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THE EXPANSION OF SERBIA IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 12TH CENTURY

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Abstract

In Serbian historiography, the expansion of Serbia, or Raška (Rascia), in the first half of the 12th century at the expense of Byzantium, whose vassal it was, was recorded a long time ago. At the same time, it is recorded that Serbia was defeated three times by Byzantium (in 1127 – 1129, 1149 and 1150). Byzantium dealt with the problem of unruly vassals by annexing some territory at the beginning of the 11th century, relocating population (after 1129 and 1150), giving land to the Serbs settled along the Byzantine border (to Zavida, Primislav, Desa, Stefan Nemanja), and raising the number of soldiers Serbia was obliged to give for waging war (in 1150). The lands granted to Serbs between 1129 and 1143 spanned the area between Ras and Kopaonik, while those granted between 1150 and 1158/9 spanned the area between Kopaonik and the parishes (Serb. *župa*) of Toplica and Reka. The first expansion benefited Zavida, who received lands from Byzantium after acknowledging the Empirećs sovereignty, upon his return to Ras, which belonged to Byzantium at the time. The second expansion impacted at least a part of Zavida's territory which Stefan Nemanja later received when he became a suzerain in Serbia. We hypothesize that the territories that Byzantium gave to the Serbs as its vassals did become part of Serbia at a certain moment and under certain conditions. The answer to the question of how this was possible even though Serbia was defeated by Byzantium may be that Byzantine emperors regarded Serbian rulers as their officials and Serbian lands as Byzantine provinces.

Key words: Serbia, Raška (Rascia), territorial expansion, Zavida, Nikava, Galič, Toplica, Reka

ТЕРИТОРИЈАЛНО ШИРЕЊЕ СРБИЈЕ У ПРВОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ XII ВЕКА

Апстракт

Проширење Србије (Рашке) у првој половини XI века на рачун Византије, чији је вазал била, одавно је забележено у српској историографији. При томе,

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забележно је да је у том периоду Византија три пута поразила Србију (1127 – 1129, 1149. и 1150. године). Византија је проблем непослушних вазала решавала одузимањем територија, почетком XI века, пресељењем становништва (после 1129. и 1150. године), давањем поседа Србима чије су се територије граничиле са Византијом (Завиди, Примиславу, Деси, Стефану Немањи), и повећањем броја војника које је Србија била дужна да јој да за ратовање (1150. г.). Указано је да је до првог проширења дошло између 1129. и 1143. године на простору између Раса и Копаоника, а до другог између 1150. и 1158/9. године, између Копаоника и жупа Ибар, Топлице, Расине и Реке. Територија на коју су се проширили у првој етапи припадала је Завиди и представљала је поседе које је он добио од Византије пошто је признао њену врховну власт након повратка у Рас, који је тада био део Византије. Проширење у другој етапи барем делом односило се на територију која је припадала такође Завиди, а коју је добио Стефан Немања када је постао удеони владар у Србији. Тако смо изнели претпоставку да су територије које је Византија давала Србима, како би били њени вазали, у одређеном тренутку и у одређеним условима постајале део Србије. На питање како је то могуће, чак и када се изгуби рат, изнета је претпоставка да су византијски цареви на владаре Србије гледали као на своје чиновнике, а на њихове земље као на византијске провинције.

Кључне речи: Србија, Рашка, територијална експанзија, Завида, Никава, Галич, Топлица, Река

INTRODUCTION

The topic of this paper is the territorial expansion of Serbia, Raška (Rascia), between the end of the 11th century and the 1160s. That was the period of its expansion to the east – to the areas between Ras and the Toplica River, and Niš and the South Morava River. This change was important because it would have permanent consequences and would move and stabilize the center of the Serbian state in these new areas.

King Bodin succeeded in expanding Serbia to the north by conquering Raška and setting up his Princes (Serb. *župan*) Marko and Vukan as its rulers after 1081 (Gesta I, 2009, p. 162 -163; Blagojević, 2000, p. 64 – 65).[1] While Marko is not mentioned in later sources, some reliable sources about Vukan have been preserved. Anna Komnene wrote about him in great detail. Thus, Serbian states spread to the west, south and north by the end of the 11th century, while the eastern border of the territory remained almost unchanged.

From the last decade of the 11th century and onwards, Byzantine sources referred to Raška as Serbia, and, judging by a letter sent by Grand

[1] King of Duklja Constatine Bodin titled himself "exousiastes of Dioclea and Serbia" on one of his Greek stamps (Cheynet, 2008, pp. 89 – 97). Solange Bujon, a French historian, believes that Marko was a figment of the imagination of Don Mavro Orbini at the beginning of 17th century. According to Solange Bujan, Mavro Orbini actually forged all of the so-called "Chronicles of the Priest of Duklja" trying to show it as one of the sources for his work "The Kingdom of the Slavs," which was printed in Pesaro in 1601 in Italian (Bujan, 2011, pp. 65 – 80). Her ideas, however, were not pursued by other researchers.

Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) Vukan to the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos, Grand Princes (Serb. *veliki župan*) were considered the rulers of Serbia (VIINJ, 1966, p. 386).

Anna Komnene, daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios I, mentioned this letter in her work "Alexiad" and stated that it was towards the end of the 11th century that the border between Serbia and Byzantium lay between the Serbian town of Zvečan in the north and the Byzantine town of Lipljan in the south. Vukan organized attacks on Zigon, the area between the towns of Kosovo Polje and Lipljan. In great detail, Anna Komnene described the relationship between Serbia and Byzantium in the period between 1092 and 1094, when her father Emperor Alexios I Komnenos fortified the border towards Serbia in order to stop Serbian attacks. She also wrote that this activity of the Emperor was carried out in the area of Zigon, which indicates that Vukan had previously attacked Byzantium exactly in this area. Vukan's greatest advance happened in 1094, when he attacked and burnt down the Byzantine town of Lipljan, and then forced his way to Skopje, Vranje and Polog. After that, Alexios I Komnenos raised an army against the Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) of Serbia, who managed to avoid conflict by surrendering hostages (his nephews Uroš and Stefan Vukan and twelve princes (Serb. *župan*). In this way, peace between Byzantium and Serbia was established (VIINJ 1966, pp. 385 – 389; Maksimović, 1985, pp. 73 – 90).

It is believed that Vukan managed to expend the state to the parishes (Serb. *župa*) of Morava (between Čačak and Kraljevo), Borač (Gruža), Lab, Ras and Toplica. In this way, at the time of Vukan, Serbia spread to the territories around the West Morava River and east of the river Ibar (Blagojević 1983, pp. 66 – 67; Blagojević, Medaković, 2000, pp. 81 – 82). Due to the successful expansion of his territory and his avoidance of unnecessary conflicts, Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) Vukan is considered one of the most important Serbian rulers of the period before the Nemanjić Dynasty. Anna Komnene mentioned him for the last time in 1106 (VIINJ III, 1966, pp. 389 – 390).

The first source aside from Anna Komnene which provided evidence about the situation in Serbia was Stefan the First-Crowned, who wrote about a great tumult in Serbia, when his grandfather (Zavida)[2] was bereft of his land by his brothers. After this, his father returned to his birth-place Dioclia, specifically Ribnica. The evidence that Zavida returned to his birth-place indicates that he returned to the land in Duklja inherited from his father, where his youngest son Stefan Nemanja was born and baptized according to Latin customs in 1112-1113 (Ćorović,

[2] From other sources, i.e. an inscription on the Miroslav Gospel and an inscription in the Church of St Apostle Peter in Bijelo Polje, we learn that the name of Stefan the First-Crowned's grandfather was Zavida (Živković, 2006, p. 119).

1938, p. 18; Stefan 1988, p. 64; Sveti Sava, 1986, p. 118; Pirivatrić, 1991, p. 35).

There is no direct evidence specifying when the unrest broke out and forced Nemanja's father to leave Serbia. It is believed that these events most likely took place after the death of Vukan, Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) of Serbia, i.e. after 1106, when, as it was previously said, he was mentioned for the last time. This event must have happened before the birth of Stefan Nemanja in 1112-1113 (Ćorović, 1938, p. 18; Blagojević, Medaković, 2000, p. 88).

Written sources have been confirmed by archeological data. Archeological research shows that the Byzantines built an earthen, palisade fort capable of housing 300-500 soldiers on the hill of Gradina, above the confluence of the Sebečevska River and the Raška River, after taking the town of Ras. Byzantine coins showing the emperors Alexios I (1080-1118) and John II Komnenos (1118-1143) were found at this location (Popović, 1997, pp. 119-136). It can be noted that no coins showing Manuel Komnenos were found. This indicates that the Byzantines must have held this town before 1118, when Alexios died and John II Komnenos came to throne. The fact that no coins showing Manuel Komnenos were not found indicates that Byzantium must have lost this town before he came to power.

Stefan the First-Crowned said that, after some time, Zavida came back to his seat (Ćorović, 1938, pp. 18 – 19; Stefan, 1988, p. 65), by which he must have meant the place where Stefan was seated, i.e. Ras. However, he did not say when this happened. It might be possible to establish the year of his return by analyzing the words of Sava Nemanjić, who said that his father Stefan Nemanja was a *mladenac* (Engl. youngster) at the time he arrived in Ras. Namely, he was called "a youngster" after he was baptized for the second time by the Bishop of Ras (Ćorović, 1928, p. 173). *Mladenac* is an expression which in the Middle Ages in Serbia referred to children up to the age of 4 (Trifunović, 1990, p. 358). So, Zavida must have come to Ras in 1116, or in 1117 at the latest. This means that Zavida was in the service of Byzantium at his arrival in Ras, since the above-mentioned fort on the hill of Gradina was on Byzantine territory. The Greek Bishop Leontios of Ras baptized Stefan Nemanja in the Church of SS Apostles Peter and Paul (Serb. *Crkva Svetih Apostola Petra i Pavla*) (Kalić, 2006, p. 147). Since the ruler of Byzantium at the time was Alexios I Komnenos († 1118), this means that, during the reign of Alexios I, it was already customary for Serbian noblemen to settle down near the Byzantine border with Serbia. In case of war, Serbian settlers would fight for Byzantium against their own people. In this way, the Byzantines eliminated their potential adversaries and made allies. It is assumed that at one point Zavida's family was given lands in the vicinity of Skopje. During the reign of Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos

(1195-1203), Archon Jovan, son of Tihomir, Nemanja's eldest brother, won independence for his estate in the vicinity of Skopje (Pirivatrić, 2009, pp. 313 – 333).

So, in the second decade of the 12th century, the border between Serbia and Byzantium was west of Ras, in order to extend to Toplica, Ibar Rasina and Reka until the 1160s. In this paper, we will try to explain how this came about and determine the time of Serbia's expansion to these territories.

THE TIME AND MANNER OF SERBIA'S EXPANSION

That Zavida had estates in the vicinity of Ras can be supported by the endowments of his heirs. Where exactly were these estates and how do we know that they were inherited? Stefan Nemanja and his brothers, nephews and other descendants built endowments on their estates. Each donor (Serb. *ktitor*) who would donate lands could do that only with those estates which were legally settled and were not disputed. Rulers tried to show that they came into possession of the land which they donated in a legitimate way, as can be seen from charters. This directly means that they must have been inherited. Next, the land which was given away was mostly in the immediate vicinity of the endowment in question. This is proof that the donor possessed the surrounding lands. That Zavida had lands in Ribnica is proved by the fact that Stefan Nemanja endowed Hilandar with a mare and 30 spuds of salt from Zeta. He was also the benefactor of Bogorodica Bistrička (Church of the Blessed Virgin of Bistrica) in Polimlje (the river Lim basin), where his brothers held lands too. In Polimlje, the following were endowments of these noblemen: the Church of SS Peter and Paul (Serb. *Crkva Svetog Petra i Pavla*) (Prince Miroslav), the monastery The Pillars of St George (Serb. *Đurđevi stupovi*) in Budimlje endowment of Prvoslav, Tihomir's son), the monastery of Mileševa (King Vladislav, before his reign), the monastery of Morača (Vukan's son Stefan) and the monastery of Davidovica (Vukan's son Dmitar). The endowments, near the rivers Ibar, Zapadna Morava, Lim and Morača were located mostly in Polimlje, which shows that this area was Zavida's estate inherited by his posterity (Ćirković, 1998, pp. 145 – 146; Ćirković, 2000, pp. 26 – 27). So, he received this territory from Byzantium.

The fact that Zavida first avoided and then placed himself in the service of Byzantium was not the worst consequence of the great unrest. It is believed that the Serbs lost Ras at the time too (Blagojević, Medaković, 2000, p. 54). That means that they lost the territories they had held east of Ras. Namely, John Kinnamos and Niketas Choniates stated that, during the uprising against Byzantium between 1127 and 1129, Serbs burnt down the fort of Ras, meaning that it was part of Byzantium, i.e.

that the border was behind it. The Serbian uprising was crushed (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 14 – 15, 115 – 117). Niketas Choniates wrote that Emperor John II Komnenos had Serbian prisoners settled in the vicinity of Nicomedia after the Serbian uprising of 1127-1129. The name of Servochoria both proves that the Serbs were moved and indicates where they were removed to. At the same time, he wrote that some of them were soldiers while others paid taxes (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 116 - 117). This shows that Byzantine emperors tried to control Serbia by forcibly relocating its population. The fact that some were soldiers and others paid taxes means that both noblemen and serfs were part of the relocated population.[3]

For more than two decades after that, no sources mentioned the relations between Serbia and Byzantium. The Serbs were next mentioned due to the new uprising against Byzantium in Raška in 1149. At the time, Serbia was ruled by Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) Uroš II (Kalić, 2006, pp. 153 – 172). John Kinnamos wrote that Emperor Manuel (1143-1180) attacked and destroyed Ras, and then headed for the area of Nikava, for which he explicitly stated that it belonged to the Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) conquering all forts there. Finally, he came to Galič, which did not want to surrender, and the Emperor and his army took it by storm (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 22 – 26). Under whose power Ras was need not be explained; however, things were different with Nikava and Galič. The fact that Emperor Manuel did not conquer anything east of Galič proves that Galič was the eastmost fort on the eastern border of Serbia.

Kinnamos did not write where exactly Nikava was; furthermore, he was the only source who mentioned this area. In current literature, opinions on Nikava's location differ from author to author. Thus, it is postulated that it was in the parish (Serb. *župa*) of Pnuće, then in the area of the Nišava River, then the area at the town of Rožaja, on the river Makva, i.e. the area of present-day Rožaja and Tutin, where the parish (Serb. *župa*) of Jelica, in the vicinity of Zvečan, would be situated later. It is doubted that its location could be determined with any certainty (Blagojević, 1983, p. 67; Mišić, 2014, p. 29). The most recent assumptions indicate that, after the conquest of Ras, Manuel moved to the southern parts of Serbia. This locates the area of Nikava, with a number of its forts which surrendered to Manuel, around the source of the river Ibar, where the border with Byzantium once was. This means that the defense strip was destroyed (Živković, 2006, p. 134; Mišić, 2014, p. 29).

Kinnamos himself did not say even where the fort of Galič was. However, Galič was mentioned in the Saint-Stephan Chrysobull of King Milutin. It was said that it was situated in the area of Sočanica, on the right bank of the river Ibar (Trifunović, 2011, I p. 47; Trifunović, 2011 II,

[3] It is believed that the Serbs kept their territories despite the defeat (Mišić, 2014. p. 28).

p. 18). This location has been accepted in literature (Blagojević, 1983, p. 67; Živković, 2006, p. 134; Mišić, 2014. pp. 28 - 29). It is in the southern part of the mountain Kopaonik. Thus, in 1149 the eastern border of Raška spread to the southern part of Kopaonik.

An important question should be asked at this point: how did the Serbs, who had been defeated in 1129, manage to move the border of their state to include Ras, Nikava and Galič, i.e. Kopaonik? The answer to this question cannot be found in available sources. What we have pointed out is that Zavida acknowledged the sovereignty of Byzantium when he came back to his lands near Ras. Moreover, his descendants treated these territories as their inheritance, as shown by the fact that they built endowments on those lands. Still, this is not the answer to the question of how Raška expanded nor if it is an indication that Zavida received these territories as a *pronoia* or as inheritance. The question of why Byzantium did not take these territories after it had defeated the Serbs can also be posed.

The following year, John Kinnamos wrote that Emperor Manuel started a new invasion on Serbia. He came to Niš, and then went north, crossing the land of Longomir. This toponym is interesting because it contains the Slavic nasal letter *o*. The name given to the river shows that Slavs must have settled the area. This land can be related to the present-day river Lugomir, which runs east of present-day Jagodina and flows into the Great Morava. This was the first time Lugomir was mentioned in sources. Emperor Manuel campaigned in the north because he had heard that Hungary was sending help to Serbia. He reached the river Sava and moved towards the river Drina. Kinnamos mentioned here that the river Drina separated Bosnia from the rest of Serbia. This means that Serbia was already situated south of the river Sava and east of the river Drina (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 26 – 28; Mišić, 2014, p. 29). In this description Kinnamos mentioned three places: Sečenica, Strimon and Tara.

Kinnamos wrote that the Emperor set his camp near Sečenica. Sečenica is believed to be the same as the present-day village Sečanica situated near Niš (Blagojević, 1976, pp. 66 – 67). Kinnamos said that Manuel had set his camp half way to Sečanica. He also said that Hungarian soldiers retreated towards the river Strimon after being defeated by the Byzantines. Strimon could be the part of the Great Morava (Blagojević, 1976, pp. 67 – 69). As the river Strimon is north of Sečanica, that means that the Byzantines fought the Hungarians on their way north, surely south of Paraćin, seeing as the Hungarian soldiers ran in that direction. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Emperor set his camp at Sečanica and that on his way north he fought against a Hungarian patrol somewhere between Niš and Paraćin; therefore, the Hungarian army could run to Paraćin, i.e. in the direction of their state.

The Emperor chose to go this way not because this was where the Serbian border possibly was, but because it was the way the road went.

He took this way to confront the Hungarian army, which he expected would advance from the north in order to help Serbia. Since he did not meet them there, he went along the valley of the river Sava and then, not meeting the Hungarian army there either, he went along the valley of the river Drina. As we have stated earlier, Kinnamos said explicitly that the Drina separated Bosnia from the rest of Serbia. Therefore, the border of Serbia in the east was east of the river Drina.

A battle between Serbs and Byzantines was fought at the river Tara. It is believed that is the present-day stream Tara. which flows into the river Jablanica west of Valjevo, and joins the river Obnica at Valjevo, thus forming the river Kolubara. Therefore, it is believed in literature that the river called Tara by Kinnamos was actually the river Jablanica, not the river Tara. In any case, the battle occurred on the territory of the town of Valjevo (Blagojević, 1976, pp. 69 - 73). It is believed that the area between the rivers Great Morava, West Morava and Drina belonged to Serbia (Mišić, 2014, p. 29). Therefore, it can be concluded that the territory of Serbia included lands between the river Drina and the town of Valjevo, while some even think that its territory included the lands near the Great Morava. This brings us to the question of how Serbs had managed to do that after their defeat in the 1127-1129 uprising.

According to John Kinnamos, after the Byzantine victories over the Serbs in 1149 and 1150, Emperor Manuel I Komnenos had "a great number of barbarians, some of whom were solders and some were cattlemen" (VIINJ, 1971, p. 25)settle down into the area of Serdica, i.e. in the vicinity of the present-day Sofia; in addition, Serbia had to give him 2,000 soldiers for waging war in Europe and 500 soldiers (instead of the 300 required until then) for waging war in Asia (VIINJ, 1971, p. 25). This also meant the relocation of Serbs, noblemen and serfs dependent categories of the population alike to the east. Serbia remained a Byzantine vassal, and border changes were not mentioned.

However, the expansion of Serbia did not end there. Namely, Stefan the First-Crowned said that, when his father reached a certain age, he received "the honor of forefathers": Toplica, Ibar, Rasina and Reke to rule. He was probably a suzerain (Ćorović, 1938, p. 19; Stefan, 1988, p. 65; Blagojević, 1997, pp. 45 - 62). It is believed that these territories were part of the estate that Zavida had received after acknowledging Byzantium's sovereignty (Aleksić, 2009, pp. 11-12), and that Nemanja had recevied them in 1158/9 (Pirivatrić, 1991, pp. 25-35). These territories were referred to by Domentian as 'eastern lands', although he did not list them individually (Domentian, 1865, p. 4; Domentian, 1988, p. 239).

The Toplica mentioned above was actually the parish (Serb. *župa*) of Toplica, which included the valley of the eponymous river and its tributaries. In the south it shared borders with Byzantium, marked by the rivers Dubočica and Lab which belonged to Byzantium at the time. It also

shared borders with Byzantium in the east. Reke, or the parish of Reke, was situated in the area surrounding the Pusta River, which included the territory between the foot of mount Jastrebac, the foot of mount Mojsinja, and the South Morava River. It was located between the rivers Toplica and Dubočica. Rasina was a parish in the valley of the river of the same name. Ibar, which would later be divided into two parishes, included the basin of the river Ibar at first, or the lands between the basin of the river Studenica and the confluence of the rivers Ibar and West Morava. So, Nemanja's territory shared borders with Byzantium in the south, east and north (Mišić, 1998, p. 94; Blagojević, 2000, p. 68).

If we consider that, as previously stated, in 1149 the border was marked by the mountain Kopaonik, then it becomes clear that in the meantime another expansion to the east happened. Those were exactly the territories which Stefan Nemanja received, as we said, in 1158, or 1159 at the latest.

The claim that these territories were a part of Serbia and not Byzantium can be supported by the fact that Stefan Nemanja was invited by his brothers to a gathering at which he was attacked for building the Church of St Nicholas, near Kuršumlija, and The Church of the Virgin Mary, at the confluence of the rivers Kosanica and Toplica. In fact, for this reason Stefan Nemanja was imprisoned by his brothers in Ras.[4] Undoubtedly, this data proves that these territories were part of the state of Raška, and that Nemanja enjoyed the rights of the grand prince (Serb. *župan*) (Mišić, 2014, p. 29). This also means that the borders of Raška were within this area.

Once, during his visit to the land in the valley of the Nišava River, most likely in 1163, Emperor Manuel invited Stefan Nemanja to meet him. Domentian writes that the Eastern Emperor gave part of his eastern land to Nemanja, emphasizing that God made Heaven in the east. Thus, Nemanja obtained the parish of Dubočica and the title of the *carski san*,[5] as a present from the Emperor, stating afterwards that Dubočica could not be inherited by his brothers but only by his children. This means that

[4] Stefan Nemanja was under the significant influence of John (Adrian) Komnenos, the Archbishop of Ohrid between 1140 and 1164 and close relative of the Byzantine Emperor Manuel. Thanks to the Archbishop's support, Stefan Nemanja built his endowments in Toplica (Kalić, 2007, pp. 197 – 208).

[5] Stefan the First-Crowned mentioned this event (Stefan, 1988, pp. 65 – 66; Domentian, 1988, pp. 249 – 240).

The title *carski san* referred to a Byzantine courtly title in our old historiography, probably the title of protospatharios (Jiraček, Radonić, 1952, p. 148). Miloš Blagojević believes that the Emperor of Byzantium gave Nemanja the title of a ruler (Blagojević, 1996, p. 198). Srđan Pirivatrić is of a similar opinion (Pirivatrić, 2011, pp. 89 – 116), relying on the evidence of "The Synaxarion Life of St Symeon", which contains the term "*samodršci* (independent rulers) of the lands of the Serbian throne".

Dubočica was seen as the private property of the youngest son of Zavida (Ćorović, 1939, p. 20; Blagojević, 1996, pp. 197 – 212). The term "Eastern Emperor" referred to Emperor Manuel, while the "part of eastern lands" means part of Byzantium. Stefan Nemanja got Dubočica, a parish (Serb. *župa*) encompassing "the valley of the river Veternica and the field of Leskovac," (Mišić, 1998, p. 95), as an inheritance. By obtaining Dubočica, Stefan Nemanja became the vassal of both the Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) of Serbia and the Emperor of Byzantium. When we consider the location of Dubočica in relation to Toplica and Reke, it can be concluded that Dubočica directly shared borders with Toplica and Reke. Its territory included the lands between Kraljevo and Kruševac in the north, and its southern border lay between the south of Leskovac and Zvečan. It amounted to around 9,000 to 10,000 km^2. Accepting this gift from the Emperor was a smart decision, although it would provoke conflict between Nemanja and his brother Tihomir (Mišić, 1998, p. 95; Blagojević, 2000, p. 68).

Next, we can note that Zavida and Nemanja received the lands between Ras and Dubočica from Byzantium.

However, they were not the only ones. Kinnamos writes that Emperor Manuel I Komnenos deposed Primislav, the Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) of Serbia, probably in 1162, and "gave him land very fertile and good for grazing cattle".[6] The words *removed* and *gave* suggest that he *removed* him from his own state, and the only place where he could *remove him* from and could *give him* was the territory of Byzantium (VIINJ, 1971, IV, pp. 56 – 58). The expression *good for grazing cattle* indicates that this was a mountainous area. Just as it happened to Zavida, Byzantine emperors settled Serbian noblemen in their territory, although in this case it is not possible to define where precisely. Primislav could get these territories either as hereditament, or as pronoia[7].

Kinnamos said that in 1163 Manuel I Komnenos brought onto the Serbian throne Desa, who had ruled Dendra until that moment. He describes Dendra as "a populated area in the vicinity of Niš" (probably Dubravnica near Leskovac). Manuel made him ruler on the condition that he should leave Dendra (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 58 – 59; Blagojević, 1996, pp. 197 – 212). This supports the assumption that Dendra was not in Serbia but in Byzantium. Desa had ruled over it recognizing the sovereignty of the emperor of Byzantium. However, after he was made ruler, Desa refused to leave Dendra, which was the reason he got into conflict with Emperor

[6] In our historiography it is the prevailing opinion that Primislav was actually Uroš II (before 1146-1162), who had already waged war against Byzantium (Kalić, 1970, pp. 21 – 38; Živković, 2006, pp. 133 – 149).

[7] On pronoia see: Ostrogorski, 1951; Bartusis, 2012, while about pronoia in the Serbs: Ferjančić, 1999, pp. 589 – 591; Bartusis, 2011, pp. 177– 216.

Manuel, who insisted that this territory was to be returned (VIINJ, 1971, pp. 58, 62 – 63). Manuel's insistence indicates that he could not accept that Dendra, which Desa had received as a Byzantine subject and which was part of Byzantium, would become part of Raška.

As we have seen, Byzantine emperors of the Komnenoi dynasty, starting from Alexios I to Manuel I, tried to stop the expansion of Serbia to the east using three methods. The first method utilized were military campaign (1092 – 1094, 1127 – 1129, 1149 – 1150). There were also more subtle methods which they used to influence the political processes in the Central Balkan regions.

The second method of preventing the expansion of Serbia to the east was the relocation of Serbia's population to Byzantium in 1129 and 1149. As we have said, in 1129 they were moved to Asia Minor, to the area of Nicomedia, where they founded Servochoria. After the Byzantine campaign and victory in 1149, Serbs were relocated to the vicinity of Serdika. In both cases both noblemen and serfs were relocated. In this way, Serbs were to be exhausted biologically, which was supposed to disable them in their struggles.

The third method of preventing the expansion of Serbia was granting Byzantine lands to members of respectable Serbian families of princes (Serb. župan) and boyars. The Serbs who were gifted Byzantine territories protected the Empire from the attacks of their fellow-countrymen, who remained subjects of the Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*). Sources indirectly show that Alexios I Komnenos won over respectable Serbs for his own aims, as was recorded in Zavida's case, while there is direct evidence of similar scenarios occurring with Primislav, Desa and Stefan Nemanja.

In addition, Serbia was exhausted by the increase in the number of solders she had to provide Byzantium for its wars.

To these methods of defeating and weakening Serbs and Serbia, we should add that Byzantium witnessed great territorial expansion during the reigns of the three war-waging emperors of the dynasty of Komnenoi (1081-1180). At that time the Grand Princes (Serb. *veliki župan*) of Serbia were vassals, who had to provide soldiers for the Byzantine army whenever Byzantium waged wars in Europe and Asia.

As early as the end of the 11th century, Alexios I Komnenos fought against Grand Prince (Serb. *veliki župan*) Vukan, and his daughter Anna Komnene described the conflict as a "civil war" (VIINJ, 1966, p. 388). According to the assumed hierarchy of Christian rulers, the Emperor of Byzantium was at the top; the rulers of Western European countries were below him, while the rulers of small countries neighboring Byzantium were at the bottom of the hierarchy. Serbian rulers were at the very bottom of the ladder, so Byzantine Emperors considered them their servants, and saw their lands as Byzantine provinces. There was a similar situation in the Asian provinces, as no clear border existed between By-

zantium and Armenia. Similarly to the Serbian people, the Armenians lived on both sides of the shifting border with Byzantium and their noblemen could serve either Armenian or Byzantine rulers (Maksimović, 2000, pp. 55 – 63).

What can be confusing is the fact that, despite the defeats that Raška suffered, the forced relocations of her population, and the removal of Serbian noblemen to the borders to fight against their own people and Serbia, the state of Serbia expanded.

CONCLUSION

We have shown that the expansion took place in at least two stages and that the manner in which the expansion was accomplished is difficult to explain. The first stage entailed the expansion to the area between Ras in the west and Kopaonik in the east. The fact that coins showing Manuel I were not found in Ras, can only mean that it was possible for the expansion to happen during the period between 1129 and 1143 at the latest. The second stage of the expansion took place between 1150 and 1158/9, when Serbia expended to the area between Kopaonik in the west and the rivers Toplica, Ibar, Rasina and Reka in the east. Both Byzantine sources and Stefan the First-Crowned remained silent on the matter of the causes of the expansion. The expansion was definitely not made possible by the military success of Serbia or the military help Hungary might have provided Serbia. Stefan the First-Crowned would not have failed to mention it if this were the case, just as he did not fail to mention that Nemanja had received Dubočica and the title of *carski san*. Therefore, something common for the period must have happened, which is why no sources mention it.

The only conclusion that can be drawn to explain the expansion of Serbia to such a degree is that Byzantine Emperors who gave lands to Serbian vassals gave them permission, at one point, to annex their Byzantine territories. Thus, these territories were under Byzantine rule indirectly, through Serbia who was a Byzantine vassal, rather than directly. That happened, as we have said, in at least two stages. The only answer to the question of how Byzantium could have allowed this is, as we have also stated, the fact that Byzantine emperors considered Serbian rulers their officials and saw their land s as Byzantine provinces.

The assumption that Serbia expanded in this way can be supported by the deeds of Desa. Namely, Manuel placed him on the throne under the condition that he left Dendra. The fact that Desa refused to leave Dendra despite Manuel's insistence seems to indicate a change in what was, until then, common practice: Serbs as Byzantine vassals could, under certain conditions unknown to us, annex the lands granted to them by Byzantium.

How significant this expansion was can be seen in the fact that Serbia's territory reached the Great Morava River. In time, this area would become the new nucleus of the Serbian State, thus permanently moving Serbia's center from the west to the east. By giving Serbian aristocracy lands located on the border Byzantium shared with Serbia, the rulers of the dynasty of Komnenoi made it possible for the area around the river Morava to become part of Serbia However, they could not have known that at the time.

As for Serbia, this expansion permanently moved the center of the Serbian state towards the central parts of the Balkans and the South Morava.

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ТЕРИТОРИЈАЛНО ШИРЕЊЕ СРБИЈЕ У ПРВОЈ ПОЛОВИНИ XII ВЕКА

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Резиме

У раду настојимо да одговоримо на питање када и како је дошло до територијалног проширења Србије у периоду између 1129. године и 60 – тих година XII века. Сво то време Србија је задржала вазални статус према Византији, који је покушала у два наврата неуспешно да одбаци.

Након смрти жупана Вукана, у периоду од 1106. до 1112. године, дошло је до великог метежа у којем је Србија изгубила територије на истоку. Изгубљен је простор између српског Звечана на северу и Липљана на југу, а на истоку се граница померила западно од Раса. Да је граница била западно од Раса потврђује и податак да су Срби напали и спалили овај град у устанку 1127 – 1129. године. Том приликом су покушали да се територијално прошире и стекну независност. У том покушају претрпели су пораз. Ипак, након 1129., а пре 1143. године, Србија се проширила од Раса до Копаоника. О томе територијалном проширењу сведоче византијска освајања српских места на том простору 1149. године, од којих је најисточније место била тврђава Галич на Копаонику. Следеће године, Србија поново бива поражена, овог пута код Ваљева. Ипак, у периоду између 1150. и 1158./9. године, територија Србије проширила се до Ибра, Топлице, Расине и Реке. Ниједан историјски извор не сведочи о томе како је дошло до ова два проширења. Чак се тако нешто не може ни наслутити на основу византијских извора, а српски извори о овим проширењима ћуте.

Указано је и на то да је прве територије вероватно добио Завида када се из Дукље вратио у Рас и ступио у службу Византије. За територије које је Србија добила у другој етапи сматра се да су такође, барем делимично, биле под његовом влашћу. Иначе, Византија је своје територије на западу, вероватно уз границу са Србијом, неретко давала на управу Србима. Тако је Деса добио Дендр, крај око данашњег Лесковца, а Стефан Немања Дубочицу, жупу која обухвата долину Ветернице и Лесковачко поље. Оно што можемо да приметимо је тода су ове територије биле близу, а да је Дендру Деса одбио да врати Византији пошто је дошао на великожупански престо.

Закључено је да су територије које је Византија давала Србима у њеној служби, у одређеном тренутку, под околностима које нам остају непознате, постајале део Србије. Значај ових територијалних проширења почива у чињеници да је тада трајно померено тежиште српске државе према централним деловима Балкана и према Јужној Морави.