THE COMPETITION FOR SOULS: SAVA OF SERBIA  
AND CONSUMER CHOICE IN RELIGION IN  
THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY BALKANS

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The word ‘heresy’ originates, means ‘choice’ and one way of looking at medieval religious movements is to consider what choices were available to lay men and women of the period. In this paper I want to review briefly what I mean with reference to the Cathar heresy in the west and to look at what choices were available to the laity in the Balkans in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. Finally, I will examine how Sava of Serbia, one of the most successful spiritual figures of the period, hoped to win people for his particular brand of spirituality and away from that offered by his Catholic and Bogomil rivals.

1 RELIGIOUS CHOICE IN THE WEST

The chronology of western Catharism is generally agreed by historians. Although there may have been earlier outbreaks of religious dissent the organised popular movement known to historians as the Cathars first emerged in Germany in the 1140s, and by then may well have also been established in what were to be their historic strongholds of southern France and North Italy. The movement seems to have originated with the Bogomils of the Byzantine empire and had been brought west either by missionaries from the area or returning westerners.1 Systematic persecution came in the thirteenth century with the Albigensian Crusade in southern France between 1209 and 1229 and

1 This paper is based on a talk given to the Institute of National History, Skopje, Macedonia. My thanks to Prof. Dr. Todor Cepechov, Director for his invitation and Dr. Maja Angelovska-Panova for suggesting the subject and her many kindnesses to me during my stay in Macedonia.

the advent of inquisitions in northern Europe and southern France from the early 1230s. However, many Catholic churchmen were convinced that more constructive methods had to be used to counteract the heresy. The rise of new semi-monastic orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans together with the legislation of the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 set the stage for a new era of church-state relations in the crusading Latin West. The new orders and the Council shifted the focus of the fight against heresy from the temporal to the spiritual realm, and the church-state relationship became more complex and diverse.

Before persecution became a major factor, the religious culture of areas where the Cathars were strong was surprisingly open. Debates were held in southern France between Cathars and Dominicans, and even between Cathars and the equally orthodox followers of Valdes de Lyon. No accounts of debates have come down to us from Italy, but the layman, Salvo Burci’s reply to the Cathar book, Stella suggests that both books were read at educated lay people.

The subject matter of these debates often centered on who was better equipped to deliver salvation to lay men and women. One notable occasion in 1208, the Cathar supporter Anatole de la Mothe advised her two little girls that the “good Christians” (Cathars) could save souls better than the Church of Rome, the bishop of Cahors and the councils of Montecassino. It is interesting how she envisaged her choice. She is certainly aware of the universal corporation of the Church of Rome, but she quickly breaks this down into more local representatives, the bishop at Cahors and the local canons in the nearby town of Montecassino. The Cathars had an apparent advantage because the consolamentum was a simple ceremony usually performed on behalf of those whose responsibility it was to save souls. A Cathar supporter from Castelnaudary lay dying far away in Narbonne, so his companion summoned two local Cathar good men to perform the consolamentum, but because the man could not see the purity of life of these Cathars whom he did not know he instead asked to be committed into the hands of the Cistercian monks of

The Countenance for Souls: Some of Serbia and some other choice in Religion in the thirteenth... The Bandeau abbey close to where he was born. The lady had high ideals for their holy men and women; broadly speaking they should be chaste, live modestly and perhaps most importantly of all, as the last story shows, present when needed in times of extremity.

More difficult to assess is how the lady experienced and participated in religious. People regularly made choices as to what forms of religion to patronise, both heretical and orthodox. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that many participants ignored such labels. Historians grasp the consequences of such choices through bequests in wills, can gauge broad measures of popularity through records of community foundations or extensions to churches, but have limited evidence of how choices were conducted on a week by week or daily basis. Yet we know that such choices were made. From the friars’ deliberate confrontations with heretical groups or the complaints of ac- cubic alaracy against the incursions of the friars’ own preaching we know that there was intense competition between spiritual individuals and institutions.

Some factors affecting the lady’s decision can be traced. There were Catholic schools in the castle of Jastrow near Milan and daughters of local nobility were educated in communities of Cathar women in southern France. Reaching further into secular life the Bandeau stronghold of Montmeyran had banking facilities. There were also religious experiences to be chosen. In the decades around 1200 we can see characteristics which successful religious movements shared. Both Cathars and friars had a local presence in lay communities and they preached regularly, often with the dramatic quality of a Francis of Assisi or Anthony of Padua. The expanding western economy of the twelfth century allowed an increasing proportion of the population to choose these novel services based on how useful they thought they were, such as university lecturers, or how they made them feel, such as friars and troubadours. It could even be argued that in an age before mass production there had more experience of such choices of intangible ‘products’ rather than material goods. The Cathars supplied these needs not only through their preaching, but through a system of social support which included regular visits by perfecti, distribution of bread blessed by them and even Cathar cemeteries. In return the ‘good men’ received the guilds, food hospitality and money essential to keep the network in place. The money was usually in the form of bequests given in return for the consolamentum and part of the role of the ‘good men’ was to collect this from the dead person’s relatives or friends. A story recounted by Peter of Les Vaux-de-Cernay against the Cathars inadvertently reveals their advantage over Catholic clergy. A man who had bequeathed 300 sous to the friars in return for the consolamentum on his deathbed asked his son to
pass the sum over to them. When the 'good men' turned up the son asked after his father. Having been reassured that he had already joined the heavenly spirits, the son refused to hand over the money declaring that his father had no need of alms and that he knew the perfect would be too kind to recall him from glory. Although in this case something had clearly gone wrong, the attraction of no expensive prayers for the dead and characters they could trust was obvious. This was an important reason why so many turned to the heretics. 11

A further aspect of how the religious laity might have viewed their own religious experiences can be derived from the work of Colin Campbell, the British literary scholar. He credits the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century with a recognition of the individual, by means of which the pre-modern 'iron cage' of providing necessities was transformed into the romantic castle of desires. 12 The implication is that the romantic consumer 'enjoys' emotion, not suppressing feelings, but appreciating them for their own sake. This key ingredient in Campbell's recipe, the 'drink' of emotion for its own sake was available long before in the west and may be explained by the innovative 're-packaging' of Catholicism in the thirteenth century through innovations such as candle lit processions, preaching, liturgical drama and staged events such as Francis of Assisi's re-creation of Christ's Nativity at Grecio in the Christmas of 1223. 13

Campbell is suspicious of such manifestations of popular feeling and dismisses them as mere communal rituals kept firmly in the hands of the priesthood, but this is to underestimate the influence of lay guilds, tertiary orders and pious individuals who often hired priests to carry out what they wanted. Even participants in the thirteenth century flagellant movements met, regularly indulged in their masochistic rites and then returned in many cases to wives and families. 14 The tide of religious sentiment had become more subjective so that the Cathars may have looked on their old-fashioned by the middle of the thirteenth century. The persecution of the inquisitors put paid to the organisation, but the movement was already to decline, along with the idea of saving souls by proxy which was the essence of the relationship of the perfecti with their supporters.

as the Dominicans were to find a few years later in their development of the Compline service, such a time was particularly suitable for those who had been out at work.16

More evidence of Bogomil attention to pastoral care comes from Hugh of Cluny’s De Vocatione. This is a curious text, only recently edited and arising many questions. Hugh, a Pisan who had been recruited by the Byzantine emperor, Maciej Koniant, wrote in Latin against a group of heretics found around the Halkiopont and indeed the entire world. While there seems no need to doubt the editors’ assessment that what Hugh termed ‘Pataroses’ are what modern historians would call ‘Bogomils’ in the east or ‘Cathares’ in the west, the text is very curious in that it makes no reference to dualist beliefs.19 One possible solution is that Hugh did not know his opponents were dualists, but this seems unlikely given that he had been in Constantinople for some time, was very aware of religious issues and could evidently read Greek. There is, in fact, a hint of dualism in Hugh’s report that the heretics rejected the Old Testament and another possibility is that Hugh, whether he knew the exact nature of his opponents or not was more concerned with fighting them in practical terms rather than looking into the theological implications.20 The heretics he described rejected marriage like the Cathares, attacked icons like the Bogomils and despised the Eucharist, as both groups did.21 When he considered the success of the heretics he stressed their contempt for priests and their preaching in secret.22 The latter would be understandable in Constantinople which had undergone conversions of anti-Bogomil paranoia just a generation earlier, but in fact probably means no more than that these heretics too preferred to preach in people’s houses.23

Supporting evidence that these are indeed Bogomil comes from Patriarch Germanus II who, writing in the 1220s or 1230s against heretics in Constantinople from his exile in Nicea records their opposition to marriage, icons and the image of the Cross as well as attributing a creative force to the Devil. This could be taken as conclusive that the two writers were describing the same phenomenon were it not that Germanus ignores the heretics’ refusal to take oaths, which so concerned Hugh. However, it may be that this merely reflects how much more important such taking was in western society than in Constantinople.24

17 It is possible that Hugh’s heretics are members of the ‘church of the Latins of Constantinople’, as described by Rainieris Siccius a century later. A.Dodcrinus ed., Liber de Deaconis Prisciæ (Rome, 1939), p.76.
18 Euchroto, Contra Pataroseos, pp.163-4. Hugh also addresses a heretic as ‘Johannes’ (p.173).
19 Ibid. pp.163-4, 170, 186-8 respectively.
20 Euchroto, pp.158, 156-7.

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Both writers are making a response to a threat and consciously shape their material to demonstrate the role the laity can play in defeating heresy. Hugh uses a series of vivid stories in which ordinary people bring about divine intervention and in particular make choices. In the section defending the miraculous nature of the Eucharist, the consequences of making the wrong choice are emphasised. Taking a story from the fifth century Greek writer, Socrates, Hugh tells of what happens when a woman tries to substitute a host consecrated by the heretic, Macrinius, for the one consecrated by the bishop. At once it turns to stone in her mouth and the terrified woman, weeping, begs forgiveness. The obvious inference is that in this case it was not necessarily the right choice. More dramatic still is the tale of the Jewish glassmaker who sends his son to the Great Church of Hagia Sophia to be educated, and then is angry when the boy casually eats some consecrated bread left over from the Eucharist. With cold deliberation the father bundles his little son into the glass furnace, only for him to be saved by the Virgin clothed in purple. The real choice here is made by the mother who, after pulling her son from the furnace goes to the patriarch and begs to convert. The father is put to death by the emperor. As an afterthought Hugh adds that the mother becomes a nun and the son, a reader in the Great Church, so their material well being was assured.25

In the section on icons, Simeon, who was cured by touching the hem of Christ’s garment in the Bible, according to Hugh then created a statue in bronze of the event at the foot of which grew a healing herb. In another tale, Abgar, the prince of Edessa secured the Mandylion, the cloth used to wipe the sweat from the face of Christ just before the Passion, to cure his leprosy. Restored to health, he destroyed a statue of a pagan god at the entrance to the city and placed the ‘reverend image of the saviour’ in its place which took over as miraculous protector of the city and displayed an ability to spontaneously reproduce itself on other surfaces.26 Both writers emphasise the material worth of spiritual objects and by doing so they attempt to articulate the aspirations of the laity. Hugh refutes the criticism of the Paterése over idol worship:

—The company of Christians do not adore icons because they have colour and rich materials, nor do they do this in idolatry because they [the icons] do not hear nor see, nor speak nor smell. We show them reverence and honour not in the way the Latins worshipped the calf, but in what they have to signify through the figure painted.27

This is unconvincing as Hugh has little interest in what the images signify and tells the miracle stories related above which treat the paintings as precious supernatural objects. Germanus in his sermon on images which he particularly aimed at women, took a similar tone when considering how images were made:

When did you ever see anyone from our churches
going to the kiln for plaster or to the quarry where these
are heaps of stones, or to the shop where sell
pigments and honour and venemous them? ... We
pay honour not simply to the material, but to the form
which appears on the material. 29

Both writers, while insisting that the precious materials were not what was being
veneered, were reminding their audiences that stone churches laden with icons made
from precious materials offered a sensual as much as a spiritual experience.

Books are discussed in the same terms. In the very next sentence after his discuss-
ion of images, Thirn Ferriano adds:

In this sense we honour and venenate the chalice, the altar and
the book to the gospels not because they have gold or sleeppaints
marked with ink, but because they extend to our minds at length the
words and thoughts which Christ delivered.30

Germanus takes a similar tone, but uses subtler reasoning. In his dialogue on the
role of icons with an imaginary heretic he first elects an admission that it is right to ho-

nour the book which contains Christ's words:

Tell me now, is not this book [the Gospels] made of boards,
of parchment and of cords which join the parchements of ink
and often of colours as well? So then, when you venenate
and kiss the book of the Gospels, do you venenate and kiss
the boards and the ink and the parchment, or the words of
Christ which are written in the book?31

This careful delineation of the care and materials which go to make books and
images was part of both authors' strategy to take on the Bogomils by emphasizing to their
relatively prosperous audiences the pleasure of orthodoxy and the proximity to
beautiful objects. As Germanus goes on to say 'Christ's form is also fashioned, by the
splendour of the picture and its clarity, and shines out brightly in it.32

32 PG, 140, col. 666.

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3. SAINT SAVA AND CHOOSING ORTHODOXY

Far away from the sophistication of Constantinople, Savva, who became
archbishop of the newly autocephalous church of Serbia in 1219, faced similar
problems of competition but had far fewer resources. However, just like Hugh and
later Germanus, he identified assets which could be used to gain people's religious
allegiance. Savva's real problem was the number of unfamiliar aspects with which he
was confronted. The territory he had grown up in as prince Rastko between Rus and
Niš was remote, mountainous and rural. However, thanks to the efforts of his father,
Stefan Nemanja (1168-96) and his brother, Stefan Prvovenčani, the first-crowned, the
Serbian kingdom now included the coastal towns of Zeta as well as former Byzantine
towns in the south-east. Their acquisition had stimulated the economy to the point
where Serbian rulers could afford to mint their own silver hyperpyra.33 All those
changes, however, had been dwarfed by the fall of Constantinople in 1204. By 1219 it
changes, however, had been dwarfed by the fall of Constantinople in 1204. By 1219 it
was not still not obvious how the political situation might resolve itself. As Desmiris
Chorazione, archbishop of Ohrid asked rhetorically, 'Where is the Empire now?'34

Byzantine regimes lived on as Nicea and Epirus while Latin rulers were enthroned in
Constantinople and Thessalonika. Meanwhile a growing threat to Serbia came from the
other great Balkan kingdom of Bulgaria to the east.35

It has long been noticed that the Serbian royal family seemed to have worked as a
'family firm' and in particular Savva and king Stefan worked hard to keep on good
terms with most of their neighbours and the apotent transcendent powers. Two years
after Stefan obtained a crown from Pope Honorius III in 1217, Savva was appointed
archbishop by the patriarch of Nicæa. Even so, in the years between his appointment
and his death in 1236 Savva was well received in Constantinople, Thessalonika and Tr-
novo. Only Epirus was outraged by Savva's elevation, not surprisingly since the new
archbishopric of Ohrid had been carved out of the archiepiscopate of Ohrid. Its incumbent, the same
Desmiris Chorazanis kept up a steady stream of criticism of the new metropolitan.

Savva and his brother may have judged this an acceptable risk for the prestige
conferring.

In religious terms Savva faced a tricky situation. He inherited Catholic popula-
tions in the bishoprics he established on the coast at Prvilen and Sveti. He would also
have been aware of an upsurge in Catholic missionary activity. As early as 1205 the
Cistercians took over the large and prosperous monastery of Cetinje outside Thes-

33 Savva himself draws attention in the expansion and varied character of Serbian territory in
his Life of Simon (Stefan Nemanja); facsimile and translation in M. Kinitor (ed.), Medieval Slav-
ian Lives of Saints and Princes, (Ann Fervo, 1983), p.259, Serbian economy, S. Caravelli,
35 This survey of the Balkan political situation is largely drawn from W. O. Curtis, Southeastern
europe in the Middle Ages, 500-1250, (Cambridge, 2000); articles by Jazy, Angold and Do-
cellier in D. Abulafia (ed.) The Cambridge Medieval History: vol. IV, 1199-1360 (Cambridge,
1999) and J. V. A. Fyne, The Late Medieval Balkans, (Ann Arbor, 1987). Anglosphere under-
standing of the region will doubtless benefit from the forthcoming Cambridge History of Byzan-
salonika with the obvious aim of turning it into a mother house for new foundations, the Franciscan friars were present in Constantinople by 1220.25 Francis of Asisi himself had preached further up the coast, possibly in Zadar when shipped over there in 1212.26 Even without conscious missionary activity there may have been a tendency to turn towards the western version of Christianity increasingly on offer. The considerable number of loss of Latin ecclesii produced by Byzantine authors (one of which was translated by [High Hierarch]) has been seen as an attempt to distinguish and stigmatise Latin practices for Orthodox believers who either did not know, or did not care about the doctrinal divisions between the two churches and were happy to attend Latin worship.27

Sava’s own feelings towards Catholicism have been much discussed and it is probably not by chance that they are so hard to divine. The references to foreigners causing great turmoil even on the holy mountain, Mount Athos has the air of suppressed outrage about the Latin invasion, but Sava knew that the papacy was taking a keen interested in the region and that his own patrons in Nicaea were far away and relatively powerless.28 Nevertheless, a regime which had carefully hoarded its power through the establishment of royal monasteries may well have been suspicious of the centralised religious orders and hierarchy of the western Church and the newly appointed archbishop rejected Latin ritual and liturgical practice.

Sava was also aware of the presence of Bogomil heretics. The agreement of Bologna-Polje in 1203 to the north of his archbishopric in Bosnia had put further pressure on the Bogomil church of Schkvenia.29 The Bogomils had already been expelled from Slatina and Trogir in the late 1190s. Now it appears a number of them had reconciled themselves with the papal authorities in the presence of Ban Kulin, lord of Bosnia and organized communities of men and women promising to shun anyone reliably identified as a Manichaeans or any other heretic. The agreement was overseen by the king of Hungary.30 Whether these really were former dualists has been much discussed, but what is certain is that those who felt that they could not live under the

29 This order had first identified by Nicanor around the Council of Saint Felix, around 1170, as of “Dalmatia”, then referred to by Rainierius Saccomane as “Schkvenia” and by Anselm of Alexandria as “Schkvenia from the area called Husia”. Hamilton intr. to Burrianino, Contra Pa
terami, p. 43-6.
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gemds once more and promised that those who were obstinate in their heresy would be driven from their lands. Whereas in the west Church and State combined to eradicate heresy with violence, Sava promised that, in the first instance at least, repentance would be rewarded. It was an imaginative policy which made use of the Serbian monarchy's growing prosperity. In spiritual terms there are resonances of the generosity shown on the returning prodigal son and yet there is also more than a hint of the 'special offer' to convince local consumers spots for religious choice.

Sava's short term generosity to the nobility was combined with a longer term programme to attract and maintain adherents within the wider community. In the first place Sava had already created seven new bishoprics. In western Serbia and on the coast the new structure ran alongside the Catholic one, both confessional leaving their own churches and priests. Sava disregarded the Greek bishops of Prizren and Ligijë and appointed Slavs in their place to the fury of Demetrius Chlamatæus, the Greek archbishop of Ohrid. There is an obviously political agenda here reflecting Sava's close relations with his brother, the Serbian king, but no less importantly Serbian prelates would be better able to address their flock in their own language. Demetrius was also interested in pastoral care, but he had tended to concentrate on the lands to the south and east of Ohrid. He accused Sava, driven by 'a mad thirst for fame', of leaving the solitary and ascetic life of Mt. Athos and instead becoming involved in worldly affairs, walking in processions and taking part in banquets. But this could be a justified description of what was expected from a conscientious metropolitan tending his diocese and mixing with his flock. Demetrius's other changes of Sava's lavishly and diversely dressed bodyguard, his thoroughbred, newly caparisoned horses merely suggest the impressive show of the charismatic archbishop on the move and find no response in other sources.

Even Sava could not everywhere at once and so he instructed 'exarchs', trained priests to go into the countryside. Sava emphasized the sacrament of marriage in his mission. Many couples were living together without the Church's blessing, supposedly because of a lack of priests to perform the ceremony. If this was the case, it is peculiar that Sava should choose this sacrament for special attention if for priests were scarce then presumably children were being going unhallowed and whole congregations going without confirmation. In fact Sava may have had a number of reasons for this action. In its original in civil law, Theologically it was seen not at best, as a poor second to a life of celibacy and many of the friars simply did not like ecclesiastical authority interfering in what was essentially a business of family alliances and property transfers. Hence the issue was taken up by barons for social as well as theological reasons.

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25 There are echoes of the 'Franciscan question' in the status of the two lives. Doctrinič's brief account is usually cited as being within twenty years of Sava's death. Teodorič's longer, M. Vieau (Prague, 1934), pp. 231-2, 238 n.22, Obloženy, Srpske Byzantinske Portrete, pp. 133-4, 1459, (Munich, 2000), pp. 376-86.
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While it is true the monastery’s charity to the poor made it literally a provider, the scheme is surely emphasizing a wider sense of spiritual and material well being. Similarly Sava extended the Church of the Holy Apostles at Peć, which was to become the burial place of later archbishops. However, the monumental painting of the Virgin and Saint John the Baptist interceding with an enthroned Christ in the spiritual plane are clearly visible above the low altar screen emphatically demonstrated to the laity the best spiritual insurance policy available to them.\[56\]

The main lines of Sava’s activity should now be clear. Further churches were built at the episcopal see at Ljeviša and perhaps Prizren as well as the new monastery of Mileševa.\[57\] Sava was deliberately making the act of going to church an affecting experience. The Serbian church had nothing like the resources which could be deployed by the Catholic Church, let alone the riches of Constantinople. Yet the worshipper entering the church would be bombarded with seductive images and the scent of incense, read to and preached to and given all the majesty that the Orthodox Church could offer. The obvious intention was to draw believers away from Bogomil and Catholic competitors in the area.

Sava was building on the existing strengths of his family’s religious culture and his own earlier career. He had mustered Nemanjids and Serbian prestige by turning Studenica into a shrine to Stephen Nemanja and by the foundation of the Hilandar monastery on Mount Athos. Undoubtedly Sava had multifarious aims in this period. As pointed out by Anthony Eastmond, the political iconography of the Serbian royal family was easily included in the spiritual messages at important sites like the monastery of Studenica.\[58\] In his later career as archbishop he drew once again on these tried and trusted techniques. His biographies were all centred on monastic complexes and his pool of talented churchmen to carry out the ambitious programme of pastoral care all had monastic backgrounds. Of course, such monasteries also acted as reservoirs of political power for the fledgling dynasty. However, they represented a substantial burden on the community and for this reason needed to be held in affection. In liturgy, in sermons and in iconography Sava helped them achieve a popularity which was to endure far beyond his own era.

Finally, it is worth speculating on the intellectual origins of Sava’s strategy. One strong influence was his namesake Saint Saba of Jerusalem (439-532) whose life he commemorated in wall paintings in the north chapel at Žiča. He too was a monk who turned reluctantly to pastoral care, church building and defense against heresy.\[59\] Another role model was his father; significantly, Sava’s life of Simeon does not mention his persecution of Bogomilism, but does carry an impression to him as a teacher of

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56 Zivkovic, "Ivica v dobi Save v osnovi Srbije”, Cirković, The Serbs, p.44.
57 Cirković, The Serbs, p.44.
orthodox Christians of how to keep the faith, a consecrator of churches and builder of monasteries, respecter of priests and monks and listener to holy men. As for the assembly at Zica, one obvious parallel is Boniface's Synodikon of 1211, but with the significant difference that at Zica, Savva, the churchman was in charge, in place of the secular power.

The intriguing idea is that some of Savva's ideas may have come from the west where churchmen regularly took charge of such matters. The new archbishop had called an assembly of the most influential priests and laity, defined the faith and introduced a code of law, the "Z彼Kunon" to regulate the laity and clergy. Moreover, he had offered a route back to the Church for heretics and schismatics, sent out trained preachers and rearranged diocesan boundaries. Like Innocent III a few years earlier at the Fourth Lateran Council, Savva sought to combine discipline and pastoral care to secure the allegiance of the laity. Marriage played an important part in Innocent's policy too and the Council tried to make it both easier and more open by relaxing the prohibitions concerning affinity (c. 50) and forbidding secret marriages (c. 51). Innocent clarified the position over payments to priests who conducted the ceremony in cimons 68 and banned hearsay evidence in matrimonial cases (c. 52), establishing the principle that it is preferable to allow some errors which are contrary to the laws of man than to contravene the law of God by putting those lawfully joined.

The Council's impact on the archbishop of Serbia may not be as unlikely as it seems at first sight. Savva was a natural authority figure and far too shrewd not to learn from the Latins, whatever his feelings about them. His appreciation of the potential role of the bishop at Zica was as novel as his development of monasteries in the region was traditional. Like the pope, Savva also strove to introduce an element of direct control through his "archons" who were responsible to him, just as the mendicants owed allegiance to the papacy in the west. Moreover, he had had plenty of chance to discuss papal strategy as he wintered in Latin-held Thessalonika in 1219-20.

CONCLUSION

The last years of the twelfth century and early years of the thirteenth were years of intense interest in religious issues all over Europe and the medieval Balkans were no exception. Indeed the fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade may well have exacerbated the religious excitement. What is interesting is that the competition for souls took place in the east without the presence of coercive as a serious option. Instead, the challenge of Bogomil heretics and representatives of western Catholicism seems to have stimulated a renewed interest in the popular appeal of Orthodox religion among the laity, both by clergymen close to the Byzantine establishment and by provincial leaders such as Savva. The strategy adopted was a combination of appeal to the senses, church participation in lay life and, where necessary, frank material rewards to gain adherents. Once defined and differentiated, the Orthodox spiritual experience appears

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63 Turner, Ecumenical Councils, 1. pp.257-9, 263.
64 Ocholenczuk, Sts Byzantine Portraits, p.154.
65 My thanks to Dr Jonathan Shepard for his many helpful suggestions and translation of sources in Serbien.