

# Pavle Sofrić and His Travelogue *In Hilandar*

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## I. The travelogue writer Pavle Sofrić

In the context of the rich travel literature on Hilandar, the travelogue of Pavle Sofrić (1857-1924) deserves special attention. It was published under the title *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)* in *Glas eparbije niške* [Voice of the Diocese of Niš] in 1910 and remained almost unknown to scholars studying this monastery. This text offers not only an abundance of information on topics related to Mount Athos, but also the personal experience of an educated and gifted devotee.

Pavle Sofrić was a hardworking scholar, a professor from Niš, who devoted his research to a wide range of topics – from Saint Sava and the Nemanjić ideology, to beliefs about plants, dancing in *kolos* (translator's note/TN: *kololo*/Serbian traditional circle dance) and witches. His bibliography, which includes about twenty works, shows that he investigated not only historical topics, but also ethnographic and ethnological ones.<sup>2</sup> “It is interesting that he published all his books and booklets at his own expense and distributed them free of charge to his friends [...]. His modesty and immense selflessness extend to nihilism.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Lj. Petrović, *Bibliografija radova prof. Pavla Sofrića* [The Bibliography of the works of Pavle Sofrić] (Beograd: Izdanje prijatelja i đaka Sofrićevih 1930), 5-15. In addition to the content of articles and books, this *Bibliography* provides a brief analysis of the basic ideas presented in them. This *Bibliography* is supplemented by two entries: J. Mihailović, “Bibliografija radova Pavla Sofrića Niševljanina” [The Bibliography of the works of Pavle Sofrić of Niš], in *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba* [Significant flora in our Serbian Folklore], ed. Jasmina Mihailović i Nenad Ljubinković (Beograd: BIGZ, 1990), 277–278. See also: J. Mihailović, “Literatura o Pavlu Sofriću Niševljaninu” [Literature about Pavle Sofrić of Niš], in *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba* [Significant flora in our Serbian Folklore], ed. Jasmina Mihailović & Nenad Ljubinković, 279-280.

<sup>3</sup> M. Bašić, “Nekrolog. Pavle Sofrić, profesor” [Necrologue. Pavle Sofrić, professor], *Glasnik profesorskog društva* 4 (1924): 301.

He was born on 11 August 1857 in Szentendre (Hungary) and descended from a reputable merchant family.<sup>4</sup> He was a close relative of the writer Jacob Ignjatović, who was also from Szentendre. He graduated from high school in Pest, but spent his working life in Serbia, as a high school professor in Loznica (1887-1888), Valjevo (1888-1890), Šabac (1890-1900), Niš (1900-1910), and Belgrade (1911-1924). Sofrić spent several years during World War One in refuge in France. He taught general and national history, geography, and sometimes German in high schools. Far from his Szentendre,

Sofrić went after the trail of those Serbs from the other side of the rivers Sava and Danube who wanted to contribute to the cultural and intellectual uplifting of their ancestors, of Serbia, like the many educated Serbs from Hungary, which also referred to the Hungary of his generation.<sup>5</sup>

In Niš, he became one of the founders and later the first librarian of the National Library of Niš. He dedicated himself specifically to the work of managing Stevan Sremac's literary legacy.<sup>6</sup> It was precisely this, the Niš period, that was the most important for his professional and scientific work, so he used the pseudonym Niševljanin (IN: of Niš), under which he is still known today in ethnology.

He died on 1 May 1924 in Belgrade.

In the analyses of Sofrić's work, it has been noted that Sofrić sought cultural roots in his studies, and that, in trying to discover the remains of the myths in the surviving customs, rituals, and oral culture of the Serbs, he pursued the reconstruction of the pre-Christian Slavic mythology.<sup>7</sup> "His works, valuable for Serbian ethnology and cultural history, for the study of the 'national soul' – to which he devoted most of his

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<sup>4</sup> Biographical information on Pavle Sofrić: M. Bašić, "Nekrolog. Pavle Sofrić, profesor," 299-303; S. Vujičić, "Spomen na Sofrića" [Rememberance of Sofrić] *Sveske* 29 (1996): 204-207; N. Ljubinković, "Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba Pavla Sofrića Niševljanina" ["Significant flora in our Serbian Folklore, by Pavle Sofrić of Niš"], in *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba*, ed. Jasmina Mihailović & Nenad Ljubinković, 257-260; J. Mihailović, "Beleška o piscu" [Note on the author], in *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba*, ed. Jasmina Mihailović i Nenad Ljubinković, 273-275.

<sup>5</sup> S. Vujičić, "Spomen na Sofrića," 205.

<sup>6</sup> P. Sofrić, "Sremčeva biblioteka" [Sremac's library], *Bosanska vila* 15. i 16, 15-30 (1907): 256-258.

<sup>7</sup> J. Mihailović, "Beleška o piscu," 275.

ethnopsychological and anthropogeographic works – due to circumstances, went unnoticed, and his scientific restlessness and contribution remained unacknowledged, forgotten and insufficiently recognized.”<sup>8</sup>

From the thematically diverse opus of Pavle Sofrić, two books reached today’s readers: *Momenti iz prošlosti i sadašnjosti varoši Szentandreje* [Moments from the Past and Present of the Town of Szentendre], Niš in 1903, which saw two renewed editions in 1994 and 2005<sup>9</sup> and *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba* [Significant flora in our Serbian Folklore], Belgrade 1912, which was a phototype edition, published in 1990.<sup>10</sup> The book *Significant flora in our Serbian Folklore* is said to be a cornerstone in the study of plant mythology in Serbia.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Pavle Sofrić’s travelogue *O Hilandaru (Putopis jednog poklonika)* [About Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)] is rarely mentioned in the context of travel literature dedicated to this monastery.

A short excerpt, of only thirty lines from Sofrić’s travelogue, is published in *Hilandar u knjigama* [Hilandar in Literature].<sup>12</sup> There is also a mention of Sofrić’s travelogue in the book by Bojana Melcer, *Manastir Hilandar. Bibliografija* [The Hilandar Monastery. Bibliography].<sup>13</sup>

With respect to travelogues on Hilandar, Dejan Medaković emphasized the role of special travel literature nurtured by Serbian newspapers and magazines.<sup>14</sup> Chronologically, it was at the end of the

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<sup>8</sup> S. Vujičić, “Spomen na Sofrića,” 206.

<sup>9</sup> P. Sofrić, *Momenti iz prošlosti i sadašnjosti varoši Szentandreje. Moje dačke uspomene* [Moments from the past and present of Szentendre. My pupillary memories], ed. Vasa Pavković (Pančevo: Zajednica književnika Pančeva, 1994); P. Sofrić, *Momenti iz prošlosti i sadašnjosti varoši Szentandreje. Moje dačke uspomene. Praznovanje Badnjeg večera i Božića u Szentandreji* [Moments from the past and present of Szentendre. My pupillary memories. Textbook Celebrating Christmas eve and Christmas day in Szentendre], ed. Vasa Pavković (Pančevo: Istorijski arhiv : Knjižara Prota Vasa, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba*, ed. J. Mihailović i N. Ljubinković.

<sup>11</sup> N. Ljubinković, *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba*, 268.

<sup>12</sup> *Hilandar u knjigama. Hrestomatija i katalog izložbe* [Hilandar in literature. Textbook and the exhibition catalogue], ed. Nada Mirkov (Beograd: Narodna biblioteka Srbije, 1998), 155–156. In Sofrić’s monograph these lines are located in pages 122-123 and 135-136.

<sup>13</sup> B. Melcer, *Manastir Hilandar. Bibliografija* [The Hilandar monastery. Bibliography] (Niš: Centar za crkvene studije, Kosovska Mitrovica: Filozofski fakultet, Ohajo: Arhivski centar za proučavanje slovenskog srednjovekovlja. Državni univerzitet Ohaja, Beograd: Zadužbina svetog manastira Hilandara, 2003), 75.

<sup>14</sup> D. Medaković, “Otkriće Hilandara” [Discovering Chilandar], in *Otkrivanje Hilandara* [Discovering Chilandar] (Novi Sad: Prometej, 2001), 20.

nineteenth century, when the Hilandar issue became more prominent to the Serbian public.<sup>15</sup> The popularization of Hilandar at that time was also advanced by the journal *Slava* from Niš, whose editor became Milivoj Bašić in 1896 and his associate, Pavle Sofrić.<sup>16</sup> The magazine was issued for a year, publishing supplements on Hilandar.<sup>17</sup> Both Milivoje Bašić and Pavle Sofrić went on a journey “to Mount Athos as well-informed experts on its issues and matters, which is why their travelogue is distinguished by beautiful and accurate observations. Owing to these virtues, they join a special group that, after World War One, would acquire its new, learned continuators, such as Dragutin Anastasijević, Žarko Tatić, Aleksandar Deroko and Vladimir Ćorović.”<sup>18</sup>

While Milivoj Bašić’s travelogue from 1925 and 1926<sup>19</sup> was reprinted entirely in 1992<sup>20</sup> and in excerpts in 1998,<sup>21</sup> Sofrić’s travelogue was not. Its indistinction was also a result of the fact that it appeared in the nowadays little-accessible journal *Glas eparhije niške*, which only exists in the fund of the National Library of Serbia.

The character of Sofrić’s travelogue *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)* was commented by Dejan Medaković: “Among the educated people of Niš, it was only Professor Pavle Sofrić, a Szentendre native,

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<sup>15</sup> D. Medaković, “Stara viđenja Hilandara” [Old views on Hilandar], *Letopis Matice srpske* 416, sv. 6 (1975): 816 (reprinted in: D. Medaković, *Otkrivanje Hilandara*, [Discovering Hilandar.] 58.)

<sup>16</sup> D. Medaković, “Otkriće Hilandara,” 21.

<sup>17</sup> D. Medaković, “Stara viđenja Hilandara” [Old views on Hilandar], 816 (reprinted in: D. Medaković, *Otkrivanje Hilandara*, [Discovering Hilandar.] 58.)

<sup>18</sup> D. Medaković, “Otkriće Hilandara,” 21.

<sup>19</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Sv. Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos], 1. deo, *Zadužbina. Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 3 (1924–1925): 49–80; 2. deo: *Zadužbina Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 4 (1925–1926): 41–69.

<sup>19</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Svetu Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos], *Gradina*, 6–7 i 8–9 (1992): 115–152.

<sup>20</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Sv. Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos] 1. deo, *Zadužbina. Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 3 (1924–1925): 49–80; 2. deo: *Zadužbina Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 4 (1925–1926): 41–69.

<sup>20</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Svetu Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos], *Gradina*, 6–7 i 8–9 (1992): 115–152.

<sup>21</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Sv. Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos], 1. deo, *Zadužbina. Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 3 (1924–1925): 49–80; 2. deo: *Zadužbina Godišnjak “Fonda Stanojla i Draginje Petrovića”* 4 (1925–1926): 41–69.

<sup>21</sup> M. Bašić, “Sa puta u Svetu Goru” [On the Road to Mount Athos], *Gradina*, 6–7 i 8–9 (1992): 115–152.

who took off on a journey to Hilandar at the eve of World War One, and who published his beautiful travelogue in *Glas eparhije niške*, in 1910. Reading this text, one should not forget that it was written by a historian who, after a great intellectual effort, broke away from his homeland, preserving in himself a sort of lasting romantic fascination.”<sup>22</sup>

Pavle Sofrić’s travelogue *In Hilandar* was published as part of an extensive four-part section entitled *Four Supplements to Serbian Cultural History*:

- I. About the educational work of Saint Sava among the Serbian people
- II. My memories as a student of the life of a Serbian national school half a century ago in Szentendre, Hungary
- III. Serbian national idea during the Nemanjić dynasty
- IV. In Hilandar

The travelogue *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)* is seventy pages long (in *Glas eparhije niške* from pp. 76 to 146) and is a valuable contribution to the study of this monastery. By reprinting the excerpts from this text, we pay tribute to Sofrić, a neglected, but a highly significant explorer of Serbian antiquities, while at the same time we deepen our knowledge of the travelogue genre, as well as the themes related to Mount Athos. Like other texts by Pavle Sofrić, this travelogue confirms the fact that his works “do not deserve to be handed over to oblivion.”<sup>23</sup>

## **II. Pavle Sofrić, *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)***

### ***Historical notes on Hilandar (Chapter V, pp. 109-117)***

It is difficult to point to the origin of the name “Hilandar.” N. Dučić says that the residents of Hilandar told him that “The History of the Hilandar,” written by Saint Sava, burned in 1722, when the southeast side (mahala) of our Hilandar was destroyed. Had this history been preserved, there is no doubt that it would have provided a reliable answer to the question asked. Furthermore, all that has been said and is

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<sup>22</sup> D. Medaković, “Stara viđenja Hilandara” [Old views on Hilandar], 817 (reprinted in: *Otkrivanje Hilandara* [Discovering Hilandar], 59).

<sup>23</sup> N. Ljubinković, *Glavnije bilje u narodnom verovanju i pevanju kod nas Srba*, 260.

currently being said to clarify this issue is, in our view, a fairytale. However, we will also make such unreliable speculations here.

Honourable Barski, who travelled across Mount Athos from 1723 to 1747 and visited our Hilandar, says that it got its name from the Greek words “chilia” (a thousand) and “andar” (fog), because it would always be saved by fog whenever bandits from the sea attacked it, since it is only half an hour away from the shore. During the attacks of bandits, Hilandar would clearly appear in the valley when they stood on the hill, but when they would come down from the hill, then the thick fog would always engulf it, which God would bring down by his eternal grace, and they would wander around, unable to reach it. As soon as they got away from it, it would appear clearly to them again. Thus, Hilandar did not suffer any harm, while other monasteries of Mount Athos were plundered – despite the fact that this interpretation seems far-fetched, we should not forget that such wandering amid Hilandar’s enemies is mentioned far later, namely at the beginning of the fourteenth century, when it was attacked by the Catalans, which will be discussed more extensively later in the text. And now, in the absence of the necessary historical information, it is difficult to say whether such wandering in the fog had occurred before, or whether a later event was carried over to an earlier century, in order to find the necessary interpretation of the name Hilandar. Certainly, “Hilandar” is mentioned as early as the late twelfth century, in the charter of Emperor Alexios III Komnenos (1195-1203), which grants its construction. But, let us focus on other interpretations of Barski. He cites various opinions that link the name of Hilandar with the jaw of a lion, i.e. the Greek words “hili” (mouth) and “leontari” (lion). For, according to some, the old city, on whose foundations Hilandar was erected, had a statue of a lion with open jaws in front of its gates, resulting in the Greek name given to the city. According to others, the name comes from the fact that the surroundings of Hilandar are open to the sea like a lion’s jaw. And finally, according to others, because there is a stone

island in front of the dock of Hilandar, on which ships crash and are torn apart by storms like in a lion's jaw. All these speculations show how unreliable they are. Let us look at more recent attempts in this direction. Porphyry Uspensky, archimandrite and archaeologist, says that in ancient times the Hellantirs, a conquering people from Asia, founded their own village here, and that this is the origin of the name of Hilandar. He later abandoned this interpretation, claiming that in the place of present-day Hilandar, Xerxes' Persians of the Hilenic detachment founded a temple to their god Tire, and hence the name "Hilandar." Therefore, we can freely say that we do not know anything about the origin of the name of Hilandar.

Rastko became a monk in 1192 in Gornji or Stari Rusik, and later received his cassock at the Vatopedi Monastery. His father Nemanja also came here in 1197, having previously become a monk in the Studenica Monastery, receiving the name Simeon. His wife, Ana, became a nun under the name of Anastasia and remained in the convent of Holy Virgin Mary on the Toplica River, as the elder of the monastery.

Rastko's entry to the ranks of monks marks a new direction in the life of the Serbs. Moreover, as his example was followed by his parents, this clearly shows that this direction was quietly prepared and energetically accepted. The task was to enlighten and organize the Serbs in the spirit of the Orthodox Church, so that they would, in light of their many strengths and fine qualities, attain their role, which was intended for them by their own virtue and the virtue of their geographical circumstances. In other words, the idea of Serbs as Orthodox Christians was to be revived and become respected members of the vast circle of European nations.

Domentijan, who in legendary form recounts the life of Saint Sava, says that the idea of building the Serbian Hilandar originated from a very pious old man who, among other councils, said that Saint Sava should serve his fatherland by erecting a Serbian monastery on Mount Athos (to be called a Serbian monastery). According to Domentijan, Vatopedi Monastery's "abbot, having consulted with many, said the

opposite and that this was not from God.” Despite the obvious legendary character of this moment, we still think that it is of real value. Namely, the medieval man attributed all his good thoughts to God, and therefore that pious old man in the role of the herald of God, to whom Saint Sava refers, could have been a completely visionary occurrence, behind which Saint Sava’s and his father Nemanja’s patriotic idea of erecting a Serbian monastery may have been concealed. The abbot of Vatopedi, with his brotherhood, sees through the legendary veil into the patriotic essence of the whole endeavour, and because, on the one side, as a loyal Byzantine, he does not consider it useful to raise the Serbian Hilandar, and on the other, because he is reluctant to dismiss such distinguished and generous monks as Sava and Nemanja, he announces with his brothers, that the advice of that pious old man “is not of God.” Despite the gravity of the moment, its slight touch of humour cannot be denied.

Fortunately, the political situation at the time was such that the Vatopedi brothers could do nothing. The Crusades were in full swing, because of which Byzantium was in perpetual feverish condition. In addition, we should not forget about the dynastic connections, because the daughter of Emperor Alexios III Komnenos, Eudokia, was married to Sava’s brother, Stefan, who would later become known as the First-Crowned.

Owing to these circumstances, Sava managed to get the permission in the Byzantine court to build a Serbian monastery on the ruins of the old Hilandar, which was dedicated to the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Furthermore, Emperor Alexios III subjected this monastery to the direct authority of Sava and Nemanja and all their offspring, and removed it from the authority of the protos of Karyes, who exercised supreme authority over all of Mount Athos. Thus, Hilandar became a Serbian autonomous monastery. Its construction, on the other hand, was accelerated by the fact that Nemanja became seriously ill, and wished eagerly to see Hilandar built. After it was constructed, Sava went to Constantinople to finally establish the legal

relations of the new Hilandar. On this occasion, he received a valuable staff as a symbol of his seniority in the monastery and its autonomy. This staff is to this day kept in Hilandar next to the icon of Our Lady the “Abbess.” He further received the vast lands of the former Žiga Monastery. At first there were ten monks, but soon their number increased to ninety, which prompted the writing of a typikon (constitution). This typikon was written by Sava himself in 1198. With this act of writing, Sava became for the legislation of Slavic monasteries on Mount Athos what had once St. Athanasius been for all the monasteries located there.

In one of our earlier articles, we outlined the ideas behind this typikon, and now we will outline its more important provisions, that is, the internal orders in Hilandar. A general hagiography seems mandatory. The first piece of monastic clothing is received from the monastery, after which each monk receives a payment to be used for obtaining garment and shoes. A separate ward must exist for the sick. The monks make confessions to their abbot or his proxy every day. Each monk can receive communion three times a week. The abbot is chosen from among ten to twenty of the oldest monks in the monastery without any outside influence. A well-known person is immediately admitted to monks, whereas a stranger is admitted only after the end of a six-month postulance. Gossiping is prohibited. For each monk, the following virtues are obligatory: piety, obedience, mutual love, harmony, and mercy. This typikon was read at the beginning of each month at a joint meal.\*

In order to maintain the traditional ties with the Vatopedi Monastery, an ordinance was introduced, which is still

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\* It will not be unnecessary to state the symbolic meaning of the garment. Anterija (IN: long shirt with deep cleavage) means willful poverty; paraman (a four-sided canvas in black, on which the cross and other signs of the suffering of Christ were embroidered with red silk) means the mark of the martyrdom of Christ, which the monk is to adhere to; outer cassock means forgetting all the world’s worries; leather belt means the death of the body; cassock means giving up one’s free will; kamilavkion means the careful avoidance of all sin; parakamilavkion means peacefulness and obedience; footwear means certainty, to follow Christ; rosaries mean the spiritual sword: the cross in the hand means the shield of faith, and the wooden cross about the neck is reminiscent of Christ’s death.

adhered to most consciously today. Furthermore, when the Vatopedi celebrates Holy Annunciation on 25 March, then the Hilandar brethren solemnly send their envoy, who is greeted with the highest honours because he is considered the elder of the monastery, thus he enjoys all the rights of a monastic elder. All this is done out of honour. Moreover, when Hilandar celebrates the Holy Annunciation of the Virgin on 21 November, a Vatopedi envoy is also welcomed and enjoys the same rights.

It was in Hilandar, thus established, that our Nemanja died on 13 February 1199 at the age of 86. For the merits gained in serving his people and for the miracles attributed to his holy relics, our church celebrates him on 13 February, as Saint Simeon, the Mhyrr-streamer.

Over the centuries, Hilandar shared joy and sorrow with the rest of Mount Athos. During the Latin Empire in Constantinople, it too suffered much from the pillaging crusaders. But its strife came to the fore at the beginning of the fourteenth century (1305-1308), when Catalan troops, composed of Frisians, Turks, Jas, Tatars, and Catalans, looted across Mount Athos. There were several thousand of them. Hilandar was also heavily stricken by them, and only by the courage and prudence of its abbot, who would later become an archbishop and historian, Danilo, that it was saved from ruin. We have a living description of these severe crises, and we will briefly provide it here. By the vivacity of the description, it is possible to assume that it came from an actual eyewitness, and perhaps even Danilo himself dictated it to his student who shared with him all the miseries of this siege.

The written account<sup>24</sup> mentions that the Catalans ruthlessly ravaged and carved. That is why many ordinary men with their wives and children took refuge in Hilandar. So, it had to provide food not only to its monks, but to many

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<sup>24</sup> See: D. Učenič, “Žitije arhiepiskopa Danila Drugog” [The Hagiography of archbishop Danilo the Second], in *Danilovi nastavljači. Danilov Učenik, drugi nastavljači Danilovog zbornika*, [Successors of Danilo. Danilo’s pupil and other successors of his anthology], ed. Gordon Mak Danijel (Prosveta i Srpska književna zadruga, 1989).

other faithful. With not enough food, children, women, and men started dying. The hungry behaved as if drunk, or lay down on the ground from exhaustion. Some ate grass, some chewed on their belts and shoes, while others ate things worse than that. Many went mad from thirst. The dead were not buried but were eaten by birds. Because of these grievous sufferings, many began to flee, but the robbers cut them down or sold them into slavery. However, Danilo fearlessly persisted in Hilandar for three years and three months. Some of the enemies stormed the gate, and some broke off the wall at the back to come inside. They showered them with arrows, their trumpets blasted, and their troops rushed. Danilo endured all this peacefully and patiently, although he was also sick of thirst and hunger. The food was so bad that it seemed the monks could no longer be able to hold on. This is why Danilo, leaving Hilandar in the hands of his trusted deputy, took Hilandar's archives and its valuables and went to Skopje to King Milutin was staying. In this journey, he was fortunate because the enemy could not harm him. The king received him cordially and thanked him for his extraordinary posture, and at the same time wanted to have Danilo stay with him. Danilo, however, left the archives and the valuables with King Milutin and headed back. On his journey back, he performed miracles with courage, composure, humanity and skill, and finally safely arrived in Hilandar. It was fortunate that he returned because the monks, tormented by a long famine, were about to surrender. He bought food and hired mercenaries, and once again prepared for a siege. Furthermore, the enemies, forcing their captives before them, retreated from Mount Athos, leaving it plundered and covered in corpses. An enemy troop moving past Hilandar was attacked by Hilandar's mercenaries, and, even though Danilo was firmly against this, they were either cut down or captured. On this occasion, they seized a great deal of treasure, and, the captives, despite being godless robbers, were freed, and their duke's valuable clothes and weapons were sent to the king as a sign of this victory.

The Catalans wanted revenge on Danilo for this defeat. So he, lest Hilandar continued to be in danger, took refuge in the monastery of Saint Panteleimon. However, by the treachery of two of Danilo's men, the enemy found out about this and hurried there to capture and kill him. However, owing to Danilo's composure, they failed, and, ashamed, they had to return. Danilo then went to the monastery of Xeropotamou, which was endowed with gifts by Sava, and then he returned to Hilandar. Finally, Milutin's and the Greek warriors defeated these bandits and, thus, the danger was finally eliminated.

In all likelihood, it seems that this grave crisis greatly affected the brethren of Hilandar, thus giving rise to the creation of the legends which will be presented later.

When Dušan the Mighty proclaimed our metropolitanate to be a patriarchate, and a kingdom the empire, our residents of Hilandar were put in a very difficult position towards the Greek monasteries on Mount Athos. They were displeased that Dušan adopted aggressive policies against their Byzantium, and our monks in Hilandar could not do nothing short but stand firmly with Dušan. This crisis was largely mitigated by his mighty hand, which ruled the immediate surroundings of Mount Athos. In the winter of 1647-8 with his wife Empress Jelena, he visited Hilandar, accompanied by his court and a detachment of 400 armoured men. On this occasion he bestowed Hilandar with many lands, so that, to this day, Hilandar is the richest monastery on Mount Athos. He gave the Rusik Monastery a valuable and significant relic – the head of St. Panteleimon, its protector. It is said that Dušan, during his pilgrimage, climbed to the top of Mount Athos and planted his flag there. This tradition has a beautiful meaning, and that is why we are recording it here.

After Dušan's death, turbulent circumstances arose in our empire. At that time, despot Jovan Uglješa ruled its easternmost region, and from 1366 onwards his rule also included the Halkidiki Peninsula and Mount Athos. He also served as Mount Athos' mighty guardian, especially protecting the Simonopetra Monastery. He is one of the

most sympathetic statesmen of the Pre-Kosovo era. Because of the position of his country, he was well aware of the all-out danger of the Turks, and worked hard to contain it – hence his serious desire to reconcile the Byzantines with us Serbs, since we were in conflict due to the proclamation of the patriarchate and the empire. To this end he subjected his state in 1368 to the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Following his example, Prince Lazar in 1375 completely reconciled the Patriarchate of Constantinople with our own.<sup>25</sup>

[...]

### ***In Hilandar (Chapter VI, pp 126-128)***

On the pillar next to the abbot's table there is the icon of the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, which Saint Sava brought from the Holy Land. She has a solemn expression on her face, and so does the little Jesus Christ held by the Virgin. The icon is made in silver and gold and is richly ornamented with the gifts of faithful souls.\*\*

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<sup>25</sup> P. Sofrić, *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)*, Chapter V “Historical notes on Hilandar,” 109-117.

\*\* This is the legend of this icon. – The Byzantine Emperor Leo III the Isaurian, an iconoclast (editor's note: Iconoclasm – a movement that emerged in the Byzantine Empire in the eighth and first half of the ninth century. It denounced the reverence of icons and forbade their possession. The struggle over the icons caused fierce internal conflicts in the Empire, which lasted for more than a hundred years. The cult of the reverence of icons was finally established in 843. John Damascus was one of the most important opponents of iconoclasm), ordered the provincial governor of Damascus to order that John Damascus' right hand be cut off, since he opposed the emperor's iconoclasm with all his might. The governor complied. And now John Damascus, asked the executioner for his severed right hand, and went with it before the icon of the Holy Virgin, and there he wholeheartedly prayed for her mercy. Upon this, he fell asleep, and when he woke up, he found that his severed hand grew back, and that only a red scar remained, showing the bloody executioner's deed. John gratefully added a third hand made of silver to the icon. From this time, icons are adorned with silver, gold and precious stones. Seeing this, the governor of Damascus repented and released John. Then John went to the Holy Labra of Saint Sabbas and became a monk, bringing with him that miraculous icon that remained in the monastery after his death. Saint Sabbas the Sanctified foretold on his deathbed in the 6<sup>th</sup> century that a saint of the royal lineage would come from Europe to enlighten his people. And when he comes, let

Saint Sava Nemanjić travelled to the Holy Land in the first half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, where he visited the Holy Labra of Saint Sabbas of Jerusalem, and prayed before the icon of the Nursing Virgin Mary and the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, which were placed one opposite the other, next to the staff of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified. Suddenly, the staff fell before our Sava, and when the abbot's guard learned of this, he asked Sava what his name was, where he came from and what his lineage was. Our Sava answered everything and then the abbot said that the prophecy of Saint Sabbas of Jerusalem was fulfilled, and following Saint Sabbas' directions, the abbot handed Sava both icons and the staff.

Upon his return home, Saint Sava Nemanjić gave the Holy Virgin with Three Hands to Hilandar, and the Nursing Virgin Mary and the staff to Karyes, where they are still kept.

Two legends are told about the fate of the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, which we will present here. According to one, it was taken to Serbia, only to be miraculously returned on a mule to its old place in Hilandar. According to the other legend, when Saint Sava went back to Serbia taking with him the relics of Saint Simeon the Mhyrr-streamer, in order to reconcile his brothers, he also brought along the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, as a gift to his brother Stefan, who later became the First-Crowned king of Serbia. This icon was kept in the house of the Nemanjić dynasty from that time until the last of the Nemanjićs. And when the line went extinct, then one night the icon appeared miraculously before the gates of Hilandar, in the spot where the clock tower now stands, built to commemorate this mysterious incident.

The abbot of Hilandar, rising early to go to midnight service, saw the light of such intensity through the window, as if the sun itself had shone. As he went out there with the monks, he found the Holy Virgin with Three Hands. Then, in a solemn lity, they brought it to the church of Hilandar and placed it in the top spot above the altar. However,

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him be handed Saint Sabbas' staff and the miraculous icon of Virgin Mary Mlekopitaljnica (the Nursing Virgin Mary). The icon is given this name as it depicts Virgin Mary breastfeeding baby Christ.

tomorrow they found it on the abbot's desk, and from there, with prayer and chanting, they returned it to the altar again. Then the abbot took the keys of the church, lest the icon be disturbed by anyone. But the Holy Virgin with Three Hands came to him in a dream, saying, "I did not come here so that you could guard me; it is I who will guard you!". Upon this, the abbot went with all the monks to the church and found the icon again on the abbot's desk. Then everyone bowed down before it and left it on the pillar next to the abbot's desk, where it stands to this day. – Twelve candles are lit before it. When the monks set out to serve the divine service, they say penance before it, kiss it and pray for blessings, but they do not do so before the abbot or archimandrite of the monastery, as the Hilandar typikon dictates. Because of this role, this icon is also referred to as "the Holy Virgin Abbess".

With all that in mind, it seems that the Holy Virgin with Three Hands was, during the time of the Nemanjić dynasty, considered the patron saint of their house, and hence her prominent role in the beliefs of our people.<sup>26</sup>

### III. Milorad Pavić and Pavle Sofrić

It is interesting that there is compatibility between Sofrić's travelogue *In Hilandar* and some descriptions given by Milorad Pavić. These include the details related to the name of the Monastery of Hilandar, as well as the story of the icon of the Holy Virgin with Three Hands. Judging by this congruence, Sofrić's travelogue could have served as a source for Pavić's story *The Sneezing Icon* [*Ikona koja kija*], although we should also consider the possibility that they both used some other source or a Mount Athos legend.

Pavić's story *The Sneezing Icon* tells of a historical event from the early fourteenth century, when Catalan mercenaries besieged Mount Athos. One of them, Don Jorge de Rueda el Sabio, was in a detachment that split in two, both units striking Hilandar simultaneously, from the south and the north:

"It was morning, heavy was the fog, so frequent in these parts that the monastery was named by the merging of the Greek words (χιλιαν)

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<sup>26</sup> P. Sofrić, *In Hilandar (The Travelogue of a Pilgrim)*, Chapter VI, 126-128.

and (δᾶριον), meaning a thousand fogs. The soldiers could not discern anything in front of them, so the group with el Sabio went past the monastery on the one side and struck the Catalans on the other side of the fortifications. Assuming they came upon the monks, they killed each other and all perished save the three, who surrendered to the Hilendars and then became monks themselves."<sup>27</sup>

Pavić recounts the fate of the Hilendar's famous miraculous icon, the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, in the part of the story entitled *The Migrations of the Icon "Trojeručica."*

"In the clashes with the iconoclasts, in 726, the Greek poet John Damascus, being an icon worshiper, slighted Emperor Leo III, the protector of this heresy. By the imperial order of the Caliph of the city of Damascus, in which John was in high office, he ordered the poet's right hand to be cut off and exposed at the place in the town where the people gather most in order to invoke caution and admonition. When this was done, Damascus' friends, who were also close to the Caliph, stole the hand from the square and returned it to the poet. Damascus closed himself off in his room that night and, placing hand against hand, clasped his hands before the icon of the Virgin and fell asleep in prayer. When he awoke, he saw that his hand had grown back in his sleep and only a red stripe was showing the spot where it had been cut off. Out of gratitude, the poet then had a silver hand made and placed it on Virgin Mary's icon, and brought the icon with him to Palestine, where he settled down at the Holy Labra of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified at Jerusalem and spend the rest of his life there. After the poet's death, the icon remained in the monastery, right next to the miraculous icon of the Nursing Virgin Mary, which Saint Sabbas had bequeathed, on the occasion of establishing the monastery in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, to the foreigner from the royal lineage who, after his death, came from Europe to visit Palestine bearing his name.

When, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Serbian poet and prince Sava Nemanjić visited the holy places for the first time, he also came to the Holy Labra of Saint Sabbas the Sanctified. He entered the church to pray before the icon of the Holy Virgin with Three Hands, and at that moment the icon fell from its place in front of the unknown visitor from Serbia. Surprised by this, the guard spread the news of this

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<sup>27</sup> M. Pavić, "Ikona koja kija" [The Sneezing Icon], in *Srpske priče* [Serbian tales], ed. R. Livada (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruka, 1996), 14.

omen, and, when they learned from Sava that he is a royal, that he bore the name Sava (TN: Serbian form of the Greek Sabbas) and that he came from Europe, the abbot and brothers gave him both icons as a gift, thus fulfilling the wish of the founder of the monastery, who predicted the visit of the Serbian poet. Upon his return from Palestine to Mount Athos, Saint Sava bequeathed the Nursing Virgin Mary to his hermitage Karyes, and the icon of the Holy Virgin with Three Hands to Hilandar. But the Holy Virgin with Three Hands did not stay long in its new home. When he went from Mount Athos to Serbia in 1208 to reconcile his brothers who were fighting over the Serbian throne, apart from the relics of his father Nemanja, Saint Sava also brought along the icon of Trojeručica. He left it in the court of his brother, King Stefan the First-Crowned, entrusting him to keep it in the ruler's house from generation to generation for as long as the Serbian state existed. And so it was. One night in 1389, the Abbot of Hilandar, awaking at the usual time to go to the great church to midnight service, suddenly saw through the cell window a light as bright as the sun on the road leading from the sea in the north in front of Hilandar, a few minutes away from the monastery. He quickly urged the monks to go and see what it was. On the ground, on top of the road leading from the sea to Hilandar, there was a donkey, alone and dusty, with the icon of the Trojeručica. From this, the terrified monks knew that the Serbian army had lost the battle with the Turks in Kosovo, that the Serbian state had fallen to ruin, that the royal court had been destroyed and that the icon had moved back. Then they brought their garments, crosses, and censers, and with chanting and reading, took the icon to the congregational church and laid it on top of the altar. The next day, much to their wonder, they found it on the abbot's desk by the dining room. Not knowing how it got there, they returned it to the altar with offerings and prayers, and the abbot locked the church and took the key with him. But the Trojeručica came to the abbot in his sleep that night, saying, 'I did not come here so that you could guard me; it is I who will guard you!'"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Milorad Pavić, "Ikona koja kija," ["The Sneezin Icon"] 16–18.

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