

THE WEST READS THE SOUTH-EAST: (IN)GRATITUDE IN CATHOLIC AND ORTHODOX POLITICAL THEOLOGIES

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ЗАПАДЪТ ЧЕТЕ ЮГОИЗТОКА: (НЕ)БЛАГОДАРНОСТ В КАТОЛИЧЕСКИТЕ И ПРАВОСЛАВНИТЕ ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИ ТЕОЛОГИИ

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Abstract: *This paper deals with the role of gratitude in Catholicism’s political theology in search for an equivalent in the power relations involving the Bulgarian and Serbian Orthodox Churches through the cults of Ivan Rilski and the canonised monk Sava. To do so, it analyses Medieval West Europe’s theology of gratitude starting from Marsilius of Padua’s Defensor Pacis (1324). The text concludes that Marsilius’s criticism have little pertinence to South-East Europe for both theological and political reason, paving the way to a better mutual understanding of Eastern and Western European histories and culture.*

Keywords: *Gratitude; Political Thought; Christianity; Orthodoxy.*

Introduction: Gratitude and Political Thought

The history of political thought has dealt only tangentially with *(in)gratitude*. Yet, it played a fundamental role in the regulation of power relations within Europe’s socio-political aggregates until the XVI century. Adequate contextualisation leads to the discovery of the *logic of gratitude* (LG) governing power relations in pre-modern Europe. LG is “the virtue of knowing how to properly reciprocate for benefits received” adopting “a conduct unanimously associated with justice” in both “the

private and public spheres.” (Lazarich, 2018: p. 15) Violations of this logic are stigmatised as acts of ingratitude.

Political authorities still use a LG to prescribe binding behaviours, but originally gratitude bore religious connotations. Greek and Latin deities were *benefactors*, dispensing benefits in exchange for sacrifices and prayers. This LG was sensibly transformed by the advent of Christianity and its affirmation. Such almost peer-to-peer relation with the divine was hard to graft on Christianity’s Judaic roots. The unitary, omnipotent and omniscient deity has no reason to bargain with mortals. Yet, it is still the *great benefactor* whom believers must venerate and honour to be rewarded. On this basis, Early Christian scholars construed a spurious doctrine of ‘gratitude towards God’ retained by both Orthodoxy and Catholicism after the Great Schism¹. Later on, gratitude became the foundation of Catholic political theology, prescribing absolute obedience to the deity and its ministers.

Moderns’ lack of interest in gratitude is evident in that age foremost thinkers’ work: Thomas Hobbes (Hobbes, 1651), John Locke (Locke, 1690), Jean-Jacque Rousseau (Rousseau, 1762a), (Rousseau [en], 1762b) and Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1797), (Kant [en], 1887) Modern political thought revolved around “Contractarianism” (Cudd & Eftekhari, 2018), thus rejecting the LG’s reciprocity and circularity. Sure, Hegel “denigrated and even ridiculed” contractarianism (Riley, 1973: pp. 131–132) — as Giambattista Vico did before him (Battistini, 2013). But its definitive affirmation erased gratitude’s legacy. The result was a twofold mistake about the nature of gratitude in politics (as Simmons argues (Simmons, 1981)). First, most of the seldom studies on gratitude consider its meaning rather stable over time, overstressing its current sense in time and space (Lazarich, 2018: pp. 11–13). Moreover, those few works tend to assume that only State-individual relations of command and obedience are political; thus shackling politics to State boundaries (Simmons, 1981: p. 58)².

Thence, this paper addresses the issue of whether Catholicism’s LG had an equivalent in political dynamics and power relations involving the Bulgarian

¹ See Artsybashev (Artsybashev, 2008) for perspectives on the “great schism”

² Commenting the essay “Political Obligation and the Argument from Gratitude” (Walker, 1988), Italian historian of political thought Diego Lazarich (2018: p. 14) noted that its conclusion looks antithetical to Simmons’s. However, Walker’s work only avoids the first of these errors — and by accident. Walker understood gratitude beyond its current semantics by rejecting its usual definition (cf. Walker, 1988: pp. 191–193) instead of looking at the term’s historical evolution.

Orthodox Church (*Bŭlgarska Pravoslavna Tsŭrkva*, BPT) and the Serbian Orthodox Church (*Srpske Pravoslavne Crkve*, SPC). Peculiar attention is given to the cult of Ivan Rilski (BPT) the canonised monk Sava (SPC). To do so, it analyses Medieval West Europe's LG starting from Marsilius of Padua's anti-clerical *Defensor Pacis* (Marislius [it], 1960: ed. 1960, ed. by C. Vasoli; first ed. 1324), (Marsilius [en], 2005: ed. by A. S. Brett). The text concludes that those criticism have little pertinence to the BPT and the SPC for both theological and political reason, paving the way to a better mutual understanding of Eastern and Western European histories and culture.

§1 Retracing Ingratitude in Western Christianity

Catholic thought's reflections on (in)gratitude are mostly based on Augustine of Hippo's and Thomas Aquinas's works. The former is somewhat controversial in Orthodox theology, whilst the latter only contributed to Catholicism.

¶1 From Augustine's *Gratia* to Thomas Aquinas's Medieval Theory of Society

A later coinage, the word *gratitude* did not exist in Augustine's time. He rather used *gratia*, (Latin for *thankfulness*), but in the sense of *God's grace*. Catholics' understanding of gratitude as the attitude to achieve justice through the recognition of the benefits received from the deity owes much to of Hippo. The North-African elaborated the trope of a monotheistic deity inherently indifferent to the logic of gratitude and whose grace operates in inscrutable ways. Even though there is nothing men can do to change that, Augustine encouraged believers to show their gratitude towards through material acts and moral submission to the clergy.

Presenting grace's political relevance, Augustine was the first to conflate *thankfulness* and *grace* (Lazzarich, 2018: p. 29). The Catholic Church elevated grace and gratitude to systemic logics in its effort to the only monopolistic holder of moral authority in the Medieval Res Publica Christiana. To do so, it had to develop a new semantics establishing "believers' integral dependence from the ecclesiastical authority" and imposing the *pastoral awe* (Borrelli, 2017: p. 172). Thomas Aquinas built solid foundations for this project as he "illuminated the Church more than all the

other Doctors” (Maritain, 1958: Chapter 4, §1, ¶1). Indeed, the Aquinas fell short of writing political treatise discussing grace extensively³. However, in the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas (Thomas, 1273: p. II, 2, Quaestio 106), (Thomas [en], 1920) operated a lexical rationalisation introducing the term *gratitudo* [gratitude, thankfulness] to express the feeling of religious reverence and family and social loyalty (*Ibid.*, vol. 2, part 2, sec. 2). In so doing, he started gratitude’s semantic shift towards its current form as a feeling (Lazzarich, 2018; p. 31).

Owing to Aristotle, Thomas’s cosmology described universal, simple-yet-great ideas, of which men’s earthly existence (i.e., social life) was but a reflex contributing to the overreaching orderly unity. Rome was the only force capable of harmonising the fragmented politics of the Res Publica Christiana. For articulated it was, Thomas’s social theory was soon to reach its expiry date as “the travail of the new time was beginning, and Marsiglio's teaching was its potent agent.” (Emerton, 1920: p. 2)

¶2 Marsilius: First Steps Towards Modernity

In Catholic Medieval Europe, Marsilius of Padua’s *Defensor Pacis* was vanguardist⁴. Written with “the explicit intent to unmask the groundlessness of the papacy's hierocratic claims and thus eradicate the dark evil that torments Italy and tries to creep into other realms” (Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, 2000: p. 166), it is considered “one of the most extraordinary political and religious works which appeared during the fourteenth century.” (Maiolo, 2007: p. 161) Yet, by 1920 there was no complete translation of the *Defensor Pacis* into any modern language⁵. Marsilius is unknown beyond restricted academic circles because his ideas “entered so subtly but so completely into the doctrine of his successors [e.g., Wycliffe in

³ In his biography of the *Doctor Communis*, Jacques Maritain (Maritain, 1958: appendix 1 [“A List of the Works of Saint Thomas”]) conflates the *De Regno, ad regem Cypri* and the *De regimine principum* and lists them amongst Thomas’s works. The first was actually left unfinished by the Aquinas, while the second appeared as a completed version of the first under the title *De regimine principum* thanks to one of Thomas’s disciples. In fact, Enrique Alarcón’s collection of Thomas’s writings includes it amongst dubious text (Thomas, 1267).

⁴ Cf. Gebhart (Gebhart, 1884) on his life and Riezler (Riezler, 1874) on his thought.

⁵ By the early 20th century there were only partial translations. An Italian version appeared around 1363, but was translated from a previous, also partial, French text. An English translation appeared in 1535 but it is very rare. The same goes for a partial German translation circulating since 1545. (Cf. Emerton, 1920: sec. Bibliographical Note)

England and Martin Luther ...] that it has been overshadowed by their greater fame.”
(Emerton, 1920: p. 1)

According to Prof. Emerton, the *Defensor Pacis* is continues Thomas’s and Dante’s work:

One might be tempted, therefore, to speak of these three notable contributors to political theory as representatives of contemporary thought. To do so, however, would be to miss the most essential quality in each. Aquinas, here as elsewhere in his monumental activity, is the spokesman of an epoch in human history that within a short generation after him was gone forever. Dante sounds the note of a transition just beginning to outshine itself clearly in the rapid march of events. Marsiglio is the herald of a new world, the prophet of a new social order, acutely conscious of his modernness and not afraid to confess it.

(Emerton, 1920: p. 1)

All three drew on Aristotle's *Politics*, but they parted ways on sovereignty: his idea that the Church and the Empire were coequal in their temporal powers makes Dante a ‘transition’ author between the other two. Marsilius’ historical reconstruction of the relations between ecclesial and secular power is the closest to the *Politics* insofar as it proposes itself,

with the help of God, to expose only this singular cause of strife. For it would be superfluous to go over again the number and nature of those identified by Aristotle. But in respect of this one – which Aristotle could not perceive and neither has anyone else after him, who could have done, undertaken to define it – it is our will to lift the veil in such a way that it can hereafter be easily excluded from all realms and civil orders, and once excluded, virtuous princes and subjects can live in tranquillity more securely.

(Marsilius, 2005: p. 9 [bk. 1 chap. 1, ¶7])

Arguing that the latter are fully legitimate, Marsilius proposed to separate the *lex huamana* [human law] from the *lex divina* [divine law]. In doing so, he retorted the Catholic LG against the Church to dismantle the *Plenitudo potestatis* [fullness of power]. The Church was not endowed with secular powers by the deity since “Christ showed that he was subject to the coercive jurisdiction of the prince of this worl [...]; and no prince could have any jurisdiction greater than this” (Marsilius, 2005: p. 170

[bk. 2, chap. 4, ¶12]). The New Testament also barred the apostles from exercising coercive judicial powers “among themselves and with respect to others.” (Marsilius, 2005: p. 172 [bk. 2, chap. 4, ¶13]) Yet, civil authorities have conceded “privileges” to the “bishops of Rome,” who got “hold of coercive jurisdictions [...] by these privileges – and by nothing else” (*Ibid.*, 142 [bk. 2, chap. 1, ¶5]) Yet, these concessions provided the “occasion for the usurpation, occupation or detention of coercive jurisdictions, which the bishops of Rome now ascribe to their own authority; and which afterwards gained strength through [...] abuse.” (Marsilius, 2005: p. 142 [bk. 2, chap. 1, ¶ 5])

What was initially a *gracious concession* was usurped, but the Church attempted to masquerade this reality and hide clergymen's grave violation of the medieval political LG:

they [sc. the Roman bishops] have – in return for the favour they have received and the benefaction of carnal goods that the Roman princes have graciously bestowed upon them; puffed up with pride, ignorant of their own condition and the *most ungrateful of all ingrates*⁶ – issued forth with unbridled presumption into horrifying blasphemies and anathemas upon both princes and the Christian faithful who are their subjects. Never mind that these things retort rather upon their own unhappy souls and bodies than reach the princes and the innocent flock of the faithful.

(Marsilius, 2005: p. 443 [bk. 2, chap. 25, ¶ 13]; emphasis added)

§2 Gratefulness in South-Eastern European Theology

To study (in)gratitude beyond West Europe is not easy, especially if compared cultures' way of thinking only diverged from a certain point onwards. Such is the case with South-Eastern Europe, whose peoples “are Europeans but not quite.” (Aleko Konstantinov quoted in Daskalov (Daskalov, 2001)). Three religions dominate the region: Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam. In Slovenia, most of Croatia and the Herzegovina region Catholics prevail. Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia, meanwhile, are mostly Greek Orthodox. The

⁶ Autor's note: The translation is here very effective as the original *ingratissimis omnibus magis ingratis* could hardly be rendered any closer. The Italian version's *ingratissimi tra tutti gli ingrati* (Marsilius, 1960: p. 605) that is slightly more equivocal since *tra* can mean either 'amongst' or 'of'.

During Ottoman rule tens of millions of Muslims lived in the region — but they are a majority only in Albania and parts of Bosnia now⁷.

Given its heterogeneity, three factors impede a transposition of West-European conceptions of gratitude in South-East Europe (SEE). The first, rooted in the Old-Bulgarian language⁸, is lexical and semantic. Second, the Great Schism led to sensible doctrinal differentiation (Archimandrite Plasid, 2008a), (Archimandrite Plasid, 2008b), (on the differences between Catholic and Orthodox theology see: (Azkoul, 1994), (The Economist’s Editors, 2016). For instance, Augustine of Hippo is the object of a lively dispute (see ¶2. “Another theology” below on page 11). Third, under the Ottomans, the region was politically isolated and fell in backwardness (Crampton, 2005: pp. 29–44), (Vucinich, 1962).

¶1 From ‘gratitude’ to ‘blagodyatt’

The etymology of the *gratitude* – from the Latin *gratia* via the late-Latin *gratitudo* – and its political meaning is now clear (Lazzarich, 2018: p. 18ff). Thus, *gratitude* exists due to theology’s colonisation of West-European culture in the 13th century.

Whereas all Slavic idioms share a term for the feeling of gratefulness, theologians use different words in different languages. The SPC (SPC, 2012), for instance, employ the formula *milost bozhiya* [милост божија] whilst older Serbian texts read *blagodat* [благодат] e.g. (Ćelijsk, 1989: p. 3). This dualism is proper of modern Bulgarian too — but in the reverse fashion. The BPT uses *blagodat* e.g. (Limasolski, 2012); however, native speakers commonly describe the Christian deity as having *milost* [милост]. Interestingly, native Russian speakers show the same tendency to use *milost’* [милость] (from *miloserdiye* [милосердие]) even though the Russian Church’s official term is *blagodat’* [благодать].

⁷ This is by no way an exhaustive catalogue. Nor does it want to hint

⁸ The diction Old Bulgarian is sued by eminent linguists as a synonym for so-called Old Church Slavonic (Fortson IV, 2011: p. 374), (Lunt, 1987). The first literary language of the Slavs, it was created by two byzantine missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, who translated the Bible, some Ancient Greek ecclesiastical texts and some of their own works. Old Bulgarian is still used as a liturgical language by some Orthodox Churches.

Such a lexical confusion is a significant linguistic idiosyncrasy of no surprise to anyone with basic knowledge of Old-Bulgarian, the language which most early Eastern theological works were written in.

The Term *blagodyatt'*

In Old Bulgarian, *blagodyatt'* [благодѣтъ] meant *gift, joy* and especially *grace* (Krause & Slocum, 2016a). It is likely to be a transposition of the ancient Greek *oída charin* [οἶδα χάριν] — meaning literally “to (re)cognise grace” (Hewitt, 1927). In fact, *blago-* is the Old-Bulgaria root for *good*, whereas *-dyatt'* is likely to be a contraction of *vyatdyatti* [вѣдѣти] which means “see, know” (Krause & Slocum, 2016b): Thus, *blagodyatt'* is to “see” or “know” the “good” which was made/received. Both *gratitudo* and *blagodyatt'* descend from the ancient Greek *charin* — putting the two words firmly in the field of religion, as their Greek root (Mikalson, 2010: p. 1, ¶“Worship”).

Blagodyatt' and *gratitudo* shared a common fate. Derivatives of the former (e.g. *blagodarya* in Bulgarian, *blagodaryu* in Russian) are standard forms expressing the sentiment referred to in English as ‘gratitude’. True, modern Serbian is an exception since *blagodat* and derivatives are confined to the religious realm. Yet, the term used to express gratitude, *hvala* [хвала], is related to the ancient Greek *euharisto* [ευχαριστώ]. So, it is a perfect homologue of *blagodyatt'* and its derivatives insofar as it means ‘be thou praised for the good you have done to me’.

The Term *milostivŭ*

In Old Bulgarian, *milostivŭ* [милостивъ] was strictly related to *blagodyatt'*, but with the meaning of *compassionate, merciful* or *full of grace* (Krause & Slocum, 2016c). In effect, the term was used to indicate he who had *blagodyatt'* — a man or the deity. In modern Slavic languages –*milost* [милост] in modern Bulgarian and Serbian, *milost'* [милость] in Russian – the word’s meaning has shifted consistently towards *mercy* in the stricter sense of the feeling which animates an act of compassion.

Thus, these derivatives have lost their original religious connotation — except for the SPT.

Results of a Conflation

That contemporary believers conflate various terms should not create doubts — Clergymen and theologians are well aware of the differences (Marinova, 2009). Still, this strange dualism speaks about how SEE laymen looked at the notion of gratitude revealing that religious grace' lexical universe was separated by that of individual feelings only by a labile border. Moreover, it shows that the gratitude for something good which was received is seen as closely related to mercy or compassion. This partly transforms the semantics of Orthodox believers' LG, which puts more emphasis on the giver than on the receiver's expected reciprocation.

Albeit more conceptual than else, this distinction is relevant to the political dimension of the BPT's and the SPC's actions. As the difference between *blagodyatt'* and *milostivŭ* is unclear, beneficiaries are not asked to return the received benefit. After all no political authority was contending the local clergy' primate as the Empire was in West Europe. Thus, he who benefits from the clergy had, first, to acknowledge the compassionate/merciful nature of religious authorities' acts. Given an absolute subordination, the beneficiary cannot but accept the gift passively and 'repay' the clergy with unquestionable loyalty.

¶2 Another Theology

Orthodox Churches officially deem the founder of Catholicism's LG, Augustine a "bishop, theologian, S[ain]t" and "the Church Father par excellence", who "justly won" his reputation "through the production of a vast library of theological works, virtually any one of which would have sufficed to secure the reputation of a lesser thinker." (Prokurat et al., 1996: p. 48), cf. (Teske, 1992) Yet, his reception in Orthodox theology is difficult to articulate.

There has never been a conciliar condemnation Augustine or his works, yet opinion about both subjects are split⁹. Named *Father of the Church* at the Second Council of Constantinople in 553 (Percival, 1900: p. 383), his works were not translated in Greek until 1360. Some regard him as a theologian whose many errors should not question his sanctity. Other go as far as to deny his canonisation and limit themselves to recognise in Augustine a theological writer. Other have criticised Augustinian theology as one of the main causes of the great schism and "the fount of every distortion and alteration in the Church's truth in the West" (Yannaras, 1984: p. 151). Anyhow, Augustine's views on grace – and, for lack of a different term, gratitude – have little space in Orthodoxy:

Augustine placed grace and human free will at odds, if only because his view of grace was too overstated and not balanced against the [...] efficacy of human choice and spiritual labor. Likewise, as an outgrowth of his understanding of grace, Augustine developed a theory of predestination that further distorted the Orthodox understanding of free will.

(Archimandrite Chrysostomos, 1996: p. 41)

Augustine's "purported inability to describe the ineffable, or the perpetuation of supposed conceptual ambiguities in doing so," (Archimandrite Chrysostomos, 2008: p. 35) leads most theologians to deny him any influence on Orthodoxy. Nonetheless, a recognition of Orthodox texts (see the many works already referenced) shows that Eastern theology only refuses the idea of a 'created' grace and — bypassing the need to grasp the duplicity of Augustine's doctrine – predestination. Pious acts, above all those acknowledging the *milostivŭ* of their deity and showing *blagodyatt'* to his ministers, are clearly a way to accede to the Christian heaven.

§3 Practices of *blagodyatt'* in South-Eastern European Churches

What preceded shows that gratitude is a useful category to read the politics of Christian religious practices and much has still to be written about the role of

⁹ A complete overview is offered in *The Place of Blessed Augustine in the Orthodox Church* (Rose, 1996) and *The Influence of Augustine of Hippo on the Orthodox Church* (Azkoul, 1990).

bladgodyatt’ in SEE’s Middle Ages. This section tries to sketch out some baselines testing the tool provided in Marsilius’s *Defensor Pacis*. SEE’s civil and religious patron–client follow temporary discontinuous pattern which diverge significantly from the historical reality of Western Europe.

¶1 The BPT and the Cult of Ivan Rilski

The history of how Bulgarians became Christians in the 9th century is one of sufferings. Tsar Boris-Mikhail I’s decision to suffocate the rebellion of several dozen noblemen in blood (Bozhilov & Gyuzelev, 1999: sec. 3, chap. 1) created room for the Bogomils, a Manichean heretic sect contesting both the State and the Church, only eradicated in the 11th century. Bulgarian Orthodoxy shaped the bulk of national identity until the establishment of real socialism in the 20th century.

The most notable figure in the BPT’s early history is Ivan Rilski (b. 876 d. 946)¹⁰, then canonised as the patron of Bulgaria. Also known as Johan von Rila, he preached his followers never to consent a king or any other men to give them anything, except what the divine will and nature wanted them to have. Old-Bulgarian chronicles tell that Tsar Asen I (d. 1196) once paid Ivan Rilski a visit in his cave near, on a mountain range about 100 kilometres south of Sofia. The Tsar offered him food and gold, as a reward for the long years of untellable sufferings he endured. True to his teachings, Ivan rejected everything the Tsar had brought with him.

These chronicles represent the closest thing to a paradigm of moral behaviour the BPT has ever had in the Middle Ages. They codify a defiant attitude towards what Marsilius would have defined “civil government”. The teaching they convey is one of chastity and Diogenes-like indifference to temporal power.

This narrow conception of virtue is the polar opposite of the religious sectarianism and deeply rooted clientelism that actually came into being. In effect, the BPT’s practises were more influenced by imported Byzantine rites of exchanging ‘generosity’ and ‘commitments’ rather than local tradition of pagan ascendance (Todorova, 2006: pp. 3–10). This reality was described with unchallenged clarity in the *Diary of a trip to the Ottoman port in Constantinople* (Gerlach, 1976: first printed in 1674). Gerlach wrote of wide spread “corruption” in the sense of the *Policraticus*

¹⁰ The following description of Ivan of Rila’s thought is based mainly on *Life of St. Ivana Rilski* (Ivanov, 1932).

(John of Salisbury, 1990): nepotism, cronyism, and the selling of posts detailing the exchanges behind all important appointment in the BTP. Moreover, missions to relatively remote areas – e.g., Veliko Tarnovo (Bulgaria) and Tetovo (Macedonia) – were almost illiterate or, at best, semi-literate.

Nevertheless, it is improper to talk here of a *neblagodyatt*’ or ingratitude. In fact, the very absence of a civil government legitimising the clergy’s temporal authority makes Marsilius’s argument inapplicable to the BPT’s case. From a theological point of view, the Bible, its ‘Orthodox’ interpretation, and the chronicles about Ivan Rilski are the paramount to evaluate the BPT’s behaviour. Doing so, the accusation of corruption moved by John of Salisbury to the RCC and their accusation of a ‘wrong’ gratitude seem to fit perfectly.

¶2 The SPC and the Cult of Sava

Sava was the son of the founder of the first Serbian kingdom, King Stephen I, founder of the SPC and a key figure in the history of his father’s dominion. Sava is remembered as the necessary adjuvant actor in the stabilisation of the Kingdom as his two brothers – Prince Vulkar and the future King Stephan II – fought to rule the country (Komatina, 2016: pp. 157–246).

The fall of the Serbian State was accompanied by the dispersion and/or the extermination of local aristocracy. Thus, after the Ottoman conquest, the SPC became the ultimate protector of Serbian national identity and the last-resort guarantor of its survival. It stood as the benevolent shepherd who nourishes his flock and protects it from the cruel landlord’s menaces (Wachtel, 1998: pp. 25–48). Applying Marsilius’s critique to the SPC is almost impossible. As a matter of fact, not only was there no “civil government” to which it could be ungrateful, but one could argue (Telarico, TBP) that it was the only remnant of the Serbian State tout court. Hence, the SPC made the largest use of the logic of gratitude in SEE as it had to take on itself part of the functions of the defunct kingdom. Yet, for widespread it may have been, the LG never descended into straightforward corruption; not even for the relatively high standards of orthodox theology.

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