

# The Perception of the Balkans in Western Travel Literature from the Eleventh to the Fourteenth Century

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Throughout history, the Balkans have been a meeting place for numerous peoples and cultures. This area was the borderline between the two great spheres of civilization: the Latin West and the Orthodox East. The ethnic image of the Balkan Peninsula has undergone drastic changes on several occasions during Late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In the period from the fourth to the seventh century, there were various Turkic, Germanic, and Slavic ethnic elements influencing the area. At the beginning of the seventh century, the Byzantine Limes collapsed, which enabled a deeper penetration of the Slavs into the interior of the Balkan Peninsula. During this period, Serbs and Croats settled. In the middle of the ninth century, the Turkish population of Bulgarians settled, which in the following period underwent a gradual process of Slavicization. The last in a series of migrations took place at the end of the ninth century when the Hungarians settled in Pannonia.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, we will look at the perception of the interior of the Balkans in the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century. First of all, we will discuss the sources that speak about the perception of the Balkan, that is, the territories of medieval Hungary, and to a lesser extent Serbia and Bulgaria.

The most important road that stretched from north to south was the *Via militaris*, also known as *Via diagonalis*, *Via Traiana*, or *Constantinople*

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<sup>2</sup> P. Lemerle, "Invasions et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque Romaine jusqu'au VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Revue Historique* 211-2 (1954): 265-308; S. Andrić, "Southern Pannonia during the age of the Great Migrations," *Scrinia Slavonica* 2-1 (2002): 117-167; H. Gračanin, *Južna Panonija u kasnoj antičici i ranom srednjovekovlju (od konca 4. do konca 11. stoljeća)* [Southern Pannonia in Late Antiquity and early the Middle Ages (from the end of the fourth to the end of the eleventh century)] (Zagreb: Plejada, 2011).

*Road*. The Byzantines called this communication βασιλική ὁδός (imperial road).<sup>3</sup> Crusade sources attributed the construction of *Via Militaris* to Charlemagne. Allegedly he constructed this road during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.<sup>4</sup> The second important road, which stretched from east to west, was *Via Egnatia* (Ἐγνατία ὁδός), which began at Apollonia and Dyrrachium and ended in Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> The unstable political situation, especially in the period from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century, affected the possibility of roads. During this period, the Balkans represented a barrier between Western and Eastern Europe. Communication between these areas during the ninth century took place almost exclusively on the Danube. This is confirmed by the Life of St. Blaise of Amorion.<sup>6</sup> The conflict with the Bulgarian state of

<sup>3</sup> About *Via militaris* see more: K. Jireček, "Vojna cesta od Beograda do Carigrada i balkanski klanci [Military road from Belgrade to Constantinople and Balkan gorges]," in *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I*, ed. Mihailo Dinić (Beograd: Naučno delo, 1959), 70-189; G. Škrivanić, *Putevi u srednjovekovnoj Srbiji* [Roads in medieval Serbia] (Beograd: Turistička štampa, 1974), 82-102; A. Avramea, "Land and Sea Communications, Fourth-Fifteenth Centuries," in *The Economic History of Byzantium: From the Seventh Through the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Angeliki E. Laiou (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2002), 65-67.

<sup>4</sup> *Una pars Francorum in Hungariae intrauit regionem, scilicet Petrus Hermita, et dux Godefridus, et Balduinus frater eius, et Balduinus comes Monte. Isti potentissimi milites et alii plures quos ignoro venerunt per viam quam iam dudum Karolus Magnus mirificus rex Franciae aptari fecit usque Constantinopolim. Gesta Francorum et aliorum Hierosolimitanorum/ The Deeds of the Franks and the Other Pilgrims to Jerusalem*, ed. Rosalind Hill (London-Paris-New York: Nelson, 1962), 2-3. *Hic cum fratribus suis Eustachio et Balduino et magna manu militum pediumque per Hungariam iter arripuit, per viam scilicet quam Karolus Magnus incomparabilis rex Francorum olim suo exercitui fieri usque Constantinopolim precepit. The Historia Iherosolimitana of Robert the Monk*, eds. Damien Kempf, Marcus G. Bull (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2013), 9.

<sup>5</sup> For *Via Egnatia* see more: *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium 1*, ed. Alexander Kazhdan (New York: Oxford University, 1992), 679. (CyrilMango); F. O'Sullivan, *The Egnatian Way* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1972); N. L. G. Hammond, "The western part of the Via Egnatia," *Journal for Roman Studies* 64 (1974): 185-194; N. Oikomonides, "The medieval Via Egnatia," in *The Via Egnatia under Ottoman Rule (1380-1699)*, ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 1996), 9-18; Y. Lolos, "Via Egnatia after Egnatius: Imperial Policy and Inter-regional Contacts," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 22 (2007): 273-293.

<sup>6</sup> D. Obolensky, "The Balkans in the Ninth Century: Barrier of Bridge?," *Byzantinische Forschungen* 13 (1988): 47-66; *Vita S. Blasii Amoriensis*, Acta Sanctorum Novembris IV, eds. Hippolyto Delehaye, Paulo Peeters (Bruxelles: Brepols, 1925), 660-661; "Žitie za Vlasij Amorijski/Vita Blasii Amoriensis [Life of Blaise of Amorion]," in *Grčki izvori za bałgarskata istorija V*, eds. Vojnov M. i al. (Sofija: Izdanie na Bałgarskata Akademija na Naukite, 1964), 15-16. Analysis of Vita of St. Blaise of Amorion: H. Grégoire, "La vic de St. Blaise d'Amorium," *Byzantion* 5 (1929-1930): 391-414; V. Gjuzelev, "Žitieto na Vlasij

Tsar Samuel ended with Byzantine domination in the Balkan Peninsula. Emperor Basil II (976-1025) re-established the borders of the Empire on the rivers Sava and Danube.<sup>7</sup> The Byzantine *reconquista* of the Balkan territories enabled the unhindered movement of travelers between East and West. This route was especially interesting for Christian pilgrims who traveled to the Holy Land. The Christianization of Hungary at the beginning of the eleventh century further facilitated the movement of Western travelers.<sup>8</sup>

One of the first descriptions of the pilgrimage across the Balkans was given by Adémar de Chabannes. He described the pilgrimage of the Count of Angoulême, William, who traveled to the Holy Land in 1026. The pilgrims were received on this occasion by the first Hungarian king, Stephen I (1000/1-1038) with great honors and he richly endowed them.<sup>9</sup> This description complements the anonymous work *Historia pontificum et comitum Engolismensium*, which states that no one had used this road until then and that Christianity was a new religion in Hungary and Slavonia.<sup>10</sup> A few decades later, the French chronicler Raoul Gleber mentions the increase in the popularity of this road.<sup>11</sup> The movement on this

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Amorijski kato izvor za baġarskata istorija [The life of Blaise of Amorion as a source for Bulgarian history],” *Godišnik na Sofijskaja universitet. Filozofsko-istoričeski fakultet* 61-3 (1968): 3-31.

<sup>7</sup> G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije* [The History of the Byzantine State] (Beograd: Narodna knjiga-Alfa, 1998), 295; V. Zlatarski, *Istorija na Baġarskata dārġava prez srednite vekove tom I, ĉast 1* [History of the Bulgarian State in the Middle Ages Volume I, Part 1] (Sofia: Univerzitetsko izdatelstvo Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2007), 743-788; S. Runciman, *A History of The First Bulgarian Empire* (London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd, 1930), 242-252; P. Stephenson, *The legend of Basil the Bulgar-slayer* (Cambridge-New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 35-36; C. Holmes, *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976-1025)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 426-427.

<sup>8</sup> J. France, *The Crusades and the Expansion of Catholic Christendom 1000-1714* (London: Routledge, 2005), 234.

<sup>9</sup> Adémar de Chabannes, *Chronique*, trans. Jules Chavanon, (Paris: Picard 1897), 189-190; *Historia d'Adémar de Chabannes* ed. J. Lair (Paris 1899), 233-234.

<sup>10</sup> *Ea tempestate, Willermus Engolismensium comes, per Bajoariam iter cepit ad sepulcrum Domini; nam ante eum per illas partes nullus praeterierat, quippe quia novella adhuc Christianitas per Ungriam et Selavoniam erat. Comitati sunt cum Odoardus Bituricensis princeps, Ricardus Dolensis abbas. Stephanus rex Ungariae cum omni honore eum suscepit, et muneribus magnis ditavit.* *Historia pontificum et comitum Engolismensium*, ed. Jaques Boussard (Paris: Librairie d'Argences, 1957), 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Ipsa igitur tempore Vngorum gens, que erat circa Danubium cum suo rege ad fidem Christi conversa est. Quorum regi, Stephano ex baptisate uocato, decenterque Christianissimo, dedit memoratus*

communication was temporarily interrupted due to the uprising of Petar Odeljan in 1040-1041. That there has been a decline in the number of pilgrims can be seen from the testimony of Radulf of Cambrai written by *Vita Lietberti episcopi Cameracensis auctore Rodulfo monacho S. Sepulcri Cameracensis*. It describes the pilgrimage of Bishop Cambre, Lietbert from 1054. In it, he described the suspicion of the Hungarian King Andrew I (1046-1060) in the intentions of the pilgrims, because almost no one uses this road.<sup>12</sup> This biography also records the presence of the nomadic population of the Pecheneg in the border area between Hungary and the Byzantine Empire. Members of this nomadic people group attacked pilgrims moving through an area of dense forest that Radulf calls the *desert of Bulgariae* (the Bulgarian desert).<sup>13</sup> We can see from the *Life of Vita Theoderici abbatis Andaginensis* from 1053 that the presence of the Pechenegs in some cases completely prevented the movement of pilgrims. Namely, Theodoric of Andage and his companions were forced to give up traveling across the Balkans. After some time they arrived in Constantinople via Apulia.<sup>14</sup> Mentions of the Pechenegs, as well as

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*imperator Henricus germanam suam in uxorem. Tunc temporis ceperunt pene uniuersi, qui de Italia et Galliis ad sepulchrum Domini Iherosolimis ire cupiebant, consuetum iter quod erat per fretum maris omitttere, atque per huius regis patriam transitum habere. Ille uero tutissimam omnibus constituit uiam; excipiebat ut fraters quoscumque uidebat, dabatque illis immense munera. Cuius rei grati pronocata innumerabilis multitudo tam nobilium quam uulgi Iherosolimam abierunt. Ex Rodulphi Glabri historiarum libris V usque ad. 1044, ed. Georgius Waitz, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS VII (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1846), 62; Rodulfus Glaber, Opera, ed. John France, Neithard Bulst, Paul Reynolds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 96-97. For the analysis of Glaber's description of Hungary: A. Györköös, "La relation de Raoul Glaber sur les premières décennies de l'Etat hongrois," in The First Millennium of Hungary in Europe, eds. Klára Papp, János Barta (Debrecen: Debrecen University Press, 2002), 120-126.*

<sup>12</sup> *Vita Lietberti episcopi Cameracensis auctore Rodulfo monacho S. Sepulcri Cameracensis*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXX-II, (Lipsiae: Impensis Karoli W. Hiersemann, 1934), 854.

<sup>13</sup> A more detailed description of this area in the works: A. Uzelac, "Skitski razbojnici u bugarskoj pustinja: pogled jednog hodočasnika na Pomoravlje sredinom XI veka [Scythian brigands in Bulgarian desert: A Pilgrim's view of Great Morava Valley in mid eleventh century]," *Istorijski časopis* 59 (2010): 59-76; Ibid, "Zapadnite pātešestvenici v 'Deserta Bulgariae' predi pārvija krāstonosen pohod [Western Travelers in the 'Deserta Bulgariae' before the First Crusade]," *Spisanie Epobi* 25-1 (2017): 196-206.

<sup>14</sup> *Vita Theoderici abbatis Andaginensis 1087*, ed. W. Wattenbach, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XII (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1856), 36-57; *Chronicon sancti Hubert Andaginensis*, ed. L. Bethmann, W. Wattenbach, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS VIII, Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1848, 572.

another nomadic people group, the Uzes, can be found in the description of the so-called The Great German Pilgrimage (1064/65).<sup>15</sup> The Pechenegs are also mentioned in the Byzantine service by Albert of Aachen, the chronicler of the First Crusade. He mentions the conflicts between the pilgrims of Peter the Hermit and the Pechenegs when crossing the Hungarian-Byzantine border near Belgrade and again at the Byzantine city of Niš.<sup>16</sup> In the work of Albert of Aachen, we can also find mention of movement through the dense so-called *Bulgarian forest*.<sup>17</sup>

The chroniclers of the Second Crusade (1147-1149) gave us a somewhat more detailed picture of Hungary. Odo of Deuil, a chronicler and close associate of the French King Louis VII (1137-1180), describes the territory of Hungary as a country with a swamp on the western border, separated from Bulgaria (i.e. the Byzantine Empire) in the south by clear streams. The Drava River, which flows through central Hungary, separates the hills from the steppe areas. The flooding of this river made it difficult for the crusaders to move.<sup>18</sup> The French chronicler states that Hungary is very rich in food. After a journey that lasted fifteen days, the Crusaders crossed into Byzantine territory. Like their predecessors, they

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<sup>15</sup> E. Joranson, "The Great German Pilgrimage of 1064-1065," in *The Crusades and Other Historical Essays Presented to Dana C. Munro by his Former Students*, ed. Louis J. Paetow (New York: F. S. Crofts & Company, 1928), 3-43. H. Kortüm, "Der Pilgerzug von 1064/65 ins Heilige Land. Eine Studie über Orientalismuskonstruktionen im 11. Jahrhundert," *Historische Zeitschrift* 277-3 (2003): 561-592.

<sup>16</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 16-17; J. Kalić, "Podaci Alberta Ahenskog o ugarsko-vizantijskim odnosima krajem XI veka [Albert of Aachen's data on Hungarian-Byzantine relations at the end of the eleventh century]," *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta* 10-1 (1968): 187-188.

<sup>17</sup> Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana, History of the Journey to Jerusalem*, 18-19.

<sup>18</sup> *Hungaria ex hac parte aqua lutosa cingitur, ex alia vero a Bogaria amne lucido separatur. In medio sui fluvium habet Droam, qui stanni more unam ripam proclivem habet et alteram arduam. Unde modica pluvia effluit, et aditus vicinis paludibus, etiam aliquanto remota submergit. Audivimus, eum multos Alemannorum qui nos precesserant subito inundasse; nos autem ubi castra eorum fuerant vix potuimus transvadare. In hoc parvas naves habuimus et paucas, et ideo fuit opus equos natare, qui facilem ingressum et egressum difficilem habentes, cum labore quidem, sed tamen Deo volente sine dampno transibant. Cetera omnis aqua terre huius lacus sunt et paludes et fontes; si tamen fontes sunt, quos paululum fossa humo etiam in estate faciunt transeuntes; excepto Danubio, qui hanc satis in directum preterfluit et multarum regionum divitias nobili civitati Estrigun navigio convehit.* Odonis de Deogilo, *Liber de via sancti sepulchri*, ed. Georgius Waitz, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXVI* (Hannoverae: Impensis Bibliopolii Avlici Hahniani, 1882), 62; Odo of Deuil, *De Projectione Ludovici VII In Orientem: The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1948), 30-31.

traveled through the Bulgarian forest. Odo notes that after two days of travel, they reached the poor town of Braničevo. He says that the surrounding area consists of wooded pastures or pasture forests (*nemorosum vel nemus pabulosum*).<sup>19</sup> This area is fertile and especially suitable for growing vines and cereals, which is fed by numerous springs and streams. After five days, the crusaders reached Niš. The testimony of the French chronicler depicts the passivity of the border area between the two countries. The area north of the Danube, and even more so the interior of the Byzantine territory, was very passive and sparsely populated, which affected the spread of forests. They were a significant resource in the medieval economy. Deforestation was a basic precondition for medieval agriculture, to reach arable land. Also, forests were used as a source of timber, firewood, hunting area, for catching birds, fishing, grazing livestock, and pig breeding and collecting medicinal herbs. In crises, the forest could serve as a place of refuge and shelter. According to available data, estimates indicate that in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 25-30% of the Carpathian Basin was under forest cover, which was unevenly distributed.

A similar description of the interior of Hungary was given by Otto of Freising, a chronicler who traveled with the German king Conrad III (1138-1152) during the Third Crusade. He states that this country has wide plains intersected by rivers and streams. Numerous forests are the habitat of many species of wild animals. This province is known for its very beautiful landscapes and rich in fertile fields. Otto of Freising compared this province to Paradise or the Biblical land of Egypt.<sup>20</sup> With as many positive words Otto speaks about the natural resources of Pannonia, he negatively describes the inhabitants of Hungary. He says

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<sup>19</sup> The term *nemus* usually means difficult-to-pass areas with dense forest. On medieval forest terminology: M. F. Jettler, "Wald und Waldnutzung im frühmittelalter," *Das Mittelalter* 13-2 (2008): 12-27.

<sup>20</sup> *Haec enim provincia, eo quod circumis quaque silvis et montibus et praecipue Apennino clauditur, ex antiquo Pannonia dicta, intus planitie campi latissima, decursu fluminum et amnium conspicua, nemoribus diversarum ferarum generibus plenis conserta, tam innata amenitate faciei laeta quam agrorum fertilitate locuples esse cognoscitur, ut tamquam paradysus Dei vel Egyptus spectabilis esse videatur.* *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, ed. B. de Simpson, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS rer. Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum XLVI (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1912), 50-51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, eds. Charles Christopher Microw, Richard Emery (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 65.

that they are barbaric and that they rarely decorate their houses. He also notes that the border of Hungary is made so much by mountains and forests, but by mighty rivers.<sup>21</sup> He says that the Hungarians behave wildly and animalistic. They eat raw meat and even drink human blood. On the other hand, they are experienced in the use of bows and arrows. He claims that the Pechenegs and Cumans still eat raw horse and cat meat.<sup>22</sup> Otto wonders at how fate or divine providence has left such a wonderful country to such people who are like monsters.<sup>23</sup> In his description, one can feel animosity towards Hungary, with which the German king had been at war only a year earlier. When he described Hungarian villages and fortifications, he claims that those look poor, built of reeds, rarely of wood and stone. During the summer and autumn, they live in tents.<sup>24</sup> These observations are only partially correct. The Arab travel writers Al-Idrisi and Abu Hamid Al-Garnati, who visited Hungary in a chronologically very close period, inform us about the existence of the urban culture.<sup>25</sup> As for the administration of Hungary, Otto states that

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<sup>21</sup> *Habet enim pulcherrimum, ut dixi, naturaliter spectaculum, sed ex barbarae gentis rituum menium vel aedium rarum ornatum terminosque non tam montium vell silvarum quam cursumaximorum fluviorum septos. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 49; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 65-66.

<sup>22</sup> *Ottonis episcopi Frisingensis, Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus*, ed. Adolfus Hofmeister, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XLV* (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Typis Culemannorum 1912), 271-272; Otto, Bishop Of Freising, ed. *The Two Cities: A Chronicle Of Universal History To The Year 1146 A.D.*, trans. Charles Christopher Microw, ed. Austin P. Evans, Charles Knapp (New York: Columbia University Press 2002), 371.

<sup>23</sup> *Sunt autem predicti Ungari facie tetri, profundis oculis, statura humiles, moribus et lingua barbari et feroces, ut iure fortuna culpanda vel potius divina patientia sit admiranda, quae, ne dicam hominibus, sed talibus hominum in monstris tam delectabilem exposuit terram. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 50; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 66.

<sup>24</sup> *Denique cum vilissima in vicis vel oppidis ibi, id est ex cannis tantum, rara ex lignis, rarissima ex lapidibus habeantur habitacula, toto estatis vel autumpni tempore papilionis inhabitant. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rahewini*, 50; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 66.

<sup>25</sup> For an analysis of the travel testimonies of Abu Hamid and Idrizi, see: T. Lewicki, "Węgry i muzułmanie węgierscy w świetle relacji podróżnika arabskiego Abū Hāmid al-Andalusiego [Hungary and Hungarian Muslims in the light of the accounts of the Arab traveler Abū Hidid Al-Andalusī]," *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 13 (1938): 106-122; I. Hrbek, "Ein arabischer Bericht über Ungarn [An Arabic report on Hungary]," *Acta Orientalia* 5 (1955) 206-230; J. Kalić, "Podaci Abu Hamida o prilikama u južnoj Ugarskoj sredinom XII veka [Abu Hamid's data on the situation in southern Hungary in the middle of the twelfth century]," *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 4 (1971): 25-37; B. Stojkovski, Boris. "Abū Hāmid in Hungary." *Istraživanja* 22 (2011): 107-115; B. Stojkovski, "Arapski

the territory of this kingdom is divided into seventy counties, from which the king enjoys two-thirds of the income, while one third remains to the local counts. When describing the royal power, the German historian claims that it is absolute. The king arbitrarily imprisoned the accused regardless of their social status. The accused were held without trial and tortured.<sup>26</sup> Otto of Freising also describes the military organization of Hungary. He states the existence of a general military obligation. Among every nine peasants, one is equipped for war. As for the knights, they are recruited in the period of greatest danger. The king also has at his disposal bodyguards, who are foreigners. The sons of foreigners who participate as soldiers are called mercenaries (*solidarios*).<sup>27</sup> These data speak of the successful centralization of power during the reign of Géza II (1141-1162).<sup>28</sup>

The well-known crusader chronicler William of Tire gave a very negative description of Serbs in his work *Historia Rerum in Partibus transmarinis gestarum*. In the year 1168, as an envoy of the King of Jerusalem, he visited Constantinople. Emperor Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) was absent on the campaign against the Serbian Grand Prince Stefan Nemanja (1166-1196), the founder of the Nemanjić (Nemanjid) dynasty. According to him, Serbia (Servia) is a mountainous area covered with forests between Dalmatia, Hungary, and Illyricum. He depicted Serbs as rude and undisciplined people, dwelling in the forests

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geograf Idrizi o južnoj Ugarskoj i Srbiji [The Arabian Geographer Idrīsī on South Hungary And Serbia],” *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 79-80 (2009): 59-69; B. Stojkovski, Boris, N. Kartalija, “The Other and the Self in the Travel Accounts of Southern Hungary and Serbia in the Works of Al-Idrisi and Abu Hamid Al-Garnati,” *Romano-Arabica* 18 (2018): 208-214; I. Elter, István. “Magyarország Idrīsī földrajzi műveben (1154) [Hungary in geographical work of Idrīsī],” *Acta historica* 82 (1985) 53-63.

<sup>26</sup> *Hinc est, ut, cum predictum regnum per LXX vel amplius divisum sitcomitatus, de omni iusticia ad fiscum regum duae lucri partes cedant, tertia tantum comiti remaneat, nullusque in tam spaciioso ambitu, rege excepto, monetam vel theloneum habere audeat. Quod si aliquis ex comitum ordine regem vel in modico offenderit vel etiam de hoc quandoque non iuste infamatus fuerit, quilibet infimae conditionis lixa a curia missus eum, licet satellitibus suis stipatum, solus comprehendit, in vinculis ponit, ad diversa tormentorum genera trahit. Nulla sententia a principe, sicut apud nos moris est, per pares suos exposcitur, nulla accusato excusandi licentia datur principi, sicut apud nos moris est, per pares suos exposcitur, nulla accusato excusandi licentia datur, sed sola principis voluntas apud omnes pro ratione habetur. Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rachevini, 50-51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 67.*

<sup>27</sup> *Gesta Friderici I. Imperatoris Ottonis et Rachevini*, 51; Otto of Freising, Rahewin, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, 67.

<sup>28</sup> P. Rokai, Z. Đere, T. Pal, A. Kasaš, *Istorija Mađara* [The History of the Hungarians] (Beograd: Clio, 2002), 53.

and mountains. They have no knowledge of agriculture but possess large flocks and herds which supply them abundantly with milk and cheese, butter, meat, honey, and wax. They have magistrates who are called *suppani* (srp. župani). William believes that the Serbian (Servi, lat. slaves) have this name because they are the descendants of slaves who worked in marble quarries and mines. He also says about Serbs: *At times they obey the emperor, but at other times, since they are a bold and warlike race, they sally forth from their mountain fastnesses and lay waste all the surrounding country.* Because of this, the emperor Manuel went on the campaign against them. He was finally successful in subduing them and captured their principal chief.<sup>29</sup>

Henry the Lion (1142-1180), Duke of Saxony and Bavaria and cousin of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, went on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1172. Thanks to the description given to us by Arnold of Lübeck, we can reconstruct the journey of the Saxon duke to the East, about which other contemporary sources say very little.<sup>30</sup> After traveling from

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<sup>29</sup> *Detinebatur porro eo temporis articulo imperator in Servia, que regio, montuosa et nemoribus obsita difficiles habens aditus, inter Dalmatiam et Hungariam et Illiricum media iacet, rebellantibus Servis et confidentibus de introituum ad se angustiis et de inperia eorum regione. Habent vetuste traditiones hunc omnem populum ex deportatis et deputatis exilio, qui in partibus illis ad secunda marmora et effodienda metalla dampnati fuerant, originem habuisse et inde etiam nomen traxisse servitutis. Est autem populus incultus, absque disciplina, montium et silvarum habitator, agriculture ignarus, gregibus et armentis copiosus, lacte, caseo, butiro, carnibus, melle et cera uberius habundantes. Hii magistratus habent quos suppanos vocant, et domino imperatori aliquando serviunt, aliquando de montibus et silvis egredientes omnem circa se regionem, ut sunt audaces et bellicosi viri, depopulantur: ob hec ergo intolerabilia vicinis eorum maleficia ingressus erat ad eos in virtute multa et innumera manu dominus imperator. Quibus subactis et precipuo eorum principe vinculis mancipato redeunti domino imperatori post multiplices viarum labores in provincia Pelagonia, in eiviate que vulgo dicitur Butella, occurrimus, iuxta illam antiquam et domini felicissimi et invictissimi et prudentis Augusti. Willelmi Tyrensis Archiepiscopi, Chronicon, ed. R. B. C. Huygens, Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis vol. LXIII (Tvrnholti: Typographi Brepols Editores Pontificii, 1986), 916; William, Archbishop of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea vol. II*, trans. Atwater Babcock, A. C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 348-349; About this conflict see: G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije* [The History of the Byzantine State], 364; Serbian Grand Prince was captured by Byzantine ruler but in 1172. Kalić, "Srpsko-vizantijski sukob 1168. godine [The Serbian-Byzantine conflict in 1168]," *Zbornik Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu* 11-1 (1970): 193-204.*

<sup>30</sup> For an analysis of the pilgrimage from 1172: E. Joranson, *The Palestine Pilgrimage of Henry the Lion*, Medieval and historiographical essays in honor of James Westfall Thompson, eds. James Lee Kate, Eugen N. Anderson (Chicago, 1938), 146-225; P. Barz, *Heinrich der Löwe. Ein Welfe bewegt Geschichte* (Hamburg, 1987), 249-259; J. Ehlers, *Heinrich der Löwe: Eine Biographie* (Göttingen-Zürich, 1997), 96-103; W. Störmer, "Heinrich der Löwe-Ein

Braunschweig to Vienna, the duke and his entourage continued their journey along the Danube to Braničevo. Once again, we can see the importance of the Danube as a communication. The duke experienced a shipwreck near this city, from where they continued their journey by land. The only inconvenience during the pilgrimage happened near Ravna (today Čuprija), where the Serbs, although nominal subjects of the Byzantine Empire, refused hospitality to the pilgrims, only to attack them later. Arnold from Lübeck describes the Serbs very negatively. He calls them the sons of Belial, who do not know the yoke of the Lord but indulge in carnal passions. According to their name *Servi*, i.e. servants, they serve all that is unclean and are savage.<sup>31</sup>

Ansbertus, the chronicler of the Third Crusade (1189-1192) and companion of German Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa (1155-1189) gives us a different image of the Serbs. After crossing over through Hungary, where the Crusaders were well received, they experienced the first attacks on the Byzantine territory. The Crusaders were attacked by Greeks, Serbs, and semi-barbarian Vlachs, who used poisoned arrows against Crusaders. From the prisoners, they learned that they were acting on the orders from the Duke of Braničevo, who was carrying out the imperial instructions.<sup>32</sup> On the territory of the Serbian grand prince Stefan Nemanja, the crusaders were warmly welcomed. The emperor and his forces were welcomed by Nemanja and his brother Miroslav at the city of Niš. The Serbian ruler received the German emperor and his entourage very nicely. Numerous animals, such as tamed boars and deer,

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europäischer Fürst des Hochmittelalters,” *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte* 73-3 (2010): 779-789.

<sup>31</sup> *Procedentes igitur appropriabant urbi que Ravenelle dicitur, que in medio nemoris sita est, cuius habitatores Servi dicuntur, filii Belial, sine ingo Dei, illecebris carnis et gula dediti et secundum nomen suum immundiciis omnibus servientes et iuxta locorum qualitatem bellualiter vivendo, bestiis etiam agrestiores. Arnoldi abbatii Lubecensis Chronica*, ed. I. Lappenberg, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXI* (Hannoverae-Lipsiae: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1869), 118; *The Chronicle of Arnold of Lübeck*. (London-New York: Taylor & Francis, trans. Graham A. Loud, 2019), 44. About this incident see: A. Uzelac, „Čuvaj se Belijalovih sinova i otrovnih strelal“-Pomoravlje u drugoj polovini XII [“Beware the sons of Belial and poisoned arrows!”-Great Morava Valley in the Second Half of the Twelfth Century],” in *Stefan Nemanja i Toplica*, ed. Dragiša Bojović, Niš: Centra za crkvene studije, 2011, 97-107.

<sup>32</sup> Ansbert, “The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick,” in *The Crusade of Frederick Barbarossa: The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick and Related Texts*, trans. Graham A. Loud (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 52; 60; I. Komatina, “Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders],” *Istorijski časopis* 64 (2015): 76-77.

were presented to the emperor. Among the gifts were even seal (Monachus Monachus).<sup>33</sup> This testifies to the economic power and political influence of the Serbian ruler in the Maritime area. Nemanja and Miroslav offered Barbarossa a vassal oath and an army for the conflict against the Byzantine emperor, which the German ruler refused.<sup>34</sup> Barbarossa did not accept Nemanja's proposal, because he aspired to carry out the crusade. However, there has been closer cooperation between the two sides. It was formalized by an agreement on marriage between the daughter of Berthold IV, the Margrave of Istria, and Toljen (Tomislav), the son of Prince Miroslav.<sup>35</sup> In the end, this marriage did not take place. The potential support of Serbia and the newly independent Second Bulgarian Empire was an important argument in the negotiations between Barbarossa and the Byzantine Emperor Isaac II Angelos (1185-1196; 1293-1204).<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, no Serbian source mentions the meeting between the Serbian Grand Prince and the German emperor.

The Mongols appeared as a significant factor in Western European politics. Their penetration into Western Europe in 1241-1242 left a great impression on the contemporaries. In Hungary, the Mongols caused a great demographic catastrophe. A large number of settlements were destroyed, and the population was killed or enslaved. Despite the danger, the Mongols posed, the Western world, saw them as a potential ally in the fight against the Arabs. The interest in the Mongols aroused missionary tendencies that are present in the travel literature of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This tendency is evident from a work

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<sup>33</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 61; M. Paulova, "Účast Srbů při třetí křížové výpravě [The Participation of the Serbs in the Third Crusade]," *Byzantinoslavica* 5 (1933-1934): 281-282; I. Komatina, "Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders]," 78.

<sup>34</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 61; J. Kalić-Mijušković, "Niš u srednjem veku [Niš in the Middle Ages]," *Istorijski časopis* 31 (1984): 24-25.

<sup>35</sup> Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 62; I. Komatina, "Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders]," 78-79; K. Jireček, "Toljen sin kneza Miroslava humskog" [Toljen son of Grand prince Miroslav of Hum]," in *Zbornik Konstantina Jirečeka I*, ed. Mihailo Dinić (Beograd: Naučno delo, 1959), 443-441.

<sup>36</sup> This can be seen from Barbarossa's negotiations with Emperor Isaac II, where the German emperor mentions the forces of 60,000 Serbs and Vlachs at his disposal (of which 20,000 are Serbs). Ansbert, "The History of the Expedition of the Emperor Frederick," 84; 94.

such as the anonymous work *Descriptiones terrarum*, written between 1255 and 1260. As a border country of Latin Christianity, Hungary became a possible base for missionary activities. The description of Serbia is especially interesting, for which an anonymous author says that the Eastern Church begins with it. The etymology of Serbia, according to the author of the writing, originates from its subordination to Greece.<sup>37</sup> The only city that is mentioned in the entire text is Bar (Anteuariam), which is situated in Serbia.<sup>38</sup> The mention of this city indirectly indicates the origin of the writings. Bar was the center of the Catholic Church in the Nemanjić Serbia. This writing shows the clear missionary tendencies that the papacy had in this period. The *Descriptiones terrarum* was written in the circle of the famous Franciscan missionary Giovanni da Pian del Carpine (c. 1185-1252) who was appointed Archbishop of Bar in 1248 upon his return from the Karakorum.<sup>39</sup>

The *Anonymi descriptio Europe orientalis*, written in late 1310 or early 1311 under Pope Clement V (1305-1314), has a similar character. The primary intention of the writer of this work is to initiate action against Orthodox Christians in the Balkans, who were considered schismatics by the Western Church. This action was to be led by Charles of Valois, titular Latin Emperor of Constantinople and King of Hungary, Charles Robert (1308-1342).<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Orientalis uero ecclesia incipit a Grecia siue Seruia, que sic dicta est quia Grecie seruebat.* L. S. Čekin, „Opisanie zemel“, anonimnyj geografičeskij traktat vtoroj poloviny XIII v. [“Description of lands”, an anonymous geographical treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century],” *Srednie veka* 55 (1993): 215; 219; D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta* 37 (1998): 252.

<sup>38</sup> *De genere est Sclauorum, Anteuariam in se continens, et per Greciam procedens terminator uersus orientem in montibus Scilicie et Syrie superius nominatis.* L. S. Čekin, „Opisanie zemel“, anonimnyj geografičeskij traktat vtoroj poloviny XIII v. [“Description of lands”, an anonymous geographical treatise of the second half of the thirteenth century],” 215; 219; D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” 252.

<sup>39</sup> D. Korać, R. Radivoj. “Iz Karakoruma u Bar. Srbija u delu anonimnog geografa XII veka [From Caracorum to Bar. Serbia in Thirteenth Century Anonymous Latin Geography],” 250-251 I. Komatina, “Srbi na putu krstaša [Serbs on the Routes of the Crusaders],” 314.

<sup>40</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis = Anonimov Opis istočne Evrope* [Anonymous Description of Eastern Europe], eds. Tibor Živković, Vladeta Petrović, Aleksandar Uzelac (Beograd: Istorijski institut, 2013) 13-70.

When it comes to the description of Hungary, it is largely anachronistic, especially as far as the earliest history of Hungary is concerned, and in a sense of geography. Anonymous states that Hungary is divided into 16 areas, of which 5 are duchies. Along with Buda, which was the capital, the cities were located in episcopal centers such as Esztergom, Győr, Zagreb, Veszprém, Pécs, Gyulafehérvár (today Alba Iulia). As episcopal centers, he also mentions Trnava, Pozsony, and Baja (the very first mention), which were not. He states that there are only five more cities in Dalmatia. Despite numerous fortifications and countless villages, Hungary seems deserted.<sup>41</sup> The writer says that it is one of the greatest in the world. It is rich in pastures, grain, wine, cattle, gold, and silver.<sup>42</sup> There are large salt deposits in Transylvania.<sup>43</sup> Hungary is also very rich in fish, Anonymous especially emphasizes the size and richness of the Danube River. In addition to the richness of fish, the rivers in the area of Transylvania are also gold-bearing. They were also used to transport salt for trade.<sup>44</sup> The inhabitants of Hungary are described as short, thin, but accustomed to war, especially good as archers. Anonymous exaggerates the military power of Hungary. Allegedly, the Hungarian king was able to recruit as many as 100,000 soldiers. The king did not stay in cities but military camps. This corresponds to the situation after the takeover of power by King Charles Robert, who sought to consolidate the seized power.<sup>45</sup> The Hungarian king has been described as a good Catholic ruler who has marital relations with many European rulers, including the schismatic Milutin.<sup>46</sup>

The Serbian state, called by Anonymous the Kingdom of Raška (Rascia), consisted of two areas, Raška and Serbia. These are often synonymous names for the Serbian state, but the author is aware of the distinctions between them. Since the beginning of the thirteenth century, the name Servia or Serbia had been in the title of the Hungarian rulers and shows their political pretensions. Concerning the Serbian state, Hungarian rulers use the term Rascia. In *Anonymi descriptio Europae orientalis*, Raška represents the area ruled by King Milutin (Vrosius) (1282-

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, 135; 141.

<sup>42</sup> *Est enim terra pascuosa et fertilis ualde in pane, uino, carnibus, auro et argento.* Ibidem, 135.

<sup>43</sup> Ibidem, 135-136.

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem, 137.

<sup>45</sup> Ibidem, 139-140.

<sup>46</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 140-143.

1321), while the area of his deposed brother Dragutin (Stephanus) (1276-1282), which incline towards Hungary, he uses the term Serbia.<sup>47</sup>

Raška is ruled by King Milutin, about whom the anonymous author has an extremely bad opinion. Raška consists of three provinces: Hum, Duklja, and Maritime province.<sup>48</sup> Raška is mostly a schismatic state, while Catholics living in the Maritime province.<sup>49</sup> The Catholic population suffers from the pressure of the fickle and schismatic King Milutin.<sup>50</sup> This presentation of Milutin's policy towards the Catholic population does not correspond to the facts. Catholics were not persecuted, they enjoyed a certain autonomy, and they used to be part of the royal administration. The Serbian ruler was negatively represented because he rejected the promised union with Rome.<sup>51</sup> Raška is not only a schismatic land but also a refuge for heretics.<sup>52</sup>

Raška has great economic potential. There are seven mines on its territory, which are in possession of the Serbian king and which are located near the Maritime area.<sup>53</sup> This area is rich in silver, lead, and iron, respectively.<sup>54</sup> As for the cities, there are six of them and they are all located in the coastal area. In the rest of Serbia, there are only large

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<sup>47</sup> M. Dinić, "O nazivima srednjovekovne srpske države [About the names of the medieval Serbian state]," *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* 32 (1966): 29-34. The Geographical Perception of Nemanjić State in Western sources from twelfth to fourteenth century: A. Uzelac, "Država Nemanjića u geografskim predstavama zapadnoevropskih savremenika [The Nemanjić State in Geographic Representations of the Western European Contemporaries]," in *Srpska kraljevstva u srednjem veku*, ed. Siniša Mišić, Beograd-Kraljevo: Filozofski fakultet, Odeljenje za istoriju, Centar za istorijsku geografiju i istorijsku demografiju, Beograd: Filozofski fakultet Novi Sad: Odsek za istoriju: Univerzitet: Centar za vizantijsko-slovenske studije Niš: Kraljevo: Grad Kraljevo, 2017, 357-380.

<sup>48</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 120.

<sup>49</sup> In hac Maritima Regione habitatores eiusdem sunt puri catholici et quasi Latin. Ibidem, 121.

<sup>50</sup> Ibidem, 125-126.

<sup>51</sup> About Milutin's relations with Western powers: A. Uzelac, Aleksandar, B. Radovanović, "Crkvena i svetovna politika kralja Milutina prema zapadnim silama—nekoliko novih zapažanja [Ecclesiastical and Secular Policies of King Milutin towards the Western Powers - Some New Observations]," *Sveti car Konstantin i brižanstvo, Međunarodni naučni skupnoporodom 1700. godišnjice Milanskog edikta*, I, ed. Dragiša Bojović (Niš: Centar za crkvene studije, 2013), 593-608.

<sup>52</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 121.

<sup>53</sup> Ibidem, 122.

<sup>54</sup> *Habundat enim dictum regnum in argento et plumbo et ferro*. Ibidem, 122.

villages with 300 to 400 houses.<sup>55</sup> This claim is certainly exaggerated, but the Western European view of urban settlements. Raška is described as a country rich in wheat, livestock, and dairy products. The population consumes milk and beer, while the king and the aristocracy drink wine imported from the Maritime province.<sup>56</sup> It is further stated that men and women in this country are tall and beautiful, but unaccustomed to warfare. The author of the writings knows the change of government in the Serbian state and the conflict that arose between King Dragutin and Milutin.<sup>57</sup> He interprets Milutin's pro-Western policy as fear of the power of Charles of Anjou.<sup>58</sup> The other area, called Serbia, was managed by Milutin's brother, Dragutin. Serbia consists of: three provinces: Mačva, Bosnia, and Markija (probably the area of Braničevo and Kučevo). These are the northern areas of Serbia, which he kept after he handed over power to Milutin in 1282. Two years later, he received the Banovina of Mačva and the areas of Usora and Soli from the Hungarian king Ladislaus IV (1272-1290).<sup>59</sup> As the antipode of his brother, Dragutin is described as a good ruler, a saint in his faith, who loves Catholics who live in his area.<sup>60</sup> Anonymous says that Dragutin handed over power to Milutin, who then usurped it and their conflict continues at the time when this source was written.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Preterquam in Maritima Regione dicta, ubi sunt sex ciuitates, in toto regno prefato non est aliqua ciuitas. Sunt tamen in eo multa castra, fortalicia et magne uille de trecentis et quadringentis domibus de lignis et asseribus edificatis sine aliqua clausura. Ibidem, 122.*

<sup>56</sup> *Alias, dictum regnum est fertile in pane et carnibus et lacticiis, sed deficit in uino et piscibus. Nam communiter non bibitur uinum ibi, sed ceruisia et lac. Rex tamen et barones utuntur uino in copia, a Maritima Regione portatum. Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis, 122-123;*

<sup>57</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis, 123-124;* About the relation between these Serbian rulers: M. Dinić, "Odnos između kralja Milutina i Dragutina [The relation between King Milutin and Dragutin]," *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 3 (1955): 49-82.

<sup>58</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis, 126-128.*

<sup>59</sup> About king Dragutin's land after abdication: M. Dinić, "Oblast kralja Dragutina posle Deževa [The area of King Dragutin after Deževo agreement]," *Glas SANU* 203 (1951) 61-82; *Ibid.*, "Uz raspravu oblast kralja Dragutina posle Deževa [With the discussion of the area of King Dragutin after Deževo agreement]," *Istorijski časopis* 3 (1952) 249-251.

<sup>60</sup> *Est enim dictus rex Stephanus homo iustus, bonus et in ritu suo reputatus multum sanctus, catholicos diligens et amplectens. Habet enim in uxorem filiam regis Hungarie, sororem regine Sicilie, ex qua habet prolem decentem utriusque sexus, nec umquam habuit aliam uxorem. Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis, 125.*

<sup>61</sup> *Quidam tamen dicunt quod tradidit ei regnum simpliciter et renuntiauit regno in manibus suis, quidam alii dicunt, et hoc idem rex Stephanus fatetur, quod non tradidit simpliciter, nec renuntiauit, sed sub condicione si uiueret, quod regnum sibi restitueretur; si uero tunc moreretur, quod haberet regnum. Sed*

Bulgaria is described as a great empire with Vidin as its capital. The land is wide, vast, and fertile, with ten rivers. Bulgaria is rich in grain, cattle, fish, as well as mineral treasures, silver, and gold-bearing gold. Wax and silk are mentioned among the products.<sup>62</sup> Unicorns, tigers, and beavers are mentioned among the animals that inhabit this country.<sup>63</sup> Anonymous states that Bulgaria was under the rule of Byzantium, which was liberated later on. Bulgaria was temporarily occupied by King Andrew, but when the Hungarian government weakened, Bulgaria came under the Tatar rule.<sup>64</sup>

Chronologically, a very close work by an anonymous Tuscan geographer was created between 1313 and 1315, which was incorporated into the World Chronicle, attributed to the Florentine Amaretto Mannelli. When talking about Hungary, the Tuscan geographer says that it borders Germany. His observation about the ethnic composition of this state is interesting. Besides Hungary, there are Romanians and Vlachs, who have their kingdom and are pagans.<sup>65</sup> This

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*frater iunior intrans regni possessionem numquam ipsi fratri restituit licet conualuisset, sed tenuit iam per XXVI annos et adhuc tenet ueridicus. Propter quod ortum est bellum et dissensio inter dictos fratres usque ad hodiernum diem.* Ibidem, 124-125.

<sup>62</sup> Ibidem, 128-129.

<sup>63</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 130. Under the tiger, as in the description of the fauna of other Slavic countries, author understood the European bison Zubr or Wisent (Bison bonasus), and the unicorn is the aurochs (Bos primigenius). A. Uzelac, “Tigrovi na donjem Dunavu”—mali prilog proučavanju megafaune srednjovekovnog Balkana [Tigers on the Lower Danube—A Small Contribution to the Research of the Medieval Balkan Megafauna],” *Braničevski glasnik* 8 (2012): 7-23.

<sup>64</sup> *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis*, 130. The description of Bulgaria is only referred to the Principality of Vidin. Hungarian King Andrew II (1205-1223) forced the Bulgarian Tsar Boril to cede to him the then northwestern areas of the Trnovo Empire - Braničevo and Belgrade. Boril's successor Ivan Asen II captured the Hungarian king on his return from the Holy Land. Ivan Asen II managed to get these areas back. He also married King Andrew's, daughter. The Hungarians conquered Braničevo from Bulgaria in 1232-1233. H. Dimitrov, *Bylgaro-ungarski odnosbenija prez srednovekovieto* [Bulgarian-Hungarian relations in the Middle Ages] (Sofija: Akademično izdatelstvo “Prof. Marin Drinov”, 1998), 132-139. Bulgaria became a dependent state of the Golden Horde in the years after Mongol invasions of Europe 1241-1242. Prince Shishman of Vidin around 1285 recognized the supreme authority of the Mongol lord Nogai. About Tatar influence on the Balkans, especially in Bulgaria see: I. Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars-Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185-1365* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 69-98.

<sup>65</sup> *La settima prouincia si è Vngaria, e anche a reame, sono molta gente, non u'a contadi grandi, confina colla Magnia e dall'altra sono cristiani Vngheri. In quella medesima prouincia sono i Rumeni e i Valacchi, e quali sono due grandi generazioni, e anno reame e sono paghani.* P. Gautier Dalché,

is the first mention of Romanians under this name in medieval sources. The misconception about the pagan religion of the Romanians-Vlachs stems from the fact that they were associated with the neighboring Cumans. His information was probably obtained by Italian merchants on the Black Sea or by Franciscan missionaries.<sup>66</sup> The ruler of Serbia is called the King of Raška. He says that its population is Christian, but they do not obey the Roman Church and there are mistakes in their religious practice. There are no big cities in Raška.<sup>67</sup> This claim should be understood very conditionally, there were cities on the territory of Serbia and Bulgaria but they are not of great importance for the author, so he did not even record them. The description of Bulgaria is very concise. The Christian population lives in this country, with the Christian emperor, but Bulgaria is subservient to the Tatars, i.e. the Golden Horde.<sup>68</sup>

For medieval travel writers in the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, the territory of the Balkans was *terra incognita*, a space located on the edge of the Western world. In the beginning, this area was important for travelers to the Holy Land. During the Crusades, the population of the Balkans were often perceived as savage pagans or just Christianized people. The lack of large urban settlements favored the presence of a nomadic population. The passivity of a significant area of the Balkans is attested in Western sources by the view that there are almost no cities on the territory of Hungary, Serbia, and Bulgaria. There

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“Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIVe siècle),” in idem, *L'espace géographique au Moyen Âge* (Firenze, 2013), 176.

<sup>66</sup> A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” in *Spomenica akademika Miloša Blagojevića (1930-2012)*, ed. Siniša Mišić (Beograd: Filozofski fakultet, Centar za istorijsku geografiju i istorijsku demografiju, 2015), 239-240

<sup>67</sup> *La decima prouincia si è Cierina, chiamasi re di Rascia, sono cristiani, non ne ubbidiscono alla chiesa di Roma, e anno molti errori tra lloro per la fede, anno reame, non u'a terra grossa.* P. Gautier Dalché, “Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIVe siècle),” 176; A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” 237; 240-241.

<sup>68</sup> *La undecima prouincia si è Bolgaria, anno imperadore, sono cristiani, ubbidiscono a' Tartari, non u'a grandi cittadi, sono assai gente.* P. Gautier Dalché, “Une géographie provenant du milieu des marchands toscans (début du XIVe siècle),” 176; A. Uzelac, “Istočna i jugoistočna Evropa u delu Anonimnog toskanskog geografa [Eastern and Southeastern Europe in the Anonymous Tuscan Geography],” 237; 240.

was certainly an urban culture in this area, but not to the extent that Western travelers would expect. Increasing interaction with the West has changed the view of the inhabitants of the Balkans. Religion, much more than ethnic origin, played a role in the perception of medieval travel writers. That is why Hungary is increasingly seen as an *antemurale Christianitatis*, which can serve as a stronghold from which Catholicism could spread further to the East. Due to the dominant role of Orthodoxy, Serbia was seen as a schismatic country, in which the Catholic minority was persecuted, although this image does not correspond to the factual situation. Although often subjective and colored by religious animosity, travel literature brings us more than significant information about this area. The perception of the former Bulgarian presence in a significant part of the Balkan Peninsula is attested in the geographical names of Western travel writers. The area south of the Sava and the Danube was perceived as Bulgaria, although until the end of the twelfth century, Byzantium had at least nominal control over it. As an independent political entity, Bulgaria played a limited but important role for Italian merchants on the Black Sea, as well as in the missionary activity of the Franciscan order. When we take into account that the sources of domestic provenance are not informative enough or do not exist at all, their significance is even greater. Owing to them, we can shed light on the dynamic history of the Balkans in this period.

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