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Usurpations of and Designated Successions to the Throne in the Serbian Patriarchate The Case of Patriarch Moses Rajović (1712–24)¹

Abstract: In the medieval and early modern periods, the metropolitans and bishops of the Serbian Orthodox Church were elected according to the procedure described in the *Archieratikon*, the bishop's liturgical book. The procedure prescribed that the archbishop should choose from among the three candidates nominated by the council of bishops of an autocephalous church. Then the elected bishop was confirmed by the ruler. The archiepiscopal (patriarchal) election procedure was not specifically described because the central role in the process in the middle ages was played by the ruler. In the Ottoman Empire, the central role in the election and confirmation of bishops was played by the sultan, but the ecclesiastical canons were not among his considerations. Sometimes persons unworthy of the office of patriarch, metropolitan or bishop were appointed, without the knowledge of or contrary to the will of the synod. In order to prevent the appointment of an unworthy person as head of the Serbian Church, some patriarchs sought to have their successor elected in their own lifetime and to ensure a smooth transfer of office in agreement with the synod. Based on known sources and unpublished Ottoman documents, this paper discusses the questions of the election of Serbian patriarchs, the usurpation of the patriarchal throne and the attitude of the Ottoman administration towards the clergy. It offers a number of fresh insights into events during the patriarchate of Moses Rajović (1712–24).

Keywords: Serbian Patriarchate, patriarch, Moses Rajović, Timothy, Arsenius Jovanović

After the death of the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Hungary Leopold I (1657–1705), Serbian Patriarch Arsenius Crnojević (1674–1706) submitted a request to his son, Emperor Joseph I (1705–11), to confirm the privileges granted to the Serbian Orthodox Church and people in 1690–95. In the request submitted to the Imperial Court 1706, he proposed that a few more provisions be added to Leopold's privileges. One of these provisions was:

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That the archbishop and patriarch shall, *according to our old custom*, be able to ordain his successor as chosen by clergy and people even in his lifetime.²

In his extensive commentary on this petition of Patriarch Arsenius, the Archbishop of Esztergom and Primate of Hungary, Count Leopold Karl von Kollonitsch, offered his advice on the proposal quoted above:

This has never been done before either by this royal court or by the Turks. In Constantinople itself no one can become a patriarch as long as the patriarch is alive and on the patriarchal throne; it is only when the latter dies or resigns from the throne or is deposed by the Turks – that another is appointed in his stead. Ergo, this can only be done if patriarch Arsenius wishes to resign his office or if the emperor, by his imperial power, divests him of the throne and appoint another in his stead. The Turkish emperor has been in the habit of doing this with the patriarchs of Constantinople. This is why the patriarch should by no means be allowed to ordain his successor in his lifetime. The patriarch should be informed instead that he has not yet been confirmed to office by the reigning ruler, that the latter can depose him at any time and appoint another in his stead – at his own discretion.³

Two years later, a national assembly of clerical and lay delegates convened at the Monastery of Krušedol on Fruška Gora to elect a new archbishop after the death of Patriarch Arsenius. When the royal commissary who presided over the Assembly, Ignatius Christoph Freiherr von Guarient und Räl, asked the attendees how they wanted the election to be done, they proposed that one of the three candidates be chosen by lot. They argued that it was an ancient custom which they had observed for some centuries.⁴

These two statements provide direct early-eighteenth-century evidence for the manner of electing the head of the Serbian Patriarchate in the Ottoman Empire. Custom required, then, that the election be made at a national assembly

² “Ut Archiepiscopus et Patriarcha adhuc in vita successorem sui, quem clerus et populus elegit, de antiquitus jam usitato more nostro constituere possit.” Quoted after R. Grujić, *Kako se postupalo sa srpskim molbama na dvoru česara avstrijskog poslednje godine života patrijarha Arsenija III Čarnojevića* (Novi Sad 1906), 20, 39, 58.

³ Ibid.

⁴ In his report on the assembly, Guarient described this arrangement as follows: “[...] Nachdem nun Abends in erstgenannten Krussenthall angelanget, bin alsobald durch expresse, ex quolibet statu, an mich eigens deputirte, ob meiner glücklichen Dahinkunft höflichst beneventiret worden, welche mir anbey in Namen der sammmentlichen Nation gehorsamst hintergebracht, wie das Sie zwar wohin der Meinung gewesen, erstens drey zu der Erzbischöflichen Wahl zu candidiren und andertens den Metropolitam, ihren Alten schon von etlichen Hundert Jahren hero, also gewöhnlichen Brauch nach (von welchem Sie zu desistiren gar nichts entschlossen waren) ut pote per Sortem zu erwählen [...]”. Quoted after S. Gavrilović, *Izvori o Srbima u Ugarskoj s kraja XVII i početkom XVIII veka*, vol. III (Belgrade 2003), 162–163.

in the deliberations of which participated, apart from metropolitans and bishops, the lower clergy and laity. The possibility cannot be ruled out that the lower clergy and laity participated in the nomination process as well, but their main role was to bear witness to the worthiness of the nominees for the highest ecclesiastical office. The central part of the election process was played by bishops, usually in the narthex of the *katholikon* of the Patriarchal Monastery of Peć and mostly according to the procedure for the metropolitan and episcopal election described by the bishop's liturgical book, the *Archieratikon*. Dimitrije Ruvarac established that in use in the Serbian Patriarchate in the last decades of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century had been a slightly modified version of the Russian *Archieratikon* of 1676, a compilation of texts from earlier Greek and Slavic manuscripts. Episcopal, metropolitan or patriarchal candidates were nominated by all bishops of the autocephalous church. Once the liturgical rites were performed, the bishops who were longest in office made their proposal first, and those most recently ordained, last. The absent metropolitans and bishops authorized some of their colleagues in attendance to speak and vote in their name. The three candidates who received most votes were shortlisted. The final decision in the election of bishops and metropolitans lay with the archbishop (patriarch). After a long and earnest prayer, he was to choose one of the three shortlisted candidates "as he pleases" (ѣдннаго ѿ ннхъ нзбереть егоже хощеть).⁵ The election of a patriarch was made by lot, as stated by the delegates to the Assembly of Krušedol. The elected candidate – bishop, metropolitan or patriarch – went to Istanbul to be formally confirmed in his new rank and it was only after that that the rite of laying on of hands and installation into ecclesiastical office could be performed.⁶

In the Ottoman Empire, however, the described election procedure could not always be honoured because of an unbridgeable ideological gap between the clergy and the ruling elite in their understanding of the church and its role in the state and society. Questions pertaining to the status of bishops in the Ottoman legal system have been thoroughly discussed over the last few decades and there now is a large body of relevant literature. We shall only sum up the main conclusions.⁷

⁵ For a description of the election of the metropolitans and bishops of the Serbian Patriarchate in the late seventeenth century, see D. Ruvarac, "Prilozi za istoriju arhiepiskopa i episkopa u Mitropoliji Karlovačkoj", *Letopis Matice srpske* 204 (1900), 284–287.

⁶ N. Milaš, *Pravoslavno crkveno pravo* (Mostar 1902), 374–385.

⁷ R. Tričković, "Srpska crkva sredinom XVII veka", *Glas SANU* 320: Odeljenje istorijskih nauka 2 (1980), 61–164; H. İnalcık, "Ottoman Archival Materials on Millers", in B. Braude and B. Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society I* (New York – London 1982), 438–447; H. İnalcık, "The Appointment Procedure of a Guild Warden (Kethüda)", *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlands* 76, Festschrift

Although the sharia guaranteed a limited freedom of religion, the Orthodox autocephalous archbishoprics were integrated into the Ottoman legal system as fiscal institutions. The concept of *patriarchate* (*patriklik*) in the discourse of the sultan's Christian subjects and the discourse of the Ottoman administration had different meanings as a result. To the former, it denoted an autocephalous church, to the latter, a tax-farming unit (*mukâta'*) and a source of state revenues (*mâl-i mîrî*). These revenues were seen as taxes the clergy charged for rendering religious services. In Ottoman discourse, every head of an autocephalous church was called *patriarch* (*patrik*) and regarded as the holder of a lease (*mültezim*) on the church taxes due from the territory under his jurisdiction. The Ottoman authorities equated, then, an archbishop's administration of the church with tax farming (*iltizâm*).⁸ Metropolitans and bishops assisted him in tax collecting. The head of the Serbian Church, whose title was *Archbishop of Peć and Patriarch of the Serbs, Bulgarians, Western Maritime Lands and Northern Parts*, was referred to by the Ottoman authorities as *patriarch of Peć* (*İpek patriği*). With time, this Ottoman fiscal term found its way into historiography as a technical term. Before taking up his office, the patriarch regulated his status in Istanbul in a similar manner to other lessees of state assets. His main obligation was to obtain a valid decree of appointment (*berât*) for the issuance of which a tax, *pişkeş*, was paid, and to pay regularly an annual lump sum to the state treasury (*kesim, maktû'*). From the establishment of the Patriarchate of Peć in the mid-1550s to 1690, the annual lump sum was 100,000 *akçes*, from 1691 to 1751, 70,000 *akçes*, and from 1752 to 1766, it was 90,000 *akçes*. The *pişkeş* was paid first before taking up office, and then upon the enthronement of every new sultan.

In early modern Europe it was not uncommon for the central authority to humiliate the tolerated religious communities in formal contexts. In the Ottoman Empire, as we have seen, the Orthodox hierarchs were treated as collectors of state revenues, but their inferior social status was pointed up in other ways too. In the official terminology of the Ottoman administration a number of disrespectful expressions became commonly used, consistently occurring in the

Andreas Tietze (1986), 136–137; H. İnalçık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans", *Turcica* 21–22 (1991), 419–420; E. A. Zachariadou, *Δέκα τουρκικά έγγραφα για την Μεγάλη Εκκλησία (1483–1567)* (Athens 1996); P. Konortas, *Οθωμανικές θεωρήσεις για το Οικουμενικό Πατριαρχείο: Βεράτια για τους προκαθήμενους της Μεγάλης Εκκλησίας (17ος-αρχές του 20ου αιώνα)* (Athens 1998); Ph. P. Kotzageorgis, "Socio-Economic Aspects of a Tax: The Metropolitans' and Bishops' *Pişkeş* (Second Half of the Seventeenth Century)", in M. Sariyannis et al., eds., *New Trends in Ottoman Studies. Papers presented at the 20th CIEPO Symposium, Rethymno, 27 June – 1 July 2012* (Rethymno 2014), 207–222; T. Papademetriou, *Render unto the Sultan: Power, Authority, and the Greek Orthodox Church in the Early Ottoman Centuries* (Oxford 2015); H. Çolak and E. Bayraktar Tellan, *The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution: A Study of Early Modern Patriarchal Berats* (Istanbul 2019).

⁸ İnalçık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch", 423.

documents issued to hierarchs until the mid-eighteenth century. For example, Christians were referred to as the *community of infidels* (*kefere tâ'ifesi*), Christianity, as a *hollow faith* (*âyîn-i bâtl*), and the death of a church head was referred to with disparaging expressions, which were not used for Muslims (*mürd olmak*, *hâlik olmak*).⁹ So it comes as no surprise to find that the central government was not at all concerned with protecting the canonical order of the church. Moreover, the state maintained poor communication with patriarchs. This goes both for the Sublime Porte (*Bâb-ı Âli*) and for the Office for Episcopal Tax-Farming (*Piskopos mukâtâ'sı kalemi*), a fiscal department that oversaw the appointments of hierarchs and payment of their financial obligations. In cases where hierarchs requested arbitration in their mutual disputes, the state did not notify the patriarch of the measures it undertook, but rather it was content to communicate with provincial administrators, usually viziers and kadis. A similar practice could be seen in the case of the appointment of metropolitans and bishops. Although the patriarchal *berâts* stated that the patriarch had the exclusive right to submit requests for the appointment of bishops, the Ottoman administration could start the procedure at the request of provincial administrators, sometimes even at the request of a candidate for ecclesiastical office. There is no need to stress that this practice undermined the authority of the patriarch and the synod, and opened the way to episcopal office for persons who were not canonically elected.

The exact sequence of Serbian patriarchs during Ottoman rule has not yet been established due to a lack of sources, which then means that we do not know the chronology of their periods in office and the manner in which each of them was elected. What is certain, however, is that the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw several attempts to usurp or take over the patriarchal throne without synodal consent. One of the earliest cases was the well-known dispute between Archbishop Prochorus of Ohrid and Metropolitan Paul of Smederevo, which lasted from 1527/8 to 1541.¹⁰ During this jurisdictional dispute, referred to by the church as the *time of troubles*, the Ottoman authorities successively confirmed Prochorus, Paul and their supporters in patriarchal and episcopal rank. Most of them obviously were not canonically elected. In the second half of the sixteenth century, a monk of the Serbian Athonite monastery of Hilandar wrote in the margin of a book: "Woe is me! Two patriarchs held the Serbian land!"¹¹ The meaning of this note has not been deciphered, but apparently it too refers to a dissension in the church. Aleksandar Fotić has established that the term

⁹ Çolak and Bayraktar Tellan, *The Orthodox Church as an Ottoman Institution*, 57.

¹⁰ P. Kostić, "Dokumenti o buni smederevskog episkopa Pavla protiv potčinjavanja Pečke patrijaršije arhiepiskopiji Ohridskoj", *Spomenik Srpske kraljevske akademije* 56 (1922), 32–39; Đ. Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, vol. I (Belgrade 2000), 298–301.

¹¹ "ЏБИ ЦНІЄ Н ДВА ПАТРИАРХА СРПСКОЈО ЗЕМЛЮ СЪДРЪЖАХОУ." Quoted after Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, vol. I (Belgrade 1902), 216, no. 699.

of Patriarch Gerasimus was interrupted by the appointment of Patriarch Sabbatius at least two times between 1575 and 1586.¹² Four appointments of two patriarchs within a span of eleven years could not have been the expression of the will of the national assembly of clerics and laymen, but rather the result of discord in the church and the central government's lack of interest in ensuring abidance to the canonical order of the church. Instead of resolving the existing problems, the central government confirmed the proposed candidates, collecting the *piškeš* of 2,000 Venetian ducats each time. A note made on the cover of a manuscript from the library of the Monastery of Peć reads: "Let it be known when the throne of Peć was taken by Archbishop kyr Philip [...] on the 15th day of the month of July."¹³ The phrase "took the throne" (взе прѣстола) led Sima Ćirković to presume that it had been another forcible takeover.¹⁴ Since Patriarch Philip is mentioned in just a few notes made in the 1590s, Ćirković's hypothesis can be neither proved nor disproved at present. It is reasonable to assume that the throne was usurped in the seventeenth century as well. A monk Habakkuk, whose identity remains uncertain, is referred to as a former patriarch of Peć (*sâbika İpek patriği*) in six Ottoman documents dating from 1675.¹⁵ He allegedly left behind a debt of about 9,000 Dutch lion thalers (*esedi gurus*) which Patriarch Arsenius was not willing to become liable for. It would follow that Habakkuk was at the head of the Serbian Church between Patriarch Maxim (1655–74) and Patriarch Arsenius Crnojević, but the Serbian sources not only do not mention a patriarch of that name, they are explicit that Arsenius replaced the ailing Maxim in 1674.¹⁶ Frequent changes on the patriarchal throne were much more typical of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was not uncommon for an archbishop of Constantinople to be appointed and ousted several times, sometimes staying on the throne for no more than a few months.¹⁷

¹² A. Fotić, "Hudžeti mitropolita Andrije", *Balcanica* XXV–I (1994), 123–136.

¹³ "Да се знатъ кѣдѣ възѣ прѣстола Пекв архієпископъ кыр Філанъ [...] мѣсеца іюліа ѿ- дѣнь. Тогда бѣ владѣты црквама ва коначное падѣніе іакоже дрѣвале ѿ звѣронменїтаго." Quoted after Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, vol. IV (Sremski Karlovci 1923), 86, no. 6429.

¹⁴ V. J. Đurić et al., *Pečka patrijaršija* (Belgrade 1990), 166, 349 (n. 11).

¹⁵ H. G. Meyer, *Das osmanische Registerbuch der Beschwerden vom Jahre 1675*, vol. I (Vienna 1984), 61, 63, 201, 202; R. Tričkov, "Patrijarh Arsenije III Crnojević: prva iskušenja (1675)", *Istorijski časopis* XLV–XLVI (1998–1999), 49–70.

¹⁶ R. L. Veselinović, *Arsenije III Crnojević u istoriji i književnosti* (Belgrade 1949), 8–9; N. Šuletić, "Maksim", in Čedomir Popov, ed., *Srpski biografski rečnik*, vol. 5 (Novi Sad 2011), 763–764.

¹⁷ D. Kiminas, *The Ecumenical Patriarchate. A History of Its Metropolitanates with Annotated Hierarch Catalogs* (Cabin John 2009), 30–48.

Problems surrounding the procedure of episcopal appointment in Istanbul and the religious indiscipline they encouraged were pointed to by Archbishop Prochorus of Ohrid in the first half of the sixteenth century. The synod held in Ohrid in 1529 condemned several practices which were contrary to the canons of the church. One of the condemned irregularities was the following:

May he be damned who after the passing of a metropolitan or a bishop wants to take over his eparchy without [previous] examination and consent by the archbishop, without the decision of the synod and the knowledge of the kadi of Ohrid, as is written in the charter of the great emperor. For, earlier, wrongfully and unlawfully acted those who, having obtained *arzes* [petitions] from other kadis, went to the Porte [where they were appointed] by decision of the court and not by God's law and decision of the church.¹⁸

The main reason for such complaints undoubtedly was the fact that Prochorus did not have full control over the appointments of his suffragans at that point. Some of them submitted their request directly to the Ottoman authorities without a previous decision of the synod of the autocephalous church and were granted episcopal rank. To restore control over the appointments to the church, Prochorus made a request to the Porte that episcopal *berâts* be issued only at the requests sent to Istanbul by the kadi of Ohrid. This was a stipulation stated in his patriarchal *berât* ("charter of the great emperor"), but it apparently was not abided by. The problem that Prochorus faced would persist in the ecclesiastical jurisdictions of both Ohrid and Peć in the following centuries. Although the *berâts* issued to the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century patriarchs regularly contained the stipulation that metropolitans and bishops should not be appointed without their written consent, it was frequently breached in practice.

The Serbian Church's lack of control over the process of episcopal appointment and deep distrust of the Ottoman administration were challenges to which it had to find an effective response. In a bid to prevent the accession of undesirable persons to the patriarchal throne, some patriarchs sought to designate their successor in their lifetime and to ensure a peaceful transfer of office in agreement with the synod of bishops. The example they could follow was none other than the founder and first archbishop of the Serbian Autocephalous Church. Before his second journey to Jerusalem, Archbishop Sava (Nemanjić) resigned archiepiscopal office in favour of his disciple Arsenius (I). This episode

¹⁸ "Тако же нже прѣставитъ се кон любо митрополитъ или епископъ, потомъ же кто въсхоиетъ да въспринимтъ онъ еноуио кроми хотѣнїа и испитанїа архїепископова и начертанїа събора его, и кроми знанїа кадиѣ ѿхридскога, како пишеть повелѣа белкаго цара не какоже творяхъ прѣжде зана и законопрѣстѣпнаа дѣюще людїе въземлюще арзы ѿ ннѣхъ кадиѣн ѿходеще на Портъ съ надворнымъ сѣдомъ и закономъ, а не по законъ Божию и сѣдомъ црковнымъ да бѣдѣтъ и си таковы ѿ проклетїе." Quoted after Kostić, "Dokumenti o buni", 35–36.

from the history of the medieval church was described in the *Life of St Sava* written by the monk Domentianus in 1253/4 and in Sava's *Life* penned by the monk Theodosius later in the century. It was also depicted in the frescoes painted in the prothesis of the church of the Virgin Hodegetria at the Monastery of Peć in 1353.¹⁹ There can be no doubt, then, that it was known to the Serbian clergy in the period of Ottoman rule. The authority of St Sava and the full-blown saintly cult of Archbishop Arsenius I, whose relics were enshrined in the Monastery of Peć, dispelled all doubts about the lawfulness of this practice, although it could be contested on the grounds of some canons of the church. The most explicit in that regard were Canon 76 of the Holy Apostles and Canon 23 of the Council of Antioch, which forbade bishops to appoint their successors in their lifetime. The logic of these canons was that episcopal authority is a gift of the Holy Spirit and that, therefore, it is no one's to give away to another as if it were one's own.²⁰

The first transfer of patriarchal office in the Serbian Church under Ottoman rule is depicted in a fresco in the narthex of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of St Nicholas (Banja) near Priboj. It shows Patriarch Macarius handing over the symbols of ecclesiastical authority to Metropolitan Anthony of Herzegovina, his nephew according to the donor inscription in the narthex of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of Gračanica.²¹ The *time of troubles* which probably ensued after Macarius's withdrawal seems to have come to an end under Patriarch John (1593–1613), who died suddenly during his visit to Constantinople. His

¹⁹ Domentijan, *Život Svetoga Save i Život Svetoga Simeona* (Belgrade 1988), 195; Teodosije, *Žitija* (Belgrade 1988), 234. See also the *Life of Archbishop Arsenius (I)* in Danilo Drugi, *Životi kraljeva i arhiepiskopa srpskih. Službe* (Belgrade 1988), 153–179. For the fresco programme depicting scenes from the life of Archbishop Arsenius I in the prothesis of the church of the Virgin, see Đurić et al., *Pečka patrijaršija*, 166.

²⁰ Canon 76 of the Holy Apostles reads: "A bishop must not out of favour to a brother or a son, or any other relation, ordain whom he will ordain to the episcopal dignity; for it is not right to make heirs of the bishopric, giving the things of God to human affections. Neither is it fitting to subject the Church of God to heirs. But if anyone shall do so let the ordination be void, and the ordainer himself be punished with excommunication." Canon 23 of the Council of Antioch reads: "It shall not be lawful for a bishop, even at the close of life, to appoint another as successor to himself; and if any such thing should be done, the appointment shall be void. But the ecclesiastical law must be observed, that a bishop must not be appointed otherwise than by a synod and with the judgment of the bishops, who have the authority to promote the man who is worthy, after the falling asleep of him who has ceased from his labours." H. R. Percival, *The Seven ecumenical councils of the undivided church: their canons and dogmatic decrees, together with the canons of all the local synods which have received ecumenical acceptance* (Oxford – New York 1900), 119, 599.

²¹ R. Grujić, "Freska patrijarha Makarija kako ustupa presto svome nasledniku Antoniju", *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* XII (1933), 273–277; M. Šakota, "O ktitorskoj kompoziciji u priprati crkve manastira Banje kod Priboja", *Saopštenja* XIII (1981), 47–56; S. Pejić, *Manastir Sveti Nikola Dabarski* (Belgrade 2009), 128–134.

successor, Paisius (1614–47), had his image painted in the church of St Demetrius at the Monastery of Peć. In the inscription next to John's figure, Paisius calls him "my lord" and dedicates the image to him "from the heart, with love", which suggests a close relationship between the two dignitaries.²² Arsenius Crnojević and Patriarch Maxim may have had a similar relationship, but there are no surviving sources to support this assumption. What is certain is that Arsenius was a monk serving at the court of Patriarch Maxim, who resigned in his favour for ill health in 1674.²³ The best-documented cases of usurpation and relinquishment of the Serbian patriarchal throne come from the time of Patriarch Moses Rajović (1712–24). Moses was first forced to defend the throne in 1718, from an ambitious monk, Timothy, and he later relinquished it to his disciple Arsenius Jovanović (1724–39). We shall pay more attention to these events since they exemplify the problems the Serbian Church faced under Ottoman rule.

In a letter of 1 September 1718,²⁴ Moses Rajović informed the Metropolitan of Karlovci (Carlowitz), Vincent Popović, that he had recently returned from Istanbul, where he had prevented, "at a great expense", Timothy, a monk of the Monastery of Iviron on Mount Athos, from taking the throne of the Serbian Patriarchate by force. We can learn from their further correspondence that the Ottoman authorities had issued a *berât* to Timothy, but Ecumenical Patriarch Jeremiah III (1716–26) petitioned the Porte to declare it void, of which he notified the Serbian patriarch on 13 July 1718.²⁵ At the church council attended by Patriarch Samuel of Alexandria, Patriarch Chrysantus of Jerusalem, many bishops and prominent laymen, the monk Timothy was accused of having repeatedly forming intrigues in churches and anathemized, and Patriarch Moses was called upon to start the struggle for restoring the canonical order in his archbishopric. According to Radoslav Grujić, who was the first to call attention to this incident, Timothy began to discharge his patriarchal duties with the support of the Ottoman authorities. Grujić pointed to the decree of appointment as abbot of the Monastery of St Elias issued to a certain hieromonk Philaretus. The document is undated and we do not know which particular monastery it

²² Đurić et al., *Pečka patrijaršija*, 285.

²³ R. L. Veselinović, *Arsenije III Crnojević u istoriji i književnosti*, 7–9; N. Šuletić, "Maksim, srpski patrijarh", 763–764.

²⁴ Serbian and Greek prelates dated their letters according to the Julian (Old Style) calendar, which in the eighteenth century was eleven days behind the Gregorian (New Style) calendar. For the sake of clarity, all dates in the text are given according to the Gregorian calendar. The original letter is dated 21 August 1718 Old Style.

²⁵ The letter is dated 2 July 1718 Old Style.

refers to, but the issuer titled himself *Timothy, by the grace of God archbishop of Peć and the First and New Justiniana* (Τιμόθεος, ἐλέω θεοῦ ἀρχιεπίσκοπος Πεκίου καὶ πρώτης καὶ νέας Ἰουστινιανῆς).²⁶

A few unpublished documents generated by the Ottoman fiscal administration add considerably to Grujić's findings about this incident. First and foremost, they provide an insight into the chronology of the events and the ways in which the Ottoman authorities responded to the complaints about infringements of the canonical order of the Serbian Church. The complaint that was the starting point of this unfortunate episode was lodged with the fiscal administration by the kadi of Skopje, Omer. On 24 Rebiülâhır 1130 (27 March 1718), he drew up a petition claiming that the bishops, the priests and people are indignant at Patriarch Moses and want him replaced by Timothy, an "upright and honest man". Apart from the usual bureaucratic formulations referring to unspecified wrongdoings, this time the kadi cited a concrete one. He claimed that Patriarch Moses had violated the canons of the church by appointing a boy of about twelve years of age as a bishop.²⁷ The boy in question was Metropolitan Stephen, appointed by the Ottoman authorities as Metropolitan of Skopje instead of the late Bishop Constantine on 5 Safer 1129 (19 January 1717).²⁸ Without looking into the matter first, the authorities issued the order for Moses's removal from office on 25 Cemaziülâhır 1130 (26 May 1718). Timothy was appointed as Patriarch of Peć and instructed to go to the *menzil* of Seyitgazi near Eskişehir, where he handed the *pişkeş* to the dervishes Osman and Süleyman, whereby the state met its obligation towards the *menzil*.²⁹ Upon his return to Istanbul, he was issued a *berât*, and it may be assumed that he was given an armed escort to ensure that he took over the symbols of patriarchal authority from Moses. Upon his return at the head of the church, Moses used new seals which again bore the year 1712 as the first year of his office.

The Ottoman documents reveal yet another hitherto unknown detail of Timothy's adventure. He did not work alone in realizing his plans, but collaborated closely with the monk Chrysantus, who had already had a bad reputation in ecclesiastical circles. Chrysantus was a monk from the Archbishopric of Ohrid, serving as Bishop of Debar in the early eighteenth century. Archbishop Diony-

²⁶ R. Grujić, "Pisma pečkih patrijaraha iz drugog i trećeg decenija XVIII veka", *Spomenik SKA* 51 (1913), 105–134; R. Grujić, "Pečki antipatrijarh Timotej 1718. god", *Glasnik Skopskog naučnog društva* 13 (1934), 210–213. Timothy's decree is published in G. Arabatzoglou, *Φωτίειος Βιβλιοθήκη: ἡτοι ἐπίσημα καὶ ἰδιωτικά ἔγγραφα καὶ ἄλλα μνημεῖα σχετικά πρὸς τὴν ἱστορίαν τοῦ Οἰκουμενικοῦ Πατριαρχείου: μετὰ γενικῶν καὶ ἐιδικῶν προλεγομένων* I (Constantinople 1933), 165–166.

²⁷ Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA), Piskoposluk Kalemi (D.PSK), 6/91.

²⁸ BOA, Kâmil Kepeci Defterleri (KK.d), 2542/1, 23.

²⁹ BOA, D.PSK 6/92, 6/93, 6/95.

sius (1709–14) and the synod of bishops deprived him of the episcopal dignity for disgraceful behaviour, but he was reinstated under Archbishop Philotheus of Ohrid (1714–18). Since Philotheus was also prone to scandalous behaviour, the already mentioned ecumenical patriarch, Jeremiah III, ensured that he was ousted at the synod held in the village of Mavrovo near Gostivar on 6 July 1718, and the synod held on 4 February 1719 deprived him of his episcopal dignity. In the synodal act issued on that occasion, one of Philotheus's transgressions was that he had surrounded himself with bad people. One of these mentioned by name was Chrysantus, who was accused of causing trouble in the Archbishopric of Peć, unlawfully ordaining deacons and priests.³⁰ It is only now that, owing to Ottoman documents, this piece of information can be placed in an appropriate context. Namely, having been deprived of his eparchy, Chrysantus allied with Timothy, at the proposal of whom the Ottoman authorities appointed him as Metropolitan of Skopje on 6 Şaban 1130 (5 July 1718).³¹ Of course, no synodal decision could have preceded that appointment.

Patriarch Jeremiah III's intervention and the synodal condemnation of Timothy's actions should be looked at in a broader context, as an attempt to overcome the institutional crisis which was shaking the Archbishopric of Ohrid. There is no doubt that Ottoman administrative practice was one of the causes of the crisis. And yet, with the help of the ecumenical patriarch, Moses Rajović managed to prove Timothy's fraudulence to the authorities. Timothy's appointment was annulled on 21 Ramazan 1130 (18 August 1718) and Moses was reinstated without the obligation to pay for a new *berât*.³² Timothy lost the *pişkeş* money, but otherwise suffered no consequences for his actions. On the contrary, on 18 Zilhicce 1130 (12 November 1718) he was appointed Metropolitan of Kastoria in the Archbishopric of Ohrid.³³ He died a few months later, and the vacant see was filled up by his close associate and former bishop of Skopje, Chrysantus, on 18 Cemaziülevvel 1131 (18 April 1719).³⁴

The troubles Moses Rajović went through in 1718 left no deep trace in the tradition of the Serbian Church or in Ottoman administrative records. In the late summer of 1724, he informed the authorities that his ill health did not permit him to continue collecting state taxes and requested that Metropolitan Arsenius of Ras be appointed in his stead. The document appended at the end of this paper bears traces of all actions undertaken by the Ottoman administration

³⁰ H. Gelzer, *Der Patriarchat von Achrida. Geschichte und Urkunden* (Leipzig 1902), 84; I. Snegarov, *Istoriia na Ohridskata arhiepiskopiia-patriiarshiia I* (Sofia 1932), 134–139, 205–207.

³¹ BOA, KK.d 2542/1, 53.

³² BOA, KK.d 2542/1, 55.

³³ BOA, KK.d 2542/1, 57.

³⁴ BOA, KK.d 2542/1, 69.

in the process of appointment of Arsenius Jovanović. Since it mostly consists of bureaucratic formulas, little can be learned about the actual circumstances and events surrounding this legal procedure. The request was written in formal language. Concrete events may be presumed from the note an Ottoman clerk wrote in the margin of the document (*der-kenâr*) with a view to precluding confusion in future appointments. The succinct note says that the incumbent patriarch Moses has been administering the Patriarchate of Peć in continuity since 1712 and that Timothy's appointment as patriarch has been annulled. Routinely, as always, above the text of the request a brief order in the name of the second *defterdar* was written that the proposed hierarch be issued a *berât* upon payment of the *pişkeş* to the treasury. Once again, the authorities did not require any proof that the candidate was elected in accordance with the rules of the church.

Since considerably more sources survive for the patriarchs Moses Rajović and Arsenius Jovanović than for any of their predecessors, their cases offer the opportunity to better understand the challenges threatening the spiritual unity of the Serbian Church and the ways in which the hierarchs responded to them. According to the inscription on the marble sarcophagus at the Monastery of Krušedol, Arsenius died in 1748 at the age of fifty-two. This would mean that he was born in 1696.³⁵ According to a short biography contained in a manuscript from the Monastery of Peć (*Peć 110*), he lived at the patriarchal court of Peć from his boyhood days, where he took monastic vows and was ordained a priest.³⁶ He became a protégé of Moses Rajović, if not before than after the latter became head of the Serbian Church in 1712, and was appointed as Metropolitan of Ras only two years later. At the proposal of Patriarch Moses, the Ottoman authorities issued him a *berât* on 13 Zilkade 1126 (20 November 1714). He was only eighteen. Since the patriarchal charter of his metropolitan ordination was issued in 1720, it may be assumed that he did not take up episcopal office immediately upon receiving the *berât*. Sources also refer to him as archdeacon in September 1715.³⁷ In the charter, Moses noted warmly that he had been looking after him since he was a little boy.³⁸ Between 1719 and 1724 he sent him on various missions as his emissary and emphasized his infinite trust in him in his letters. Therefore, the contemporaries thought of Arsenius as the patriarch's right hand and natural successor. Having fallen gravely ill in mid-November 1723, Moses

³⁵ Lj. Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, vol. II (Belgrade 1903), 158, no. 2960.

³⁶ Monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć, Ms. no. 110 (*Peć 110*). M. Milojević, "Obšti list Patrijaršije pečke", *Glasnik Srpskog učenog društva XXXV* (1872), 75–83.

³⁷ Stojanović, *Stari srpski zapisi i natpisi*, vol. II, 32, 36, nos. 2257, 2258, 2285; V. Ćorović, "Bosansko-hercegovačka pisma", *Glasnik Zemaljskog muzeja u Bosni i Hercegovini XX* (1910), 510.

³⁸ I. Ruvarac, "Povelja patrijarha Mojseja dana raškom mitropolitu Arseniju Jovanoviću", *Spomenik SKA 38* (1900), 122.

convened a synod of bishops, which was held at the Patriarchal Monastery of Peć in the Week of the Myrrh-bearers (30 April – 6 May 1724).³⁹ Moses announced his retirement. He no doubt arrived at an agreement with the bishops about his successor, proposing his protégé. According to *Peć* 110, he “handed power over to his disciple, Metropolitan Arsenius of Ras, of his own free will”.⁴⁰ An election procedure as prescribed in the *Archieratikon* was nonetheless carried out in the narthex of the *katholikon* of the Monastery of Peć. Arsenius’s shortlisted rivals were Bishop Ioannicius of Niš and Metropolitan Meletius of Bosnia. He was issued a patriarchal *berât* on 15 Zilhicce 1136 (4 September 1724), and the ailing patriarch was able to withdraw from public life. Arsenius took filial care of him until his death. Moses Rajović died in Novi Pazar on 24 April 1730, and was buried by his disciple in the nearby church of Sts Peter and Paul.⁴¹

During the Austro-Turkish War of 1737–39, Arsenius Jovanović fled to the Habsburg Kingdom of Hungary, where Queen Maria Theresa (1740–80) confirmed him in the rank of patriarch. Since the consequences of the war made it impossible to convene a synod of the Serbian Church, the ecumenical patriarch appointed the *protosyncellus* Ioannis Karatzas as patriarch of Peć.⁴² The new patriarch and his successors were neither in a position nor, as it seems, too willing to concern themselves with the continuity of ecclesiastical authority. During a few short terms of office, they mostly pursued their self-interest, and so the Patriarchate of Peć kept crumbling under the burden of financial obligations until its abolition by the Ottomans in 1766.

As the described examples show, in the Ottoman Empire a person could be installed as patriarch without a canonically conducted election procedure, even without the knowledge of the synod of an autocephalous church. In the Habsburg Monarchy, on the other hand, such a scenario was impossible in the eighteenth century. Unlike the Porte, the Court in Vienna showed formal respect for the Serbian archbishop and bishops and used their services to strengthen its imperial authority. The most loyal of them could even become members of the Imperial Privy Council, as Archbishop Isaiah Djaković did in 1706.⁴³ The na-

³⁹ Grujić, “Pisma pečkih patrijaraha”, 105–134.

⁴⁰ *Peć* 110, 3; Milojević, “Obšti list”, 77.

⁴¹ *Peć* 110, 3; Milojević, “Obšti list”, 78.

⁴² D. Aleksijević, “Prilozi za istoriju srpske crkve”, *Vesnik srpske crkve* (1909), 755; Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, 357.

⁴³ S. Gavrilović, *Izvori o Srbima u Ugarskoj s kraja XVII i početkom XVIII veka*, vol. II (Belgrade 1990), 733–735; S. Gavrilović, “Isaija Đaković: Arhimandrit grgeteški, episkop jeno-poljski i mitropolit krušedolski”, *Zbornik Matice srpske za istoriju* 74 (2006), 18–19.

tional assemblies at which archbishops were elected were convened by the ruler who formally presided over them through a commissary. The ruler sought to be informed about potential candidates in advance and favoured the one he expected to have good communication with. Upon the closure of the assembly, the commissary submitted a report to the ruler, and then the official confirmation of the election ensued. When Serbian bishops requested that the ruler arbitrate in their mutual disputes, the archbishop was always notified of the outcome. According to the president of the Illyrian Court Deputation, Count Johann Christoph von Bartenstein, the rationale behind this policy of the imperial court was that it did not want the metropolitan to have full control over the bishops or to let the bishops become fully free from the metropolitan's authority.⁴⁴ If we add to all this the fact that the Serbian clergy in the Kingdom of Hungary enjoyed fiscal immunity, that the archbishop enjoyed the income from the landed estate in Dalj (a village in present-day Croatia, near the confluence of the Drava and Danube) and received a generous annual tithe from the state treasury, it becomes clear that the Serbian Church in Hungary managed to secure an incomparably better status than the one it had in the Ottoman Empire. Emperor Joseph I and his successors recognized the potential importance of the Serbian clergy for the strengthening of their authority in the Kingdom of Hungary. They chose to disregard the advice of Leopold von Kollonitsch and Roman Catholic bishops, and confirmed to the Serbs in Hungary the exclusive right to be the only other religious community in the Monarchy, apart from Roman Catholics, permitted to practise their faith in public (*exercitium religionis publicum*). Consequently, not only did the threats Kollonitsch wanted to intimidate Arsenius Crnojević with not materialize, but many *old customs* established in the Ottoman Empire lost their *raison d'être*.

⁴⁴ "It is also customary for almost all non-uniate bishops to submit their matters to the court through the metropolitan who passes them on with his brief letter of request enclosed. But they are not really required to do that and can turn to the court directly and without any obstacles, as the bishops of Karansebes and Buda do today and as the late bishops of Bacska and Temesvar used to do. Nor does the court hesitate to decide on the requests of bishops directly by court decrees, both in the cases where they come here on their own, without the metropolitan, and in the cases where the requests are addressed to the metropolitan first and then sent by him with his own letter of request and recommendation. But the metropolitan is usually notified of the highest decision because it is deemed useful neither to let the metropolitan have full power [over the bishops], which he would gladly appropriate, nor to let the bishops wrest themselves fully free from his authority which is defined in the privileges." J. Ch. von Bartenstein, *Kurzer Bericht von der Beschaffenheit der zerstreuten zahlreichen illyrischen Nation in den Kais. Kgl. Erblanden* (Frankfurt and Leipzig 1802), 120.

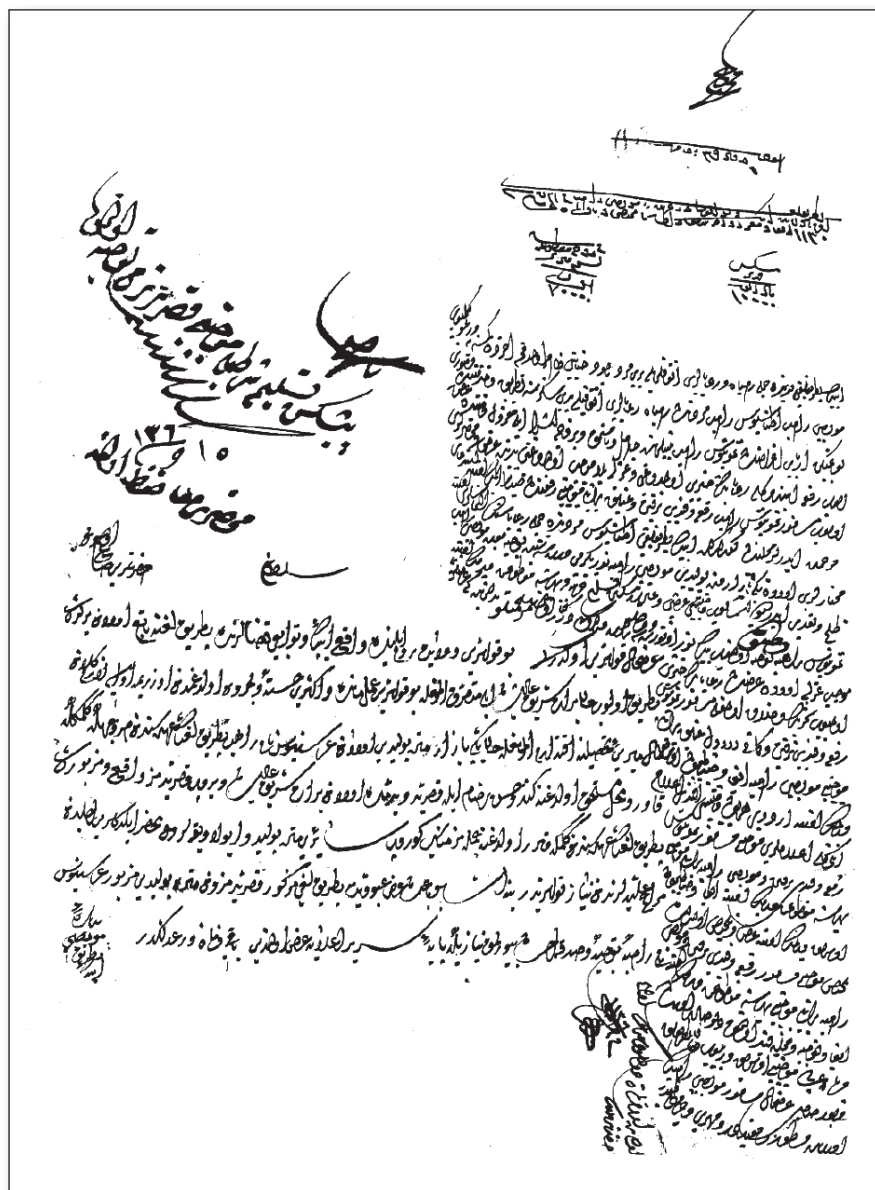


Figure 1

Moses Rajović's request for the appointment of Metropolitan Arsenius (Jovanović) of Ras as Patriarch of Peć (BOA, D.PSK, 8/58)

APPENDIX
REQUEST FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF ARSENIUS JOVANOVIĆ AS
PATRIARCH
(BOA, D.PSK, 8/58)
[TRANSLITERATION:]

Devletlü merhametlü sultânım hazretleri sağ olsun
'Arzuhâl-ı kulları oldur ki bu kulları vilâyet-i Rumeli'nde vâkî' İpek ve tevâbî'i kazâlarında patrikliğine tâbî' olan yerlerin / patrik olub hâlâ berât-i şerîf-i âlişân ile mutasarrıf olmakla bu kulları amelâmde ve ekserî hasta ve mecrûh olduğumden üzerime edâsı lâzım gelen / mâl-i mîrî tahsiline iktidârım olmamakla hâlâ Yenipazar mitropolidi olan Arseniyos nâm râhib patrikliğîn 'uhdesinden her vechile gelmekle / kâdir ve mahall ve müstehakk olduğuna kendü ve hüsn-i rızâm ile kasr-i yed ve yedimde olan berât-i şerîf-i âlişân virüb kasr-i yedimiz vâkî' ve mezbûrun / patrikliğîn 'uhdesinden gelmeğe kâdir olduğu aelemiz münâsib görüb sâ'ir bir mitropolid ve ivladikalardan mahzar eyledükleri ecilden / merâhim-i aliyyelerinden niyâz kullarıdır yine işbu bâ'is-i 'arz-ı ubûdiyyet patrikliği mezkûr kasr-i yedimizden mitropolidi mezbûr Arseniyos / nâm râhibe tevcih ve sadaka ihsân buyurılmak niyâziyla pây-e-i serîr-i âlâya 'arz olundu bâkî fermân der-i adlindir.

Bende Moysey patrik-i İpek

Ber-mûceb-i defter-i Hazîne-i Âmire
Patriklik-i kefer-i vilâyet-i İpek ve tevâbî'uhû der-uhde-i Moysey râhib fi 21
Ramazan sene 1130 ibkâ ve mukarrer ve emr-i şerîf dâde bâ-telhîs ve bâ-fermân-i âlî
Pişkeş-i kadim 100.000 (akçe)
Fi sene ber-vech-i maktû' teslim-i mîrî 70.000 (akçe)

MAHALLI
SAH

İpek patrikliği kadimden cümle ruhbân ve re'âyâları ittifâklarıyla biri mürd yâhûd hayâtını zâhir olmadıkça âhardan kimesneye virilügelmeyüb / Moysey râhib Atanasios râhib mürdinden ruhbân ü re'âyâları ittifâkıyla yedi sekiz sene patrik ve hidmetinde kusûrî / yoğiken erbâb-ı ağrâzdan Timotiyos râhib beynlerinde hâsıl ve nâ-müstehakk ve birkaç eşirrâ ile ma'zûl kâdîdan 'arz / alub ref' itdirmekle re'âyânın haberi olmadığı ve azil bilâ-mucib olduğu yedinde 'arz ve mahzarları / olub mesfûr Timotiyos râhib ref' ve kaydı terkîn ve 'atîk berâtı mûcebince ref'inden zabt itmek üzere istid'âyı / merhamet iderler mahallinden görüldükde İpek patrikliği Atanasios merdinden cümle re'âyâsının iltimâsları üzere / muhtârları olan Yeni Bazar mitropolidi Moysey râhibe yüz yigirmi dört senesinde tevcih ba'dehu Moysey râhib / zûlm ve ta'addî ider diyü Üsküb kâdîsı 'arz ve âdet-i pişkeşi teslim-i Hazîne ve be-her sene maktû'ı virmek üzere / Timotiyos râhibe tevcih olunub bin yüz otuz senesi berât virildiği derkenâr olunmuşdur yedlerinde ki 'arzları / mûcib-i 'azli olan 'arzdân re'âyânın hayrî / olmayub tahrik ve hilâf olmakla mesfûr Timotiyos / ref' ve kaydı terkîn ve kemâ-fi'l-evvel 'atîk berâtı / mûcebince Moysey râhibe ibkâ ve zabtiçün emr-i şerîf / virilmek üzere ordu-yı hümayûn kâdîsı efendî i'lâm / itmekle i'lâmları mûcebince mesfûr Timotiyos / ref' ve kaydı terkîn ve Moysey râhibe berâtı mûcebince / beher sene maktû'ı virilmek üzere ibkâ ve zabtiçün / emr-i şerîf virilmek üzere 'arz ve telhîs olındıkda / telhîs mûcebince mesfûr ref' ve kaydı terkîn ve Moysey / râhibe berât mûcebince beher sene maktû'ı virilmek üzere / ibkâ ve tevcih ve mahalline kayd olunmak diyü sâdır olan / fermân-ı âlî mûcebince emr-i şerîf virilüb hâlâ

patriklik-i / mezbûr sâhib-i 'arzuḥâl mesfûr Moysey râhibin / üzerinde mestûr ve mukayyeddîr ve mühri dahî mutâbıkdır / ol bâbda emr ü fermân devletlü saâdetlü sultânım hazretlerindir.

Fi 14. Zilhicce sene 1136
(İmza)

SAH

Peşkeşi teslim şartıyla mücebince kasr-i yedinden tevcih olunmak buyurıldı
Mahzar yerinde (?) hıfz olına
15. Zilhicce sene [1]136.

[TRANSLATION:]

Long live His Majesty, my prosperous and merciful Sultan!

The petition of Your servant is as follows:

This servant of Yours is the patriarch of the places that belong to the patriarchate of Peć and local kadiliks in the region of Rumelia and an administrator (mutasarrıf) with an exalted imperial berât. [It is said in his petition:] "Since I am not able to collect the tax due to the state treasury because I have grown weak and of ill health, I withdraw from office of my own free will, hand over the exalted imperial berât and assent to someone from among the able and suitable persons from the patriarchate taking over my office. Monk Arsenius, one of the patriarchate's men and the incumbent metropolitan of Novi Pazar, is a suitable, upright and worthy person in every respect. At the request of the other metropolitans and bishops, Your servant humbly requests for the highest grace and command of the most exalted throne to appoint the said metropolitan Arsenius as patriarch because of my withdrawal from office. The command belongs to Your just judgement.

Your servant, Moses, patriarch of Peć

At the place

Correct

According to the defter of the imperial treasury:

Patriarchate of the region of Peć and local places. Within the responsibility of the monk Moses. Appointed and confirmed by the imperial decree issued on the grounds of the petition and the order of 21 Ramazan 1130 (18 August 1718).

Correct

Old pişkeş: 100,000 [akçes]

Annual payment by lump sum to the state treasury: 70,000 [akçes]

Never since ancient times has the patriarchate of Peć been granted to anyone without the agreement reached – every time a patriarch dies or falls ill – by all monks and reaya. After the death of the monk Athanasius, the patriarch was the monk Moses, as agreed by the monks and reaya. As he had been holding his post for seven or eight years without fault, a malevolent man – monk Timothy – obtained from the former kadi a petition [which claimed] that there was in their midst an ignorant and worthless man and that wrongdoings were happening [in the patriarchate]. Since it was ordered that he be dismissed, [Moses] came with a petition [which claimed] that he had not mistreated the reaya and that there had been no reason for his dismissal. Monk Timothy was dismissed and struck off the register, and the grace was asked for that [Moses] hold [patriarchal office] on the basis of the old berât. Inspection of the records has established the following. That after the death of Athanasius all the reaya elected the metropolitan of Novi Pazar, the monk Moses, who was appointed in the year 1124 at

their request. After that, on the basis of the petition of the kadi of Skopje, which states that the monk Moses has committed abuses and violence, the monk Timothy was appointed [as patriarch] with the proviso that he should pay the customary pişkeş to the state treasury and a lump sum every year. He was issued a berât in the year 1130, which was noted in writing. Since his petitions which led to the dismissal did not come from the reaya, but were false and untrue, the imperial order was issued that the said monk Timothy be removed from office and struck off the register, and that the monk Moses hold the office on the basis of the old berât as before. After his lordship the kadi of the imperial army was informed, the imperial order was issued which states that, in accordance with his decisions, the said Timothy shall be dismissed and struck off the register, and the monk Moses shall remain in office and pay the annual lump sum. Since there are both the petition and the telhis, in accordance with the proclaimed exalted order, the imperial decree was issued stating that, in accordance with the telhis, the said person was dismissed and struck off the register, and the monk Moses appointed, confirmed and registered in the appropriate place. The said patriarchate is now registered on the name of the petitioner, the said monk Moses. His seal is valid. Further commands belong to His Majesty, my prosperous and merciful Sultan.

14 Zilhicce 1136 (3 September 1724)

(Signature)

Correct

With the proviso that he should pay the pişkeş, it is ordered that he be appointed [to office] because of withdrawal [of the previous patriarch]

Let the mahzar be kept in place

15 Zilhicce 1136 (4 September 1724)

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