

DANICA POPOVIĆ

## The Deserts and Holy Mountains of Medieval Serbia

*Written Sources, Spatial Patterns, Architectural Designs*

Essential concepts in Christian thought and practice, the *desert* and *holy mountain* denote a particular kind of monastic and sacral space. Medievalist scholarship describes such locales as secluded from the world, intended for asceticism, and ambivalent in nature: they are inhospitable and menacing zones populated with demons, but also a monastic paradise, places for spiritual conversion and encounter with the divine. From earliest times, *deserts* and *holy mountains* had a few distinguishing characteristics. All forms of monastic life, from communal to solitary, were practised side by side there. Monks of a special make-up and distinction known as holy men and often founders of illustrious communities, future saints and miracle-workers acted there. Furthermore, those locales were important spiritual and bookmaking centres, and, therefore, mainstays of Orthodoxy in times of crisis, such as the Iconoclastic Controversy, or, in the late medieval period, initiatives for church union<sup>1</sup>.

These introductory clarifications seem necessary in order that an adequate research framework can be established for considerations of the Serbian material, where we face a specific situation: few surviving sources on the one hand, and devastated monuments as a result of the turbulent Balkan past on the other. The ultimate consequence is that the entire subject has been neglected. Therefore the study of the Serbian *deserts* and *holy mountains* requires a very complex interdisciplinary approach with systematic fieldwalking survey as its essential part. The research carried out over the last few years promises valuable results and significant advances. It should address the following issues: the reception of the concept of the monastic desert and holy mountain in a particular, regional, context; the distinct means and mechanisms employed in their physical realization; interpretation of their function, one of major being the spread of Orthodoxy; and finally, the recognition of patterns preserved in the surviving physical structures. Even the results obtained so far appear to be relevant enough to become included in the sacral topography of the Christian world.

The concept of monastic *deserts* and *holy mountains* in a narrower sense may be traced in the Serbian environment only from the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the founding period of Serbia's independent state and church under the Nemanjić dynasty. Its roots, of course, were much deeper. They were embedded in the ancient Byzantine tradition whose main representatives in the Balkans were the illustrious hermits Sts John of Rila, Joachim of Osogov and Prochorus of Pčinja. Their lives and deeds set off some significant processes, such as the development of monastic environments, centres and sources of the anchoritic way of life in the region. Devotional compositions dedicated to these anchorites not only codify an eremitic and saintly model but also confirm that their pursuits, occasionally under royal patronage, had a powerful influence on the organization of monasticism and the sacralization of the entire western and central Balkans<sup>2</sup>.

Most of the credit for acquainting the Serbian environment with the concept and practice of monastic *deserts* goes to St Sava of Serbia, the true architect of all major ideological programmes of the newly-founded Serbian state. This outstanding man – a prince, a monk, and head of the church – was in his youth an Athonite learner, where he experienced all forms of monastic life, from coenobitic to solitary. In his later years, on his journeys to the East, he visited the famous deserts of Egypt and Holy Land. Having gained a full insight into Orthodox monasticism, he was able to choose a proven eremitic model to suit Serbia's particular needs. Round the large coenobitic communities, the earliest Nemanjić foundations – Hilandar<sup>3</sup>,

---

<sup>1</sup> On the meaning of monastic *deserts*, GUILLAUMONT 1979, 67–87; T(HOMPSON), C(UTLER), 1991, 613; on *holy mountains*, TALBOT, 1991, 941; TALBOT, 2001, 263–318; BERNBAUM, 1997.

<sup>2</sup> DUYCHEV, 1947; PAVLOVIĆ, 1965, 20–33.

<sup>3</sup> BOGDANOVIĆ, ĐURIĆ, MEDAKOVIĆ, 1978; SUBOVIĆ, 1998, KORAC, 2000.

Studenica<sup>4</sup> and Mileševa<sup>5</sup> – Sava had hesychasteria built intending them for the ascetic way of life, and set down a typikon to regulate their affairs<sup>6</sup>. This organizational model of monastic life turned out to be a long-standing achievement. Namely, in the medieval Serbian state, throughout the period of its independence, the practice was strongly present of forming round royal foundations, organized as coenobitic communities, anchoritic settlements which functioned as monastic *deserts* and *mountains*. That is how it was during the kingdom (1217–1346) and the empire (1346–71) and afterwards, until the final Ottoman conquest in 1459. In the late fourteenth and during the fifteenth century this model was maintained by members of the nobility, and also accommodated to the needs of the Church, as evidenced by the fact that some of the major monastic deserts were founded in close proximity to the Patriarchate of Peć, in the picturesque scenery of Rugovo Gorge<sup>7</sup>.

I shall begin this discussion with an analysis of the written sources. It should be emphasized at the outset that the monastic *deserts* and *mountains* in the Byzantine world had a common denominator and the same essential function. Central to our enquiries is the fact that the two concepts in fact are interchangeable. From earliest times, deserts and mountains, and as a rule caves as well, were seen as integral to a single natural and monastic setting<sup>8</sup>. Abundant examples are found in the classical works of ascetic literature, such as the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the *Lausiac History* or the *History of Egyptian Monasticism*. Let me by way of illustration quote the description of the recluse Elijah's dwelling in the Thebaide as it is recorded in *Historia monachorum in Aegypto*: "He was famous for having spent seventy years in the terrible desert. No description can do justice to that rugged desert in the mountain where he had his hermitage, never coming down to the inhabited region ... He had his seat under a rock in a cave, so that even the sight of him was very impressive."<sup>9</sup> Similar descriptions were a commonplace in Byzantine hagiography, and for so long as it was written. The same notion is to be found in medieval Serbia. Accounts of anchoritic dwellings in Serbian hagiography often make use of the Epistle to the Hebrews 11:38 speaking about wanderings "in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth"<sup>10</sup>. The same topos is used by the eminent Serbian writer of the thirteenth century Domentianus (Domentijan) in his account of Sava's visit to the hermits dwelling just below the summit of Mount Athos по поустыняхъ и по пещерахъ и по пропастьехъ земляныхъ<sup>11</sup>. The biographer of the Serbian ruler Despot Stefan Lazarević (1389–1427) does exactly the same when he says that the Despot "walked mountains and fields and deserts looking for a place to build up the desired community, a hesychasterion" обьхождааше горы и поля и поустынк изискоук идѣже възможежь желакмоую обитель мальчаниу селкник възставити<sup>12</sup>. In an even more straightforward and very factual manner, the humble monk Theodore, a distinguished scribe of the first half of the fifteenth century, describes his efforts to find a "desolate place" suitable for a "skete": eventually he found it on Mt Visoka (High Mountain), on the Dalša River, having walked "many deserts and mountains, adorned with caves and springs" (поустынк прошьдь и горы многы обьшьдь, пещералми же и прыснотекоуцими источники оукрашеноу)<sup>13</sup>. That the two concepts, *mountain* and *desert*, are identical in meaning is shown by the Life of St Peter of Koriša, key source for the study of Serbian ascetic thought and practice penned by Theodosius (Teodosije) of Hilandar, the most important Serbian writer of the first half of the fourteenth century. The site of Peter's ascetic endeavour – slopes of Mt Koriša near Prizren, Metochia – is designated the "Koriša desert" въ кориш `кои поустини), and also the "high mountain by the name of Koriša" (приш(ь)дыша до горы етеры

<sup>4</sup> KAŠANIN, ČANAK-MEDIĆ, MAKSIMOVIĆ, TODIĆ, ŠAKOTA, 1986; BABIĆ, KORAC, ĆIRKOVIĆ, 1986; KORAC, 1988.

<sup>5</sup> RADOJČIĆ, 1971; Đurić, 1987.

<sup>6</sup> POPOVIĆ S., 2001.

<sup>7</sup> ĐURIĆ, ĆIRKOVIĆ, KORAC, 1990; IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 499–500.

<sup>8</sup> POPOVIĆ D., forthcoming.

<sup>9</sup> RUSSELL, WARD, 1981, 69.

<sup>10</sup> POPOVIĆ D., 2002, 66.

<sup>11</sup> DOMENTIJAN, 1988, 67, 69; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1865, 133–134.

<sup>12</sup> Konstantin Filozof, 1989, 103; the original in: JAGIĆ, 1875, 288.

<sup>13</sup> TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1979, 187; the original in: Zapisi i natpisi, vol. 1, No. 250; the copyist has been identified by VASILJEV, 2000, 399–402.

высоки ... выше села корише нарицаемаго). Moreover, it is also described as “God’s holy mountain” (гора в(о)жїа с(вѣ)таа) and the “mountain called holy” (на горѣу свѣто нарицаемоу)<sup>14</sup>.

Studies of the Lives of famous Balkan hermits, which contain highly relevant information to this issue, lead to the very same conclusion. The place where St Prochorus of Pčinja founded a community is described with an eye for detail. His solitary life began in the usual manner, by retreating from the world “into the mountain, like a deer to a water source, into the desert” (в горѣ, пакже еленъ на источникъ, в пѣстинѣю). Having withdrawn into the mountain, he found a small cave and a spring, and settled there, “as though in a king’s palace”<sup>15</sup>. This first of Peter’s abodes is referred to, though in an office of a later date based on legends, as the “Nagoričino desert in the Žegligovo area” (east of present-day Kumanovo)<sup>16</sup>. His final abode is, in the Life of St Joachim of Osogov, termed the “deserts of Vranje by the Pčinja River” (въ поустинѣахъ враняньскыиухъ, на рѣцѣ грѣкѣи пшинѣ)<sup>17</sup>, and in two records, dating from the end of the seventeenth and the mid-eighteenth century respectively, as the “mountain of Koznik” (гора козыачьска) and the “desert of Koznik” (вбители с(вѣ)таго ѡца прохора пѣстини козычскїе), Koznik being an area northeast of Kumanovo in the valley of the Pčinja River<sup>18</sup>. A distinct formulation of a monastic setting and its function is found in the Life of St Joachim of Osogov. According to it, Joachim went into the “mountain of the Osogov desert” (въ страни гвры поустини ѡсоговскїе), where he found, in a barely accessible place, a suitable cave for his purposes<sup>19</sup>.

Considerations that follow are aimed at exploring, as concretely as possible, whatever contexts in which the concepts of monastic *deserts* occur and what their actual contents were. It should be noted that medieval Serbian writings use the term “desert” in its literal meaning, to denote the famous anchoritic dwellings of the East. So, for example, both Domentianus and Theodosius give detailed accounts of St Sava of Serbia’s “journeying across the desert” (светааго савы по поустыньомъ прохождени), arguing that he visited “every desert dwelling” (вса въ поустыни мѣластвѡуѡшта). They explicitly cite the deserts of Betlehem, Jordan and Egypt, as well as the “desert abodes of St Anthony and St Arsenius”<sup>20</sup>. Other writers do the same. For example, Daniel II (Danilo), Serbian archbishop (1324–37), in his account of Archbishop Eustathius’ pilgrimage to Jerusalem says that Eustathius visited, besides other holy places, “the divine deserts in its environs” (поустынкъ вожьствьныкъ окръсть прилещтѣк къ иерѡсалимоу)<sup>21</sup>.

Perhaps central to our subject, and with the broadest range of meanings, is the Holy Mount of Athos. It is referred to as a “desert” even in the earliest written sources. Thus the Typikon of Hilandar states that Simeon Nemanja (died 1199), having renounced the world and the throne, “came to this desert” (въ сїю приде поустинѡу)<sup>22</sup>, and, according to his son and biographer, King Stefan the First-Crowned, Simeon became a “desert dweller” (поустинѣ наго житѣла)<sup>23</sup>. Such broadest designation covering the whole of Mount Athos is found in other writers as well, especially in former Athonite learners. For Domentianus, for example, Athos is a “holy desert” (въ свѣтѣи поустыни сѣи)<sup>24</sup>, and for Theodosius, a “holy and sweet desert” (светоуѡ и сладкоуѡ мнѣ поустыню)<sup>25</sup>. That eremitism might have been seen as equivalent to the monastic way of life on Athos as a whole is evidenced by the well-known episode from Theodosius where a Russian monk instructs the young Rastko – future monk and saint, Sava of Serbia – in the “desert order” and specifies its

<sup>14</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 265, 269, 270–271; the original in: JOVANOVIĆ, 1980, 649, 654, 655, 656.

<sup>15</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 402.

<sup>16</sup> Composed by Martyrius of Hilandar in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, HADŽI-VASILJEVIĆ, 1900, 62; IVANOV, 1970, l. c; Rakocija, 1997, 6–7. It is worthy of note that etymological studies suggest that the name *Nagoričino* (possessive adjective of *nagorica*) contains the word *gora* (mount), Loma, 1990, 8.

<sup>17</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 407.

<sup>18</sup> HADŽI-VASILJEVIĆ, 1900, 106.

<sup>19</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 407, 410.

<sup>20</sup> Domentijan, 1988, 176–178, 206; the original in: DANIČIĆ 1865, 271–273; Teodosije, 1988, 225, 239–242; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1860, 168, 188–189.

<sup>21</sup> Danilo Drugi, 1988, 196–197; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1866, 298.

<sup>22</sup> BOGDANOVIĆ, 1986, 47; the original in: ĆOROVIĆ, 1928, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Stefan Prvovenčani, 1999, 94–95.

<sup>24</sup> Domentijan, 1988, 259; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1865, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 205; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1860, 142.

main forms: “common life in monasteries, and the separate unanimous life of two or three, and the solitary life of those living in eremitic silence” (въ мнѣнастирихъ ѡбшѣо прѣбываніе и ѡсобно по двѣма или тремъ коупнодоушно и ѡтѣхъодно оуединеніемъ въ поштеніи мѡлчаливѣ живоуштихъ)<sup>26</sup>. Studies of the diplomatic material suggest the same conclusion. Of many examples, I shall single out two. The Act of the Serbian Archbishop Nicodemus for the Cell of St Sava at Karyaes (1321) refers to “beautiful desert communities on the Holy Mount of Athos” (прѣкрасная поустыини(хъ) селкниа горы с(вѣ)тънык адона)<sup>27</sup>, and several charters of Emperor Stefan Dušan describe Athos as the “great desert”<sup>28</sup>.

The term *desert*, however, is also used in its narrower meaning, that of a space intended for austere ascetical practices, for a higher form of asceticism. It is in that vein that particular sites on Athos are described where distinguished fathers, during Lent, “endure trials for Christ’s sake”. The term “eremitic way of life” (поустыинное и неметежное житіе) is used to denote the most radical form of asceticism, the one practised by the hermits dwelling just below the summit of Athos<sup>29</sup>. In this, narrower, sense, the term is used by Theodosius, in his Life of St Sava, for the well-known account of the way St Sava distributed a miraculously discovered treasure: most of it went to the Athonite monasteries, a portion to the Constantinopolitan Virgin Evergetis, a portion to – “desert cells and all those leading a solitary life” (по поустыни ккліамъ и всѣмъ ѡтѣхъодно живоуштімъ), and the fourth portion was donated to Hilandar<sup>30</sup>. The diplomatic material provides many such examples. For instance, in Emperor Stefan Dušan’s charter granting the village of Potolino to the Monastery of Hilandar (1348), the term “desert” refers to the area where the greatest “holy men” dwell<sup>31</sup>.

How well the learned Athonite alumni, such as Domentianus, were versed in the established patterns of eremitic monasticism is evidenced by their use of a distinct concept specific to Eastern Christian ascetic literature and inaugurated in the Life of St Anthony the Great – the *inner desert*. The research conducted so far, with the contribution of James Goehring being of particular relevance, has shown that the term *inner* or *deep desert* (ή μακροτέρα έρημος; ή πορρωτέρω έρημος), just like the *inner mountain* for that matter, refers to a particular stage on the path of a monk’s renunciation of the world. In that sense, going to the inner desert can be taken literally, as denoting the action of moving from the inhabited world into the wilderness, but the meaning of the venture as a rule is deeper. It implies the quest for a place suitable for higher ascetic pursuits involving the renunciation not only of the world but also of any worldly fame, the ability to mortify the body and subdue the demons<sup>32</sup>. The same conclusion has recently been drawn by Nina Gagova and Irena Špadijer. Their comparative analysis of the Lives of St John of Rila and St Peter of Koriša has shown that the progress of the two ascetics from the *desert* into the *inner desert*, via a number of sacral loci such as *cave* and *rock*, is at once an upward progress, along the ladder of ascetic virtues, towards sainthood<sup>33</sup>. The Serbian literary heritage provides several examples. Thus, according to Domentianus, Simeon and Sava went together “into the inner desert, the great laura of St Athanasius of Athos” (въ вноуטרню поустыню въ великую лавроу свѣтаго атанасіа атонитъскаго); describing Simeon Nemanja’s arrival on Mount Athos, the same writer says that “all the sychasts [came] from the inner deserts” (вси сихастикъ отъ вноуטרини(хъ) поустыинъ) to meet the venerable one<sup>34</sup>. The same meaning, though somewhat differently formulated, is carried by the term “inner monasteries” (внѣтрни(к) с(вѣ)тне мѡнастирѣ), found, for instance, in the abovementioned Charter to

<sup>26</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 105; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1860, 7.

<sup>27</sup> ŽIVOJINOVIĆ D., 2005, 28.

<sup>28</sup> For example, in the so-called “General” Charter to Hilandar of 1348 (SLAVEVA, MOŠIN, 1980, 431), in the 1348 Charter to Hilandar granting Potolino (VUJOŠEVIĆ, 2006, 118), in the 1348 Charter to the Cell at Karyaes (TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1999, 11) and the Charter to St Panteleimon of 1349 (Leonid Archimadrite, 1868, 232–236). On the circumstances and purpose of Emperor Dušan’s stay on Athos, TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1999a, 18–26.

<sup>29</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 118–119, 121; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1860, 23, 24, 28.

<sup>30</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 145; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1860, 60.

<sup>31</sup> VUJOŠEVIĆ, 2006, 118.

<sup>32</sup> GOEHRING, 1999, 40–41, 80–82.

<sup>33</sup> GAGOVA, ŠPADIJER, 2001, 159–171.

<sup>34</sup> Доментијан, 1988, 86, 279–280; the original in: DANIČIĆ, 1865, 159, 56–57.

Hilandar for the village of Potoľino<sup>35</sup>. That the term was not specific to Athos is attested by other hagiographies. Thus St Prochorus of Pčinja, at a particular stage on his ascetic path, left his *vertep* – that is his cave in the Nagoričino desert – and went into the “inner desert” (ВНУТРЕНЮ ПУСТИНЮ)<sup>36</sup>, as commanded by an angel of the Lord. In his case, the inner desert was the already mentioned “desert of Vranje” or “mountain of Koznik”. The “inner desert” or “mountain of the inner desert” (ВЪ ВЪНУТРЕННЕ ПУСТЫННЕ ГОРЫ) was also the destination of Romilus of Ravanica on his arrival in Paroria<sup>37</sup>. All these examples show that to dwell in the *inner desert* in fact means to attain the highest degree of human perfection. For that reason its dwellers are called “holy men” and “earthly angels”. Therefore, the inner desert, as shown memorably in the Lives of St Anthony the Great and St Arsenius, was impossible to attain by mere human means<sup>38</sup>.

To judge from written sources, in medieval Serbia the term *desert* is used in reference to different contents, which I hope to demonstrate clearly through the examples that follow. Even so, it should be emphasized that every attempt at identifying such contents should proceed with extreme caution. Namely, studies in Byzantine eremitic monasticism, notably the work done by D. Papachryssanthou, show convincingly how complex and flexible its forms were both in their content and from the viewpoint of the terminology employed<sup>39</sup>. From the second half and late fourteenth century date a few sources essential in elucidating this question. Valuable information is found in the Life of the Serbian Patriarch Ephrem (1375–79 and 1389–92). Having arrived in Serbia, this distinguished monastic entered the monastery of Dečani and settled in the “desert”, where, according to Bishop Mark, he embraced “the much-cherished practice of quietness” (ВЪ ПУСТЫНЮ КДИНЬ ВСЕЛАКМЬ, ЛЮБИМАГО МЛЪЧАНІА ЛОВЫЗАКТ(Ь))<sup>40</sup>. Given Mark’s testimony that Ephrem dwelled there with another two ascetics – Abraham, Spyridon and the latter’s disciple James, presumably their abode was organized either as a cell or as a skete, little monastery, depending on whether it included the sacred area or church – of which the sources say nothing<sup>41</sup>. This question will be revisited later in this text, in the section discussing the surviving physical structures. In a similar way should be interpreted the information from the Life of Elder Isaiah that this holy Father, and his disciple Sylvester, settled in a “place called St Paul’s desert, with blessed and venerable Father Dionysius the Sanctified as his adviser and fellow ascetic”<sup>42</sup>. How complicated this issue is when it comes to concepts and terminology is evidenced by yet another statement from the Life of Patriarch Ephrem, the one referring to his cave hermitage, established specifically for him in the gorge of the Bistrica River in the environs of the Patriarchate of Peć. Ephrem, an eminent spiritual father and “holy man”, was frequented by “many monks living in nearby monasteries and deserts” (ВЪ УКРЪСТНЫХ(Ь) МОНАСТІРЬХ(Ь) И ПУСТЫНЬХ(Ь))<sup>43</sup>. Taking into account the available patchy information about the hesychasteria around the Patriarchate, it seems that in this case the phrase “monasteries and deserts” should be interpreted as “sketes and cells”. Even less specific in its reference to monastic communities in Bistrica Gorge is the so-called Synaxarion of Gerasim and Euphemia. Mark of Peć simply states that his Father, having chosen the monastic way of life, “lived with fathers in the desert”<sup>44</sup>.

What we know at present apparently suggests the conclusion that even the earliest foundations of the Nemanjić had monumental cave hesychasteria functioning as eremitic *deserts*, although they are not explicitly named as such. A good example is the cave complex beneath the walls of the fortress of Ras. A well-known record by Elder Simeon dated to 1202 quite unambiguously indicates the nature of this monastic community. The record makes use of customary topoi of ascetic literature to describe in detail the stages of Simeon’s monastic path and travels, from his abandoning of his family and the world and his entry into a coenobitic

<sup>35</sup> VUJOŠEVIĆ, 2006, 118; the topos occurs in other documents as well, for example, in Emperor Stefan Dušan’s Charter to the Cell of Karyaes issued in 1348, ЖИВОЛИНОВИЋ Д., 2002, 72 (where the phrase *inner monasteries* is mistranslated as “the interior of monasteries”, 74).

<sup>36</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 402; RAKOCIJA, 1997, 8.

<sup>37</sup> SYRKU, 1900, 18–19.

<sup>38</sup> GOEHRING, 1999, l. c.

<sup>39</sup> PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, 2003.

<sup>40</sup> MARKO PEĆKI, 1986, 166; the original in: TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1967, 70; cf. also POPOVIĆ D., 2006, 113–114.

<sup>41</sup> On the kinds and types of monastic cells, TALBOT, 1991a, 1120; MILOŠEVIĆ [REDACTED] IVOJINOVIĆ M., 1972.

<sup>42</sup> Anonymous Athonite, 1986, 93–94.

<sup>43</sup> Marko Pećki, 1986, 167; TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1967, 70.

<sup>44</sup> Marko Pećki, 1986a, 207.

community to his final settling in a “cave in the fortress of Ras”. It is worthy of note that Simeon himself sees this abode as the attainment of a higher form of monastic life, as clearly seen from his formulation that he was “graced” with a cell (сп(о)добихъ се жити ѿ пеки ѿ градѣ расѣ и написахъ сие кнѣге...)⁴⁵. Equally important for the understanding of its overall function is the information that Simeon was also engaged in copying manuscripts there⁴⁶. In a similar way should be viewed the role of the distinguished Studenica hermitage, established by St Sava of Serbia not long after the one at Karyaes. Known as Sava’s or Upper Hermitage, it has not been documented in the sources as a *desert*, but I believe that exactly this function is suggested by the designation “St Sava’s cave hermitage” (въ пещере светаго савы постница), as it is described in a record of 1619⁴⁷. The same goes for another of Studenica’s old cave hesychasteria located on the hill Konjice some 500 metres away from the monastery. The rock-cut inscription above the cave entrance, dated to the second half of the thirteenth or first half of the fourteenth century, describes it as “Pachomius’ cave” (пещер пахомиева), which its dweller adapted and dedicated to the famous hermit of the same name, obviously his role model⁴⁸. In my view, the term *cave* in all the three cited cases is, from the standpoint of function and meaning, identical with the concept of the monastic desert, a view which the examples that follow are meant to substantiate.

Namely, not only that the term “desert” is often used literally but its actual contents may be identified with much certainty in many cases, especially when documentary data are testable against surviving physical structures. For example, when Theodosius recounts his visit to Koriša and to Peter’s “desert” and the rock on which Peter exercised ascetic discipline (пѣстину же его, и стѣноу на нѣи же страд(а)ль), he must have had in mind the hermit’s cave cell or hermitage. This is confirmed by his statement, later in the same text, that Peter’s remains, before they were taken apart and carried off, “lay in the desert” (въ пѣстини лежещоу)⁴⁹. The nearby Monastery of St Mark also had a cave hermitage up in the crags. If a report recorded in the nineteenth century is credible, there was in this cell the inscription reading: “This is the cell of venerable Father Mark” (сина поустни пр. штыца марка)⁵⁰. The exceptionally important complex of cave hermitages of the Monastery of Mileševa is referred to, in a record dating to 1508, as “St Sava’s desert” (въ пѣстини светаго сави). The record also provides an important piece of information, namely that a copyist Vladislav transcribed Theodosius’ Life of St Sava in the Mileševa Hermitage⁵¹. Books were copied also in the “Grabovica desert” which, according to a manuscript inscription of 1535 from the Octoechos of Banja Monastery near Priboj, was situated “on the Lim River, in the direction of the Church of St Nicholas of Dabar” (на рѣцѣ лимѣ прѣма храмѣ светаго и славнаго ар’ хїереа христова николѣ, рѣкомѣ дабарѣ, въ пѣстини грабовици). This must have been a cell, and a barely accessible one, as seen from the note of the scribe, hieromonk Sava, appealing to the readers to forgive whatever error he may have made, “for the place was rugged, and the season wintry and dark”⁵². Yet another cell-hermitage of Banja Monastery is documented as a “desert” in toponymy and in legend: Bjeličkovica – in the rocky landscape of a massif bearing the same name, near the village of Kratovo – made up of a monumentally-built structure⁵³. This list of “verifiable” contents will be concluded with the examples offered by the hesychasteria of Dečani Monastery. Thus, the manuscript inscription the monk Nicander made in a Gospel of 1494 tells us that the book was transcribed in the “Belaje desert, in the home of the Most Holy Virgin” (въ пѣстины белѣе, въ домоу прѣс(вѣ)тыѣ в(огороди)це), which is to say in the well-known ascetic centre of the Dečani desert⁵⁴. Another record from Dečani is also quite revealing. In a Triodion, roughly dated to the sixteenth-seventeenth century, the scribe, sinful Gregory, testifies that he copied the manuscript “above Dečani, in a desert which is

⁴⁵ The most recent edition of the record: TRIFUNOVIĆ, 2004, 79–81.

⁴⁶ On the function and architectural features of the monastic community at Ras, POPOVIĆ D., POPOVIĆ M., 1999, 103–130.

⁴⁷ Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 1066, 293; on “Sava’s hermitage” at Studenica, TEMERINSKI, 1986, 257–260; PAVLOVIĆ, 1987, 169–171.

⁴⁸ ĐURIĆ, PEJIĆ, KRSTANOVIĆ, TEMERINSKI, 1990–91, 195–196.

⁴⁹ Teodosije, 1988, 287–288; the original in: JOVANOVIĆ, 1980, 673–674.

⁵⁰ SREČKOVIĆ, 1882, 26; cf. also POPOVIĆ D., 1998, 137.

⁵¹ Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 399;

⁵² Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 3, No. 5598.

⁵³ POPOVIĆ D., 2005, 111–117.

⁵⁴ IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 395–396.

beautiful looking and, besides, partly fertile, southward and sunward, a mile up above the monastery, and in which is the church of three saints, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom” (иже више дѣчанїи кс(ть) во поустини та красна видѣнїемъ паче же и дѣломъ прѣдъспеваетъ прѣма югоу и въ вчїю сльнцоу, кс(ть) во више монастыра пьприще кдно въ нкиж(е) храмъ цркви светыхъ трехъ светитель, василїа великаго, григорїа богослова, ѿвана златоуста)<sup>55</sup>. From these data, it may be inferred with much certainty that the Three Hierarchs was a skete of Dečani, but the question of its recognition in the field remains open<sup>56</sup>.

Although far from complete, some knowledge has also been gained about monastic deserts from the last period of medieval Serbia’s independence (between the mid fourteenth and mid fifteenth centuries). From that period dates an exceptionally well-documented narrative, the Life of Romilus of Ravanica, which gives a detailed account of the monastic life in Paroria, one of the most eminent post-Byzantine deserts<sup>57</sup>. In view of the fact that monks were always on the move and in intercommunication across the Balkans, it seems reasonable to believe that Paroria’s patterns of monastic life were not unknown in the Serbian lands<sup>58</sup>. At any rate, the sources from the end of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries contain more than one reference to monastic deserts. The already mentioned hieromonk Theodore cites one such desert in the environs of Ljubostinja Monastery (central Serbia), “in Ljubostinja parts, near the monastery of the Dormition of the Virgin” (въ странахъ любостинскихъ оу поустыни близъ монастыра прѣчистык оуспѣнїа), without further commenting on its character<sup>59</sup>. He is much more specific, however, in narrating about the monastic communities in the area of the Monastery of the Presentation of the Virgin near Golubac on the Danube, which were established on the Dalša River, at the foot of Mt Visoka, where Theodore walked “many deserts and mountains adorned with caves and undrying springs, and alike to the sketes of the Fathers, as is known to the experienced ones” (поустынкъ прошьдъ и горы многы обвьшьдъ, пещерами же и прыснотекоущїими источники оукрашеноу оузрѣвъ и подобнаа скутомъ ѿчьскыимъ имоущїимъ искоуць)<sup>60</sup>. The latter remark of Theodore’s is likely to have resulted from his experience gained on Athos, whence, at the invitation of Despot Stefan Lazarević, he came to Serbia to set about manuscript copying. There is yet another interesting issue that future research should address, namely that of the interrelationship between the monastic communities in the gorge of the Crnica River, within the boundaries of the feudal estate known as Petrus, the strategic centre of which was Petrus Castle, and its true heart, the village of Lešje with hamlets (central Serbia, area of present-day Paraćin)<sup>61</sup>. Namely, the Charter of Prince Lazar to Среп Vukoslavić makes mention of the Petrus “wasteland” (пѣстошь) – in all probability meaning the monastic desert<sup>62</sup> – while a record of 1412 states that in the “desert of Lešje” (въ пѣстыни лѣщїанскои) a monk John transcribed a book<sup>63</sup>. Whether we have here one or, which is more likely, two distinct monastic communities, this source clearly shows that manuscript copying was, as it had been in earlier times, one of the principal activities of the monastic *deserts*.

The notion of the *desert* as a space intended for a higher and more austere form of monastic life is documented in seventeenth-century written sources as well. Interestingly, they contrast the terms *desert* and *world*. Thus, a manuscript inscription made at the Monastery of Morača in 1616 speaks of the “churches and monasteries in the deserts, and in the world, too” (на цркви и монастырѣ же иже сѣть въ поустинахъ же и въ мирѣ)<sup>64</sup>. A similar formulation is found in a note inscribed in a Psalter in 1643. It was transcribed on Athos, in the Skete of St Paul, in the Soter Cell, by the hand of the greatly sinful and “unworthy” monk Euthymius, whose “body dwells in the desert and the mind in the world” (въ скитѣ монастыра светаго павла, на ккѣлїи глаголкъмен сотирь, рѣкою многогрѣшнаго еудимїа, таха ѿнока, иже въ пѣстыни тѣломъ

<sup>55</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 6, No. 9395; TODIĆ, ČANAK-MEDIĆ, 2005, 97.

<sup>56</sup> SMIRNOV, BOŠKOVIĆ, 1933, 266; BOŠKOVIĆ, 1941, 113–114; IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 395.

<sup>57</sup> SIRKU, 1900, I–XXXIII, 1–53; for ubification of Paroria, DELIKARI, 2006, 219–220.

<sup>58</sup> AMFILOHIJE JEROMONAH, 1981, 101–134; LAIOU-THOMADAKIS, 1980, 84–114.

<sup>59</sup> TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1979, 186; Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, 80 (No. 250).

<sup>60</sup> TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1979, 187; Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, 81 (No. 250).

<sup>61</sup> MIHALJČIĆ, 1968, 264–267; KNEŽEVIĆ, 1980, 223–259; BRMBOLIĆ, 2000, 99–112.

<sup>62</sup> MIHALJČIĆ, 1976, 104.

<sup>63</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 217.

<sup>64</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 1039.

прѣывае, въ мирѣ же мѣдрованіемь)<sup>65</sup>. Finally, it is in light of these facts that the reasons should be looked at for which certain monastic communities have come to be named Desert (*Serb.* Pustinja), which is the case of monasteries near Prijepolje<sup>66</sup> and Valjevo<sup>67</sup>. It would also be useful to work out, as precisely as possible, what led the scribe Paul to engrave in the church of Rudenica Monastery, below the figure of the Apostle Paul on the south-western pilaster, a record of his visit to the “Rudenica Desert”<sup>68</sup>.

Compared to the term *desert* and the topoi and phrases combining the terms *desert*, *mountain* and *cave* in reference to the area intended for ascetical practices, the independent use of the term *mountain* meaning the monastic mountain is less frequent in the medieval Serbian written heritage. As in the case of the term *desert*, the practice is observable of using biblical quotations to clarify its meaning and function; for example, Psalm 15:1–2 (Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in the holy hill?), or the Prophet Daniel’s reference to “a great mountain” (2:34–35), or the evangelic message that “a city that is set on an hill cannot be hid” (Matt. 5:14). It certainly is not by accident that Psalm 121:1 (I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help) is a commonplace in the diplomatic material, notably in Emperor Dušan’s charters<sup>69</sup>. So, except for illustrious mountains of the Christian world, such as Sinai and, in particular, Athos – the two, by the way, being programmatically compared by Theodosius more than once<sup>70</sup> – explicit references to monastic holy mountains are a relatively rare occurrence. One of those rare examples is the already quoted reference Theodosius of Hilandar made to the mountain of Koriša, which in the Life of St Peter of Koriša is described as “God’s” and “holy”<sup>71</sup>, and in his Office as “holy named”<sup>72</sup>. The “mount of Lesnovo” (eastern Macedonia) (въ лесновскою горю) is referred to in this way not only in the Lives of Gabriel of Lesnovo and Joachim of Osogov<sup>73</sup>, but also in the well-known manuscript inscription of 1330 the greatly sinful Stanislav wrote in a Prologue he copied in the “mount of Lesnovo, in the monastery of the Holy Archistrategos Michael, at the grave of venerable Father Gabriel” (въ горѣ лѣсновскѣи, въ монастири с(вѣ)т(а)го архистратига михаила и 8 гроба прѣподобнаго ѿца гавриила)<sup>74</sup>. Apparently, the status of a monastic, holy, mountain was also conferred on Treskavac (near Prilep) with the monastery bearing the same name. This assumption is favoured by characteristic contents in the monastery’s surroundings as well as the fact that the first chrysobull King Stefan Dušan granted to Treskavac (1334/35) draws a parallel between the lifestyle of this monastic community and the rules obeyed on “Mount Sinai and the Holy Mount of Athos”<sup>75</sup>.

Monastic *mountains* are somewhat more frequently referred to in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Thus, in the reign of Despot Stefan Lazarević, the monks Dositheus and Moseus made four copies of the Books of Kings “under the wing of Mount Prozrak” near Ljubostinja Monastery (въ подкриліи горы прозрака влизь храма прѣчистые богородице иже на любостини)<sup>76</sup>. Quite similar phrases, evidencing to the activity of manuscript copying in a monastic mountain, are found in another two notes. One, dated 1566, states that a book of Ravanica Monastery was transcribed “under the wing of Mount Mojsinje, in Varlamovci Monastery” (въ подкриліе горы мовсиніе въ монастирѣ вар’ лавовцѣ)<sup>77</sup>. The other, dated 1673, is a vividly composed testimony to the continued existence of traditional patterns of ascetic monasticism both in terms of the nature of their abodes and their pursuits. So, that year, the monk Theodosius wrote a panegyric “under the wing of mounts Ovčar and Kablar, on the Morava River, in a humble structure in a large rock called Lestvica [Ladder]” (въ подкрилію горы овчара и каблара, на рѣцѣ моравѣ, въ нѣкоем хѣдем

<sup>65</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 1368.

<sup>66</sup> KNEŽEVIĆ, 1996, 79 (with earlier literature).

<sup>67</sup> PEJIĆ, 2002.

<sup>68</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Branislav Cvetković for this information.

<sup>69</sup> VUJOŠEVIĆ, forthcoming.

<sup>70</sup> Domentijan, 1988, 89, 210.

<sup>71</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 270, 271.

<sup>72</sup> JOVANOVIĆ-STIPČEVIĆ, 1988, 215.

<sup>73</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 395, 407.

<sup>74</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 56.

<sup>75</sup> SLAVEVA, MOŠIN, 1981, 77–78; Babik, 37–45; SMOLČIĆ-MAKULJEVIĆ, 2004, 287–322.

<sup>76</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 224.

<sup>77</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 654.



ГРАДИЛИШТИ ВЪ ВЕЛИЦЕ СТЕНЫ, ЗОВОМ ЛѢСТВИЦА)<sup>78</sup>. One should also look at the folk tradition where the areas with densely clustered sacral contents are called “Holy Mounts”. Thus, the already discussed area in the gorge of the Crnica River is known as “Little Holy Mount”, the monasteries in Ovčar-Kablar Gorge are called “Serbian Holy Mount”, the monastic communities in the Mojsinje range is referred to as “Holy Mount Mojsinje”, and the complex on Lake Scutari as the “Holy Mount of Zeta”<sup>79</sup>. It is well known that in the late medieval period these monastic mounts were seats of renowned ascetics of the Hesychast, Sinaitic, tradition, and the last mainstays of Orthodoxy. Some continued to exist even under Ottoman rule and, in keeping with their basic function, played the role of the custodians of tradition.

It remains to offer a few select examples in order to show in what ways the written sources speak about the purpose and significance of monastic *deserts* and *mounts*. The desert is a place of prayer, fast and hesychia<sup>80</sup>, a space of peacefulness, of a viceless and commotionless life<sup>81</sup>, but also the ultimate arena where the battle with demons is fought<sup>82</sup>. Deserts were eremitic abodes and “cities” as well<sup>83</sup>. This well-known phrase of Cyril of Scythopolis is an oft-used topos, defining the desert as a spiritual city and affirming that the monastic way of life and order is set up in one-time wastelands<sup>84</sup>. The purpose of such an enterprise is expounded clearly in the Life of St Joachim of Osogov. Once on Mount Osogov, Joachim “infused knowledge of God into the mountains and caves, converted the desert to a city and whereby attained eternal families and the Jerusalem above” (яко горы и вр’тпи осоговскыя в(о)горазуміа испальниль еси, поустыню град сътвориль еси .... яко въстекль еси къ вѣчнім обывтелкм и вышнаго иеросолима достигль еси)<sup>85</sup>. This goal, to reside in the abodes of the righteous of Heavenly Jerusalem, is the motivating force behind all eremitic pursuits<sup>86</sup>. Monastic *mountains* are described in an essentially identical manner in the written sources. They are important metaphors for spiritual ascent, as shown by the attributes attached: the mount of knowledge of charity<sup>87</sup>, the passionless mount<sup>88</sup>, the “great height of virtue, from which those who ascended to the height shine forth like the light”<sup>89</sup>. The pre-eminent of all mountains, Athos, is an embodiment of heaven and a “holy meadow”<sup>90</sup>, and below its “holy summit” dwell the most excellent, “heavenly men”<sup>91</sup>. It is not an accident that a spiritual Athonite to the core, Theodosius of Hilandar, is responsible for a superb and theologically profound poetic statement interpreting the mountain as an image of the Virgin: “A mount thoughtful and sacred, a mount of God, a mount of green, a mount infused with the Spirit, a mount alike to heaven, a mount higher than the mounts of heaven, to all angelic ranks equal, this is what the Pure Virgin and the Mother of my God is.”<sup>92</sup>

This look at the sources seems to confirm fully the initial assumptions regarding the meaning and function of the monastic locales labelled as *deserts* and *holy mountains*, and in a limited number of cases also as *caves*. The most important conclusions that may be drawn would be the following: the terms are interchangeable and were used both in a broader and a narrower sense, but in either case in reference to the space intended for higher forms of monastic life. A particularly broad range of meanings had the term *desert* which, as we have seen, could refer to a distinct locale, as a rule a river gorge, or a mountain inhabited by hermits, but also a cave hermitage, the hesychasterion of a coenobitic community. The distinct forms of

<sup>78</sup> Zapisi i natpisi, Vol. 1, No. 1303.

<sup>79</sup> BRMBOLIĆ, 1998–99 (with earlier literature); to the listed *holy mountains* should be added the mountain range Čičavica, divide between Kosovo and Metochia. Because of the large number of churches, monasteries and cells the area was once known as “Serbian Holy Mountain”, IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 544.

<sup>80</sup> BOGDANOVIĆ, 1986, 37 (Typikon of Karyeas).

<sup>81</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 118 (Life of St Sava); MARKO PEČKI, 1986, 166.

<sup>82</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 272–283 (Life of St Peter of Koriša); cf. GAGOVA, ŠPADIJER, 2001, l. c.

<sup>83</sup> Domentijan, 1988, 92, 289.

<sup>84</sup> CHITTY, 123–132; PATRICH, 1995, 353.

<sup>85</sup> POPOVIĆ D., forthcoming.

<sup>86</sup> IVANOV, 1970, 412.

<sup>87</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 103 (Life of St Sava).

<sup>88</sup> MARKO PEČKI, 1986, 172.

<sup>89</sup> SYRKU, 1900, 31–32.

<sup>90</sup> Stefan Prvovenčani, 1999, 4–7 (Charter of Hilandar).

<sup>91</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 117 (Life of St Sava).

<sup>92</sup> Teodosije, 1988, 200 (Life of St Sava); on the Virgin the Mountain, Radojčić, 1957, 212–222.

monastic life in such areas were communities of two or three or a few monks, organized as a skete or as a cell. Complete solitude was a rare occurrence. In the *deserts* and *mountains* hermits primarily pursued the practice of “agon and hesychia”, but were also engaged in manuscript copying – an important peculiarity of Serbian eremitic monasticism. Finally, such locales were thought of by their dwellers as spiritual cities and the narrow path leading to Heavenly Jerusalem<sup>93</sup>.

Aside from the written sources, another important aspect of our enquiry is concerned with spatial patterns and architectural designs of the monastic *deserts* and *mountains*. The research being in its initial phase, we are still very far from a comprehensive picture of the topography and morphology of such communities. On this occasion, therefore, the problem is looked at on the basis of selected and well-studied examples which should prove useful in establishing the research framework for this highly complex subject.

One of the first fully studied patterns of the monastic *desert* in the Serbian lands is the anchorite community that grew beneath the walls of Ras, a fortress set on a crag near modern Novi Pazar. In the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, this former strategic Byzantine stronghold was renovated to serve the purpose of a Serbian royal refugium. The focus of the community was the Monastery of the Archangel Michael. The complex was a fully developed whole comprising a range of components, both sacral and secular. The church, simple in form and relatively modest in size, was erected beneath a large rocky overhang, a nearby cave contained monks’ cells and a working area, and further to the east a granary and a reservoir were built. The cells intended for solitaries were set up in the surrounding caves, some of which were barely accessible. They communicated with each other, and with the monastery, by way of rock-cut paths, still partly passable.

The monastic community at Ras contained a number of other important elements. One of them is a fresco of the patron saint painted on the face of a commanding cliff. The key component of the Ras community is a pillar-like rock, presently accessible only with the aid of rock-climbing equipment. Visually and morphologically, the rock is reminiscent of the *stylos*, real or symbolic dwelling of extreme ascetics. On its flat top, which offers an amazing view of the area, stand the remains of a monumental solidly-built structure. The activity of manuscript copying evidenced by Elder Simeon’s note may have been carried out just there<sup>94</sup>.

The full significance of the Ras complex should be viewed in light of the fact that the anchorite community and the military stronghold not only were on the same elevation but in an immediate proximity to one another. The coexistence of the two very different contents, archeologically ascertained beyond any doubt, is only seemingly paradoxical. Namely, an entire ideology, deeply embedded in the Byzantine legacy, rested upon the concept of “spiritual warfare”, that is, upon the belief in the efficiency of holy men’s prayers in the battle against the enemy<sup>95</sup>. This notion, which had received a strong response in the Serbian environment from the earliest period of statehood, retained its appeal even later. Let me by way of illustration quote from Emperor Stefan Dušan’s Charter to Esphigmenou (1346/47): “Beautiful are the phalanx and the column of soldiers and military skills in battling enemies and suppressing adversaries, but much more than that, victory to my empire is brought by those who are armed with the sign of the cross and who stand as defenders before the authority and power of the Pantocrator, keeping enemies at bay far and wide with the weapon of their prayer. For the aid that comes from the former lies in multitude and strength and military equipment and the hideousness of soldiers, whereas from those who by the will of God take care of the state, the prayer and fasting of a single man, despite his lack of physical strength, brings down entire enemy phalanxes, without weapons and without a clash with the enemy, and brings victory, suppressing the attackers invisibly.”<sup>96</sup>

The idea and practice of the monastic *holy mountain* reached Serbia under the direct influence of Athos, mediated by the Serbian spiritual elite on whose life’s path the monastery of Hilandar was an unavoidable station<sup>97</sup>. The earliest known instance of the effort to follow the famous model and create a holy mountain in

<sup>93</sup> POPOVIĆ D., 2004, 552–585 (with earlier literature).

<sup>94</sup> POPOVIĆ D., POPOVIĆ M., 1999 (with sources and all earlier literature).

<sup>95</sup> POPOVIĆ M., 2004, 240–241.

<sup>96</sup> SOLOVJEV, MOŠIN, 1936, 107.

<sup>97</sup> □VOJINOVIĆ M., 1998.

the local environment is offered by the Monastery of St Peter of Koriša near Prizren. A brief account of the stages of its development would be as follows:

Around the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Peter, a radical hermit, embarked on an ascetic path in the Koriša River gorge, underneath the steep rocky cliff of Mount Rusenica. His dwelling and, eventually his burial place, was a barely accessible cave. His outstanding deeds, which attracted many followers, and the posthumous signs of his sainthood, earned Peter a cult. The inclusion of a Serbian anchorite among the saints was substantially facilitated by the fact that after 1219 this area changed hands from Byzantium to Serbia and came under the jurisdiction of the Serbian bishop seated at Prizren. This course of events was decisive for the shape the Koriša shrine was to take. Peter's cave was converted to a church which, in the latter half of the thirteenth century, became the centre of a monastic community. Its sacral core, and a focus of pilgrimage, was the hermit's holy and miracle-working relics. The key stage in the development of the cult took place in the 1310s, when the learned Athonite monk Theodosius arrived in Koriša with the task of preparing Peter's canonization. Namely, the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Serbian state required that a native hermit be included in the choir of national saints. In composing a life and office for St Peter, Theodosius drew on the supreme achievements of Byzantine ascetic literature, describing Koriša itself as "a beautiful dwelling God made for hermits" and explicitly naming it a "holy mountain". From that point the development of the monastic community followed the well-established pattern, repeated time and again in the Orthodox world. It grew into an influential coenobitic community, guardian of its sainted founder's relics, closely associated with Hilandar whose metochion it had become at an earlier date. With its new and large cave church dedicated to St Peter of Koriša, a revered focus of pilgrimage, round the middle of the fourteenth century the monastery enjoyed highest patronage, including the ruler himself<sup>98</sup>.

The effectiveness of the pattern employed found its full expression in the second half of the fourteenth century, when the monastery's powerful aura encouraged the growth of new monastic communities on the north-western slopes of Mt Šara. Recognizable in this process is the well-established mechanism of making an area sacred by converting it to a "holy mountain". Thus in the immediate vicinity of the monastery a small cave church dedicated to the Virgin was built. In the village itself, which bore the name of St Peter until the twentieth century and then was renamed Kabaš, there were at least three other churches, to judge from the discovered remains. A dense cluster of sacral buildings has also been ascertained in the village of Koriša. Besides the Church of St Peter, known to be the foundation of Elder Gregory of Hilandar, there were also the churches dedicated to St. Nicholas, St George and the Virgin. Somewhat to the north, on a cliff above the hamlet called Mužljak, was a fortified monastery, and on a rock overlooking the Koriša River, south-east of Koriša, stood the Monastery of St Mark, which also had a cave hermitage. In the village of Ljubizda, four kilometres to the north-east of Prizren, remains of as many as eleven Orthodox Christian shrines have been recorded. Further to the north-east, in the Mušutište village area, some ten churches, most of them of a medieval date, have been reliably attested. Particularly interesting in the context of the subject discussed here is the Trinity Monastery known as Rusinica, on a hill above Mušutište, and its monumentally designed cave hermitage. That there was in this area a marked penchant for cave monasticism is demonstrated by other eremitic communities, such as the splendid complex of hermitages at Matos<sup>99</sup>. Apart from these only partially investigated communities "in the rocks", in all likelihood more numerous in the past, there must be on the slopes of Mt Šara as yet unrecognized remains characteristic of anchoritic habitations. It is deplorable, therefore, that the incipient investigation of these sites was interrupted by the hostilities and bombing of 1999, and made impossible to resume by the known course of events in their wake.

Mount Lesnovo undoubtedly is yet another full-fledged model of the monastic mountain. It may well be regarded as a representative example not only for the fortunate circumstance that numerous and interesting sites have survived in that area, almost inaccessible until the last quarter of the twentieth century, but also for the fact that they have been investigated in a methodologically exemplary manner. Although the gorge of the Lesnovo River was the site of building activity even in early Christian times, the chief incentive for

<sup>98</sup> BOJOVIĆ, 1998; GAGOVA, ŠPADIJER, 2001; POPOVIĆ D., 1997, 181–212.

<sup>99</sup> For the essentials about these monastic communities, IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 454 (Kabaš of Koriša); 460–463 (Koriša); 475–476 (Ljubizda); 488–490 (Mušutište, Rusinica, Matos); cf. also POPOVIĆ D., 1998 (with sources and all earlier literature).

monasticism was provided by the illustrious foundation of Despot Jovan Oliver, dated to the 1340s. Several churches, both of a medieval and of a later date, have been identified within the boundaries of the monastic estate in the gorge of the Lesnovo River. It is significant that some of them are referred to as sketes in a later but valuable source. In addition to these sacral buildings, evidence for the anchoritic way of life in the gorge has also been registered, for example cave hermitages, such as the mid-fourteenth-century one known as the Virgin's on the site Kolarsko, or that of St Elijah, on the mountain top above the Monastery of Lesnovo, with frescoes dated to the second half of the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries. Finally, worthy of attention are the traces of a community on the ridge Belo Mesto–Ručnik–Peštari which, in addition to various interesting components such as a rock-cut grape press, contained cave dwellings<sup>100</sup>.

Fieldwork carried out more recently and the inspiring scholarly results relevant to the subject achieved on a global scale<sup>101</sup> have enhanced our insights into the sacral topography of certain monastic *mountains* within the boundaries of medieval Serbia. Such is the case of Treskavac Monastery near Prilep, in the environs of which many previously unrecognized contents have been registered: a cave hermitage above the monastery, rock icons, a miraculous spring and, lastly, the “sacred summit” of Treskavac, known as Zlatovrh (Golden Peak), a focus of pilgrimage for centuries<sup>102</sup>. Investigations in central Serbia also promise advances in our understanding of the subject, most of all the anchoritic communities in Gornjak Gorge and the already mentioned monastic *mountains* in the gorge of the Crnica River in the Kučaj Mountains, well-documented in sources<sup>103</sup>.

In the future the research into the spatial patterns of monastic *deserts* and *mountains* will certainly address some specific and quite interesting issues, such as the topos *inner deserts*, discussed above. The example of St Prochorus is exceptionally important in that respect, because hagiographic data are still recognizable in the field. Thus, his “Nagoričino desert” is substantiated by a small cave some fifty metres from the Church of St George at Staro Nagoričino. In 1875 the villagers of Nagoričino erected a chapel above it as a devout tribute<sup>104</sup>. The holy Father's progress towards his new abode is traceable clearly enough in space. From Nagoričino Prochorus took a northerly course along the Pčinja River, which in all probability coincided with the traditional pilgrimage route known as “Kumanovo Road”. The hermit made a stop at the mountain which later was named Starac (Ava) after him, and then resumed his journey towards the inner, “Vranje desert”. Prochorus chose the site for his new hermitage in an out-of-the-way corner of Mount Kozjak, about half-an-hour's walk from the present-day Monastery of St Prochorus of Pčinja. This impressive and as yet unspoilt wilderness preserves many sacral loci that are still associated with the renowned hermit. If toponymy and living folk traditions are added, the reasons become clear why the whole mountain can be seen as a *memoria* to holy Father Prochorus<sup>105</sup>.

Enquiries into the spatial patterns of monastic *deserts* include the question of the physical structures and contents of so-called little monasteries or sketes. On this occasion, two select examples will be singled out. One is the monastic community at Belaje near Dečani. Belaje was the heart of the Dečani desert extending along the left bank of the Bistrica River beneath rocky Streočka Mountain. In its cliffs many cave hermitages were set up, seven of which are, it is to be hoped, still relatively well preserved<sup>106</sup>. Even in the early twentieth century it was within memory that on Sundays the Dečani hermits had used to assemble at Belaje for communal prayer and communion, but also to see to their weekly food supply<sup>107</sup>. Written sources leave little room for doubt that this *desert* was a busy hub of manuscript copying, and over a long period of time. Unfortunately, its physical remains are virtually unexplored. Best known are the vestiges of a cave church

<sup>100</sup> GABELIĆ, 1984, 163–174; GABELIĆ, 1998, 239–245 (with all earlier literature).

<sup>101</sup> BAKIRTZIS, 2006, 126–139; BROWN, 2006, 117–124.

<sup>102</sup> SMOLČIĆ-MAKULJEVIĆ, 2004 (with bibliography).

<sup>103</sup> See note 56 above.

<sup>104</sup> HADŽI-VASILJEVIĆ, 1900, 65–66; CVETKOVIĆ, 2006, 100.

<sup>105</sup> HADŽI-VASILJEVIĆ, 1900, 87; GAGULIĆ, 1965, 10–12; CVETKOVIĆ, 2006, 98–99; on the Church of St George at Staro Nagoričino, TODIĆ, 1993.

<sup>106</sup> SMIRNOV, BOŠKOVIĆ, 1933, 264–266; BOŠKOVIĆ, 1941, 114; IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 395–396; TODIĆ, ČANAK-MEDIĆ, 2006, 18, 61, 97–98; precious information about Belaje is provided by the travel account by Muir Mackenzie, Irby, 1867, 430–443.

<sup>107</sup> NINKOVIĆ, 1927, 23–29.

and its wall-paintings, but the adjoining cave and the area to the west, where, in 1998, we found what had survived of the walls of the complex, are completely unexplored.

A remarkable but little known example is the monastic community at Matos, south-east of the village of Mušutište (the Prizren area). Difficult to get to, this complex combines different contents, sacral as well as profane, which indicate that it was the monastery's skete. At the foot of a rock formation, in the narrow belt along the cliff, a small single-nave church was built, next to it, a massive building rectangular in plan, apparently intended as a dwelling, while the natural caves were adapted for various purposes. Anchoritic cells in five or six rows were set up in the cliff over 60 metres high. The caves are interconnected by paths and rock-cut steps, and their interiors reveal usual interventions: smoothed cave walls, timber beams as part of perished constructions between floor levels, seats and benches, as well as niches where icons and books were kept<sup>108</sup>.

Architectural designs employed for monastic *deserts* are another important aspect of the subject discussed here. The appearance and type of anchoritic abodes, however, is one of the questions that are most difficult to deal with today. The basic dwelling type, which is a hut, is attested in documentary sources and in art, but all material traces are long gone. Consequently, the cave dwellings provide a precious, often the only, source of information. They, however, fall into the most endangered category of heritage. On the one hand, they are uncared for and progressively decaying, and on the other, usually being in roadless areas suffering severe depopulation, they are steadily falling into oblivion. The elementary type of anchoritic cell was a cave with its mouth walled up, leaving an opening to serve as the entrance and a small window. References to caves walled up and converted to dwellings are found in narrative sources, and the comparatively large number of surviving examples shows that the practice was widespread. In exceptional cases, the design could take on a monumental form. Such pattern was inaugurated in the Monastery of Studenica. "Sava's Hermitage", constructed in a spacious funnel-shaped cave, is a massive multistoried structure equipped with the necessary furnishings for the labours of daily life of a select community of monks, such as the subterranean rooms with a source of water and a hearth, or fireplaces built on every level. The complex of this hesychasterion included an access bridge, a chapel dedicated to St George and a walled-up cave at its entrance<sup>109</sup>. The model set at Studenica is not a lonely example in medieval Serbia, one of the best-preserved monuments being the hermitage of the Annunciation Monastery in Gornjak Gorge<sup>110</sup>. An example of a monumental hesychasterion constructed in a walled-up cave is also provided by recently investigated Bjeličkovica, one of the cells of Banja Monastery near Priboj (western Serbia). This is a solid-built, spacious, three-storied structure with windows and fireplaces on each level<sup>111</sup>.

A somewhat different pattern was employed for the hermitages of the Monastery of Mileševa, about two kilometres south-east of the monastery, in a mass of rock at the downstream end of the canyon of the Mileševka River. Namely, instead of walling-up caves and rock shelters, the dwelling structures were built in front of them. One gets the impression that the barely accessible landscape and the caves "not-made-by-hand" were just a frame, physical as well as conceptual, a stage set as it were, for the realization of a particular building project. The hermitages of Mileševa constitute a remarkably elaborate and interesting cave complex with two chronological horizons and diverse components. Its central portion, known as "Savine vode" (Sava's Waters), consists of the access area with rock-cut steps and vestiges of a partition wall, and two cave rooms. The eastern one was converted to a chapel, while the one on the opposite, western, side contains a well-known miraculous spring. The structure in front of the entrance to the cave was built from tuff blocks and strengthened with mighty timbers. The same building method was employed for the so-called "Upper Hermitage", erected at the highest point of the complex and presently inaccessible without rock-climbing equipment. It was connected with Sava's Waters by a cave shaft furnished with rock-cut steps and handrails<sup>112</sup>, a communication system proper – though not very common – to cave dwellings where

<sup>108</sup> IVANOVIĆ, 1987, 489–490; POPOVIĆ D., 1998 140–144 (with earlier literature).

<sup>109</sup> TEMERINSKI, 1986, l. c.

<sup>110</sup> CUNJAK, 2000, 75–76.

<sup>111</sup> POPOVIĆ D., 2005, 112–114.

<sup>112</sup> POPOVIĆ D., 2002a, 53–60.

nearly inaccessible points are reached with the aid of ropes, ladders and simple wooden devices used by the anchoritic communities of the Judean Desert, Athos or Meteora till this day<sup>113</sup>.

This hermitage type, consciously erected in front of a cave or a cliff, was not a rare occurrence in medieval Serbia. One of the representative examples is the monumental structure known as the "Hermitage of Stefan of Dečani" in the gorge of the Bistrica River<sup>114</sup>. Ongoing investigations of cave monasticism in the valley of the Lim River (Polimlje) have significantly expanded our knowledge about architectural designs used for medieval anchoritic dwellings. A remarkable example is Orlić, a hesychasterion of Žitin Monastery in the middle Lim River (western Serbia), the importance of which is additionally supported by the fact that archaeological finds date it to the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The hermitage at Orlić is set up in front of a spacious cave consisting of two large channels and several chambers, and containing a source of water. The cave was converted to a dwelling by walling up its smaller, eastern, mouth, obviously for security reasons, while in front of the larger, western, one a massive wall was erected with an opening enabling entrance to the cave. The surviving traces in the wall and on the surrounding rock faces suggest that the hermits dwelled in wooden lean-tos resting against the wall and propped with braces, a solution which has its contemporary analogies, on Athos in particular<sup>115</sup>.

This paper has consciously begun with some general principles bearing on the monastic *deserts* and *mountains*, and concluded with data about a particular or local, hitherto virtually unknown, collection of documentary and monumental evidence the investigation of which is ongoing. Such an approach derives from my firm belief that it is systematic and well-designed fieldwork projects that should be expected to bring fresh results and true advances in this particular field of research. Although documented in written sources, the monastic *deserts* and *mountains* are not easily recognizable in the field. The search for them should therefore involve a method that in addition to standard indicators such as structural remains, archaeological finds and toponymy, relies on some other, generally overlooked elements. As diagnostic in that respect, I would mention the following: first of all caves, which for practical or symbolical reasons were the preferred habitation of medieval Serbian anchorites; roads and rock-cut paths; rock paintings, and rock-engraved crosses and other prophylactic symbols; the presence of a "holy spring"; vistas on commanding sites, possibly involving rock-cut seats. From my fieldwork experience, to these "codes" should be added unusual landscape features, natural or "not-made-by-hand", as well as the presence of particular plant and animal species as an integral part of one-time anchorite settings. Only such an integrated approach going across the narrow disciplinary boundaries is likely to bring us closer to understanding the distinctive "sacral" space of medieval monastic *deserts* and *mountains*.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AMFILOHIJE JEROMONAH, 1981 = JEROMONAH AMFILOHIJE, *Синаити и њихов значај у животу Србије XIV и XV века*, in: Манастир Раваница, Споменица о шестој стогодишњици, Београд 1981, 101–134.
- ВАВИЋ, КОРАЋ, ЋИРКОВИЋ, 1986 = Г. БАБИЋ, В. КОРАЋ, С. ЋИРКОВИЋ, *Студеница* (The Monastery of Studenica), Београд 1986.
- ВАВИЋ, 1981 = Б. БАБИЋ, *Манастирот Трескавец со црквата св. Успение Богородичино*, Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија, IV, Скопје 1981.
- BAKIRTZIS, 2006 = N. BAKIRTZIS, *The Creation of an Hierotopos in Byzantium*, in: Hierotopy. The creation of sacred spaces in Byzantium and medieval Russia, ed. A. M. LIDOV, Moscow 2006, 126–139.
- BERNBAUM, 1997 = E. BERNBAUM, *Sacred Mountains of the World*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1997.
- BOGDANOVIĆ, 1986 = *Свети Сава, Сабрани списи*, ed. Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, Београд 1986.
- BOGDANOVIĆ, 1986a = Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, *Предговор* in: Теодосије, *Житија*, Београд 1986, 9–96.
- BOGDANOVIĆ, ЂУРИЋ, МЕДАКОВИЋ, 1987 = Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, В. Ј. ЂУРИЋ, Д. МЕДАКОВИЋ, *Хиландар* (The Monastery of Hilandar), Београд 1987.
- ВОЈОВИЋ, 1998 = *Манастир Црна Ријека и свети Петар Коришки* (Monastery Crna Rijeka and Saint Peter Koriški), ed. Д. БОЛОВИЋ, Приштина–Београд 1988.

<sup>113</sup> POPOVIĆ D., 2004, 583.

<sup>114</sup> VOŠKOVIĆ, 1941, 113–114, Pl. 16.

<sup>115</sup> POPOVIĆ M., 2005, 85.

- BOŠKOVIĆ, 1941 = Ђ. БОШКОВИЋ, *Манастир Дечани I* (Monastery of Dečani I), Београд 1941.
- BROWN, 2006 = P. BROWN, *Chorotope. Theodore of Sykeon and His Sacred Landscape*, in: The creation of sacred spaces in Byzantium and medieval Russia, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moscow 2006.
- BRMBOLIĆ, 2000 = М. БРМБОЛИЋ, *Мала Света Гора у клисури реке Црнице* (The Little Holy Mount in the River Crnica Gorge), Саопштења XXX–XXXI/1998–1999 (2000) 99–112.
- CHITTY, 1966 = D. J. CHITTY, *The Desert a City. An Introduction to the Study of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire*, Oxford 1966.
- SUNJAK, 2000 = М. ЦУЊАК, *Светиње Горњачке клисуре*, Смедерево 2000.
- CVETKOVIĆ, 2006 = Б. ЦВЕТКОВИЋ, *Теренска истраживања у области Врања и Пчиње у 2005. години*, Гласник Друштва конзерватора Србије 30 (2006) 98–100.
- ĆOROVIĆ, 1928 = В. ЋОРОВИЋ, *Стиси св. Саве*, vol. 1, Београд–Сремски Карловци 1928.
- Danilo Drugi, 1988 = Данило Други, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, ed. Г. МАК ДАНИЈЕЛ, Д. ПЕТРОВИЋ, Београд 1988.
- DANIČIĆ, 1860 = Ђ. ДАНИЧИЋ, *Живот светоза Саве. Написао Доментијан* (=Теодосије), Београд 1860.
- DANIČIĆ, 1865 = Ђ. ДАНИЧИЋ, *Живот светоза Симеуна и светоза Саве*, Београд 1865.
- DANIČIĆ, 1866 = Архиепископ Данило и други, *Животи краљева и архиепископа српских*, издао Ђ. ДАНИЧИЋ, Загреб 1866.
- DELIKARI, 2006 = А. DELIKARI, *Ein Beitrag zu historisch-geographischen Fragen auf dem Balkan: "Paroria". Neue Angaben zur Lokalisierung des Klostergebietes von Gregorios Sinaites*, Proceedings of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Byzantine Studies, vol. II, Abstracts of Panel papers, London 2006, 219–220 and Heilige Berge und Wüsten ... 71–76.
- Doментijан, 1988 = Доментијан, *Живот Светоза Саве и Живот Светоза Симеона*, ed. Р. МАРИНКОВИЋ, Београд 1988.
- DUYSNEV, 1947 = И. ДУЈЧЕВ, *Рилският светец и неговата обител*, София 1947.
- ЂURIĆ, 1987 = Милешева у историји српског народа (Mileševa dans l'histoire du peuple serbe), ed. В. Ј. ЂУРИЋ, Београд 1987.
- ЂURIĆ, ЋIRKOVIĆ, KORAĆ, 1990 = В. Ј. ЂУРИЋ, С. ЋИРКОВИЋ, В. КОРАЋ, *Пећка патријаршија* (The Patriarchate of Peć), Београд 1990.
- ЂURIĆ, РЕЉИĆ, KRSTANOVIĆ, TEMERINSKI, 1990–1991 = С. ЂУРИЋ, С. ПЕЉИЋ, Б. КРСТАНОВИЋ, С. ТЕМЕРИНСКИ, *Споменици у сливу Студенице. Опис и стање* (Les monuments du bassin de la Studenica), Саопштења XXII–XXIII (1990–1991) 183–226.
- GABELIĆ, 1984 = С. ГАБЕЛИЋ, *Непознати локалитети у околини лесновског манастира* (Surroundings of Lesnovo. Unknown localities), Зборник за ликовне уметности Матице српске 20 (1984) 163–174.
- GABELIĆ, 1998 = С. ГАБЕЛИЋ, *Манастир Лесново* (The Monastery of Lesnovo), Београд 1998.
- GAGOVA, ŠPADIJER, 2001 = Н. ГАГОВА, И. ШПАДИЈЕР, *Две варијанте анахоретског типа у јужнословенској хагиографији* (Two versions of the anchoritic type in the South-Slavic hagiography), in: Словенско средњовековно наслеђе, Зборник посвећен професору Ђорђу Трифуновићу, ed. З. ВИТИЋ, Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, И. ШПАДИЈЕР, Београд 2001, 159–175.
- GAGULIĆ, 1965 = П. В. ГАГУЛИЋ, *Манастир Свети Прохор Пчињски*, Ниш 1965.
- GOENRING, 1999 = J. E. GOENRING, *Ascetics, Society and the Desert. Studies in Early Egyptian Monasticism*, Harrisburg, PA 1999.
- GUILLAUMONT, 1979 = А. GUILLAUMONT, *La conception du desert chez les moines d'Egypte*, in: Aux origins du monachisme chrétien, Paris 1979, 67–87.
- HADŽI-VASILJEVIĆ, 1900 = Ј. ХАЏИ-ВАСИЉЕВИЋ, *Свети Прохор Пчињски и његов манастир*, Годишњица Николе Чупића XX (1900) 59–116.
- IVANOV, 1970 = Ђ. ИВАНОВ, *Български старини из Македонија*, София 1970.
- IVANOVIĆ, 1987 = М. ИВАНОВИЋ, in: Задужбине Косова, Призрен–Београд 1987.
- JAGIĆ, 1875 = *Константин Филозоф и његов живот Стефана Лазаревића деспота српскога*, ed. В. ЈАГИЋ, Гласник СУД XLII (1875) 223–328.
- JOVANOVIĆ, 1881 = А. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, *Пчиња, Историјска црта из нове српске покрајине*, Гласник Српског ученог друштва XLIX (1881) 316–345.
- JOVANOVIĆ, 1980 = Теодосије Хиландарац, *Житије Петра Коришког*, ed. Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, Књижевна историја XII/48 (1980) 635–681.
- JOVANOVIĆ-STIPČEVIĆ, 1988 = Теодосије, *Службе, канони и Похвала*, ed. Б. ЈОВАНОВИЋ-СТИПЧЕВИЋ, Београд 1988.
- KAŠANIN, ČANAK-MEDIĆ, MAKSIMOVIĆ, TODIĆ, ŠAKOTA, 1986 = М. КАШАНИН, М. ЧАНАК-МЕДИЋ, Б. ТОДИЋ, М. ШАКОТА, *Манастир Студеница* (The Monastery of Studenica), Београд 1986.
- Konstantin Filozof, 1989 = Константин Филозоф, *Житије деспота Стефана Лазаревића*, ed. Г. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, Београд 1989.
- KORAĆ 1988 = Студеница и византијска уметност око 1200. године (Studenica et l'art byzantin autour de l'année 1200), ed. В. КОРАЋ, Београд 1988.
- KORAĆ, 2000 = Осам векова Хиландара (Huit siècles du monastère de Chilandar), Историја, духовни живот, књижевност, уметност и архитектура, ed. В. КОРАЋ, Београд 2000.
- KNEŽEVIĆ, 1980 = Б. КНЕЖЕВИЋ, *Средњовековне цркве и манастири у долини Црнице* (Eglises et monastères médiévaux dans la vallée de la Crnica), Зборник за ликовне уметности Матице српске 16 (1980) 223–257.
- KNEŽEVIĆ, 1996 = Б. КНЕЖЕВИЋ, *Цркве и манастири у средњем Полимљу* (Churches and Monasteries in the Central Polimlje), Милешевски записи 2 (1996) 71–90.

- KNEŽEVIĆ, 2000 = Б. КНЕЖЕВИЋ, *Аркосолијуми у Хиландару и у српским средњовековним манастирима* (Arcosolia in Hilandar and in Medieval Serbian Monasteries), in: Осам векова Хиландара. Историја, духовни живот, књижевност, уметност и архитектура, ed. В. Кораћ, Београд 2000, 595–610.
- LAIYOU-THOMADAKIS, 1980 = А. LAIYOU-THOMADAKIS, *Saints and Society in the Late Byzantine Empire*, in: Charanis Studies, ed. А. LAIYOU-THOMADAKIS, New Brunswick, New Jersey 1980, 84–114.
- LEONID ARHIMANDRIT, 1868 = АРХИМАНДРИТ ЛЕОНИД, *Стара српска писма из руског манастира Св. Пантелјмона у Св. Гори*, Гласник српског ученог друштва 24 (1868) 232–236.
- ЛОМА, 1990 = А. ЛОМА, *Рани слојеви хришћанских топонима на старосрпском тлу* (Frühe Schichten christlicher Ortsnamen auf altserbischem Boden), Ономотолошки прилози XI (1990) 1–18.
- Marko Pečki, 1986 = Марко Пећи, *Житије светог патријарха Јефрема*, in: Шест писаца XIV века, ed. Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, Београд 1986.
- Marko Pečki, 1986a = *Синаксар Герасима и Јефимије*, in: Шест писаца XIV века, ed. Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, Београд 1986.
- МИНАЈЋИЋ, 1968 = Р. МИХАЉЧИЋ, *Где се налазио град Петрус?*, Прилози за књижевност, језик и фолклор 34/1–2 (1968) 264–267.
- МИНАЈЋИЋ, 1976 = Р. МИХАЉЧИЋ, *Прилог српском дипломатару, Даровнице властеоске породице Вукославић*, Историјски гласник 1–2 (1976) 99–105.
- МИЛОШЕВИЋ, 1999 = Р. МИЛОШЕВИЋ, *Келија*, in: Лексикон српског средњег века, ed. С. Ћирковић, Р. Михаљчић, Београд 1999, 287–288.
- MUIR MACKENZIE, IRBY, 1867 = G. MUIR MACKENZIE, A. P. Irby, *Travels in the Slavonic Provinces of Turkey-in-Europe*, London 1867.
- Анонимous Athonite, 1986 = Непознати Светогорац, *Житије старца Исаије*, in: Шест писаца XIV века, ed. Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, Београд 1986, 91–97.
- NINKOVIĆ, 1927 = Ј. НИНКОВИЋ, *Браство Лавре Високих Дечана, његова борба и рад*, Пећ 1927.
- PAPACHRYSSANTHOU, 2003 = Δ. ΠΑΠΑΧΡΥΣΑΝΘΟΥ, *Ο Αθωνικός μοναχισμός άρχές και όργάνωση*, Αθήνα 1992.
- PAVLOVIĆ, 1965 = Ј. ПАВЛОВИЋ, *Култови лица код Срба и Македонаца*, Смедерево 1965.
- PAVLOVIĆ, 1987 = Ј. ПАВЛОВИЋ, *Белешке о манастиру Студеници* (Notes sur le monastère de Studenica), Саопштења XIX (1987) 162–172.
- PATRICH, 1995 = J. PATRICH, *Sabas, Leader of Palestinian Monasticism. A Comparative Study in Eastern Monasticism, Fourth to Seventh Centuries*, Washington D. C. 1995.
- РЕЉС, 2002 = С. ПЕЈИЋ, *Манастир Пустинја* (Pustinja Monastery), Београд 2002.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 1997 = D. ROPović, *The Cult of St. Petar of Koriša, Stages of Development and Patterns*, Balcanica XXVIII (1997) 181–211.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 1998 = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *Средњовековне пећине-испоснице у призренском крају – претходна истраживања* (Medieval caves-hermitages in the region of Prizren) Историјски часопис XLIV (1998) 129–154.
- ROPOVIĆ D., ROPović M., 1999 = D. ROPović, M. ROPović, *The Cave Lavra of the Archangel Michael in Ras*, Старинар XLIX/1998 (1999) 103–130.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 2002 = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *Пустиножителство светог Саве Српског* (Hermitism of St. Sava of Serbia), in: Култ светих на Балкану II, ed. М. Детелић, Лицеум 7 (2002) 61–79.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 2002a = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *Пећинске цркве и испоснице у области Полимља – досадашњи резултати и правци даљег проучавања* (Cave churches and ascetic places in the area of Polimlje), Милешевски записи 5 (2002) 47–61.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 2004 = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *Монах-пустинјак*, in: Приватни живот у српским земљама средњег века, ed. С. Марјановић-Душанић, Д. Поповић, Београд 2004, 525–552.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 2005 = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *'Пустинја' Бјеличковица* (A hermitage at Bjeličkovica), Милешевски записи 6 (2005) 11–118.
- ROPOVIĆ D., 2006 = Д. ПОПОВИЋ, *Патријарх Јефрем – један позносредњовековни светитељски култ* (Patriarch Ephrem: A late medieval saintly cult), Зборник радова Византолошког института 43 (2006) 111–125.
- ROPOVIĆ D., forthcoming = D. ROPović, *Desert as Heavenly Jerusalem: the imagery of sacred space in making* in: New Jerusalem, The Translation of Sacred Spaces in Christian Culture, ed. А. М. LIDOV (forthcoming).
- ROPOVIĆ M., 2004 = М. ПОПОВИЋ, *Вештина ратовања и живот војника*, in: Приватни живот у српским земљама средњег века, ed. С. Марјановић-Душанић, Д. Поповић, Београд 2004, 218–246.
- ROPOVIĆ M., 2005 = М. ПОПОВИЋ, *Остаци манастирског комплекса у Житину* (Remains of a monastic complex at Žitin), Милешевски записи 6 (2005) 85, 79–89.
- ROPOVIĆ S., 2001 = S. ROPović, *Sabaite Influence on the Church of Medieval Serbia*, in: The Sabaite Heritage in the Orthodox Church from the Fifth Century to the Present, ed. J. PATRICH, Leuven 2001, 385–407.
- RADOJČIĆ, 1957 = С. РАДОЈЧИЋ, *Епизода о Богородици–Гори у Теодосијевом „Животу св. Саве“ и њена веза са сликарством XIII и XIV века*, Прилози за књижевност, језик и фолклор XXIII/3–4 (1957) 212–222.
- RADOJČIĆ, 1971 = С. РАДОЈЧИЋ, *Милешева* (Monastery of Mileševa), Београд 1971.
- RAKOŠIJA, 1997 = М. РАКОШИЈА, *Манастир светог оца Прохора Пчињског*, Врање 1997.
- RUSSEL, WARD, 1981 = *The Lives of the Desert Fathers, The Historia monachorum in Aegypto*, trans. N. RUSSEL, Introduction B. WARD, London–Oxford 1981.



- SYRКУ, 1900 = *Монаха Григория Житие Преподобнаго Ромила*, ed. П. А. СЫРКУ, Памятники древней письменности и искусства, Санктпетербургъ 1900, 1–54.
- SLAVEVA, MOŠIN, 1980 = *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија III*, ed. Л. СЛАВЕВА, В. МОШИН, Скопје 1980.
- SLAVEVA, MOŠIN, 1981 = *Споменици за средновековната и поновата историја на Македонија IV*, ed. Л. СЛАВЕВА, В. МОШИН, Скопје 1981.
- SMIRNOV, BOŠKOVIĆ, 1933 = С. СМІРНОВ, Ђ. БОШКОВИЋ, *Археолошке белешке из Метохије и Прекорупља* (Notes archéologiques de Metochia et de Prekoruplje), *Старинар VIII–IX* (1933) 255–276.
- SMOLČIĆ-MAKULJEVIĆ, 2004 = С. СМОЛЧИЋ-МАКУЉЕВИЋ, *Сакрална топографија манастира Трескавца* (The Sacral Topography of the Monastery of Treskavac), *Balkanica XXXV* (2004) 285–322.
- SOLOVJEV, MOŠIN, 1936 = А. СОЛОВЈЕВ, В. МОШИН, *Грчке повеље српских владара*, Београд 1936.
- SREĆKOVIĆ, 1882 = П. СРЕЋКОВИЋ, *Путничке слике*, *Летопис Матице српске* 130 (1882) 12–35.
- Stefan Prvovenčani = Стефан Првовенчани, *Сабрана дела*, ed. Љ. ЈУХАС-ГЕОРГИЈЕВСКА, Т. ЈОВАНОВИЋ, Београд 1999.
- SUBOTIĆ, 1998 = *Манастир Хиландар* (Monastery of Hilandar), ed. Г. СУБОТИЋ, Београд 1998.
- TALBOT, 1991 = А.-М. Т(ALBOT), *Holy Mountain*, in: *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2, 1991, 941.
- TALBOT, 1991A = А.-М. Т(ALBOT), *Kellion*, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 2 (1991) 1120.
- TALBOT, 2001 = А.-М. TALBOT, *Les saintes montagnes à Byzance*, in: *Le sacré et son inscription à Byzance et en Occident, études comparées*, ed. М. КАРЛАН, Paris 2001, 263–318.
- TEMERINSKI, 1986 = С. ТЕМИРИНСКИ, *Горња испосница у Савову код Студенице*, in: *Осам векова Студенице*, Београд 1986, 257–260.
- Teodosije, 1988 = Теодосије, *Житија*, ed. Д. БОГДАНОВИЋ, Београд 1988.
- T(HOMPSON), C(UTLER), 1991 = J. A. T(HOMPSON), A. C(UTLER), *Desert*, in: *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, vol. 1, 1991.
- TODIĆ, 1993 = Б. ТОДИЋ, *Старо Нагоричино* (Staro Nagoričino), Београд 1993.
- TODIĆ, ČANAK-MEDIĆ, 2005 = Б. ТОДИЋ, М. ЧАНАК-МЕДИЋ, *Манастир Дечани* (The Monastery of Dečani), Београд 2005.
- TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1967 = Ђ. ТРИФУНОВИЋ, *Житије светог патријарха Јефрема од епископа Марка*, *Анали Филолошког факултета* 7 (1967) 67–73.
- TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1979 = *Деспот Стефан Лазаревић, Књижевни радови*, ed. Ђ. ТРИФУНОВИЋ, Београд 1979.
- TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1999 = Ђ. ТРИФУНОВИЋ, *Две повеље цара Душана*, *Источник VIII/31/32* (1999) 5–13.
- TRIFUNOVIĆ, 1999A = Ђ. ТРИФУНОВИЋ, *Цар Душан о свом боравку на Светој Гори*, *Источник VIII/31* (1999) 18–25.
- TRIFUNOVIĆ, 2004 = Ђ. ТРИФУНОВИЋ, *Запис старца Симеона у Вукановом јеванђељу*, in: *Са светогорских извора*, Београд 2004, 65–88.
- VASILJEV 2000 = Љ. ВАСИЉЕВ, *Ко је инок из Далше, хиландарски писар прве половине XV века* (Who is Inok of Dalša, Hilandar Scribe, from the First Half of the 15th Century) in: *Осам векова Хиландара, Историја, духовни живот, књижевност, уметност и архитектура*, ed. В. КОРАЋ, Београд 2000, 399–402.
- VUJOŠEVIĆ, 2006 = Ж.. ВУЈОШЕВИЋ, *Хрисовуља цара Стефана Душана Хиландару о селу Потолину*, *Стари српски архив* 5 (2006).
- VUJOŠEVIĆ, forthcoming = Ж. ВУЈОШЕВИЋ, *Стари завет у аренгама повеља цара Стефана Душана* (forthcoming).
- Zapisi i natpisi = Љ. СТОЈАНОВИЋ, *Стари српски записи и натписи*, vol. 1, Београд 1982.
- ŽIVOJNOVIĆ D., 2003 = Д. ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ, *Хрисовуља цара Стефана Душана Карејској келији Светог Саве Јерусалимског* (*Хил. 30*), *Стари српски архив* 1 (2002), 69–78.
- ŽIVOJNOVIĆ D., 2005 = Д. ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ, *Акт архиепископа Никодима I за келију Светог Саве Јерусалимског у Кареји*, *Стари српски архив* 4 (2005) 89–106.
- ŽIVOJNOVIĆ M., 1972 = М. ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ, *Светогорске келије и пиргови у средњем веку* (Kellia and pyrgoi on Mount Athos in the Middle Ages), Београд 1972.
- ŽIVOJNOVIĆ M., 1998 = М. ЖИВОЈИНОВИЋ, *Историја Хиландара I* (History of Chilandari I, from its foundation 1198 to 1335), Београд 1998.

