Original Scientific Paper
https://doi.org/10.18485/ips_moldova_slavs.2025.ch1

Sanja Šuljagić
Senior Research Associate
Institute for Political Studies
Belgrade
sanja.suljagic.ips@rcub.bg.ac.rs
ORCID 0009-0008-9295-5408

SERBIAN-MOLDAVIAN RELATIONS IN THE PERIOD AFTER THE DEATH OF EMPEROR STEFAN DUŠAN NEMANJIĆ

Abstract

Serbian-Moldavian relations reached their full flourishing during the reign of the Serbian Emperor Stefan Dušan "the Mighty" Nemanjić in the fourteenth century, when it was recorded that Emperor Dušan the Mighty fought in the Black Sea region against the Tatars and engaged in trade in the area between the rivers Prut and Dniester, in the territory of present-day Moldova. After the death of Emperor Dušan, who, through his trade and the extent of the territory he ruled, was a great rival to the rulers of neighbouring states as well as to representatives of trading and slaveholding companies in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea, the then Serbian Empire began to weaken. At the same time, neighbouring states' interests intensified in present-day Moldova, and Moldova became a state, an object of struggle among various geopolitical powers for dominance over its territory. After the unification of Wallachia and Moldova and the formation of the state of Romania in the nineteenth century, and the subsequent reforms in theology, politics, and linguistics, a new geopolitical constellation was created in which rulers from the European Welf-Hanover dynasty took control over a large part of the Balkan-Black Sea territory that Emperor Dušan Nemanjić had ruled in the fourteenth century.

Keywords: Serbia, Moldova, Emperor Dušan "the Mighty", Stephen the Great, Genoese trading company, formation of Romania.

At the root of the contemporary neglect of the once strong Serbian–Moldavian ties lie several significant causes of a geopolitical, educational, and economic nature. The first and fundamental reason is the fact that for thousands of years trade routes passed through the territory of present-day Moldova and along the Danube River toward Western and Northern Europe, and later through the Vardar–Morava route and the region of the former "Old Serbia," that is, today's Kosovo and Metohija and Northern

Macedonia. These areas were crossroads of roads leading from the Adriatic, Ionian, and White (Aegean) Seas and toward the Mediterranean and Africa. Such a commercially vital Balkan–Black Sea territorial link prompted, in modern and postmodern historiography and politics, the creation by colonial-minded powers of a political agenda of denial, fabrication, and neglect of the traditional, strong political and cultural ties between the autochthonous Slavic peoples of the Balkan–Black Sea region. Thus, world historiography has overlooked that numerous premodern artefacts and historical sources connect the ancient Serbs with the ancient Dacians. In descriptions of the struggles of these peoples against Roman troops during the rule of Old Rome on the Balkan Peninsula, the use of ethnonymic synonyms such as Dacians, Wends, and Sarmatians actually refers to the battles of ancient Slavic tribes defending the Balkan–Black Sea region against the colonial campaigns of the armies of ancient Rome. A deeper analysis of this period—based on medieval Serbian sources and artefacts, the Czech Chronicle of Dalimil and Chronicle of Cosmas of Prague, as well as the Russian Joachim Chronicle—reveals a connection, neglected in the Serbian educational system, between the rule of the pre-Nemanjić dynasty of Drvanić–Svevladović and the Balkan–Black Sea region. This analysis also uncovers a historiographical confusion concerning the "Venedic" (Slavic) origin of rulers Valamir and his brothers Čudimir and Vidimir, who came (or, according to some historical sources, returned) to the Balkan Peninsula from the region of ancient Dacia, where they established the pre-Nemanjić dynasty of Drvanić–Svevladović.[1] The presence of Slavic peoples along this route is further evidenced by the existence of Slavic toponyms in the

[1] Тарасов Илья. Некоторые сюжеты готской истории, упомянутые в Иоакимовской летописи // Заметки ученого, вол. 11, бр. 2. ур. Артаваздович.А. г. Ростов-на-Дону: Южный университет «Институт управления бизнеса и права». 2021. стр. 54–76: According to the Russian Joachim Chronicle, the Serbian Chronicle of the Priest of Duklja, and the Czech Dalimil Chronicle and Chronicle of Cosmas of Prague, the Novgorodian ruler Valamir (Vladimir) settled on the Balkan Peninsula in the fifth century together with his brothers — the ancestors of the Drvanić–Svevladović dynasty. The descendants of his dynasty were genealogically related to the Russian Rurik dynasty and the Czech Přemyslid dynasty. For information regarding the Nemanjić dynasty as the descendants of the Drvanić dynasty, see: Арсеновић Аљоша. Обредне пјесме древних Срба из Индије Београд: ИПА „Мирослав". 2008. ISBN: 978-86-7056-090-1. стр. 373

Peloponnese (modern Greece), present-day North Macedonia, as well as in modern Romania and Moldova.[2]

The descendants of the Drvanić–Svevladović dynasty, who in ancient times came to the area of Old Serbia from Dacia (then known as Wallachia and Moldavia), established their capitals in geopolitically important Balkan cities such as Prizren and Shkodër. One of the emperors of the Nemanjić dynasty, Stefan Dušan "the Mighty," who ruled from Prizren in the fourteenth century, was genealogically linked, through the dynastic ties of the Nemanjić and Palaiologos families, to the medieval Russian dynasty of Rurikovich–Vasilievich.[3] This "Emperor of the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians, and Ugro-Wallachia" is connected with the territory of Moldova by the fact that, according to Arab historians, historians of the Egyptian Caliphate, and a series of lectures by historian, philologist, and professor Josif Bođanski on Serbian history at Moscow University—attended by the well-known Serbian historian Miloš Milojević—Emperor Dušan, after defending Crimea from the Tatars in 1352, added to his imperial title the designation "Emperor of the Hungarians and the Russians," and placed the territory of present-day Moldova under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć[4]. Furthermore, according to the manuscript On the History of Romanian–Serbian Reciprocity, preserved in the Bulgarian National Library in Sofia, Emperor Stefan Dušan was called the "Autocrat of Ugro-Wallachia."[5] Medieval charters of Wallachia confirm such historical records–Moldavian rulers affirming the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Peć and the Archbishopric of Ohrid over the Wallachian–Moldavian clergy, including the ordination of priests from those regions in Peć and Ohrid.[6]

The strong historical ties between the modern Serbian and Moldavian peoples are further attested by the discovery, in the area between

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[2] Барбулеску Илија. Румуни према Србима и Бугарима. Београд: Задужбина Илије Коларца, Нова штампарија Давидовић. 1908. стр. 124-125.

[3] Свети Сава у Руском царском летопису прев. Витезовић, М. Београд: Завод за уџбенике. Репринт 2012. 14-30, 20-21. ISBN: 978-86-17-18144-2

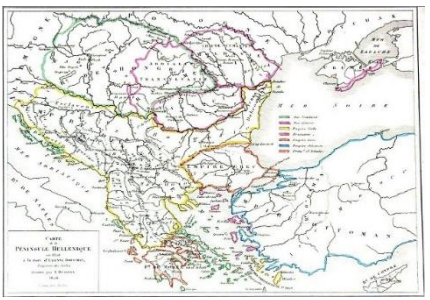
[4] Милојевић Милош. Одломци историје Срба. Београд: Државна штампарија, Београд, 1872. стр. 119, 221.

[5] Домосилецкая М.В. „Изучение румынского языка и культуры румын в России (XIX — начало XX вв.)". Балканское языкознание: Итоги и перспективы (Материалы румынско-русского симпозиума, Санкт-Петербург, 2–3 октября 2009 г.) / Отв. ред. Н. Л. Сухачев., Acta Linguistica Petropolitana – Труды Института лингвистичеких исследований СПб.: РАН, «Наука», 2009. стр. 131

[6] Барбулеску 1908; Домосилецкая 2009. стр.132

the Danubian Dobrudja and the lands between the Prut and Dniester rivers, of various types of original coins minted by the Serbian King Stefan Dečanski and his son, Emperor Stefan Dušan, dating from 1346–1355—evidence of established trade and economic connections between that region and medieval Serbia.[7]

The strong political and economic ties between the territories of present-day Serbia and Moldova, supported by the discovery of Serbian coinage in Moldova, are also confirmed by official geographical atlases in the European educational system during the nineteenth century. These atlases depict the empire of Stefan Dušan Nemanjić as including part of the territory of modern Moldova.



Louis Étienne Dussieux. „Serbian Empire in 1358, according to Louis Etienne Dussieux." 1857. Atlas General De Geographie Physique, Politique Et Historique Carte de la Péninsule Hellénique en 1358 à la mort d'Étienne Doushan, Empereur des Serbes. Paris: Librairie de Jacques Lecoffre et Comp. / (General Atlas by Louis Étienne Dussieux (1857): "Map of the Extent of the Serbian Empire in 1358, after the Death of Emperor Stefan Dušan.")

Gustav Droysen. "Serbisches Reich unter Stephan Duschan um 1350". Allgemeiner historischer Handatlas. Ausgeführt von der Geographischen Anstalt von Velhagen & Klasing in Leipzig unter Leitung von Dr. Richard Andree. Bielefeld/Leipzig: Velhagen & Klasing.1886

[7] Руссев Николаи Д. На грани миров и эпох. Города низовий Дуная и Днестра в конце XIII - XIV вв. Кишинёв: ВАШ. 1999., стр. 131; Кривенко, Андреи В. Находки сербских средневековых монет в междуречье Прута и Днестра // Stratum plus №6. 2014. стр. 339-343: Новац је проналажен у насељима Орловка, Кеселија, Костеште, Аича-Керман, Лопацика, Спеја, Стари Орхеј и Исакча.

The aforementioned data concerning the political, military, and economic presence of Emperor Dušan in the territory of present-day Moldova become more understandable when considering that, according to Romanian historian Ilie Bărbulescu, from the fourteenth century onward, Serbs as a people were predominant in the territories of Wallachia and Moldavia, and that even earlier, various Wallachian–Moldavian voivodes had married their daughters to the sons of Serbian noblemen.[8] The strong Serbian–Moldavian ties throughout history are also reflected, in a particular way, in the traditional heraldry of Serbia and Moldova. According to Moldavian legend, in 1343, a Moldavian voivode named Dragoș was hunting a wild bison on the banks of the Moldova River, and at that place he founded the first town, Baia—the first capital of Moldavia—and the bison became the emblem of the Moldavian coat of arms and flag.[9] This legend and the Moldavian coat of arms recall the millennia-long heraldic tradition of the ancient Serbian tribe of the Triballi, who bore the image of a wild boar on their helmets as a symbol of noble status and manhood, in accordance with the ancient Balkan belief that only a man who could slay a wild boar—or, symbolically, a wild beast—was worthy of founding a family (and, by extension, a state).[10]

On the other hand, information about Emperor Dušan's strong influence in the territory of present-day Moldova remains unclear and insufficiently researched in historiography, considering the data indicating that before and during Emperor Dušan's reign, various peoples fought against the Serbs, above all the Hungarians, Bulgarians, Tatars, and Eastern Romans.[11] Emperor Dušan was, in Moldova as elsewhere, a primary political and economic rival of the Eastern Romans, as well as of the Genoese and Venetians, who, having established their slave-trading and commercial stations along the Don and Volga Rivers and in the Black Sea ports of Sudak and Caffa, sought to maintain a monopoly on trade between Europe and Asia. Various world historians believe that the cause of Emperor Dušan's

[8] Барбулеску 1908. стр. 85-100.

[9] Новаковић Срђан. Црквено-народна историја Срба, Руса и Влаха. Крушевац: Историјски архив Крушевца. 56-57

[10] Шуљагић Сања. Оглед о српском идентитету: Распознавање извориштa српског идентитета у древној историји. Београд: Институт за политичке студије. 2020. 229-234. 978-86-7419-327-3

[11] Архиепископ Данило и други. Животи краљева и архиепископа српских. Београд: Српска књижевна задруга, штампарија Драг. Поповића. 1935. стр. 171-176; 188-191, 219.

premature death — he had aspired to seize the throne of the Roman Empire in Constantinople — was an agreement between the authorities in Constantinople and Venice to prevent him from gaining a trade monopoly over the Bosporus.[12] The inability to maintain active political and economic ties between the populations of the territories of modern Serbia and Moldova after the death of Emperor Dušan the Great was mainly because the Genoese and Venetians took control of trade in the Balkan–Black Sea region. This is evidenced by the fact that, two years after Emperor Dušan Nemanjić's death, beginning in 1357, the port of Caffa on the Black Sea was governed by a Genoese consul.[13] Genoese diplomatic and economic representatives — as well as envoys of the Genoese Banca di San Giorgio — operating among the Tatars and Ottoman Turks in the Black Sea region, allied themselves with Tatar and Ottoman political agents, obtaining from them the right to continue their commercial activities and to exact "retribution" against the rulers of Wallachia, Georgia, Sinope, and the Greek Empire of Trebizond.[14]

The Slavic language remained the official language of Wallachia and Moldavia until the seventeenth century. At the same time, the Cyrillic alphabet continued to be used officially until 1860, and Church Slavonic remained the language of Orthodox liturgy in Romania until the nineteenth century.[15]

Despite documented ongoing correspondence between Moldavian rulers and Serbian church dignitaries, and despite the ordination of Wallachian–Moldavian priests in the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć and the Archbishopric of Ohrid, the discontinuation of active Serbian–Moldavian political and commercial relations was caused by the political–economic agreements among the Genoese, the Vatican, the Hungarian court, and the Ottoman Turks concerning the trade in Slavic, Greek, and Tatar slaves and goods from the Balkan–Black Sea area, by sea routes and via Transylvania

[12] Шуљагић Сања. Српски идентитет од Старе Србије до југословенске идеје. Београд: Институт за политичке студије. 2025. 47-48. ISBN 978-86-7419-422-5

[13] Oderico Gasparo e Massola Francesco. Lettere ligustiche. Bassano: Remondini. 1792. 159

[14] Karpov Sergei. 1995. New Documents on the Relations between the Latins and the Local Populations in the Black Sea Area (1392- 1462). Dumbarton Oaks Papers: Symposium on Byzantium and the Italians, 13th–15th centuries 49. 33–42.

[15] Трујић Властимир. Кратки архаични словер Влашке и Молдавије у савременом румунском језику // Анатомија румунске политике. ур. Милошевић З. Шабац: Центар академске речи; Бањалука: Маркос. 2017. 307 ISBN 978-86-80142-15-9

and the Danube River.[16] In later centuries, this interruption of Serbian–Moldavian ties was further reinforced by the fact that nearly all Ottoman, Turkish, and European financial flows were managed by the owners of the Genoese Bank of St. George and by members of the Mendez, Fugger, and Welser family clans, whose economic influence extended to the entire Balkan–Black Sea region.[17] In addition, shortly after Emperor Dušan's death, King Louis I (Moldavian ruler Lacko First) attempted to establish a Roman Catholic bishopric in Moldavia under the patronage of Pope Gregory XI. His successors, Peter I and Alexander the Good, confirmed their vassal dependence on the Lithuanian prince Jogaila and the Polish king. At the same time, the peoples of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Transylvania, led by Vlad Țepeș "Dracula," Stephen the Great, and Michael the Brave, actively resisted the Ottoman Turks.[18]

After Emperor Dušan's death, within the spiritual ethos of a ruler surrounded by unfavourable geopolitical circumstances, one can observe parallels between the example of Moldavian King Stephen the Great and that of Serbian rulers such as Emperor Dušan, Prince Lazar, and his son Despot Stefan Lazarević. Just as Serbian Prince Lazar, in whose time his armies had to fight the Ottoman Turks in the south and the Hungarians in the north, so too did Moldavian King Stephen the Great have to wage war against the Ottoman Sultan Mehmed II in the south and the Polish King John Albert in the north.[19]

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[16] Tardy Lajos. Beyond the Ottoman Empire: 14th—16th Century Hungarian Diplomacy in the East. transl. Boris, J. Szeged: Universitas Szegediensis de Attila József Nominata. 1978. 4-48; Гашпаровић Стела. Србија и Угарска од 1402. до 1460. године. докторска дисертација. Београд: Универзитет у Београду, Филозофски факултет. 2016. 179: Already since 1444 Roman Pope estimated that there was a certain possibility that eastern Christians could liberate themselves from the yoke of the Ottoman Turks and so he sent a vicar of Bosnian Franciscans, an inquisitor Fabian "de Bachia"into Walachia, Moldavia, Bulgaria and Serbia to declare the union of the Roman church with the Orthodox churches.

[17] Шуљагић 2025, 73.

[18] Муза Дмитриј. Историјско постојање Румуније кроз призму цивилизацијске и геополитичке анализе // Анатомија румунске политике. ур. Милошевић З. Шабац: Центар академске речи; Бањалука: Маркос. 2017. 146-147. ISBN 978-86-80142-15-9

[19] As in the case of Serbia, the Hungarian King Sigismund, through his military campaigns in Bosnia, contributed to the Ottoman Turks' conquest of Tarnovo Bulgaria, Wallachia, and the Timiș Banat. Afterwards, King Sigismund led his

As with the Serbian rulers, Moldavian King Stephen the Great remains remembered among his people for his willingness to sacrifice himself for his nation — even to die before his troops on the battlefield. It is little known in Serbian public discourse and historiography that Moldavian King Stephen the Great (1457–1504) corresponded with the Serbian clergy using the Serbian alphabet, and that he built and decorated his monastic endowments — such as the Monastery of St. Elijah in Sucidava — modeled after Serbian monasteries of the thirteenth century and those from the mid-fourteenth century in the region of Ohrid in today's North Macedonia.[20] In these monasteries, one can discern the influence of Serbian Emperor Dušan, who in the fourteenth century was the first to have himself depicted in frescoes wearing a loros — a cross upon the emperor-founder's chest — as an ancient symbol of deification.[21]

Wallachian and Moldavian rulers and nobles not only built their monastic endowments following the example of Serbian monasteries, but in the regions of Moldavia, Bukovina, and Russo-Wallachia, there also developed a strong cult devoted to Saint Sabbas the Sanctified of Jerusalem, Saint Sava of Serbia, Serbian Prince Lazar, Princess Milica, and the dynasties of Nemanjić, Hrebeljanović, and Branković.[22] Moreover, Wallachian and Moldavian rulers and nobility intermarried with noblewomen from the dynasties of Nemanjić and their successors — the Branković, Crnojević, and Mladenović families, among others. This has been confirmed by genetic studies of their haplogroups, indicating their Serbo-Slavic origin, and by using the Serbian alphabet in Wallachian and

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troops into Moldavia and returned it to Hungarian rule. (See for more: Гашпаровић 2016. 29).

[20] Dumitrescu Andrei. The Bowing Prince: Post-Byzantine Representations of Christian Rulership in Moldavian Wall Paintings. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003121480-18 in: The Routledge Handbook of Byzantine Visual Culture in the Danube Regions, 1300-1600. ed. Rossi, M. A. and Sullivan A.I. 2024. 223-224. ISBN: 978-0-367-63954-9

[21] Војводић Драган. Портрети владара, црквених достојанственика и племића у наосу и припрати // Зидно сликарство манастира Дечана. Београд: Грађа и студије. 1995. 288-292

[22] Андрејић Живојин и Илић Виолета. Мултикултурна и етничка прожимања Срба и Влаха у Србији на размеђи између Југославије и Румуније. Митолошки зборник 32. Рача: Центар за митолошке студије. 2014. 201-202; Барбулеску 1908; Bogunovic 2018аб; Bogunovic 2019; Новаковић 2019

Moldavian state documents.[23] Furthermore, several decades after Emperor Dušan's death, the Metropolitan of Kiev, Grigorije Tsamblak — who for a time served as abbot of the Dečani Monastery in Kosovo and Metohija, Serbia — played a crucial role as a hagiographer and writer in developing Serbian–Moldavian cultural ties.[24] Through his efforts, the Serbian literary and scholarly tradition spread from the Serbian Monastery of Manasija, a learning centre, to present-day Russia and Romania. According to data from the Library of the Romanian Academy of Sciences, more than fifty Serbian texts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have been preserved in monastic libraries of Wallachia and Moldavia.[25] Serbian culture was so influential and respected in the mid-fifteenth century that young men from present-day Lviv came to Wallachia and Moldavia to study "Serbian church chanting" and the Serbian literary language.[26] However, after the signing of the Church Union in 1700 and the founding of the "School of the Transylvanians" (Școala Ardeleană) in the then Transylvanian Belgrade (Alba Iulia), a neo-Latin geopolitical construct — "Romanianism" — was conceived and subsequently implemented through the creation of the modern state of Romania on the territories of former Wallachia and Moldavia.[27]

THE IDEOLOGICAL AND GEOPOLITICAL NATURE OF THE WEAKENING OF SERBIAN–MOLDAVIAN TIES IN THE MODERN PERIOD

In the sixteenth century, representatives of the Republic of Genoa, the most loyal ally of the Habsburg Monarchy, assisted Emperor Charles V and his son Philip II in expanding their "Holy Roman Empire" to include territories stretching from modern Germany, Spain, and northern Italy to the

[23] Bogunovic 2018аб; Bogunovic 2019; Новаковић 2019

[24] Пеньо Русев, Ангел Давидов. Григорий Цамблак в Румъния и в старата румънска литература БАН София. 1966.

[25] Davidović Milena. The Influence of Serbian Literacy in Wallachia and Moldavia in the 14th and 15th centuries. Nouvelle série Tome IV (XI) Byzantine Heritages in South-Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Period. Etudes Byzantines et Post-Byzantine. Ed. Timotin A. Pirivatrić S. Iacubovschi O. Bucharest: Academie Roumaine Institut d' Etudes Sud-est Europeennes Societe Roumane d' Etudes Byzantines. 2022. 91-94

[26] Милошевић Зоран. Српско питање и Румунија // Румунија и румунизација Срба. ур. Милошевић, З. 15-41. Шабац: Центар академске речи. 2018. 24-25 ISBN 978-86-80142-18-0 стр. 24-25

[27] Ibid, 27, 34.

kingdoms of Naples, Sicily, and Sardinia.[28] It is telling that it was precisely the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sardinia, Count Camillo Cavour — the architect of mid-nineteenth-century state policy toward the Balkans — who influenced the founding of the modern state of Romania, thereby contributing to the subsequent Latinization of Wallachia and Moldavia and the further weakening of Serbian–Moldavian ties.[29]

Meanwhile, from the seventeenth century onward, in the ports of the North and Baltic Seas and in the cities of the Hanseatic League and modern-day Netherlands, banks were modelled after the Mediterranean ports and navies, particularly after the Genoese Bank of St. George. These institutions financed the maritime expeditions of Dutch colonial fleets — namely, those of the famous trading and slaveholding East India Company.[30] Likewise, after the accession of the European Welf–Hanover dynasty to the English throne, the British East India Company was organised according to the model of Venetian trading and slaveholding companies. Indeed, according to British statesman Benjamin Disraeli, the entire structure of modern British society was modelled on the Venetian Republic, with English kings assuming the role of the former Venetian doge, ruling over privileged aristocratic families, political parties, and other social institutions.[31]

Viewed within a broader geopolitical context, after the increasingly evident weakening of Ottoman rule in the Balkan–Black Sea region, the members of the European Welf–Hanover dynasty, along with their dynastic branches and financial family clans active within the sphere of this dynasty's power, perceived a major geopolitical obstacle to their colonial expansion toward India, China, Japan, and other Asian countries — namely, the

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[28] Noailles François de Charrière. Negociations II. Venezia: de la Vigne. 1558

[29] Тамбора Анђело. Кавур и Балкан.прев. Милинковић С. Београд: Завод за уџбенике. 2007. vii-ix ISBN 978-86-17-14950-3

[30] Roover R. de. Money, Banking, and Credit in Medieval Bruges: Italian Merchant-Bankers, Lombards, and Money Changers: A Study in the Origin of Banking. Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America. 1948; Macaulay Thomas. The History of England from the Accession of James the Second. Vol. IV. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans. 1855. 492-493: .Амстердамска банка (хол. Amsterdamsche Wisselbank) била је формирана по узору на ђеновљанску Банку Светог Ђорђа.

[31] Disraeli Benjamin. Coningsby. ed. Langdon-Davies, B. London and Edinburgh: R. Brimley Johnson- 1904. xxix-xxx; 320-321; 442-442; Шуљагић Сања. Утицај идеолошких и геополитичких доктрина Запада на формирање модерне српске државе // Национални интерес вол. 51, бр. 2. 2025.

potential formation of a politically and economically strong alliance of Orthodox Russian and Slavic–Greek dynasties in the Balkan–Black Sea area.

Had there been formed or renewed a geopolitical constellation of a Slavic–Greek alliance among states which, up to the reforms of the Russian Tsar Peter the Great at the beginning of the eighteenth century, had shared a common history, script, language, Orthodox Christian faith, calendar,[32] and economic and cultural exchange, it might have resembled the geopolitical configuration of the Balkan–Black Sea states from the pre-Ottoman period, when Emperor Dušan, through his vast empire and genealogical ties with the medieval Russian and Balkan–Black Sea dynasties,[33] hindered Venetian, Eastern Roman, and Genoese commercial interests across the Balkan–Black Sea–Anatolian region. For this reason, from the time of Tsar Peter the Great onward — especially during the reign of the Russified Empress Catherine II — representatives of the Welf–Hanover dynasty were introduced into the highest positions in the Russian Empire in the fields of culture, politics, the military, and the economy, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, to subordinate Russian imperial policy to European political interests. Some of these Russian foreign ministers who, during the nineteenth century, contributed to the weakening of ties between pre-Ottoman Serbia and pre-Ottoman Moldavia were Karl Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister and bearer of the Welf dynasty's order, who insisted that Russia's role in the Balkan–Black Sea–Anatolian region be subordinated to European political interests; and the Phanariot diplomat Konstantin Rodofinikin, Russia's envoy to Serbia during the Serbian

[32] Полное собрание законов Российской империи с 1649 года. О писании впредь Генваря с 1 числа 1700 года во всех бумагах лета от Рождества Христова, а не от сотворения мира // Петр Великий. Избранное. Законодателъние акти. ур. А. Усманов. 47-48. Москва: РОССПОЕН, Институт обшественной мисли. репринт 2010 (1830): Tsar Peter also changed the ancient Slavic–Byzantine calendar, abolished the traditional structure of the Russian Orthodox Church, closed many monasteries, and introduced into Russian society many customs and manners that had previously been unknown there.

[33] Барбулеску 1908. стр. 85-100; Bogunovic Petar. Gens Vlachorum in historia Serborumque Slavorum I (Vlachs in the History of the Serbs and Slavs I) // Култура полиса 15 (35). 2018. 577–600; Bogunovic, Petar. "Gens Vlachorum in historia Serborumque Slavorum II [Vlachs in the History of the Serbs and Slavs II]." Култура полиса 15 (36).191–214. 2018a; Bogunovic Petar. Appendix ad Historiam Serborum et Slavorum [A Contribution to the History of the Serbs and Slavs] // Култура полиса 16 (39). 159–188. 2019.

uprisings against the Ottoman Turks at the beginning of the nineteenth century, who foretold to the Serbian language and script reformer Vuk Karadžić "the disappearance of the Serbs from the world's political stage."[34] A decisive blow to Serbian–Moldavian relations was marked in 1810 by the publicly declared stance of the Habsburg monarch — whose empire, since 1526, had been referred to by Austrian historians as the "Danubian Monarchy" — as recorded in the memoirs of the Austrian field marshal Josef Radetzky, who stated that the Danube River must become "the lifeblood of the Austrian Monarchy and the foundation of its military and political system," and that "Austria, through an alliance with France, could conquer Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia, and Moldavia."[35] Such Austrian policy was a continuation of the plan of the German historian and reformer of Russian historiography in the eighteenth century, August von Schlözer, who maintained that "Austria must expand to the Black Sea" and that "Vienna must become the centre of Slavic studies."[36] This policy simultaneously represented a reversal of earlier views among world historians who had described the Balkan–Black Sea region as the cradle of a "Wallachian–Serbian–Russian Eastern civilisation" (Walachia Serviae Russiaeque objicitur ab Oriente).[37]

The abolition of Wallachia and Moldavia, and the creation of the modern neo-Latin state of Romania, resulted from several geopolitical and

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[34] Караџић Вук. Историјски списи II. Сабрана дела Вука Караџића XVI. ур. Самарџић Р. Београд: Просвета, R. Samardžić. Beograd: Prosveta. 1969. 76; Шуљагић Сања. Утицај идеолошких и геополитичких доктрина Запада на формирање модерне српске државе. Национални интерес вол. 51, бр. 2. 2025. стр. 13-14, 47. DOI: 10.5937/nint51-56959; Ingle Harold. Nesselrode and the Russian Rapprochement with Britain, 1836-1844. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1976. 50–51

[35] Поповић Васиљ. Европа и српско питање у периоду ослобођења (1804–1914). Београд: Геца Кон А. Д.. 1940. 54-57; Шуљагић Сања. Значај реке Дунав у дефинисању идентитета српског народа // Европа и Дунав – Дунав у геополитичким стратегијама европских држава. ур. Милошевић З. и Стојадиновић М. Београд: Институт за политичке студије. 2023. 295–324. https:// doi.org/10.18485/ips_evr_dunav.2023.ch19. стр. 298

[36] Sotirovic Vladimir. 2007. Creation of the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, 1914-1918. Vilnius: Vilnius University Press. 2007. 237; Vidmar Luka. Struktura in funkcija pisem iz literarnoprerodne korespodence Žige Zoisa, Phd. D., Nova Gorica: Univerza v Novoj Gorici. 2009, 233, 237

[37] Clvverii Philippi. Introdvctionis in vniversam geographiam tam veterem quam novam libri VI. Amstelodami: ex Office Elzeviriana. 1672.

ideological factors — most notably the desire of European and British politicians and economists to push Russia away from the Bosporus, the Balkan Peninsula, and the Middle East,[38] as well as Emperor Napoleon's ambition in 1852 to make himself, rather than the Russian Tsar, the protector of Christians in the Ottoman Empire and the Holy Land.[39] After the Ottoman Grand Vizier Mehmed Ali secretly informed the French to prepare their Mediterranean fleet for a possible Russian attack, and after the Russian Tsar ordered his troops in Bessarabia to cross the Prut River into Moldavia and Wallachia, Turkey in 1853 declared war on Russia — supported by Great Britain, France, and, to the disappointment of Tsar Nicholas I (whose foreign policy had until then been influenced by Austria), also by Austria.[40] Russia's defeat in that war led to the withdrawal of its influence from Wallachia, Moldavia, and Serbia, and, following the Paris Conference, to the establishment of the modern state of Romania under the rule of the Prussian Hohenzollern–Sigmaringen dynasty. This outcome followed strong local resistance in Moldavia and Wallachia. Yet, after the assassination of the anti-Romanian Metropolitan Meletie Istaty, the murder of Prime Minister Barbu Catargiu, and other political killings and uprisings, the Paris Conference sanctioned the creation of the Romanian state.[41]

Following the establishment of the modern Balkan "pseudo-states" — as North American political scientist and statesman Strobe Talbott termed them[42] — from the nineteenth century to the present day, under both the official and unofficial rule of members of the Welf–Hanover dynasty's branches, that dynasty succeeded in bringing under its control the entire former territory of Emperor Dušan Nemanjić's empire. Given that the Serbian Emperor Dušan "the Mighty" Nemanjić embodied the genealogical interconnection of the Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek dynasties; that he was, through his sister's family line, an ancestor of the Russian Tsar Ivan "the

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[38] Milich Peter. Slavic Ethnogenesis and Great Power Diplomacy: Recurring Themes. Journal of the North American Society for Serbian Studies Vol. 14 No. 1. 29–40. 2000. 33

[39] Figes Orlando. Crimea: The Last Crusade. London and New York: Allen Lane. 2010. 8-10

[40] Ibid., 185.

[41] Гросул Владислав. Молдавское движение до и после образования Румынии (1821-1866 гг.). Кишинев; Ассоциация историког и политологов „Pro-Moldova". 2014. 166-175

[42] Talbott Strobe. The Great Experiment: The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for a Global Nation. Simon and Schuster. 2009. 312-320

Terrible" Rurikovich–Vasilyevich; that descendants of the dynastic branches of the Nemanjić dynasty intermarried with Wallachian and Moldavian rulers and nobles; and that the Nemanjić and Rurikovich–Vasilyevich dynasties represented familial continuity among rulers across the territories stretching from the Eastern Roman Empire to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — it is worth noting the assertion of historian Vladislav Grosul that not only in medieval Moldavia was the official language the "trans-Danubian" (Old Serbian) language, but also in Bulgaria, Wallachia, Transylvania, the Muscovite principality, and even the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.[43]

This demonstrates that the centuries-long intermarriage among rulers across a vast area — from northern Europe to the southern Balkans and Russia — was facilitated by a shared language, script, Orthodox Christian faith, calendar, and a common state and political philosophy, ethics, and ideology. Within this Orthodox Christian circle of the Wallachian–Serbian–Russian Eastern civilisation (Walachia Serviae Russiaeque objicitur ab Oriente), as characterised by the seventeenth-century geographer Philipp Clüver, Serbian–Moldavian relations occupy a highly significant place.

Therefore, an essential task for Slavic and world historiography is to investigate the crucial and insufficiently clarified period of Serbian–Moldavian relations during the rule of the Nemanjić and Rurikovich–Vasilyevich dynasties. Further research and a clearer understanding of these medieval Serbian–Moldavian ties would enrich global historiography with valuable historical, geopolitical, and cultural insights, and shed new light on the prevailing paradigms concerning the history of the Slavic peoples — and, more broadly, on the history of world civilisations.

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[43] Милошевић Зоран. Српско питање и Румунија. 2018. 21-22

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