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The Ideology of the Illyrian Armorial

Abstract: The appearance of the Illyrian Armorial in the late sixteenth century has been linked to Petar Iveljin (son of Ivelja) Ohmućević-Grgurić, a native of Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in the service of the Spanish king. The main purpose of the Armorial was to demonstrate his noble descent. It was therefore designed in such a way as to make it clear to everyone who should see it that the Ohmućević-Grgurićs were an old and reputable noble family. In order for the Armorial to achieve the intended purpose efficiently, some ideas and beliefs were slipped in which were current in the milieu in which it was created. The Illyrian Armorial cannot therefore be properly understood without taking into account the time and setting of its creation as it reflects various political, cultural and religious influences of its time.

Keywords: Illyrian Armorial, Illyrian heraldry, Petar Ohmućević, Ohmućević-Grgurić, Slavism, Illyrism

The creation of Illyrian heraldry and the Illyrian Armorial has been linked to the activity of Petar Iveljin (son of Ivelja) Ohmućević-Grgurić from Slano near Dubrovnik (Ragusa).¹ The effort Petar Ohmućević and his family put into self-promotion and self-exaltation, including claiming to be related to the Komnenoi, purported descendants of the Byzantine and Trebizond emperors, led to the creation of a number of historical, genealogical and heraldic works. Most of them were highly uncritical and largely based on invented family traditions and genealogies, and forged documents.² Illyrian heraldry cannot, however, be

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¹ On Illyrian heraldry and the Ohmućević-Grgurić family see A. Solovjev, "Postanak ilirske heraldike i porodica Ohmućević", *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* 12 (1932), 79–125; A. Solovjev, "Prinosi za bosansku i ilirsku heraldiku i 'Rodoslovlje bosanskih i srpskih kraljeva'", *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* NS (A) 9 (1954), 87–133; S. Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika* (Belgrade: Istorijski institut, 2006); A. Palavestra, "Ilirski grbovnici i ilirska heraldika", *Ilirski grbovnici i drugi heraldički radovi* (Belgrade: Zavod za udžbenike; Dosije studio, 2010), 53–110. I was unable to consult S. Čosić, *Ideologija rodoslovlja. Korjenić-Neorićev grbovnik iz 1595* (Zagreb: Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica; Dubrovnik: HAZU, Zavod za povijesne znanosti, 2015).

² For an incomplete list of printed works and manuscripts about the Ohmućević-Grgurić family see V. Foretić, "Udio naših ljudi u stranim mornaricama i općim pomorskim zbivanjima kroz stoljeća", in *Pomorski zbornik povodom 20-godišnjice dana mornarice i pomorstva Jugoslavije 1942–1962*, vol. I, eds. Grga Novak and Vjekoslav Maštrović (Zagreb: Jugoslavenska akademija znanosti i umjetnosti; Zadar: Institut za historijske i ekonomske nauke, 1962), 296–299, n. 43.

associated only with Petar Ohmućević and his personal ambitions. It was also a product of its times. The 1590s were marked by the activity of the Roman Curia, the Spanish court in Naples, and Austria, which sought to stir up an uprising of the Balkan Christians against the Ottomans. It was also a time when a Slavic, i.e. Illyrian spiritual and political movement began to take shape, primarily in Dalmatia. The idea of Slavic unity championed by this movement arose under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church and encouraged the appearance of historical constructions whose purpose was to prove an identity between Slavs and ancient Illyrians, the Slavic origin of illustrious figures of the past and the grandeur of a former Slavic state. The awareness of the Slavic community as a new political factor came as a result of dissent within the Roman Catholic Church, the plans of Pope Clement VIII to launch a crusade against the Ottomans, and the shared interest of the Christians to have Muslims driven out of Europe. Dubrovnik held an important place in the political and cultural developments of the period. While recognising the Sultan's authority, it remained linked with the Christian lands. Many Ragusans took part in wars the Christian countries, notably Spain, waged against the Ottomans. Many of them climbed high on the ladder and held prominent posts at the Spanish court.³

Petar Ohmućević-Grgurić was one of the best known Ragusans in Spanish service. He took part in a number of Spanish naval campaigns, which earned him the rank of admiral. He came to the fore particularly during the conquest of Portugal in 1580 and in the Azores in 1582, and also played an active role in the war between England and Spain which was fought not only in Europe but also in the newly-discovered lands, "the Indies" as America was dubbed, which is why he was titled as Capitán generale per l'Indie. From 1581, he sailed on the *St Jerome*, a ship he built and armed at his own expense. In 1590 he and his nephew Stefan Dolisti-Tasovčić entered a contract to serve the Spanish king with twelve ships of Ragusan ship-owners built in Spain – those were merchant vessels adapted for war. In 1592 and 1594 Petar Ohmućević figured prominently in the accusations the English made, in Constantinople, against Dubrovnik of its ships having been integrated into the Spanish fleet which was preparing to attack England. Apart from war campaigns, his ships were used for the transport of grains. In 1594, three of his ships carrying grains from Barletta to Naples were captured by the Ottomans. In their defence before the Sublime Porte the Ragusans stated that Petar Ohmućević, disappointed at his allegedly old nobility not having been recognised, had left Dubrovnik territory with his relatives, settled in Spain and entered into Spanish service. Petar Ohmućević died in Lisbon in 1599.⁴

³ Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika*, 25–26.

⁴ Solovjev, "Postanak", 82–94; Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika*, 25–37. Petar Ohmućević had four brothers and two sisters. Three brothers lost their lives as sea captains in Spanish service. One sister was married to Nikola Dolisti-Tasovčić, and the other, Jelena, is known to have

The life story of Petar Ohmućević-Grgurić reveals a remarkably capable and ambitious man. He was intent on becoming a member of a Spanish chivalric order, but to become one he had to meet several strict conditions – he had to be a nobleman, moreover to have eight degrees of nobility, to come from a purely Roman Catholic background, and to prove that there had been no Jews, heretics and Muslims in his family. He first tried to have his nobility confirmed in his native Dubrovnik in 1584.⁵ When this failed, he resorted to the only means left in the absence of genuine evidence – he began to construct genealogical and heraldic fictions and to forge documents. As early as 6 May 1584 he received confirmation of his noble descent from the Bosnian bishop seated at Požega, Antonius Mattheus, to whom he had submitted a few forged charters, his family tree and a table with eight degrees of his Roman Catholic and noble descent and eight coloured coats of arms of his ancestors.⁶ In Aleksandar Solovjev's view, this may be taken to be the beginning of Illyrian heraldry.⁷

Having failed to have his nobility recognised in Dubrovnik, Petar Ohmućević filed a request with the Viceroy of Naples supported with false documents and genealogies. On 17 May 1594, the Royal Council in Naples issued him the letters patent of nobility and the confirmation of the false charters. Two years later, Petar Ohmućević became a knight of the Order of St James of Galicia, and later on was awarded the rank of Commander of the Order with an annual income of 3,000 scudi.⁸ The Illyrian Armorial, being designed to support Petar's claims, must have been created at that time, and certainly before the grant of nobility, i.e. around 1590.⁹

The original of the Illyrian Armorial is lost. Its appearance and content are known only from the surviving copies. We refer primarily to the oldest ones – Korenić-Neorić (1595), London (1590s), Altan's (1614), Belgrade II (ca 1615) – which are believed, with reason, to be very similar or even identical to the lost protograph. Whoever the originators of numerous copies may have been, their objective was largely the same – to rise to nobility, to strengthen social prestige and, hopefully, to come into possession of estates in the Balkans should it hap-

married, sometime between 1585 and 1590, Pietro Comneno, a purported descendant of the Byzantine and Trebizond emperors.

⁵ Solovjev, "Postanak", 83.

⁶ Francesco de Petris, "Breve discorso genealogico della antichissima, e nobilissima famiglia Ohmvchievich Gargvrich", 11–14, in Lorenzo Miniati, *Le glorie cadute dell'antichissima, ed augustissima famiglia Comnena* (Venice: Francesco Valuasense, 1663); Solovjev, "Postanak", 83–85. Solovjev noted the possibility that the letter of the Bosnian bishop could be a forgery made in Naples before 1594.

⁷ Solovjev, "Postanak", 85.

⁸ Francesco de Petris, "Breve discorso", 23; Solovjev, "Postanak", 87.

⁹ Solovjev, "Prinosi", 131.

pen that the Turks were driven out of the region.¹⁰ Those who made the copies were not always true to the model being copied, and the most frequent modifications concern the number and sequence of noble insignia.¹¹ It has been assumed that the protograph contained 141 family coats of arms, the same as a few of the oldest preserved copies, unlike, for instance, only 127 in the Fojnica Armorial or as many as 164 in Vukoslavić's Armorial.¹²

The oldest surviving copy of the Illyrian Armorial is the Korenić-Neorić Armorial of 1595, and it may be assumed that it was copied from the protograph.¹³ It contains six non-paginated and 157 paginated leaves. The front page is followed by four pages of the table of contents both in Serbian Slavonic language and Cyrillic script and in Latin language, while the sixth and last non-paginated leaf contains a vignette with a Christogram, and the Armorial's title and year of creation. There follow the leaves paginated with Roman numerals.

¹⁰ In the seventeenth century many families that had fled before the Ottomans began to appropriate coats of arms from the Armorial, claiming descent from the former Bosnian nobility. It is known that the seventeenth-century Habsburgs, by confirming nobility to families that had fled Ottoman-held Bosnia, sought to strengthen their loyalty with the view to achieving their goal of conquering Bosnia. In the eighteenth century nobility began to be granted to some Dalmatian families. The bestowal of nobility based on the Armorial went on until as late as the mid-1910s. See F. Heyer von Rosenfeld, *Der Adel des Königreichs Dalmatien* (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe (Emil Küster), 1873); I. Bojničić, *Der Adel von Kroatien und Slavonien* (Nuremberg: Bauer und Raspe (Emil Küster), 1899); V. Duišin, "Srpske plemićke porodice u Vojvodini od 1690 do 1790 godine", *Glasnik Istoriskog društva u Novom Sadu* 13 (1940), 89–123; B. Zmajčić, "Legalizacija grbova nekih naših obitelji na temelju Ohmućevićevog Grbovnika", *Glasnik arhiva i Društva arhivskih radnika Bosne i Hercegovine* 7 (1967), 41–53; S. Traljić, "Palinićev bosanski zbornik", *Zbornik Historijskog instituta Jugoslavenske akademije* 1 (1954), 184–185; M. Atlagić, *Grbovi plemstva u Slavoniji i Vojvodini u novom veku s posebnim osvrtom na grbove srpskog plemstva* (Priština: Pergament, 1997). In the second half of the seventeenth century the archbishop of Sofia Stefan Knežević used the Knežević family's coat of arms from the Illyrian Armorial, cf. I. D. Spisarevska, *Chiprovskoto vustanie i evropejskiat sviat* (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1988), ill. 38.

¹¹ See Solovjev, "Prinosi", 103–131; J. A. Goodall, "An Illyrian armorial in the Society's collection", *The Antiquaries Journal* 75 (1995), 255–310; A. Palavestra, *Beogradski grbovnik II i ilirska heraldika* (Belgrade: Muzej primenjene umetnosti 2006), 10–15, 35–67; Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika*, 59–91; Palavestra, "Ilirski grbovnici", 65–101. Three of these armorials have been published as facsimile editions: Korenić-Neorić: I. Banac, *Grbovi – biljezi identiteta* (Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1991), 131–316; Fojnica: *Fojnički grbovnik* (Sarajevo: Oslobođenje, 1972); *Fojnički grbovnik* (Sarajevo: Rabić, 2005); *Fojnički grbovnik* (Sarajevo: Rabić, 2009); *Fojnički grbovnik* (Fojnica: Franjevački samostan Fojnica, 2012); and Belgrade II: *Beogradski grbovnik II: fototipsko izdanje* (Belgrade: Muzej primenjene umetnosti, 2006).

¹² About thirty copies of the Illyrian Armorial are known to have been made, but some of these are known only from written references, cf. Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika*, 59–91.

¹³ A. Palavestra, "Komentari", in A. Solovjev, *Istorija srpskog grba i drugi heraldički radovi* (Belgrade: Pravni fakultet; Dosije; BMG, 2000), 180.

Leaf I shows St Jerome, leaf II King Stefan kneeling before St Stephen, leaf III the Mother of God, leaf IV St Gregory. Leaf V contains the coat of arms of Emperor Stefan (Dušan), and leaves VI–XV feature the coats of arms of Macedonia, Illyria, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Rascia and Primorje (maritime land), respectively. Leaf XVI shows the arms of Emperor Uroš, and leaves XVII–CLVII contain the arms of 141 noble families.¹⁴

The Ohmućević-Grgurić family holds a prominent place in the Armorial because it obviously had to be clear to all that they were one of the most reputable noble families of the Illyrian Empire, a fictitious realm ruled by the Nemanjić dynasty. The family arms occurs on sheet XXXI of the Korenić-Neorić Armorial as fifteenth among the family arms and immediately after those of the ruling family and the most distinguished noble families, those whom the Ohmućević-Grgurićs either allegedly served or whose members figure in the forged charters.¹⁵ According to S. Ćirković, the presence of the ruling and magnate families conferred prestige and authority on those who commissioned the Armorial or their more recent ancestors.¹⁶ The Ohmućević-Grgurić coat of arms is followed by those of noble families which were either related to them or mentioned in the false charters. From leaf XLVII there begin to appear many unknown families, but among them too there are relatives of the Ohmućević-Grgurićs. Aleksandar Solovjev ascertained that the Armorial contains all known sixteenth-century relatives of this family, but pointed out that we know of only half of them because the genealogical tables contain the surnames of only those girls who married into this family, the only exception being two sisters of Petar Ohmućević who are known to have married into the Tasovčić and Komnen (Comneno) families, respectively. Solovjev therefore assumed that the Armorial may well contain the coats of arms of some other female-line relatives of the family.¹⁷ The Armorial also features the arms of the families occurring in the genealogical table that Petar Ohmućević had submitted to the Bosnian bishop Antonius Mattheus to prove his descent back for eight generations of purely Roman Catholic nobility.¹⁸

All of the first four depictions in the Armorial may be linked with the Ohmućević-Grgurić family. The first picture shows St Jerome, who was particularly venerated in their midst. The oldest family tomb (1472) is in the church

¹⁴ Aleksandar Palavestra proposed an ideal reconstruction of the Illyrian Armorial, i.e. the Armorial of Don Pedro Ohmućević Grgurić, see Palavestra, *Beogradski grbovnik II*, 22–28, and “Ilirski grbovnici”, 58–64.

¹⁵ Solovjev, “Postanak”, 99.

¹⁶ S. Ćirković, “Dopune i objašnjenja”, in S. Novaković, *Istorija i tradicija*, ed. S. Ćirković (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1982), 478.

¹⁷ Solovjev, “Postanak”, 99.

¹⁸ The arms of these families are shown on leaves XXXIV (Kostanjić); XL (Bogašinović); XLIII (Tasovčić); XLV (Čihorić); L (Bosnić); LX (Dražojević); and LXX (Ljubibratić).

of St Jerome in Slano, and Ivelja's sons had a sumptuous altar set up in it in 1580. Don Pedro's admiral ship was named St Jerome. The second picture shows King Stefan kneeling before St Stephen – which is similar in iconography to the painting from the Franciscan monastery of Sutjeska to the back of which the "Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings" was glued. The third picture depicts the Mother of God with a part of Bosnia's coat of arms – a similar picture can also be found above the Ohmućević-Grgurić family tree in Miniati's collection. The fourth picture shows St Gregory, whom the Ohmućević-Grgurićs considered their special patron. The composite imperial insignia on leaves V and XVI present the Nemanjićs as the rulers of Serbia, Bosnia, Macedonia, Dalmatia and Primorje (Littoral) – the lands mentioned in the false charters.¹⁹ Ivo Banac believes that the depictions on the first sixteen leaves of the Armorial reveal a link between the one-time glory of the South Slavs and private objectives of the Ohmućević-Grgurić family. According to him, the family's priorities are readable from the arrangement of the insignia in the composite coat of arms of Emperor Dušan – precedence is given to Macedonia, the land where the family allegedly enjoyed the greatest power, followed by Bosnia, the land they originally came from, and then – in the proper diplomatic order – Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia, and then Bulgaria, Serbia, Rascia and, finally, Primorje, their current homeland.²⁰

The Armorial's title page, written both in Serbian Slavonic language and Cyrillic script and in Latin, was intended to inform the readers from the very start of the alleged time and place of its creation, and thus to attest to its antiquity and authenticity. Petar Ohmućević's most renowned ancestor, according to family tradition, was the "imperial grand *vojvoda*" Hrelja who had owed his power, as had his alleged descendants, to Emperor Stefan Dušan, the ruler of the fanciful Illyrian Empire. This was why the date of the Armorial was placed in the reign of Stefan Dušan (1331-1355) and, in some copies, explicitly in the year 1340. Its antiquity would automatically imply the antiquity of the nobility of the Ohmućević-Grgurić family, in whose honour and glory it had been composed. The authority and authenticity of the Armorial were to be further corroborated by the mention of its author, Stanislav Rubčić, holder of the invented title of

¹⁹ Solovjev, "Postanak", 96, 99. The "Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings" is Petar Ohmućević-Grgurić's first heraldic undertaking, dated by A. Solovjev to 1584/5. See O. Pucić, "Zur südslavischen Heraldik I", *Archiv für Slavische Philologie* 4 (1880), 339–342; S. Novaković, "Heraldički običaji u Srba u primeni i književnosti", *Istorija i tradicija*, 384–387; Solovjev, "Postanak", 111 (drawing of the "Genealogy"); Solovjev, "Prinosi", 87–103, 132–133; Rudić, *Vlastela Ilirskog grbovnika*, 43–46.

²⁰ Banac, *Grbovi – biljezi identiteta*, 13–14.

Emperor Dušan's *ban cimerja (rex insigniarum)*.²¹ According to the title page, the Armorial was translated from an old book kept in a Basilian monastery on Mount Athos. The mention of Mount Athos in a manuscript that was intended to confirm its user's adherence to the Roman Catholic Church may be explained by the reputation that Mount Athos enjoyed in the circles in which the Armorial was created, and by relations that the rulers of the Illyrian Empire and Don Pedro's great "ancestor", Hrelja, maintained with it. The Basilian monastery was not a random choice either: namely, not much before the creation of the Illyrian Armorial, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) united the Italian Basilian monks into one congregation. Nor should we lose sight of attempts at church union made at the time, so the reference to Mount Athos may perhaps be seen as a propaganda move in that direction.

The author of the Illyrian Armorial would not have been able to achieve his primary objective – to exalt the Ohmućević-Grgurić family – had he limited himself to this family only. Had he done that, his work would certainly not have produced the desired effect. He therefore slipped in some ideas and beliefs that were current in the environment in which he lived and worked, thereby making his work acceptable in content and appearance to those that it was intended for. It is therefore impossible to understand the Illyrian Armorial outside the context of the time and setting of its creation because it reflected various contemporary political, cultural and religious influences.

As already mentioned, during the sixteenth century the Roman Curia, the Spanish court in Naples and Austria worked actively on fomenting an uprising of the Balkan Christians against the Ottomans. It was also a time when the memory was revived of ancient empires, of the glory of former Slavic states, of old and once famous families whose real and alleged descendants now sought to profit from the troubled times. The Illyrian Armorial was created in such an atmosphere: the Balkan Christians now could show foreigners, most notably the Spaniards and Italians, that they too had once had a large and glorious empire, and that their representatives were not simple peasants and commoners but descendants of the once illustrious "Illyrian" nobility.²²

In Aleksandar Solovjev's view, the "Illyrian" idea runs steadily throughout the activity of the Ohmućević-Grgurić family.²³ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Renaissance and Renaissance humanism in the literature, art and culture of Dubrovnik and the Dalmatian coast were in full swing, awakening interest in classical antiquity, classical sciences and values. A revived interest in history and in the study of the distribution and origin of peoples would over

²¹ Jakov Lukarević refers to Stanislav Rubčić as the writer of a life of Emperor Dušan: J. Lucari, *Copioso ristretto de gli anali di Ravsa* (Venice: Ad instantia di Antonio Lenardi, 1605), 58.

²² Solovjev, "Postanak", 106.

²³ *Ibid.*

time give rise to many a fantastic theory. Unlike the Italians, who naturally glorified ancient Rome, and the Germans, who based their pride in their ancestors on Tacitus' *Germania*, there emerged in Slavic environments theories about Illyria and the Slavs as a once glorious people who had inhabited vast territories.²⁴ Long-forgotten Greek and Roman geographic and ethnographic names came into use again. A considerable role in spreading these ideas was played by Ptolemy's atlas, for a long time the only geographic manual. Peoples living in territories of long-vanished peoples now came to be called by their names. The Frankish state was dubbed Gaul, the Hungarians came to be called Pannonians and the Italians, Ausones. By the same token, the Slav-inhabited areas of the Balkan Peninsula were dubbed Illyria and Macedonia.²⁵ As early as the mid-fifteenth century, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, future Pope Pius II, believed that *Illyricae gentes* lived to the west and north of the Albanians.²⁶ Piccolomini's work influenced a number of later writers, including Sabellicus (Marcus Antonius Coccius) for whom Bosnians were Illyrians, Bulgarians, Triballi, and Serbs, Moesi.²⁷ The belief that Illyria and Bosnia are synonymous can be found in Giovanni Musachi as well.²⁸ Many learned men of the time called the Balkan Slavs Illyrians, to mention but a Tuscan, Francesco Serdonati, for whom King Zvonimir, Sandalj Hranić and Stefan Kosača were, among others, *principi degli Illiri oggi Schiavoni*.²⁹ Mavro Orbin claimed that the tomb of *Ban* Stefan's sister Danica in Rome bore the inscription: HIC IACET DIANA ILLIRICA.³⁰

It should be noted that Byzantine writers throughout the Empire's existence had used ethnographic and geographic names and concepts which the humanists "discovered" and introduced in Roman Catholic Europe. Medieval

²⁴ M. Kombol, *Povijest hrvatske književnosti do narodnog preporoda* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1961), 79.

²⁵ A. Matkovski, *Grbovite na Makedonija* (Kumanovo: Misl, 1990), 54–56.

²⁶ "Post Albaniam Illyricae sequuntur gentes, ad occidentem septentrionemq; versae. hoc genus hominum nostra aetas Schlavos appellat, & alij Bosnenses, alij Dalmatae, alij Croacij, Istri, Carniq; non cupantur", quoted after J. Matasović, "Tri humanista o patarenima", *Godišnjak Filozofskog fakulteta u Skoplju* 1 (1930), 245.

²⁷ "Enimuero Delmatici nomini quidam, qui Sclavi sunt hodie, Illyrij qui Bosinenses, sed de Bosina alia est opinio, quae suo postea locomemorabitur. Triballi qui Bulgari, Misij qui Servij", quoted after Matasović, "Tri humanista", 238.

²⁸ G. Musachi, "Breve memoria de li discendenti de nostra casa Musachi", in *Chroniques Gréco-Romanes*, ed. Charles Hopf (Berlin: Weidmann, 1873), 312, 314: "...tutti li Rè d'Illyria, ch' oggi dicono la Bosna, le gente de quel paese chimiano il loro Rè Stefano [...] Regno de Bosna alias Illiria."

²⁹ M. Deanović, "Talijanski pisci o Hrvatima do kraja 17. vijeka", *Anali Historijskog instituta JAZU u Dubrovniku* 8–9 (1960–1961), 135.

³⁰ M. Orbini, *Il Regni de gli Slavi* (Pesaro: Apresso Girolamo Concordia, 1601), 351.

Serbian writers, such as Teodosije and Grigorije Camblak, had used them under Byzantine influence.³¹

The Roman Curia began as early as the fifteenth century to make use of the Illyrian idea as a tool in its missionary work in the Balkans. As a result, the Slavic name was gradually replaced by the Illyrian name, as shown by the case of the hospitium of St Jerome in Rome founded by Pope Nicholas V in 1453. It was established for “Dalmatians and Slavs” (*Dalmatiae et Sclavoniae nationes*), and its brotherhood was originally styled *societas hominum Sclavorum, societas Sclauorum Urbis Sancti Jeronimi de regione Campi Martis*.³² The hospitium was referred to as Slavic in documents until 1485, when it was named Illyrian for the first time. The following year Pope Innocent VIII also referred to it as Illyrian;³³ then it was called either Slavic or Illyrian until 1655, from when on only the Illyrian name was used.³⁴

The Illyrian idea, which was widespread among learned people at the time, was quite frequently intertwined with or identical to the Slavic idea. From the fifteenth century, the interest of Slavic humanists in the past and in the current situation of their peoples became part of their concerns with the origin, unity and greatness of the Slavs, whereby they competed against the pan-Romanism

³¹“Съ сынъ вѣ жоупана великааго Неманк владыкы сръбскааго, иже самодръжавно владычествовавшоу въсеми сръбьскыи землями, еже глаголют се Діоклитіа Далматіа Травоуніа, къ востоку оубв Иллірїи приближають се, къ западу же рымьсцѣи влласти прилежести” [The latter was son of the Serbian ruler grand župan Nemanja, who ruled as autokrator over all Serbian lands that are called: Dioclitia, Dalmatia, Travunia, nearing Illyria in the east, and abutting the Roman province in the west]: Teodosije [misattributed to Domentijan by the editor], *Život Svetoga Save*, ed. Djuro Daničić (Belgrade: Društvo srbske slovesnosti, 1860), 3; “царствоуошти во Константиновъ градъ тогда фроугомъ прѣемшимъ и дрѣжештимъ, царство гръцьско на двое разсѣче се, по въсемъ во Теталїи и Иллірїи въ Голоуцїѣ царствоуоштоу Θεοδοροу” [For then Constantine’s imperial city was seized and held by the Franks, and the Greek empire was cut in half because all of Thessaly and Illyria was ruled by emperor Theodore in Thessalonike]: *ibid.* 170; “вѣнць царствїа роукама възьмъ архїеренъ чьстноюю тьмо главоу вѣнчаваше, съвршєнна показавъ иллірїчьскыиъ вьсѣмъ езькыиъ цара” [Taking the imperial crown in his hands, the archbishop crowned his honourable head and presented him as the perfect emperor to all Illyrian peoples]: J. Šafarik, “Гтефана Оуроша –г- зьписано Григорикемъ мнїхомъ”, *Glasnik Društva srbske slovesnosti* 11 (1859), 65.

³² L. Jelić, “Hrvatski zavod u Rimu”, *Vjestnik Kr. Hrv.-Slav.-Dalm. Zemaljskog arkiva IV* (1902), 6–8; see F. S. I. [fra Stefano Ivančić?], *La questione di S. Girolamo dei Schiavoni in Roma in faccia alla storia e al diritto ed il breve di S.S. Leone XIII “Slavorum gentem”* (Rome: Tip. Capitolina, D. Battarelli, 1901).

³³ I. Črnčić, “Prilozi k raspravi: Imena Slovjenin i Ilir u našem gostinjcu u Rimu poslije 1453 godine”, *Starine JAZU* 18 (1886), 36, 38. The papal letters from 1181 until the time of this document of Innocent VIII make no mention of either Illyria or Illyrians. I. Črnčić, “Imena Slovjenin i Ilir u našem gostinjcu u Rimu poslije 1453 godine”, *Rad JAZU* 13 (1886), 3.

³⁴ Črnčić, “Imena Slovjenin i Ilir”, 70.

of Italian and the pan-Germanism of German humanists. It was their belief, which was particularly pronounced in Mavro Orbin, that language in a land always remains the same, with minor changes, and they therefore declared as Slavs not only the Illyrians and many other peoples but also the Roman emperors born on their side of the Adriatic.³⁵ These ideas about Slavic unity “undoubtedly were a reflection of a gradual rise of the Slavic world in the sixteenth century”.³⁶

Quite naturally, humanism in the Balkans thrived best in coastal towns. Juraj Šižgorić (Georgius Sisgoreus) of Šibenik, one of the most important Dalmatian humanists, thought of the area inhabited by the South Slavs as constituting one cultural and geographic whole. According to him, it was due to the malice of heavens, human negligence, civil wars and envy, that the Illyrians achieved little worthy of mention and gave few illustrious persons, such as the Dalmatian Gaius, who became pope and gave name to the dalmatic, or Diocletian and Jerome. For Šižgorić, his Dalmatia was the noblest province of Illyria.³⁷

The pan-Slavic idea was first articulated in 1525 by Vinko Pribojević, a native of the island of Hvar, who attributed to the Slavs a far more glorious past than they actually had and included among the Slavs many more peoples than actually belonged to them. He thought of himself as being a Dalmatian, an Illyrian and a Slav. Pribojević also believed that many great men of a distant past had been Slavs – Philip and Alexander of Macedon, Aristotle, twenty-one Roman emperors and nine popes. He claimed that the Slavs descended from the forefather of the Thracians, Tiras, son of Japheth, son of Noah. According to his theory, Tiras’ descendants used to have twelve names, and are now called by a single name, “Slavs”, which derives from the Slavic word “slava” (glory).³⁸

The Illyrian name was occasionally also used in the official documents of the Republic of Ragusa. Perhaps its commerce in the Mediterranean and the Balkans led them to conclude that their city linguistically belonged to the Slavic world in its immediate and more distant hinterland and perhaps, as a result, the humanistic movement in the Republic introduced itself, in the cultural and political sense, with the idea of the unity of that world using the Illyrian name.³⁹

³⁵ R. Samardžić, “Kraljevstvo Slovena u razvitku srpske istoriografije”, in M. Orbin, *Kraljevstvo Slovena* (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1968), CXVII–CXVIII. M. Orbin, *Il regno de gli Slavi*, 173, believed that the language spoken in Illyricum, although somewhat changed since the arrival of Goths and Slavs, had been the same as that spoken in his times.

³⁶ Samardžić, “Kraljevstvo Slovena”, CXIX–CXX.

³⁷ J. Šižgorić, “De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici a. 1487”, *Gradja za povjest kniževnosti Hrvatske* 2 (1899), 1–12.

³⁸ V. Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i zgodama Slavena* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1951), 56–61, 69–71, 74–76.

³⁹ B. Hrabak, “Tradicija o srednjovekovnoj Bosni u Dubrovniku XV i XVI veka”, in *Radovi sa simpozijuma Srednjovekovna Bosna i evropska kultura*, ed. Fikret Ibrahimpašić (Zenica: Muzej grada Zenice, 1973), 342.

Dissent within the Roman Catholic Church also played an important role in the development of the Illyrian idea. In 1561, in Urach near Tübingen, Germany, a group of Protestant refugees set up a printing press and began printing books in Glagolitic, Latin and Cyrillic scripts.⁴⁰ Their aim was to lay the foundations of an “Illyrian” language that would be understandable in all South-Slav lands. It may be said that the idea of South-Slavic cultural and political unity had never before been expressed so clearly.⁴¹ The most important representative of Protestantism in the South-Slavic area was Matija Vlačić Ilirik (1520–1575), who thought of himself as being an Illyrian and a Slav, and emphasised Illyrism which, for him, was synonymous with Slavism. According to Vlačić, the “Illyrian language” was one of the four main world languages along with Greek, Latin and German, and Illyrian and Slavic churches were one and the same.⁴²

The Reformation soon prompted the reaction of the Roman Curia. At the Council of Trent (1545–1563), the Roman Catholic Church adopted several decisions which had an impact on the areas inhabited by the South Slavs as well. The Council defined as one of its objectives not only defence against Protestantism but also the renewal and propagation of Roman Catholicism.⁴³ Pope Gregory XIII sought, in the spirit of the Council, to bolster Roman Catholicism in southern Dalmatia, particularly in Dubrovnik and Kotor (Cattaro), so that the strengthened Roman Catholic Church in Dalmatia would be able not only to prevent any further spread of Protestantism but also to spread itself towards the east through the Serbian Patriarchate of Peć that was supposed to be brought into church union with Rome.⁴⁴ In 1580 Gregory XIII established at the pilgrimage church of Sancta Casa in Loreto, south of Ancona, the Jesuit *Collegium Illyricum* for South Slavs who were to be prepared to fight Islam, Protestantism and schism.⁴⁵

The Illyrian idea was at its peak in the late sixteenth century and it was transparently expressed in the Armorial. Unlike the “Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings” which embodies the Illyrian-Bosnian idea evoking the faded

⁴⁰ F. Bučar, *Povijest hrvatske protestanske književnosti za reformacije* (Zagreb: Matica hrvatska, 1910), 73.

⁴¹ Ž. Črnja, *Kulturna historija Hrvatske: ideje, ličnosti, djela* (Zagreb: Epoha, 1964), 297.

⁴² M. Mirković, *Matija Vlačić* (Belgrade: Nolit, 1957), 22. Matija Grbić was entered on the Tübingen University roll of students in 1537 with the qualifier “Illyricus” added to his name, and by 1559, four other students were entered on the roll with this same addition to their names, cf. Dj. Köbler, “Humanist Matija Grbić”, *Rad JAZU* 145 (1901), 45, 100.

⁴³ J. Radonić, *Štamparije i škole Rimske kurije u Italiji i južnoslovenskim zemljama u XVII veku* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1949), 5.

⁴⁴ J. Radonić, *Rimska kurija i južnoslovenske zemlje XVI–XIX veka* (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka, 1950), 4.

⁴⁵ Radonić, *Štamparije i škole Rimske kurije*, 92.

grandeur of the Bosnian kingdom, successor of the Nemanjić state, the Armorial highlighted the new Illyrian-Serbian idea. It is Emperor Stefan (Dušan), rather than weak Bosnian kings, who figures there as the powerful ruler of the vanished Illyrian Empire uniting nine South-Slavic kingdoms under his sway.⁴⁶ Saint Jerome (*Patronus atque lux totius Illyriae*), who was considered to be a Slav and the creator of Glagolitic script and Illyrian literature, is shown as the patron of this invented Empire.⁴⁷ Saint Stephen is depicted as *Patronus atque dux Illyriae*, and the Mother of God as *Patrona ac Mater pyssima totius Illiriae*. The coat of arms of Illyria is shown as one of the individual arms of the South-Slavic kingdoms, but is not included into the composite arms of the Illyrian rulers. The composite coat of arms contains only the arms of those lands that were inhabited by Slavs – even though several of the noble families were of non-Slavic origin or resided outside of the territories covered by the depicted territorial coats of arms. This once again goes in favour of the already proposed view about the Slavic idea having been synonymous with the Illyrian idea. It is also observable that all surnames in the Armorial are Slavicised, i.e. they all end in *-ić*. This was done even there where the family was quite clearly Slavic, which once again speaks of the author's intention to show that the territories encompassed by the former Illyrian Empire were inhabited by one people – Illyrian, i.e. Slavic.⁴⁸

According to the Armorial, the Illyrian kingdoms, i.e. parts of the Illyrian Empire, were Macedonia, Bosnia, Dalmatia, Croatia, Slavonia, Bulgaria, Rascia, Serbia and Primorje – which is to say all South-Slavic areas of the Balkans (except those of present-day Slovenia). It may be interesting to compare this concept of the Illyrian Empire with contemporary geographic maps and written sources. Ancient Greek historians used the name Illyria for the area inhabited by Illyrian tribes, i.e. the one extending east of the Adriatic Sea between Liburnia in the north and Epirus in the south. For the Romans, Illyria was a territorial unit whose boundaries were subject to frequent change and which therefore often occupied a much larger area than the one habitually called Illyria. The reforms of

⁴⁶ Solovjev, "Prinosi", 102–103.

⁴⁷ "Hieronymum ex oppido Stridonis [...] non Italum, sed Slauum extitisse" (Pribojević, *O podrijetlu i zgodama Slavena*, 66); "Is enim, ut patrium idoma (Sabellico teste) illustratet, nova literarum elementa commentus est, quibus in sacris et prophanis rebus regionis accolae nostra tempestate utuntur" (ibid. 86); "S. Girolamo fù Slavo" (Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, 176); "La nazione Slaua ha due forti de Caratteri, quel che non hano nè Greci, nè Latini; vna fù ritrovata da Cirillo, & la chiamano Chiuriliza: dell'altra fù inventore San Girolamo, chiamata Buchuiza; & è fatta nel seguente modo" (ibid. 46).

⁴⁸ Dukadjini – Dukadjinović, Kastrioti – Kastriotić, Orsini – Ursinić, Piccolomini – Pikjelomenović, Frankopan – Frankopanović. The compiler did the same with the Kosača family name as he recast it into Kosačić. The Slavicised surnames Pikjelomenović and Ursinić were pointed to early on by G. Gelcich, *I conti di Tubelj: contributo alla storia della Marina Dalmata ne' suoi rapporti colla Spagna* (Ragusa: I. R. Scuola Nautica, 1889), 157.

Emperors Diocletian and Constantine created the prefecture of Illyricum which encompassed Noricum, Pannonia, Valeria, Savia, and almost the entire Balkans – Dalmatia, Moesia Prima, Dacia, Praevalitana, Dardania, Epirus, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaea and Crete. As we can see, the prefecture of Illyricum did not include the areas of present-day Thrace and Bulgaria (except for its eastern part with Serdica), which belonged to the prefecture of the East.⁴⁹ According to Šižgorić, in the north of Illyria was Hungary, Friulia was in the west, the Black Sea in the east, and Macedonia in the south.⁵⁰ According to Ludovik Crijević Tuberon, Illyrian peoples inhabited the area between the Dalmatian coast and the river Drava, and the Hungarians called them Croats, Slavs and Rascians.⁵¹ The perception of Illyria in this territorial extent was maintained even much later. According to an anonymous manuscript from 1790, Illyricum spread from Istria to Epirus, and was inhabited by Slavic peoples: Croats, Dalmatians, Bosnians, Serbs, Bulgarians.⁵² Of course, not everyone shared this perception. Sebastian Münster, in his *Cosmographia* (1544), included Carantania, Croatia and Slavonia into Illyricum, but did not know whether Bosnia also belonged there. According to him, Dalmatia was a special case and did not belong to Illyricum.⁵³

Bosnia holds a central place in the Armorial, although it was, on the one hand, dwarfed by Illyria, and, on the other, lost among several lands which had

⁴⁹ Procopius of Caesarea, *De bello Gothico*, ed. Guilielmi Dindorfil (Bonn: Weber, 1833), 449, refers to Sardica as a city in Illyricum.

⁵⁰ Šižgorić, *De situ Illyriae et civitate Sibenici a. 1487*, 3: “Illyria a septentrionali plaga habet hungariam: ab occasu foroium: ab ortu littus Euxinum, a meridie Macedoniam.”

⁵¹ *Lvdovici Tveronis Dalmatae abbatis Commentarii de temporibus suis* (Zagreb: Hrvatski institut za povijest, 2001), 10: “A litore Dalmatico, quod mari Adriatico abluitur, ad Drauum amnem gentes Illyricae sunt, quas Hungari partim Choruatos, partim Slauenos, ac Rhaxianos dicunt”, and, according to him, a large part of Illyricum is called Rascia: “Magna enim Illyrici pars nunc quoque Raxia appellatur” (ibid. 11).

⁵² *Dissertatio Brevis ac Sincera Hungari Auctoris de Gente Serbica perperam Rasciana dicta ejusque Meritis ac fatis in Hungaria cum Appendice Privilegiorum eidem Genti elargitorum*, 1790, 17: “Regnum enim Illyricum, quod ab Istria usque ad Epyrum, nunc Albaniam dictam, per Oram maris Adriatici se protendebat, diversae Slavonicae Nationes sibi succedentes, Croatae, Dalmatae, Bosnenses, Serbii, Bulgari, funditus everterunt, ita, ut ne nomen quidem Illyrici manserit, imo nec amplius constet, qualinam gens olim Illyra lingua usa fuerit.”

⁵³ S. Münster, *Cosmographia. Beschreibung aller Lender durch Sebastianum Münsterum: in welcher begriffen aller Voelker, Herrschaften, Stetten, und namhaftiger Flecken, herkommen: Sitten, Gebrüch, Ordnung, Glauben, Secten und Hantierung durch die gantze Welt und fürnemlich Teütscher Nation* (Basel: durch Henrichum Petri, 1544), DXLVIII: “Es seind vor zeiten zwischen dem Venediger möre und Ungerland zwo namhaftiger prouintzen oder landschafften gelegen, die man Illyricum unnd Dalmaciam hat geheissen. Aber zü unsern zeiten ist Illyria in vill landschafften zertheilt worden, nemlich in Carinthiam, das ist in Kernten, und in Coruatiam, Croatiam, zü teütsch Crain und Crabaten, item in Sclauoniam, das ist die Windisch marck. Etlich wöllen auch das Bosna oder Bossen darzü hab gehört.”

purportedly formed part of the Illyrian Empire.⁵⁴ Its position is reflected particularly well in the design of the coat of arms of the Bosnian kingdom. For the sake of reminder, the “Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings” shows the coat of arms of Illyria with the inscription: “[tit ilira stariéh bo{gnana] [the shield of the Illyrians, ancient Bosnians]. Bosnia’s coat of arms in the “Genealogy” consists of two crossed bands with negro heads surmounted by a smaller shield with a crown. Its coat of arms in the Armorial also displays two crossed bands, but there is at their crossing a small shield bearing the Illyrian coat of arms, while the shield with a crown was left out. The distinctive link between Bosnia and Illyria may also be seen in the coat of arms of the ruler of the Illyrian Empire Emperor Stefan (Dušan), which shows a female figure holding a banner with the arms of Illyria in one hand, and a shield with Bosnia’s insignia in the other. According to Stojan Novaković, the reason why Bosnia’s coat of arms contains the Illyrian arms “may be that its people was accorded the position of particular priority among those considered, under their modern-day ethnic names, to be descendants of the Illyrians”.⁵⁵ At the time of the Armorial’s creation, it was widely believed that the Bosnians descended from the Thracian people of Bessi. According to Ludovik Crijević Tuberon, Bosnians were descendants of the Thracian Bessi who, having been expelled by the Bulgarians, settled in Illyricum between the Sava, Una and Drina rivers and the Adriatic Sea.⁵⁶ Sebastian Münster shared this view, believing that the name Bessi had changed as the letter “e” had been replaced with an “o”, and so “Bessi” became “Bosi”.⁵⁷ Mavro Orbin concurred with Crijević and Münster.⁵⁸

It may be interesting to note that the arm with a sword and the crescent moon with a star above as an integral part of the Bosnian arms appeared together for the first time on the tombstone of Queen Catherine of Bosnia who died in 1478 and was buried in the church of Santa Maria in Ara Coeli in Rome. However, the insignia from this tombstone is known only from drawings whose accuracy can be reasonably doubted.⁵⁹ Namely, around 1590, during repair works

⁵⁴ Ćirković, “Dopune i objašnjenja”, 475.

⁵⁵ Novaković, “Heraldički običaji u Srba u primeni i književnosti”, 403.

⁵⁶ *Ludovici Tuberonis*, 89: “Porro Bossinates, Thracum Bossorum soboles, olim Thracia a Bulgaris pulsi eas regiones Illyrici insederunt, quae Sauo, Valdano, Drino amnibus et mari Adriatico, qua Dalmatiae pretenditur, continentur.”

⁵⁷ Münster, *Cosmografia*, DXLIX.

⁵⁸ Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, 345.

⁵⁹ Andrija Kačić-Miošić, *Razgovor ugodni naroda naroda slovinskoga* (Dubrovnik: Nakladom knjižarnice D. Pretnera, 1886), 247, believed that the crescent moon and a star was the arms of Bosnia: “Bosanska arma jest jedan štit i na njemu pò misica i jedna zvizda. U Primorju na mnogim starim grobnicam nahodi se rečena arma: sva je prilika, da su takve grobnice učinjene od bosanskih uskoka, za jednu uspomenu od svoga dočaća i gospodstva” [The Bos-

on the church, the grave slab was pulled out of the floor and built into one of the columns. On that occasion, the plaque with a Cyrillic, Serbo Slavonic inscription vanished and was replaced with one bearing a Latin inscription. When Franjo Rački visited the church in the late nineteenth century, the coat of arms on the slab was very worn-out and he was unable to discern in its centre the shield with the arm with a sabre and the crescent and a star. He therefore posed the question as to where the drawings of the intact arms had come from.⁶⁰ Aleksandar Palavestra, when he visited the church a century later, was also able to see only the outlines of the arms, the figure of the queen and the Latin inscription. What he has found indicative is the year the grave slab was moved to another place, which was the time of the flourishing of Illyrian heraldry. He therefore has not ruled out the possibility that the crescent with a star and the arm with a sword was a subsequent, late sixteenth-century interpretation by a person from the circle in which the Slavic movement and Illyrian heraldry were being created under the auspices of the Roman Curia.⁶¹

The distinctive place accorded to Bosnia is also reflected in the depiction of its patron, St Gregory (Pope St Gregory is depicted also above the border surrounding the "Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings"),⁶² and in the presence of some elements of Bosnia's arms in the depiction of the Mother of God. Based on a part of the text of the "Genealogy", Vladimir Mažuranić believed that the Mother of God, venerated in Hungary as *patrona Hungariae*, was the new

nian arms is a shield and on it a half moon and a star. In the coastal lands this arms occurs on many old gravestones: in all probability, such gravestones were made by Bosnian rebels in memory of their arrival and nobility]. According to A. Solovjev, "Simbolika srednjovekovnih spomenika u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine* 8 (1956), 35, the crescent moon and a star were probably introduced under the influence of Bosnian tombstones on which they occurred so frequently that emigrants from Bosnia might well have understood it as some sort of a national symbol. See also P. Andjelić, "Neka pitanja bosanske heraldike", *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Sarajevu* NS (A) 19 (1964), 168.

⁶⁰ F. Rački, "Stari grb bosanski", *Rad JAZU* 101 (1890), 155–157. A transcription of the original Cyrillic inscription is preserved in the work of the Italian calligrapher Giovanni Battista Palatino published in Rome in 1547.

⁶¹ Palavestra, "Komentari", 266; A. Palavestra, "O nadgrobnoj ploči kraljice Katarine", *Ilirski grbovnici*, 48–49.

⁶² In 1461, Pope Pius II confirmed St Gregory as the patron saint of Bosnia, cf. P. F. Nedić, *Monumenta privilegiorum, concessionum, gratiarum et favorum provinciae Bosnae Argentinae* (Vukovar: Typographia Ernesti Jančik, 1886), 111. See also A. Soloviev, "Saint Grégoire, patron de Bosna", *Byzantion* 19 (1949), 263–279. Solovjev, "Postanak", 96, suggested that the depiction of St Gregory in the Armorial might be understood as an allusion to Pope Gregory XIII who had reformed the calendar, and restored the Illyrian College of St Jerome in Rome and the monastic order of St Basil.

patroness of Bosnia.⁶³ Having been made king of Bosnia by the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus in 1471, Nicholas of Ilok (Nikola Iločki) began to strike the coins with the image of the Mother of God and the inscription *Patrona Regni*.⁶⁴

Bosnia's central place in the Armorial is also reflected in the fact that most of the historically attested families came originally from it. Particularly prominent is the ruling Kotromanić dynasty whose coat of arms comes first among the family arms. What adds to the impression of the importance attached to this family is the fact that it is immediately followed by the Nemanjićs – the ruling dynasty of the Illyrian Empire, as well as the fact that the arms of both families contain the same symbol, a lion. The role of the Bosnian royal family is also visible in the composite arms of the Illyrian rulers where only the coats of arms of the Nemanjićs and the Kotromanićs are shown. The importance of the Kotromanićs is further stressed by the fact that the coats of arms of their family branches, the Tvrtkovićs and the Hristićs, hold the fourth and the seventh place respectively among the family arms.

The Nemanjićs – Emperors Stefan (Dušan) and Uroš, the rulers of the Illyrian Empire, were also given a special place in the Armorial.⁶⁵ It was not by accident that the author chose members of this Serbian family as rulers of the invented Empire. As we have seen, Hrelja, the purported ancestor of Petar Ohmućević, was in the service of Emperor Dušan who, according to a forged charter of 1349, granted him several towns. The imperial title of the last two rulers of the Nemanjić dynasty must have inspired admiration and respect even at the time of the Armorial's creation. The fact should not be overlooked either that Emperor Dušan maintained friendly relations with Dubrovnik, Petar Ohmućević's place of origin, and that during his reign Serbian-Ragusan cooperation was a major factor of Dubrovnik's prosperity.

Ragusan sources quite frequently link the Nemanjićs with Bosnia and refer to them as its rulers. This is also observable in the "Genealogy of the Serbian

⁶³ V. Mažuranić, *Dodatci uz Prinose za Hrvatski pravno-povijestni rječnik* (Zagreb: JAZU, 1923), 27–28.

⁶⁴ I. Rengjeo, "Novci bosanskih banova i kraljeva", *Glasnik Hrvatskog državnog muzeja u Sarajevu* 55 (1943), 289–291.

⁶⁵ A reworked version of Dušan's Law Code done in the late seventeenth century or the first quarter of the eighteenth says: "Благочыстываго и христолюбиваго, македонскаго цара Стефана сръбскаго, болгар'скаго, оугар'скаго, дальмат'скаго, арванаскаго, оугровлахінскаго, и инимъ многимъ прѣделомъ и землямъ самодръжца" [The pious and Christ-loving Macedonian emperor Stefan, autokrator of Serbian, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Dalmatian, Albanian, Hungaro-Wallachian and many other provinces and lands] (*Zakonik cara Stefana Dušana*, vol. III: *Baranjski, Prizrenski, Šišatovački, Rakovački, Ravanički i Sofijski rukopis*), eds. Mitar Pešikan, Irena Grickat-Radulović and Miodrag Jovičić (Belgrade: Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, 1997), 359–360, 406). Solovjev, "Postanak", 106, linked this version to the Illyrian and Slavic movement and saw in the title of Emperor Dušan "a symbol of the desired unity of all Balkan Christians".

and Bosnian Kings”, which is considered to have been one of the main sources for the Armorial and which makes mention of “all the Nemanjić kings of Bosnia”.⁶⁶ What must have also led to such interpretations was a very blurry understanding of the past, which is obvious in Ragusan historiography. Among other things, it is reflected in “Bosnianness”, i.e. a tradition about the medieval Bosnian state which considerably contradicts historical fact.⁶⁷ For an anonymous writer, Emperor Dušan was the king of Bosnia, Nikola Altomanović was a Bosnian magnate, and the 1389 Battle of Kosovo was fought between the Bosnians and the Turks.⁶⁸ Ludovik Crijević Tuberon wrote that Stefan Nemanjić (Dušan) had commanded Bosnians in Illyricum.⁶⁹ For Nikola Ranjina too, the Nemanjićs were the rulers of Bosnia, and Vojislav Vojinović and Nikola Altomanović were Bosnians.⁷⁰ The Nemanjićs were considered the rulers of Bosnia by Serafino Razzi too.⁷¹ For Jakov Lukarević, Desa – whom he considered an ancestor of the Nemanjićs, was “pro nepote di Stefano Prete della Chiesa di Tuchegl Città di Bosna”.⁷² In the early eighteenth century, Junije Rastić wrote that members of Nemanja’s house had ruled over all of Illyricum.⁷³

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting ideas put forth by the Armorial is the placing of a distinctly Christian Orthodox family at the head of an imaginary Catholic empire. There is in the entire activity relating to Illyrian heraldry a visible intention to present the Nemanjićs as Roman Catholic. The same may be said of the “Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings”, where the images of the first archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church, St Sava, emphasised by a white mitre lit with rays of light, and of Archbishop Sava

⁶⁶ Pucić, “Zur südslavischen Heraldik I”, 341; Novaković, “Heraldički običaji u Srba”, 386.

⁶⁷ Hrabak, *Tradicija o srednjevekovnoj Bosni*, 339–354.

⁶⁸ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. S. Nodilo (Zagreb: JAZU, 1883), 40, 41, 48: “Fu morto Re Stiepan de Bosna adi 18 decembre in suo paese di Bosna” [...] “Nicola Zupan, signoretto de Bosna” [...] “Adi 15 giugno, in giorno di S.to Vido, et fo martedì, fu battaglia tra Bosnesi et Gran Turco, li quali Bosnesi furono Despot Lazar Re de Bosna.”

⁶⁹ *Lvdovici Tvberonis*, 95: “Stephanus Nemagna, Bossinatibus in Illyrico ad temporis imperans.”

⁷⁰ *Annales Ragusini Anonymi*, 218, 223, 225, 233f: “Nemagna re di Rascia, o vero di Bosna” [...] “Urosio re di Rascia e di Bosna” [...] “Imperator Stefano di Bosna” [...] “la guera fra li Ragusei et Bosnesi, delli quali era el guida Voisav Voinovich” [...] “Et etiam loro morseno per mano di Nicolò, zupan Bosnese.”

⁷¹ S. Razzi, *La storia di Ragusa scritta nuovamente in tre libri* (Ragusa: Editria Tipografia Serbo-Ragusea, A. Pasarić, 1903), 29, 67–68: “Stefano Nemagna, Principe de Bossinati” [...] “Stefano Rè di Bossina.”

⁷² J. Luccari, *Copioso ristretto de gli anali di Ravsa*, 20.

⁷³ *Chronica Ragusina Junii Restii (ab origine urbis usque ad annum 1451) item Joannis Gundulae (1451/1484)*, ed. S. Nodilo (Zagreb: JAZU, 1893), 51: “Casa di Nemagna, che signoreggiò tutto l’Illirico.”

II, shown in a red cardinal cap, reveal the intention to present the Nemanjić archbishops, and through them the entire dynasty, as good Roman Catholics.⁷⁴ The Roman Catholic orthodoxy of the Armorial, and thus of the rulers of the Illyrian Empire, was ensured by the four opening pictures. The same motive was behind the inclusion in the Armorial of the coat of arms of the Pičkelominovićs (leaf CXXXI), in fact the Italian Piccolomini family.⁷⁵ The author did that in order to be able to fit the Nemanjićs into a picture which had to be acceptable both to the user of the Armorial and to the Spanish court in Naples in the service of which he was. In this, he might have relied on some details from the history of this dynasty which suggested their “positive” attitude towards Roman Catholicism.

An important element for understanding the ideology of the Armorial is also the depiction of the unnamed ruler kneeling before St Stephen and receiving with his both hands the cross with a banner showing the Crucifixion. Aleksandar Solovjev was content to note, without further elaboration, that it is King Stefan kneeling before St Stephen, and pointed to the similarity of the depiction to the abovementioned painting from the monastery of Sutjeska⁷⁶ which shows King Stefan Tomaš kneeling before Christ – tradition has it that it shows his conversion from Bogomilism to Roman Catholicism.⁷⁷ Ivo Banac identified the ruler as Stefan Nemanjić but misidentified the saint as St Demetrius.⁷⁸ There is no doubt that the depicted ruler is Emperor Stefan Nemanjić (Dušan), whose coat of arms is placed at the beginning of the Armorial. St Stephen was the patron saint of the Nemanjić dynasty and his cult played an important role in medieval Serbia.⁷⁹ The Bosnian kings based their claim to the crown on their kinship ties with the Nemanjićs and, in emulation of them, assumed the royal

⁷⁴ Solovjev, “Prinosi”, 102.

⁷⁵ The Piccolomini family is included in the Illyrian Armorial because of the role that Enea Silvio Piccolomini, Pope Pius II, played during the last few years of the existence of the medieval Bosnian state, his effort to organise a crusade against the Turks, his reputation in the Roman Catholic Church, and the circumstances of the Armorial’s creation; cf. S. Rudić, “Porodica Pičkelomenović i Ilirski grbovnik”, *Istorijski časopis* 47 (2000), 77–87.

⁷⁶ Solovjev, “Postanak”, 96.

⁷⁷ The painting from the monastery of Sutjeska dates from the mid-fifteenth century. The identity of the depicted ruler was a matter of some controversy. The view that it is Stefan Tomaš was held by Martin Nedić, according to R. Drljić, *Prvi ilir Bosne fra Martin Nedić 1810–1895* (Sarajevo: Trgovačka štampa, 1940), 111, fn. 22; F. Rački, “Stari grb bosanski”, 136, and V. Mažuranić, *Dodatci uz prinose*, 21. Stojan Novaković, “Heraldički običaji u Srba”, 384, believed the ruler to be King Tvrtko, while Vjekoslav Klaić, *Povijest Hrvata*, II-3 (Zagreb: Kugli, 1904, 37), identified him as King Stefan Tomašević.

⁷⁸ Banac, *Grbovi – biljezi identiteta*, 150.

⁷⁹ S. Marjanović-Dušanić, *Vladarska ideologija Nemanjića* (Belgrade: SKZ; Sveti arhijerejski sinod SPC; Clio, 1997), 42–59.

name of Stefan.⁸⁰ It is quite clear therefore that St Stephen figures in the Armorial as the patron saint of not only the Nemanjićs but also of the rulers of Bosnia. This becomes obvious also from the inscription in the “Genealogy of the Serbian and Bosnian Kings” which says that all the crowned Nemanjić kings of Bosnia assumed the name Stefan (Stipan) like the Ptolemies of Egypt had used to.⁸¹

What emerges from all this is a quite interesting picture – once heretical Bosnia serving as a link connecting Stefan Dušan’s “schismatic” empire with the Roman Catholic world of the compiler and users of the Armorial.⁸² Yet, the concept of a thus conceived Roman Catholic empire was not contradicted only by the fact that its core was made up of Orthodox rulers and magnates but also by the inclusion of adherents of the “Bosnian Church”, and especially of Muslim families, some of which either ranked high in the hierarchy of the sixteenth-century Ottoman state or were important on the local, Bosnian, level. In that way the author of the Armorial highlighted the unity of the Illyrian people which he put above religious affiliations. In glorifying this people, he consciously stepped out of his imaginary Roman Catholic circle and embraced the Illyrians (Slavs) of the other two faiths, and even placed an Christian Orthodox dynasty at the head of the imaginary Illyrian Empire. Given the circumstances of the Armorial’s creation, the question may be posed as to whether it was simply the product of a humanistically educated author who consciously chose to disregard the religious dimension, or it should perhaps be looked at in the context of the then current plans for a church union and a crusade.

The idea of Roman Catholicism threaded through the Armorial was its author’s key idea. He was not motivated only by his own religious beliefs but also by the awareness that the Armorial would not otherwise be able to achieve the purpose for which it was made in the first place. The other two great ideas, Illyrism and Slavism, had to be subjugated to it, which, after all, should not have been difficult because the Roman Curia had already been exploiting them in its activity.

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⁸⁰ S. M. Ćirković, “The Double Wreath: A Contribution to the History of Kingship in Bosnia”, *Balkanica* XLV (2014), 122–123; R. Mihaljčić, “Odjek titularnog imena Nemanjića”, *Vladarske titule oblasnih gospodara*, vol. VI of *Sabrana dela* (Belgrade: Srpska školska knjiga; Knowledge, 2001), 205–239.

⁸¹ Pucić, “Zur südslavischen Heraldik I”, 341; Novaković, “Heraldički običaji u Srba”, 386. Pius II commented: “Sicut Romani quondam suos principes, vel Caesares, ves Augustos vocauerunt, Aegyptij, vel Pharaones, vel Ptolemaeos: ita & Bosnenses suos reges apellauerunt Stephanos”, quoted after Matasović, “Tri humanista”, 246. This interpretation was also adopted by Orbini, *Il regno de gli Slavi*, 369: “Percioche, si come peril passato il Romani chiamavano i loro Principi Cesari, o vero Augusti, e gli Egitij Faraoni, ò Tolomei; cosili Bosnesi (dice Gioanni Gabellino ne’ Commentarj di Pio 2. al 3. lib) chiamavano i loro Rè Stefani.”

⁸² Ćirković, “Dopune i objašnjenja”, 475–476.

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