

Serbian-Romanian Relations in the Middle Ages until the Ottoman Conquest Connections, Influences, Cohabitation*

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IN THE Middle Ages the region of present-day Romania was in many ways tied to the region where Serbian people lived. It is not necessary to emphasize that until the modern age parts of present-day Serbia and Romania belonged to the same state, while in the Middle Ages they were parts of the Kingdom of Hungary and later, in various forms, part of the Habsburg Monarchy. Under the Nemanjić dynasty the contacts between Serbia and Wallachia were rare and occasional, but still interesting. Political and cultural relationships were present also during the time of the Serbian Despotate, as evidenced by Serbian medieval sources. After the collapse of the Serbian medieval Despotate, the connections between Romanian and the Serbian people of that time did not decrease; on the contrary, they reached their peak. After the migration of the Branković family of Serbian nobles, these ties became multiple, and the former Serbian despot Đorđe, who became monk Maksim, left a very strong mark upon Wallachian history, culture, and church. Serbs and Romanians lived together in Banat and other regions of medieval Hungary and modern-day Romania and Serbia since the 16th century, and cohabitation is well documented in the historical sources.

Bearing all that in mind, the aim of this paper is to present a short overview of the relations between the two countries (Romania and Serbia) in the Middle Ages until the Ottoman Conquest, highlighting the connections, influences and cohabitation between the two people.

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THE FIRST sign of the Wallachian-Serbian friendship was a marital tie of the last ruler from the Nemanjić dynasty. More precisely, Emperor Stefan Uroš V got married in 1360 to a Wallachian princess, Anna or Anka, a daughter of the Wallachian Voivode Nicolae Alexandru and the granddaughter of Voivode Basarab. There are almost no details about her, but it is known that one of her sisters was the wife of the Bulgarian heir to the throne, Ivan Stracimir, and it seems that Jelena, the mother of Emperor Uroš, matched this marriage seeking connections with her Bulgarian relatives. It is known that Anka was a faithful believer of the Orthodox church, which is implied in a papal letter. Namely, in a 1370 letter to Anka's mother Klara, the widow of Voivode Basarab, Pope Urban V expressed his pleasure because Klara had persuaded her daughter and converted the Bulgarian empress to Catholicism, also inviting her to convert her other daughter, Serbian empress Anka, to Catholicism. According to some sources, she outlived her husband and became Sister Jelena (Jireček 1952, 238; Ruvarac 1934, 28-31).

These contacts and ties were manifold during the Middle Ages as well, at historical, political, but primarily cultural and religious level. Here we shall present the activities of reverend Nikodim Grčić, i.e. Saint Nicodemus of Tismana. His origin is unclear, but he was probably born in Prilepac near Novo Brdo in Kosovo and had Slovene and Greek blood in addition to his Serbian origin. He was proficient in Greek and was one of the most learned people of his time. He is famous mainly for having founded two monasteries, which are still highly respected in the Romanian Orthodox church as well as in the entire Orthodox civilization. Vodica Monastery was founded in 1372-1374, while a bit later, in 1377-1378, or even after 1384 Nicodemus founded monastery of Tismana, after which he was named Tismanski. Wallachian voivodes Dan I and especially Mircea the Great amply aided the monastery of Tismana and gave it great privileges. After 1399 and the conflict with Voivode Mircea, Nicodemus left for the monastery of Prislop, where he finished copying and illustrating his most significant work, *The Gospel*. He also wrote the *Life of the Elder* and after his death he was canonized in the Orthodox world (Radojičić 1956; Stojkovski and Boškov 2016).

The connections with Wallachia did not disappear even after the demise of the Nemanjić state. Constantine the Philosopher notes that the Wallachian Voivode Mircea welcomed Despot Stefan Lazarević and his retinue with great honors. This *pious and always mentioned great voivode* supplied the voivode with horses and other necessities that the Serbian ruler required after a long journey. Mircea accompanied Despot Stefan all the way to the border, when Despot Stefan crossed the border with Hungary and arrived to Golubac. There is another earlier mention which is dated by Konstantin Filozof [Constantine the Philosopher] (1989, 108) to 6903 (1394)¹, when, according to his chronology, there was a battle at Rovine, i.e. Bayazit's war against the *Hungarians-Wallachians*. Here too the writer refers to Mircea as a *great and stately voivode*. However, in this battle Despot Stefan and other Serbian noblemen waged war against Mircea, fighting for Bayazit as his vassals. Author also mentions Wallachia and Mircea in the context of a civil war between Musa and Suleyman in the Ottoman Empire (1989, 106).

Surely the most significant ties between the two nations that defined the Middle Ages as well as later periods were those between the Despot house of Branković and the Wallachian voivodes. After the death of Despot Jovan Branković, his brother, the

former Despot Đorđe, now hieromonk Maksim, and their mother, Despotess Angelina, left Srem (Kupinovo/Kupinik), which had been the seat of the Branković estate since the time of Despot Đurađ Branković. They went straight to Wallachia to see Voivode Radu, with the remains of Despots Stefan and Jovan Branković. After the death of the Wallachian metropolitan, Radu also gave to Maksim the bishop's (maybe even metropolitan's) position. Maksim was promoted to the rank of hieromonk by Metropolitan Kalevit of Sofia, as previously said, but there are claims by certain Romanian historians that this chirotony did not happen in Kupinovo, the seat of the Srem despots, but rather in Wallachia (Tomin 2007; Vukomanović 1859).

Bishop Maksim was also a great diplomat of the Wallachian voivode, reconciling him with the Voivode Bogdan of Moldavia in 1507 and with the Transylvanian Saxons two years later. He made an agreement with the Saxons, which stipulated they would protect Voivode Radu if he was dethroned. He also went to Budim to see King Władysław Jagiello, to arrange a new agreement regarding the fight against the Turks. The Branković family also got an estate in Transylvania, with 19 villages from Voivode Radu. At the same time Wallachia was visited by Patriarch Nephon of Constantinople, who organized a church there, and by the Serbian printer Makarije, who printed books for church services in Târgoviște. It seems that Maksim was then appointed bishop of Râmnicu Sărat-Noul Severin, one of the two dioceses which Patriarch Nephon set up in Wallachia. Wallachian and Moldavian sources note that after Patriarch Nephon left in 1505 Maksim became a metropolitan of Hungary-Wallachia with his seat in Curtea de Argeș, being the fourth bishop of this diocese. However, the death of Radu was a turning point because Mihnea, a pro-Catholic ruler, became voivode of Wallachia. Maksim and Angelina returned to Srem even though Maksim himself had anointed the ruler and was in Hungary to do diplomatic business for Mihnea, called the Evil in the Romanian tradition (Bugarski 2002; Dinić-Knežević 1975, 39; Tomin 2007, 35-42; Vukomanović 1859). It is possible that Maksim also contributed to the arrival of the Patriarch of Constantinople and the Serbian printer (Ćirković 2000, 434-440).

Wallachian and Moldavian sources mostly talk about Maksim's political actions, primarily the reconciliation with the Moldavian Voivode Bogdan. Namely, it is said that in 1506 a conflict broke out between Wallachia and Moldavia, that the Wallachian army attacked Moldavia and did great damage, and that what followed was a retaliatory expedition of Voivode Bogdan. Due to his political and diplomatic skills, Maksim reconciled the two warring parties and asked Bogdan to make peace, as most sources claim. In the context of our topic it is interesting to observe how Maksim is titled in these sources. In the Slovene-Romanian *Chronicles of Macarie* [Cronica lui Macarie], it is said that he got the bishop's position from Moldavian archbishops and that he was a metropolitan of Belgrade. In most sources of Wallachian and Moldavian origin Maksim is just termed a monk, while in some other places he is mentioned as a metropolitan and sometimes as a bishop from Srem (Bugarski 2002; Tomin 2007). There is also an opinion that Maksim was already at the court in Târgoviște in 1503 and that he was appointed a metropolitan because of his education and origin. Namely, he was a descendant of the Byzantine imperial dynasty of Palaeologus, a relative of Skanderbeg and of Radul's wife Katalina, as well as the uncle of the future wife of Neagoe Basarab, Milica,

and of the future wife of Petru Rareș Jelena, Milica's half-sister. It should be emphasized that in the Romanian literature Maksim is often called the metropolitan of Târgoviște (Vergatti 2008).

Wallachian rulers also had a significant influence on the construction of Serbian monasteries on Fruška Gora. Bishop Maksim Branković was given a convenient location in Srem by the Jakšić brothers and with the help of the Wallachian Voivode Neagoe Basarab he built the Krušedol monastery and dedicated it to the Annunciation. Later sources preserved in the monastery archive claim that the monastery was built by Despot Jovan on the basis of a founding charter from Berkasovo of 4 May 1496. According to that document Krušedol was founded by Despot Jovan and was constructed by his brother, who was first a monk and later a bishop and a metropolitan, Maksim Branković. The bishop could not build such an edifice on his own because he did not have the means, so he was helped by the Wallachian Voivode Neagoe Basarab. Nicolae Stoica of Hațeg, in his book *Chronicles of Banat* [Cronica Banatului], says that Voivode Neagoe gave money and copper to cover the roof of the monastery. However, the year may not be very accurate. It is probable that after 1509 Angelina started this initiative and soon after that she commenced this great endeavor (Bugarski 2002, 18; Timotijević 2008, 17-20).

In 1512, Voivode Neagoe Basarab called Maksim to return as metropolitan of Hungary-Wallachia. However, the Serbian bishop did not stay long in Wallachia with this friendly voivode. After Maksim thanked him for this honor and after he left Wallachia, another Serb, Makarije, was appointed metropolitan of this most honorable diocese, which is the origin and primary source of the present-day Romanian patriarchate. In the same manner, the connections between Curtea de Argeș and Serbs are deep. Despina Milica, the wife of the Wallachian Voivode Neagoe Basarab, the protector of Krušedol monastery and the daughter of Despot Lazar Branković, was according to the tradition the most deserving for the construction of this holy place. Her endeavors helped build the monastery of Curtea de Argeș. Another patron of the monastery located on the Moldavian territory was Jelena, the wife of Voivode Petru Rareș, the other daughter of Jovan Branković. Petru and Jelena's daughter was Roxanda, the wife of the Moldavian Voivode Alexandru Lăpușneanu. Among other things, she gave contributions for the Mileševa monastery, where the body of Saint Sava resided (Micle 2008; Mioc 1963; Nicolescu 1969; Tomin 2007, 87-88).

According to a history book about the monastery, Staro Hopovo was built by Maksim Branković (Radić 1847). The biography of his mother Angelina also confirms that Hopovo was constructed before Krušedol. However, the patronage of the Branković family of this and some other monasteries at Fruška Gora are not reliably proven by historical facts. Radić (1847) believes that Bishop Maksim constructed Staro Hopovo before he became a priest. According to this monk, the monastery was probably founded at the time of King Matthias Corvinus, possibly even in 1486, which would also make this monastery the oldest. There is even data that it was built before 1490 and that the remains of Saint Theodore Tȳron had already been there, and then were moved to the new church of Saint Nikola in 1576. Ruvarac (1892) claimed that this monastery was built between 1496 and 1502, but that already between 1555 and 1563 Saint Theodore Tȳron had his final resting place in this monastery. The oldest dating of this monastery is during the rule of Despot Stefan Lazarević. Namely, in his time greater numbers of Serbs migrated to Srem and inhabited it and on the foundations of an older construction from that

period the Branković family built a monastery church from wood. As, allegedly, Saint Nikola was the patron saint of the Branković family, this additionally strengthens the said argument that this family, or Bishop Maksim himself, built this endowment (Kovačević and Kovačević 2008, 22-36; Radić 1847; Ruvarac 1892, 5-7; Stefanović 1986; Timotijević 1991-1992).²

At the end of the 1970's archaeological excavations were done below the temple in the monastery of Staro Hopovo. According to the experts, it was constructed perhaps between 1402 and 1456, at the time of the Despotate and of greater migrations of Serbs to Hungary. It was devastated perhaps several times after 1436 and the founding of the old Hopovo. According to the second proposed version, the church had been built earlier and it was devastated before the beginning of migrations in the 14th century or at the time of the Hungarian-Turkish wars in the long period between 1436 and 1532. The existence of a menaion from 1541 suggests a possibility that the church had existed earlier because it mentions fresco paintings. If it is connected with Hopovo, then it is likely that there was an earlier church. On the other hand, it might refer to a church unknown to us. Another document mentions the remains of Saint Theodore Tyron and the church of Saint Nikola and, since the brotherhood went from Staro Hopovo to Novo Hopovo before 1555, it is likely that an older church was mentioned here. The Protestant preacher Stefan Gŕrlach began the education of priests from Belgrade in Srem in the 1570s, probably in an older church because the monastery of Novo Hopovo was constructed in 1576, i.e. quite late in the Ottoman period (Stražmešterov 1982-1983, 48-49; Tomin 2007, 79-90).

Even at the end of the medieval period this monastery had close ties to Wallachian and Moldavian noblemen as well as with the art of these regions. Therefore, it is particularly important to see Hopovo monastery as a link between the Serbian and Romanian peoples in the Middle Ages, as a spiritual, cultural, literary and political connecting point (Kovačević and Kovačević 2008; Radić 1847).

The older church was quite influenced by the late medieval ecclesiastical architecture of Moldavia, but in general the ties between Hopovo and Wallachia and Moldavia were multiple and these countries had close connections with the Branković family and therefore a great influence of Hopovo. It should be borne in mind that the influence of the Moldavian style was seen on the church in Slankamen, the one that the tradition attributes to Vuk Grgurević, but the frescoes of the church in Hopovo were under the great influence of Wallachian and Moldavian masters, primarily those of Greek origin, like in the period around 1600, when the famous Theophanes of Crete and his students were active. A special parallel is noticed with the church at Arbore in Moldavia, but there is a parallel with almost all churches in Moldavia, especially in connection with, for example, the support beams of the main nave of the church, so both churches seemed to have a single nave. Parallels can be found also in the apses as well as in the western wall at Hopovo and in the Moldavian places of worship. There is a similarity between the church in Slankamen and the churches in Moldavia, and the earlier statements of Nicolae Iorga and other Romanian historians about the influences of Serbian medieval art on Wallachia and Moldavia should not be disregarded (the similarities between the narthex of Kalenić and the Moldavian churches is great), especially at the time of Stephen the Great. Similarities exist even with some monasteries in Bosnia and this shows the

great complexity of mutual Balkan influences, as well as the fact that post-Byzantine artists painted the frescoes in churches in the Serbian ethnic area, but also in Hungary, Wallachia, Moldavia and Bessarabia. Another connection with these areas is a copy of the *Syntagma Canonum* by Matthew Blastares from around 1495, which was commissioned by the Moldavian Voivode Stephen the Great. Namely, it was kept in Hopovo and today it is located in the Saltykov-Shchedrin library and it was described by Pavel Josef Šafárik (1865, 218-219).³ In the library of the monastery there is another Codex in Serbo-Slavic commissioned by the same voivode, as well as the Gospel of Voivode Neagoie from around 1512. In the same monastery one *pomelnic* or *pomjanik* was found, which mentioned Wallachian and Moldavian noblemen, donors and patrons of this Serbian Orthodox holy place. The time of the Branković family and the late Middle Ages, which is the focus of this paper, is the origin of names like Barbu, Pirvu, Dance and Radu, whose father was Neagoie and whose grandfather was Neagoie Basarab. Barbu was a Serbian son-in-law and was the ban of Craiova, called Barbu Craiovescu in the Romanian literature. His wife was Negoslava and it seems that she was Serbian. They were probably major donors of the monastery Hopovo. Besides them it seems that Stephen the Great of Moldavia himself was a donor of Hopovo. The relics of Saint Theodore Tyron, which are the most sacred proof of cooperation and a pledge of friendship between the two peoples, were transferred to the original monastery church at the monastery of Hodoş (near Arad, which was probably the estate of the Jakšić brothers) (Milanović-Jović 2003).

The Battle of Mohács on 29 August 1526 signified the end of a powerful, great and respected Kingdom of Hungary, which had survived for five centuries in the Carpathian basin as an extremely important and crucial player in regional politics. This battle led to a series of changes and events which stirred the region where that country used to be located. Only a few months after the disaster at Mohács the uprising of Emperor Jovan Nenad broke out. Although its character was anti-Turkish and then anti-feudal, it turned into a movement which played a crucial role in the battle for the Hungarian throne and, in the widest context, it was tied to the Serbian-Romanian relations (Popović 1990; Czimer 1892).

The first connection between this movement and Romania concerns Emperor Jovan Nenad himself. It was claimed that Jovan Nenad was originally from Transylvania, more precisely Lipova (Popović 1990, 134; Sremac 1987, 75). Hungarian historiography often calls him the stableman of János Szapolyai, voivode of Transylvania and a subsequent Hungarian king. There are also suppositions that he was Szapolyai's soldier. If we accept this hypothesis, the connections of the leader of this movement with Romania would be great indeed (Czimer 1892, 660; Smolka 1883).

After the conquests of Srem Jovan Nenad headed towards Banat and occupied some cities on the Mureş river. The delegation of Békes County presented their complaints to Szapolyai on 21 January 1527 regarding the activities of Emperor Jovan Nenad's army (Karácsonyi 2014, 88). Ladislaus Csáky, the lord of the largest part of this region, went after him with 300 horsemen but in the conflict with the army of Emperor Jovan Nenad he himself was killed, in the second half of March 1527 in the battle near the Apatin crossing in the vicinity of Cenad (Duzinchevici 1956, 137; Ćirković 2002, 483; Popović 1990, 135; Szakály 1978, 45-47). Further, the English emissary Wallop writes about 3000 dead among Csáky's soldiers (Simonyi 1859, 78; Stojkovski 2007,

160). Hungarians especially complained about the Black Man (the popular name for Jovan Nenad, given to him because of his many atrocities) who, in the valley of the Mureş river as well as in the districts of Arad and Zarad, according to some sources, robbed the people and did not spare even women and children, also tearing down churches and smashing altars and other sacred places. In a letter issued in Alba on 12 April the bishop of Transylvania complained about the troops of the *Black Man* who mercilessly killed Christ's believers (Czimer 1892, 667; Daicovicu 1964, 32; Márki 1892). The letter was published by Nicolae Iorga (1911, 295). Two days later Nikola Macedonić (Maczedóniai Miklós), the county prefect and the vice-duke of Transylvania, called all Saxon towns to mobilize their troops in order to prevent the crimes of emperor Jovan's soldiers, especially in the district of Hunyad near Haţeg (Iorga 1911, 294). In that period two more letters were sent from Deva, which have a great significance for this topic. In the correspondence between Macedonić and Alba Iulia, i.e. the bishop of Transylvania János Gosztanyi and Braşov, there is mention of troops organized by these two people, gathering to fight Jovan. The army was supposed to meet at Deva on 14 April (Iorga 1911, 294-295). On the same day Perényi ordered for the army to meet on 24 April at Orăştie (Daicovicu 1964, 32; Iorga 1911, 295-296). Peter Perényi complained in his letter of 15 April sent from Deva to Sibiu and Braşov that he could not enter Timişoara (when Szapolyai was elected king) because the *Black Man's* troops blocked his path (Iorga 1911, 295).

As soon as the truce ended the voivode of Transylvania, Petar Perényi, gathered 12,000 soldiers in Alba Iulia and headed across the Mureş to a camp near Seleş. Jovan proposed negotiations to Perényi but the voivode of Transylvania refused. A great battle ensued and of the 2000 fighters that Perényi had barely 50 survived, while the cavalry of Jovan Nenad defeated the opponents' cavalry (Duzinchevici 1956, 139-141; Ćirković 2002, 485; Sremac 1987, 96-98; Szakály 1978, 73). Still it is possible that Sremac's data was not quite precise because Perényi kept Marko Jakšić as a prisoner earlier. After this triumph the troops of Emperor Jovan Nenad continued with their eastward march through Timiş valley, to the district of Hunyad, and towards Szászváros after passing Vaskapu, i.e. the Iron Gates. Petar Perényi writes about this on 15 May to Szaszebes and Bistriţa (Iorga 1911, 296). Three days before that János Szapolyai himself sent a letter to Bistriţa, where he complained about Serbian rebels who had caused a lot of harm in Hungary (Daicovicu 1964, 38; Duzinchevici 1956, 146).

Conditionally, "the first capital" of Jovan Nenad was near Timişoara. This is confirmed in the letter of 4 June 1527 by Hoberdanz, an imperial emissary to Jovan Nenad (Szentkláray 1885, 511). The next crucial battle happened in the vicinity of Arad. At the beginning of the month of May, the Saxon towns received instructions from the king and the voivode as to how much money, gunpowder and cannons they had to collect to prepare for the battle against Jovan Nenad. An army was recruited around the Criş and Mezetur (Daicovicu 1964, 33-35; Szentkláray 1885, 512). In an unpublished document of 12 May 1527 János Szapolyai ordered Bistriţa to help the voivode of Transylvania by sending soldiers and weapons (Duzinchevici 1956, 146).⁴ During the month of May there was a lively correspondence between the towns in Transylvania and Perényi concerning the gathering of troops, but it seemed like the towns wanted to stall (Daicovicu 1964, 33-35).

The army leaders who were against Jovan were Imre Czibák, the bishop of Oradea Mare, and Duke Peter Perényi. The soldiers were mainly from the vicinity of Lugoj, Caransebeş and Kőrösbánya. Czibák's army crossed the Mureş near Sedfal. The battle happened on 21 June 1527 but, on the basis of the letters to István Werböczi, Ferenc Szakály proved that the battle happened four days later near the town of Bač, in the vicinity of Arad. Emperor Jovan Nenad lost around 8000 soldiers. After this victory the churches celebrated gratitude masses and Szapolyai ordered the cannons to be shot (Ćirković 2002, 486-487; Sremac 1987, 99-100; Szakály 1978, 51). What followed was the retreat of Jovan Nenad towards Szeged and his imminent demise. Because of the battle in June 1527 Transylvania and the general area of present-day Romania lost its significance in this uprising.

The Ottoman conquest of the entire Hungary, including present-day Banat, represented a turning point between the Middle Ages and the age that was just beginning. The fall of Timișoara in 1552 turned a new page in the history of Banat. This event was important for this topic since at the beginning of their rule the Ottoman conquerors took a few censuses of the population, available even today, which suggest that Serbs and Romanians as well as other nations that are still present in this region all lived together at that time (Ćirković 2002; Hațegan 2005).

The very conquest of Timișoara and of the entire area of Banat was undertaken by Mehmed Pasha Sokolović, of Serb origin. While preparing for the quest he promised privileges to local Serbs who had long been displaced, provided they stood by him. The Serbs indeed surrendered Bečej and Arača to Mehmed Pasha without a fight and in 1552, when Lugoj fell into the hands of Turks, the local Serbs joined the Ottoman army (Popović 1990, 227-228). Peter Heller notified Archvoivode Maximillian of Habsburg on 30 May 1552 that a large army was gathering near Belgrade. Only three weeks later, on 22 June, Mehmed Pasha started his offensive on the town of Timișoara. During his quest he made an agreement with Serbian military garrisons to surrender towns in Banat to him: Lipova, Csanad, Nagyszentmiklós (Șănnicolau Mare), Giarmata, Nagybecskerek, Kikinda, Ciacova and Versec (Vârșeț). This avoided the devastation of land and great sacrifices (Hațegan 2005, 16-43; Szentkláray 1914).

Timișoara was defended by a force of 2500 men, Serbian soldiers and Spanish mercenaries under the command of Alfons Perc. The Serbian soldiers were led by Nikola Crepović; with his army he went out as a vanguard, fought with the Turks and then captured twenty Turkish soldiers. The main part of the Ottoman army commanded by Ahmed Pasha, however, reached the town. According to the sources, which did exaggerate somewhat, this army had over 100,000 soldiers. It would be more realistic to say that this was a much stronger enemy. The commander of the defense of the town, Stephen (István) Losonczy, was forced to surrender the town to the Turks after heavy bombing. He agreed with Ahmed Pasha on the terms of the surrender but the Turks slaughtered the army that retreated from the town. Nikola Crepović was also captured with a part of the Serbian soldiers and later exchanged for a bey who had also been captured. Timișoara was occupied from 26 to 30 July 1552, which was formally the beginning of the Ottoman rule over Banat (Iambor 2002; Ivić 2000). The formal date which is taken to be the beginning of the Ottoman rule, at least in the modern Turkish

historiography, is 27 July 1552, when Mustafa Jelalzadeh, an Ottoman chronicler, wrote that Timișoara had been conquered, that Kasim Pasha had been appointed the first berleybey of the Timișoara eyalet and that other sanjacs of this vilayet had also been set up (Hațegan 2005, 44).

As the center of this great administrative area, in the first census Timișoara had precisely 300 houses (1554). Then the number of houses declined and the Ottoman defterdars noted 277 houses in 1569, while ten years later there were only 193 houses (Engel 1996; Feneșan 2006). All places cannot be mentioned, of course, but a part of the detailed defters has already been analyzed and published. As for the Turks in Timișoara itself, as the town was the center of the wilayah, it had a very strong garrison during the period for which we have data. A census from 1591 is interesting since it lists 257 soldiers, two of whom were pensioners. This last census also contained *armatoloi*, most of whom had Serbian names and only a few of them had Romanian names (Hațegan 2005, 113-119; Hegyi 2007, 1351-1370; Velics and Kammerer 1886, 373-375).

Bečej was part of the Cenad suburb and, if we look at the census, regardless of the fact that it did not list ethnicity, the names of people on the list suggest a great deal of ethnic mixture in the towns. For example, in the case of Bečej, according to the 1567 census, many Serbian names and surnames are mentioned, such as priest Nikola and his sons Lazar and Jovan, or a certain Jovan Martinović and his brother Cvetko. The list also mentions a certain Jovan Saletić, Marko Radovan and his sons Vuk and Lazar, Jovan Osmičević and his sons Vuk and Cvetko, Simon Nikolić and his sons Lazar and Jovan, Đurađ Bolković and his brothers Luka and Miladin, and many others. However, in Bečej also lived Maliș Diurman and his sons Prodan and Nestor, Petre Fazikaș, as well as Máté Csikos and his sons Marko, Dimitre, Orban and Gilerd. István Tóth lived in Bečej in 1567 with his sons Máté, Balázs and Ferenc. Mátyás Geren, as well as Mihal Lacko and his son Nikola were also listed alongside Gregor Tóth, Ambrus Dekan, Kristu Sireb and his son Demijan. Names like Damabo, István Kasza, Mateo Saradij, András Darabos, Sebestyén Dobó, Benedictus Esendjart, Tobijas István and his son Albert, Ferenc Feze, and many others best reflect the ethnic diversity of Banat. The presence of a priest can indicate the existence of a church somewhere, but it was not listed. The same diversity can be seen in a census in Bečej from 1579. It even mentions servants Nedeljko and Zaharije, as well as the name Pava Kožuhar, probably stemming from his tanning craft. We will list only a few examples of names that indicate a very diverse origin: Mihály Szűcs and his son Gábor were listed in 1579 along with Đurđe Srbin, Alberd Senc and his sons Toma and Istok, Kozma Labić and his son Petre. This defter also lists Nedeljko Varga, Brata Ačaš, Đurd Petko and his son Kota and brother Barabarbo (Nagy-Káldy 2000, 154-159).

In smaller towns and villages the situation was different. There we can find a lesser degree of ethnic diversity, at least according to the names of the inhabitants. Therefore, in the very center of the sanjak, Cenad, the Hungarian population was predominant in 1567, while in 1579 Cenad had both a Hungarian and a Serbian quarter. Of all the villages that belonged to this *nahiya* we can single out Čoka, whose population bore primarily Slavic names, presumably Serbian, while in the village of Zonbor the large majority of the population had Hungarian names. Oroszlámos was also to a great

extent populated by Hungarians (Nagy-Káldy 2000, 15-22, 65-67). Probably one of the most interesting details in this census is the fact that all Hungarian names are written with surnames first like in Hungarian today. From an onomastic perspective the village of Bašaid was also populated by Serbs to a great extent. On the other hand, Itebej, which was a fairly large village with 107 houses in 1567 or 90 houses according to an Ottoman defter from 1579, was populated mainly by Hungarians judging by the names of inhabitants (Nagy-Káldy 2000, 199-200, 217-220).⁵

Beckerek and its vicinity belonged to the waqf of Mehmed Pasha Sokolović. Beckerek was also a meeting place for people of different origins. Truth be told, we cannot determine with precision their ethnicity but it is interesting to analyze their names. They indicate a Serbian, Hungarian and Romance background, i.e. the ancestors of present-day Romanians. Let us single out only some of the names which are mentioned in the 1567 defter: Petre Rile, Mihal Danciu, Mihal Vasil, Imre Nikolić, Marko Đurić, Đura Đurinović, Martin Píros, Martin Varga, Jovan Bogojević, Vuk Rajković, János Szábo, Anbrus Sajt, Lazar Rajačatić, Bálinth Bikacs, István Majzsa and his son Balazs, Gregor Kalmar, Jaka Rajtar, Stepan (Stefan) Barbir, Lazar Pantić, Mate Gal, Petar Iflah,⁶ Jaka Mika, Carić Jaka, Jovan Ibralanar, Jaka Kaluđer,⁷ as well as several priests: priest Mihajlo, priest Marko, priest Aćim, priest Todor, priest Lazar, another priest Mirko and priest Vuk. In many cases in Hungarian names first the surnames are written and then names according to the Hungarian orthography. In the next defter there are names like imena Matijas Radul, Avram Korin, Radosav Nikolić, Dakan Rašić, Miladin Stepan, Nikola Miladin, Đura Lalić, Lazar Botić, Michal Vlah, Vlah Miloš, Lajos Jakab, Jakob Fazekas and his sons Gaspar and Mate. The defter also lists three priests, Vuk, Đurađ and Mirko. We do not know in which church these priests served and the note that they were married can be an indicator that all the Orthodox priests were listed (Nagy-Káldy 2000, 245-250). The conclusion that can be drawn after the analysis of the Ottoman defters is that in towns the population was ethnically mixed and that there were Hungarian, Slavic (primarily Serbian) and Romance names, some of which are typically Romanian today. In the villages the ethnic composition was different so villages were monolithic in the ethnic sense, either primarily Serbian or to a lesser degree Hungarian.

Lastly, since Nicolae Iorga called the period after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans *Byzantium after Byzantium*, and since many Kantakuzens (one of them was the father of Romanian literature and literacy, Șerban Cantacuzino) stayed in Moldavia and Wallachia, as well as some Komnenes and even the aforementioned patriarch Nephon, these lands were representative for the Byzantine culture in the Balkans. Serbian despots and Serbian culture have a deeply embedded Byzantine heritage. The general Balkan context of the connections between Serbs and Romanians with the *Byzantine commonwealth*, as a macro-historical aspect of the cooperation of two peoples, left a deep trace also in the micro-context of the mutual cooperation, connections and friendship between Serbs and Romanians from the Middle Ages until this postmodern time.



Notes

1. The battle took place in 1395.
2. Due to the broadness of the topic, only the most important sources are mentioned.
3. The manuscript was written in the name of St. Nicholas in Iași.
4. The document is in the State Archives in Cluj.
5. The transcription has been done by the authors since the shole defter source has been translated and the names transliterated into the Hungarian language. Slavic names have been transliterated into Serbian orthography, Wallachian (Romanian) into the Romanian language and Hungarian names have been preserved.
6. Almost certainly *Wallachian*, because *Eflak* was a name for Wallachia and *Iflah* is also considered to be a name for Wallachians.
7. It is noted that he was married, so this was a surname. *Kaluđer* means *monk* in Serbian.

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Abstract

Serbian-Romanian Relations in the Middle Ages until the Ottoman Conquest.
Connections, Influences, Cohabitation

Bearing in mind the fact that in the Middle Ages the region of present-day Romania was in many ways tied to the region where Serbian people lived, the aim of this paper is to present a short overview of the relations between the two countries in the Middle Ages until the Ottoman Conquest, highlighting the connections, influences and cohabitation between the two people. The ties between Serbia and Wallachia began at the end of the rule of the Nemanjić dynasty. In addition, just like the Serbs influenced the Romanian church and literacy, the Moldovan and Wallachian influences could be seen on Serbian churches and monasteries at Fruška Gora. Besides, after the final conquest of Hungary, in the Ottoman defters, evidence of cohabitation of people bearing typical Serbian and Romanian names could be found. That indicates that the examined region, mostly present-day Banat, was a region with a mixed population.

Keywords

Serbian-Romanian relations, Middle Ages, Ottoman conquest, connections, influences, cohabitation