischofs Nikodemos: vom Einfluss Konstantinopels auf den Gottesdienst der serbischen Kirche», *Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 8 (1953), 429-433.

¹⁶ His reputation had crossed the borders of Mount Athos and he was already known, obviously due to his lineage as well, in the greater Slav and Orthodox world. Cf. Tarnandis I., *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 27· Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op. cit., 15-17· Kašić D., *Istorija Srpske crkve*, op. cit., p.113-115· Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 94-97.

framework of that Church in the general ecumenical climate of the Orthodox East. Quite accurately, professor Tarnanidis notes: *"...the radiance of his spirit by far surpassed the glory of his lineage. It is worth noting that his canonization was a universal recognition of his personality and irrelevant to his nobility..."*¹⁷. The manuscript records in their entirety are irrefutable evidence of Sava's intact spirituality. Books on his life, Masses, Eulogies, compilations of Greek recovered texts or customized hymn compositions; either carefully translated from Serbian to Greek, either written directly in Greek, they grace the Orthodox Church's hymnological tradition in its ecumenical dimension. However, we should note the objective difficulties faced by the researcher of these topics, due to the lack of primary sources. Such a fact makes the need for a systematic research of the scarce sources seem imperative for subsequent researchers.

Which Typikon did Sava implement in the newly formed Church? It is possible that two Typika were put up for use on behalf of Savva. The first is the monastery Typikon, as he experienced it in Mount Athos and in Constantinople and applied it in Hilandar, Studenica and subsequently in other monasteries¹⁸ in medieval Serbia. The second is the parish Typikon, as he came to know it in Thessaloniki, and, more

¹⁷ Tarnandis I., *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 27.

¹⁸ Cf. Bogdanović D., *Sveti Sava, Sabrani spisi*, 2, Beograd 1986, 12 et seq. Cf. the description of his biographer, Domentian, for the way he organized the Church. Domentian says: *"... and he organized everything in accordance with every good law and he transferred every example of Mount Athos in his country, in monasteries and hermitages, always having in his heart him who is watered by the Holy Spirit..."* Domentian, op. cit., 124; also see Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op.cit., 17; Хиландарски типик, (ed. J. Шафарик), *Гласник СУД* 20 (1886), 157–213; Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 84-96.

specifically, in the church of Hafia Sophia¹⁹. In this account, we should take into consideration an additional reality of utmost importance. The Typika do not only constitute a structured class of worship, but also an expression of the deep faith and the doctrine of the ecclesiastic experience of a community. Therefore, behind Sava's decision to follow that direction lies not only a symbolism, but also a conscious and oriented choice. Moreover, Sava initiated a highly innovative action, by the standards of his time, which involved the organizational structure of the new Church. He placed the seats of the new bishops under his jurisdiction in significant medieval monasteries, that would thus become the center of the ecclesiastic life²⁰. This had multiple advantages for the legitimacy of the still developing Church. He interconnected the parish life with the monastery life. The monastery's *katholikon* became the Metropolis, which was the center of the parish life, thus making the ecclesiastic class homogenized and uniform.

¹⁹ Liturgiologist Milošević Nenad notes that "...it would be inconceivable for Sava, coming from 1198 into contact with liturgical texts and *typikon* books in the churches of Thessaloniki, to not have studied their *typikon* in depth and to not have introduced elements from it into the developing liturgical practice", Milošević N., «Η επίδραση του Τυπικού της Κωνσταντινουπόλεως στην ανάπτυξη των λατρευτικών ακολουθιών στην Εκκλησία της Σεργίας», Thessaloniki 2017, 3, note 6.

²⁰ Regarding the role of the institutions of dioceses and metropolises in the organization of the Serbian Church see Janković M., *Episkopije i Mitropolije srpske Crkve u srednjem veku*, Beograd 1985, 32. He deliberately avoided the eminent and possibly secularized urban centers of those dioceses, wanted to emphasize the fact that church life is concentrated in the high ideals of the monastery community. Also cf. Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op. cit. 19, Evangelou Ilias, *Ιστορία της Μεσαιωνικής Γραμματείας*, op. cit., 296-297.

Sava conveyed practically the experience of his monastic and byzantine education into his developing Church. For that purpose, he conferred with well-regarded hierarchs and counselors. After his departure from Nicaea, he was escorted by his partners to Thessaloniki, to his trusted archbishop, Constantine Mesopotamites (1198-1199 and 1204-1223). It seems that he held a lengthy and substantive discussion with archbishop Constantine about topics related to the organization of the Church²¹. Thus, Photios' Nomocanon was translated, probably by him or his partners, and constituted the *ecclesiastic and legal code of conduct for the newly-found Church*²². The faithful and accurate implementation of the eastern Typikon by Sava is also apparent by the fact that each diocese was supplied with a copy of the Nomocanon (Krmčija), so as to avoid phenomena of unaccountability, misinterpretations or personal initiatives in everyday matters of worship and faith²³. The deeper meaning he attributed to the eastern Byzantine Typikon is also apparent by the acceptance of the Byzantine ecclesiastical art and

²¹ It is worth highlighting the enthusiasm with which bishop Nikolaj Velimirović presents monk Sava's visit in Thessaloniki, from his entrance in Kalamaria and the contacts he established with the archbishop of Thessaloniki, Constantine. He partook in the concelebration with the bishop of Ierissos, Nikolaos, and the archbishop of Kassandreia, Michael, while Constantine included him with love and honor, raising him to the rank of archimandrite. Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 58-59 and 100.

²² Tarnandis I., *Ιστορία της Σεββικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 44. cf. Puzović Pr., *Srpska Pravoslavna Crkva*, op. cit., 7.

²³ Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 93-96. Tarnanidis I., *Περί των βασικών θεσμών Διοικήσεως του Πατριαρχείου Σεββίας. Συνοπτική Ιστορική Ανασκόπησις*, Reprint of Archbishop of Kitros, Barnaba D. Tzrotzatos, «Οι βασικοί θεσμοί διοικήσεως των Ορθοδόξων Πατριαρχείων μετά ιστορικών ανασκοπήσεων», Athens 1972, 4-5. Cf. the commentary of Novaković St. regarding Nomocanon, *Zakonik Stefana Dušana*, Beograd 1938.

architecture, preserved until today through the massive cultural creations of Studenica and Zica monastery, as well as many other medieval Serbian monasteries. It should be noted that Sava had an extended, “mobile perception” regarding the life and practice of his Church. For example, he did not hesitate to introduce, after his travel to the Holy Land in 1228, reformatory elements of the Jerusalem Typikon to his ecclesiastical class²⁴.

An additional element that shows the relationship of the inspired high priest with the eastern tradition is his choice to author the Mass of his father, Saint Symeon, on the basis of the eastern liturgical calendar typikon, already established in Mount Athos²⁵.

In his debates with the Archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatianos (1216-1236)²⁶, it is evident that Sava followed the

²⁴ Regarding the Jerusalem Typikon see the study of the bishop of the Serbian Church in Eastern America and Canada, Sava Vuković, “Prvi prevod Jerusalimskog tipika kod Srba”, povodom 650 godišnjice predstavljena Arhiepiskopa srpskog svetog Nikodima, *GSPC*, 12 (1974), 271-276.

²⁵ Professor Milošević writes: *The aforementioned Mass’ type follows the Typikon rules regarding minor celebrations without doxology, and as such, the Mass is evidence of the form of worship in the era during which it was composed. ...Based on that evidence, it is obvious that the Jerusalem Typikon, before the Second Hesychast composition, gave priority to the religious themes of the weekly cycle...*. Milošević N., *Η επίδραση του Τυπικού*, op. cit., 9.

²⁶ Archbishop Chomatianos did not consent to the founding of the Serbian Church, since that would deprive his Archdiocese of important administrative provinces, so he coordinated his action to that end. Cf. for the role of Archdiocese of Ohrid Tarnanidsi I., *Η διαμόρφωσις στου Αυτοκεφάλου της Βουλγαρικής Εκκλησίας (864-1235)*, Θεσσαλονίκη 1976, 94-110 and *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 42-44. Delikari Ang., *Η Αρχιεπισκοπή Αχριδών κατά τον Μεσαίωνα: Ο ρόλος της ως ενωτικού παράγοντα στην πολιτική και εκκλησιαστική*

Byzantine Typikon in his plans for the Serbian Church. This is also made obvious by Archbishop Chomatianos' argumentation, where he did not react negatively in Savvas' polity in topics regarding worship or faith; on the contrary, he recognized his best practice and clear awareness of the eastern tradition, the way it was followed in the Mount Athos Typikon²⁷. Chomatianos seemed to be certain that Sava belonged to the eastern tradition, because he would otherwise put forward his dependency on the West as an argument. We can assume that he followed the same Typikon with the Archdiocese of Ohrid, many provinces of which were abstracted to the newly-found Church²⁸. Additionally, his lengthy stay in cities with a profound ecclesiastical class, such as Constantinople, Nicaea and Thessaloniki leads us to the conclusion that he came to know and study the so called eastern asmatic typikon, which was adopted when he was appointed Archimandrite in Hagia Sophia of Thessaloniki and Bishop in

ιστορία των Σλάβων των Βαλκανίων και του Βυζαντίου, Thessaloniki 2014. For Chomatianos' letter where he calls Sava "a simple monk that abandoned Mount Athos" see Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op.cit., 20.

²⁷ It should be noted that Sava had already composed *The Karyes Typikon* (*Karejski tipik*) to be used by the monks in the vicinity of the Karyes cell. Cf. Bogdanović D., *Karejski munik svetoga Save*. Београд 1985: Јовановић–Стипчевић Б., «Писар Карејског типика», *Свети Сава у српској историји и традицији*. Београд 1998, 127-133. Popović R., *Kratak pregled Srpske Crkve*, op. cit., 16.

²⁸ Cf. Milošević N., Η επίδραση του Τυπικού της Κωνσταντινούπολης, op. cit., 1. The Typikon of Studenica monastery, which he composed or edited himself, was possibly a product of the influence his travel to Sinai and his contact with Saint Sava Monastery in the Holy Land had to him. Cf. Evangelou Ilias, *Ιστορία της Μεσαιωνικής*, op. cit., 296-297. Cf. Popović R., *Srpska Crkva*, op.cit., 17-18.

the Cathedral of Nicaea²⁹. It is also necessary, in order to obtain an overall view of Sava's stance, to take into account the political circumstances of that era, which were favorable to the acceptance on the part of emperor Theodore Laskaris and patriarch Manouel Sarantenos (1215-1222) of conferring advantages to the Serbian Church, since that would enhance their ecclesiastic and political supremacy over their challengers³⁰.

However, one might wonder: What is Archbishop Sava's relations with the West? Even though Domentian, his biographer, made it seem as if it had a leading role in the process of taking the royal crown on behalf of his brother, Stefan, from Pope Honorius III (1216-1227), it seems that their relations were limited to diplomacy³¹. Of course, he did not wish to create conflicts with the West, which was notably the strong political pole of the era; on the contrary, he maintained diplomatic contact, without actually implementing the administrative, religious or other principles followed by the

²⁹ Milošević N., Η επίδραση του Τυπικού της Κωνσταντινούπολης, op. cit., 3.

³⁰ Cf. Tarnandis I., *Ιστορία της Σερβικής Εκκλησίας*, op. cit., 34-42. It is very possible that there had been some sort of agreement between Laskaris and Stefan for Sava's election as a patriarch, seeing that the development was fast and very smooth. We consider the siege of Constantinople by the Crusaders worthy of note in our analysis; an occasion of objective difficulty in handling such issues on behalf of the empire.

³¹ Historian Stanoje Stanojević presents the return of Saint Sava in Mount Athos in 1217 as a consequence of a conflict with his brother, Stefan the First-Crowned, who seemed to be oriented towards the West. Stanojević St., *Sveti Sava*, Beograd 1935, 42. Cf. for the topic, regarding the opinions of other historians with similar reservations, Jovan Radonić's, Vladimir Ćorović's, in the analysis set out by Slijepčević Đ., *Istorija Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, op. cit., 67.

West³². We believe that quite rightly older and more contemporary historians believe that we can only accept his relations with the West in a diplomatic level, and in fact as a regional policy³³.

The researcher of this unique personality that remains until today the quintessence of the Serbian people cannot help but focus on the main purpose of Saint Sava's presence and contribution which is called *Svetosavlje-Saint-Savism*. *Svetosavlje* is the spiritual essence of the patriarch's presence: theological, historical, ecclesiastic, of the Holy Spirit, evangelical, Slavic and Serbian, Byzantine and eastern, and always orthodox³⁴. It is the Christian culture as a way of life, as an image of the Living Christ, it is the unity of the Serbian Church, it is the spirituality creeping in the everyday life of the Serbian soul, in arts, in science, in literature, in philosophy, as Saint Nikolai Velimirović would say. For that reason, Saint Sava is considered

³² Bishop Velimirović does not leave room for other interpretations except for one; Sava sought to have the diplomatic contact with the West, in addition to the second wedding of his brother, Stefan, with the granddaughter of Enrico Dandolo, Anna. Cf. Velimirović N., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 83-85.

³³ Cf. the aforementioned works by Radomir Popović, Predrag Pužović, Đoko Sljepčević, et al. Nonetheless, there are also records that present Saint Sava as guiding his flock towards the Roman Catholic faith. Cf. Rogošić R., *Prvi srpski arhiepiskop Sava i Petrova stolica*, Nova revija VIII, 389.

³⁴ The most notable monograph is, in our opinion, the study by the now retired Bishop of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Athanasije Jevtić, *Bogoslovlje Svetog Save*, Vrnjačka Banja 1991, 7-109. At this point it is worth mentioning the comparison attempted by professor Radomir Popović between Orthodoxy and the Serbians' spiritual identity in his article "Pravoslavlje i srpski duhovni identitet", *Sveti manastir Hilandar srpska carska lavra*, Beograd 2005, 17-21.

to be the *homo universalis*³⁵ of the Serbian existence. The way all these components come together gives off an essence of Byzantium and Mount Athos.

Carefully studying Serbia's first Archbishop's life and work, a researcher shall also notice an ecclesiastically valuable criterion which demonstrates the relationship of Sava the blessed with the Eastern Church. Besides the fact that through his action he witnessed and continued the mission of Cyril and Methodius and its successors³⁶, it is not by chance that already by the time of his biographers, but mainly in the medieval times, he was called "enlightener-prosvetitelj"³⁷ of the Serbian people. At first glance, this topic seems irrelevant to the eastern tradition, since the concept of the "enlightener" also exists in the West. With a more careful reading, one shall observe in this move the popular recognition of his offering to his flock of an eastern-type tradition that was passed on to the Slavic Serbian people as an authority. We can already see this disposition being reflected in the hymns of worship, in troparia describing this tradition.

Even more so, the fact that the eastern tradition was ingrained in Sava is apparent in Domentian's description of his

³⁵ Cf. Bigović Rad., (Protojerej), Sveti Sava – Homo Universalis, on the website (02/03/2017) <http://vaznesenjeovcarbanja.blogspot.gr/2013/01/homo-universalis.html>, 27/01/2013.

³⁶ Jevtić At., (episkop), "Sveti Sava u tokovima ćirilo-metodijevskog predanja. Pojam i tajna predanja", in *Sveti Sava i Kosovski Zavet*, Beograd 1992, 7-19.

³⁷ Prince Miloš Obrenović recognized in 1823 the Memorial Day of Saint Sava as a national holiday. Some years later, in 1841, the 27th of January was established by decree as a public holiday and a celebration for all the educational institutions and Literature. See Velimirović Nik. (Vladika), *Život Svetog Save*, Vrnjačka Banja 2000, p.179, note 3· Jevtić At., (episkop), "Sveti Sava kao prosvetitelj", op. cit., 20-36.

second visit to Zion church in Jerusalem. There, the subsequent martyr of our Church, Patriarch of Jerusalem Athanasius, welcomed him with tremendous honor, which surpassed the protocol of welcoming an hierarch³⁸. Hailing him with Easter hymns of Saint John Damascene and Saint John Chrysostom by paraphrasing them and addressing them to Sava's personality, he described him as "an enlightener and an apostle of the Lord"³⁹. *This polysemous address and comparison of Saint Sava with the eastern Fathers is the ultimate characteristic of the Eastern Enlightenment tradition*" notes bishop Athanasije Jevtić⁴⁰.

By all the aforementioned information, it becomes clear that Sava, equal-to-the-apostles, founder of the Serbian Church, by organizing his Church in the newly-found Serbian state and by creating deep ecclesiastical bonds with Hellenism, established in his flock the Orthodox eastern practice as an "*all-governing and all-fulfilling*" principle.

Nevertheless, what empowers his person and renders it a part of the holy tradition is his participation in the divine bestowal of the Holy Spirit in the Church of the Lord. Saint Savas was a faithful guide and a pure follower and supporter of the Orthodox Eastern Tradition that the enlighters Cyril and Methodius established in the Slavic Churches. This tradition remains unaltered throughout the centuries.

³⁸ Two years before his martyrdom, possibly in 1234, Patriarch Athanasius welcomed Sava in Jerusalem. Cf. Jevtić At., *Sveti Sava*, op. cit., 36.

³⁹Jevtić At., "*Sveti Sava kao prosvetitelj*", op. cit., 4.

⁴⁰Jevtić At., "*Sveti Sava kao prosvetitelj*", op. cit., 4.

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