

***Regnum Albaniae, the Papal Curia,
and the Western Visions of a Borderline Nobility***

by

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List of abbreviations

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| ASPN | = | <i>Archivio storico per le province napoletane</i> |
| ASV | = | <i>Archivio Segreto Vaticano</i> |
| BAV | = | <i>Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana</i> |
| Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex. | = | <i>Camera Apostolica, Introitus et Exitus</i> |
| HC | = | <i>Hierarchia Catholica</i> |
| HDA | = | <i>Hrvastki Državni Arhiv, Zagreb</i> |
| HDAD | = | <i>Hrvatski Državni Arhiv, Dubrovnik</i> |
| HAZU | = | <i>Hrvatska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti, Zagreb</i> |
| Reg. Aven. | = | <i>Registra Avenionensia</i> |
| Reg. Suppl. | = | <i>Registra Supplicationum</i> |
| Reg. Vat. | = | <i>Registra Vaticana</i> |
| C. | = | <i>Codex Iuris Canonici</i> |
| ep. | = | <i>epistola</i> |
| fol. | = | <i>folio</i> |

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Introduction

During the fourteenth century, the spread of Catholicism reached its peak in the Southwestern Balkans, particularly in the area lying within the borders of present-day Albania. If we bear in mind that Albania sat on the borderline between the Eastern and Western Churches, a frontier *par excellence*, that the majority of its territories had been Byzantine and that the Eastern rite was practiced there until the late thirteenth century, the spread of Catholicism in Albania should not be considered self-evident. The reasons it began to flourish in the Southwestern Balkans have not yet been articulated clearly.

The zenith of Catholicism in the Southwestern Balkans overlaps with the “physical” existence of the *Regnum Albaniae*, a political structure created in the seventies of the thirteenth century. This overlapping should not be treated as a coincidence. The success of Catholicism in the Albanian territories in the fourteenth century, visible through the foundation of new bishoprics, the conversion of Orthodox sees into Catholic ones, and the creation of Catholic nobility cannot be attributable only to the religious zeal of the Monastic and Mendicant Orders. In this study, I consider the success of Catholicism in this region to be the result of two driving forces, which met in the *Regnum Albaniae*. On the one hand, the Papal Curia wanted to implement its oriental politics towards the Southwestern Balkans through the *Regnum Albaniae*. On the other hand, the local nobility considered it a means to connect with western power centers and tried to personalize it through their conversion to Catholicism.

The *Regnum Albaniae*, created by a secular favourite of the Roman Curia, Charles I of Anjou, represented western political views in the Western Balkans. Through papal recognition and support, this political entity managed to provide an identity for the local nobility, who strove

for international recognition. During the époque of the Byzantine Empire, the local nobility of the Southwestern Balkans drew their self-identity from their attachment to this power center, which they considered the central authority. After the sack of Constantinople in 1204, when numerous political powers, such as the Latin Empire, the Despotate of Epiros, the Bulgarian Empire, the Serbian Empire, the Hungarian Kingdom, the Republic of Ragusa etc. emerged or were strengthened in the region, the self-identity of the local nobility underwent a crisis, something reflected in the various titles they received and continued to accumulate from different political powers. In the first half of the fourteenth century, however, the local nobility considered the Holy See to be the central authority and the *Regnum Albaniae* as a means to attach themselves to this power center. This study will try to shed light on the reasons leading to a shift in world views of the local nobility, namely from the local and eastern power centers to the western ones and especially to the Holy See as the new main source of power.

The notion of the *Regnum Albaniae* was difficult to grasp even at that time because it existed on paper but was not fully realized on the ground in the fourteenth century. The local nobles tried to personalize this phantome *Regnum Albaniae*, which had received the recognition of the Holy See. Through it they aimed to align themselves with the western powers led by the Roman Curia. Thus, the local nobles converted to Catholicism and through their conversion they enabled it to flourish for a century in the Southwestern Balkans. This study will shed light on how the Roman Curia used the *Regnum Albaniae*, and especially the western outlook of the local nobility, to create an outpost of Catholicism on the periphery of Latin Christianity in the Southwestern Balkans.

Concepts, sources and methodology

The concept Albanian bears different meanings in different historical periods. To avoid ambiguities, in this study, I use the term Albanian as it is associated with the *Regnum Albaniae*, that is, either as an attribute of the *Regnum Albaniae* or as a representative of this political structure. I deliberately avoided the ethnic meaning of this term, and also any discussion of ethnicity, because ethnicity in itself has no bearing on the *Regnum Albaniae* as a political structure or for the Holy See, as can be observed in its correspondence with the representatives of the *Regnum Albaniae*. From time to time, Albanian appears also in its conventional meaning, that is as associated with the present day political Albania, but in these cases, the context will facilitate its clear meaning.

My basic source materials for this study are the papal letters sent to the clergy and rulers of the *Regnum Albaniae* and its surrounding territories. Since a full corpus of papal correspondence with the medieval Albanian territories is not yet available, this work is heavily based on archival research in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* and in the *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*. I mainly concentrated on two holdings of the ASV and systematically searched in the *Registra Vaticana* and the *Registra Avenionensia*, of the Avignon popes (1305-1378). These registers contain letters sent from the papal chancery. The *Registra Avenionensia* chiefly contains the minutes or drafts of bulls and letters sent out by the papal chancery at Avignon between 1316 and 1418. The *Registra Vaticana* contains copies of papal bulls and letters. As such, it is one of the largest series in the Vatican archives. During the Avignon period, the text of letters was taken from the *Registra Avenionensis* copy rather than directly from the original letter.

I also researched other holdings in the Secret Archives of Vatican City. *Archivum Arcis* contains records of papal privileges, deeds to land, and related documents of royal and imperial

relations with the papacy, including royal letters, and privileges diplomata of emperors. The collection also contains acts of homage to popes, authentications of councils by bishops, and lists of bishops, as well as original incoming letters to the various departments of the Curia, transcripts of very early documents, now lost, papal bulls, and some cameral material. *Obligationes et Solutiones* contain the different financial transactions between the Curia and Catholic bishops or archbishops. It is roughly in chronological order, with each volume in sequence according to the type of transaction. This series is now in the *Fondo camerale* along with the other ones, *Introitus et exitus* and *Collectoriae*. This registry system of payments on the obligation and solutions was inaugurated in the fourteenth century. These *obligationes*, *solutiones* and *quittantia* had to be properly settled by a new appointee before he could receive his bulls of appointment. *Instrumenta Miscellanea* and *Armadi* contain letters from individuals from all around the Catholic world to the Papal Curia. The letters sent to the Roman Curia were unfortunately not systematically registered in the Papal Chancellery until the late fifteenth century so they can only be found sporadically here and there in the *Instrumenta Miscellanea* or the *Armadi*. In addition, these corpuses suffered great losses during their transport from the Lateran to Paris by Napoleon. Notes on the existence of some of the lost documents may be found in old indices such as the *Schedario Garampi*, *Schedario Montroy*, and so on, which are also located in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano*.

Many papal letters may also be found, however, published in various compilations of Roman Curial sources. The most important of these are the *Registres et Lettres des Papes du XIVe siècle*, a series of papal letters edited and published by the *Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*.¹ This series offers the richest published corpus of papal letters,

¹ *Clément V, Lettres communes des papes d'Avignon*, ed. J. M. Vidal, R. Fawtier, Y. Lanhers and Guillaume Mollat; 1948-1957, 2 fascicules.

especially from the Avignon period. The indexes are quite reliable, but the texts are sometimes only referred to in summary form. Another very important series is also that of the *Pontificia commissio ad redigendum codicem iuris canonici orientalis* edited by Aloysius Taūtu²

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- Jean XXII (1316-1334). Lettres communes*, ed. Guillaume Mollat; 1921-1947, un fascicule d'introduction et 16 tomes en 31 fascicules (fascicules 19, 21/2, 23 épuisés);
- Jean XXII (1316-1334). Lettres secrètes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. A. Coulon and S. Clémencet, 1906-1972, 10 fascicules publiés, 4 tomes en 10 fascicules;
- Benoît XII (1334-1342), Lettres closes et patentes intéressant les pays autres que la France*, 1913.
- Benoît XII (1334-1342). Lettres communes analysées d'après les registres dits d'Avignon et du Vatican. Lettres communes des papes d'Avignon*, ed. J.-M. Vidal, 1903-1911, 3 tomes en 6 fascicules (fascicule 5 épuisé).
- Benoît XII (1334-1342). Lettres closes et patentes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. G. Daumet, 1899-1920, 1 tome en 3 fascicules.
- Benoît XII (1334-1342). Lettres closes et patentes intéressant les pays autres que la France*, ed. J.-M. Vidal and Mollat, 1913-1950, 2 tomes en 6 fascicules.
- Clément VI (1342-1352), Lettres secrètes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. E. Déprez, J. Glénisson, and Guillaume Mollat; 1910-1961, 6 fascicules.
- Clément VI (1342-1352), Lettres secrètes et curiales intéressant les pays autres que la France*, ed. E. Déprez and Guillaume Mollat, 1960-1961, 3 fascicules.
- Clément VI (1342-1352), Lettres closes, patentes et curiales, intéressant les pays autres que la France*, ed. E. Déprez and Guillaume Mollat;
- Innocent VI (1352-1362), Lettres secrètes et curiales*, ed. P. Gasnault and M. H. Laurent; 1959-1975, 4 tomes en 4 fascicules.
- Innocent VI (1352-1362), Lettres closes, patentes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. E. Déprez. *Urbain V (1362-1370), Lettres secrètes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. P. Lecacheux and Guillaume Mollat, 1902-1955, 4 fascicules (fascicules 2 épuisé).
- Urbain V (1362-1370), Lettres communes, analysées d'après les registres dits d'Avignon et du Vatican*, ed. Membres de l'école française de Rome sous la direction de Pierre Gasnault, M.-H. Laurent, A.-M. Hayez, 1954-1989, 12 tomes en 18 fascicules et 9 vols.
- Urbain V (1362-1370), Lettres Communes analysées d'après les registres dits d'Avignon et du Vatican*, par Anne-Marie Hayez, Janine Mathieu, et Marie-France Yvan, 12 vol., 1980-1989.
- Grégoire XI (1370-1378), Lettres secrètes et curiales se rapportant à la France*, ed. L. Mirot, H. Jassemmin, J. Vielliard and Guillaume Mollat; 1935-1957, 5 fascicules.
- Grégoire XI (1370-1378), Lettres secrètes et curiales intéressant les pays autres que la France*, ed. Guillaume Mollat; 1962-1965, 3 fascicules.
- Grégoire XI (1370-1378), Lettres communes*, ed. Anne-Marie Hayez, Janine Mathieu and Marie-France Yvan, 1992-1993.

² Aloysius L. Taūtu and Ferdinandus M. Delorme, eds. *Acta Romanorum pontificum ab Innocentio V ad Benedictum XI (1276-1304)* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1961);

Aloysius L. Taūtu, ed. *Acta Clementis PP. V (1303-1314) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1955);

Idem, ed. *Acta Joannis XXII (1317-1334) e registris vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1952).

Idem, ed. *Acta Benedicti XII (1334-1342) e regestris vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1958);

Idem, ed. *Acta Clementis PP. VI (1342-1352) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1960);

Idem, ed. *Acta Innocentii PP. VI (1352-1362) e regestis Vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1961);

Idem ed. *Acta Urbani PP. V: (1362-1370) e regestis vaticanis aliisque fontibus* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, 1964);

Idem, ed. *Acta Gregorii PP. XI (1370-1378) e regestis Vaticanis aliisque fontibus collegit notisque* (Rome: Typis

Other primary sources, which help to better understand the local situation, were compiled and published by Ludwig Thallóczy, Konstandin Jireček, and Milan von Šufflay at the beginning of the last century.³ These volumes comprise many other different documents, besides the papal ones. However, the greatest number of papal documents come from a period around the eleventh and twelfth centuries. They offer rich information on papal policy towards this medieval region in the Balkans, especially its northern territories. Over the course of time, however, such documents in these volumes begin to be scarcer and shorter, ultimately only appearing as *regesta*. Many other documents, especially those concerning the Anjou dominion in the Southwestern Balkans are well represented, although from time to time again simply as *regesta*. Among other important compilations I also frequently consulted those of Parrino,⁴ Farlati,⁵ Theiner⁶ as well as numerous other compilations consulted less often.

Besides the papal letters, I also made use of various itinerary descriptions and other treaties written in the fourteenth century including the *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*.⁷ Such sources highlight the religious and political situation in the area better and are less formal than the papal letters. These sources, thus, contribute more details to complement the papal

Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, 1966);

Idem, ed. *Acta Urbani PP. VI (1378-1389) Bonifacii PP. IX (1389-1404) e registris Vaticanis et Lateranensibus aliisque fontibus collegit notisque* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, 1970);

Idem, ed. *Acta pseudopontificum Clementis VII (1378-1394), Benedicti XIII (1394-1417), Alexandri V (1409-1410) et Johannes XXII (1406-1415), e registris Avenionensibus, Vaticanis, Lateranensibus et supplicationum aliisque subsidiis* (Rome: Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregoriana, 1971);

³ *Acta et Diplomata res Albaniae Mediae Aetatis Illustrantia* (3 vols), ed. Ludwig Thallóczy, Konstandin Jireček and Milan von Šufflay (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1913-1918) [henceforth: *Acta Albaniae*].

⁴ Ignatius Parrino, ed. *Res Albaniae saeculorum XIV et XV atque cruciatam spectantia*, vol. I (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1971).

⁵ Daniele Farlati and Jacopo Coleti, *Illyrici Sacri*, 9 vols. (Venice: Apud Sebastianum Coleti, 1751-1920) [henceforth: Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum*].

⁶ Augustin Theiner, ed. *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, vol. 1 (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1859; reprint Osnabrück, 1968) [henceforth: *Monumenta Hungariae*]. idem, ed., *Vetera monumenta Slavorum Meridionalium Historiam Illustrantia*, vol. I: 1198-1549 (Rome: Typis Vaticanis, 1863) [henceforth: *Monumenta Slavorum*].

⁷ Robert Elsie, “Anonymous: Initiative for Making the Passage,” in <http://www.albanianhistory.net/texts/AH1332.html> (accessed 16 June, 2008) [henceforth: Elsie, “Anonymous: Initiative”].

source material. For this reason, and also for the identification of religious houses in the aforementioned period, I also made use of archaeological reports and studies, as well as monument descriptions of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century scholars who traveled through the Balkans.

In order to better understand the bulk of the papal letters, filled as they are with formulae of the time, and to apply this understanding to highlight local developments, I consulted the secondary literature in a number of different fields. From a general point of view, this literature can be divided into studies that concern local territories, namely those of the western Balkans, and studies concerning research on the Roman Chancellery and papal politics towards the East.

The leading authority used in this research for understanding the *Regnum Albaniae* has been Alain Ducellier, with his voluminous study *La façade maritime de L’Albanie au Moyen Âge, Durazzo et Valona du XI^e au XV^e siècle*,⁸ which remains the best study carried out on Durrës, Vlora and the maritime face of Albania throughout the Middle Ages. The strength of his work relies mainly on the activity and the impact of foreign elements in maritime Albania. Ducellier’s conclusions about *Regnum Albaniae*, which he studied in detail, is that this political construction was the biggest failure in ‘Albanian’ medieval history. Here I will reassess the role of the *Regnum Albaniae*, especially in terms of the international recognition received by this part of the Balkans in the fourteenth century and its importance for the people of this region in its aftermath as a political ideal.

The condensed study of Milan von Šufflay,⁹ “Die Kirchenzustände im vortürkischen Albanien: Die orthodoxe Durchbruchzone im katholischen Damme,”¹⁰ concerns the religious

⁸ Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1981 [henceforth: Ducellier, *La façade maritime*].

⁹ On the contribution of Milan von Šufflay see Lazar Dodić, “Der Beitrag Milan Šufflays zur Albanischen Geschichtsforschung,” *Beiträge zur Kenntnis Südosteuropas und des Nahen Orients* 8 (1969): 47-67 and also Musa

situation in the fourteenth century in the Western Balkans and, as such, is still unsurpassed. In his article, Šufflay provided an overview of the religious system in the Southwestern part of the Balkans in the Middle ages and suggested avenues for further studies.

In my research, I will apply comparative methods from a chronological point of view, as well as a topical and toponym point of view. First, I will deal with the surviving source evidence and try to show the most important preconditions and basis for fourteenth-century developments and trends in the Southwestern Balkans. I will particularly concentrate on mentions of the *Regnum Albaniae* and its political role in the region in my source material.

Secondly, I intend to analyze the source material from different angles, both universal and local ones. The topic may be considered from the point of view of the Roman Curia in order to access the universal plans of the Holy See and its methods of outreach and establishment of power centers in the Western Balkans. However, another point of departure for this study will be a ‘local’ one concerning regional identity and the perception of Catholicism as a means of identification with and affinity to the Holy See.

The structure of this study derives from the methodology. In its first phase, the *Regnum Albaniae* was presented as a phenomenon which flourished and operated independently from the Roman Curia. Nevertheless, it had a strong impact as a foreign and Catholic dominion in the Western Balkans.

After explaining the background to the creation of the *Regnum Albaniae* and its geographical and geo-ecclesiastical position among other power centres in the region, I move to the methods that the Papal Curia applied to establish a power base in the region. The Curia laid

Ahmeti and Darko Sagrak, eds., *Dr. Milan pl. Šufflay-Izabrani eseji, rasprave i članci* (Dr. Milan von Šufflay – Essays, studies and selected articles), 2 vols. (Zagreb: Nakladnik, Darko Sagrak, 1999, 2000).

¹⁰ In *Illyrisch-albanische Forschungen*, ed. Ludwig Thallóczy, vol. 1 (Munich and Leipzig: Verlag von Duncken and Humlot, 1916): 188-282 [henceforth: Šufflay, “Die Kirchenzustände”].

emphasis on its formal representation in the region through its elections of high church officials and its contacts with local rulers through whom it could exercise its authority. In this way, I intend to examine the important context of papal policy and visions towards this region, local identities and the existence, idea and manipulation of this idea of *Regnum Albaniae* among the local nobility.

I. *Regnum Albaniae* as a political structure (1267-1373)

The existence of the *Regnum Albaniae* has been thoroughly studied by Albanian¹¹ and Western historians.¹² The general attitude is that *Regnum Albaniae* was an Anjou invention in the Albanian territories having little or almost no impact for the Albanians themselves. As such, *Regnum Albaniae* was studied only as an isolated political structure in the Albanian territories and its interaction with the locals was seen in a negative light and simplified into a relation between occupiers and occupied.

At first glance, it seems that there is no need for any further study on this political structure, because everything is documented and so well described that any more analysis seems to be a repetition. Such an opinion was almost unbreakable in Albania at the moment when I

¹¹ The most important Albanian scholar in this area is Pëllumb Xhufi with his studies on *Dilemat e Arbërit (Një studim mbi Shqipërinë e shek. XI-XVI)* (The dilemmas of Medieval Albania: A study on the eleventh-sixteenth-century Albania), (Tirana: Pegi, 2006) [henceforth: Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit*]; “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve (1267-1285)” (Les Albanais face aux Anjous de Naples), *Studime Historike* (1987): 199-222 [henceforth: Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve”]; “Vështrim mbi popullsinë e qyteteve bregdetare shqiptare në shek. XII-XV” (An overview of the populace of the Albanian coastal cities in the 12th-15th centuries), *Studime Historike* 4 (1982): 147-156.

¹² The most authoritative historian of medieval Albania, especially of the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* is Alain Ducellier with his aforesaid voluminous study *La façade maritime* and also with *L’Albanie entre Byzance et Venise, Xe-XVe siècles* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987) [henceforth: Ducellier, *L’Albanie*]. Another important scholar was Gennaro Maria Monti, with his studies “La dominazione napoletana in Albania. Carlo I d’Angiò, primo re degli Albanesi”, *Rivista d’Albania* (1940): 50-58 [henceforth: Monti “La dominazione”]; *Nuovi Studi Angioini* (Trani: Vecchi e C., 1937); *Da Carlo I a Roberto di Angiò: Ricerche e documenti* (Trani: Vecchi e C., 1936) [henceforth: Monti, *Da Carlo I*]; “Ricerche sul dominio angioino in Albania IV: Una leggendaria principessa angioina moglie di un dinasta Albanese,” *Studi Albanesi* 5-6 (1935-1936): 1-32 [henceforth: Monti, “Ricerche”]; *Les Anjous de Naples: Les Anjous de Naples dans les études du dernier demi-siècle* (Blois, 1934); “Studi di storia Angioina,” *Rivista Storica* 1 (1932): 1-25; “Studi di storia Angioina. Roberto di Angiò e la crisi del regno di Sicilia,” *Rivista Storica* 3 (1931): 1-24; “Una Storia Italiana dei Tartari e dei loro rapporti con l’Europa Cristiana,” *L’Europa Orientale* 5-6 (1931): 1-14; “Due documenti sconosciuti sull’Albania di Alfonso I0 di Aragona.” *Studi Albanesi* 1 (1931): 1-10; *Mezzogiorno d’Italia nel medioevo: Studi Storici* (Bari: Laterza, 1930) [henceforth: Monti, *Mezzogiorno*]. Recent constructive contributions gives us David Abulafia, specifically with his “The Aragonese Kingdom of Albania: an Anjou Project of 1311-1316” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 10 (= Intercultural Contacts in the Medieval Mediterranean. Studies in Honour of D. Jacoby) (1995): 1-13 [henceforth: Abulafia, “Aragonese Kingdom of Albania”], and more generally with “Charles of Anjou reassessed,” *Journal of Medieval History* 26, no. 1 (March 2000): 93-114 [henceforth: Abulafia, “Charles of Anjou reassessed”]; See also his work *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms, 1200-1500: The Struggle for Dominion* (London: Longman, 1997) [henceforth: Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*]; idem, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean 1100-1400* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987) [henceforth: Abulafia, *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean*]; idem, “Genoa and the Security of the Seas: the Mission of Babilano Lomellino in 1350,” *Papers of the British School at Rome* (1977): 272-279.

began to be interested in the *Regnum Albaniae* from the pontifical point of view. The first results from my archival research in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* about the relations between the *Regnum Albaniae* and the Holy See already served as a starting point for the revision of the *Regnum Albaniae* from another perspective.

I.1. The emergence of the *Regnum Albaniae*

The term *Regnum Albaniae* appeared for the first time in the chancellery of the Anjous in 1267,¹³ in the Treaty of Viterbo between Charles I of Anjou, the exiled Latin Emperor of Byzantium, Baldwin II (1261-1273), and the prince of Achaia, William II of Villehardouin (1246-1278), to attack the Balkans.¹⁴ Rewarded with Sicily in 1265 by Pope Clement IV (1195-1268), King Charles I of Anjou had become the leader of a papal crusade, in the course of which he first defeated Manfred Hohenstaufen in 1266, and then Conradin in 1268.¹⁵ The Treaty of Viterbo, which took place on 27 May 1267 in the palace of Pope Clement IV at Viterbo, became the cornerstone of Anjou hostility towards the Paleologoi in the following decades and the legitimate basis bringing the *Regnum Albaniae* into existence.

According to the treaty, Charles would provide 2000 men of cavalry to fight for one year for Baldwin in *Romania*; in exchange the king would be given one third of the conquered territory, besides suzerainty over Achaia.¹⁶ Charles I of Anjou saw himself as the successor and

¹³ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 253: ... ita quod etiam in terra memorati despoti ac in regnis Albanie et Servie liceat nobis nostrisque in regno Sicilie heredibus, si voluerimus, huiusmodi tertiam partem eligere aut etiam obtinere.

¹⁴ Giuseppe Del Giudice, *Codice Diplomatico di Carlo I e II dal 1265 al 1309* (Naples, 1869), 36-37; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 103, n. 5.

¹⁵ Bernard Schimmelpfennig, *The Papacy*, tr. James Sievert (N. Y.: Columbia University Press, 1992), 174.

¹⁶ For more about the conditions see Deno John Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael Palaiologos and the West (1258-1282): A Study in Byzantine-Latin Relations* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 197-200 [henceforth: Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*]; Xhufi, "Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve," 205. Donald M. Nicol makes us aware of two treaties, signed on 24 and 27 May 1267; see his *The Despotate of Epiros 1267-1479: A Contribution to the History of Greece in the Middle Ages* (London et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 12, n. 11 [henceforth: Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*]. The text of the treaty is published by Jean Longnon and Charles

inheritor of Manfred Hohenstaufen, who had received many Albanian territories as a dowry from his wife Helen, the daughter of the despot of Epiros.¹⁷ Thus, Charles acquired from Baldwin II what he saw as legitimate title to the land between Corfu and Durrës, and he immediately installed an official in Corfu. He also obtained the mainland.¹⁸ In February 1272, Charles I proclaimed *de jure* the creation of the *Regnum Albaniae*,¹⁹ with himself as its legitimate king.²⁰

Charles I of Anjou, “the greatest ruler in Europe, king of Sicily, Albania and Jerusalem, count of Provence, Forcalquier, Anjou, Maine, and Tonnerre, overlord of Tunis, sometime Senator of Rome”²¹ had projected the *Regnum Albaniae* as a base for his crusade to recover Constantinople from the Greeks²² and for the creation of a wholly oriental²³ and a more restricted Adriatic-based²⁴ empire to be attained step by step through a number of similar campaigns.²⁵ Durrës was thought to be “*la tête de point*,”²⁶ the main basis of Charles I for his expeditions

Perrat, *Actes relatives à la principauté de Morée 1289-1300* (Paris: Bibliothèque Nationale, 1967), 207-211. Cf. Jean Longnon, *L'Empire Latin de Constantinople et la principauté de Morée* (Paris: Payot, 1949), 236-237.

¹⁷ Donald Nicol elaborates this issue in his study *The Despotate of Epiros*, 11, note 13. David Abulafia argues that Charles of Anjou considered himself as an inheritor of Manfred Hohenstaufen also in other aspects of his rulership, which would partly determine his failure during the Sicilian Vespers. Abulafia, “Charles of Anjou reassessed.”

¹⁸ Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou: Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe* (London and New York: Longman, 1998), 90 [henceforth: Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou*].

¹⁹ 21 February 1272: see *Acta Albaniae*¹ no. 268.

²⁰ Ducellier stated that neither the exact date, nor the precise form of Charles' election is known to us. That is why he considered this election not as a real one, but as a decision taken by the *communitas* of Durrës. Cf. Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 238.

²¹ Abulafia, “Charles of Anjou reassessed,” 94.

²² Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 12.

²³ Edouard Jordan considered the oriental politics of the Great Anjou as the biggest mistake in his career. See *L'Allemagne et l'Italie aux XIIIe et XIIIe siècles* (Paris, 1939), 354, whereas Monti praised him for this. See Monti “La dominazione.” Ducellier named these attitudes *polémiques stériles* and argued on the track of Léonard, that it was the geographical conditions which dictated the oriental policy of the south-Italian rulers, among others also Charles I of Anjou, to capture the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea. See Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 231 and also Émile G. Léonard, *Les Anjous de Naples* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 103.

²⁴ Abulafia, “Aragonese Kingdom of Albania,” 3.

²⁵ For more with regard to his oriental policy see Silvano Borsari, “La politica bizantina di Carlo I d'Angiò dal 1266 al 1271,” *Archivio storico per le province napoletane* 74 (1955), 319-348; George Yver, *Le commerce et les marchands dans l'Italie méridionale au XIIIe et au XIVe siècle* (Paris: Librairie des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 1903), 9-23 [henceforth: Yver, *Le Commerce*]; Monti, *Da Carlo I*; Laetitia Boehm, “*De Karlingis imperator Karolus, princeps et monarcha totius Europae*. Zur Orientalpolitik Karls I. von Anjou,” *Historisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* LXXXVIII (1968): 1-35; Peter Herde, *Karl I. von Anjou*. (Berlin et al.: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1979); Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 189-228.

²⁶ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 231.

against Constantinople²⁷ Besides that, Albania, like Sardinia and Tunis, was worth acquiring because control of its waters would enable Charles to create a *cordon sanitaire* around his kingdom.²⁸

Concerning its geographic position, the Southwestern Balkans had always represented important transitional crossroads for eastern and western power centers, with the many rivers and open valleys leading into the heart of the Balkans and further on to Constantinople.²⁹ Xhufi counts thirty-two different powers that “visited” these territories in the period from eleventh to fourteenth century, among whom the most important were the Sicilian Normans, the German Hohenstaufen, the French Anjou, the Spanish Aragonese of Naples, Nicaean Empire, the Byzantine emperors, Bulgarian Empire, the Serbs, the Venetians etc.³⁰ Creating and establishing a kingdom in these territories, Charles I raised a stronghold in these crossroads. This kingdom stronghold was, in my opinion, initially meant to be the heart of his Byzantine and Mediterranean Empire.

²⁷ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 16.

²⁸ Abulafia, *The Western Mediterranean Kingdoms*, 63.

²⁹ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, IX.

³⁰ Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit*, VIII.



Map. 1: Geographical map of the Balkans. Out of: Denis P Hupchick and Harold E. Cox, *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of the Balkans*, (N.Y.: Palgrave, 2001).

The idea of creating such a *regnum* seems not only to have been born out of the ambitions of Charles I of Anjou, but it also found a good ground in the strong desire of the local nobility for

more independence. Starting from the twelfth century, the local nobility had become more self-confident and more independent from the centralized Byzantine authority. The reasons for such an opposition against the Byzantine authority was generally analysed by the historian Lucien Stiernon who emphasized the geographical situation of the Epirots, who favored feelings of freedom and independence.³¹ These feelings found their expression most notably in the period of weakness of the Byzantine Empire following the death of Manuel Comnenos.

In the Despotate of Epiros, the local nobles were irritated by the rule of Manfred Hohenstaufen's representative Philip Chinardo, and that is why they did not want to be absorbed by them. In order to avoid the risk of dispossession by the Serbian rulers, a fraction of the local nobility revolted and submitted to Charles.³² According to an Anjou document, the local "bishops, counts, barons, soldiers and citizens" were those who were immediately elected and accepted Charles I of Anjou as their king.³³ Ducellier interprets this fact as the expression of a desire for independence by the citizens of Durrës: "Les Albanais de Durazzo, en mettant Charles d'Anjou à la tête de ce royaume d'Albanie, entendaient, tout en s'assurant de leur autonomie théorique, ne pas renoncer à la forme oligarchique qui régissait leur cité-Etat et ses environs."³⁴

Concerning the name given to this new kingdom, Xhufi suggests that Charles I may have thought to present the *Regnum Albaniae* as a natural descendant of the *Principatum Albaniae*,³⁵ and thus legitimize its creation. The *Principatum Albaniae* appears in the historical sources at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century.³⁶ It had its stronghold in the fortress of Kruja, which looked over the coastal plain with its back firmly against the wall of mountains.

³¹ Lucien Stiernon, "Les origines du despotat d'Épire," *Revue des Etudes Byzantines* XVII (1959): 90-126 (see in particular 90) [henceforth: Stiernon, "Les origines"]

³² Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou*, 90.

³³ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 268. See also Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 15; Monti, *Mezzogiorno*, 80.

³⁴ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 263.

³⁵ Xhufi, "Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve," 204.

³⁶ 28 February 2008: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133.

According to the Albanian scholar Kristo Frashëri, it had also started to extend its borders to the north and south.³⁷ Unfortunately, there is only a very limited and fragmented source material which sheds light on this principality and its rulers Progon (1190-1198), Gin (1198-1208) and Demetrius (1207-1216). Xhufi points out that the *principatum* came into existence as an attempt of local nobles for independence from Byzantium.³⁸ In 1207, presumably because the Byzantine Empire could no longer defend it after the sack of Constantinople, a chieftain named Demetrius took over Kruja and began to carry out what was in effect a tentative foreign policy for a small sovereign state in the making. He married a daughter of Stephan Nemanja, the Great Zupan of Rascia, who at the same time was also granddaughter of the Byzantine Emperor Alexios III Angelos.³⁹ From this marriage he gained the title *panhypersevastos* and much prestige in the Balkan royal courts. Latin sources of the time attribute him with the titles *judex* and *princeps Arbanorum*, while Byzantine records refer to him as *megas archon*. Along with Michael of Epiros, he signed treaties with Ragusa, allowing its citizens free access to their territories.

The desire for independence of the local nobility of the *Principatum Albaniae*, as represented by Demetrius, found its best expression in his tentative acceptance of Catholicism. On the one hand, Catholicism was a different religion from that of his neighboring powers. Although Demetrius described himself with eastern titles such as *panhypersevastos* and great archon, which show his alignment with the political powers influential in the region, Demetrius was evidently aware of the danger of political and cultural assimilation, if he retained the Orthodox religion of his two neighbors: the Greeks and Serbs. For this reason, he opted for the Latin rite, which was different from the Byzantine ones. On the other hand, he wanted to secure

³⁷ See Kristo Frashëri, “Trojet e shqiptarëve në shek. XV” (The territories of the Albanians during the 15th century,” in *Studime për Epokën e Skenderbeut* (Tirana 1989), 11 [henceforth: Frashëri, “Trojet e shqiptarëve”]

³⁸ Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,” 204.

³⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 147: ... *Gini filii Progoni, Comnenam, domini Stephani, magni Serbie zupani filiam, viduam vero Demetrii, fratris dicti Gini, in uxorem recepisse.*

papal help against the claims of the Venetian Republic on his territory. The Albanian territories had been ascribed to the Venetian Republic after the fall of the Byzantine Empire⁴⁰ and, at first, the Venetian Republic had taken over Durrës where it created the Venetian Duchy of Durrës⁴¹ and the isle of Corfu in the name of the new Latin empire, but Venice quickly assumed direct control over them and tried to extend her rule over other towns and strategic points on the coastline of Albania and north western Greece.

For these reasons, in 1208, Demetrius, *Princeps Arbanensi*,⁴² asked Pope Innocent III to send a legate to his court to instruct him in the Roman Catholic faith.⁴³ Pope Innocent III was happy to be given such an opportunity and immediately confirmed Nicolaus, the archdeacon of the Latins in Durrës, as a *legatus a latere* to instruct him in the matters of the Latin rite.⁴⁴ Shortly after that, however, the Archbishop of Durrës died and when the Venetian governor seized the church revenues and estates in and around the town, Demetrius and his Greek ally did the same in the surrounding countryside. For this reason, he was excommunicated by the Holy See.⁴⁵

The problems of the *Principatum Albaniae* with Catholicism, however, were not that simple. Demetrius had considered the Roman Curia to be a protector against the Venetian Republic and other western forces, but when he managed to dominate the king of Zeta, Georgius, who had threatened him,⁴⁶ he considered himself strong enough not to need the intervention of the Roman Curia any longer, thus interrupting the process of Catholicization for himself and his

⁴⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 129, 130.

⁴¹ About the Venetian Duchy of Durrës see Ducellier, “Le Duché Vénitien de Durazzo”, in *La façade maritime*, 121-159.

⁴² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133:

⁴³ 28 February 1208: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133: *Innocentius III papa nobili viro Demetrio Arbanensi principi, qui per litteras suas legatum a sede apostolica se in fidei puritate eruditurum postulabat.*

⁴⁴ *Ibidem.*

⁴⁵ 16 August 1208: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 135: *Innocenti III papa ... mandat, ut Demetrium iudicem Albanorum a pontifice quasdam possessiones cum fructibus ex illis perceptis quaerulanti (Manfredo) archiepiscopo Duraciensi restituere iussum, si mandata neglexerit adimplere, per censuram apostolicam ad restitutionem bonorum cogant.*

⁴⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 134: *si Demetrius se non converterit ad domini ducis fidelitatem et voluerit eum dominus dux offendere.*

people. This whole “adventure” with the Roman Curia, therefore, lasted only some months: February 1208 – August 1209.⁴⁷ With the death of Demetrius the *Principatum Albaniae* stopped being mentioned in historical sources.

Concerning the nature of the *Regnum Albaniae*, the Albanian medievalist Pëllumb Xhufi argued that Charles I Anjou had no historically legitimate basis for presenting the *Regnum Albaniae* as a descendent of the *Principatum Albaniae*, since the two political structures did not represent any sort of continuation either in the purpose for which they had come into being, nor in their function or in the way they were received by the locals.⁴⁸ The *Principatum Albaniae* was a local creation and aimed at independence from Byzantium, whereas the *Regnum Albaniae* was an Anjou creation and its function was the recapture of Constantinople, and establishment of an Anjou Empire in the Mediterranean area. The *Principatum Albaniae* intended to unify local political forces whereas the Anjous developed the *Regnum Albaniae* as an armed base for their campaigns in the East so that local nobles were hostile to it. That is why, seen from this viewpoint, Xhufi calls the *Regnum Albaniae* an Anjou invention.⁴⁹

I.2. The zenith of the *Regnum Albaniae*

Having created the *Regnum Albaniae* as a basis for his campaign to recover Constantinople from the Greeks⁵⁰ and to create an oriental empire,⁵¹ the peak of power of the *Regnum Albaniae* came immediately after its proclamation. Charles invested all his energies to

⁴⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133-135.

⁴⁸ Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,”²⁰⁴.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁰ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 12.

⁵¹ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 231.

make it into a true fortress and military base: a “structure politique artificielle ... régime d’occupation militaire, tout y a été fait par la guerre et pour la guerre”.⁵²

Also from the territorial point of view, the extension of the *Regnum Albaniae* reached its zenith immediately after the proclamation of the kingdom. As a successor of Manfred Hohenstaufen, Charles possessed the dowry of Helen, Manfred’s wife, as well as the territories that Manfred had occupied. The territories included in the dowry of Helen had been subject of much discussion. According to Sanudo,⁵³ the original dowry of Helen, brought to Manfred in 1259, consisted of Durazzo,⁵⁴ Valona and Corfu which, at last, he gave to his admiral, Philip Chinardo. Nevertheless, it is known that by February 1258, Manfred was already in possession of Durazzo, Berat, Valona and the mountains of Spinaritza.⁵⁵ Domenico Forges-Davanzati was of the opinion that Helen’s dowry consisted only of the coastline between Valona and Butrinti while Corfu and Kanina were in the possession of Chinardo, not Manfred.⁵⁶ Del Giudice defined the dowry as Corfu and all the adjacent mainland of Epiros, including Vlora, Kanina, Himara, Sopot, and Butrint.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, whatever the dowry of Helen was, according to studies by the well-known historian of the Anjou Dynasty, Francesco Carabellese, the territories of the *Regnum Albaniae* presented by Charles I of Anjou in February 1272 extended from the mountains of Accroceraunt (from Vlora) in the south to the mouth of the river Drini (to Lezha) in the north,

⁵² Ibidem, 262.

⁵³ Marino Sanudo Torsello, “Istoria del Regno di Romania,” in *Chroniques gréco-romanes inédites ou peu connues*, ed. Charles Hopf (Berlin: Weidmann, 1873, repr. Brussel: Culture et Civilization, 1966), 107.

⁵⁴ Capital of the theme of Illyria, also called the key of the Empire towards the Occident; see Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la domination Normande en Italie*, vol. I (Paris: Picard, 1907), 258-9.

⁵⁵ Franc Miklosich and J. Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca medii aevi sacra et profana* III (Vienna: Gerold, 1865), 239-42 [henceforth: Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca*]; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 246.

⁵⁶ Domenico Forges-Davanzati in his *Dissertazione sulla seconda moglie del Re Manfredi e su’loro figliuolo* (Naples, 1791), 38-41.

⁵⁷ Del Giudice, *ASPN*, III (1878), 19, and IV (1879), 92-3, See *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 245.

with undetermined borders in the hinterland.⁵⁸ He also acquired the castles of Butrint and Sopot from the Despot Nikephoros Ducas of Epiros, who had become a vassal of Charles.⁵⁹

The borders of the *Regnum Albaniae* in the hinterland remained undefined for a variety of reasons. One of the main reasons was certainly the aim of the Anjous to extend their kingdom to the east. Proclaiming himself king of a fraction of the Balkan territories, although this section was very small, Charles wanted to legitimize his suzerainty over the peninsula in advance and, if possible, over the whole Byzantine Empire.⁶⁰ Another reason were those local nobles, who, threatened by Serbian invasions, wanted to have their territories included in the *Regnum Albaniae* in order to enjoy the promised protection of the Anjou dynasty. Such nobles included Pal Gropa and Gjin Muzaka, who controlled territories on the northeastern and eastern borders of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

The “privilege” extended by Charles I to Pal Gropa on May 18, 1273 signalled one of the most important moments in Albanian-Anjou relations in this early period. According to this privilege, Pal Gropa had to be content with control of some villages to the north of Ohrid (*Casalia Radicis maioris et Radicis minoris nec non Cobochetes, Zuadigoriza, Sirclani et Craye, Zessizan sitam in valle de Ebu*),⁶¹ which were of little value (*nec excedunt valorem annum*

⁵⁸ Francesco Carabellese, *Carlo d'Angiò nei rapporti politici e commerciali con Venezia e l'Oriente: Documenti e Monografie* (Bari: Tip. ed. Vecchi, 1911), 45 [henceforth: Carabellese, *Carlo d'Angiò*]. Cf. also Monti, “Ricerche,” 1-22; idem, *Mezzogiorno*, 80-81.

⁵⁹ Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)*, vol. I (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1976), 130-1 (henceforth: Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*).

⁶⁰ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 262.

⁶¹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 300. Theodor Ippen suggests that these territories are to be found in the valley created by the joint of the rivers Okshtuni and Bulqiza, which lies up to the Gryka e Vogël. See Theodor Ippen, “Mbretëri e Shqipërisë 1267-1373” [The Kingdom of Albania] in *Ditura* 12 (December 1928), 376 [henceforth: Ippen, “Mbretëri e Shqipërisë”]. Xhufi thinks that Cobochetes should be located in Klobçisht and Zessizan in the Zepisht. See Pëllumb Xhufi, “Zotërimi i Gropajve në Dibër në shek. XIII-XV” (The possessions of Gropaj in Diber in the 13th and 15th centuries), in *Dibra dhe etnokultura e saj*, vol. 1 (Dibër, 1995), 101.

quadrigentorum yperperorum)⁶² and did not impinge on the immediate interests of the Anjou nor those of the Serbs, or those of the Greeks,⁶³ showing in this way a great sense of diplomacy.

With regard to the internal functioning of the *Regnum Albaniae*, it is important to state that it was a kingdom, *un royaume distinct de royaume de Naples*,⁶⁴ that not only had the status of a kingdom, but also its own structure and organs of government. The whole governmental *apparatus* was mainly located in its capital Durrës. The most important office was that of captain general who was a kind of viceroy.⁶⁵ Under the command of the *capitaneus et vicarius generalis*, the army was commanded by the *marescallus in partibus Albaniae*.⁶⁶ The *thesaurius* of Albania played the role of the general receiver of royal resources, and especially the incomes from salt, which was an essential resource for the kingdom. The *prothontius*, the commander of the port of Durrës⁶⁷, the “capitaine de la flotte d’Albanie”⁶⁸, and other offices were subordinated. These functions show a well organized military-oriented political structure. Throughout the years 1272 and 1273, a series of documents originating from the kingdom of Naples contains evidence for the construction of a huge accumulation of arms, provisions and money in Albania, especially in Durrës and Vlora.⁶⁹

⁶² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 300.

⁶³ *Ibidem: dummodo non sint de pertinentiis regni nostri Albanie, neque regni Servie, nec terrarum datarum in dotem per quondam Michaelem despotum quondam Elene filie sue uxori quondam Manfredi olim principis Tarantini.*

⁶⁴ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 262.

⁶⁵ Gazzo Chinardo was the first who enjoyed this title from 1272. He was in fact *capitaneus et vicarius generalis in regno Albaniae*, (Carabellese, *Carlo d’Angiò*, 55); successors of Gazzo Chinardo, like Anselme de Chau (May 1273), Narjot de Toucy (1274), Guillaume Bernard (23 September 1275), Jean Vaubecourt (15 September 1277), Jean Scotto (May 1279), Hugues de Sully le Rousseau (1281), and Guillaume Bernard (1283), Gui de Charpigny (1294), Ponzard de Tournay (1294), Simon de Mercey (1296), Guillaume de Grosseteste (1298), Geoffroy de Port (1299), Rinieri de Montefuscolo (1301) would more and more become governors of Durrës and less and less representatives of the king for whole Albania. See Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 264.

⁶⁶ The first one was probably Guillaume Bernard, who later became general captain. He was succeeded by Philip d’Artulla (Ervilla) and then by Geoffroy de Polisy, who for some months was replaced by Jacques de Campagnol, due to his sickness. After the 1280s, there are no more marescals mentioned. Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 265.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 267.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 268.

⁶⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 273, 275, 287, 288, 291, 295, 297, 304; Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 256-7; Ducellier, *Albanie*, 241; Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 16;



Map 2: Archeological sites in Albania. Out of: Zhaneta Andrea, "Archaeology in Albania 1984-1990," *Archaeological Reports* 38 (1991 - 1992): 72.

I. 3. The decline and end of the *Regnum Albaniae*

The gradual fall of the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* started with the Sicilian Vespers (30 March 1282).⁷⁰ The Byzantine Emperor Andronikos II (1282-1328) occupied the Adriatic coast up to Vlora and Pojani (close to Apollonia) and some Ragusans trading in these territories not only complained against Byzantine officers, but also against the more northerly Albanian noble Matarango family: *qui sunt sub dominio domini imperatoris*.⁷¹ According to some contemporary testimonies by Manuel Philes and Marino Sanudo Torsello, the Byzantines even took over Durrës.⁷² Around 1295, after the Serbian attacks on Byzantine Albania, the Neapolitan domination only controlled Butrint and its surroundings. Durrës had also fallen into the hands of the Serbs. According to Ducellier, it remained under Serbian rulership until the year 1304.⁷³

The rising malcontent of the Albanian nobility was also another push against the Anjou regime in Albania. The promises given to the local nobles were never kept, probably for the same reasons the inhabitants of Sicily were neglected, namely the imperial concerns of Charles I that directed him to Byzantine, Levantine, African, North Italian and Provençal affairs.⁷⁴ The political aspirations of the local nobility were not only ignored, but often punished. Some noblemen were imprisoned or kept hostage in order to ensure their loyalty.⁷⁵ Many were also excluded from the *Regnum*, pushing them to become main supporting forces of an anti-Anjou movement in Albania. This anti-Charles faction became stronger as other noble families joined it. Charles called them

⁷⁰ See Setton, "The Sicilian Vespers and a Century of Anjou Decline (1282-1383)", in *The Papacy and the Levant*, 140-162.

⁷¹ November 1297: Document cited by Constantin Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, vol. I (Gotha: Friedrich Andreas Perthes A.-G. 1911), 338 [henceforth: Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*].

⁷² Concerning the fall of Vlora and Durrës under the Byzantine invasion during the years 1284-1286 see the letter of Marino Sanudo from 10 April 1330, published by F. Kunstmann, "Studien über Marino Sanudo den Aelteren mit einem Anhang seiner ungedruckten Briefe," *Abhandlungen der historischen Klasse der kgl. Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften VII* (1855): 697-819; and specifically pp. 755-789, no. 2.

⁷³ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 32.

⁷⁴ Abulafia, "Charles of Anjou reassessed," 94.

proditores nostros.⁷⁶ This situation as well as other aspects of a harsh regime such as heavy taxes imposed on the local population etc.,⁷⁷ created hostility to the regime.⁷⁸

Although now a kind of phantom,⁷⁹ the *Regnum Albaniae* and Anjou domination continued for a considerable period of time after the death of Charles I. The *Regnum* was inherited from Charles I by his son Charles II (1254-1309).⁸⁰ In August 1294, Charles II created an Anjou “Secundogenitur.”⁸¹ He gave *in pheudum* to his fourth son, Philip of Taranto (1294-1331), not only direct rule over the islands of Corfu and Butrinti, the Principality of Acaia and *Regnum Albaniae*,⁸² but also the rights over the Franks in Greece and all claims to the Latin Empire.⁸³ Kiesewetter recognized a grandiose project of Charles II in these privileges, namely the foundation of a substantial dominion on both sides of the Ionian Sea, which would be kept *in pheudum* by the Kingdom of Naples.⁸⁴ This project of political reorganization of the Anjou dominion over the Balkans was finalized with the marriage of his son, Philip I of Taranto, with Thamar Duca Comnena, the daughter of Nikephoros, despot of Epiros, in December 1294. He could not, however, immediately exercise control over these territories, nor make use of his rights, partly because of Greek opposition, and partly because of the war of the Vespers, which reached its peak in 1293. In 1299, Philip of Taranto was taken prisoner by the Sicilians. After

⁷⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 279, 333, 354; Konstantin Jireček, “Albanien in der Vergangenheit,” In *Illyrisch-Albanische Forschungen*, vol. I (Munich and Leipzig, 1916), 72 [henceforth: Jireček, “Albanien in der Vergangenheit”]; Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,” 213; Monti, *Mezzogiorno*, 82; Yver, *Le Commerce*, 12.

⁷⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 396; Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,” 213

⁷⁷ Abulafia argues that this was a policy started by Manfred of Hohenstaufen, and inherited and continued by Charles I of Anjou. See Abulafia, “Charles of Anjou reassessed,” 94.

⁷⁸ Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,” 213.

⁷⁹ Andreas Kiesewetter, “I principi di Taranto e la Grecia (1294-1373/83,” *Archivio Storico Pugliese* 54, no. 1-4 (Gennaio-Dicembre 2001): 53-100, see especially 69 [henceforth: Kiesewetter, “I principi”].

⁸⁰ About Charles II Anjou and his time, see Andreas Kiesewetter, *Die Anfänge der Regierung König Karls II. von Anjou (1278-1295): das Königreich Neapel, die Grafschaft Provence und der Mittelmeerraum zu Ausgang des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Historische Studien, vol. 451 (Husum: Matthiesen, 1999).

⁸¹ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 338.

⁸² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 523.

⁸³ Kiesewetter, “I principi,” 68.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 69.

being released in 1302, he immediately claimed his rights, and since he did not manage to reconcile peacefully with the Greeks in 1304, he led an armed offensive to conquer the Despotate of Epiros in July 1306.⁸⁵

The attitude of the Albanian nobles towards Philip of Taranto and towards the *Regnum Albaniae* again became friendly at the end of the thirteenth century, mainly due to the Serbian threat. In the nineties the Serbian king, Stefan Uroš II Milutin, arrived at the frontier at Mat-Ohrid and occupied territories in the northeast of the *Regnum Albaniae*. Since the Serbs successfully continued to take possession in the southwest of the region (by 1296 they had even taken Durrës),⁸⁶ the local nobles saw obeying the Anjous as a positive thing in order to enjoy their assistance in the neutralization of the tensions with these aggressive neighbors.

The voluntary submission of the community of Durrës and the local nobles to Philip of Taranto was realized in September 1304.⁸⁷ Together with his father, Charles II, *dominus genitor noster Jerusalem et Sicilie Rex illuster*⁸⁸ Philip of Taranto, who referred to himself as *illustris Jerusalem et Sicilie Regis filius princeps Taranti despotus*⁸⁹, confirmed all the old privileges that Charles had promised to the citizens of Durrës and the nobles. Kaznec *Blenisci* was not only confirmed in his old privileges, but was also nominated *comes honoris* so that he might be considered illustrious (*ut inter alios regni Albaniae nobiles fungaris et refulgeas*) among the other nobles of the *Regnum Albaniae*.⁹⁰ Furthermore, in 1305, Charles II gave other economic privileges to the Adriatic city.⁹¹

⁸⁵ Ibidem, 65.

⁸⁶ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 329.

⁸⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 561-569.

⁸⁸ Ibidem.

⁸⁹ Ibidem.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, no. 565.

⁹¹ 27 and 28 September 1305: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 575-576; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 330.

The confirmation of their old privileges had a significant importance for the power consolidation of the local nobles as lords over their possessions. Charles II recognized the previous nobles as such even in the *Regnum Albaniae*, and this meant a continuation of local powers, which led to their strengthening. According to the Byzantine laws, the *pronoia*, which was granted only for the lifetime of the recipient, and could be neither alienated nor enfeoffed, subinfeudation being nonexistent in Byzantium⁹² could not be inherited, unless there was a personal connection with the Byzantine emperor. According to the Western feudal laws, which the Anjous brought with themselves, the possessions were inheritable automatically, and the feudal lord was free to rule in its territory as he wished. The local nobles that recognized the *Regnum Albaniae* and became part of it, could enjoy the status of the western feudals, and could pass their possessions in heritage to their successors. On these grounds, they were better motivated to consolidate their power on their lands, and also to acquire new possessions. The extension of their territories became the main aim of the local nobles in the fourteenth century, and the extension of their possessions determined their power and strength.

Deducing information from the *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*⁹³ about the extension of the second Tarantine *Regnum Albaniae*, Ducellier concluded that the *Regnum Albaniae*, as such, based in Durrës neither did extend beyond the hills of Rodoni in the north nor beyond the region of Kavaja in the south.⁹⁴ When it came to the implementation of a real rule in Durrës and in the *Regnum Albaniae*, the Anjous again started to be considered as an enemy by the local nobility, who acted in full independence and wanted to continue like this. These contradictions between the Albanians and the Anjou were one of the reasons for the attempt by

⁹² David Jacoby, "The Encounter of Two Societies: Western Conquerors and Byzantines in the Peloponnesus after the Fourth Crusade," *The American Historical Review* 78, no. 4 (1973), 878.

⁹³ Translated by Robert Elsie, "Albania in the 'Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis' (1308 A.D.)," *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 26/1 (1990): 24-29.

⁹⁴ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 331.

the Anjous in 1311 to exchange the *Regnum Albaniae* for Sicily, which at that time was under possession of Frederic of Aragon.⁹⁵ The latter did not accept the Anjou offer, although he knew that *il dit regne es molt noble e rich*.⁹⁶

In 1319, Philip I of Taranto transferred all his rights over *Regnum Albaniae* and also over Epiros, including the title *Despotus Romaniae*, to his son, Philip II, probably because of conflicts with his younger brother, John of Gravina. When Philip of Taranto died in 1333,⁹⁷ the *Regnum Albaniae* was taken by his brother, John of Gravina (alias Jean de Durazzo) (1294-1336), who was also Prince of Morea. His son, Charles de Durazzo (1323-1348), who received the *Regnum* in 1336, was decapitated in Aversa in 1348 by his cousin Louis the Great, king of Hungary (1326-1382; king of Hungary 1342-1382), who was not recognized as king of *Regnum Albaniae* either. This may be seen in attempts in the year 1338 by the Anjou Robert, king of Sicily to regain the title of king of Albania.⁹⁸ These attempts seem to have been successful since his cousin, Philip II, inherited the *Regnum Albaniae* from him and might have become famous for his campaign against the Serbs if he had not died in 1372 before the campaign started. With his death he put an end to Anjou rule as to the *Regnum Albaniae*.⁹⁹

After 1372, the *Regnum Albaniae* became a kind of dream for the Albanian nobles. After the death of its last Anjou ruler, the power of the *Regnum Albaniae* fell into the hands of the Albanian chieftain of Thopia and with the transfer of power, a new phase in the history of the *Regnum Albaniae* began. There are scholars, such as Georges Christos Soulis, who are of the opinion that such a local *Regnum Albaniae* appeared for the first time after the death of the

⁹⁵ This project was launched by the Anjous on April 28, 1311. About the other reasons which have to do with the universal politics of the Anjou and Aragonese dynasties see Abulafia, "The Aragonese Kingdom of Albania," 1-13.

⁹⁶ 5 March 1312: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 602.

⁹⁷ Charles du Fresne Du Cange, *Histoire de l'Empire de Constantinople sous les Empereurs François, diuisee en deux Parties* (Paris: de l'Imprimerie Royale, 1657), 261-262.

⁹⁸ *Burime të zgjedhura për Historinë e Shqipërisë* (Selected Sources about the History of Albania), vol. 2 (Tirana, 1962), doc. nr. 69.

Serbian Emperor, Stephen Dušan, in 1355.¹⁰⁰ This kingdom was ruled by the most powerful and significant member of the Thopia clan, Charles Thopia, from 1359 to 1388. His headquarters were apparently located in Kruja, which he had conquered in 1363. In 1363, Charles Thopia also occupied Durrës, taking it from the Anjous.¹⁰¹ In his policy Charles Thopia, actually the son of an Anjou mother, was supported by the Venetian and the Ragusan Republics, as well as by the Albanian nobility. In 1379, Charles Thopia appears for the third time as ruler of Durrës, but on this occasion merely as a vassal of the French pretender Louis I (d. 1384) and his young son Louis II.

The Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* survived for one hundred and seven years.¹⁰² In 1393, control of it was definitively taken by a member of the local nobility until it was given to the Venetians.¹⁰³ Venice no longer used the terms *Regnum Albaniae* or *dominus Regni Albaniae*. However, although the *Regnum Albaniae* had ceased to exist as a physical entity, it continued as an idea even in later periods. In this context, to deal with the question of whether there was still a *Regnum Albaniae* or not the metaphor of the king's two bodies, used by Erich Kantorowicz¹⁰⁴ can be helpful. This metaphor was in fact used by lawyers in order to deal with the phenomenon that the kingdom continued to exist even after its king died. The *Regnum Albaniae* also continued to exist without a king, at least as an idea. Still, even in the sixteenth century and later, we come across the term “*Regnum Albaniae*”, although physically it had not existed for a long time.¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Ippen, “Mbretëri e Shqipërisë,” 377.

¹⁰⁰ Idem, “Contributions à l’histoire de l’Albanie du XIII^e au XV^e siècle, 1204-1444,” *Albanie* 4 (1932): 28-35.

¹⁰¹ Athanase Gegaj, *L’Albanie et l’invasion turque au XV^e siècle* (Paris, Louvain: Bureaux du recueil bibliothèque de l’université, 1937), 10 [henceforth: Gegaj, *L’Albanie et l’invasion turque*].

¹⁰² Ippen, “Mbretëri e Shqipërisë,” 377.

¹⁰³ *Acta Albaniae* II, no. 502.

¹⁰⁴ *The King’s Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997).

¹⁰⁵ There are many works from the late fifteenth century onwards, which without putting into question the existence of the *Regnum Albaniae*, name Scanderbeg king of Albania, who never called himself *rex Albaniae*. This attribution can be found in 16th-century literature and it still continues today. Cf. Marinus Barletius, *Chronica del esforçado Principe y Capitan Iorge Castrioto Rey de Epiro, o Albania, traduzida del lengua Portuguesa en el Castellán, por Iuan Ochoa de la Salde Prior perpetuo de sant Iuan de Letran* (Lisbon, 1588; Madrid, 1597); Jacque de Lavardin,

II. Political and ecclesiastical power centers in the Southwestern Balkans

After the Fall of Constantinople (1204), the Byzantine lands or *Imperium Romaniae* underwent a process of internal political, social, and economic change. The division of Byzantium during the Fourth Crusade (1204) into the Latin Empire and the Empire of Nicaea created space for numerous other political and territorial entities, which to a certain degree and for a certain time also became centers of power within their zones of influence. This chapter will deal with the extent of the influence of those political centers in the Southwestern Balkans. Since the church was also considered and acted as a center of secular and religious authority, the church organization of the Southwestern Balkans will also be treated here.

No attempt will be made here to rewrite the history of the many political and ecclesiastical structures that were influential in this region, but rather I will attempt to enumerate them and point out the extent to which the Southwestern Balkans became peripheries of various political entities in the wider region. That is, until the installment of the *Regnum Albaniae* allowed local nobility to create a political center of their own. On the other side, Charles I of Anjou valued this region, not as a periphery, but rather as a gateway territory. Here he created a kingdom from which he could negotiate an assortment of diplomatic connections with regional powers to further his general plan to reach Constantinople and to build a Mediterranean Empire. At the same time, he maintained the *Regnum Albaniae* as a military base central to his enterprise. In addition, the Papal Curia regarded this border region as a stronghold against Orthodox encroachment. Therefore it also played into their hands that the Southwestern Balkans should acquire a more

Histoire de Georges Castriot surnommé Scanderbeg, roy d'Albanie (Paris, 1576; Paris, 1597; Geneve, 1601; Paris, 1621; etc.); Jean Nicolas Duponcet, *Histoire de Scanderbeg, Roy d'Albanie* (Paris, 1709); *A Brief account of the Life and Character of George Castriot, King of Epiros and Albania, commonly called Scanderbeg, inscribed to the Spectators of the Christian Hero* (London, 1735; Edingburgh, 1753); Stefano Zannowich, *Abregé de l'histoire de la vie et des actions de Scanderbeg, roi d'Albanie et duc d'Epire* (Berlin, 1777); Idem, *Geschichte des Grossen Castriotto genannt Skanderbeg, König von Albanien, und Grossherzog von Epiros* (N.A., 1780) and so on.

central political character than previously. Highlighting the network of political and ecclesiastical powers influential in the western Balkans reflects the position that the *Regnum Albaniae* had in the region and speaks to its significance for the Papal Curia in the fourteenth century.

II. 1. The political power centers in the Balkans

Latin *Romania*¹⁰⁶ was completely fragmented already by 1210. Besides political structures installed by foreigners, many local political entities claimed stronger and stronger influence in the geo-political arena. The balance between foreign and locally ruled political and territorial entities in the Byzantine lands shifted frequently. The changing fortunes of Constantinople and Achaea, Epiros and Nicaea¹⁰⁷ were the leading political motifs which, at a certain level, also dictated the delineation of the smaller political and regional structures in the region.

After 1204, not only was the Latin Empire itself ruled by foreigners, namely by the French dynasties of Flanders and Courtenay, but also other territories: the Kingdom of Thessaloniki was established and ruled by Boniface of Montferrat (1204-1207) and his son Demetrius (1207-1224);¹⁰⁸ the Duchy of Athens was governed by a Burgundian dynasty, the de La Roche family, and later on by the Catalans and subsequently by the Aragonese dynasty and Florentine Acciaiuoli family;¹⁰⁹ southern Greece, Morea, which formed the Principality of Achaea had close ties with the Anjou kingdom of Naples; Venice had colonies and dependencies in Crete, Euboea, and in Coron and Modon, etc. A number of minor Latin families also ruled on

¹⁰⁶ On the different meanings of 'Romania' and specifically on its connection with the Latin Empire of Constantinople, see Robert Lee Wolff, "Romania: The Latin Empire of Constantinople," *Speculum* 23, no. 1 (1948): 1-34.

¹⁰⁷ On these changing fortunes see Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Haberstumpf, *Dinastie europee nel Mediterraneo orientale. I monferrato e i Savoia nei secoli XII-XV*, (Torino: Edizioni Scriptorum, 1995), 56-67.

¹⁰⁹ Kenneth M. Setton, *Catalan Domination of Athens 1311-1380* (revised edition. London: Variorum, 1975).

many of the islands in the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. The phenomenon of western dynasties taking control of leading positions of the Byzantine lands thus represented the prevailing paradigm in this period.

Political and territorial entities created and ruled by locals dignitaries were no less frequent and no less powerful than those ruled by foreigners. The Byzantine Empire of Nicaea, the Trebizond Empire, the Despotate of Epiros, the Bulgarian Empire, the Serbian Kingdom, the Hungarian Kingdom and many other smaller entities acted as counterbalances to the Latin-ruled territories.

The Latin Empire claimed the central political power in the Byzantine lands, and exerted control over many areas such as the Kingdom of Thessaloniki, the Principality of Achaea, the Duchy of Athens, the Duchy of the Archipelago, etc. Nevertheless, it did not extend its control over much of the territory that remained in the hands of local aristocrats in lands such as the Empire of Nicaea, the Empire of Trebizond and the Despotate of Epiros. In 1261, after the Latin Empire fell into the hands of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos (1261-1282), most of the territories were recovered by Byzantium, whereas others, such as Attica, Boeotia, the Morea, Crete, Euboea and other Aegean islands, remained under Latin rule for more than two centuries. The spheres, nature, and degree of both continuity and change in each of these political and territorial entities largely depended on a combination of three factors:

- the existence of local or regional features prior to the Latin occupation,
- the conditions under which the conquest took place,
- the political and social impact of various groups of conquerors on their respective territories.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ David Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania: Continuity and Change," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (1989): 1-44, 2 [henceforth: Jacoby, "From Byzantium to Latin Romania"].

The Byzantine Empire

The Byzantine Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epiros, both ruled by local aristocrats, were the two main rival states exercising control in the Byzantine lands, when the *Regnum Albaniae* came into existence. The first had become powerful after having restored Byzantium in the year 1261 and dismantling the Latin Empire, whereas the latter had come to power especially after the ultimate absorption of the city of Thessaloniki in the year 1242, which during the years 1224-1242 had been the center of the so-called Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki.

Since the Byzantine Emperor, Michael VIII, wanted to keep exercising control of the Western Balkans, the relations between him and the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* were never friendly. Michael VIII considered Charles I of Anjou to be the most ambitious and determined enemy of the restored Byzantine Empire. When Anjou troops penetrated inland as far as Berat (1274), and at the same time supplies were being shipped to Morea to enable the prince of Achaia to become involved in the great Anjou enterprise, the emperor in Constantinople was seriously alarmed and tried to make contact with the Albanian nobility, most probably hoping that they would again recognize his authority. He wrote to the leading noblemen of Durrës and Berat, but they preferred to join Charles I of Anjou instead of him.¹¹¹

Knowing the plans of the Anjous towards the Byzantine Empire, Michael VIII considered his negotiations with the Papal Curia as the only way to deter Charles I of Anjou. He was convinced that the pope was the only authority able to impose moral restraints on Charles, to sanction or to forbid a holy war for the restoration of the Latin Empire in Constantinople. His strategy worked, and it demonstrated to the local nobles of the Southwestern Balkans that the

Holy See was the power center of the *Regnum Albaniae*. Pope Gregory X took the proposals of Michael VIII seriously and invited him to the Council of Lyons (1274), where Michael VIII accepted the Roman creed and the primacy of the pope. The reunion of the Churches of Rome and Constantinople was declared to have been accomplished in July 1274, as a result of the above-mentioned negotiations. With this move by Emperor Michael, Pope Gregory X forbade Charles to undertake any attack against the Byzantine Empire.

The rejoining of the Churches affected by Emperor Michael VIII was not welcomed in Constantinople where uproar started. The Emperor could not impose his will on his church and people. To convince the Pope that he was doing his best to enforce the union, Emperor Michael VIII took to persecuting and imprisoning his opponents. Refugees from his persecution went to those parts of the world where the word of the Emperor was not so strong. One such place was Epiros.

¹¹¹ Camillo Minieri-Riccio, *Il Regno di Carlo I d'Angiò negli anni 1271 e 1272* (Naples, 1875), 81. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 282; Dölger, *Regesten und Kaiserurkunden*, no. 1993. Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 234; Ducellier, *Albanie*, 241.



Map 3: The Despotate of Epirus and other states carved from the Byzantine Empire, as they were in 1265.
 Out of: William R. Shepherd, *Historical Atlas*, 9th ed. (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1980)

The Despotate of Epiros

The Despotate of Epiros also emerged immediately after the fall of the Byzantine Empire and it became the most important political structure and especially the most influential one in the Balkans in general and in the western Balkans in particular.¹¹² Michael Komnenos Doukas, a “bastard” son of the *sebastokrator* John Doukas (1126-1200),¹¹³ was one of those Greeks who had joined Boniface of Montferrat, the leader of the Crusade, in the Latin invasion of Greece. After having deserted Boniface, he joined the Byzantine governor of Arta, married his daughter and became the accepted leader and protector of the inhabitants of Epiros. There he took over the Byzantine administration which had been centered on the city of Arta, capital of the theme of

¹¹² Stiernon, “Les origins,” 90.

Nicopolis. He extended his power over the whole of Old Epiros, whose inhabitants were mainly Greek-speaking and in the north to the Albanian territories comprising the theme of Dyrrachion (Durrës), which later on would become the capital of *Regnum Albaniae*. The western section of the *Via Egnatia*,¹¹⁴ the trunk road which had for centuries linked the ports on the Adriatic Sea with Thessalonica and Constantinople, was recovered from the Venetians in 1214. Before Michael Doukas died in 1215, he was master of all the land from Naupaktos in the south to Durrës in the north.

The strength of the Despotate of Epiros increased drastically under Theodore Comnenos Doukas, the half-brother of Michael Doukas, who succeeded him (1215-1230). He proclaimed independence in ecclesiastical and in political affairs, after being crowned emperor of the Rhomaioi at Thessaloniki (1225-1227) by Demetrius Chomatianos, the autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid. The latter was, then, reproached by Patriarch Germanos II for having created a rival to the emperor of Nicaea, at that time John III Vatatzes (1221-1254).¹¹⁵ This Empire of Thessalonica, which came out of the Despotate of Epiros, was a short-lived creation (1224-

¹¹³ Nicol states that it was not Michael Doukas himself who was the founder of the Despotate of Epiros, since none of the contemporary sources suggests that he held any such title. See Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 2.

¹¹⁴ This road was the continuation of the *Via Apia*. The main stations from Durrës were Clodiana (today: Peqin), Scampa (today: Elbasan), Candavia, Lichnido (today: Lin, Pogradec), Brucida, Eraclea di Linco, to Edessa and Thessaloniki. On the *Via Egnatia* see N. G. L. Hammond, "The Western Part of the *Via Egnatia*," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 64 (1974): 185-194. The *Via Egnatia* was the main road, but not the only one which connected Rome with the East. The four others also started from Durrës: *Via Iliana* which went through Apollonia, Amantia, Adrianopolis, Ilio and Dodona and reached Nicopoli. The other one started also in Durrës, went through Apollonia, Aulona, Acroceraunia, Fenice, Butrinti, and reached Nicopoli. The third one started in Ragusa (Dubrovnik) went through Risano, Budua, Scutari, Lissum Pistum, and reached Durrës, and the last one which was the only one which did not start or end in Durrës, was the one from Skopje to Stopi and Thessaloniki. Conrad Peutinger, *Tabula Peutingeriana. Codex Vindobonensis 324* (Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1976). See also Claudius Ptolemaeus and Girolamo Ruscelli, *Tavola nuova di Schivonia* (Venice, 1561); Louis Krompotic, *Relationen über Fortifikation der Südgrenzen des Habsburgerreiches vom 16. bis 18. Jahrhundert* (Hannover: Krompotic, 1997).

¹¹⁵ Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 275. See also Günter Prinzing, "Die Antigraphie des Patriarchen Germanos II. an Erzbischof Demetrios Chomatianos von Ohrid und die Korrespondenz zum nikaiesch-epirotischen Konflikt 1212-1233," *Rivista di Studi Byzantini e Slavi* 3 (1983) (Miscellanea A. Petrusi), especially 58-60.

1242),¹¹⁶ but while it lasted it was quite powerful and it extended from Durrës to Adrianople, from Ohrid to the Gulf of Corinth, thus including a great part of the Albanian territories.

The balance between the two powerful rival states of the Byzantine lands, the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea and the Despotate of Epiros, changed after the Nicaean victory in the Battle of Pelagonia (1259). This change affected the whole future of the Byzantine lands. After the death of Theodore II Laskaris (August 1258), the new Byzantine Emperor, Michael VIII Palaiologos (1223-1282), assembled an army against Despot Michael II of Epiros. In summer 1259, a battle was fought at Pelagonia in Macedonia¹¹⁷ and was won by the army of Nicaea under the command of his brother John Palaiologos. He invaded Epiros and Thessaly. Despot Michael II was chased from Arta to Vonitza and took refuge on the island of Cephalonia with the Orsini family, to whom he was related. Arta, Joannina, and other towns in Epiros as far north as Durrës, were occupied by garrisons of troops from Nicaea.¹¹⁸ The Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII seems to have achieved a big victory as he advanced as far as Durrës. There was a series of events occurring in the Despotate of Epiros in that period. In 1257, the king of Sicily, Manfred of Hohenstaufen (1232-1266), had occupied the coast of Albania¹¹⁹ namely Dyrrachium (Durrës), Bellegrada (Berat), Avlona (Vlora), the Spinariza mountains, and the surrounding area.¹²⁰ Despot Michael II had by 1258 reoccupied the former European territories of the Byzantine Empire that is, Western Greece and Albania. However, the link with Manfred would remain and even become

¹¹⁶ About the history of the thirteenth-century Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki, see the study of François Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki (1224-1242)* (Thessaloniki: Municipality of Thessaloniki, 1996) [Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki*].

¹¹⁷ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 10. About the inner quarrels of the allies in the battle of Pelagonia see William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant: A History of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)*, (London, John Murray, 1908), 111.

¹¹⁸ Nicol, *Despotate*, 7.

¹¹⁹ Evidence for this is a Greek notary document from Dyrrachium dated 23 February 1258, attesting that it was already Manfred's first year of lordship over territories surrounding Dyrrachium and Avlona. See Miklosich and Müller, *Acta et diplomata graeca*, 239-42.

¹²⁰ On this see also Jean Alexandre Buchon, *Recherches historiques sur la principauté française de Morée et ces hautes baronnies*, I (Paris, 1845), 103-4; Deno John Geanakoplos, "Greco-Latin Relations on the Eve of the

stronger in the coming years. As a result of the battle of Pelagonia, and especially after the reconquest of Constantinople on 25 July 1261 by Michael VIII, Despot Michael II feared the loss of his independence, and for this reason he allied with Manfred of Hohenstaufen: He gave to him his daughter Helen in marriage and also many territories as a dowry. Durrës, Vlora, Butrinto, Kanina, Corfu which were parts of Helen's dowry were considered to be among the most important parts of Despot Michael II's possessions and were certainly the most strategic areas in the Despotate of Epiros.¹²¹ While accepting this offer, Manfred enabled a kind of extension of the Kingdom of Sicily on the Albanian coast. "Clearly, the master of these would be in position to begin the conquest of the Balkan Peninsula," states Geanakoplos,¹²² since Durrës was the key to the Byzantine Empire in the west along with Vlora, the Adriatic terminus of the *Via Egnatia*, which led directly to Thessalonica.

After the death of Despot Michael II, the much reduced Epirot state was ruled by his legitimate son, Nikephoros I Angelos (1271-1296). The hostility to Byzantium continued under him. When, as mentioned, the Byzantines took the town of Butrinti and refused to restore it to Nikephoros, he turned to Charles of Anjou.

The relations between the despot of Epiros and the king of the *Regnum Albaniae* varied at different times, but mostly they were cordial because they had a common enemy in Michael VIII. The relationship which developed between them is rather astonishing considering the fact that Charles was a favored vassal of the papacy while Nikephoros was Orthodox, a staunch opponent of the union of the churches and thus an enemy of papal plans in the Byzantine lands. The enforcement of the union with the Roman Catholic Church made by Michael VIII against the will

Byzantine Restoration: The Battle of Pelagonia-1259," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 7 (1953): 99-141. See especially p. 103, note 11.

¹²¹ See Geanakoplos, *Emperor Michael*, 51, note 16.

¹²² *Ibidem*, 51.

of his citizens had driven Nikephoros, the Despot of Epiros, who had married the *basilissa* Anna, the third daughter of the Emperor's sister, Eirene, to take this opportunity to become a defender of the Orthodox faith. He even used the chance to fight Michael openly, when Byzantine troops entered Butrint (1274), which Despot Nikephoros considered to be his own.

Nikephoros was able to retake Butrint from the Byzantines only in 1278, and pressed by Charles, he was forced to make a formal vassal submission to him, yielding to the latter the newly recovered town as well as the port of Sopot. By recognizing Charles' right to all the towns that Michael II had awarded to Manfred of Hohenstaufen as the dowry of Helen, Nikephoros also surrendered the port of Himara to the Anjous. As a result Charles acquired possession of the Adriatic coast from the Acroceraunian promontory (below the Bay of Vlora) down to Butrinti.¹²³

The affinity of the Despotate of Epiros with the Anjous can also to a certain degree be explained by the geographical position of Epiros. Unlike the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea, Epiros had traditionally enjoyed sound economic ties with Europe, due to its geographical position as a province which had always been a little cut off from the main streams of Byzantine political developments,¹²⁴ although its history as an independent Byzantine province in the northwest of Greece had begun only after the Fourth Crusade.¹²⁵

The Second Bulgarian Empire

The Second Bulgarian Empire existed between 1185 and 1396 (or 1422) as a successor to the First Bulgarian Empire. Unseparately from the Orthodox Bulgarian Church, this political structure played an important role in the history of the Balkans. It reached the peak of its power under Tsar Kaloyan (1197-1207) and Tsar Ivan Asen II (1207-1218), and this power remained

¹²³ Ibidem.

¹²⁴ Stiemon, "Les origins," 90-126, 90.

considerably strong and radiating on the Southwestern Balkans even up to the period when the *Regnum Albaniae* emerged. His son, John Asen II (1218-1241), who is unanimously known by scholars as one who “aimed at nothing less than the foundation of a Bulgaro-Byzantine *imperium* with its center in Constantinople”,¹²⁶ poured troops into Thrace and Macedonia, and within a few months Adrianople, Didymotichus, Serres, Ohrid, Prilep and even Durrës itself were in Bulgarian hands. Asen’s authority was recognized from the Black Sea to the Adriatic.

¹²⁵ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 1.

¹²⁶ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 435; Bredenkamp, *The Byzantine Empire of Thessaloniki*, 32.



Map 4: The Bulgarian Empire
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Bulgaria-Ivan_Asen_2.png

By the reign of Michael II Asen (1246-1256), the Bulgarian Empire had lost significant territories, not because of any major military disaster, but because of disloyal nobles who surrendered territories for personal enrichment. Under Constantine I Tih (1257-1277), the Bulgarian Empire lost northern and central Macedonia to Byzantium as well as Severin Banat to Hungary. Byzantium wanted to get the Black Sea cities from him also.

As a master of diplomacy, Charles I of Anjou managed to exchange embassies also with the Second Bulgarian Empire, and in 1273 he even managed to have Constantine I Tih join his coalition.¹²⁷

The Serbian Kingdom

The Serbian Kingdom was the most influential political center in the Southwestern Balkans. Konstantin Jireček, who is still today considered to be one of the most notable scholars of the medieval history of the Serbs, attributed the rapid development of Serbia at the end of the thirteenth century mainly to wealth coming from the exploitation of mines with the help of Saxons hired from Hungary. The huge amounts of income were used to create a strong military power supported by numerous mercenaries enabling an attack on the Empire of the Palaiologoi.

In its essence, the Serbian kingdom was completely oriented towards Byzantium, although the contacts of the Serbian kings with the West, especially with the papacy, were never entirely absent.¹²⁸ Besides the spiritual leader, who just as in Byzantium, was the patron saint St. Stephen, after whom all the Serbian kings of the Nemanjidi dynasty were called, the seals of the Serbian kings, signatures, titles, ceremonies, dresses etc. all imitated Byzantine ones as well. Their contacts with the Roman Curia had begun early and continued throughout the Middle Ages. The Serbian Crown itself and the independence from Byzantium and from the Kingdom of Hungary were fruits of a good relationship with the papacy. It was also the papacy which opened the way for the Serbian kingdom to enter into European coalitions and to attain a certain level of prestige in the fourteenth century.¹²⁹ The first Serbian contacts with Western Christendom can

¹²⁷ Carabellese, *Carlo d'Angiò*, 48.

¹²⁸ See Dragomir Maritch, *Papstbriefe an serbische Fürsten im Mittelalter* (Srem: Serbische Kloster Buchdruckerei Karlovci, 1933), X [henceforth: Maritch, *Papstbriefe*].

¹²⁹ *Ibidem*, XIV.

already be dated to the reign of Michael of Zeta (1051-1081), who addressed himself to Pope Gregory VII, requiring the *vexillum* from him. This request may have been made in order to receive the protection and recognition of his principality¹³⁰ from the pope as spiritual leader of the West, and to be introduced to the ‘international’ Christian community, an aim which seems to have been well defined quite early in the history of Serbia.

During the later periods, the Serbian Kingdom managed several times to draw papal attention. The key person in the relations between the Papal Curia and the Serbian Kingdom at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century was Helen, a French princess and Serbian Queen. She had married the Serbian King Stephen Uroš I (1243-1276) in 1245 and they had two sons: Stephen Dragutin and Stephan Uroš II Milutin as well as a daughter whose name is not known.¹³¹ Helen was a devoted Catholic whose faith was not opposed by the Serbian king, probably because she was also generous towards the Orthodox population of the Serbian kingdom. She had a great influence on strengthening local Catholicism.

King Stephen Uroš I was dethroned by his son Stephen Dragutin (1276-1282). The latter divided his kingdom among himself, his mother, Helen, and his younger brother Uroš Milutin (1282-1321). To his mother, he gave the coastal territories from Ragusa to Shkodra, which for a long time were known as the lands of *domina regina mater*. These included the region of Plav (near Gusinje) on the upper section of the Lim and the Castle of Brnjaci in the territory of Ibar.¹³²

¹³⁰ Farlati, *Ilyricum Sacrum VII*, 21; Pietro Balan, *Delle Relazioni fra la chiesa Cattolica e gli slavi della Bulgaria, Bosnia, Serbia, Erzegovina* (Rome: Tipografia della Pace, 1880), 29 [henceforth: Balan, *Delle relazioni*]; Stajonević, *Geschichte des serbischen Volkes*, 84; idem, *Der Kampf um die Selbständigkeit der katholischen Kirche im Staate der Nemanjiden*, 32. Maritch excludes the hypothesis that Pope Gregory VII gave the royal insignia to Michael, because, first of all, there is no document which sustains this and, secondly, because the addressee is not named in the order it had to be for such an assumption: title and then nation, e.g., *Guilermo regi Anglorum*, but the opposite of this: *Michaeli Sclavorum regi*. See Maritch, *Papstbriefe*, 9-10.

¹³¹ Viktor Ćorović, “Die Königin Helen” *Volksenzyklopädie*, vol. II, 148.

¹³² Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben I*, 328.

In 1291, through an intervention by Helen, these territories were put under the patronage of Saint Peter.¹³³

Serbs seem to have joined the coalition of Charles I of Anjou in 1273,¹³⁴ after the collapse of relations between the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII and Pope Martin IV, and the attack of the Byzantine army on the *Regnum Albaniae*, where they took control of some cities and castles such as Berat, Kruja, Kanina.¹³⁵ When King Stephen gave the throne to his young brother, Uroš II, the war between the Anjous and the Palaiologoi had reached its zenith. The allies of the Franks, Serbs and Thessalia started an attack, without knowing about the Sicilian Vespers. The young Serbian king occupied Skopje, which never again was to become part of the Byzantine Empire, and the surrounding territories. Skopje became the residence of Uroš II. After occupying Western Macedonia, the border between the two Serbian brothers and kings was in the North of the Byzantine fortress Strumica, Prosêk, Prilep, Ochrid, and Kruja. Uroš II managed to take even Durrës from the Anjous for some time in 1296.¹³⁶

The amiability between parts of the *Regnum Albaniae* and the Serbian kingdom varied at times. As long as Charles I of Anjou was living, these contacts were relatively warm. After his death, however, Serbian attempts to possess the territories of the *Regnum Albaniae* made the relations difficult and at times even aggressive.

The Kingdom of Hungary

The Hungarian political interest in and impact on the Southwestern Balkans got underway with the alliance that Stephen (1246-1272), son of the Hungarian King Béla IV, formed in 1269

¹³³ Emille Langlois, *Les Registres de Nicolas IV*, II, 892, no. 6707-6708. August Potthast, *Regesta Pontificum Romanum inde ab anno post Christum natum MCXCVIII ad anno MCCCIV*, vol. I (Paris: Berolini, 1875): 862, no. 10, 145, 23601 [henceforth: Potthast, *Regesta*].

¹³⁴ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 185.

¹³⁵ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 329-330.

with Charles I of Anjou. “The king of Hungary has incredibly great power and such a military force that there is no one in the east and in the north who would dare to move if the glorious king mobilized his enormous army”¹³⁷ reported Charles of Anjou’s envoy in 1269. This alliance was to have long-term consequences. Stephen had his seven-year-old son Ladislaus, marry Elisabeth, Charles’s granddaughter, while his own daughter, Mary, became the wife of the future King Charles II. This marriage was later to be the legal basis of the Anjou claim to the Hungarian throne.¹³⁸

After the Anjous came to the Hungarian throne, a well-defined Albanian policy of the Hungarian kings started, and culminated under the rule of Louis the Great (1342-1382). This was a continuation of the Anjou policy towards the Southwestern Balkans and more specifically towards the *Regnum Albaniae*. Such a policy started after the peace-treaty of Zadar (1358), according to which Venice withdrew from the whole eastern Adriatic area.

Hungary itself had entered the conflict against Venice because of their interference with the salt trade in Dalmatia. Venetians had prohibited trade in salt produced on the Hungarian held island of Pag in all their harbors, which affected Hungarian finances. It was the entry of Hungary into the anti-Venetian coalition that explains why the operations of the Genoese fleet were transferred into the Adriatic. After the fall of Chioggia into the hands of the Genoese, the Venetians made some efforts to obtain peace, and thus negotiated with the Hungarian king. As preconditions for peace, the Hungarian king demanded reimbursement of losses with the salt from Pag and reimbursement for damages to his subjects in Dalmatia. Although they agreed to recognise the authority of the Hungarian king and to pay an annual tribute, the negotiations were

¹³⁶ Ibidem, 339.

¹³⁷ Gustav Wenzel (ed.), *Codex diplomaticus Arpadianus continuatus*, vol. 8 (Pest, 1870), 316. English translation provided by Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526*, tr. Tamás Pálosfalvi (London and New York: I.B. Tauris Publishers, 2001), 108 [henceforth: Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*].

¹³⁸ See Pál Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 107.

not successful because the Genoese and Padoans wanted a total surrender of Venice and because the Hungarian aristocracy demanded much more money than Venice could pay.

The Hungarian Anjous continued the Neapolitan tradition in Albania and from then on the relations between Albanians and Hungarians received a well-defined political character.¹³⁹ On the one hand, the Hungarians were protectors of the Catholic element against the schismatics, and, on the other hand, they became supporters of the Albanian rulers who were trying to consolidate their power in the *Regnum Albaniae*, especially of the Thopia family, whose most significant member, Charles Thopia pretended the throne of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

Independently from the contradictions between Charles Thopia and the Hungarian rulers about Durrës, the Hungarian king Louis the Great (1342-1382) became a great supporter of the Thopia kindred in their attempts to become absolute rulers of Albania. All the negotiations between this local kindred and the Hungarian royal court were carried out by Dominik Thopia.¹⁴⁰ Dominik had been chaplain in the Anjou court in Naples (1336)¹⁴¹ and had shown interest to climb in the ecclesiastical career. With the help of the Hungarian King, Louis the Great, he served primarily as bishop of Stoni dhe Korcula in Dalmatia for seventeen years (1350-1367).¹⁴² His ambitions were satisfied when he became archbishop of Zadar (1367-1376),¹⁴³ which at that time was one of the most important Adriatic cities for the Hungarian Kingdom. On January 23, 1376 Dominic Thopia was entrusted with the administration of the bishopric of Bosnia, where he

¹³⁹ Šufflay, "Ungarisch-albanische Berührungen," 297

¹⁴⁰ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* V, 97; Stjepan Krsić, *Domenikanci u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni* (Dominicans in the Medieval Bosnia) (Gjakova, 1996), 51.

¹⁴¹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 802.

¹⁴² Conrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi sive Summorum Pontificum S.R.E. Cardinalium, Ecclesiarum Antistitum Series ab anno 1198 usque ad annum 1431 perducta e documentis tabularii praesertim vaticani*, vol. I (Regensburg: Monasteri, 1898), 462 [henceforth: Eubel, *HC*].

¹⁴³ Ivan Lucić, *Povijesna svjedočanstva o Trogiru* (Historical testimonies about Trau), vol. I (Split, 1979), 640. 645; Ferdinando Ughello, *Italia sacra*, vol. V (Venice, 1720), 1424-1425 [henceforth: Ughello, *Italia Sacra*].

stayed for six years.¹⁴⁴ While being in Zadar and also in Bosnia, Dominic Thopia was in very good terms with King Louis the Great and his wife.¹⁴⁵

The Hungarians were interested in expanding their influence in the south, but their intentions were blocked by the “schismatic” Serbs, on the one hand, and by the “infidel” Turks, on the other hand. For this reason, they attempted to create an alliance with the Albanians, in order to have it easier with their war against both Serbs and Turks. The main aim of the Anjou Hungarians to add the Albanian territories into their kingdom came also into conflict with the Venetians, who were interested in keeping them under their supremacy. Although the Venetians were the main pretenders of the Eastern Adriatic coast, Hungarians managed thanks to the Treaty of Zadar, to reach in 1373 Durrës and Kotor and to build with Charles Thopia (*princeps Albaniae*) the so called *Liga domini nostri regis Hungariae*.¹⁴⁶

In 1381, the Venetian Republic and Hungary signed another peace-treaty, the one of Turin. According to it, Venice withdrew again from the Adriatic Sea territories in favor of Hungary. After having broken the peace-treaty of Zadar, Venice had occupied the territories around the Lake of Shkodra, Bar and Ulcinj; furthermore, they had penetrated the the Northern Balkans, which Louis I had put under his dominion after the peace-treaty of Zadar. The treaty of Turin put a new balance between the two powers.

The territories of Dalmatia as well as those of northern Albania were included in the zone of the rights of the Hungarian crown. At the same time, the most powerful ruler in the northern territories of the present-day Albania and Montenegro, George II Strazimir Balsha, who converted to Catholicism in 1369,¹⁴⁷ adhered to the Hungarian policy and received from the

¹⁴⁴ Eubel, *HC I*, 142. Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum I*, 311, no. 440; Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae II*, 158, no. 315.

¹⁴⁵ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum V*, 97; Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum I*, 296-298, no. 419.

¹⁴⁶ Šufflay, “Ungarisch-albanische Berührungen,” 297.

¹⁴⁷ ASV, *Instr. Misc.* 2526.

Hungarian king, Sigismund (1387-1437), the government of the islands of Curzola, Lesina and Brazza in Dalmatia as a fief. What is more important, he received the title of the prince of Albania (*princeps Albaniae*) in 1397.¹⁴⁸ The Hungarian policy, at that time, was concentrated in North Albania, since the lower part of the Southwestern Balkans was already in the hands of the Venetians, rivals of the Hungarians. Nevertheless, this policy remained fruitless, because of the Turkish assaults and the Venetian influence in the territory.

Venice and other Mediterranean City States

The Adriatic waters played a very important role in the formation of the *Regnum Albaniae*. The history of the Adriatic between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries is in a great part the history of Venice as well.¹⁴⁹ After the fall of Byzantium (1204), and the creation of the Venetian colonial Empire in the East, the Adriatic became particularly important for Venice as its main route for trade and communication with the Levant. It had under its control the main terrestrial routes which connected Central Europe with the sea. Venice thus held a key geographical position as the point where maritime and continental routes met. Venetians had the best fleet in the Adriatic as well as very good organisational capabilities. They held the position of mediators and leaders in water transport and, thus, became one of the major maritime powers in the Mediterranean.

Venice was very much interested, not only in the Adriatic waters, but also in the Balkan hinterland. The source of this interest was the Venetian possessions on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea. Although the Venetians had conquered Dalmatia in the year 1000, Venice for the first time became especially interested in the Balkan hinterland from the end of the thirteenth

¹⁴⁸ Giuseppe Gelcich, *La Zedda e la Dinastia dei Balšidi* (Spalato: 1890), 195-196, 202 [henceforth: Gelcich, *La Zedda*].

century, when Serbia had begun mining activities and became the largest and most powerful Balkan state. Large quantities of copper, iron, lead and, above all, silver began moving westwards, primarily through Ragusa/Dubrovnik. Some of these minerals remained in that coastal city, but most of them were exported from there to Italy, especially to Venice, from where they found their way into other European countries.

Venetians took the maritime territories of medieval Albania¹⁵⁰ after the sack of Constantinople within the framework of the so-called *partitio Romaniae*. In Durrës Venice created the Duchy of Durazzo, which continued until 1213 when it was destroyed by the Despotate of Epiros.¹⁵¹ After the installation of the Anjous in the Albanian territories, Venetians withdrew from the eastern shores of the Adriatic. Nevertheless, they were always interested in revitalizing their commerce with the maritime urban centers of medieval Albania. Although jealous about the possessions of the Anjous, through the treaty of Orvieto (July 1281), they joined Charles I of Anjou¹⁵² for an attack against Constantinople from Brindisi. This did not come into fruition, because of the Sicilian Vespers. At the end of the fourteenth century, the Venetians would receive all the territories of northern Albania, and create the so-called Venetian Albania.¹⁵³

Besides Venice, there were other Italian city states too who maintained constant and intense contacts with the eastern Adriatic coast. Florentine companies, for instance, were very active on the Adriatic. They were quite important in the import of cereals from southern Italy to

¹⁴⁹ See Freddy Thiriet, *La Romanie vénitien au Moyen Age. Le développement et l'exploitation du domaine colonial vénitien (XIIIe-XVe siècles)*, (Paris, 1959).

¹⁵⁰ About the borders of medieval Albania see Milan von Šufflay, "Die Grenzen Albaniens im Mittelalter," in *Illyrisch Albanische Forschungen* vol. I (Munich and Leipzig: Verlag von Duncken and Humlot, 1916), 288-294.

¹⁵¹ About the Duchy of Durazzo see Ducellier, "Le Duché Vénitien de Durazzo" in idem, *La façade maritime*, 151-159.

¹⁵² About the relations between Venetians and Anjous of the fourteenth century see the chapter "Venice and the Kingdom of Naples 1332-43" of Abulafia's study on *Italy, Sicily and the Mediterranean*.

¹⁵³ About Venetian Albania see the detailed study of Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Das Venezianische Albanien 1392-1479*,

Ragusa, because Ragusa was agriculturally a poor area which constantly needed to import grain. The Florentine commercial companies acted mostly in Ragusa in the first half of the fourteenth century. Their activities were also recorded in the small coastal city of Kotor, south of Dubrovnik. Most of the money sent by the Florentine companies from Dubrovnik to Venice was acquired not from credit investments in Dubrovnik, but from the companies' commercial operations in southern Italy. The agents of the Florentine companies ceased their activities in 1340, a short time before these companies met their downfall.

Ragusa (Dubrovnik)

The second most important maritime republic on the Adriatic coast was Dubrovnik (Ragusa).¹⁵⁴ Ragusa, like the other maritime republics, had mainly economic interests in the coast ports of the Southwestern Balkans. While Venice controlled the trade in grain, Ragusa dominated the trade in salt. These economic links, however, had their ups and downs depending on the powers controlling the ports of the southeastern Adriatic. When the major Adriatic and Ionian ports such as Durrës and Vlora came under the control of the Anjou, Ragusa tried to be satisfied with the smaller ones such as SS. Sergius et Baccus, Rodoni Cap, Vregu, Pirgu etc. The same thing also occurred after installation of Venetian dominion in the region.¹⁵⁵

Ragusa was able to profit generally due to its excellent location on the main naval route from Venice towards the Levant and the Mediterranean world, and especially from the transport westwards of the Balkan minerals which became a source of the city's prosperity in the later Middle Ages. Even the credit transactions involved merchandise not cash, something that was

Südosteuropäische Arbeiten 110 (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 2001) [henceforth: Schmitt, *Das Venezianische Albanien*].

¹⁵⁴ Barisa Krekić, *Dubrovnik, Italy and the Balkans in the Late Middle Ages* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980); Francis W. Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa): A Classic City-State* (London and New York: Seminar Press, 1972).

especially true of Balkan silver. Besides Bosnian and Serbian minerals, however, the economic strength of Ragusa also derived from the instability of the Balkans after the death of the Serbian emperor Stefan Dušan (1355), the Serbian defeat by the Ottomans in the battle on the Maritsa River (1371), and especially the papal privilege Ragusa received extending permission in Egypt, without forgetting several favorable commercial treaties with Italian cities. This great economic power then was crowned with independence from Venice. Ragusa ceased to recognize Venetian supremacy a short time before the rebellion on Crete in 1358.

Although relations between Ragusa and Venice between 1358 and 1378 were never disrupted, they were not very cordial either. Then, Ragusa entered the Venetian and Genoese war (1378-1381). Operations especially spread in the Adriatic Sea. Dubrovnik fought on the side of the Genoese against Venice, not only because its protector, the king of Hungary, had joined the Genoese, but also because Venetian power remained a constant threat to the further growth of Ragusan trade.

¹⁵⁵ Ducellier, “Les mutations de l’Albanie au XVe siècle (du monopole ragusain à la redécouverte des fonctions de transit),” in *L’Albanie*, XVII, 1-79.

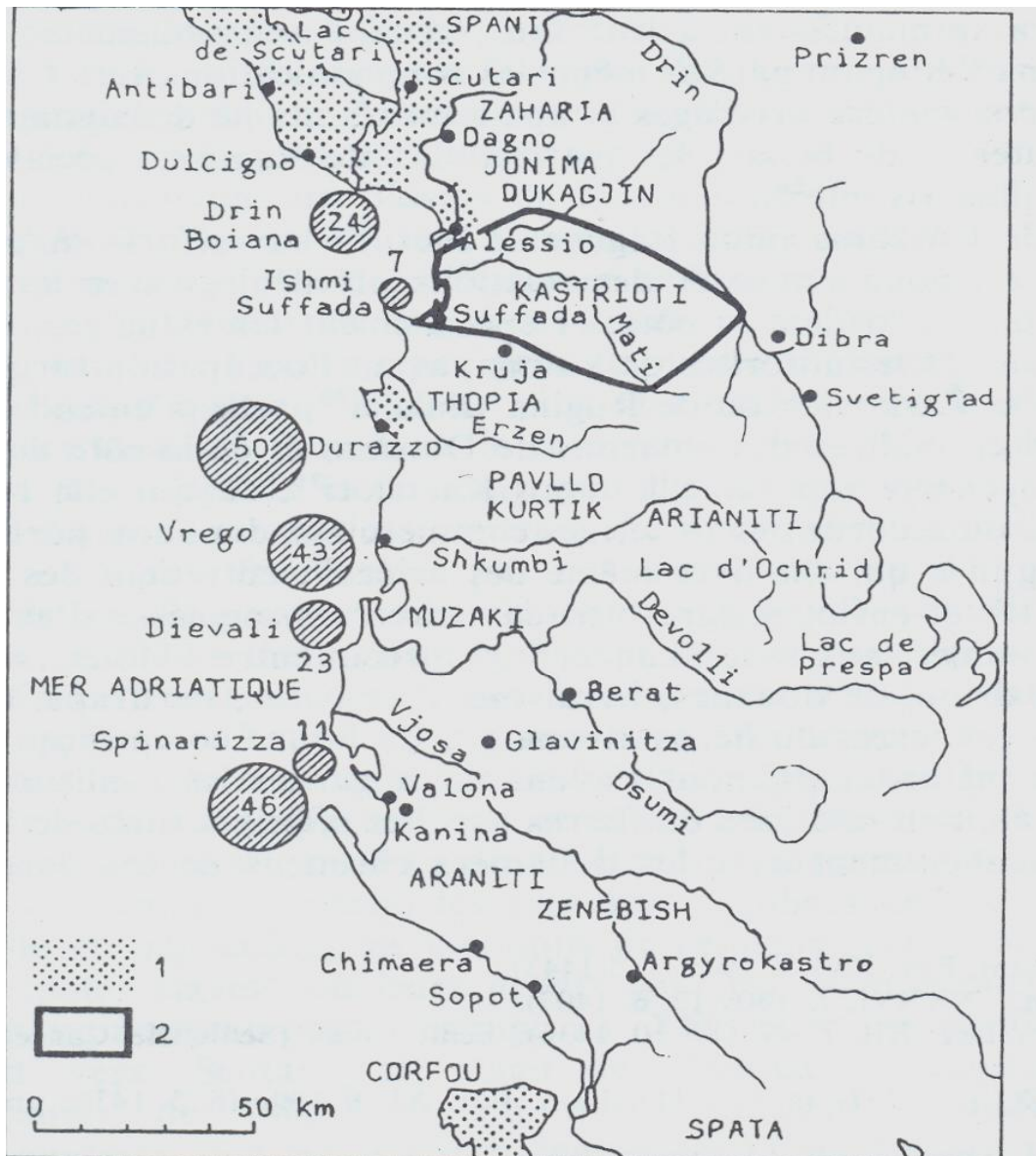


Fig. 1. Contrats ragusains pour l'Albanie 1283—1392
 1. Possessions vénitiennes; 2. Limites approximatives de la principauté de Kastriot

Map 5: Ragusan influence in the Southwestern Balkans.
 Out of: Alain Ducellier, *L'Albanie entre Byzance et Venise Xe-XVe siècles*
 (London: Variorum Reprints, 1987), XVII-57.

II. 2. Church organization in the Southwestern Balkans

“Geographically the population of Albanian stock was deliberately apportioned among several administrative departments such as Dyrrachion, Dalmatia, Thessaloniki, and Nicopolis.”¹⁵⁶ This means that the history of the Albanians was divided between the histories of other countries, of smaller local principalities, and between the histories of autonomous clans of the mountainous territories.¹⁵⁷

From the religious point of view, one still can support the statement by Milan von Šufflay in 1916: “Wie ethnisch, politisch und kulturell, ist Albanien auch vom kirchlichen Standpunkte aus ein ausgeprägtes Grenzgebiet.”¹⁵⁸ Indeed, the population of the Southwestern Balkans was subject to many religious metropolitan powers, such as Bar, Durrës, Ohrid, Nicopolis, which nowadays can be found in present-day Montenegrin, Albanian, Macedonian and Greek territories. Catholicism, Greek Orthodox, Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox Churches interchangeably or, at times, even simultaneously, applied their religious and political authority over these lands. The emergence of the *Regnum Albaniae* not only strengthened the Catholic rite in Durrës, but also its influence over the Catholic areas around and opened a new phase in the conversion of non-Catholic territories east-ward and south.

The archbishopric of Durrës

Durrës was not only the administrative heart of the *Regnum Albaniae*, but also its main religious center. As a Christian metropolis, it had been known since the very beginnings of

¹⁵⁶ Alain Ducellier, “Genesis and Failure of the Albanian State in the XIV and XV Centuries,” In *Studies on Kosova*, ed. Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti, (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1984), 5.

¹⁵⁷ Jireček, “Albanien in der Vergangenheit,” 64.

¹⁵⁸ In *Illyrisch-albanische Forschungen* I: 188-282, see especially 188.

Christianity in the region.¹⁵⁹ Šufflay puts it into the list of the primary bishoprics in Albania¹⁶⁰ and there is archeological evidence to support this assertion.¹⁶¹ Until the tenth century, the metropolis of Durrës had fifteen Episcopal sees under its authority.¹⁶² With the split of Churches (1054), Durrës remained under the authority of the Eastern Church. Nevertheless, it always maintained latent connections with the Latin Church,¹⁶³ and these connections continuously gave rise to hopes within the Roman Church concerning the conversion of Durrës to the Latin rite.

Since Durrës represented a border between Roman, Greek and Slavic cultures and religions, it was important for the Papal Curia to reach it not only *pro forma*, but also *de facto*. The papal curia had tried for three centuries in a row to reach Durrës using different means (legates, archbishopric election and other diplomatic attempts), but these attempts had not borne any fruit.¹⁶⁴ After the fall of the Byzantine Empire (1204) the Holy Congregation again tried to win the orthodox bishoprics of Durrës for the Catholic Church, but without the help of any secular power this attempt remained only partially successful. In 1208, after five centuries of dominance by the Eastern Church, the cathedral of Durrës got an elected Catholic archdeacon.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 194: “Die Christianisierung Illyrikums ging zweifellos aus zwei Zentren, zugleich Hauptorten der Provinzen Dalmatien und Epiros und Ausgangspunkten der Heerstrassen, Salona und Dyrrhachion aus.”

¹⁶⁰ Ibidem, 193: along with Durrës were also *Doclea, Sarda, Scodra, Lissus, Scampa, Amantia, Appolonia, Byllis, Aulona* and *Ulcinium*.

¹⁶¹ Hasan Nallbani, “Mozaiku i kishës së amfiteatrit të Durrësit” (The Mosaic of the Amphitheater church in Durrës), *Monumentet* 7-8 (1974): 111-116; Reshat Gega, “La Chapelle de l’Amphithéâtre de Durrës,” In *XL Corso di Cultura sull’Arte Ravennate e Bizantina* (Ravenna, 1993): 527-536; Zhaneta Andrea, “Archeology in Albania: 1973-83,” *Archeological Reports* 30 (1983-1984): 76-78; Myzafer Korkuti and Karl M. Petruso, “Archeology in Albania,” *American Journal of Archeology* 97, no. 4 (1993): 736-737.

¹⁶² Michael Le Quien, *Oriens christianus in quatuor patriarchatus digestus; quo exhibentur Ecclesiae, Patriarchae, caeterique praesules totius orientis*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1740), 240 [henceforth: Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*]: *Quindecim episcopatus Dyrrhachii metropolitanae subjuciantur Stephaniacensis, Chonubiae, Croiensis, Elisce, Diocliae, Scodrensis, Drivastensis, Polatensis, Glabinitzae sive Acroceraunicae, Auloneae, Lychidorum, Antibarensis, Tzernici, Polycheropolis, seu potius Pulcheropolis, Graditzi*. See also Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 196-7; Valentini, *Contributi*, 48; Lorenzo Tacchella, *Le antiche sedi episcopali latine, greche e bulgare dell’Albania etnica e della Macedonia* (Milano, 1990), 59.

¹⁶³ 3 January 1168: *abbatibus et ceteris Latinis tam clericis quam laicis apud Durachium commorantibus. Acta Albaniae I*, no. 98; Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 203.

¹⁶⁴ 25 September 860: *Acta Albaniae I*, no. 54; Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 200.

¹⁶⁵ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 198-9.

We not only find him mentioned in the year 1208 under the title: *archidiaconus Latinorum Durachii*¹⁶⁶ but also in the year 1318: when he was called *archidiaconatus latine ecclesie Duracensis*.¹⁶⁷

Reaching Durrës, one of the most important spots of the Eastern rite where many Synods of Constantinople had taken place,¹⁶⁸ was a great success for Catholic missionary plans, but still not enough to build a future. Since Durrës was such an important center for the entire southeastern Adriatic region, “capital of the theme of Illyria, also called the key of the Empire towards the Occident,”¹⁶⁹ the election of the archbishop turned out to be difficult. A member of the Tresivo Cathedral Chapter was finally elected and consecrated by the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople in August 1209.¹⁷⁰ A great difficulty with regard to the election of the Catholic bishops was also introduced by the Venetians with their practice of nominating Venetians to the episcopal seats in the Albanian territories. The archbishop of Durrës, died soon after his nomination (1211),¹⁷¹ and according to the wish of Venice, the pope nominated a Venetian in the free place. Nevertheless, the Venetian archbishop did not stay long in Durrës, since the city was retaken by the despot Michael II (1213), and so he became the first titular archbishop of Durrës.¹⁷²

After the reconquest of Durrës by the Despotate of Epiros, the archbishopric election was again a point of tension in the Eastern Church as it had been in the Latin one. Finally in 1214, the Latin archbishop of Durrës was replaced by a Byzantine one, although the nomination of

¹⁶⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem* I, no. 636.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibidem* I, no. 61, 102.

¹⁶⁹ Ferdinand Chalandon, *Histoire de la Domination Normande en Italie*, vol. I (Paris: Picard, 1907), 258-259.

¹⁷⁰ Durrës along with 22 other archbishoprics was under the Latin Patriarchate of Constantinople. See Michael Tangl, *Die päpstlichen Kanzleiordnungen von 1200-1500* (Innsbruck: Verlag der Wagner'schen Universitäts-Buchhandlung, 1894), 28.

¹⁷¹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 135-139, 141-143.

Archbishop Dokeianos was not welcomed by Nicaea since this nomination had taken place only with the agreement of Michael Doukas.¹⁷³ The patriarch even wrote a letter to Jean Apokaukos, denouncing the uncanonical character of the archbishopric election in Durrës¹⁷⁴ although Dokeianos remained in his metropolitan seat in Durrës until March 1222.¹⁷⁵ After his death in 1225, a difficult discussion took place between patriarch Germanos, the autocephalous archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatianos,¹⁷⁶ and the metropolitan of Corfu, Georges Bardanes, about the vacant seat.¹⁷⁷ Finally, the Despot of Epiros, Theodore Doukas, nominated Constantin Kabasilas, who also had family connections with the Dynasty of Epiros. He served for a long time in the archbishopric of Durrës,¹⁷⁸ but in 1246 most probably he was transferred to the autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid.¹⁷⁹ Until this time, some of the southern suffragan churches of Durrës were under the metropolitan power of the archbishop of Ohrid, Demetrios Chomatianos.¹⁸⁰ In 1256, after the Nicaean reconquest of Durrës,¹⁸¹ Chalkoutzes was elected new archbishop of Durrës. Nevertheless, he never exercised his authority because in 1258 Durrës was taken over by Manfred Hohenstaufen so that he was never able to go to his archiepiscopal see. Independently of this, however, the Byzantine rite in Durrës remained much stronger than the Latin one.

¹⁷² He would appear only from time to time in marginal events, which do not have to do with Durrës, as for instance in Murano, in 1220. Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 360B, *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 154.

¹⁷³ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 40. Apostolos D. Karpozilos, *The Ecclesiastical Controversy between the Kingdom of Nicaea and the Principality of Epiros* (Thessaloniki, 1973), 52-63; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 226.

¹⁷⁴ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 205.

¹⁷⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 157; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 205.

¹⁷⁶ Demetrios Chomatianos was one of the most persistent adversaries of Rome. See Walter Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz: Die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1903), 203 n. 1 [henceforth: Norden, *Papsttum und Byzanz*]; Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 211.

¹⁷⁷ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 93; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 205.

¹⁷⁸ During 1230-1234 there are many letters of Demetrio Chomatianos, which show that Kabasilas was still in his seat. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 164. Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 205.

¹⁷⁹ Heinrich Gelzer, "Der Patriarchat von Achrida, Geschichte und Urkunden", In *Abhandlungen der philologisch-historischen Klasse der königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften* 5 (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 1903), 12 [henceforth: Gelzer, "Der Patriarchat von Achrida"].

¹⁸⁰ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 211.

¹⁸¹ Nicol, *The Despotate of Epiros*, 161.

No reliable data exist about any continuous Catholic presence in the town. In the Synod of Nicaea (1220), assembled to decide about the union with Rome, we also find a mention of an archbishop from Durrës called Romanos. Most probably he was a prelate in name only.¹⁸² Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that although there seems to be no continuation of the Catholic archbishopric of Durrës during this period, the Latin rite not only continued to exist latently during the years of Byzantine dominance, but it developed its roots with the contribution of the Benedictines,¹⁸³ who during the period of Catholic vacancy secured local dynasties in central Albania for Catholicism.¹⁸⁴ In addition, the bishopric of Kruja also held a very privileged political status.¹⁸⁵

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Catholic Durrës continuously struggled with the autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid for the territories in between. It looked as if the authorities of the eastern rite in Constantinople tried to put prominent personalities who either were scholars or closely connected with the politicians of Constantinople in the office of the archbishop, considered to be “Exponierte Posten des Hellenentums.”¹⁸⁶

The autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid

Although known from Late Antiquity,¹⁸⁷ Ohrid had become famous as a metropolis and capital of the medieval kingdom of Bulgaria. The role of the bishopric was strengthened by the activity of SS. Clement and Naum, who acted there as missionaries in the end of the ninth

¹⁸² Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 204-5; Mansi, *Sacrorum Conciliorum amplissima collectio* XXII, col. 1138.

¹⁸³ About the Benedictines in Albania the best study remains the one of Fulvio Cordignano, *Antici monasteri Benedictini e loro benevolenze sociali in Albania* (Rome: La civiltà cattolica, 1929).

¹⁸⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 150. Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 210.

¹⁸⁵ Pëllumb Xhufi, *Dilemat e Arbërit*, 17.

¹⁸⁶ Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrída*, 19.

¹⁸⁷ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VIII, 18, 158; Lequien, *Oriens Christianus* II, 282-300; III, 953-954; Louis Marie Olivier Duchesne, “*Les églises autocephales*”, in *Les églises séparées* (Paris, 1856); Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von*

century, during the rule of the Bulgarian Tsar Boris I. At the time of Tsar Peter (927-961), the first clash between the metropolis of Durrës and the autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid occurred. Under Tsar Samuel (976-1014), Ohrid became seat of Bulgarian archbishops,¹⁸⁸ and when Bulgaria was incorporated into the Byzantine commonwealth, Ohrid received Byzantine archbishops.

In the tenth century, the archbishopric of Ohrid also managed to expand its territories at the cost of the archbishopric of Durrës. The suffragans of Skampa-Çermenikë (Scampa-Tzernick), Glavenica (Glabinitca), Berat (Belegrada) and even Vlora came at that time under the supremacy of Ohrid.¹⁸⁹ In 1019, Ohrid became the residence of the patriarch and thus, was newly established as an autocephalous archbishopric by the Byzantine emperor Basil II (976-1025). The borders were confirmed in 1020, ignoring the protests of the archbishop of Durrës, who was even told to mind his own business and not to get involved in Ohrid's affairs.¹⁹⁰

The expansionist tendencies of this autocephalous archbishopric in the twelfth century at the expense of the metropolises of Thessaloniki, Larisa, Durrës, and so on, caused many reactions.¹⁹¹ Since the archbishopric with its thirty-two suffragans also covered the territory of

Achrida; Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur* (2nd ed., Munich, 1897), 994; Neher, in *Kirchenlexikon* I, 165-167.

¹⁸⁸ At that time the archbishopric had as suffragans the following bishoprics: Castoria, Glabinitza (Glavenica), Moglaena (Meglen), Butelis (Pelagonia), Strummitza (Strumnica), Morobisdos (Morozvizd), Belebusda (Velbuzhd), Triaditza (Sredec, Sofia), Nisos (Nish), Branitza (Branicevo), Belegrada (Berat), Thramos (Striamos, Zemlin), Skopje, Prizdriana (Prisren), Lipainion (Lipian), Serbia. Besides these there were others added by archbishop Joannes, such as Dristra (Drster), Bodina, Rhasos (Rasa), Horaea, Tzernick, Chimaira, Adrianupolis, Buthroton, Joannina, Kozila, Petros, Stagoi, and Berroia, which had been suffragans of the archbishopric of Durrës or of Nicopolis. See Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida*, 4.

¹⁸⁹ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 198.

¹⁹⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 59; Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 198.

¹⁹¹ Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida*, 4.

the ancient *Justiniana Prima* it was often identified with *Justiniana Prima*¹⁹² and, as such, continued to exist under this name until 1767.¹⁹³

Because of the reactions of the other metropolitans, and as a result of the rearrangement of the patriarchate of Constantinople by the Byzantine Emperor Alexios, the dioceses that had until that time been part of the patriarchate of Ohrid were returned to their previous metropolitans. After this, the patriarchate of Ohrid only controlled the following suffragans: Kastoria, Skopje, Velbuzd, Sredec, Maleshevo, Meglen, Pelagonia, Prizren, Strumica, Nish, Glavenica, Branicevo, Berat, Libplian, Striamon-Zemlin and Bdyn, Rhason.¹⁹⁴ The new expansionist tendencies brought into being some other dioceses to compensate for the lost suffragans of the patriarchate. At the end of the twelfth century, there was a period of revolution in the patriarchate of Ohrid to secure independence from the Bulgarians. The archbishopric of Ohrid, and also its bishoprics, was taken over by Greek clerics. The Greek element and character remained even when the archbishopric was taken by the Serbs in 1334.¹⁹⁵ In the middle of the

¹⁹² Duchesne, however, stated that this honor (i.e. the most important of the several new cities that bore the name of Justinian) belongs to Scupi (Uskub). See his *Les églises séparées* (Paris, 1856), 240.

¹⁹³ Günter Prinzig, "Achrída," in *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. I (Freiburg et al.: Herder, 1993), 115. Günter Prinzig, "Entstehung und Rezeption der Iustiniana-Prima-Theorie im Mittelalter," *Byzantino-Bulgarica* 5 (1978): 269-287.

¹⁹⁴ See Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrída*, 10.

¹⁹⁵ In 1382 the number of the old eparchies Achrída (Ohrid), Castoria, Moglena, Pelagonia, Strumica, and Glavinica had already grown with the Albanian and Greek eparchies such as Deabolis (Devoll in Albania), Sthlanitza, Grebenon (Greece), Kanina and Debra. Dismembering of the older eparchies would cause everlasting changes in the map of the respective countries. From dismembering of Ohrid, the eparchies of Kitzbon (Kitzabis, Kitzaba), Prespa, Gkora, and Mokra came into being. From Kastoria emerged Sisanion and Anaselitzon and perhaps also Moleschos and Korytza. Glavinitza disappeared. Instead came into being Belegrada (Berat in Albania) and Ispateia (Ischbad) as well as Muzakia (in Albania). From Pelagonia dismembered Belessos (Veles), and Prilapos which still functioned joined with Pelagonia. Gelzer draws our attention to the bishop of Devolli in Albania, who even pretended to the titles *archiepiscopus* and *protothonos*, titles that were reserved only for the prelate of Ohrid (the first) and for the metropolitans of Kastoria (the latter). He argues this phenomenon as a shift of authority from the bishop of Kastoria to the bishop of Devoll during the Serbian predominance of the given territories. Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrída*, 19-21.

thirteenth century, the city of Ohrid was ruled by the Albanian Paul Gropa,¹⁹⁶ who was on good terms with Charles I Anjou. Ohrid started to become touched by western influences.

Still, in the thirteenth century, the archbishopric of Ohrid entertained the presence of prominent scholars. Demetrios Chomatianos, archbishop in 1320s, was a most outstanding personality. He participated in a hot debate regarding the emperor's qualification to transfer bishops, and did not judge this act as irregular since the emperor was the 'common *epistemonarches* of the Churches.'¹⁹⁷ Although the archbishopric was reduced during his authority, it was the period which strengthened the rite and provided a good basis for the expansion of the archbishoprics in later periods.¹⁹⁸

The archbishopric of Bar

The strongest Catholic archbishopric in the southeastern Adriatic region was Bar (Antibari). The archbishopric of Bar included the northern territories of present-day Albania and also parts of Montenegro. It was the only Catholic archbishopric along the southeastern Adriatic coast until the installation of the Anjous in Albania and until the archbishopric of Durrës was won for the Catholic rite.

As a bishopric, it was first mentioned in 882.¹⁹⁹ It inherited the authority of the previous metropolitan see of Dioclea, whose bishops were already mentioned by name in the third and fourth centuries.²⁰⁰ In 1022, Bar, along with Ulcinj, was separated from Durrës to which they

¹⁹⁶ Paul Gropa appeared as a Sebastocrator, *dominus* of Dibra and of the city of Ohrid. See Gegaj, *L'Albanie et l'invasion turque*, 29-30.

¹⁹⁷ Gilbert Dagron, *Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium*, tr. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 269.

¹⁹⁸ Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrída*, 16-18.

¹⁹⁹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* III, 58-60; Ivan Marković, *Dukljansko-Barska Metropolija* (The metropolitan of Dioclea-Bar), (Zagreb: Tisak Antuna Scholza, 1902), 16, 18, 21.

²⁰⁰ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 195.

were affiliated religiously,²⁰¹ although, in fact, they had never been strongly connected to Byzantine Durrës. The rise and recognition of the bishopric of Bar as an archbishopric was made possible only after many attempts which lasted for almost two centuries. *De facto* Bar became an archbishopric in the year 1067,²⁰² but *de jure* its status was not accepted until 1199.²⁰³ The process of full recognition was still long and difficult.²⁰⁴

The rise of Bar to an archbishopric was the result of two driving forces that had affected this process in parallel. On the one hand, it had started as an attempt by the papacy to gain influence in the Orthodox Balkans and, on the other hand, it had developed by the urging of the bishops of Ragusa and Bar, who had been suffragans of the archbishoprics of Spalato (later on Split) and Durrës. They insisted on receiving the *pallium* in order to become independent. Since the northern Albanian provinces had always been connected only lukewarmly with the Eastern rite and strongly connected to the Latin Church, they fully backed the rise of Bar to an archbishopric. The strength of the Byzantine components was minimal from the beginning because even the princes of Duklja (later the State of Zeta) were anti-Byzantine and did not want to have their territories under the supremacy of an exterior archbishopric such as Ragusa, Durrës or Ohrid, which lay outside their sphere of influence.²⁰⁵ In this context these parts of the southeastern Adriatic coast became an important strategic point in the politics of the Western Church.

One of the leading personalities who contributed in an extraordinary way to the rise of Bar into an archbishopric was Gregory, a nobleman from Zadar, who in the seventies of the twelfth century became prelate of Bar. He created a significant network: he was connected in

²⁰¹ Ibidem, 199.

²⁰² See *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 63. Nevertheless, in a copy of the original charter in the *Bibliotheca Vallicelliana*, Ms. C. 16. ff. 97r-98r the year is 1062.

²⁰³ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 45.

²⁰⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 146, 183, 189.

person with the archbishop of Bari, who brought Kotor again under his supremacy in the year 1172,²⁰⁶ built very good relations with the archbishop of Split, the archbishop of Ragusa, and with Michael, the prince of Dioclea.²⁰⁷ Gregory managed to receive two papal bulls:²⁰⁸ one by Pope Alexander III, who set the final position of the bishopric of Kotor, and the second one by Pope Calixtus II. The first one proved the succession of the Dioclea church to the metropolitan church of Bar, and the second one the continuity of the archbishopric of Bar. Supported by Prince Michael and equipped with documents, Gregory went to Rome to receive the *pallium* from the pope, who ten years before had excommunicated the “bishop of Bar” for disobedience.²⁰⁹ Due to a lack of sources from this particular period, it is impossible to figure out whether he ever actually received the *pallium*. What we know is that the archbishop of Bar did not have nominal supremacy over the dioceses of northern Albania.²¹⁰ In 1189, Gregory had to escape from Bar because of the Serbian Prince Nemanja.²¹¹

In 1199, Vulcanus, Prince of Dioclea, who was a devoted Catholic, and according to Šufflay also a relative of Pope Innocent III,²¹² managed to obtain the archbishopric *pallium* for the prelate of Bar. There were times when the archbishop of Ragusa complained about this decision of Pope Innocent III,²¹³ but it proved to be irrevocable. The title, character and its

²⁰⁵ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 199.

²⁰⁶ On the involvement of the Sicilian monarchy in the region see *Codex Diplomaticus Barese* 1, 99; See also the study of Fedele Sforza, “Le relazioni giurisdizionali tra l’arcivescovo di Bari e il Vescovado di Cattaro in Dalmazia dal X al XV secolo,” *Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Sectione Oecumenico-Patristica Graeco-Byzantina* “A.S. Nicolao” in *Urbe Barensi in Facultate S. Theologiae apud Pontificiam Universitatem S. Thomae de Urbe* (Bari, 1975) [henceforth: Sforza, “Le relazioni giurisdizionali”]

²⁰⁷ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 204.

²⁰⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 63, 81; Šufflay considered these *bullae* as forgeries. See Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 204, n. 4.

²⁰⁹ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 205.

²¹⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 103.

²¹¹ *Ibidem* I, no. 106. Gregory went to his hometown, Zadar, where he died in 1195. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 109, 111; Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 266.

²¹² Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 206.

²¹³ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 214; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VI, 93.

suffragans were never again questioned in Rome.²¹⁴ All the north Albanian dioceses were in the hands of the archbishopric of Bar, and in the course of time, its influence spread more and more along the southeast Adriatic coast.

Many bishoprics were suffrages of Bar and Jireček grouped them according to their geographical position into those situated in the vicinity of the maritime cities and castles and those in the hinterland.²¹⁵ While most of the latter disappeared one after the other from 1200 onwards, the number of the coastal suffragans continued to increase.²¹⁶ Jireček considered the bishoprics of Shkodra (*Scutari*), Drishti (*Drivast*), Shurdhah (*Sarda*), Pulti (*Polatum*), and Arber (*Arbanum*) close to Kruja as coastal while Ulcinj, Shas (*Suacium*) in its eastern vicinity, and Budua were considered inland bishoprics.²¹⁷ New bishoprics were created such as Danja south of Shkodra and Baleci on the Rioli River east of Lake Shkodra, and Sapa or Sapata, now in the village of Nenshati in the vicinity of Lezha.²¹⁸ This way Bar became the most important base for the Papacy to spread its influence in Albania and in the Balkans, a role previously held by the archbishopric of Ragusa.

The archbishopric of Ragusa

Ragusa/Dubrovnik became archbishopric and a metropolis around 999. After its rise to the status of an archbishopric, Kotor, Ulcinj, Bar and many other bishoprics fell under its authority. The metropolitan power of Ragusa reached its peak under Archbishop Tribunus (1158-1187), who was also engaged in taking care of the Catholic rite in north Albania. He intervened at the Papal Curia for the improvement of the Catholic rite in these territories, asking the pope to

²¹⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 146, 183, 189.

²¹⁵ Constantin Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft im mittelalterlichen Serbien. Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des 13. bis 15. Jahrhunderts*, 4 vols. (Vienna: Im Kommission bei Alfred Hölder, 1912-1919) [henceforth: Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft*].

²¹⁶ *Ibidem.*; idem, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 218, 265.

²¹⁷ *Ibidem.*

²¹⁸ See Johan Georg von Hahn, *Reise durch die Gebiete des Drin und Wardar* (Vienna, 1867), 328.

send envoys there. At that time, around the year 1167, he claimed archepiscopal authority over Bar, which had already risen to an archbishopric (1067) and called the prelate of Bar simply “bishop.” Since the archbishop of Bar did not want to obey him, Tribunus managed to influence the pope to excommunicate him and also the bishop of Ulcinj.²¹⁹

For a certain time, it seemed that the enthusiastic archbishop of Ragusa had even started a battle against Orthodox strongholds. In the year 1167, he managed to convince the bishop of Arbanum, who was in permanent contact with the abbots of the biggest Benedictine monasteries in northern Albania as well as those of southern Dalmatia,²²⁰ to abandon the Greek rite, *qui in multis Romane ecclesie consuetudini obviare videtur.*²²¹ The bishop of Arbanum, who seems to have been ordained by the pope himself²²², was also subordinated to Tribunus. In 1168, Tribunus was sent by Pope Alexander III as a fighter for Rome to Durrës, whose archbishops were acknowledged Greek scholars and who participated actively in all the important Church meetings in Constantinople, signing the acts of synods with their personal *ductus.*²²³ Tribunus was recommended to the *abbatibus et ceteris Latinis tam clericis quam laicis apud Durachium commorantibus.*²²⁴

When the archbishop of Bar, Gregory, had to escape from Bar (1189), because of the Serbian prince Nemanja, the archbishop of Ragusa, at that time Bernard I (1189-1201), profited from these circumstances, and strove decisively against Bar. He went to Rome in the year 1189,²²⁵ where the situation for his purposes was superficially favorable: he was on good terms with the Papal Curia through the new rulers of the Dioclea, Župan Nemanja and his brothers; he

²¹⁹ Ibidem I, no. 96, Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 203;

²²⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 93.

²²¹ Ibidem, no. 97.

²²² Ibid., no. 200, n. 1.

²²³ Ibid., no. 85, 86, 90, 92.

²²⁴ Ibid., no. 98. Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 203.

²²⁵ Karl Hampe, *Germany under the Salian and Hohenstaufen Emperors* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1973), 168.

was equipped with original and even forged documents to prove the legal continuity of his authority²²⁶ over the north Albanian dioceses.²²⁷ Bernard I came back as the only metropolitan ruler of these territories.²²⁸ During 1188-1189, Bar and its suffragans: Ulcinj, Shasi, Drishti, Pulti, Shkodra and Albania were officially under the jurisdiction of the archbishopric of Ragusa, as the *Liber Censuum* testifies.²²⁹

²²⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 65, 82.

²²⁷ *Ibidem* I, no. 110.

²²⁸ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 275.

²²⁹ BAV: *Codex Ottoboni* 3057. Cfr. Paul Fabre and Louis Duchesne, *Le Liber Censuum de l'Église Romaine*, vol. II (Paris: Fontemoing et C^{ie}, éditeurs, 1910), 102: *Metropolis civitas Ragusia hos habet episcopos suffraganeos: Stagnensem, Bossensem, Tribuniensem, Catarinensem, Rose, Biduanensem, Antivarensensem, Dulchinensem, Suacinensem, Drivastensem, Polatensem, Scodrinensem, Arbanensem.*

III. The establishment of papal authority in the Southwestern Balkans

Until the *Regnum Albaniae* came into existence, the Southwestern Balkans was considered “schismatic,” along with Greeks, Serbs and Bulgarians²³⁰ but, as opposed to the latter they had no distinct political or religious organization until the late thirteenth century. Their Catholicisation was thus, a different phenomenon from that found in other Western European countries. Since these territories were not yet organised within a centralised state before 1272, Catholicism could not be introduced by royal decree. It was also different from the Christianisation of the pagan lands, because these territories were already Christianized. Taking into consideration these conditions, before the *Regnum Albaniae* emerged, the Papal Curia had attempted to reach people mainly on an individual basis, that is, through archiepiscopal and episcopal elections, and through religious orders and papal envoys.

III. 1. Papal representatives in the region

There were different means with which the Roman Curia used to establish its authority in a certain region. A preferred one was certainly having its representatives there, which could be done best through the election of archbishops and bishops, who resided there, but also through different legates, who carried out different duties according to their status. In this context, archiepiscopal and episcopal elections were one of the main means of the Roman Curia to establish its authority in the region, which continued to have a crucial role also after the installation of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

²³⁰ About heresy in Albania see Ylber Hysa, “Çështje të herezise dualiste dhe heterodoksisë në Shqipërië Mesjetare” (The question of dualist heresy and heterodoxy in medieval Albania), *Gjurmime Albanologjike, Seria e Shkencave Historike* 26 (1996): 39-56; Dhimitër Shuteriqi, “Shënim mbi herezinë mesjetare në Shqipëri” (A note on medieval heresy in Albania), *Studime Historike* 2 (1980): 199-222. About the pagan forms of religion see Georges von Hahn, *Albanesische Studien* (Jena, 1854), 143-65.

III. 1. 1. Archiepiscopal and episcopal election and confirmation

Keeping an eye on the events in the region could best be done through faithful bishops and archbishops, who not only implemented the suggestions and directions given by the papal curia, but also reported to the curia in written form or in person during different visitations.²³¹ It was the duty of every bishop to show himself at the Papal Curia once a year,²³² although this was not always possible. Not only the obligatory visits were to be taken into consideration, but sometimes also unforeseen ones. The bishop of Cunavia, in the archbishopric of Durrës, for instance, was asked by Pope John XXII (18 May 1317) to show himself within 20 days in the Papal Court in Avignon for reasons which were not explicitly mentioned in the papal epistle.²³³

The majority of papal letters addressed to the Albanian clergy concerned the issue of bishopric and archbishopric nomination and translation. These letters, although mostly following the prescribed formula, show to a certain level the reality behind the very act of nomination and translation. They are a good source not only for the dates, places and persons' names, but also as indicator of the local circumstances.

The election of the archbishop and of the exempt bishop required a special process of ecclesiastical nominations and translations. The normal, non-exempt bishop was elected by the chapter, and, in case this failed, by the metropolitan, while the archbishop was elected by the papal curia. For this reason special attention needs to be paid to the nomination and translation on

²³¹ Pennington pointed out the variety of canonistic political and constitutional thought defining the relationship of the pope with the bishops. See Kenneth Pennington, *Pope and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

²³² Since the pontificate of Gregory VII, the elected bishop was obliged to present himself in the Papal Curia every year. This was part of his vow. See Aemilius Friedberg, ed. *Corpus Juris Canonici* (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1959), *Liber Extra*, X 2.24.4: *Apostolorum limina singulis annis aut per me aut per certum nuncium meum visitabo, nisi eorum absolvar licentia.*

the level of the archbishopric and exempt-bishopric election as a feature of the papal policy in the region.

The two main Catholic archbishoprics, whose suffragans were partly or wholly in the territories of the *Regnum Albaniae* were the archbishoprics of Bar (Antibari) and Durrës (Durazzo). The latter received the attention of the papacy mainly after its Anjou conquest, and especially during the fourteenth century, which was also the period when the *Regnum Albaniae* played its part in the Albanian territories. The archbishopric of Bar, however, was one of those archbishoprics which drew the attention of the Holy See from the beginning. An interest in it grew over the course of time, as the southeastern Slavs finally returned to the eastern rite and attempted to build a national church with expansionist tendencies. Just as the Eastern Church tried to fill these “exponierten Posten”²³⁴ with prominent personalities, so also did the Papal Curia, and to manage this feat it was necessary to break the electoral rules from time to time.

The papal policy of strengthening Catholic discipline in the archbishopric of Bar through the appointment of prominent personalities started in the first half of the thirteenth century, when Johannes de Plano Carpini²³⁵ was appointed to the seat of this archbishopric as a reward for the success he had achieved during his activity as a legate to the Mongols, who were seriously

²³³ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 2, fol. 183; *Reg. Vat.* 63, ep. 132: *ut infra viginti dierum spatium post citationem huiusmodi se coram nobis personaliter represententur.*

²³⁴ Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida*, 19.

²³⁵ The well-known historian of the Franciscans in Albania Marin Sirdani stated that John de Plano Carpini was one of the first strong archbishops in these territories. See Marin Sirdani, *Françeskanët në Shqypni dhe shqyptarët katolikë në lamë t'atdhetaris* (Franciscans in Albania and the Catholic Albanians in the area of patriotism (Prishtina: Shpresa, 2002), 105. There are many studies on John de Plano Carpini as an envoy to the Mongols, and also some on his activity in Germany. See, for instance, Harald Zimmermann, “Johannes de Plano Carpini”, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, vol. XIV (1998), col. 1112-1114. Alberto Ghinato, *Giovanni da Pian del Carpine*, in *Encyclopedia Catholica VI*, 595; Francesco Liverani, *Fra Giovanni da Pian de Carpine nel contado di magione viaggiatore e descrittore di Tartaria e Mongolia nel secolo XIII* (Perugia: V. Bartelli, 1876). Nevertheless, there are almost no studies done on the activity of John de Plano Carpini in the archbishopric of Bar, an activity sporadically mentioned as a very important one.

threatening Europe in the thirteenth century.²³⁶ Johannes de Plano Carpini was already experienced when he was appointed archbishop of Bar, because he was the one who in 1222 was sent to Germany to smooth the path of the Minorite Order in the German territories, and, during his stay there, he established many convents not only in various German towns such as Hildesheim, Magdeburg etc. but also in the east in lands such as Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland.²³⁷

He was appointed archbishop of Bar in 1248,²³⁸ in very difficult circumstances when the archbishopric's relations with the archbishopric of Ragusa had reached crisis proportions.²³⁹ Every time when the seat of the archbishopric of Bar was vacant the archbishop of Ragusa tried to place it under his own rule. The same happened at the occasion of the death of the archbishop of Bar in 1247. The archbishop of Ragusa tried to use this occasion to further his pretensions, claiming the archbishopric of Bar and its suffragans in a written letter, presented in an assembly demanded by his envoy and convoked by a Serbian prince. The citizens of Bar, participating in the assembly did not accept these claims and even threatened the envoy with his life. The archbishopric of Ragusa turned to the pope in protest, but the latter nominated a new archbishop of Bar, namely Johannes de Plano Carpini.

²³⁶ John de Plano Carpini is very famous for his work "*Historia Mongalorum quos nos Tartaros appellamus*," fruit of his legation to Mongolia which became the first guide to Central Asia. This work which includes introductory chapters about geography, habits, costumes and religion of the Mongols, a historic synthesis of the empire, a short description of their army and their methods of fighting etc. has a great historical and ethnographical importance, that is why it has been published many times and in different languages from the Middle Ages onwards. See Felicitas Schmieder, *Johannes von Plano Carpini: Kunde von den Mongolen (1245-1247)* Fremde Kulturen in Alten Berichten, vol. 3 (Siegmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1997).

²³⁷ Liverani, *Fra Giovanni da Pian de Carpine*, 14-20, 90, 100.

²³⁸ We do not have the exact date of appointment. Eubel gives in his *HC I*, 92 only the year 1248. Alfonso Orбини stated that John de Plano Carpini was appointed archbishop of Bar in 1248, in a time of great difficulties with the archbishop of Ragusa. See Alfonso Orбини, "Fra Giovanni di Pian del Carpine, ambasciatore di Roma," *Miscellanea Franciscana* XLIII, no. I-II (January-June 1943): 55-79, especially p. 57. See also Liverani, *Fra Giovanni da Pian de Carpine*, 97; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VI, 101-102; VII, 38-39.

²³⁹ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 139-140.

Carpini began his office as a mediator. Before going to Bar, he stopped in Ragusa, where he presented a detailed plan for reconciliation. According to this plan, each side had to gather the evidence to justify its claims over the rights of each Church and, after that, they were to meet in Kotor, a neutral territory.²⁴⁰ John promised to excommunicate everyone who tried to prevent the proposed meeting in Kotor and not to take any action against Ulcinj, Bar's suffragan, which had recognized the supremacy of Ragusa, but turned back to Bar in 1249 and 1250. Nevertheless, the meeting in Kotor seems not to have taken place, since there is no mention of it anywhere in the documents. Archbishop Johannes, however, became a "strong partisan"²⁴¹ of the rights of his see, which even resulted in his imprisonment in Ragusa. After having paid for his release, he excommunicated the Ragusans for his humiliation.

In 1252, the two competing archbishops brought their claims in front of the pope, supporting themselves with evidence they had. Opposing the title archbishop for Bar and claiming it along with its suffragans, the archbishop of Ragusa based this claim on a "stolen" document, which was most certainly a forgery.²⁴² According to the document, which was "stolen" by the Serbian king Stephen Nemanja, seventy years previously, a certain Andreas had been appointed Archbishop of Ragusa in the eighth century by Pope Zacharias. Among other territories, this archbishop also had under his supremacy the territory and the towns of Bar and its present suffragans. This letter could not be produced and the other documents presented by the archbishop of Ragusa were rejected by Johannes de Plano Carpini as being not relevant to the claims of Ragusa about jurisdiction over Duklja (Zeta). These documents included submissions to the archbishop of Ragusa by the bishopric of Ulcinj in 1189 and 1242. The archbishop of Ragusa

²⁴⁰ Kotor was the only Dalmatian see which was under the jurisdiction of the Italian archbishopric of Bar. See Sforza, "Le relazioni giurisdizionali."

²⁴¹ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 139.

²⁴² *Ibidem*, 140.

did not fail to point out that Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) had recognized an excommunication of Bar and Ulcinj for disobedience by the Ragusan archbishop and claimed that Bar had been recognized as an archbishopric only owing to an error. He claimed that Pope Innocent III had given this recognition at a time when the see of Ragusa was vacant and thus, unable to launch a protest.

Johannes de Plano Carpini claimed that his see was older than Ragusa's. Originally there had been two archbishoprics in Dalmatia: Salona (now Split) and Dioclea (succeeded by Bar). Ragusa, whose jurisdiction extended only over the town of Ragusa had been first only a bishopric under the supervision of the archbishop in Split. Johannes denied that the archbishopric of Bar had been created in the way described by the archbishop of Ragusa.

Johannes de Plano Carpini initiated a reformation in the southeastern Adriatic territories that turned the archbishopric into a strong center of Catholicism in the Albanian lands.²⁴³ Two years before his death (1252), he managed to turn some of the dioceses of middle Albania to Catholicism.²⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, during the whole of the thirteenth century, an important missionary movement from the Byzantine to the Catholic rite is evident, especially in north Albania, but also in Durrës, where, for instance, archdeacon Calojohannes and the Minorite Nicolaus, bishop of Crotone, converted to the Latin rite.²⁴⁵ Such a success of Catholicism in the north Albanian territories in this period should most probably be attributed to the activities of Johannes de Plano Carpini.

As a result of his work, the archbishop of Bar also received the title of primate of Serbia and metropolitan of the suffragans Ulcinj, Budua, Shasi, Shkodra, Drishti, Pulati and Sarda, Sapa, Danja, Lezha and Arbëria. Besides the dioceses, the archbishopric had also indirect influence on

²⁴³ Thallóczy, *Forschungen* I, 202.

²⁴⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 200.

Benedictine abbeys such as S. Maria of Rotec, S. Nicola of Boina della Fossa (in the bishopric of Ulcinj), SS. Sergio and Bacchus (in the bishopric of Shkodra), S. Giovanni de Stivalio or Strilalio (in the bishopric of Drishti), S. Paolo in the bishopric of Lezha, S. Sofia of Dagno (Deja), S. Maria of Trefandena (in the bishopric of Lezha), S. Alexander del Monte (in the bishopric of Arbano), and S. Alexander of Molendino (in the bishopric of Arbano).²⁴⁶

Another mediator came to the archiepiscopal see of Bar when Marinus Zare was elected in 1301. He proved to be a very predominant personality, who not only had the support of the Papal Curia, but was also a favorite of secular rulers. Descended from a patrician family in Bar he often served as *nuncio* of the Serbian kings Stephen Dragutin²⁴⁷ and Uroš II,²⁴⁸ and of their mother, Helen, a French princess and Serbian Queen.²⁴⁹ When promising to Pope Nicholas IV that she would attend to the conversion of the Bulgarian emperor,²⁵⁰ she counted on Marinus Zare, who would also have been on good terms with the latter.

Marinus was also quite influential thanks to the various powers bestowed on him by Pope Benedict XI. In 1303, Marinus was given the right to institute and remove rectors in some parochial churches of the Serbian Kingdom: *de Briscovia, de Rudenico, de Rogosna, et de Trepzo et de Grazaniza in regno Servie*.²⁵¹ The acceptance of episcopal resignations was a right reserved for the pope but, in November 1303, Benedict XI transmitted it to Marinus as well, namely he

²⁴⁵ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 210.

²⁴⁶ Giuseppe Salimbeni, *Appunti per la storia ecclesiastica in Albania nei secoli XIV e XV* (Grottaferrata: Badia Greca, 1977), 30-31.

²⁴⁷ Langlois, *Les Registres*, no. 6713; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 23622.

²⁴⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 514, 547, 581.

²⁴⁹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 46. f. 166^r, ep. 793; Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* I, 375-376. n. 607; as a regest is to be found in ASV, *Schedario Garampi*, vol. 68, f. 191^v [Miscellanea I A1];

²⁵⁰ In 1291 (March 23), Pope Nicholas IV praised Helen, the queen of Serbia and “Rascia”, because through Marinus, the archbishop of Bar she aimed at converting the Bulgarian Emperor. See ASV. *Reg. Vat.* 46, ff. 14^r-17^v given as a regest by Fulvio Cordignano and Giuseppe Valentini, *Saggio di un Regesto Storico dell’Albania. Premiato dalla R. Accademia d’Italia* (Shkodër: Tipografia dell’immacolata, 1937-40), 10.

²⁵¹ 18 November 1303: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 552.

was allowed to accept the resignation of Stephanus, bishop of Shkodra,²⁵² *certis ex causis*.²⁵³ It is on the same day, 18 November 1303, that he was also entrusted with the very difficult, but prestigious task of correcting and reforming a quite vast area which included all the churches of northern Albania, starting from Durrës, those under the dominion of the Greek emperor, and the ones in the territories of the Serbian king Uroš II, his brother Stephen and their mother, Queen Helen.²⁵⁴

In the fourteenth century, the archbishopric of Bar had already consolidated his authority through such energetic archbishops and also because of the royal support of Helen and Stephen Dragutin. In the twenties of the fourteenth century, the Roman Curia had almost no hope of converting the Serbs to Catholicism. In these circumstances, the major question of the Curia became saving the Catholic territories along the southeast Adriatic coast from the expansionist attempts of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which was closely linked with the secular authorities of the Serbian kingdom. The archbishop of Bar was now needed as a crusader and not as a mediator: as a fighter of schism and heresy, who was experienced in converting the people to Catholicism even when this was in clear contradiction with the will of the Serbian royal authority. Such a crusader was the famous Dominican Guillelmus Adae.

Guillelmus Adae was chosen by Pope Clement V in 1305 for missionary work in the East. He went to Constantinople and thence traveled through Asia Minor to Syria. When he came back to the West during the first half of 1313, he began writing his first work *De modo Sarracenos extirpandi*.²⁵⁵ He went back to the East, first to the Mongol Khanate of Persia, then to preach the

²⁵² 18 November 1303: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 553: *concedit facultatem recipiendi resignationem Stephani episcopi Scutarensis*.

²⁵³ *Ibidem*.

²⁵⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 554.

²⁵⁵ Edited in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Documents arméniens*, 2 (1906), 521-555. Comments are given by J. Delaville le Roulx, *La France en Orient au XIV^e siècle*, in *Bibliothèque de l'École Française de Athènes et Rome*

Gospel in India, sailed to Aden and penetrated into parts of Ethiopia. Around 1316-1317, he went back to Avignon for a short time only because of Pope John XXII and decided then to create a new see at the town of Sultaniah (1 April 1318) with Franco di Perugia as the first archbishop and Guillelmus Adae as one of his suffragan bishops. He succeeded Franco di Perugia as archbishop in 1322, and was to conduct a mission for the union with the Catholic Church at the court of King Leo V of Armenia (31 May 1323). It is not certain if he himself participated in this mission, because soon after that (26 October 1324²⁵⁶) Guillelmus Adae was transferred to the archbishopric of Bar, although he was not consecrated until 18 January 1325.²⁵⁷

He must have left for his new see very soon afterwards, for he is reported once more in 1329 as having made his way from Bar to Avignon and later to Narbonne, where he arrived on 25 January 1337. There he was enjoined by Pope Benedict XII to return to his see which he had abandoned for eight years. Adae remained at Bar until his death in 1341.²⁵⁸ Guillelmus Adae was a fanatic enemy²⁵⁹ of the infidels on a global level. The south French Dominican was archbishop at a time when Bar was a very hot spot between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, as well as very close to many heresies that were spreading in the Balkans. He was enjoined to turn Bar into a bulwark of Catholicism against the “schismatics” and heretics. Over the rest of the fourteenth century, the Albanian bishops would be the ones to play a very important role in the crusades against the “schismatics” and also in matters of Church Union.

In the fourteenth century, the election process in the Albanian bishoprics was quite often in the hands of the central authority, that is, the Papal Curia, although each Albanian bishopric

44 (1886), 70-77; Ch. Kohler, “Documents relatifs a Guillaume Adam archevêque de Sultanieh puis de Bar et à son entourage (1318-1346),” *Revue de l’Orient latin* 10 (1903-4): 42-44.

²⁵⁶ ASV: *Reg. Aven.* 22, fol. 268; ASV: *Reg. Vat.* 78 (an. IV., pars. 1) ep. 350; Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 158; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 67; Eubel, *HC* I, 92; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 699.

²⁵⁷ Aziz Suryal Atiya, *The Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Methuen and Co. LTD., 1938), 65-66 [henceforth: Atiya, *The Crusade*].

²⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 66.

had its own canonical Chapter, which according to the Canon Law was considered the legitimate elective body. The Chapter was supposed to elect the respective bishops, but very often there are cases which were reserved either for the pope himself or entrusted to papal envoys or clerics. Especially during the pontificate of John XXII such cases were numerous. Pope John XXII concentrated all the offices in his hands, especially those of nominations and confirmations.²⁶⁰ The elections of the bishops of Shas (1319),²⁶¹ Cunavia (1319),²⁶² Skopje (1326),²⁶³ Ulcinj (1334),²⁶⁴ to mention a few, were all carried out by Pope John XXII himself. This can certainly be explained by the centralizing policy of nominations and translations of Pope John XXII, but it is also an indicator of the local process of nomination, since this phenomenon was also repeated during the pontificates of successive popes. During the pontificate of Benedict XII, there were many cases of nominations such as the one of Antonius, bishop of Ulcinj (1343),²⁶⁵ Johannes, bishop of Shkodra (1345),²⁶⁶ Paulus, bishop of Shas (1345),²⁶⁷ Gerwicus, bishop of Balec (1347),²⁶⁸ and so on.

A very significant case of bishop election in the Albanian territories was reported by Daniele Farlati concerning the election of the bishop of Drivast (Drishti) in 1322.²⁶⁹ After the

²⁵⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 699, 760. Cf. Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* II, 55 n. 6.

²⁶⁰ To justify the centralization he issued the bull “*Ex debito*”. The centralization achieved increased the power of the papacy and that of the Catholic Church during his pontificate. For more readings regarding the issue of centralizing policy see Guillaume Mollat, *Les Papes d’Avignon (1305-1378)* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffré, 1924), 36-62. See also *Corpus Juris Canonici*, lib. I, tit. III, cap. 4; Geoffrey Barraclough, *Papal Provisions: Aspects of Church History Constitutional, Legal and Administrative in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1935) [henceforth: Barraclough, *Papal Provisions*].

²⁶¹ 16 July 1319. ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 63, f. 28v.

²⁶² 19 September 1319. ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 70, fol. 304r-v; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 654.

²⁶³ 7 December 1326. ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 26, fol. 385r; *Reg. Vat.* 82, ep. 567; Mentioned by Garampi, ASV, *S. Garampi* 61, f. 155v.

²⁶⁴ 17 August 1334: ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 106, ff. 450r-451v, ep. 1127. Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, no. 251; Eubel, *Bullarium Francescanum* V, no. 1072.

²⁶⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 152, f. 186r-v.

²⁶⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 169, f. 41; ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 61, f. 160r.

²⁶⁷ ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 63, f. 28v; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 297; *Acta Albaniae* II, no. 16.

²⁶⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 173, fol. 40r-v; ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 36, f. 119r; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 207; Eubel, *Bullarium Francescanum* 6, no. 406; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 30.

²⁶⁹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 236.

death of Dominicus, the Canon Chapter could not elect the new bishop within the time limits reserved for it. It elected Nicolaus, an Augustinian.²⁷⁰ In order to prevent the episcopal seats remaining vacant for a long term, the Fourth Lateran Council had determined that the electors of the candidate for bishop had to gather within three months after the proclamation of the vacant seat. If after three months no bishop was elected, the electors would lose the right to elect the candidate. The right would then be given to the higher authorities, that is for a bishop the right was given to the archbishop, and the right to elect the archbishop or the exempt bishop (dependent directly on the Apostolic See) was given to the pope himself.²⁷¹ Because of the delay in the election of the bishop, Andreas, the archbishop of Bar, proclaimed the election of the chapter as invalid (*irritam*), and since he was the next higher authority he reelected the bishop of Drivast, strangely enough, the same Nicolaus. Pope John XXII, however, accepted neither this election nor the previous one, *quippe jus eligendi ad se revocaverat*.²⁷² Having concentrated the whole nomination process in his own hands, Pope John XXII started another process of election. Nevertheless, stated Farlati, because of the virtues of Nicolaus, Pope John XXII could do nothing else but also elect the same Nicolaus. It would have been interesting to find out what qualities this Nicolaus had that made him special, but the papal letters are so formal that they do not contain such information. One year after this election, Pope John XXII transferred Nicolaus from the bishopric of Drishti to the one of Argos (*Ecclesia Argolicensis*), leaving vacant the important bishopric of Drishti for almost 27 years.²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Ibidem.

²⁷¹ C. 41, X 1, 6: *Infra quos, iusto impedimento cessante si electio celebrata non fuerit, qui eligere debuerant, eligendi potestate careant ea vice, ac ipsa eligendi potestas ad eum, qui proximo praeesse dignoscitur, devolvatur.* Cf. Klaus Ganzer, *Papsttum und Bistumsbesetzungen in der Zeit von Gregor IX bis Bonifaz VIII: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der päpstlichen Reservationen* (Cologne et al.: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), 9 [henceforth: Ganzer, *Papsttum und Bistumsbesetzungen*].

²⁷² Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 236.

²⁷³ Ibidem.

In the territories of the Southwestern Balkans, the election of bishops and other clerics had been very much influenced by secular authorities such as the Anjous, Venetians and local secular authorities all of whom exercised power in the territory. This was mostly the case when the archbishopric of Durrës was won back to Catholicism after the fall of Constantinople. The Venetians started the practice of appointing Venetian burghers as bishops in the suffragans of Durrës. They even managed to appoint a Venetian citizen by birth as the archbishop of Durrës, who in 1211, was sent immediately from Constantinople to Durrës.²⁷⁴ Nevertheless, he did not stay in Durrës. He is mentioned as living in Venice, thus becoming the first archbishop of Durrës in name only.²⁷⁵ The Anjous followed the same politics. When the Anjou regime was installed in the region, they also started to influence the process of bishop election, choosing men who were loyal to them.²⁷⁶

Although freedom in the process of election was required not only for the candidate, but also for the electors, secular influence continued throughout the fourteenth century. According to Canon Law, if a candidate was elected to a bishopric under the influence of the secular authority, the election was *ipso iure* illegitimate and the elected was declared *ineligibilis*. The electors not only lost their rights to elect, but their offices and benefices were to be suspended for three years.²⁷⁷ Nevertheless, even indirectly, the secular influence was very often present during the election process in the Albanian territories. In the early years of his career, Marinus Zare, the archdeacon of Bar,²⁷⁸ was also a *nuncio* of the Serbian Queen Helen, who was on good terms with the Roman Curia because of her French origins and her Catholic zeal. It was certainly not a

²⁷⁴ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 210.

²⁷⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 143, note 154.

²⁷⁶ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 211.

²⁷⁷ C. 14 X 1, 6; c. 43 X 1, 6. See also Ganzer, *Papsttum und Bistumsbesetzungen*, 9.

²⁷⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 46, f. 166^r, ep. 793.

coincidence that the same Marinus was elected archbishop of Bar on 21 June 1301.²⁷⁹ The Zare family had always enjoyed privileges of the Serbian kings: They were confirmed in their possessions by the Serbian king, even when the latter was fought by a Catholic coalition led by the Hungarians, as it was the case in 1319. Since in the same year they also received citizenship rights in the Ragusan Republic,²⁸⁰ it seems that this family had taken the side of the Serbian King Uroš II against the Hungarians in the battles of 1319.

The metropolitan received his confirmation and consecration from the pope,²⁸¹ whereas the bishop received it from the metropolitan unless he was under the direct administration of the Apostolic See. In the latter case, confirmation had to be given by the pope, and the elected bishop had to go either personally to the Papal Curia to receive the confirmation or had to send a representative to get it.²⁸² In this case, the bishop was treated like a direct dependent of the Apostolic See.²⁸³ There were also cases when the confirmation was carried out by a papal trustee because the elected bishop could not travel to Avignon. In 1318, Pope John XXII confirmed Johannes Rubeus, rector of the rich parochial church of S. Nicolaus de Petrosa in the diocese of Cunavia, through Andreas, the expelled bishop of Kruja.²⁸⁴ Besides this, Andreas was also given the task to carry out two other confirmations, one of them in southern Italy. Along with Michael, the bishop of Albania, he had to confirm the election of Costa as the archdeacon of Durrës:²⁸⁵ the latter was not able to travel to Avignon, because of his fear that the “schismatics” would occupy

²⁷⁹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, f. 31^v, ep. 117.

²⁸⁰ Unpublished archival document in HDA, Dubrovnik, *Diversa Cancelariae* 1323 (14 August), 142. HDA, Dubrovnik, *Testamenta Notariae* 1295-1334, 41. cf. also the regest in *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 651 and *Monumenta Ragusina* V, no. 142.

²⁸¹ Geoffrey Barraclough, The Making of a Bishop in the Middle Ages: The Part of the Pope in Law and Fact,” *The Catholic Historical Review* XIX, no. 3 (October, 1933), 601; 5, 286-287 [henceforth: Barraclough, “The making of a Bishop”]; Paul Hinschius, *Das Kirchenrecht der Katholiken and Protestanten in Deutschland*, 6 vols. (Berlin, 1869-1877), vol. II, 577, 601.

²⁸² C. 44 X 1, 6.

²⁸³ Barraclough, “The Making of a Bishop,” 287.

²⁸⁴ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 187r, ep. 1324; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68, fol. 104 v ep. 1324; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 637.

his seat (*attento quod schismatici dominium templi obtineant in dicta civitate Dyrrhachiensis*).²⁸⁶

The third confirmation carried out by Andreas Croensis was that of a parochial benefice to Johannes Barbuci in the diocese of Bari in Italy.²⁸⁷ The task of confirming Johannes Barbuci in Bari may seem strange because it was in Italy. As a matter of fact, this demonstrates that Andreas was given the right of confirmation in Avignon, and since on the way back he had to stop in Bari he could also carry out the confirmation of Johannes Barbuci.

Other cases when the papal trustee confirmed the results of a bishop election are certainly not missing: Paul, the bishop of Shas, received his confirmation by Bertrand, bishop of Ostia. His confirmation took place in July 1345.²⁸⁸ In 1363, Vinciguerra got papal confirmation to his episcopal office at Vreg, a seat strongly under threat by the “schismatics”.²⁸⁹

The frequency of such direct appointments and confirmations challenges us to search for other reasons for this direct impact of the Papal Curia in the region. The centralising policy of bishop elections and confirmations of certain pontiffs such as John XXII permitting financial use of it was certainly one reason. Another reason for the failure of the metropolitans to confirm bishops in their seats was the physical absence of the archbishop, something that may have been connected to a lack of attention to his suffragans as was the case of Thomas, bishop of Ulcinj in 1331, who received his confirmation from Bertrand, the bishop of Tusculani. The election and also the confirmation devolved to the archbishop of Bar was not recognized by the papacy, because Archbishop Guillelmus Adae was in the Roman Curia at that time (*electio devoluta*

²⁸⁵ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 281r-v, ep. 1329 (nota taxae); ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68 fol. 106 and mentioned in the work of Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 196, 191, 366; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 636.

²⁸⁶ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 196.

²⁸⁷ This letter of the same day is recorded in ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 187v, ep. 1325 and in ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68, fol. 105 ep. 1325.

²⁸⁸ Eliseo Monsignano, ed., *Bullarium Carmelitanum*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1715), 46; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 297; *Acta Albaniae* II, no. 16.

²⁸⁹ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 152, fol. 362.

archiepiscopo Antibarensis non valet fieri, cum dictus archiepiscopus in Curia Romana resideat).²⁹⁰

III. 1. 2. Papal legates

*Tantam devotionem, tantas deo gratias, tantas lacrymas, tanta gaudia difficile in alio populo vidimus*²⁹¹ - with these words a papal legate expressed his impression about the way he was welcomed in Scampa (nowadays Elbasan in Albania) in the year 519. This is the earliest documented visit of papal legates in the Albanian territories. On this occasion, the papal legates, who stopped not only in Scampa, but also in Vlora, indicated that they were on their way to Constantinople, most probably traveling on the famous *Via Egnatia*. The legates of Pope Hormisdas were welcomed by Trojus,²⁹² the bishop and also by the citizens of Scampa who seem to have greeted them on the streets in an enthusiastic welcoming ceremony, quite impressive for the papal legates and unique, as they state.

Many papal legates traveled through the Southwestern Balkans afterwards. With its many rivers and open valleys leading into the heart of the Balkans and further on to Constantinople,²⁹³ the Albanian lands very often served as a passageway for many westerners on their way to eastern territories.²⁹⁴ The Albanian lands, however, were visited by papal legates not only on their way through to other lands but also as a final destination. Although probably not as spectacular as the Scampa visit (519), their visits were always welcomed and they had a great impact on the life

²⁹⁰ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 41, fol. 235; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 103, ff. 7v-8r, ep. 13; Eubel, *HC I*, 229; ASV, *Schedario Garampi*, n. 45, f. 111r-113r.

²⁹¹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum*, vol. VII, 433-434; *Acta Albaniae I*, no. 29.

²⁹² *Ibidem*.

²⁹³ Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, IX.

²⁹⁴ Robert Elsie has translated and published many of the accounts of the travelers who went through the Albanian territories. Cfr. Robert Elsie, *Early Albania, a Reader of Historical Texts, 11th - 17th Centuries*, *Balkanologische Veröffentlichungen* 39 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003).

of the Albanians. During the fourteenth century, the papal legates took great responsibility in strengthening the status of the *Regnum Albaniae* as a local political structure, as will be argued in the next chapter. In this chapter, however, the meaning and importance of the papal legations in general and their presence in the Albanian territories will be in the main focus.

The medieval papal legate was *alter ego* of the pope himself. The essential attribute of the papal legation was thus representation of the pope.²⁹⁵ The institution of legation within the medieval papal government was one of the administrative devices utilized by the popes over an extended period of time to share those tasks of government claimed or exercised under papal supervision.²⁹⁶ As the “full office of legation” (*plena legationis officio*) evolved, the legate became the ecclesiastical governor of church provinces and assumed the presidency over the provincial hierarchy. He called synods and presided at them, he ratified canonical elections, exercised rights of visitations, consecrated clerks, dedicated churches, absolved vows, issued decrees, conducted courts of first instance, heard appeals from lower courts, and generally represented papal authority in the province.”²⁹⁷

In 1167, the papal legate who was sent to the Albanian territories by Pope Alexander III (1105-1181) assisted Lazar, the bishop of the diocese of Albania to abandon the Greek rite. Pope Alexander III himself congratulated Lazar in his letter of December 1167 for his success against the Greeks: *voluntatem habes [ritum] Grecorum, qui in multis Romane ecclesie consuetudini*

²⁹⁵ Robert C. Figueira, “*Legatus Apostolice Sedis* - the Pope’s *Alter Ego* according to Thirteenth-Century Canon Law,” *Studi Medievali*, 3rd Series XXVII, no. 2, (1986): 527-574 [henceforth; Figueira, “*Legatus Apostolice Sedis*”]; Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972); Richard Schmutz, “Medieval Papal Representatives: Legates, Nuncios and Judges delegate,” *Studia gratiana* 15 (1972): 441-463 [henceforth: Schmutz, “Medieval Papal Representatives”]; Donald Queller, “Thirteenth-century Diplomatic Envoys: ‘Nuncii’ and ‘Procuratores’,” *Speculum* 35 (1960): 202-205; idem, *The Office of Ambassador in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1967), 25, 57-59; Karl Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung des päpstlichen Legaten bis Bonifaz VIII* (Paderborn, 1912), 128 [henceforth: Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*].

²⁹⁶ Robert C. Figueira, “The Classification of Medieval Papal Legates in the Liber extra” *Archivum historiae pontificiae*, no. 21 (1983), 211-228 [henceforth: Figueira, “The Classification”]

²⁹⁷ Schmutz, “Medieval Papal Representatives,” 457. There is a good summary of legate faculties given also by Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 144-145.

*obviare videtur, in quibus potes, vitare.*²⁹⁸ That way, the Roman Curia had made a significant achievement since Lazar, the bishop of Albania, was the southernmost influential personality at that time in medieval Albania. Profiting from his good relations with the Benedictine abbots and the biggest monastic complexes of the Benedictine Order in northern Albania and also in southern Dalmatia,²⁹⁹ he could presumably also win central Albania over to Catholicism.

In 1180, Gregorius, the archbishopric of Bar,³⁰⁰ wrote a letter to the papal legate Gualterius, canon of Split,³⁰¹ asking him for help concerning the payment of a tax of 800 *perperi*, imposed by the Great Župan, Stephen Nemanja. Gregorius was unable to pay that tax, since his church did not have such income.³⁰² In the year 1181, another papal legate, Thebaldus, *subdiaconus* acted in Dalmatia.³⁰³ Whether he was part of the same legatine mission or not is not clear from the sources.

On January 8, 1199, Pope Innocent III (1160/1-1216) sent the chaplain Johannes and the archdeacon Simon *Apostolicae sedis legati* in order to strengthen the Latin rite in Dalmatia and Dioclea.³⁰⁴ They were given the authority to transmit the *pallium* to Johannes, the archbishop of Dioclea.³⁰⁵ Papal letters were written to *Wulcano, illustri regi Dalmatie et Dioclie, to nobili viro Stephano magno iupano*, to the wife of the latter, as well as to the archbishops, bishops, abbots,

²⁹⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 97.

²⁹⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 93: *Maio episcopus Catharensis cum ,episcopis Lazaro Albanensi et cum Martino Drivastensi et cum Johanne episcopo Dulcinensi adiunctis abbatibus: Michaelae abbate (archimandrita) sancti Johannis et cum Petro abbate (archimandrita) sanctorum Sergii et Bachi, et Johanne abbate sancti Salvatoris Antibarensis, et Petro abbate sancti Michaelis Catarensensis et Triphone abbate sancte Marie Buduensis et Petro abbate sancti Petri et Johanne abbate sancti Georgii et Georgio abbate sancti Salvatoris Arbanensis ecclesiam Sancti Triphonis consecrat.*

³⁰⁰ Eubel, *HC* I,

³⁰¹ According to *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 99, he was nominated as a papal legate in 1173.

³⁰² Tadija Šmičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, vol. II (Zagreb: Akademia Scientiarum et Artium Slavorum Meridionalium, 1904), no. 169. See also Tibor Živković, “Duklja između Raške i Vijantije u prvoj polovini XII veka” (Dioclea between Rascia and Byzantium in the First Half of the Twelfth Century), *Byzantine Studies (Zbornik radova Vizantološkog Instituta)*, 43 (2006): 460.

³⁰³ Šmičiklas, *Codex Diplomaticus* II, no. 176.

³⁰⁴ ... *ritum Romanum solidatUros in Dalmatiam et Diocleam mittit. Acta Albaniae* I, no. 114

³⁰⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 115.

prelates of the churches and other clerics in whole Dalmatia and Dioclea.³⁰⁶ Some days later, on January 26, however, Pope Innocent III noticed *ex relatione quorundam et inspectione libri censualis camere*,³⁰⁷ that the church of Bar was enlisted under the suffragans of the metropolis of Ragusa.³⁰⁸ Since his predecessors had neither the *palleum*, nor the dignity of the metropolitan, he ordered them to not give the *pallium* to him.³⁰⁹ Nevertheless, later,³¹⁰ Johannes wrote to Pope Innocent III as *Dioclenis et Antivarensis ecclesie humilis minister*, giving thanks to him *pro pallio per Johannem et Symeonem legatos sibi transmissio*, praising the actions of the legates *apud regem (Vulcanum)*, and promising to send a nuntio to the pope.³¹¹ Šufflay states that it was King Vulcanus, a devoted Catholic, according to him also a relative of Pope Innocent III,³¹² who managed to obtain the archbishopric *pallium* for the prelate of Bar, but the work of the papal legates in this respect should not be underestimated.

Having seen the corruption of the Latin rite in the territories of the Eastern and South-eastern Adriatic coast (*videns multa in clero et populo Dalmatie et Dioclie corrigenda*),³¹³ the papal legates Johannes and Symeonus summoned a provincial synod in 1199. The prohibition of the marriage of clerics and of buying and selling ecclesiastical offices, the bad distribution of the tithe, the misuse of the secrets of confession, the prohibition of consanguinity-marriages between the fourth and the fifth grades, and so on were the issues discussed in this provincial synod.³¹⁴

³⁰⁶ ... *archiepiscopis, episcopis, abbatibus, ecclesiarum prelati et aliis clericis per Dalmatiam et Diocliam in regno karissimi in Christo filii nostri Wulcani illustris Regis Dioclie et Dalmatie constituti*. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 115.

³⁰⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 116. In 1180, in this book it was written that: *In Sclavonia Metropolis civitatis Ragusia hos habet episcopos suffraganeos Stagnensem, Bossensem, Tribuniensem, Catarinenensem Rose, Buduanensem, Antibarensensem, Dulchinensem, Suacinensem, Drivastensem, Polatensem, Scodrinensem, Arbanensem*. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 98, 471.

³⁰⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 116: ... *quod Antibarensis ecclesia inter suffraganeos Ragusane metropolis numeretur*.

³⁰⁹ *Ibidem*: ... *ne Antibarensi electo palleum aliquatenus concedatis, nisi vobis constiterit eius predecessors fuisse palleis decoratos et dignitatem metropolitamicam habuisse*.

³¹⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 119.

³¹¹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 119.

³¹² Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 206.

³¹³ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 120.

³¹⁴ *Ibidem*.

Many local clerics signed the decisions of the council.³¹⁵ During this time they collected also information about Dominicus, *episcopus Soacinensis*, who was accused of homicide, and proved him to be guilty not only of homicide but also of the forgery of a papal letter. After his abdication, he came back to his seat through a false papal letter, but when Pope Innocent III was informed about this, he had to escape to Hungary.³¹⁶

In the thirties of the fourteenth century, another ecclesiastical personality was acting as a papal legate in the bishoprics of the southeastern Adriatic coast: *Johannes s. Theodori diaconus cardinalis apostolicae sedis legatus*.³¹⁷ *Johannes s. Theodori*³¹⁸ was sent by Pope John XXII to exempt the excommunicated clerics and citizens of Kotor, who had refused the nomination of Sergius as their bishop. Johannes of S. Theodori seems not to have ever gone to Kotor. In a letter of Pope Benedict XII we learn that all his duties were filled by the bishop of Shkodra.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, Johannes became one of the leading personalities in the crusade against the Turks later on (1333-1334).³²⁰

Besides the observation of ecclesiastical discipline and church reform,³²¹ especially in the fight against and extermination of heresies,³²² and the smoothing of litigations among the princes, the crusades opened new areas for the activity of the legates. The preparation and the leadership of the crusades was to become one of their most important tasks, from the eleventh century on, and the significance of their personal employment in such activities was so great for their career that it generated competition among the candidates for legate. The crusade-activity of the papal

³¹⁵ Ibidem.

³¹⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 122. Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* I, 55; Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 10, 13, 53.

³¹⁷ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 309; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 751.

³¹⁸ Johannes Caietani de Ursini, diac. S. Theodori. 18 December 1316 – 27 August 1335. Eubel, *HC* I, 15.

³¹⁹ Ibid., no. 254; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 751: *(Petro) episcopo Scutarensi committit in hac parte totaliter vices suas.*

³²⁰ Geanakopulos, "Byzantium and the Crusades, 1354-1353," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. III, 50-51.

³²¹ Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 65-66.

³²² Ibid., 68-73.

legates was not to become restricted only to the crusades to the Holy Land, but it was to extend in every kind of crusade-activity, such as in those against different heretic groups like Albigensians and Bosnians in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and so on.

The question of the church union and the winning over the “schismatic” Christians had a special place in the attempts at the expansion of faith. The idea of church union with the help of legates has its beginnings with Pope Gregory VII, who tried to establish contacts with the prince of Rascia through the legates.³²³ On the Southeastern Adriatic coast, Pope Alexander III involved Tribunus, the Ragusan archbishop (1158-1187), in matters of union and reform. Šufflay³²⁴ holds the opinion that Tribunus urged Pope Alexander III to send papal legates into the region, actually because he wanted the bishops of Ulcinj and Bar under his own authority and they refused to obey.³²⁵ Tribunus was a favorite of Pope Alexander III: more than a normal archbishop he was one of the most important activists of the papal Curia in the spiritual battle against the Byzantine church. In 1268, Tribunus himself was sent as a *legatus a latere* to the Catholic community of Durrës, namely to *abbatibus et ceteris Latinis tam clericis quam laicis apud Durachium commorantibus*.³²⁶

The history of negotiations for the church union was in all of its phases also a history of papal legations.³²⁷ As soon as the final break between the East and West under Pope Leo IX happened, the popes tried always to stay in contact with Constantinople, by sending cardinals, bishops and abbots, or even normal clerics³²⁸ as their representatives. Cardinal-legates, juridically

³²³ Ibid., 78.

³²⁴ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 203.

³²⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 96.

³²⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 98. Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 203.

³²⁷ Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 79.

³²⁸ Ibid.: Gregory VII sent the patriarchate Dominic of Venice; Paschal II the bishop Maurus of Amalfi, two Roman priests and a subdiacon; Alexander III sent a priest cardinal and the archbishop of Benevent in the year 1161 and a second time he sent cardinals, Innocent III sent the notar of the Camera Apostolica and the subdiacon Albert in the year 1198 and his chaplain and familiar John, in 1199.

full-powered, were sent by Innocent III and Honorius III, when the political rule of Constantinople was in the hands of the westerners. The aim of these cardinal-legates was to instruct the submitted Greeks of the Latin empire, for the unity of the faith, and simultaneously to nourish union negotiations with the Greeks of the Empire of Nicaea.³²⁹ Since Gregory IX, one should note the extraordinary use of Franciscans and Dominicans as diplomatic envoys with the aim to lead negotiations for the church union. Innocent III sent his legates to the Bulgarian tsar, Calaiohannes, and the cardinal priest Gregory of St. Vitalis through Hungary to Galicia, and the archbishop of Calocza to Wulk, the župan of Serbia, with the hope that the latter and his people would join the Roman Church.³³⁰

The activity as mediators between the two churches continued throughout the thirteenth century until the renewal of the schism under Pope Martin IV. In 1234 two Minorites and two Dominicans negotiated as nuncios of Gregory IX with Vatazes of Nicaea concerning the union. Innocent IV sent a legation led by the Franciscan John of Parma in 1249, and Alexander IV, in the year 1256, sent the bishop of Civitavecchia to Theodor II, Laskaris of Nicaea. Since 1263 negotiations were led between Pope Urban IV and Michael Palaiologus, who had occupied Constantinople. In the year 1263 this happened through two Franciscans and in the year 1264 through the Albanian Nicolaus de Durachio, bishop of Cotrone.

Another case of papal interaction with the local political powers is also the correspondence with Helen, the French princess and Serbian queen. It was her royal influence that made Pope Boniface VIII hope for Roman outreach in the region, fighting heresy. In a papal

³²⁹ About the activity of the Cardinal priests Benedict of S. Susanna, during the years 1205-1207, see Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 182 ff, 197ff. The cardinal bishop Pelagius (Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 4802) had at the same time to win the Greek clergy which was under the western rule and to handle with the church representatives of the emperor Laskaris of Nicaea, and with the metropolitan of Ephesus. (Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 215). John of S. Prassede, the cardinal-legate of Honorius III, had a very important mission (Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 274.)

³³⁰ Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 234.

letter of the year 1298, Pope Boniface VIII tried to reach a broader audience. There, he ordered the minister provincial of the Minorites to choose two members of their order to extirpate *letiferam pestem haereticae pravitatis inquisitionis officium in partibus Servie, Dalmatie, Croatiae, Bosne atque Istrie provincie Sclavonie*, and also in the archbishoprics of Durrës, Bar, Ragusa and Zadar *contra hereticos, fautores, et defensores eorum exequantur*.³³¹ If we put the letter in the context of the local political developments, it is very easy to note the big expectations that the Roman Curia had due to the royal influence of the French princess and Serbian queen in the big frame of Catholic outreach to the local territories.

By “classifying” the legate, when he first was nominated, the pope could restrict or expand a legate’s jurisdiction, and thus exercise supervision over him.³³² By placing his legate-to-be in one specific class, the pope was exercising control over what the legate could or could not do. The pope granted general and special mandates to the legates according to the class they were nominated, and these mandates bound the legate to a certain number of faculties. Each time the legate referred to the pope for information and instruction on how to deal with a specific case, and the reply given by the pope could often be couched in terms of an order.³³³ At other times, a legate acted as far as he felt able and then asked the pope’s aid in terminating the matter.

Papal legates were always engaged to interact with the local political structures, although at times they were too fragile or too hostile. In 1208, Pope Innocent III sent a legate *a latere* to the court of *Principatum Albaniae* to instruct Demetrius in the Roman Catholic faith.³³⁴ Although the request for Catholic conversion proved to be purely political, Pope Innocent III was happy to be given an opportunity to intervene in local matters and confirmed immediately Nicolaus, the

³³¹ Ibid. no. 530.

³³² Figueira, “Legatus Apostolice Sedis,” 543.

³³³ Ibidem, 545.

³³⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133: *Innocentius III papa nobili viro Demetrio Arbanensi principi, qui per litteras suas legatum a sede apostolica se in fidei puritate eruditurum postulabat ...*

archdeacon of the Latins in Durrës, as a *legatus a latere* to instruct Demetrius in the matters of the Latin rite.³³⁵

There were also other papal legates who, although not directly sent to the Albanian lands, had their impact on the religious matters there. In 1307, it was Gentilis de Monteflorum,³³⁶ who was sent by Pope Clement as a *legatus a latere* to Hungary, but his assistants were also sent to Poland, Dalmatia, Croatia, Serbia, Galicia and other territories. According to Daniele Farlati, this legation was acting in the territories of the ancient Illyria, Dalmatia and Croatia, which means that it also came into the Albanian territories, at least those in the North. We do not have data on the reception of this legation in the Albanian lands, but if we bear in mind the fact that the legates *a latere* had a very broad spectrum of activities also through their sublegates who very often are not mentioned in the source material, then it is easy to suggest that they had an impact in the Albanian lands as well.

Another cardinal legate with a great impact on the North-Albanian territory was Gui de Boulogne, who was sent to the kingdom of Naples, Italy and also Hungary in the years 1348-1350. He was also addressed to the archbishopric of Bar, which means that his legate activity extended also in this archbishopric, which had its jurisdiction as south as Lezha in Albania. The mission of cardinal Gui was considered as very dangerous and complex in the kingdom of Naples,³³⁷ because the relations with this kingdom were a big diplomatic and political issue for Clement VI.³³⁸ The main political and diplomatic aspects of his activity are in detail treated by

³³⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 7A, fol. 49^v.

³³⁶ *Acta Legationis Cardinalis Gentilis (1307-1311)*, X.

³³⁷ See Pierre Jugie, "Le Cardinal Gui de Boulogne (1316-1373), Biographie et étude d'une familia Cardinalice," *Thèse pour le diplôme d'archiviste paléographe*, vol. I (Paris, 1986), 124 [henceforth: Jugie, "Le Cardinal Gui de Boulogne"]

³³⁸ About the relations between the Roman Curia and Jeanne of Naples see Émile Léonard, *Histoire de Jeanne Ière, reine de Naples, comtesse de Provence (1343-1382)* (Munich, Paris, 1932-1936) [henceforth: Léonard, *Histoire de Jeanne Ière*]; Idem, *Les Anjous de Naples*, (Paris, 1954).

Pierre Jugie,³³⁹ but for our purpose we are referring only to the ecclesiastical aspects of his mission.³⁴⁰ There were circa 70 papal bulls coming out of the Papal Chancellery about this legation,³⁴¹ and the duration of the latter was from January 1349 to June 1350.³⁴² Pierre Jugie argues that not only were members of the legate from wide geographies but from wide competencies too. Through papal bulls, the legate had a canonical and beneficial jurisdiction that included not only the collection and distribution of benefices but also dispensations of all sorts of failures such as *defectus natalium*, *defectus aetatis*, *matrimonialia*, etc.³⁴³

It has to be noted that while Northern Albania was included in the spectrum of the Central European Catholic region, the southern territories of Albania, including the suffragans of the archbishopric of Durrës, partook in the legate activities of the Eastern Patriarchates. In the crusade organized by Clement VI against the Turks, where Henry d'Asti, Latin, patriarch of Constantinople, acted as a *legatus a latere*, Durrës was enlisted among the other Latin archbishoprics of the Latin Empire of Constantinople, such as Crete, Patra, Athens, Corinth, Rhodes, Corfu, etc. His authority *pro quibusdam magnis et arduis negotiis ad partes Romaniae*³⁴⁴ extended certainly also over the suffragans, prelates and other clergy of these archbishoprics. In the activity of the Apostolic nuncio Petro de Genulaco, who was sent to collect the fruits of the

³³⁹ There is a vast bibliography on the legation of cardinal Gui of Bologna. The main aspects of the parallel legations of cardinal Anibaldo Caetani of Ceccano in Italy and cardinal Gui of Bologna in Hungary and later on in Italy are also described adequately by Léonard, *Histoire de Jeanne Iere*, vol. II, part V, chapter II, 195-230. The financial aspects are studied by Pierre Jugie, "Le Cardinal Gui de Boulogne," chapter II. The canonical aspects are best studied by Guillaume Mollat, *Boulogne (Gui de)*, in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et géographie ecclésiastique*. vol. X (1938): 101-106.

³⁴⁰ In the list where the legatime mission of cardinal Gui came to one finds Hungary, Lombardy, Salzburg, Aquileia, Milan, Zadar, Split, Dubrovnik, etc. For the full list see Jugie, *Le Cardinal Gui de Boulogne*, 139.

³⁴¹ Jugie, "Le Cardinal Gui de Boulogne," 140.

³⁴² *Ibidem*, 136.

³⁴³ *Ibidem*, 140.

³⁴⁴ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 157, fols. 4r-5v; inadequate notice in Déprez I, fasc. 1, no. 340, col. 129. See Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 388-390, 406.

first year of all benefices in cities and dioceses of the archbishoprics, Durrës was also enlisted along with the archbishoprics of Corinth, Ipatia, Crete, Patra, Athena, Rhodes, Corfu, etc³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 2, fol. 71; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 63 f. 412v, ep. 387.

III. 2. Papal influence through rulers' authority

Since the earliest times, and especially after the Donation of Pepin (756), the Roman Curia wanted to build a close relationship with the highest secular powers, in order to have not only their protection, but also their secular help in implementing religious teaching. The well-known historian of the Latin East, Norman Housley, formulates very well the reasons, why the Curia had to rely on the secular powers *in situ*: Primarily, it was the acknowledged responsibility of the Christian king to defend his church and people against attack and, secondly, the Curia was conscious of its own ignorance of the detailed local situation.³⁴⁶

After the Gregorian Reform, when the spiritual authority was clearly divided from the secular one, the Roman Curia had to negotiate with the secular authorities, in order to have certain things done by them. This was especially the case with the local rulers in the peripheries of the western Christendom, where obeying the Pope and choosing Catholicism as a religion was not the only option in religious matters. In order to reach these frontier territories the Roman Curia had to rely on the local rulers; that is, why the Holy See intensified its negotiations as soon as hopes for reaching such secular rulers were given a chance.

The local rulers of the Western Balkans continuously discussed with the Roman Curia about recognizing Roman spiritual authority, especially after 1204, when the Byzantine spiritual authority had suffered an obvious setback in the Byzantine lands.³⁴⁷ As a matter of fact, the Serbs had started such a policy as early as the eleventh century, when Michael of Zeta (1051-1081)

³⁴⁶ Norman Housley, *The Avignon Papacy and the Crusades (1305-1378)*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 92-3 (henceforth: Housley, *Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*).

³⁴⁷ The Latin rule had ensured the supremacy of the Roman Church in the conquered territories and had generated important changes in the life and organization of the Greek Church. "From Byzantium to Latin Romania," 23. Rudolf Lee Wolff, "The Latin Empire of Constantinople and the Franciscans," *Traditio* 2 (1944): 213-237; Jean Richard, "The establishment of the Latin church in the Empire of Latin Empire of Constantinople," In *Latins and Greeks in the Eastern Mediterranean After 1204*, ed. Benjamin Arbel et al. (Wiltshire: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. 1989): 45-62; D. Baker, *The Orthodox Churches and the West* (Oxford 1976): 169-181.

required the *vexillum* from Pope Gregory VII in order to receive protection and recognition of his principality and also protection against Byzantium. The ruler of the *Principatum Albaniae*, Demetrius (1208) had also attempted the same strategy for almost the same reasons: to get recognition and protection against his eastern but also western enemies. He asked Pope Innocent III to send a legate to his court to instruct him in the Roman Catholic faith and renounced Catholicism as soon as he felt himself strong enough to defeat his enemies by himself.³⁴⁸

In the eyes of the Holy See, the western Balkans needed the strong hand of a Catholic ruler, who would bring them into Catholicism with or without their will, and this chance appeared with Charles I of Anjou, whose plans were highly supported by Pope Urban IV. At first, the pope encouraged Charles to conquer the Hohenstaufen lands in Italy and Sicily, but soon after the Battle of Benevento (1266), when Charles defeated Manfred of Hohenstaufen and became king of Naples and Sicily (coronation on 6 January 1266), Charles directed his eyes towards the western Balkans (claiming the dowry of Manfred's wife), giving thus hope to the Holy See for a Catholic ruling hand in these territories. After the installation of the Anjou rule in the Balkans, and the creation of the *Regnum Albaniae*, a Catholic political structure was a good basis for the spread of Catholicism. Nevertheless, Charles was more possessed by his political aims than by a religious devotion to conversion. While at the beginning of his reign he occasionally encouraged conversion to Catholicism, he soon decided against this policy, presumably on political grounds.³⁴⁹ Charles also allied with Nikephoros at a time when the latter was the main opponent of the Church Union that the popes were trying to reach with Michael VIII.³⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the *Regnum Albaniae* created by him would be a Catholic political structure, which under his

³⁴⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 133-135.

³⁴⁹ Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou*, 153.

³⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, 140.

successors would become a political basis for papal plans in reaching the Balkans for Catholicism.

Until the *Regnum Albaniae* would become this stronghold of papal outreach in the Balkans, Helen of France, the Serbian Queen., was the one who was reaching the south-eastern Adriatic coast and its hinterland for the Papal Curia. Helen, praised by the Roman popes for her eloquence, her good spirit, generosity, religious life, and her good behavior had an intensive Catholic activity in these regions,³⁵¹ and a vivid correspondence with the papacy regarding the issues of faith in the area. She founded Catholic churches and monasteries in Kotor, Bar, Ulcinj, Shkodër, and she even tried to convert the Bulgarian emperor to the Catholic rite.³⁵² Helen and the *Regnum Servie* were repeatedly (1291, 1303, 1306) taken under the protection of St. Petrus. So was her elder son, King Stephen (1291). Uroš, however, did not take into consideration the requests of popes Nicholas IV (1288) and Benedict XI (1303) to convert to the Catholic faith.

The origin of the French princess Helen is still disputed. Her Serbian biographer, the archbishop Daniel II, states that she was a daughter of a king or of an emperor.³⁵³ Some historians hold the opinion that Helen was the daughter of the Latin emperor Baldwin II (1273).³⁵⁴ In their correspondence Charles I Anjou (1265-1285) and Charles II (1285-1309) addressed her and her sister Marie de Chaure³⁵⁵ as “*consanguinea nostra carissima, cognate nostra, affinis nostra carissima.*”³⁵⁶ Jireček holds the idea that Helen was the daughter of one of the many French

³⁵¹ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 318-319, 328.

³⁵² ASV, Reg. Vat. 46, ff. 14r-17v; Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* I, 360, 375f, 407, 410, 414; cf. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 335.

³⁵³ Đura Daničić, ed. *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih/ arhiepiskop Danilo i drugi* (The lives of the Serbian kings and archbishops by archbishop Daniel) (London: Variorum Reprints, 1972), 58.

³⁵⁴ De Mas Latrie, *Tresor de Chronologie d'histoire et de géographie*, col. 1760; Norden, *Papsttum und Byzanz*, 483.

³⁵⁵ Maria married in 1273 Anselm de Chauris a French nobleman from Bar-sur-Seine, who became the Captain-General of Charles of Anjou in Albania in 1273. After the death of her husband (1280), Maria lived in the lands of her sister, and Residence was prepared for her in Ulcinj. Her son, who was also called Anselm, possessed territories in the principality of Achaia around the year 1292. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 319.

³⁵⁶ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 319.

nobles mostly coming from Burgundian and Champagnian dynasties, who were reigning in the Balkans at that time.³⁵⁷

During her lifetime, she played an extraordinary role for deepening the roots of Catholicism in the territories of her influence. Her residency in Shkodra became a highly cultivated court, which welcomed and supported artists, architects, missionaries etc. With her activity she deepened the spiritual reform work of Johannes de Plano Carpini.³⁵⁸ Helen encouraged the Franciscans in her territory, so that by 1283 Franciscan missions existed in Bar, Kotor, and Ulcinj. The Ulcinj mission (and possibly also the Kotor one) became a full-fledged monastery in 1288. Another Franciscan monastery was established that year in her main residence in Shkodra.³⁵⁹ With her royal authority and wealth she built up and restored Catholic religious houses. She founded churches and monasteries in Kotor, Bar, Ulcinj, and Shkodra,³⁶⁰ but also in the hinterland, such as the Serbian monastery Gradac at the river Ibar.³⁶¹ An example of rebuilding Catholic religious houses was the monastic church of SS. Sergius and Bacchus in the vicinity of Shkodra.³⁶² The foundation of the church of S. Mary in Shkodër and that of the Catholic diocese of Sappa at the upper part of the Drin, which would join the one of Sarda at the beginning of the fifteenth century,³⁶³ were also pious works of Queen Helen. Helen also renovated the town of Drishti and others which were destroyed by the Mongol invasion.³⁶⁴

³⁵⁷ Ibidem.

³⁵⁸ Balan, *Delle relazioni*, 125.

³⁵⁹ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 220.

³⁶⁰ Cf. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben I*, 318-319, 328.

³⁶¹ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben I*, 328.

³⁶² The Benedictine Monastery of SS. Sergius and Bacchus was one of the most important in her dominion. An inscription which nowadays is housed in the Albanian National Museum in Tirana, testifies that she restored this monastery along with her sons in 1290: MEMENTO DOMINE FAMULE TUE HELENE RE-/GINE SERVIE, DYOCLIE, ALBANIE, CHILMIE,/ DALMACIE ET MARITIME REGIONIS QUE/ UNA CUM FILIIS SUIS REGIBUS UROSIO ET STE-/PHANO EDIFICAVIT DE NOVO ISTAM ECCLESIAM/ AD HONOREM BEATORUM MARTIRUM SERGII ET/ BACHI ET AD FINE (sic!) USQUE/ CO[M] PLEVIT ANNO DOMINI M.CC.LXXXX.

³⁶³ Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum I*, 111, no. 152; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 23700. Šufly, "Kirchenzustände," 21.

³⁶⁴ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben I*, 318.

According to Balan she had founded 30 Catholic churches and monasteries altogether, most of which are not known to us any more.³⁶⁵ Because of her virtues, and her activity, Coleti praised her in the *Illyricum Sacrum* as *Sanctissima femina, eademque Sedis Apostolicae reverendissima et catholicae religionis propagandae studiosissima*.³⁶⁶

Nevertheless, Helen was not successful in the Church union in Serbia, that is why she paid all her attention and dedicated all her energies to the Bulgarian Union in the nineties of the thirteenth century.³⁶⁷ Pope Nicholas IV responded optimistically to the plan that Helen had for the union with the Bulgarian Church, a plan to be implemented with the help of her confessor Marinus, the archdeacon of Bar who later on became the archbishop of Bar (1303-1307). Marinus was also her nuncio to the pope. From the papal letter, we can learn that Helen had planned to meet the Bulgarian Tsar, Georg Terteri I (1280-1299), during the summer of 1291, and to talk to him personally about the question of the union.³⁶⁸ She hoped to win him for the Catholic issue, and this hope was based on her affinity with the Tsar, as her son Uroš II had married the daughter of the Bulgarian Tsar, Anna, in 1284.³⁶⁹ Pope Nicholas IV praised her plan: *lumine fidei catholice divinitus illustrate*,³⁷⁰ and gave her his full support, writing on the same day to Tsar Georg Terteri I³⁷¹ and also to the Bulgarian Patriarch Joachim III (1294)³⁷² proposing the union. Helen did what she had planned, but her acts did not have any success. The union never happened, because the patriarch was killed by Svetislav, son of the tsar, in 1294,³⁷³ and Tsar Georg Terterij had to

³⁶⁵ Balan, *Delle relazioni*, 125. About the monasteries and the churches that the Queen Helen built see Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 59; Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* I, 55. Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 69.

³⁶⁶ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 43. The real editor of this volume was Jacopo Coleti.

³⁶⁷ 23 March 1291. Langois, *Le Registre de Nicolas IV*, vol. II, 893, no. 6710; Potthast, *Regesta II*, no. 23618.

³⁶⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat. 46, ff. 14r-17v*. Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* I, 360, 375f, 407, 410, 414. cf. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 335.

³⁶⁹ Anna was his third wife. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 333.

³⁷⁰ 23 March 1291: Langois, *Le Registre de Nicolas IV*, n. 6710; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 23618.

³⁷¹ Langlois, *Le Registre de Nicolas IV*, n. 6711; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 23619.

³⁷² Langlois, *Le Registre de Nicolas IV*, n. 6712; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 23620.

³⁷³ Balan, *Delle relazioni*, 64.

escape to Constantinople.³⁷⁴ It was also due to her influence, that pope Benedict XI invited the Serbian king into a Church union in 1303,³⁷⁵ a union which also was never realized.

Pope Nicholas IV encouraged her already since 1288 to support the papal attempts for a union with her sons, recommending the queen to keep them strengthened in the Catholic faith.³⁷⁶ This was not an easy task, especially with her second son, Uroš. Her first son, Stephen Dragutin, maintained his Western orientation and had regular dealings not only with Hungary, but also with the papacy. He allowed the establishment of a Catholic bishopric in his city of Belgrade and supported in the 1290s a Franciscan mission in his northern Bosnian lands.³⁷⁷ He also continued the good relations that his father had created with the Anjous.

One aspect of the Papal influence through the ruler's authority was certainly the attempt for Church Union with the whole Eastern Church. The conversion to Catholicism of a great number of eastern Christians and their religious institutions was one of the main purposes of the Roman Curia since the great schism of 1054. Attempts to unify the church frequently alternated with crusading attempts. According to one of the most notable scholars on the history of the union of the Churches, Walter Norden,³⁷⁸ the culmination of papal attempts to unify the churches religiously, and the culmination of the papal-Byzantine relations in this regard took place in the thirteenth century.

The Catholic clerics of the Southwestern Balkans were continuously involved in the union negotiations. They were not homogeneous in their religion and for this reason they served well as mediators between the Eastern and Western churches. These regions, with such special religious

³⁷⁴ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 335.

³⁷⁵ (1303) Taütu, *Acta Benedicti XI*, n. 150, 249-250: *Regem Servie monet et hortatur, ut ad unitatem fidei orthodoxae properet.*

³⁷⁶ “*sedulis exhortationibus inducere non omittas, ipsosque in observantia et perservantia fidei prelibate foveas et confortis.*” Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum*, 360, no. 580.

³⁷⁷ Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 219.

conditions, created people who could be devoted to the reunion of the Church. Albanians became important mediators.

A very active mediator was the prelate Nicolaus de Durachio.³⁷⁹ He was among the leading authorities of the Albanian clergy who played a very important role concerning the union of the Churches in the Council of Lyon (1274).³⁸⁰ The first document about Nicolaus comes from Pope Innocent IV, written on 2 September 1254. This letter was addressed to the provincial minister of the Franciscan Order in Calabria, and it announced the investiture of Nicolaus de Durachio as the bishop of Cotrone.³⁸¹ Through this letter we are informed that Nicolaus, who came from Durrës, was nominated by the pope himself, due to the fact that the office of the bishop had remained vacant for a long time (*tanto tempore jam vacavit*).³⁸² According to the letter, Nicolaus was also a *magister* of the Apostolic Chamber and thus in the entourage of Pope Innocent IV. That is why the latter presented him in the following way: *dilectum filium magistrum Nicolaum de Durachio Camerae nostrae clericum*.³⁸³ The nomination of Nicolaus de Durachio as bishop of Cotrone also implied a political strategy of the pope. Nicolaus was given the office of bishop Mauro, who had gained that post through the help of secular authorities (*per*

³⁷⁸ See in particular his *Das Papsttum und Byzanz: Die Trennung der beiden Mächte und das Problem ihrer Wiedervereinigung* (Berlin: B. Behr's Verlag, 1903).

³⁷⁹ He was the bishop of Cotrone in southern Italy. According to Eubel, his election was done on 2 September 1254. Eubel, *HC I*, 221.

³⁸⁰ Pëllumb Xhufi, "Nikollë Durrsaku dhe përpjekjet për ribashkimin e kishave në mesin e shek. XIII" (Nicolaus de Durachio and his efforts for the reunion of the churches in the mid-XIIIth century), *Studime Historike* (Tirana, 1997); Girolamo Golubovich, *Biblioteca bibliographica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano* (Quaracchi, 1906), vol. I, 255-9; Antoine Dondaine, "Nicolas de Cotrone et les sources du *Contra errores Graecorum* de Saint Thomas," *Divus Thomas*, vol. 28, (Freiburg 1950), 313-340. Antoine Dondaine, "*Contra Graecos*. Premiers écrits polemiques des Dominicains d'Orient," *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum* 21 (1951): 348-87; Paolo Sambin, *Il vescovo Cotronese Niccolò da Durazo e un inventario di suoi codici latini e greci* (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1954).

³⁸¹ The full text of the papal letter is edited by Ferdinando Ughelli, *Italia Sacra sive de Episcopis Italiae et insularum adiacentium*, vol. 9 (Venice: apud Sebastianum Coleti, 1721), 385.

³⁸² Ughello, *Italia Sacra*, 385. Eubel does not give the date when Mauro, the previous bishop of Cotrone was removed. Eubel, *HC I*, 221.

³⁸³ Ughello, *Italia Sacra*, 385.

secularem potentiam).³⁸⁴ The nomination of Nicolaus in this hot region showed the papacy's great trust in the newly elected bishop, since he would become the person through whom Pope Innocent IV wanted to strengthen his authority in southern Italy, which under the Hohenstaufen, had been out of his control.

Nicolaus had a good reputation among the Orthodox authorities as well. The historian George Pachymeres (1242-1310) praised him as someone who knew the Holy Scriptures well and used both Latin and Greek.³⁸⁵ The Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII (1261-1282) expressed a similar opinion in his letter addressed to Pope Urban IV (1264) in which the central problem was the unification of the churches. Among other things the letter contains biographical information about Nicolaus, where it is stated that he grew up in Byzantine Durrës and was transferred to Rome when he was already an adult. Being a product of the milieu of Durrës, which according to a letter of Pope Clement IV in 1266 contained "people of different religious rites and observances,"³⁸⁶ Nicolaus was equipped with knowledge of both Latin and Greek and of the two confessions and rites. Michael VIII Palaiologos stated this fact with appreciation in his letter.³⁸⁷ Nicolaus de Durachio had been able to explain the Catholic doctrine in Greek (*immediate graeco sermone*).³⁸⁸ In this way, he had gained the status of mediator between Rome and Constantinople.³⁸⁹

Having said all this, it is logical how it came to be that Nicolaus was entrusted with such

³⁸⁴ Ibidem.

³⁸⁵ Georgii Pachymerii, *De Michele et Andronico Palaeologiis*, vol. I (Bonn, 1835), 360.

³⁸⁶ *Nationes disparis ritus et alterius observantiae . . . in civitate Dyrrachii et eius dioceseos habitantes.*" Edouard Jordan, *Les registres de Clement IV (1265 - 1268)*, (Paris, 1893), 93, no. 346.

³⁸⁷ *ad hortum similem inserta sanctae Matris Romanae Ecclesiae atque litteris sacris et scientia divinae Scripturae et dogmatibus utriusque Ecclesiae adornat. . . . Sensimus ipsum esse De cultorem diligentem et catholicae fidei discretum et verum praedicatorem et omnibus sermonibus suae fidei discretum et verum praedicatorem et omnibus sermonibus suae fidei sine personarum acceptione zelatorem reuniendae communis nostrae Matris Ecclesiae sine falsitate utriusque partis verum dispensatorem divinae Scripturae et quae sunt Sanctorum Patrum ... expositorem.*" Aloysius L. Taütu, *Acta Urbani IV* (Vatican City: 1953), 39.

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ Johannes Dräseke, "Theodoros Laskaris," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 3 (1894).

an important issue as the unification of the churches. For this purpose he often visited the Byzantine emperors, trying to convince them about the union. In 1262, he managed to show Michael VIII Palaiologos that the Catholic dogma was not different from that of the Byzantines neither in questions of dogma nor in belief.³⁹⁰ In 1264, Nicolaus de Durachio visited Constantinople for the last time as the mediator for Pope Urban IV. This mission was meant to finish the union of the churches, but did not succeed because of the death of Urban IV. The process of unification was postponed again.³⁹¹

Nicolaus disappeared from the papal source material in 1264, the period when Charles of Anjou entered the papal stage as a soldier for Western Christendom. According to Pachymeres, Nicolaus changed his attitude towards the Byzantines and began to work against them, thus losing the privileges given to him by the Emperor and being sent into exile to Heraclea in Pontus.³⁹² Nevertheless, at the end of 1264, Nicolaus was still praised in a letter of Emperor Michael VIII Palaiologos sent to Pope Clement IV.³⁹³ This indicates that he had not really lost favor in the eyes of the Palaiologi, but rather in the eyes of the papacy.

The work of Nicolaus de Durachio bore fruit at the Council of Lyon (1274) where the Byzantine Emperor Michael VIII accepted the Roman creed. This was in fact a political move on the part of the Byzantine emperor. Knowing the plans of the Anjous towards the Byzantine Empire, Michael VIII considered his negotiations with the papal Curia as the only way to deter Charles I of Anjou. He was convinced that the pope was the only authority able to impose moral restraints on Charles, to sanction or to forbid a holy war for the restoration of the Latin Empire in Constantinople. Pope Gregory X took the proposals of Emperor Michael VIII serious and invited

³⁹⁰ *et animo illustrati invenimus sanctam Dei Ecclesiam Romanam non alienatam a nobis in divinis suae fidei dogmatibus, sed ea fere nobiscum sentientem et concordantem.* Taūtu, *Acta Urbani IV*, 39.

³⁹¹ Sambin, *Il vescovo Cotroneo Niccolo da Durazzo*, 11.

³⁹² Georgii Pachymerii, *De Michaele Palaeologo*, vol. I, 360.

³⁹³ Niccola Festa, *Lettera inedita dell'Imperatore Michele VIII Paleologo al Pontefice Clemente IV* (Bessarione, 6,

him to the Council of Lyon (1274) where Michael VIII accepted the Roman creed and the primacy of the pope. Because of this move, Pope Gregory X forbade Charles to undertake any attack against the Byzantine Empire.

The fourteenth-century Unions of Churches were mostly political and strategical unions rather than of a religious nature. The religious interests had more than ever before become instruments of political intentions.³⁹⁴ On the one hand, the fourteenth century presented a visible change in the politics of the occidental powers towards Byzantium: the Byzantine Empire was no longer a simple target of military assaults by European armies³⁹⁵ but it also represented people in need of protection against the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, in the fourteenth century, Westerners had many reasons to start a crusade: the Latin Empire had fallen in 1261 and needed to be taken again out of Byzantine hands; the negotiations with the Byzantine emperors and local kings such as the Serbs to affect Church unity frequently failed; the Fall of Acre to the Egyptians had cut one of the main traditional routes of Eastern commerce, and the maritime republics were interested in having it function once again; Egyptians and Turks represented a continuous threat, not only for the Catholic kingdoms of Armenia and Cyprus, but also for the Byzantine Empire. The rulers of Europe were interested in the crusade not only out for religious reasons but also to accumulate wealth: at home through crusading tithes and in the East from booty. These periods of crisis in the Latin East, and enthusiasm in Western Europe for a crusade to the Holy Land, coincided with the papal crusades against Christian rulers in Italy which took place between 1254

1899), 48.

³⁹⁴ Norden does not enter deeply into the development of the Papal-Byzantine relations in the fourteenth century, which according to him are just political, and he gives only the basic structure of their relations. Norden, "Die Erneuerung der päpstlichen Unionspolitik angesichts der Bedrohung des byzantinischen Reichs durch die Türken; die Florentiner Kircheneinigung und der Untergang des Byzantinischen Reichs, c.1330-1453." In Norden, 694-712.

³⁹⁵ This does not mean that they got rid of the idea of the crusades. Housley (*Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*), demonstrates that there is a survival of the crusading ideal in the fourteenth century. Nevertheless, generally speaking, crusades were not any more considered as a means of the union with the Byzantine Church.

and 1343.³⁹⁶ That is why negotiations remained the preferred means of the Holy See and created good grounds for new hopes that there might one day again be a union between the Byzantine and Roman churches, although these hopes were no longer based on religious feelings, but on political designs.

The fourteenth century popes made their assistance and help to the Byzantine emperors conditional first on the union of the church. The Byzantine emperors of the fourteenth century, on their part, made also the union of the churches conditional on receiving the promised assistance from the Roman Curia. It was, thus, clear that the union was going to end up rather as a political and diplomatic issue than as a religious one. And it actually did. The new form of union in the fourteenth century was no longer of any classical religious significance, but rather the political league of Latins and Greeks in a war against a common enemy.³⁹⁷

Pope John XXII was the first to initiate an instrumental Church union with the Greeks, although he personally was extremely anti-Greek and had planned many crusades against them. In 1318, the pope still hoped that the situation at Genoa would not seriously impede the crusade, but in the course of the next two years he took steps which added up to a postponement of the general passage until the political situation in Italy could be settled to the Guelf advantage. In 1328/9, he worked together with the Venetian Republic and with the Order of St. John of Rhodes to build a league, not only against the Turks, but also against the Greeks.³⁹⁸ He considered the creation of a confederation between King Robert of Naples, the Venetian Republic and other magnates for *Romania, ad resistentum eisdem inimicis fidei et defendendum fideles ab eorum*

³⁹⁶ Norman Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal-Anjou Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254-1343*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986): 71 (henceforth: Housley, *Italian Crusades*).

³⁹⁷ Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 701. At the beginning the unifications were more often called “societas” or “confoederatio”, but since the forties of the fourteenth century, they were often called “unio”.

³⁹⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 115, fol. 144. In his letter addressed King Robert on December 9, 1328 he had written: *Quia dire persecutiones et oppressiones varie, quas Greci schismatici, Bulgari, Alani, Turchi aliique infideles, crucis hostes et nominis christiani blasphemi, christicolis Romanie ... inferre moliuntur, nos in amara trahunt suspicia.*

persecutionibus.³⁹⁹ This league never came into being, but another, in 1332,⁴⁰⁰ between the Venetian Republic, Rhodes, and Andronikos, was joined by the Curia and by the French and Cypriot king, and a church-union was formed. This *union* was proclaimed in Avignon on 8 March 1334.⁴⁰¹ Under these circumstances, it was impossible for the papacy to intervene on behalf of the “schismatics.” The protection of the Greeks could not be separated from that of the Latin Romania, in which the Papacy had very soon the leading position.

During the first thirty years of the fourteenth century, it is easy to see that papal-Byzantine relations had reached a completely new stage of development. Attempts at unification had already taken place since the previous decade, but in the background to such attempts had always been the old Latin policy of supremacy. Having the Byzantine Empire threatened by the Turks, and wanting to humiliate the Greeks through this new *vexatio*, the Curia was able to rid itself forever of the old *vexatio* with the Latin sword and an aggressive policy, although Pierre Dubois, Guillaume Adam, and Ramon Lull were not the only ones who believed that the road to Jerusalem passed through Constantinople.⁴⁰² So when Pope John XXII gave instructions to the two Dominicans, whom he sent to Constantinople, he hoped that Christ would give a lesson to the Greeks *per vexationem huiusmodi* (the Turkish risk) ... *Graecis ... cognoscendi suam omnipotentiam et ad unitatem catholicae fidei ... redeundi rectum intellectum*.⁴⁰³ Urban IV reasoned like that when addressing Michael VIII Palaiologos: *Nam si Latini Graecos diversis temporibus impugnarunt, hoc procul dubio non fecerunt tantummodo causa acquirendi eorum*

³⁹⁹ Odorico Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici* vol. IX (Lucae: Typis Leonardi Venturini. De Superiorum Licentia, 1752), 1328, 86 [henceforth: Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici*].

⁴⁰⁰ Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 701.

⁴⁰¹ Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1334, 7.

⁴⁰² Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant I*, 167.

⁴⁰³ Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1333, 19.

*terras et divitias temporales, sed ut per vexationem Graecis intellectus qui noluerunt intellegere, ut bene agerent, praestaretur.*⁴⁰⁴

Nevertheless, the Turkish assaults were directed at both Latins and “schismatic” Greeks alike so they were forced to draw closer to each other to defend themselves against this common enemy. The solution for the threatened powers was union.⁴⁰⁵ As Pope John XXII found himself in 1334 in league with the “schismatic” Greek Emperor against the Turks, so did the popes who followed. The Greek abbot, Barlaam, who in 1339 negotiated in Avignon about the help of the Holy See against the Turks and about the union of the churches, argued that the secular hatred of the Greeks against the Latins would be wiped out only through a great beneficial deed by the Latins, the liberation of the Greeks from the Turks.⁴⁰⁶

Other popes like Clement VI (1342-52) also ended up in league with the Greek Emperor, this one supported by the Venetian Republic, Rhodes, and Cyprus.⁴⁰⁷ Innocent VI planned even a crusade led by the legate Petrus Thomas.⁴⁰⁸ Many projects of occidental rulers came into existence with the idea of liberating Byzantium from the Turks. King Louis I of Hungary in 1366 started to set free the Byzantine Empire from the Turks, but after a while proclaimed his intention to occupy Constantinople. Nevertheless, his project was never put into practice, because the Venetians, whom he asked for help, refused to join him.⁴⁰⁹

After the strengthening of the local political and religious powers in the Balkans, the Church Union became a multifaceted issue. Besides the Byzantine emperor, there were other political and ecclesiastical powers, with which the Roman Curia could negotiate a Church Union. The continuous union attempts with the Serbian Church are definitely an interesting aspect of the

⁴⁰⁴ Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1263, 35.

⁴⁰⁵ Norden, *Das Papsttum und Byzanz*, 701.

⁴⁰⁶ Raynaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1339, 22-24.

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, 1343, 11.

⁴⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, 1353, 20/1; 1356, 33-35.

Church Union policy of the Holy See. Such attempts started to have a systematic basis during the reign of Helen, French princess and Serbian Queen, who had done not only missionary work for Catholicisation on the Balkans, but had also tried to reach the local rulers. Through her royal authority the Papal Curia tried many times to implement a Church Union with the Serbian Orthodox Church and, as already mentioned, even with the Bulgarian one.⁴¹⁰

The archbishops of Bar and its suffragans played an important role not only in the reformation of religious discipline within their territories, and the opening up of new territories to the Church but also as mediators between the papacy and the Serbian kings. In the first half of the fourteenth century, we find the archbishop of Bar mediating actively, especially in attempts for a union with the Serbian kings.⁴¹¹ Marinus Zare, who was the personal confessor of Helen was intensively involved with such mediating activities with the Serbian rulers, and the Bulgarian Tsar. After he became archbishop of Bar in 1301 he continued to deal with the difficult question of the presence of Catholics in the Orthodox areas of the Serbian kingdom,⁴¹² and in 1303 (November 18) he undertook a mission to correct and reform *personas ecclesiasticas in regno Servie terrisque adjacentibus constitutas*.⁴¹³ These attempts, however, remained fruitless, because not only these Churches had been unwilling to except a union, but also other representatives of these Royal Courts acted much more influentially and strongly than Helen and even the Bulgarian Tsar himself.

The fact that the Church Union had become more a political instrument than a religious reality was quickly apprehended by the Serbian rulers, who immediately started to make use of it.

⁴⁰⁹ Gustav Wenzel, *Monumenta Hungariae Historica. Acta Extera* II, 244.

⁴¹⁰ 23 March 1291. See ASV. *Reg. Vat.* 46, ff. 14r-17v given as a regest by Cordignano and Valentini, *Saggio di un Regesto Storico*, 10. See also Langois, *Le Registre de Nicolas IV*, vol. II, 893, n. 6710; Potthast, *Regesta II*, no. 23618.

⁴¹¹ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 334, 359, 408.

⁴¹² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 552.

In 1306 the relations between King Uroš II and the Anjous improved as a result of the Anjou pressure from Hungary and also from the *Regnum Albaniae*.⁴¹⁴ As a result, a Church Union was in the backstage. In the West, hopes about restoring the Latin Empire arose again when Catherine, niece of Baldwin II, who inherited the supreme title of the Latin Empire, married a brother of the French king Philip IV, namely Charles of Valois (1301), who because of this marriage claimed Constantinople and the title of the Emperor in a coalition with the Venetian Republic and the Catalans. On this occasion, King Uroš II sent two envoys equipped with Latin letters addressed to the pope and “emperor” Charles: the first was from Ragusa and the second from Kotor. On March 27, 1308, they accomplished a coalition with Charles about the recapture of the *imperium Constantinopolitanum*”. He even promised to give his daughter Zorica (from the marriage with Elisabeth of Hungary) in marriage to Charles, son of the titular emperor.

The Serbian also king promised to join the Roman Church. He asked pope Clement V about the conditions to accept the union, and the pope responded in April 1308.⁴¹⁵ From the very beginning he informed the Serbian king about the solemn mass, in which within the *Credo* the addition of *Filioque* had to be sung. In the second place, the king, the prelates, the clergy, the monks, and the people had to confess that the Roman Pontiff was the vicar of Christ, the successor of the Apostle Peter, who had the power to bind and loose, and that the Roman Church has the primacy and the principality over all the other churches. As a sequence, the king had to promise obedience and respect to the Roman Church, for himself and for his people. The prelates had to vow the same thing for themselves and for the whole clergy. The archbishops, the abbots, the archimandrites of the kingdom had to be elected and postulated according to canonical

⁴¹³ ASV, *Reg. Vat. 51*, f. 36v. ep. 149. Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* I, no. 650; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 554; and given as a regest by Garampi, in *Schedario Garampi* 33, ff. 118-123.

⁴¹⁴ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 344: “Die Bestätigung eines Vertrages Philipps von Taranto “cum rege Servie” durch Karl II. 1306 nur in einem kurzen Regest bei Rački (Arkiv za povijestnicu Jugoslavie 7, 1863, s. 28 nro. 31) und bei Makuschew (2, 80).”

election. The inferior prelates had to receive their confirmation of their election from their superiors. The metropolitans had to receive their confirmation and the *pallium* from the Holy See of Rome. The Roman Church had to be independent of any other churches. The king had to keep the honor of the Latins and their priests. Neither the king nor his subjects should stay away from the Latin ceremonies. To fulfill the desire of Uroš, Pope Clement V sent even his nuncios, who had to give more detailed instructions.⁴¹⁶ The mission was unsuccessful. The nuncios were sent back with unsatisfactory answers.

The interests of King Uroš were mainly territorial. There was no problem about the territories from Skopje to Polog. Štip was also in a clear state of his predominance. Emperor Charles gave as a present to the Serbian king Ovčepolje, the territory between Prosêk and Prilep, the surrounding of Kičava at the border of Ohrid and the area from Debar (Dibër) to the river Mat in Albania, a territory which according to Jireček offered an income of 5000 “Goldenstück.”⁴¹⁷ The castles of Prosêk, Prilep and Ohrid remained still in the possession of the Byzantines.

The French Pope Clement V was full of hope for a real Church Union when he gave in Poitiers (April 1, 1308) many charters to the envoys of the Serbian king. In these letters, Patriarch Egidius of Grado and the proctors of the Dominican and Minorite Orders were given the responsibility to proceed with the acceptance of the king in the Roman Church. The Franciscan Gregor of Cattaro was supposed to be the spiritual adviser in the Serbian court. A special papal letter was about Stephen, who was an illegitimate son according to Canon Law, because the king had married a divorced woman (*conjugatus genuit de soluta*).⁴¹⁸ The pope absolved Stephen from

⁴¹⁵ This document is to be found *in extensio* in the collection of Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 181.

⁴¹⁶ In this letter, the pope asked the king also to recognize the legitimacy of the application of Azyme. Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 129; also Adophe D’Avril, *La Serbie Chrétienne*, in *Revue de l’Orient Chrétien*, vol. I, 1896, pp. 489-490.

⁴¹⁷ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 345.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 345.

this and allowed him to have (during his life or in the testament) a *comitatus* (territory) under his possession.

A real failure of the Church Union happened when the Latin Empress Catherine died and Charles of Valois gave up all his plans. The Serbian King Uroš II went back to the Greeks (1311). The relations between Uroš II and his brother Stephen deteriorated and a brother-war started. King Stephen Dragutin started the war to assure the throne for his son, Vladislav.⁴¹⁹ With the mediation of the clergy, peace was restored between the two brothers, in all probability with Stephen victorious. After the death of Stephen (1316) Uroš II took the throne by force from his nephew, Vladislav, and became the only supreme king in the Kingdom of Serbia, having under his dominion many Albanian territories, including also those of Helen who died in 1314.⁴²⁰ In these circumstances, when the Church Union did not come into being, a crusade started to being prepared against the Serbian King.

⁴¹⁹ Ibidem, 347.

⁴²⁰ The timing of her death is questionable. According to Balan, she died in 1307, but he does not support this date with any evidence. See Balan, *Delle relazioni*, 135. Jireček provides us with a precise date of her death, which according to him is February 8, 1314. *Geschichte der Serben* I, 348. See also Fine, *Late Medieval Balkans*, 220.

IV. The *Regnum Albaniae* and the recognition of the Papal Curia as a central authority in the region

The focus of this chapter will be on the correspondence of the Avignon popes and the local authorities of the territories in and outside the *Regnum Albaniae*, during the period of the Avignon Papacy, that is from 1305 to 1378. This chapter will shed light on both of these aspects of their activity: mission through crusades and church union, and reform in the southeastern Adriatic coast and its hinterland. It is almost impossible to separate into subchapters the crusades and the diplomatic attempts to unify the Church in this area, because they overlap in such a way that sometimes one cannot be understood without the other, since they are mutually related. Nevertheless, I present them independently in order to show hidden motives and the attention these developments received in the Holy See.

After the death of Helen the Catholic, *Regnum Albaniae* took over her mission in the Balkans. Although the *Regnum Albaniae* was officially proclaimed in 1272, its first mentioning in the papal chancellery dates back only to the second decade of the fourteenth century. All the recorded papal letters, in which the *Regnum Albaniae* is either addressed or mentioned in the text, can be grouped into two time-periods.⁴²¹ The first group was written during the second decade of the fourteenth century, and more specifically during the period 1317-1320. In these papal letters, the *Regnum Albaniae* is explicitly mentioned as an addressee, since they were addressed to the representatives of the *Regnum*. The second group which dates from the fifties of the fourteenth century contains letters in which *Regnum Albaniae* is just mentioned, because it is somehow related to the addressees. We do not have papal letters addressed or explicitly mentioning *Regnum Albaniae* in any other period of the fourteenth century, that is, neither in the period in-

⁴²¹ I have consulted all the volumes of *Registra Vaticana* and *Registra Avenionensia* in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* that cover the period from 1272-1387, and also the *Schedario Garampi* and *Schedario Montroy* for missing documents. I draw these conclusions, thus, from my own archival research.

between, in the twenties, thirties, forties, nor in the period before nor after the registration of these two groups of letters.

IV. 1. Military strategies

Philip of Taranto, who from 1304 held the title *dominus regni Albaniae*, and from 1313 that of the Latin emperor,⁴²² encouraged the Avignon popes, especially John XXII, to organize crusades which, starting from *Regnum Albaniae* and the Hungarian kingdom, would try to reach all the Balkan territories. The first attempt was recorded in 1319, when a Christian coalition against *Graecos schismaticos*⁴²³ and also, in particular, against Uroš II, the Serbian king, was created, consisting of the Pope, Philip, Charles I Robert, king of Hungary,⁴²⁴ and Mladen II, ban of Croatia and Bosnia.⁴²⁵ The Hungarian king, Charles Robert, was not only a devoted Catholic, but also claimed the territories of Stephen Dragutin. Jireček stated in his study that war between him and the Serbian king was fought in different territories from the Danube to Albania, including the Anjou territories of the *Regnum Albaniae*.⁴²⁶

Almost all the papal letters of this period (1317-1320) addressed to the *barones Regni Albaniae* encourage them to resist the oppression of the “schismatic” Serbs. The papal legate, Andreas Croensis, who was himself a victim of the oppression of the Serbs (expelled from his bishopric of Kruja by King Uroš in 1317: *ab ecclesia sua, per Urosium regem Rasciae schismaticum occupata, expulsare compellitur*)⁴²⁷ was entrusted to instruct the *barones* to resist this oppression.

⁴²² Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 179

⁴²³ ASV, *Reg. Vat.*, fol. 162v, ep. 671.

⁴²⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴²⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁴²⁶ *Ibidem*, 350, 352.

⁴²⁷ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 8, fol. 70 ep. 96; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 67, fol. 26 ep. 96.

Fundraising for the crusade was being encouraged by the Holy See. On September 27, 1317,⁴²⁸ Pope John XXII wrote a letter to the bishops of Oristano⁴²⁹ in Sardinia, of Brindisi,⁴³⁰ and of Taranto⁴³¹ in Puglia with regard to Andreas. After explaining the situation, Pope John XXII asked them for financial aid for Andreas, namely *quingenta florenos auri ... faciatis eidem episcopo annis singulis usque ad quinquennium*.⁴³² That money seems to have been a big amount at that time, since it was to be obtained from the incomes of five monasteries.⁴³³ We do not know whether and how Andreas spent that money, but on June 18, 1320, the pope had to give him again money *de causa elemosinae*,⁴³⁴ which indicates the fact that Andreas was spending a lot and his financial situation was still, or again, quite critical.

Whether Andreas was instructed in person in Avignon, or indirectly somewhere else to lead the crusade is not explicitly mentioned in the source material. Most probably he resided in Avignon after his expulsion. The request of the pope to the south Italian bishops to help him, makes one consider that he was to be reached easily by them, probably on his way to Avignon (September 27, 1317). He should have stayed in Avignon until June 1318, because on June 6, 1318, he was in charge of three confirmations of ecclesiastical offices, on his way back to Albania. Along with Michael, the bishop of Arbanum, he had to confirm the election of Costa as the archdeacon of Durrës,⁴³⁵ who himself was not able to travel to Avignon because of fear that his

⁴²⁸ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 8 fol. 70 ep. 96; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 67 fol. 26 ep. 96.

⁴²⁹ The bishop of Oristano was the Dominican Guido Cattano (1312-....). Eubel, *HC I*, 102.

⁴³⁰ The bishop of Brindisi was Bartholomaeus (1306-1319). Eubel, *HC I*, 154.

⁴³¹ The bishop of Taranto was the Dominican Gregorius (1301-1334). See Eubel, *HC I*, 98.

⁴³² ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 8 fol. 70 ep. 96; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 67 fol. 26 ep. 96;

⁴³³ *Ibidem*.

⁴³⁴ *Die XVIII Junij tradidimus de mandato domini nostri papae ex causa helemosinae venerabilibus patribus dominis fratribus Nicolao archiepiscopo Acridensis et Andree episcopo Croensis et Zacarie Suassinensis C florenos auri.* This text was registered in three different registers. ASV, *Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex.* 564, f. 102v (ol. 95v) in *Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex.* 33, fol. 142v (Garampi gives a wrong signature which is folio no. 105v, cfr. ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 44, Vescovi 14, Indice 488, fol. 130v, and Šufflay gave also a wrong one, 175, cf. *Acta Albaniae I*, no. 663). The third registration is in ASV, *Cam. Ap., Intr. et Ex.* 38, fol. 107v.

⁴³⁵ June 6, 1318. ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol 281r-v, ep. 1329; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68 fol. 106 ep. 1329. See also Michael Tangl, "Das Taxwesen in Mittelalter," *Mitteilungen des Institutes für österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 13 (1892),

seat would be occupied (*attento quod schismatici dominium templi obtineant in dicta civitate Dyrrhachiensis*).⁴³⁶ The second confirmation was that of Johannes Rubeus in the rich parochial church of St. *Nicolaus de Petrosa* in the diocese of Chunavia, who also could not travel to Avignon.⁴³⁷ The third one was that of a parochial benefice for the presbyter Johannes Barbuci from Albania (*de Albania*) in the Italian diocese of Bari who seemed to have charged Andreas as his proctor to the Pope.⁴³⁸

Another argument, which is in favor of the presence of Andreas in Avignon, is the right to ecclesiastical confirmations. If we keep in mind the fact that John XXII concentrated all the faculties in his hands, especially those of nominations and confirmations,⁴³⁹ it should be self-evident that a bishop could receive the right of confirmation only after being instructed personally on the spot. Besides that, in the papal letter sent to Costa, we also find the obligation to appear in Avignon or to send nuntios to receive the confirmation formulated as follows: *non fuerit ausus apostolicam sedem adire vel nuntios mictere pro confirmationis et electionis sue munere obtinende*.⁴⁴⁰

36; Viktor Novak, "Acta Innocentii VI" in *Monumenta Vaticana res gestas bohemicas illustrantia* II (Prague, 1907), XIII; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 636.

⁴³⁶ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 196.

⁴³⁷ June 6, 1318. ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 187r, ep. 1324; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68, fol. 104 v ep. 1324.

⁴³⁸ June 6, 1318. ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 187v, ep. 1325; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68, fol. 105 ep. 1325: *per te vel procuratorem tuum*.

⁴³⁹ At the beginning of the pontificate of John XXII (1316), the Papal Curia was badly organized because of the long interregnum. The Apostolic treasure was empty not only because of exaggerated donations that Pope Clement V had given, but also the attempts of the latter for independence and the wars in Italy and in the Orient. Pope John XXII had to accomplish huge work to create new order and prosperity in the Holy See. For the success he reached, he was considered as "an incomparable administrator"; but to come to that point he had to create a re-organized fiscal system to increase the monetary power of the papacy, mainly through centralizing the system of nominations and confirmations of bishops and archbishops, the elections in the cathedral chapters, the system of benefices, etc. To justify the centralization he issued the bull "*Ex debito*". The achieved centralization increased the power of the papacy and that of the Church during his pontificate. For more regarding the issue of this centralizing policy see G. Mollat, *Les Papes d'Avignon* (1305-1378) (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffré, 1924), 36-62. See also Emil Friedberg, *Corpus Juris Canonici, Pars Secunda: Decretalium Collectiones*. 2 vols. (reprint Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1959); *lib. I, tit. III, cap. 4*; See also Geoffrey Barraclough, *Papal Provisions*.

⁴⁴⁰ June 6, 1318. ASV, *Reg. Avin.* 9, fol 281r-v, ep. 1329; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68 fol. 106 ep. 1329.

Because of the calamities that Andreas was experiencing, he had won the favor, respect and trust of John XXII. He was given a mission that normally was a privilege of the papal legates *a latere*,⁴⁴¹ that is, to organize and lead a crusade. In 1319, Andreas Croensis was the one who would fully represent the papacy in the anti-Serbian movement in the occupied parts of Albania. The participation of the *barones Regni Albaniae* in the organized coalition with the Holy See, the Anjou Kingdom of Naples, Hungary, and the Banat of Croatia⁴⁴² obviously made the Albanians get recognized by the European secular and religious forces of the time.

Whether a real crusade was organized, this is not clearly stated in the source material. Jireček stated that there was fighting and that the Catholic armies led by the Hungarian king were not successful, because the other Catholic rulers, especially those of Bohemia and Poland, whom Pope John XXII appealed for help, were reluctant to participate. As a result, Uroš II not only expanded his southern territories into the *Regnum Albaniae*, but he even held the title *Rex Albaniae* afterwards.⁴⁴³

Concerning the reasons of the failures of crusading attempts during this period, Norman Housley draws our attention to a letter of Pope John XXII written to Philip V between September 1319 and the summer of 1320.⁴⁴⁴ In the letter, the pope reveals his approach towards the crusading initiatives at this time. He wrote that there was no chance for a crusade, because all of Christendom were entangled in wars and disputes: England against Scotland, Robert of Naples against Frederick of Sicily, Cyprus against Armenia, Guelf against Ghibelline, the German princes amongst themselves. In addition, the Spanish kingdoms were fully occupied with fighting

⁴⁴¹ About the legates see S. J. Pierre Blet, *Histoire de la Représentation Diplomatique du Saint Siège des origines à l'aube du XIX^e siècle*, Collectanea Archivi Vaticani 9 (Vatican City: Archivio Vaticano, 1982); Figueira, "The Classification"; Schmutz, Schmutz, "Medieval Papal Representatives"; Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*.

⁴⁴² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 648 (notes). Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 352.

⁴⁴³ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 352. Engel, however, talks about a success of the Hungarian king in the campaign in the autumn of 1319, "which seems to have brought about the occupation of Belgrade." Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 134.

the Muslims on their borders, and the Hospitallers were crippled by debts of over 360 000 florins. Few of these powers had ever co-operated fully with the pope in planning a crusade.⁴⁴⁵

To prevent any further crusading attempts against him, the Serbian king Uroš III played again like his predecessors with the cart of Church Union. To Pope John XXII he offered the Church Union, whereas to Philip prince of Taranto he offered the conquest of Constantinople and asked for the hand of Blanche, the daughter of Philip as his wife. A legate of Pope John XXII received from him the profession of the Catholic faith, and John XXII wrote to him a letter in 1323. He also sent two nuncios, but the mission had no success, exactly like the one of Uroš II.⁴⁴⁶

The crusading attempts, however, did not finish in 1319-1320. Even in the successive years, the *Regnum Albaniae* had become basis for crusading attempts of the Westerners against the *infideles* of the Balkans. This is also clearly shown in the *Directorium ad passagium faciendum*. The “Initiative for making the passage,” as it is translated by Robert Elsie,⁴⁴⁷ is a medieval Latin manuscript written in 1332 (also available in early French translations) attributed alternatively to a monk called Burcard (Brocardus Monachus / Frère Brochard) or to Guillelmus Adae, the archbishop of Bar.⁴⁴⁸ Raymond Beazley mentioned even Johannes de Cora as a possible author, but he denied the latter possibility, because “the attitude adopted by the *Directorium* toward the Eastern Church is *toto caelo* removed from the diplomatic attitude of the *Livre du Grant Caan*, where something like an alliance is suggested between the Catholic

⁴⁴⁴ About the comment on this letter see Housley, *Italian Crusades*, 74.

⁴⁴⁵ Housley, *Italian Crusades*, 74.

⁴⁴⁶ Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 239.

⁴⁴⁷ Elsie, “Anonymous: Initiative.”

⁴⁴⁸ On the authorship of the *Directorium* cf. Milan Šufflay, “Pseudobrocardus. Rehabilitacija važnog izvora za povijest Balkana u prvoj polovini XIV vijeka,” (Pseudobrocardus: The rehabilitation of an important source about the history of the Balkans from the first half of the fourteenth century), in *Vjesnik kraljevskeg. Hrvatsko-slavonsko-dalmatinskoga Zemaljskoga Arkiva*, ed. Ivan Bojničić, Pl. Kninski, vol. 13, 3 (Zagreb: Tisak Kralj. Zemaljske Tiskare, 1911): 142-150; Atiya, *The Crusade*, 95, 106. Beazley held the opinion Burchard of Mount Sion could not have been the author of the *Directorium*, because of his liberal spirit expressed in the *Descriptio Terrae Sanctae*. Cf. Raymond C. Beazley, “Directorium ad Faciendum Passagium Transmarinum,” *The American Historical Review* 12, no. 4 (Jul., 1907): 812 [henceforth: Beazley, *Directorium*].

missionaries in the Mongol realms and the native Nestorian Christians of the same countries.”⁴⁴⁹

The author was, at any rate, a Dominican priest and Latin prelate in the Byzantine Empire and Armenia, as he himself mentioned,⁴⁵⁰ and certainly very much devoted to the crusading ideas.

Jireček presumed that Guillelmus Adae, the archbishop of Bar (1324-1341), whom he considered as the author of the *Directorium*,⁴⁵¹ had got his inspiration for the treatise from a revolt of the nobles of Zeta in April 1332, led by the *vojvode* Bogoe and the Albanian Demetrius Suma against Stephen Dušan.⁴⁵² As a reason for this revolt he suggested that they were not rewarded enough by Stephen Dušan for helping him to fight his father, Uroš III.⁴⁵³ This certainly might have been the pretext, but if we bear in mind that the Dominican Guillelmus Adae, was at any rate a “fanatic enemy of all schismatics,”⁴⁵⁴ he might have tried to put this revolt into the framework of the universal crusade plans of Pope John XXII and the Venetian Republic against the Greeks, Bulgarians and other *infideles* in 1328-1332.⁴⁵⁵

In the spirit of this crusade, the *Directorium ad passagium faciendum* was written to persuade the French King Philip VI of Valois (r. 1328-1350) to participate and conquer the parts of the Western Balkans that were occupied by the Serbs and inhabited by Albanians, *que sunt gentes obedientes Romane ecclesie et devote*,⁴⁵⁶ thus restoring the Catholic Church to its former power there and taking revenge upon the Orthodox Greeks for having destroyed the Latin Empire

⁴⁴⁹ Beazley, *Directorium*, 811.

⁴⁵⁰ Charles Kohler, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Documents Armeniens* 2 (Paris, 1906), 365-517 [henceforth: Kohler, *Recueil*].

⁴⁵¹ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 371.

⁴⁵² 14 April 1332: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 759.

⁴⁵³ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, 371.

⁴⁵⁴ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 214.

⁴⁵⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 115, fol. 144. In his letter addressed to King Robert of Naples from 9 December, 1328 he had written: *Quia dire persecutiones et oppressiones varie, quas Greci schismatici, Bulgari, Alani, Turchi aliique infideles, crucis hostes et nominis christiani blasphemi, christicolis Romanie... inferre moliuntur, nos in amara trahunt suspiria...*

⁴⁵⁶ Kohler, *Recueil*, 416.

of Constantinople.⁴⁵⁷ The author counts very much on Albanian support to conquer the Serbian kingdom, stating: “With the help of the aforementioned Albanians and Latins, one thousand French knights and five or six thousand foot soldiers could without doubt easily conquer the whole length and breadth of this kingdom.”⁴⁵⁸

The nobles of Zeta led by the *vojvode* Bogoe and the Albanian Demetrius Suma against Stephen Dušan in April 1332⁴⁵⁹ should have been well informed about the general crusading attempts of the West, if not prepared for this crusade. Archbishop Guillelmus Adae was in Avignon at that time (1329-1337),⁴⁶⁰ so they could not have been directly encouraged by him. However, since the *Directorium* relied so much on the help of the Albanians, its author should have been sure that the Albanian nobles would be willing to fight the Serbian King, even better in the framework of the crusading attempts. Let us consider the reasons why their protest was not sporadic.

Johannes s. Theodori,⁴⁶¹ a cardinal-legate who became the leading personality in the crusade against the Turks,⁴⁶² is supposed to have been in Kotor in 1331. He was charged by Pope John XXII to exempt the excommunicated clerics and citizens of Kotor, who had refused the nomination of Sergius as their bishop.⁴⁶³ Johannes of S. Theodori had to solve *capitulum, clerum et ecclesiam ac universitatem et civitatem* from excommunication, but all his work seems to have been done by Petrus, bishop of Shkodra.⁴⁶⁴ In this context, John of S. Theodori should certainly have been informed about the crusading attempts of the Holy See, and so should Petrus.

⁴⁵⁷ Translated from Latin by Robert Elsie, *Early Albania*: 28-30.

⁴⁵⁸ Elsie, *Anonymous: Initiative*.

⁴⁵⁹ 14 April 1332: *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 759.

⁴⁶⁰ Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 214.

⁴⁶¹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 309; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 751.

⁴⁶² Geanakopulos, “Byzantium and the Crusades, 1354-1353,” in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, vol. III, 50-51.

⁴⁶³ Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, no. 236.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, no. 254. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 751: *(Petro) episcopo Scutarensi committit in hac parte totaliter vices suas.*

“Rumors” about these crusades reached also the nobles of Zeta, who profiting from this general enthusiasm for a crusade against the “schismatics” started with their general protest against the Serbian king. From the events of 1319 they also knew that the Serbs were already considered “schismatics” by the Roman Curia, so this protest should at least have been a serious threat for Dušan.

Their protest of 1332 could not have been sporadic, also considering the “rumors” coming from the secular powers of the time. During the period 1331-1333, there are various Venetian documents which relate to the crusade, and on April 6, 1332 the Venetian Senate instructed their consul of Apulia to urge King Robert of Naples to join an anti-Turkish league which was being organized.⁴⁶⁵ Philip of Taranto was also encouraged by the Venetians, and tried to persuade the Anjou court at Naples to help. An important part in this league was to be played by the Catholics of *Romania ad resistendum eisdem inimicis fidei et defendendum fideles ab eorum persecutionibus*.⁴⁶⁶ Since the territories of *Regnum Albaniae* were considered part of *Romania*,⁴⁶⁷ it goes without saying that the Albanian nobility was to play an important role in this league. *Regnum Albaniae* seems to have been in the hands of Stephen Dušan, since in January 1333 we find him as the *rex Servie, Dalmatie, Dioclie, Albanie, Zente, Chelmie et Maritime regionis*.⁴⁶⁸ The revolt against the Serbs could have been considered by the author of the *Directorium* part of this large-scaled crusade against the infidels.

Crusading attempts continued during the following years. Many papal letters were sent also to almost all the archbishops of Europe during 1333 and 1334 urging them to facilitate the

⁴⁶⁵ Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 179;

⁴⁶⁶ Raynaldi, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1328, 86.

⁴⁶⁷ In 1303, the *concilium rogatorum* in Ragusa considered Durrës, Vlora and Spinarica parts of *Romania*: ... *Dirachio ... Vallona et Spinarça in Romaniam ... Acta Albaniae* I, no. 533

⁴⁶⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 764.

passagium ultramarine.⁴⁶⁹ Their leader was again the papal legate Cardinal-deacon Johannes of S. Theodori. On November 4, 1334, the archbishop of Bar, Guillelmus Adae, sent a short note of six lines to Pope John XXII confirming that he had received four papal letters with regard to the general passage, and that he had ordered their execution.⁴⁷⁰

The anti-Turkish league, however, did not come into being, nor did any crusade. There are various reasons for this. Philip VI was prevented from any crusade plans by the tempting offer of a kingdom in Lombardy and the Curia was tied down by the Italian republics, Naples and France to give its full backing to any crusade aspirations.⁴⁷¹

IV. 2. Diplomatic activities

As already mentioned, *Regnum Albaniae* appeared in the papal charters for the first time during the period of the Avignon papacy, starting with Pope John XXII (1317). Being the only Catholic territory in the Balkans, the Avignon popes had planned a specific mission for the *Regnum Albaniae*: reaching the schismatics, that is expanding papal influence in the Balkans. Besides the missionary activities, the Avignon popes were paying a lot of attention to the union of the Greek and Roman church and to the protection of Byzantium from dangers of the Turks. Both of these aspects: missionary and reforming are visible also in the papal-led activities of the *Regnum Albaniae*. At times, the plan to take hold in the Balkans was thought to be implemented by crusades, at other times by diplomacy. The chosen way for the implementation of the papal

⁴⁶⁹ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 44, f. 121r-122r, 127r, 128v-131, 134r; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 104, fol. 29r-36v, ep. 20-27: *de negotio Terrae Sanctae, de indictione passagii ultramarini, de praedicatione verbi crucis et de impositione decimarum super fructibus redditibus et proventibus beneficiorum ecclesiasticorum in omnibus mundi christiani partibus atque mandatur eis dictas decimas in eorum civitate et diocese colligere ac debito tempore persolvere.*

⁴⁷⁰ ASV, *Instr. Misc.* 1290: *Sanctissimo ac beatissimo patri et domino domino Johannis, Sacrosancte romanae ecclesiae ac universalis ecclesiae papae dignissimo, frater ecclesiae Antibarensis archiepiscopus, in pedum oscula beatorum. Recepi quatuor tuorum literas sanctitatis vestre ordinationem generalis passagii continentes, quas executioni mandabo, cum promissa obedientia et devota. Recepi autem prefatas literas per manum Civiani de*

plans depended not only on the local circumstances, but mostly on the universal plans and visions of Jerusalem of each pope.

The fifties of the fourteenth century are, generally speaking, characterized by the restitution of the military crusades starting from *Regnum Albaniae*. The diplomatic activity had by now fully replaced the military strategy of the papal legates. Crusades were expensive and the papal curia could not afford them any more. At the beginning of his pontificate Clement VI (1342-1352) could afford a crusade, but as time passed, the expenditures for the Italian wars, the completion of the papal palace at Avignon, the purchase of the city from Joanna I of Naples, the gifts and loans to the French crown, and the luxury of his court reduced the revenues of the Apostolic Camera to a pass from which his Avignon successors could never rescue it.⁴⁷²

The beginnings of the diplomatic missions to *regna Rasciae, Sclavoniae, et Albaniae* can be traced as early as January 1346. Dušan sent a delegation to the Venetian Republic, to whom he made known his coronation (*coronatio sua in imperio Constantinopolitano*)⁴⁷³ and asked for an alliance with it (*unio*) to conquer this empire. The Senate congratulated him, but did not want to join him, due to the war with Hungary and also because of the contracts with Byzantium. This might have been one of the reasons, why Dušan tried to strengthen his kingdom, also from the religious point of view.

In the middle of the fourteenth century (1346) he proclaimed himself “emperor of the Serbs and the Greeks.” He attempted to receive the Byzantine crown so that, following the example of the Bulgarian tsars of previous centuries, he could build a Byzantine Empire of the Slavic nation, a plan that ended with the death of Dušan in 1355. Venice refused to help him

Solumgello curierii vestri. Mandatus mense novembris feliciter pontificatus vestri anno XIX. Incarnationis dominum anno M CCC XXX IIII. In cuius res testimonium sigillo meo hanc cedulam comunivi.

⁴⁷¹ Housley, *Italian Crusades*, 74.

⁴⁷² Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant*, 179;

⁴⁷³ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 387.

occupy Constantinople (1350), exactly for the same reasons it would later refuse the Hungarian king Louis I, although Dušan offered as a reward either the Despotate of Epiros, which he had already occupied, or Pera which he intended to get from Genoa.⁴⁷⁴

This coronation of Stephan Dušan as Emperor of Serbs and Greeks⁴⁷⁵ (April 16, 1346 in Skopje) was done by the Serbian patriarch Joannikij, the Bulgarian patriarch Symeon of Trnov, in the presence of nobles, clerics and monks of Mount Athos,⁴⁷⁶ and also in the presence of the Catholic Archbishop of Ohrid, Nicolaus. Queen Helen was crowned Empress and the nine-year-old son Uroš, King of the Serbs. According to the rules of the Byzantine lands, the emperor had to have a patriarch on his side, that is, why Stephan raised his former chancellor (logothet) Joannikij, to the office of *Patriarch of Serbs and Greeks*. He received the ecclesiastical approval for this move from the Bulgarian patriarch of Trnov and from the Catholic archbishop of Ohrid, who already seems to have been a titular Catholic archbishop there before.⁴⁷⁷ Dušan did certainly not expect the approval of the Greeks, and, as a matter of fact, he expelled and replaced all the metropolitans of the Patriarchate of Constantinople with Serbian bishops.⁴⁷⁸

The same rejection was also done to the Catholic rite. Under the supremacy of Dušan, whose Code called the Catholic rite the “Latin heresy”, the good relations between the local Catholic population and the Serbs came to an end. The *Zakonik* of Stephan Dušan was promoted for the first time in the same Skopje in May 1349⁴⁷⁹ and it contained harsh statutes against the “Latin heresy”, against the conversion of Serbians by Latin clerics and against mixed marriages

⁴⁷⁴ Sime Ljubić, ed. *Monumenta Spectantia Historiam Slavorum Meridionalium*, (Zagreb: Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slavorum Meridionalium, 1872), vol. III, 174.

⁴⁷⁵ In Serbian, the title was “Emperor of Serbs and Greeks”, whereas in Latin and Greek charters it was “Emperor of Rascia and Romania”. See Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 386.

⁴⁷⁶ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 387.

⁴⁷⁷ According to Šufflay, the archbishop of Ohrid who took part in the coronation of Dušan was the same Dominican Nicolaus, who had become archbishop of Ohrid in 1320. Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 215.

⁴⁷⁸ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 387.

between “half believers” and “Christians”.⁴⁸⁰ In this situation the good relations between the papacy and Catholic Albanians became quite tight.

This codex of laws was clearly aiming at a new and more solid basis of Dušan’s empire. It was a normative *aparatus*, which was to be applied not only in the Serbian kingdom, but also in the occupied territories of Macedonia, Thessaly, Epiros, and Albania. However, religious persecution of the Catholic population in the above-mentioned territories, such as confiscation of property, expulsion, physical mutilation until death, were not a phenomenon that started after the year 1349, but they were continuous at least since the beginning of the fourteenth century, as the case of Andreas Croensis showed.

Albanians and Vlachs seem to have been the black sheep in the bunch of nations which were included in the “empire” of Stephen Dušan. They were more attacked than the others, and their status was different from the status of the other ethnics even in the codex. So, for instance *Article 75*, which is about fighting, says: “A fight between villages, 60 perpers, between Vlachs and Albanians, 100 perpers. And of this fine one half to the Tsar, and one half to the lord owning the village.”⁴⁸¹ Besides that there is another special article on Vlachs and Albanians, which said: “In a village where a Vlach or an Albanian stays, another following him shall not stay in that

⁴⁷⁹ For this study I have used the translation of Krstić Đurica, ed. *Dušan’s Code: The Bistritza Transcript* (Belgrade: Vajat, 1994).

⁴⁸⁰ Dušan’s Code. Article 6: And concerning the Latin heresy: Christians who have turned to the use of unleavened bread shall return to the Christian observance. If any fail to obey and do not return to Christian Orthodoxy, let him be punished as is written in the Code of the Holy Fathers.

Article 7: And the great church shall appoint head priests in all market towns to reclaim from the Latin heresy those Christians who have turned to the Latin faith, and to give them spiritual instructions, so that each one of them returns to Christianity.

Article 8: And if a Latin priest be found to have converted a Christian to the Latin faith, let him be punished according to the Law of the Holy Fathers.

Article 9: And if a half-believer be found to be married to a Christian woman, let him be baptized into Christianity if he desires it. But if he refuses to be baptized, let his wife and children be taken from him, and let a part of his house be allotted to them, and let him be driven forth.

Article 10: And if any heretic be found to live among the Christians, let him be branded on the face and driven forth, and whoever shall harbor him, let him too be branded.

Article 83: And whoso utters a heretical word, if he be noble let him pay 100 perpers, and if he be a commoner, let him pay 12 perpers and be beaten with sticks.

village. If that one stays by force, let him pay a fine and for the grass he has grazed.”⁴⁸² The persecutions, recorded in the papal letters but also by travellers⁴⁸³ make one suggest that the code was more than just a normative source, but the codification of what already was a daily practice.

In 1351, the Holy See restarted diplomatic activities with the Serbian kings. On September, Pope Clement VI sent his legates to Stephan Dušan. The concerning letters refer to the *regna Rassie, Albanie et Sclavonie ac alia circumadiacentibus partibus*, therefore, the legates had apparently not only the mission to reach Dušan, but also the nobles of these region and to reform the church there.

The papal legates, Antonius,⁴⁸⁴ archbishop of Durrës, Elias,⁴⁸⁵ archbishop of Ragusa and Bartholomaeus,⁴⁸⁶ bishop of Trau, were all great personalities, very much experienced with difficult missions and circumstances. Antonio was an Italian Minorite,⁴⁸⁷ who had been successful in Jerusalem, and for this reason he was sent to Durrës,⁴⁸⁸ which had a significant importance for the papal policy in the Balkans. Bartholomaeus had been bishop of Kotor during

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. Article 75.

⁴⁸² Ibid. Article no. 80.

⁴⁸³ Pëllumb Xhufi, “*Albanian Heretics in the Serbian Medieval Kingdom*,” 48-54.

⁴⁸⁴ Eubel, *HC I*, 232: Antonius de Alexandria, *Ordinis Minorum, episcopus Hieropolitanensis* (July 31, 1346 - May 25, 1349), was elected on May 25, 1349 as archbishop of Durrës. According to Eubel, he died in 1363. According to Farlati, Antonius was an *Italus Alexandriae natus in Insumbria*. See Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum VII*, 367.

⁴⁸⁵ Eubel, *HC I*, 411: Elias de Saracha, who was deacon canonic of the same church, was elected on February 18, 1341 as archbishop of Ragusa. According to Eubel, he died in 1361.

⁴⁸⁶ Eubel, *HC I*, 490: Bartholomeus, the bishop of Kotor, was elected as bishop of Trogir on January 30 1349. According to Eubel, he died in 1361. Based on the Codex of Brunatione, Farlati tells us that his real name was Salomon, and his birthplace was in Valmontone, in the diocese of Segni in Italy. See Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* vol. IV, 381.

⁴⁸⁷ Luca Wadding, *Annales Ordinis Minorum et trium Ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum, cura J. M. Fonsecae ab Ehora*, 1-12 (Rome, 1731-1745), VIII, 1349, XI, 39 [henceforth: Wadding, *Annales Minorum*].

⁴⁸⁸ *ASV. Reg. Vat.* 195, f. 22r, ep. 1; *Acta Albaniae II*, no. 54; Wadding, *Annales ecclesiastici* ad 1349; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum VII*, 367; Eubel, *Bullarium Franciscanum VI*, 229, 505, Eubel, *HC I*, 241 et 1, 232; *Regesta Clemensis VI*, 2, n. 56: 1349, 25. Maii. Avenione. Clemens VI. papa, vacante “*ecclesia Duracensi per obitum bone memorie Angeli archiepiscopi Duracensis qui apud sedem apostolicam diem clausit posterum*,” *Antonium archiepiscopum Hierapolitanum ad ecclesiam transfert Duracensem*.

the years 1347-1349, in a time when it had the most stubborn nobility in the region. He was apostolic legate to Rascia, Albania, and Slavonia until the end of his life, around 1362.⁴⁸⁹

One part of the papal letters of this time was addressed to the legates themselves, instructing them about their activity. Another part was sent to the legitimate king and queen of Serbia or to the chieftains of the *Regna Rasciae, Albaniae, and Slavoniae*. In this context, the usage of the term *Regnum Albaniae* in the papal letters seems to have conveyed a strong political implication. The letters were addressed to the legates and the people, with whom they would be in contact.

If we analyze these papal letter *de verbo ad verbum*, an important question arises: How distorted was the religious situation in these kingdoms from the Catholic viewpoint, and how far could three papal envoys be successful to reform the religious practices and life in these kingdoms? The focus of my analysis will be concentrated merely on the case of the *Regnum Albaniae*, trying not only to shed light on the religious situation there, but also to show the background of such a situation and the connection to the Holy See.

The majority of the papal letters from this period mentioned *Regnum Albaniae* not as the addressee, but in the text. These letters were addressed to papal legates, who were sent to the *regna Rascia, Albaniae and Slavoniae* with the purpose to fight heresy and to reach heretics and schismatics, whose religion in fact was Byzantine Greek/Serbian orthodoxy.

The message of the first letter from September 1, 1351, which was also the core of the mission, is expressed very clearly: to fight schism and heresy (*contra schismaticarum et hereticorum venena pestifera quibus catholice fidei puritatem conantur, inficere*).⁴⁹⁰ The

⁴⁸⁹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* IV, 381-390.

⁴⁹⁰ ASV, Reg. Vat. 207 fol. 1; ASV, Reg. Vat. 62 fol. 97v-98r; ASV, Reg. Aven. 255, fol. 1. Clement VI, anno 10, communes litteres 2, fol. 1, ep. 2, de curia; ASV, Reg. Aven. 255, fol. 1. It was edited by Taūtu, *Acta Clementis VI*, 295, no. 189, and Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* 1, 802, n. 1226 et 6, 127 et 7, 368. Fragments of it are given by

destructive poison of the “schismatics” and heretics to be condemned were the following statements:

1. The Holy Spirit does not proceed from the son but only from the Father (*Spiritum Sanctum non a Filio sed a solo Patre procedere*)
2. The Corpus Christi should not be consumed in unleavened but in leavened bread (*corpus Christi non in azimo sed in fermentato pane confici debere*)
3. The form of the baptism and confirmation according to the rite the Roman Church offers is false (*formam baptismi et confirmationis iuxta ritum quem praefata Romana servat Ecclesia falsam fore*)
4. The teachers of the universal Christian faith do not know how to subordinate to the Roman Church and to serve the institutions bound to them (*Romanam Ecclesiam, cui universae christianae fidei professores subesse noscuntur eiusque tenentur instituta servare*)

According to the letter, the first and main error of these “schismatics” and heretics was to believe that the Holy Spirit did not proceed from the Son, but only from the Father. The crucial issue of the controversies between the Byzantine and Roman theologians, and the core of the Eastern Church⁴⁹¹ is considered as an error in this letter, and nothing more. Reducing the Eastern Christianity into a simple heresy and a simple schism was certainly done on purpose. Through this action, Pope Clement VI wanted the mission of the legates to be not only against a heresy in the sense of a simple deviation, but he also wanted to reach the population of the Greek rite, while annihilating the core of the controversy with the Byzantine/Slavic orthodox dogma and rite.

Eubel, *Bullarium Franciscanum* 6, n. 597; Rainaldi, *Annales Ecclesiastici* ad annum 1351, no. XX, XXI; and regesta by Déprez, *Clement VI*, no. 2490; *Acta Albaniae* II, no. 87;

⁴⁹¹ François Dvornik states that the papacy lost its primacy over the Greek in the moment when it supported the according to them ‘heresy’ of the *filioque*. See François Dvornik, *Byzance et la primauté romaine* (Paris: Cerf, 1964), 10.

The question of unleavened bread and the issue of *azyme* were not new. They had come time and again in the papal letters against the Byzantine rite, condemning their way of perceiving the *corpus Christi*. Since the Eastern Church considered the Catholic rite as a false one, and the Catholic baptism and confirmation as non valid and not true, requesting another baptism and confirmation, was not only a presumption, but a reality, as Dušan himself admitted at a latter date. The second baptism and confirmation presented in the letter is considered as an error of the heretics of these parts of the world, and thus had to stop.

Besides such errors, which in fact were not simple errors but the crucial characteristics of the Byzantine rite, there were also others committed by the representatives of Catholic rite in these territories. The letter claimed that some bishops, and archbishops falsely declared for themselves to have been sent in those parts by the Apostolic See with the office of legation (*sibi fore ab Apostolica Sede in eisdem partibus legationis officium minus veraciter asserunt*). They were grasping at the authority to dispense marriages bound in a prohibited grade of affinity, thus opposing the Canon Law.⁴⁹² The mission of this legation was thus not only against *errantes*, but also against *praesumptores et attemptatores* and, if necessary, the legates were given the

⁴⁹² According to the Gloss of Johannes Teutonicus to the *Compilatio Tertia*, Figueira distinguished sixteen reserved powers of the pope: Questions of faith; “major matters” (*maiora negotia*); depositions, restitutions, and transfers of bishops; transfers of confirmed bishops-elect; the acceptance of episcopal resignations; the exemption of bishops from metropolitan control; dispensations in cases of major crimes; adjustment of onerous local customs; commutations of vows; the convocation of universal councils; absolution of persons excommunicated by himself or by his judge-delegate; the granting of a benefice or prebend that is not yet vacant (i.e. the grant of an expectancy); and the capability to adjudicate an original complaint or even an appeal to the neglect of all other judicial instances. *Glossa ad Comp. III. 1.19.2* (= X 1.20.4), pp. 129-30: “*pontifici reservata...*” See Figueira, “Papal Reserved Powers and the Limitations on the Legatine Authority,” In *Popes, Teachers, and Canon Law in the Middle Ages*, ed. James Ross-Sweeney and Stanley Chodorow, 198-211 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989) [henceforth: Figueira, *Papal Reserved Powers*]. See especially p. 196. Pennington counts seventeen reserved powers in Johannes’ gloss; in the opinion of Figueira two separate phrases in the gloss represent only one power, namely, the statements that “likewise only to him [the pope] alone can one appeal despite all other intervening jurisdictions” and “a legate cannot be approached by simple compliant” that is be a court of first instance. See Kenneth Pennington, “A Study of Johannes Teutonicus’ Theories of Church Government and of the Relationship between Church and State, with an Edition of His Apparatus to *Compilatio Tertia*” [Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 1972], 1: 160-61. Regarding Johannes’ thoughts about legates in general see Kenneth Pennington, “Johannes Teutonicus and Papal Legates,” *Archivum historiae pontificiae* 21 (1983): 183-194.

authority to appeal for the help of the secular branch,⁴⁹³ which in this case was the Hungarian kingdom.

The delegation of the envoys based on the aforesaid legitimacy, was most probably urged by the complaints of the Albanian Catholics during the earlier periods of the fourteenth century. The tensions between the Catholic Albanians and the Orthodox Slavs during the occupation of the Serbian kings had increased a lot, and the papacy was informed quite early about them. The *rumor infestus* heard “recently”, which had been disturbing for Pope Clement VI, refers, most probably, not only to very recent events, but to what was happening in these territories during the whole reign of the Serbian kings. Nevertheless, since the papacy did not want to point out the Serbs as the enemy, because that could have destroyed the attempts at reconciliation, one used the vague expression *rumor infestus*.

We do not have data on the activities of the papal legates on the spot. Nevertheless, it is clear that the papal legation of September 1351 was not successful. This can be implied not only by the repetition of the same mission in 1354, but also by the choice of other persons who would undertake this second mission. Furthermore, there is a change in the status of the representation, which was made clear by the mandates given to the envoys: *legati missi* is replaced with apostolic nuntios, which implies that the legates had lesser authority to act on their own, and the Pope had more control of the situation. This explains also the considerable number of papal letters addressed on this occasion.

Most probably it was Dušan himself who had refused these legates, because for the next legation, the initiative for Church Union came from him to justify his political claims towards

⁴⁹³ ... *errantes, praesumptores et attemptores huiusmodi pro Ecclesia sancta Dei vos defensionis murum viriliter apponentes, praemissa schismata dissipare, sectas dissolvere, errores evellere, excessus corrigere, deformata reformare et errantes ipsos ad veram ipsius catholicae fidei unitatem dictaeque Romanae Ecclesiae ritus et mores reducere, quantum vobis inspirabit Altissimus, auctoritate nostra fideliter studeatis, invocato ad hoc, si opus fuerit, auxilio brachii saecularis.*

Jerusalem. The Carmelite scholar Smet⁴⁹⁴ pointed out that on June 16, 1354 Dušan sent his ambassadors to Venice, supplied with letters of recommendation from the Republic to the pope. His ambassadors (Bosidarius *iudex generalis* of the realm, Nestegus Zephalia, and Damian of Catara)⁴⁹⁵ made known to the pope the desire of Stephen Dušan for union with Rome, and acknowledged the primacy of the Holy See, describing his formal faults and future reforms. One of these was that he had prohibited the Latin Christians to be rebaptised and reconfirmed, and had commended Latin prelates to be restored to their churches and monasteries, with the exception of six monasteries which at present could not be taken away from their schismatical occupants without great scandals, but would be restored in the future. By public edict he had proclaimed freedom of worship for Latin Catholics, and the rebaptised could return to the Catholic rite. According to Smet, it was the proposal of the king to have Bartholomeus, the bishop of Trau, as his representative on behalf of this work of restoring the Serbian kingdom to the Roman church.

The *Apostolicae Sedis nuncii* sent to *Regna Rascia, Albaniae* and *Sclavoniae* in 1354 were Bartholomeus, the bishop of Trau, and Peter, the bishop of Patti, who was to become the famous St. Peter Thomae. Bartholomeus,⁴⁹⁶ with a background as a canon of Constantinople, was made bishop of Kotor in Dalmatia on July 24, 1348, and on January 20 of the following year, he was transferred to the diocese of Trau.

As *Apostolicus nuntii*, Bartholomeus and Peter were enjoying a very privileged status, accompanied with much authority, and mentioned explicitly in the letters, as for instance, in those which are dated December 24, 1354.⁴⁹⁷ Some of these faculties mentioned are as follows: to

⁴⁹⁴ Joachim Smet, *The Life of Saint Peter Thomas by Philip de Mézières* (Rome: Institutum Carmelitanum, 1954).

⁴⁹⁵ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 215v.

⁴⁹⁶ 1348-1361: Eubel, *HC I*, 177, 490.

⁴⁹⁷ These letters are registered in ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, f. 228r-v.

give indulgences of 100 days to those who were present at their preaching;⁴⁹⁸ to absolve 20 men and their wives from their marriages in affinity of consanguinity, to absolve 20 persons from the *defectus natalium*;⁴⁹⁹ to absolve those priests who had given their benedictions to people who had married for a second time;⁵⁰⁰ and to absolve those who had fallen into excommunication, etc.⁵⁰¹

Around twenty other papal letters were written in December 1354. All of them did not only contain necessary instructions for the legates themselves, but they were also meant as letters of accreditation⁵⁰² and served to path the way and facilitate the mission of the legates sent to *Regna Rasciae, Albaniae, et Sclavoniae*.

The first of these letters dates from December 21, 1354 was addressed to the three legates themselves. Two days later, on December 23, a letter was addressed to Louis, King of Hungary,

⁴⁹⁸ ASV, Reg. Vat. 236, f. 228r-v: *Eisdem nunciis. Cum vos etc. usque plus devotos omnibus vere penitentibus et confessis qui missarum solenniis et hiis etiam qui propositioni verbi dei presentialiter intererunt quotiens nos seu coram nobis solemnia celebrare seu celebrari et verbum huius per predicationis ministerium preponere seu proponi contigerit centum dies de invictis eis penitentibus relaxandi plena nobis et cuilibet vestrum tenore presentium concedimus facultatem. Datum ut supra.*

⁴⁹⁹ ASV, Reg. Vat. 236, f. 228r-v: *Eisdem nunciis. Cum vos etc. ut in prima usque constituti cum viginti viris et totidem mulieribus partium earundem quarto duntaxat aut quarto ex uno et tertio ex altero lateribus affinitatis vel consanguinitatis coniunctis gradibus aut publice honestatis iusticia impenditi matrimonia invicem ignorantes impedimenta huiusmodi contraxerint quod in sit contractis matrimoniis remanere licite valeant dispensare libere valeatis. Prolem susceptam et suscipiendam ex huius matrimoniis legitimam decernendo plenam novis durante negociorum prosecutione huiusmodi concedimus tenore presentium facultatem. Datum ut supra.*

⁵⁰⁰ ASV, Reg. Vat. 236, f. 228r-v: *Eisdem nuntiis. Cum nos etc. ut in prima usque constituti omnibus et singulis sacerdotibus de partibus ipsis exstentibus penam suspensionis quam pro eo quod secundis nuptiis scienter benedixerint incurrerint relaxare invincta eis penitentia salutari et cum ipsis etiam super irregularitate siquam sic suspensi divina non tamen in contemptum clavium celebrando vel innstendo se illis contraxerint dispensare durante negociorum prosecutione huiusmodi libere valeatis plenam nobis et cuilibet nostrum concedimus tenore presentium facultatem. Datum ut supra.*

⁵⁰¹ ASV, Reg. Vat. 236, f. 228r-v: *Eisdem nuntiis. Cum nos etc. ut in prima usque consituti requisiti omnes et singulos clericos et laicos de prefatis existentes partibus ab omnibus et singulis suspensionum interdictorum excommunicationum sententiis latis a canone quas ex quacunque causa quomodolibet incurrerunt et incurrent etiam si absolutio talium sit nobis et apostolice sedi specialiter reservata dummodo episcopi vel archiepiscopi aut prelati proprii seu cardinalis interfectores aut percussores vel eorumdem Cardinalium persecutores aut litterarum apostolicarum falsam non fuerint iuxta formam ecclesie absolvere ac eis etiam extra partes easdem qui sententias canonis incurrerunt et incurrent in illis dumtaxat casibus in quibus diocesan eorum vel minores penitentarii nostri absolvere ipsos possent absolutionis beneficium iuxta formam similem impendere invinctis eis pro modo culpe penitentia salutari et aliis que de iure fuerint iniungenda et quod hiis quibus tenentur propterea satisfaciant competenter et cum clericis qui sic suspensi vel interdicti aut excommunicati in susceptis ordinibus ministrando vel se immiscendo divinis irregularitatis maculam contraxerunt aut contrahent super irregularitate sic contracta huiusmodi negociorum prosecutione durante dispensare libere valeatis plenam concedimus tenore presentium facultatem. Datum ut supra.*

⁵⁰³ and its message was to accept and help the Apostolic nuntios to fulfill the Union of the Churches. The other letters were addressed to Stephen Dušan, the Serbian king,⁵⁰⁴ to Helen, the Queen of the Serbs,⁵⁰⁵ to the Serbian patriarch Joanichi,⁵⁰⁶ to the other secular powers (*nobilibus viris universis principibus commitibus et baronibus Servie, Sclavonie ac Albaniae*)⁵⁰⁷ and to the religious authorities of these territories.⁵⁰⁸

Different people took part in this mission. This is shown by a number of supplications, all of them dated August 27, 1354. From the supplication of the bishop of Butrinti we learn that he had been there, working *pro sancta legatione Rassiae*. For this reason, the *pauper episcopus Botrodonensis*, frater Jacobus *Ordinis Praedicatorum* asked for nothing less than for the famous Benedictine monastery of SS. Sergius and Bacchus *in confinibus regni Rassiae*. He received it for three years, with the freedom to reside there or in his bishopric (*et resideat ibi vel in episcopatu suo*).⁵⁰⁹ A presbyter of Durrës called Vinciguerra Andronici, also working *in servitium sanctae fidei catholicae in partibus regni Rassiae* and helping Bartholomaeus, bishop of Trau, asked for a prebend. He received the incomes of the church of S. *Mariae Malfitanorum Duracensis*, which, according to him, did not exceed 30 florens per year.⁵¹⁰ The scribe Theodoricus Theutunicus *de*

⁵⁰² For further reading on this issue Schmutz, "Medieval Papal Representatives," 450; Ruess, *Die rechtliche Stellung*, 67, 104.

⁵⁰³ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 244C, f. 76r-1 and in ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, fol. 238v.

⁵⁰⁴ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, f. 222v; *Reg. Vat.* 244B, f. 125, ep. 288.

⁵⁰⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, f. 224v, *Reg. Vat.* 244B, f. 37, ep. 76.

⁵⁰⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236 fol. 225r-226r.; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 244B, f. 36, ep. 75; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 244C, fol. 80, ep. 211.

⁵⁰⁷ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 127, fol. 32r-v; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 227 fol. 4v-5r, ep. 12.

⁵⁰⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, fol. 230r-v⁵⁰⁸; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 244B, f. 36v, and in ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 227 fol. 5r, ep. 15; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 236, fol. 229r-v. *Litterae secretae et curiales*, nr. 1253: *Ven. fratribus --- Archiepiscopis et --- episcopis et dilectis filiis --- electis --- abbatibus et aliis ecclesiarum et monasteriorum prelatibus et clericis ac personis ecclesiasticis secularibus et regularibus Capitulis quoque ac conventibus ecclesiarum et monasteriorum ipsorum Doctorum Benedicti et Augustini necnon Cuniacensi, praemonstaensi, cisterciensi ac aliorum ordinum necnon Hospitalis sancti Johannis Jerusalem sanctae Marie Theotonicorum et Calatanensis magistris, prioribus et preceptoribus universis et singulis per Regna Rassie et Serviae ac Albaniae constitatur gratiam et comunionem apostolice sedis habentibus salutem etc.*

⁵⁰⁹ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 214r.

⁵¹⁰ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27 fol. 214r-v.

Campo sancte Marie,⁵¹¹ the cleric Johannes *quondam Bovini de Astulso*, and also Johannes de *Vico Antibarensis diocesis*⁵¹² who worked in the legation (*in sanctam legationem ad regem Rassie Regni scismaticos laboravit*) also received some reward. Johannes Bovini de Astulso tells us that he had been working from the beginning and for three years (*qui a principio huius legationis ad regem Rassie usque in hodiernum diem*) with the bishop of Trau.⁵¹³ Other supplications were given to the bishop of Kotor,⁵¹⁴ and to Andreas, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Alexander (*abbas monasteri Sancti Alexandri ordinis sancti Benedicti Albanensis dioceses*).⁵¹⁵ All these people show how important this mission had been.

Meanwhile, further letters of instruction continued to be sent to the nuntios themselves (on December 27 and 29, 1354). The letters of accreditation differ from each other in the way the pope addressed the locals. This is at a certain point to be expected, but the presence or the omission of some details is striking and quite indicative about the kind of relation the papacy wanted to build with each of these personalities.

Stephen Dušan was a clever opponent, though, who knew how to play with politics and religion, so he opened negotiations with Avignon on Church Union and at the end of 1354 offered his services as captain of the Roman church with the duty of defending the Christians in the east. Innocent VI had many reasons to be attracted by the idea of the negotiated Union. On the one hand, there was no time and space for another conflict in the Balkans since the Turks were advancing rapidly. On the other hand, Innocent knew that Louis the Great, if he was given the indulgences for a crusade, would fight not only against the “schismatic” Serbs, but also against Catholic Dalmatia and Venice. The pope was afraid to have a full-scale war between

⁵¹¹ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 214v.

⁵¹² ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 215r.

⁵¹³ *Ibidem*, *qui in ista legatione tum domino Traguriensis episcopo a principio usque ad sivem continuando per annos tres fideliter et tum magnis laboribus laboravit.*

⁵¹⁴ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 215v.

Hungary and Venice, because he was hoping to renew a naval league with Venice against the Turks. Putting all these into balance, the pope had decided to send nuncios to Serbia to discuss the Union in 1354. A crusade led by Stephen Dušan could be the solution. The Church Union, however, failed and the crusade also.

⁵¹⁵ ASV, *Reg. Suppl.* 27, fol. 275v, 276v.

V. The Papal Curia, the *Regnum Albaniae* and the strengthening of identities

The propagation of Christianity and its spread in the Orient was one of the main purposes of the French popes, about which they merit most of the praise, as Ludwig von Pastor stated, the famous composer of the history of the popes.⁵¹⁶ The Anjous were always interested in the East, and the *Regnum Albaniae* came into existence to better approach their expanding needs in this direction. In this context, the Avignon papacy and the Anjous shared the same aim: reaching the East. While the first was interested in the religious aspects, the second was interested in the political ones. Because of this differentiation, they did not see each other as rivals, and that is why they collaborated very often and mutually supported each other. The Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* was, thus, not only a basis for the political expansion plans of the Anjous towards the East, but it became also a basis for the religious attempts of the French papacy to reach the Balkans. While the first aspect of the *Regnum Albaniae* has been already well studied,⁵¹⁷ the second one has been somewhat ignored up to now.

* * *

The two main components of group identity for medieval authors were certainly political and the religious. Thus, for instance, those who recognized the secular authority of the Byzantine emperor and the religious authority of the ecumenical church of Constantinople, called themselves *Rhomaioi* while the Latins called them Greeks. Those, who submitted themselves to the secular authority of the Byzantine emperor and obeyed the Patriarchate of Ohrid, were called *bulgaroi*, whereas those who obeyed the Roman Catholic Church were Latins.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁶ Ludovico Barone von Pastor, *Storia dei Papi dalla fine del Medio Evo*, ed. Angelo Mercati, vol. I (Rome: Desclée and Ci. Editori Pontifici, 1958), 72.

⁵¹⁷ See Ducellier, *La façade maritime*; Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou*.

⁵¹⁸ I follow here the argumentation of Frashëri, “Trojet e shqiptarëve”: 7-21.

The process of the “dismembering” of the Byzantine Empire brought into light, especially through Byzantine scholars, the first signs of a new concept of “national” identity, which was no longer determined by the political and religious community, but by linguistic and religious ties.⁵¹⁹ The Albanians are for the first time mentioned as such (*Ἀλβανοί*) by the Byzantine historian M. Attaleiates, who among others reported also about the revolt of the strategios Georgios Maniakes (1043) and that of Nikephoros Basileios (1078), which partly had been developed in the Albanian territories. Describing the battle, Attaleiates wrote that the Albanians and the Latins, who up to then had been equal citizens of the empire, and had the same religion as the Byzantines, who had strangely become their enemies.

Although the Albanians had quite early features of a “national” identity (a unique language, and from time to time acted as a politically and religiously independent group of people⁵²⁰), according to Ducellier, Albania was the “only national entity to emerge from Byzantium, which in spite of the aspirations of her people and the often brilliant attempts of her princes, never succeeded in pouring her strong ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identity into the mold of a political structure.”⁵²¹ This made the Albanians different from the Greeks of the Middle Ages, from the Bulgarians, from the Serbs, and even from the Bosnians, concluded K. Jireček.⁵²²

The main reason, why the Albanians could not form a political structure themselves, was, according to the Albanian scholar K. Frashëri, their religious differentiation: the Albanian of the eastern rite identified himself as different from the Albanian of the western rite, and vice versa,

⁵¹⁹ V. Tapkova-Zaimova, “L’idée byzantine de l’unité du monde et l’Etat Bulgare” *Résumés des Communications-ler Congrès Int. Et. du S. E. Européen*, Sofia, 1966. 228.

⁵²⁰ One of the first records of the independent functioning of the Albanians can be inferred already in the 11th century. According to Anna Comnena, the leader of the Albanian military groups in 1081 had the title “comescortes,” and it looks like he had a political authority independent from Constantinople, since the Byzantine emperor, Alexios Comnenos, had to deal with him in the same way he dealt with the independent princes of Duklja and Dalmatia, in order to reach him as an ally against the Normans. The argumentation is developed by Frashëri, “Trojet e shqiptarëve,” 9-10. Anna Comnena, IV, 8; VI, 7.

although they spoke the same language.⁵²³ This religious difference, according to him, was also reflected in the way the Albanians called themselves and were called by others. Interpreting a letter of Charles I Anjou dating from November 9, 1274 (*Albanensis et Greci terram nostram Durachii obsiderint vel obsidere proponant*),⁵²⁴ Kristo Frashëri understands under the *Albanenses* the Catholic Albanians, whereas under *Greci* the Orthodox Byzantine Albanians.

According to Ducellier, the main reason, why the Albanians could not form a political structure, was the tight connection with the Byzantine emperors, who considered Albania economically and politically as a matter of life and death for the empire. It was the only area along the Adriatic coast, whose numerous and generally accessible valleys permitted easy access to the heart of the empire. It had been like that since ancient times: the *Via Egnatia* was the main overland road which connected Rome and Constantinople. At the end of the eleventh and in the thirteenth century, hagiographic texts and early Venetian documents confirm the same importance of the *Via Egnatia*: Greeks and Italians traveled from Durrës to Thessaloniki and Constantinople and to mainland and peninsular Greek towns. This economic axis was also the easiest line of attack for all invaders coming from the West, which explains why Albania, beginning with the early Byzantine epoch, became an imposing fortified complex, carefully and constantly maintained. As a result of such importance, the Byzantine Emperors did not wish to see Albania become a hostile political entity or even have autonomy, and this desire was not necessarily imposed through a policy of force, but mainly through encouraging “Byzantine loyalty” among the Albanians through privileges and other services.⁵²⁵

⁵²¹ Alain Ducellier, “Genesis and Failure of the Albanian State in the XIV and XV Centuries,” In *Studies on Kosova*, ed. Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1984), 1.

⁵²² Jireček, “Albanien in der Vergangenheit,” 64.

⁵²³ Frashëri “Trojet e shqiptarëve,” 7-21. See especially 12.

⁵²⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 330.

⁵²⁵ Alain Ducellier, “Genesis and Failure of the Albanian State in the XIV and XV Centuries,” In *Studies on Kosova*. Ed. Arshi Pipa and Sami Repishti (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1984), 6.



Map 6: Medieval Albania according to Milan von Šufflay
 Out of: Ludwig Thallóczy, Konstantin Jireček, and Milan von Šufflay, eds.,
Acta et Diplomata res Albaniae Mediae Aetatis Illustrantia, vol. 1
 (Vienna: Holzhausen, 1913, reprint Tirana and Prishtina: DPA and Ekskluzive, 2002).

V. 1. Local identities

The earliest papal letter, known to us, in which the term *Regnum Albaniae* is mentioned dates from May 18, 1317.⁵²⁶ This is a letter of Pope John XXII addressed to the archbishop of Auch, in Gascony to present himself together with *Guillelmus de Montegrano*, the bishop of Cunavia in the archbishopric of Durrës in the Kingdom of Albania (*Guillelmo de Montegrano episcopo Cunaviensis de Archiepiscopatu Duraseno in Regno Albaniae*),⁵²⁷ at the papal Court, for reasons which are not mentioned. These reasons are to be found in a letter of later date, on September 19, 1318, in which Pope John XXII transferred Guillelmus of Montegrano from the bishopric of Cunavia to the church of S. Giusta in Sardinia.⁵²⁸ It is puzzling that Pope John XXII wrote to the archbishop of Auch, in southern France, about the bishop of Cunavia in Albania. Geographically, these persons should have been very far away from each other and, thus, the papal letter very impractical.

The question in this context is whether, based on dynastic relations, the Papal Curia wanted to create on purpose a relation between the *Regnum Albaniae*, southern France and later on Sardinia where the bishop of Cunavia was transferred to, or whether it was simply a coincidence that the archbishop of Auch was in contact with the bishop of Cunavia, who perhaps originated from Montegrano (Southern Italy). Šufflay, however, suggests that this bishop of Cunavia, who was also the first Catholic one of this bishopric (1310-1318), originated from Gascony.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁶ See ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 2, fol. 183 and ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 63, fol. 363^v.

⁵²⁷ Ibidem.

⁵²⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, 192-193, no. 641.

⁵²⁹ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 214.

Bearing in mind that after the Sicilian Vespers the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* seems to have been reduced to only some maritime castles and city ports such as Durrës, Vlora and Kanina,⁵³⁰ this letter shows another reality: that by including the bishopric of Cunavia, as part of the archbishopric of Durrës, into *Regnum Albaniae*, the latter was defined as a much larger territory.

Another letter of the Roman Curia mentioning *Regnum Albaniae*, and being addressed to the bishop of Cunavia, dates from June 6, 1318.⁵³¹ In it, Pope John XXII confirmed Johannes Rubeus in the parochial church of *S. Nicolaus de Petrosa*, in the same diocese. Again, the territories of the diocese of Cunavia are in fact not clearly defined. Šufflay states that they should have been between Durrës and the mountains at the western upper part of the Mat River.⁵³²

In most of the letters addressed to the representatives of the *Regnum Albaniae* in the second decade of the fourteenth century we learn about the plan for a crusade against the Serbs. Durrës was taken by the Serbs in 1317 or 1318, as Kiesewetter suggested, whereas in 1319, it was taken by Catalans, as he also stated.⁵³³ Nevertheless, in the papal letters, we do not find any mention of the Catalans.

As a consequence of the crusading plans of Philip of Taranto and Pope John XXII, the latter addressed a series of letters to the nobles of the *Regnum Albaniae*. These letters, dated June 17, 1319 were *de Curia*, meaning that they were not requested by the Albanian nobles, but were result of the initiative of the Roman Curia, and were not *patente*, open to a wider public, but *secrete*, only meant for the addressees. It looks like the local political class of the *Regnum*

⁵³⁰ See Monti, *Da Carlo I*, 565-568; *ibidem*, *La Dominazione*, 50-58; Xhufi, “Shqiptarët përballë Anzhuinëve,” 199-222; Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 230.

⁵³¹ ASV, *Reg. Aven.* 9, fol. 187v, ep. 1324; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 68, fol. 104, ep. 1324.

⁵³² Šufflay, “Kirchenzustände,” 196; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 199, n. 3, no. 4, 665.

⁵³³ Kiesewetter, “I principi,” 70.

Albaniae was planned to play an important part in the anti-”schismatic” coalition, encouraging them to resist *grava tyrannis* of the *rex perfidus Rasciae*.⁵³⁴

The first letter of the series, according to the *Registri Vaticani*, was sent to the Musaka (Musatio) family members: Mentul Musatio, *comes* of Këlcyra, Andreas Musatio, *marescallus regni Albaniae*, and to Theodor Musatio, *prothosevastus regni Albaniae*.⁵³⁵ The next letter was sent to Guillelmus Blenisti, who was another *prothosevastus* of the *Regnum Albaniae*, to Guillelmus Araniti the *protholegaturus*, to Caloiohanes Blenisti another *comes* of the *Regnum Albaniae*, and Paulus Materango who is not given any title, and to other *barones regni Albaniae*.⁵³⁶ The third letter, very similar in content with the two others, was sent to Bladislaus Gonome (Ladislaus Jonima), *Dioclee et Maritime Albanie comes*.⁵³⁷ All of the mentioned addressees were politically high ranked representatives of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

In these papal letters the local identity of the *Regnum Albaniae* is quite visible. Pope John XXII had written to the nobles in groups according to their geographical affinity. One letter (to the Musaka family) was meant for the nobles of the south eastern territories of the *Regnum Albaniae*; the other one (to the Blenisti, Araniti and Materanga families) was apparently addressed to the nobles of the central and northern territories, and the third one (the Jonima family) was addressed to members of the nobility from the northern and maritime territories of Albania.

The Musaka family had its possessions (Musachia) in the south of present-day Albania, around Tomorrica⁵³⁸ and, according to Giovanni Musachio who wrote the history and genealogy

⁵³⁴ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* Fol. 140r, ep. 571; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* fol. 140r-v, ep. 572; ASV, *Reg. Vat.* fol. 140v, ep. 573;.

⁵³⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* fol. 140r, ep. 571;

⁵³⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140-140v, ep. 572 (secret letter)

⁵³⁷ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140v, ep. 573.

⁵³⁸ Šufflay, *Kirchenzustände*, 240.

of the Musaka family in 1510, Berat was its capital.⁵³⁹ Mentulus was the count of *Clissania*, nowadays Këlcyra in present day Albania. Këlcyra was a very important strategic point for the Anjous in the *Regnum Albaniae*, because it offered the shortest passage from the Ionian Sea to the Devol River and to Greece. It was for this reason, that the area was desirable for the Byzantines and for the Latins alike, either to pass through or to block it.⁵⁴⁰

The family connection of the persons mentioned in the papal letters are partly given by Giovanni Musachio in the genealogy of his family. He was not sure whether Mentulo Musatio was a son or a brother of Theodoro Musatio,⁵⁴¹ but he stated that the latter was the father of Andrea Musatio, also known as Andrea II. Giovanni Musachio was right when stating that later on, in 1336 and 1337, Andrea II was made despot of Albania by the Anjous,⁵⁴² because this is proved also by archival evidence: Andrea II became *despotus Regni Albaniae* on December 30, 1336,⁵⁴³ and was confirmed as such on July 18, 1337.⁵⁴⁴ In the papal letter of June 17, 1317, Andreas II was named *marescallus* and his father Theodorus *prothosevator*. With these titles, Pope John XXII made a strong connection of the *Regnum Albaniae* to the western tradition as well as to the eastern. While *comes* and *marescallus* were western titles, the *prothosevator* was a title of high eastern officer in the kingdom. The titles of the Albanian nobles addressed in the papal letters were thus mixed.

⁵³⁹ Karl Hopf ed., “Historia e genealogia della familia della casa Musachia, scritta da D. Giovanni Musachio despoto dell’Epiro a suoi figli nell 1510” In *Chroniques Greco-Romanes inedites ou peu connues* (Berlin, 1873), 532 [henceforth: Hopf, “Historia della casa Musachia”]

⁵⁴⁰ On the position and the fortress of Këlcyra see Gjerak Karaiskaj, “Kalaja e Këlcyrës” (The fortress of Këlcyra) *Perla* 2 (2007): 72-77.

⁵⁴¹ Hopf, “Historia della casa Musachia,” 532.

⁵⁴² *Ibidem*.

⁵⁴³ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 808.

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, no. 810.

In the letter to the Blinishti family, we have Guillelmus mentioned, who held the title *prothosevastor*, and Calojohan who was another *comes* of the *Regnum Albaniae*.⁵⁴⁵ The Blinishti family was very important in this period. Its territories lay between the Gjader River in the vicinity of Lezha and the Benedictine abbey of St. Alexander on the Holy Mount of Mirdita.⁵⁴⁶ The first member of this family, Vlado, is mentioned in 1274, as *miles*.⁵⁴⁷ Initially he joined the Anjous, but later on the Serbs and received from the latter the title *kaznac* (*casnesius*), which he held for the period 1274-1304.⁵⁴⁸ In 1279, he was imprisoned by Johannes Scoctus, the Anjou *miles capitaneus* of Durrës and was sent to Brindisi. In 1304, Philip of Taranto restored him to the *Regnum Albaniae*, decorating him with *comitatus honore* and raising him over all the other Albanian nobles.⁵⁴⁹ Guillelmus, to whom the papal letter was addressed, was the son of Vlado.⁵⁵⁰ In 1304, he was the only one to be appointed as *marascallum regni Albaniae* by Philip of Taranto and his father Charles II of Anjou.⁵⁵¹ In the papal letter, of 1319, we find him with the Byzantine title *prothosevastus Regni Albaniae*. The other member of the Blinishti family mentioned in the papal letter was Calojohan, according to an Anjou document which dates back to September 1304, the brother of Vlado (Blasius)⁵⁵² He held the title *comes Regni Albaniae* during the years 1304-1319.⁵⁵³

In the same papal letter we also find a member of the Araniti and the Matranga family mentioned. Both of these families were confirmed possessions and rights by Philip of Taranto

⁵⁴⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140-140v, ep. 572, (Secret letter).

⁵⁴⁶ Milan von Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi* (Serbs and Albanians), (Belgrade, 1925), 122.

⁵⁴⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 333.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 333, 396, 565, 566, 649c.

⁵⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, 565: *te comitatus onore munificenciu decoravimus, ut inter alios regni Albanie nobiles fungaris et refulgeas*. Cf. Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi*, 122.

⁵⁵⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 566. Cf. Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi*, 122.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁵² *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 567.

⁵⁵³ *Ibidem* I, 567. Cf. Šufflay, *Srbi i Arbanasi*, 122.

and his father Charles II in 1304.⁵⁵⁴ Guillelmus Araniti appears as the *protholegaturus regni Albaniae*,⁵⁵⁵ whereas Paulus Matranga was not attributed any title. The third letter was addressed to the Jonima family.⁵⁵⁶ This family was not mentioned at all among those privileged in 1304.⁵⁵⁷ According to Giovanni Musachio their territories should have been at the Mat River mouth of Shufada, in the vicinity of Shkodra.⁵⁵⁸ The other nobles of the *Regnum Albaniae* to whom the papal letter was addressed were not mentioned by name. They were simply addressed as *ceterisque baronibus regni Albanie*.⁵⁵⁹

The term *barones regni Albaniae*,⁵⁶⁰ used in the papal letter is also quite significant. This title denoted from the end of the thirteenth century the highest office-holders of the kingdom.⁵⁶¹ The barons were appointed and replaced by the king, and a normal career for a baron lasted until his death. Bearing in mind that Byzantine society lacked formal legal stratification, these barons of the *Regnum Albaniae* should have been created by the Anjous. They were certainly provided with possessions and special rights, and most probably these were connected with what Ducellier meant when he spoke about “growth of aristocratic estates in their homeland.”⁵⁶² If we refer back to the privileges given to the Albanian nobles by Philip of Taranto and his father Charles II in September 1304, it is easy to find out the number of such nobles and their names,⁵⁶³ without

⁵⁵⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 563, 564, 569.

⁵⁵⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140-140v, ep. 572, (Secret letter).

⁵⁵⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140v, ep. 573.

⁵⁵⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 563-569.

⁵⁵⁸ Hopf, “Historia della casa Musachia,” 531.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶⁰ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140-140v, ep. 572, registered as a secret letter.

⁵⁶¹ A. Cavanna, “Baron (baro)” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, (Munich and Zurich: Artemis Verlag, 1980), 1476; U. Mattejiet, “Baron (baro)” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1476-7; R.-H. Bautier, and B. Bedos, “Baron (baro) in Frankreich,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1477-9; K. Schnith, “Baron (baro): England” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1479-80; G. di Renzo Villata, “Baron (baro): Neapel und Sizilien,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1480-1; I. García de Valdeavellano, “Baron (baro): Spanien,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1482-3; H. Göckenjan, “Baron (baro): Königreich Ungarn,” *Lexikon des Mittelalters* I, 1483-4;

⁵⁶² Alain Ducellier, “Les Albanais du XIe au XIIIe siècle: nomades ou sédentaires?” *Byzantinische Forschungen* 7 (1979): 23-56. Reprinted in *L’Albanie entre Byzance et Venise, Xe-XVe siècle* (London, 1987), 270, l. 277.

⁵⁶³ 5 and 6 September 1304 : *Albos, Spatos, Catarucos, Bischesini, Aranitos, Lecenis, Turbaceos, Marchaseos, Scuras, Zenevias, Bucceseos, Logorescos, Mateseos*. Cf. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 563, 569.

including the Materanga and Blinishti families, who had special privileges.⁵⁶⁴ The Musaka members were not mentioned among those privileged by Philip of Taranto and his father in 1304,⁵⁶⁵ although Johannes was mentioned as a delegate of the Albanians to Charles I of Anjou as early as 1274.⁵⁶⁶ In 1279 he is mentioned as *proditor noster* and punished for this.⁵⁶⁷ In 1280 he came out of prison,⁵⁶⁸ but in 1281 the wife and the son of Andreas were imprisoned by the officers of Charles I of Anjou.⁵⁶⁹ This might have been the reason why their rights were not confirmed by Philip of Taranto, although, in 1319, Pope John XXII considered the members of this family as the leaders of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

Charles I of Anjou and Charles II had called themselves *reges Albaniae*. However, Philip of Taranto used for himself only the title *Dominus Regni Albaniae*.⁵⁷⁰ In the above mentioned letter of Pope John XXII, Philip was addressed as *Dilecto filio nobili viro Philippo clarae memoriae regis Siciliae filio, principi Tarantino*,⁵⁷¹ and not attributed any title with respect to the *Regnum Albaniae*. In a normal procedure, when the pope wrote to a king or lord of some territory, he would mention the titles of the addressee explicitly in the *intitulatio*. In this case, because the papal letter addressed to Philip of Taranto referred to the *Regnum Albaniae*, one would expect the pope to write to Philip if not as the king, at least as the lord of the territory, and to mention this in the *intitulatio*, which he did not do. On the one hand, one reason might certainly be, as Monti and Kieseewetter suggested, the respect and duty towards his brother, Robert who was already the king of Naples, and Philip was subject to him.⁵⁷² On the other hand,

⁵⁶⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, 564-567

⁵⁶⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, 561-569.

⁵⁶⁶ *Acta Albaniae* I, 92, no. 318.

⁵⁶⁷ *Acta Albaniae* I, 396.

⁵⁶⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, 416.

⁵⁶⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, 454, 459.

⁵⁷⁰ Kieseewetter, "I principi," 69.

⁵⁷¹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109 (Litt. Secr.) fol. 162v, ep. 671.

⁵⁷² Monti, "Ricerche," 6; Kieseewetter. "I principi," 69.

the normal procedure, when there was a question which regarded a territory in general, was that the Pope addressed the ruler, and not the individual nobles who were subject to the latter. In our case, Pope John XXII did not address the/a ruler of *Regnum Albaniae*, but each of the nobles of this *regnum*. This gesture is quite indicative about the nobles regarding their local identity: Pope John XXII showed that the local nobles were to be seen on the same level as the *dominus* Philip who lived far away. This could mean that the pope saw the nobles as the actual leaders of Albania. The king, whoever he might have been, was *de facto* not the most important political figure in the given territory.

The local nobles eventually grew aware of the papal powers, on the one hand, through the crusading attempts of the Holy See and, on the other hand, through its negotiations with the Byzantine and Serbian orthodox rulers. They also realized that the *Regnum Albaniae* was considered an important political power in the Balkans, a power upon which the Papal Curia relied. On these grounds, local nobles who were eager to align themselves on the side of the most powerful entities, started to treat the *Regnum Albaniae* like a political costume, one which they had to put on in order to be recognized and treated as allies of the western powers, especially of the papacy. Since *Regnum Albaniae* had a Catholic status, local nobles who pretended to the royal throne, considered their conversion into Catholicism to be the most important step towards this aim.

Initially, the local nobles permitted themselves to be named nobles of the *Regnum Albaniae*. This was certainly the case for almost all the leading local families in 1304-1305, such as the Arianiti, Blinishti, Gropa, Jonima, Matarango, Musacha, Scura, Span, Thopia, etc.⁵⁷³ In

⁵⁷³ *Acta Albaniae* I, 561-569.

1336, the Musacha family took aim at the higher offices of the *Regnum Albaniae*, and by the end of December 1336 Andreas Musachio was recognized as the *despotus Regni Albanie*.⁵⁷⁴

The two main pretenders to the Albanian throne, the Thopia and the Balsha families, might have legitimized their claims on the basis of their French origins. Both the Thopia and Balsha considered themselves natural successors to the Anjous within the *Regnum Albaniae*. The Thopias, who converted to Catholicism around 1338, received from the pope a “country” which extended from Mat to Shkumbin, and which the Anjou recognized in 1338.⁵⁷⁵ The most prominent member of this family, Charles Thopia, claimed to have been son of an Anjou mother, and this is reflected in a stone inscription from the St. John Vladimir monastery in the vicinity of Elbasan.⁵⁷⁶ Thopia actually seems to have held this status since mention of it is also made in a letter of Pope Gregory XI to Philip III, Emperor of Constantinople (1364-1373).⁵⁷⁷ In this letter from 1372, the pope urged him to ask Charles Thopia, whom he called *nobilem virum* and *nepotem suum*, to leave the heresy and schisma. Philip III was the son of Philip II and Catherine of Valois. We know about his brothers, but we know nothing about his having any sisters.⁵⁷⁸ The letter of Gregory states that Charles Thopia was his nephew on his sister’s side (*nepos tuus ex sorore, licet naturali*).⁵⁷⁹

George II Strazimir Balsha was also a pretender to the Albanian royal throne. Although early on the Balsha family strove for prominence in the *Regnum Albaniae*, George II Strazimir Balsha managed to obtain the title *princeps Albaniae* in 1397.⁵⁸⁰ Before achieving this aim, they

⁵⁷⁴ *Acta Albaniae* I, 808.

⁵⁷⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, 816. Ducellier, *La façade maritime*, 339-340.

⁵⁷⁶ Theofan Popa, *Mbishkrime të Kishave në Shqipëri* (Church Inscriptions in Albania), (Tiranë: Akademia e Shkencave Republikës së Shqipërisë/ Instituti i Historisë, 1998).

⁵⁷⁷ ASV, *Instr. Misc.* 2526.

⁵⁷⁸ Peter N. Stearns, William Leonard Langer, eds., *The Encyclopedia of World History, Ancient, Medieval, and Modern, Chronologically Arranged* (Houghton Mifflin Books, 2001), 237.

⁵⁷⁹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 268, f. 10r.

⁵⁸⁰ Gelcich, *La Zedda*, 195-196, 202.

also had to publically profess the Catholic faith in January 1369.⁵⁸¹ The charter which contains this profession is a solemn one, and written by the same hand, although the text seems to have been composed in different periods. From the content of the charter itself, we learn that the Balsha brothers had asked Pope Urban V at an earlier date, and that Pope Urban V had sent Petrus, the bishop of Suacium, to instruct them in their conversion to the Catholic faith. The content of the proclamation is very similar to the one sent to and accepted by the Byzantine emperor John V Palaeologos. It contains the *credo*, the *professio* of the faith, and the rejection of the old rite. Palaiologos signed his conversion in October 18, 1369, whereas the Balsha brothers had signed theirs earlier in January of the same year.

The conversion of the Balsha brothers proved quite a positive move for Catholicism in the region. Not only did they ceased to harass the Catholics of Kotor, but they also began to take a hand in the nomination process of the local bishops. In 1370, Pope Urban V nominated “as result of information and requests” of Balsha, the bishops of Arbanum, Polatum, Alessio, Avlona, and Sarda.⁵⁸² As soon as George II Strazimir Balsha was converted to Catholicism, he adhered to the Hungarian policy and, as already mentioned, he primarily received from the Hungarian king, Sigismund (1387-1437), the government of the islands of Curzola, Lesina and Brazza in Dalmatia as a fiefdom and, more importantly, the title of Prince of Albania (*princeps Albaniae*) in 1397.

V. 2. Catholic identity

In all his letters of 1317, Pope John XXII addressed to the Albanian nobles, he called them: *dilecti filii*.⁵⁸³ In the official textbook of the History of Albania, these papal bulls are

⁵⁸¹ ASV, *Instr. Misc.* 2526.

⁵⁸² Theiner, *Monumenta Hungariae* II, 103.

⁵⁸³ In the above mentioned bulls, we find the following *intitulatio*: *Dilectis filiis nobilibus viris Mentulo Musatio comiti Clissaniae Andreae Musatio regni Albaniae marescallo et Theodoro Musatio prothosevastori...; Dilectis filijs nobilib[us] viris Guil[e]lmo Bleniste prothosevastoni Guil[e]lmo Aranite protholegaturu Caloibani Bleniste comiti Paulo Materango ceterisq[ue] baronibus Regni Albanie...; Dilecto filio nobili viro Bladislao Conome Dioclee et*

interpreted as if the Albanian nobles wanted to abandon the Byzantine rite and embrace the Catholic one, in order to be also ecclesiastically different and separated from the Serbs.⁵⁸⁴ However, the popes did not use *dilecti filii* for addressing non-Catholics, therefore they should have been Catholic.⁵⁸⁵

Even Ladislaus Jonima (Baldislaus/Bladislaus Gonome),⁵⁸⁶ already seems to have been a Catholic nobleman.⁵⁸⁷ His name has been the starting point for such an opinion.⁵⁸⁸ This also can be explained by his possessions which were under the direct influence of Helen, the Catholic French princess and wife of the Serbian king Stephen I Uroš.⁵⁸⁹ She had, as already mentioned, an intensive Catholic activity in these regions and had a vivid correspondence with the papacy regarding the issues of faith.⁵⁹⁰ The Catholic element became strong and certainly still had an influence after the death of Helen.

1317 is the year in which we encounter the first religious confrontation between the Serbs and Albanians. Catholicism and Catholic identity were now encouraged by those confrontations. After having occupied the territories of the south-eastern Adriatic coast, the Serbs tried to impose by violence the eastern rite. The Anjous certainly used this occasion as a pretext to draw the

maritime Albanie comiti...; For the analysis of such *intitulatio* see Thomas Frenz, *Papsturkunden des Mittelalters und der Neuzeit*, (Stuttgart, 2000), 44-46.

⁵⁸⁴ *Histori e Shqipërisë*, vol. I (Tirana: Toena, 2002), 273.

⁵⁸⁵ Frenz, *Papsturkunden*, 44-46.

⁵⁸⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 109, fol. 140v, ep. 573.

⁵⁸⁷ Claudine Delacroix-Besnier, "Les Ordres mendiants et l'expansion de l'Église latine dans les Balkans," In *Alle frontiere della Cristianità/ I frati Mendicanti e l'evangelizzazione tra '200 e '300*, Atti del XXVIII Convegno internazionale (Assisi, 12-14 ottobre 2000. Spoleto, Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto Medioevo, 2001), 245; *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 650.

⁵⁸⁸ The method of Jireček, to base his study of ethnic relations mainly on the interpretation of personal names, cannot be that much reliable. On the basis of personal names, it is not possible to create facts that prove ethnicity, especially as regards the Albanian and Slavic personal names which are all hidden under the Latin writing elements.

⁵⁸⁹ When Stephen Dragutin, who reigned only for a short time alone, divided his reign in three parts (among his sons and his wife Helen, she received the territories on the coast of the Adriatic, from Dubrovnik to Shkodër, and these territories were for a long time known as the territories of *domina regina mater*. In the hinterland, she received Plava (near Gucia) in the Northern Lim and the castle Brnjac in the upper part of Ibri. This way, Helen had the whole Dioclea und her dominion. Cf. Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben*, 328.

papal intervention in order to build a coalition and possibly to attack the Serbs with the justification of leading a crusade against the schismatics. The Catholic identity in *Regnum Albaniae* was territorial and religious. Xhufi explained Catholicism of the *Regnum Albaniae* as a political one. The important role of Catholicism in the Albanian territories even increased after the breakup of the Serbs from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. After this breakup a number of complaints against the Serbs were registered: they took away goods of the Latin Church, even religious houses.⁵⁹¹

The reason for the rising Catholic identity is also connected to the fact that Pope John XXII and his successors wanted to strengthen the Catholic kingdom which was to be a strong papal weapon in the Balkans. Norman Housley formulated the reasons why the Curia had to rely on the secular powers *in situ*: it was the acknowledged responsibility of the Christian king to defend his church and people against attack, in this case it was the responsibility of the Catholic nobility to take action and secondly the Curia was conscious of its own ignorance of the detailed local situation.⁵⁹² Being at the border of western Christendom, *Regnum Albaniae* was the political structure on which the Avignon Popes simply had to rely, especially in regard to crusading and union matters. In such a situation, the most the Curia could do was to support the political structure and to win it over for the Catholic issue.

Catholicism reached its peak in the Albanian territories in the second half of the fourteenth century. According to Šufflay, this was also the third period of bishopric formation in Albania.⁵⁹³ With regard to the bishopric and archbishopric formation in Albania he had distinguished three periods: “Primäre Bischofssitze” were those which came into being during the

⁵⁹⁰ In 1291 (March 23rd), the Pope Nicholas IV praised Helen, Queen of Serbia and “Rascia”, because through Marino, the archbishop of Bar she made known to the Pope that she would take care of the conversion to the Catholic rite even of the Bulgarian emperor. See ASV, *Reg. Vat. 46, ff. 14r-17v*.

⁵⁹¹ Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft I*, 54.

⁵⁹² Housley, *Avignon Papacy and the Crusades*, 92-3.

third and fourth centuries until 602. Besides Dyrrachion, such bishoprics of the first period were Dioclea, Sarda, Scodra, Lissus, Scampa, Amantia, Apollonia, Byllis, Aulona, and perhaps Ulcinium. The “secundäre Schicht” (until 1250) was characterized by the creation of new and metamorphosed bishoprics. Such were Stephaniaka, Arbanum, Kruja, Antibari, Drivasto, Suacium, etc. The third one started around the end of the fourth crusade and continued approximately until the year 1370. Its real emphasis had started after the installation of the Anjou dynasty in Albania.

This third period is characterized by an increasing kind of “boom” of Catholicism: new dioceses, monasteries, churches were founded; the spread of new religious orders can be noticed, as well as a big number of Albanian clerics and monks who took religious offices in the Dalmatian territories. Those who were not already Catholics got converted particularly in the north and in the centre of the Albanian territories. Between 1350 and 1370 the spread of Catholic dioceses in Albania reached its peak. One can trace 17 bishoprics that were dependent on the archbishoprics of Bar⁵⁹⁴ and Durrës.⁵⁹⁵ These bishoprics became centers not only for the Catholic reform within the *Regnum Albaniae*, but with the permission of the Holy See also centers for missionary activity in the eastern and southern neighboring territories during the fourteenth century. The Catholic Church spread out further by the activity of those old and newly established bishoprics, but also by the interaction of the Papal Curia with the political powers of the *Regnum Albaniae*. The latter can be seen as the political vessel for the development of religious activity.

⁵⁹³ Ibidem.

⁵⁹⁴ Ulcinj (Dulcinj), Shkodra, (= Scutari), Shas (= Suacium), Sarda (Scordiensis, Polatensis Minor), Sappa (= Sava), Danja (= Dagno), Balezo, Drishti (= Drivast), Pulti (= Polatum Major), Prizren, Arbanum under the metropolitan of Bar (= Antibari).

⁵⁹⁵ Lezha (= Alessio, Lissanensis), Stephaniaka (= Bendensis), Kruja (= Croiensis), Chunavia, Wrego (= Cernicensis, Scampinus), Vlora (= Avlona) under the archbishop of Durrës.

The religious center of the *Regnum Albaniae* Durrës had been transferred from an Orthodox to a Catholic archbishopric in 1272. The flourishing of Catholicism in the archbishopric of Durrës started after the installation of the Anjou dynasty in Durrës, and especially after the creation of the *Regnum Albaniae*.

Later a number of bishoprics whose territories were either included in the *Regnum Albaniae*, or depended on the metropolitan authority of Durrës were converted from Orthodox to Catholic; Butrinti,⁵⁹⁶ in the very south of the *Regnum Albaniae*, religiously did not depend on Durrës, but on Corfu.⁵⁹⁷ Taken by the Anjous in 1279 and remaining under their dominion until 1386,⁵⁹⁸ Butrinti had become Catholic only after the Anjou installation, although its first Catholic bishop Tomasso Morosini had replaced the Greek patriarch Jan X Camatero already after the Fall of Constantinople, when the Venetians took Butrinti.⁵⁹⁹ From the notes given by Garampi⁶⁰⁰ one can clearly state that Butrinti had its Catholic rite during almost all the fourteenth century.

The bishopric of Vlora converted to Catholicism soon after the *Regnum Albaniae* came into existence. Its Catholic bishop, Valdebrunus (1286-1299) became *episcopus Avelonensis et Glavinicensis*,⁶⁰¹ the *Glavinicensis* taken over from a former Orthodox bishopric. Along with the Catholic bishop, the Orthodox one continued to exist until the end of the fourteenth century,

⁵⁹⁶ The best study on the Christianity of Butrinti is still the one of Luigi M. Ugolini, "Il Cristianesimo e l'organizzazione ecclesiastica a Butrinto (Albania)," in *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* (Vol. 2, Fasc. 3-4. Rome, 1936): 310-329.

⁵⁹⁷ *Buthroti (nunc Botronto) episcopus sub archiepiscopato Naupactensis*. Lequien, *Oriens Christianus*, vol. 3, 995; *Botrotensis al. (?) Votrontin (Butrinto, Vuzindro) in Epiro, suffr. Neopactensis al. Corphiensis*. Eubel, *HC I*, 143.

⁵⁹⁸ There are two interruptions in this Anjou dominion: the first was at the end of the thirteenth century or beginning of the fourteenth one, because in 1306 Despot Tommaso had to replace Butrinti with two other cities of Philip of Taranto. The other interruption should have been in the years 1313-1331.

⁵⁹⁹ Ugolini, *Cristianesimo*, 310.

⁶⁰⁰ ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 38, *Vescovi* 8, *Indice* 482, fol. 147v-148r: Dominican Nicolaus, Demetrius (1235), Petrus (1355), Jacobus (1363).

⁶⁰¹ Eubel, *HC I*, 122; Fedalto II, 54-5; Gams, 395; Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 399; Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 212.

because it is mentioned in the bishopric registers of Ohrid during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁶⁰² The Catholic bishops ruled throughout the fourteenth century.⁶⁰³

The bishop of Chunavia was also won over for Catholicism at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁶⁰⁴ The first Catholic bishop was nominated in 1310 and came from Gascony⁶⁰⁵ In the early years of the Avignon papacy a Gascony fraction was very strong in the Papal Curia. Beside the new Catholic bishopric of Chunavia, even the suffrage of Stephaniaka became Catholic and in the place of the bishop of Tzernik appeared the Catholic *episcopus Vregensis*.⁶⁰⁶

Soon after Durrës, its hinterland with the main city and episcopal seat, Kruja, was also gained for Catholicism when the Anjous took hold of it. The Anjous lost it after a while (1286), whereas Catholicism stayed. Farlati mentioned fourteen bishops of Kruja from 1286 to 1694⁶⁰⁷ whereas Eubel added four other bishops' names to this diocese.⁶⁰⁸ Its first bishop was, however, mostly titular, because he was deported by the Byzantines in 1286 and lived as a pensioner of the Anjous along with the bishop of Vlora in the Roman and Avignon Curia until 1295.⁶⁰⁹ In the first half of the fourteenth century, the bishops of Kruja, along with the archbishops of Bar would play an important role in the negotiations for the union of the churches with the Serbian kings⁶¹⁰ and also in the projects for crusades when the two churches were in conflict with each other.⁶¹¹

⁶⁰² Ibidem.

⁶⁰³ Eubel, *HC* I, 122; Fedalto II, 55, Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 399: 1299 Albricus, in 1303 Nicolaus, 1330 the Dominican Mattheus, in 1343 the Carmelite Jacobus, in 1354 Paulus, in 1370 the Dominican Joannes Petri, and in 1399 Marianus de Senis.

⁶⁰⁴ This is in fact the second period of the creation of the bishopric of Chunavia. This time it is a Catholic one. The first one seems to have been the Orthodox one. Chunavia is mentioned to have been under the jurisdiction of the orthodox archbishopric of Durrës in the twelfth century (*Acta Albaniae* I, 84).

⁶⁰⁵ *Acta Albaniae* I, 633.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum*, VII, 411-432;

⁶⁰⁸ Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica* I, 224; II, 156.

⁶⁰⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 514, 547, 581. Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 214.

⁶¹⁰ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 359, 408.

⁶¹¹ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 214.

The Byzantine rite continued to exist in the archbishopric of Durrës, even for a while after the installation of the Anjous in Durrës. The Byzantine archbishop of Durrës, Niceta, is mentioned as a victim of the earthquake in 1273.⁶¹² Most probably he was not only allowed to appear in the city, but also to exercise his rite. From now on and throughout the first half of the fourteenth century, until the influence of the Despotate of Epiros extinguished, Šufflay distinguished a double line of Catholic and Orthodox archbishops of Durrës. According to the state of political relations, their nomination as bishops moved back and forth to Curia and to the Synod.

The double line of Catholic and Orthodox archbishops created a lot of religious confusion among the population of Durrës. This is visible in the accounts of travelers who went through Albania at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The ‘Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe’ from the year 1308 which contained a survey of the lands of Eastern Europe, in particular, the Balkan countries, stated about the Albanians: “nor are they entirely Catholic or entirely schismatic.”⁶¹³ Robert Elsie elucidates some details about the context of this report. After having analyzed the text, he puts into question the fact whether the unnamed author actually had an opportunity to visit Albania himself or had gathered his information on the country from the reports of other clergymen who had been there.⁶¹⁴ We know that the Dominicans were active in Durrës from 1304 onwards when the town fell to the West after twenty years of Byzantine rule. In a letter dated March 31, 1304, Pope Benedict XI asked the head of the Dominican Order in

⁶¹² *Acta Albaniae*, no. 305, n. 5;

⁶¹³ The text of the *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis* is contained in several medieval codices, among which Ms. Lat. 5515 and Ms. Lat. 14693 at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Ms. 263 of the library of the City of Poitiers, and Cod. Lat. 66 of the University Library of Leiden. The manuscript was edited in Krakow in 1916 by Olgierd Górka. In addition to sections depicting the various regions of Byzantine Greece, Rascia, Bulgaria, Ruthenia, Hungary, Poland, and Bohemia, it contains a section on Albania, one of the rare descriptions of the country in the early years of the fourteenth century. Robert Elsie, “Albania in the ‘Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis’ (1308 A.D.)” *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 26, no. 1 (1990): 24-29 [henceforth: Elsie, “Albania in the ‘Anonymi’”].

⁶¹⁴ Elsie, “Albania in the ‘Anonymi’, 24-29.

Hungary to send to Albania some of his subordinates of ‘good moral character, active and eloquent’ for missionary activities. With the support of the Holy See, the Dominicans thus had full power to set up a Latin hierarchy of their own liking on the Albanian coast to replace the Orthodox Church which had been forced to abandon its position. In such a context, one can appreciate the author’s allusion to the religious ambivalence of the Albanians, a characteristic they were to retain for centuries, as Elsie states.⁶¹⁵

The *Itinerarum Symonis Semeonis ab Hybernia ad Terram Sanctam*⁶¹⁶ of the two Anglo-Irish pilgrims, Simon Fitzsimons (Symon Semeonis) and Hugh the Illuminator (Hugo Illuminator), who visited Albania in 1322 on their way to the Holy Land, testifies the same confusion. In their writing they consider the Albanians as “schismatics” similar to the Greeks not only in rite, but also in their lifestyle: behavior and clothing: *Ipsi enim Albanenses schismatici sunt, Grecorum utentes ritu et eisdem habitu et gestu in omnibus conformes.*⁶¹⁷

The kind of rite-mixture in Durrës was the reason for a campaign to reform the city and the archbishopric. Pope Benedict XI, who was only for a short time pontif of the Roman Church (October 1303 – July 1304) wrote a considerable number of letters to the archbishoprics of the southeastern Adriatic coast: to the one of Durrës, and also to the archbishop of Bar. The letters date back to March 1304, and clearly indicate a church reform, launched in these territories, especially in Durrës. Pope Benedict ordered the Dominicans in Hungary to go to the vast and peopled provinces of Albania, Cumania (sic!),⁶¹⁸ Polati and Durrës, where “some bishops and

⁶¹⁵ Ibidem.

⁶¹⁶ Robert Elsie, “Two Irish Travellers in Albania in 1322”, in *Albanien in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, ed. Klaus-Detlev Grothusen [Südosteuropa-Studien 48], (Munich, 1991): 24-27.

⁶¹⁷ Elsie, “Two Irish Travellers,” 26.

⁶¹⁸ It has to be Cunavia.

many priest and clerics, who love sincerely the rite of the Holy Roman Church, live under the dominion of the Greeks”⁶¹⁹ and instruct them according to the teachings of the Roman Church.

This expression: *Quasdam amplas et populosas provincias Philot, Arbaniam et Hunaviam, prope Ungariam sitas esse* was most probably copied from an earlier letter of Pope Innocent IV in 1250, who in the same word order expressed the motives for ordering the Dominicans to go to these territories: there were some bishops and many clerics who *sub Grecorum dominio habitant*, who had expressed their desire to take the rite of the Roman Church *qui ritum s. Romane ecclesie sincere diligent*.⁶²⁰ The explanation for the expression *prope Ungariam sitas esse*, which often is explained as ignorance of the papal Curia about the distance of Hungary and Albanian territories,⁶²¹ can be explained with the existence of the Dominican Province of Hungary, which was created in 1221, and included not only Hungary and Croatia, but also Panonia, Transylvania, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Albania and the whole territory around the Danube.⁶²² The Provincial of the Dominican Order was ordered by the Pope as early as April 22, 1236 to send monks to Bar.⁶²³ As a result, the convent of Ulcinj, St. Mauri, was founded in 1258, St. Dominicus in Durrës in 1278, whereas the convent of Shkodra, St. Blasius, was founded in 1345.⁶²⁴

The new reform in 1304 shows that the earlier reforms had not been wholly successful. This one started from the archbishopric of Bar, where Helen, the Catholic Serbian Queen was

⁶¹⁹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 159, ep. 688: *aliqui episcopi ac plurimi sacerdotes et clerici sub Grecorum dominio constituti habitant, qui ritum sancte Romane ecclesie sinceramente diligent.*

⁶²⁰ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 199. For the presence of the Benedictines, Dominicans and Franciscans in Durrës by or after 1250 see Ducellier, *Albanie*, 208-9.

⁶²¹ Even politically Hungary was not that far away in 1250. The Hungarian King Béla IV had reinforced his influence in Bosnia through two rapid campaigns in 1244 and 1253; cf. Engel, *The Realm of St. Stephen*, 106.

⁶²² Nikolaus Pfeiffer, *Die ungarische Dominikanerordensprovinz von ihrer Gründung 1221 bis zur Tatarenverwüstung 1241-1242* (Zurich, 1913): 27-49.

⁶²³ Thomae Ripoll, *Bullarium Ordinis FF. Praedicatorum*, vol. I (Rome: Typographia Hieronymi Rainardi, 1730): 88 no. 154; Potthast, *Regesta*, 862, no. 10, 145.

using her royal authority in support of the Dominicans. From an earlier letter (November 18, 1303), addressed Marinus, the archbishop of Bar, we can observe that the same problems that existed in the archbishopric of Durrës, are mentioned also there, and most probably they existed in the whole of medieval Albania. The archbishop of Bar was ordered to correct and reform the clergy in *Arbano, Polato, Canavia (!), Duratio, Cataro, Dulcinio, Suatio, Scodro, Drivasto, Antibaro* and also those in other places under the dominion of Andronicus, Emperor of the Greeks, and Uroš II, Serbian king and his brother Stephan as well as in the territories of Helen, their mother and Serbian Queen.⁶²⁵ The Catholic rite needed, thus, a strong reform in the Western Balkans, and that was taken over by the Dominicans.⁶²⁶

The building of the church of the Dominicans in Durrës should have been the starting point of the reform. The Pope enlarged the indulgences for all those who would offer their help for building the church.⁶²⁷ The other step was to be followed by the prior of Dominicans, who had to gather around himself all the *personas idoneas* of the archdeaconate of Durrës,⁶²⁸ and also to apply punishments for the evildoers. The prior and the convent were allowed to receive a sum of 100 *librarum venetorum grossorum* from the *usuris, rapinis et aliis male acquisitis*.⁶²⁹ This was just the beginning of the Catholic reform that the Dominicans started under the strong recommendation of Pope Benedict. The intensive activity of the Minorites and Dominicans in Albania would then reach its peak during the pontificate of Pope Clement VI (1342-1352)⁶³⁰, and

⁶²⁴ *sine licentia generalis capituli et sine priore et doctore non mictatur* Innocenzo Taurisano, *L'organizzazione delle scuole domenicane nel secolo XIII. Il capitolo provinciale di Lucca del 1288*, (Lucca: Scuola Tipografica Artigianelli 1928): 112.

⁶²⁵ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 36v-37r, ep. 149: *quibusdam aliis locis sub dominio Andronici imperatoris Grecorum ac Orosii regis Servie et fratris eius S(tephani) nec non carissime in Christo filie Elene matris eorum regine Servie illustris positis*.

⁶²⁶ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 159, ep. 688.

⁶²⁷ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 160v ep. 694 bis; Grandjean XI, no. 867; Potthast, *Regesta*, no. 25412.

⁶²⁸ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 160v ep. 695; Grandjean no. 868.

⁶²⁹ ASV, *Reg. Vat.* 51, fol. 154, ep 663; Grandjean no. 831.

⁶³⁰ Gay, *Le pape Clément VI et les affaires d'Orient* (Paris, 1904)

continue under the popes Innocent VI (1352-1362) and Urban V (1362-1370). The growing influence of the papacy and their zeal put an end to the religious tolerance that had been one of the characteristics of the Albanian population. During the fourteenth century mendicants spread and strengthened the Latin rite not only in the territories of the *Regnum Albaniae*, but all over the area of the Western Balkans.

In the bishopric of Vlora, the Dominican Mattheus became bishop in 1303,⁶³¹ whereas the Dominican Nicolaus went to the bishopric of Butrinti, which although part of the *Regnum Albaniae*, was a suffragan of Corfu.⁶³² *Cernicensis*, one of the bishoprics of the metropolitan see of Durrës was converted into a Catholic bishopric in the proximity of the *Regnum Albaniae*. Its first Catholic bishop was recorded in 1318;⁶³³ as orthodox it was mentioned in 1270.⁶³⁴ In 1327 a Dominican was appointed even in Skopje, which was Serbian Orthodox.⁶³⁵ Even the most eastern parts of the Albanian line in the North, the town of Prizren, which was also orthodox bishopric with some catholic parochial churches up until then,⁶³⁶ pertaining to the archbishopric of Ohrid and later to the Serbian Patriarchate of Peja, received a real catholic bishop (1372) as a result of the good connections between Balsha and Rome, as it already had been under the pope Innocent III.⁶³⁷ As a consequence of the reform or its perhaps better to say Catholicisation of the Albanian territories, at the end of the fourteenth century, there was a dismembering of the autocephalous archbishopric of Ochrid in favor of the Catholic rite.

⁶³¹ Eubel, *HC I*, 122; Fedalto II, 54-5. Gams, P. Pius Bonifacius Gams. *Series Episcoporum Ecclesiae Catholicae quotquot Innotuerunt a Beato Petro Apostolo a Multis Adjutus*. (Regensburg: Typis et Sumptibus Georgii I Manz., 1873), 395, Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum VII*, 397-401.

⁶³² Eubel *HC I*, 143.

⁶³³ Eubel, *HC I*, 182, n. 1.

⁶³⁴ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 217.

⁶³⁵ Eubel, *HC I*, 439.

⁶³⁶ *Acta Albaniae I*, no. 74.

⁶³⁷ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 217.

Besides the members of the Dominican Order, there were certainly also members of other orders taking episcopal offices. In the archbishopric of Durrës, the majority of the archbishops of the fourteenth century were Minorites⁶³⁸ starting with Antonius Banstro from Dalmatia, who was appointed by Pope Clement V on July 14, 1305.⁶³⁹ There were also Carmelites and Franciscans at the top of this archdiocese⁶⁴⁰ and Carmelites, Cisterciansans, and Premonstratensians in other bishoprics. There are some visible order preferences of the different popes in these nominations, so for instance, while Pope John XXII liked Dominicans better, Pope Innocent VI preferred Minorites. The latter wrote even a letter to the General Chapter of the Minorites (Assisi) in 1354 asking for missionaries to appoint as bishops.⁶⁴¹

While in Central Albania the papal curia took an offensive position, favored by the political situation created on the spot, in Northern Albania it held a defensive role.⁶⁴² Great attention was paid to the borderline between Albanians and Serbs. Since the creation of the autocephalous Serbian archbishopric, the Catholic Church had to hold back only in the coastal area and it included only non-Serb populace: Romans and Albanians.⁶⁴³ These and the Hungarians in the north, were the only Catholic neighbors of the Serbs. Since Hungary was a quite strong kingdom, the Serbs continuously pushed their borders into the South building up monasteries and bishoprics of the eastern rite.⁶⁴⁴ That is the main reason why the intention of the Avignon popes at that time was directed to the possession of parochial churches in the Albania.⁶⁴⁵ Nevertheless, since the creation of the *Regnum Albaniae* the Serbs had to cope with a politically

⁶³⁸ Giorgio Fedalto, "La chiesa Latina in Oriente," *Studi Religiosi* 3, vol. II (1976), 116-117; Petrus de Gironda (1340), Angelus (1344), Antonius de Alexandria (1349), Franchus (May, 1394).

⁶³⁹ Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 363; Fedalto, "La chiesa Latina in Oriente," 116-117.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibidem: Antonius de Durachio (1351) was Franciscan and Stephanus de Neapoli (July 1394) was Carmelite.

⁶⁴¹ Conrad Eubel, "Die während des 14. Jahrhunderts im Missionsgebiet der Dominikaner und Franziskaner errichteten Bistümer." In *Festschrift zum elfhundertjährigen Jubiläum des Deutschen Campo Santo in Rom*, ed. Stephan Ehses (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herdersche Verlagshandlung, 1897): 170-95; see especially 179.

⁶⁴² Ibidem.

⁶⁴³ Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* II, 53.

protected area: they found their Catholic neighbors of the South under the protection of the Anjous, with whom they tried to create political and diplomatic relations, using sometimes also the marriage market.⁶⁴⁶

New bishoprics emerged in Northern Albania during the fourteenth century. Already in 1291 in *Albanie partibus iuxta Sclavos*, the old city of Sava was renewed on the request of the descendants of its Catholic citizens and newcomers and with the intervention of Helen, Catholic Serbian Queen and also that of the orders of Franciscans and Dominicans of Ragusa. It received its own bishop in 1291 (*episcopus Sappatensis*) and the line of its bishops continued regularly with different bishopric names: *Sardensis*, *Scordiensis*, *Scordinensis*, *Scodriensis*, *Polatensis Minor*⁶⁴⁷ until the beginning of the fifteenth century, when this diocese was united with that of Sarda (= *Polatensis Minor*).⁶⁴⁸ The old geographical division of the province Polatum (Pilot) in Upper and Lower Pilot, had influenced also a division of the bishops of Polatum in the fourteenth century.⁶⁴⁹ The bishop of the Lower Pilot (*Polatensis Minor*) had his residency in Sarda, whereas the new bishop of the Upper Pilot (*Polatensis Major*) seems to have settled in the Benedictine monastery of S. Paulus, along with the Orthodox Serbian bishops and the Catholic prelates of Arbanum and Stephaniaka. Oliver Schmitt states in his study about Venetian Albania that the province of Polatum had its boom in the time of the Serbian kingdom and empire around 1350.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁶⁴⁵ Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 215.

⁶⁴⁶ Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* II, 53.

⁶⁴⁷ According to the opinion of Šufflay, the name *Scordiensis*, *Scodriensis* has wrongly been derived from *Sardensis*, because of the ignorance of the papal scribes. Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 216; Eubel I, 456.

⁶⁴⁸ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 515; Jireček, *Staat und Gesellschaft* I, 60.

⁶⁴⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 41. cf. 113; Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 195-6.

⁶⁵⁰ Schmitt, *Das Venezianische Albanien*, 51.

Nevertheless, in the period 1372-1376 the Catholic bishopric of Polati was that poor that the archbishop of Bar could not collect any income from it at all.⁶⁵¹

Along with the bishopric of Sapa in the proximity of Lezha, the bishoprics of Balezo and Danja came also into existence in the fourteenth century.⁶⁵² The bishops of Balezo (at the River Rioli on the East of Shkodra Lake) appeared for the first time during the pontificate of Clement VI, namely in 1347.⁶⁵³ As a matter of fact, we do not know⁶⁵⁴ when its first bishop Guillelmus, whose death created a vacancy in this bishopric, had been appointed. In 1347 he died and another bishop, namely the Minorite Gerwicus, was appointed. The series of its bishops continued regularly during the fourteenth century, although it had enormous problems with the Serbs. In 1356 its church, along with the monastery of St. Johannes in the vicinity of Drisht, was mentioned as *ab schismaticis destructum*.⁶⁵⁵

Another reform which started from Durrës, went through whole Albania until the city of Ohrid. As a result of the Catholic reform, even in Ohrid, a Dominican was nominated as archbishop in 1320.⁶⁵⁶ He was certainly a titular archbishop in the strong autocephalous archbishopric of Ohrid but when in 1346, the Serbian tsar Dušan expelled all the metropolitans of the patriarchate of Constantinople, he seemed to have become a real archbishop, and according to Šufflay, was identical with the archbishop Nicolaus, who partook in the coronation of Dušan in 1347.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵¹ Pietro Sella and Giuseppe Vale, *Rationes Decimarum Italiae nei secoli XII e XIV: Venetiae – Histria – Dalmatia*, (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apotolica Vaticana, 1941): 481-491

⁶⁵² Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 218.

⁶⁵³ ASV, *Reg. Vat* 173, fol. 40r-v.

⁶⁵⁴ Neither the historiography, nor the archival research in the papal registers in ASV were helpful for dating the beginnings of this bishopric. *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 30, Farlati, *Illyricum Sacrum* VII, 207; Eubel, *Bullarium Franciscanum* 6, n. 406; Wadding ad 1347; Eubel, *HC* 1, 128 and 1, 125; ASV, *Schedario Garampi* 36, Vescovi 6, Indice 480, fol. 118v-119r.

⁶⁵⁵ Theiner, *Monumenta Slavorum* I, 236.

⁶⁵⁶ Eubel, *HC* 1, 69; *Acta Albaniae* 1, 663; Schäfer, *Liber expensarum Johannis XXII*, 674.

⁶⁵⁷ Jireček, *Geschichte der Serben* I, 387; idem, *Staat und Gesellschaft* I, 53.

The papal policy towards the Albanian territories seems to have been quite complex. It varied from region to region, from bishopric to bishopric, and from time to time. So, at times, the Papacy was on very good terms with a chosen region, while acting for the introduction of the Catholic religion, as it can be traced with the example of Kruja. The interest of the papacy towards Kruja is quite significant in showing the papal attitude towards regions which were about to become Catholic. When Arbanum (Kruja) became a Catholic bishopric in 1167, it was the pope himself who consecrated the bishop.⁶⁵⁸ In the coming centuries, especially during the fourteenth century, when the attention of the popes was mainly concentrated on the inner regions of modern Albania,⁶⁵⁹ Kruja would become a very important center for the Catholicization of these territories. Along with the establishment of new parish churches, the papacy also encouraged the reform of the existing churches.⁶⁶⁰ In this process, the bishops of Kruja, along with the archbishops of Bar would play an important role. Into the archdiocese of Durrës came (around 1363) even the Catholic bishop of Chunavia, and the catholic suffragan of Stephaniaka and in the place of the bishop of Tzernik appeared the catholic *episcopus Vregensis*.⁶⁶¹

The relations between popes and Albanian noble families and the clergy were significant for the spread of Catholicism. During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a difficult situation existed between the Holy See and the Albanian aristocracy. The influence of the Albanian noble families in the nomination of the bishops became so great that often there were cases when two parallel bishops were nominated in the same place, such as in Arbanum, Alessio, and Dagno. Another such case was that of an archbishop of Antibari in 1363-1373. The archbishop of Antibari, an ex-prior of the Dominican monastery in Ragusa became so influential and

⁶⁵⁸ Ibidem, 203.

⁶⁵⁹ *Acta Albaniae* I, no. 637.

⁶⁶⁰ The churches which had been following the Greek rite and thus had deviated should return to the Catholic rite. See Šufflay, "Kirchenzustände," 209.

⁶⁶¹ Ibidem.

independent from the pope that, against the will of the latter, he nominated a clergyman from Drivasto, a member of the Summa family.⁶⁶²

The *Regnum Albaniae* promoted by the Anjous was the good ground for the spread and flourishing of the Roman Catholic rite in these parts of the world. For the papacy *Regnum Albaniae* was more than a political structure: it was the secular arm responsible for the implementation of Catholic religious teachings in the local population, and a basis for outreach in the Balkans.

Many locals had opted for the Roman Catholic faith after the installation of the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae*. There were certainly also many of them, who felt more affinity with the Greeks than with the Latins, but most of them would prefer to enjoy their independence, which was best encouraged by the Catholic Church. The conversion of the Albanians to the Latin rite had already been early supported by the popes, but it was only at the beginning of the fourteenth century, that Catholicism was widely accepted by the local population.

⁶⁶² Ibidem, 246.

Conclusions: The pope, visions of a region and the Western Church

Throughout this study, I have attached an important role to the *Regnum Albaniae*. The different desires and goals of the local nobility and the oriental policy of the papacy met within this concept. Together they were the main factors behind the flourishing of Catholicism in the fourteenth-century in this part of the Balkans.

After the Sack of Constantinople (1204), the Byzantine Empire lost its power as the central authority in the Byzantine lands. The fragmented political powers that emerged aimed to acquire this central authority, at least in their purported territories, but managed it only with various levels of success. The territories in the Southwestern Balkans had never possessed a local central authority from the political viewpoint. As a result, the local nobles tended to attach themselves to what they perceived as the strongest political powers. Thus, at any one time, the smaller territories controlled by local nobility came under the sphere of influence of these different power centres. Their political worldview created a fluid situation where political alignments were taken up and dropped with an array of large power centres in the greater region. The way the local nobles choose a central authority to submit to and self-identify with determined whose “periphery” they wanted to be in.

The Southwestern Balkans was important in the plans of the Holy See during the Middle Ages. Geographically, the Balkans offered the shortest and the most convenient terrestrial routes to Jerusalem and the East. They acquired a special importance, not only during the crusading campaigns, but also for pilgrimages and passages of papal envoys to the East. Politically they represented the frontier between the Byzantine Empire and the Latin sphere of influence. Having one foot in the Southwestern Balkans, reflected the Papal Curia’s hope for eventually acquiring

control in Byzantium. Religiously the Southwestern Balkans also represented a borderline between the Byzantine Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church.

The attempts of the Papal Curia to infiltrate this part of the Balkans and to establish its power there seems to have begun as early as the seventh or eighth century with the beginning of the schism between the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. After the creation of the Latin Empire in Constantinople in the thirteenth century, these papal attempts became more emphatic because hopes for a universal Church were again revived. The Holy See used a variety of outreach methods in these parts of the world. Negotiations for Church Union were underpinned with archbishopric and bishopric nominations and translations of bishops and archbishops to the area. The Papal Curia also enlisted the authority of the many local secular rulers. The influence and sometimes detailed activities of various religious orders was always in the background of these attempts as well. As long as the Southwestern Balkans did not have any centralized secular rulership that would be firmly supportive of the plans of the Holy See, these attempts, remained only partially successful and the papal impact in the region was sporadic and limited.

The installation of the Anjou *Regnum Albaniae* at the end of the thirteenth century opened new perspectives for a successful papal impact in the region and beyond. The universal visions of Charles I of Anjou corresponded with the visions of the Holy See in terms of reaching out towards the East, leading sometimes to successful collaborations.

Being a powerful personality, Charles I of Anjou concentrated his attempts mainly on ‘universal’ undertakings like the recapture of Jerusalem, the restoration of the Latin Empire in Constantinople and the creation of a Mediterranean Empire. So did also the Papal Curia. In this context, the territories in the Southwestern Balkans acquired importance as a passageway to the East and as a military base for Charles’ military campaigns. At this early stage of the *Regnum*

Albaniae, the religious life and papal impact in this part of the Balkans was boosted by the existence of a Catholic secular power like Charles I.

After the Sicilian Vespers in 1283 and the death of Charles I of Anjou in 1285, the *Regnum Albaniae* continued to operate within a limited territorial space with uncertain and fluctuating geographical boundaries. The descendants of Charles I had various degrees of success in keeping the *Regnum Albaniae* alive but more in name than reality. However, it needs to be stressed that this ‘nominal existence’ still seems to have exerted a significant influence on the subsequent development of the political and religious situation in the Southwestern Balkans in the fourteenth century.

The local nobility in this region had thought of Charles I of Anjou as their protector against neighboring aggressive powers. The *Regnum Albaniae* was for them a kind of mental fortress which they could call upon when they came under attack by their neighbors; that is why they joined or abandoned it according to their need to protect themselves. At any rate, they were interested in its existence, especially when it provided them with a political status which was recognized by the powers they wished to ally themselves with such as the Holy See, the Hungarian Kingdom, and the Ban of Bosnia. In this context, the *Regnum Albaniae* represented a source of power, identification and self-representation, for the local nobility as required. Over the course of time, however, and especially when they saw that the Western powers recognized them and were linked to them through this political structure, they also started to attach another value to this *Regnum* by personalizing it. Since the *Regnum* was created by the Anjous and the Holy See recognized it as being Catholic, accepting Catholicism was one of the ways to implement this personalization.

Catholicism was one of the key ideologies that connected the political and religious visions of the Avignon Popes and the local nobility of the *Regnum Albaniae* in the fourteenth

century. While the Avignon Popes saw it as a means of religious and political outreach in the Balkans, the local nobility considered it a political means to connect with the West and reap power benefits by association. At this moment of apparent triumph, the French religious influence in the region was quite strong. Supported by both the Holy See and the local nobility, Catholicism reached its heyday in the Southwestern Balkans in the second half of the fourteenth century. The number of Catholic religious houses and clergy increased, and the territories of the nobles who considered themselves members of the *Regnum Albaniae* became true strongholds of Catholicism against the Orthodox rite in the area. The religious and political visions of the Avignon popes and of the local members of the *Regnum Albaniae* were again united on the eve of their almost simultaneous downfalls.

The Papal Curia only began to directly address local nobles associated with the *Regnum Albaniae* in the second decade of the fourteenth century. The specific listing of their names and offices created a sense of mutual trust and self-confidence in the Albanian nobility that would later on encourage them to keep alive and even strengthen their relations with the Holy See. Religious life started to flourish, not only because the territories had energetic and prominent archbishoprics and religious orders, but also because noble families began to invest in ecclesiastical careers and in the creation and maintenance of ecclesiastical and monastic houses. Albanian clerics took over ecclesiastical positions throughout the Western Balkans. The *Regnum Albaniae* no longer existed physically but still retained its power as an ideal, playing a more important role in the consolidation of local political identity and Catholicism than the physical *Regnum Albaniae* had managed to accomplish in its heyday at the end of the thirteenth century.

Placed in a more general context, this study has aimed at contributing to a better understanding of the relations between the Holy See and the peripheries of western Christendom. Priority was given to the elections, nominations and actions of personal representatives of the

popes, to the attempts for crusades and church union. Still, a large range of possibilities for further research has remained. I wish I would have been able to go more in-depth with regard to the solemnity of papal presentation, and the way this solemnity was perceived and used by the locals. The power performance of the Holy See can be studied in a more detailed way and leading into other directions. How locals approached the power centers represents also an attempting field of further studies.

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