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## REALIA VS. REGALIA: REGENCY INSIGNIA IN CONTEXT

in loving memory of Tzar  
(Jan. 25, 2015 – Apr. 11, 2023),  
our wonderful tibble, infinitely missed

*Abstract:* This essay explores portrayals of female wielders of power in Byzantium in order to analyze usage of regalia in context of cases of regency. Research of the vast material of wall paintings, miniatures, coinage or seals reveals that different groups of female royals shared various insignia among which some were usually met on images of emperors. The conclusion can be drawn that imperial consorts, regents, empress mothers and empresses-regnants were depicted with various regalia with no particular item alone being decisive in displaying prominent Byzantine feminine and their crucial roles or outstanding impact as mothers of heirs, co-rulers of their sons emperors, regents, rulers of their own, and also providers of legitimacy for new emperors.

*Key words:* regalia, insignia, regency, empress, Byzantium, Serbia

As in majority of cultures dominated by men, so in Byzantium too women from all social strata had secondary place, which is why a few succeeded to prominence.<sup>1</sup> The surviving textual and other sources on the Byzantine higher class and court mostly contain data about exploits of men,<sup>2</sup> – accordingly, scholars focus on imagery of emperors.<sup>3</sup> However, due to results of modern

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<sup>1</sup> J. Herrin et al., *Women*, The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium 3, ed. A. Kazhdan, New York – Oxford 1991, 2201–2204; I. Kalavrezou et al., *Byzantine Women and Their World*, Cambridge, MA – New Haven – London 2003.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. C. Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312–1453. Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ. 1972; M. G. Parani, *Reconstructing the Reality of Images. Byzantine Material Culture and Religious Iconography (11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Leiden – Boston 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Grabar, *L'Empereur dans l'art byzantin. Recherches sur l'art officiel de l'Empire d'Orient*, Paris 1936; P. Magdalino, R. Nelson, *The Emperor in Byzantine Art of the Twelfth Century*, BF VIII (1982) 123–183; M. Studer-Karlen, *The Emperor's Image in Byzantium: Perceptions and Functions*, Meanings and Functions of the Ruler's Image in the Mediterranean World (11<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> Centuries), ed. M. Bacci et al., Leiden – Boston 2022, 134–171; M. Parani, *Clothes maketh the emperor? Embodying and Performing Imperial Ideology*



Fig. 1 a) *Triumph of Orthodoxy*, British Museum, London; b) *Triumph of Orthodoxy*, Istituto Ellenico, Venezia; c) *Triumph of Orthodoxy*, Benaki Museum, Athens; d) *Queen Helen*, Sopoćani (after T. Vuleta); e) *Princess Milica*, Ljubostinja (Gallery of frescoes, Belgrade)

Сл. 1 а) *Недеља православља*, Британски музеј, Лондон; б) *Недеља православља*, Грчки институт, Венеција; в) *Недеља православља*, Бенаки музеј, Атина; д) *Краљица Јелена*, Сопоћани (Т. Вулета); е) *Кнегиња Милица*, Љубостиња (Галерија фресака, Београд)



Fig. 2 a) *Theodora*, nomisma; b) *Michael III and Thekla*, nomisma; c) *Theodora*, seal; d) *Theodora and Michael III*, nomisma

Сл. 2 а) *Теодора*, златник; б) *Михаило III и Текла*, златник; с) *Теодора*, печат; д) *Теодора и Михаило III*, златник

studies, activities and interests of the Byzantine feminine, secular and spiritual, are better known today,<sup>4</sup> especially of women wielding imperial power.<sup>5</sup>

*in Byzantium through Dress, Staging the Ruler's Body in Medieval Cultures. A Comparative Perspective*, ed. M. Bacci et al., Turnhout 2023, 156–172.

<sup>4</sup> A. Laiou, *The Role of Women in Byzantine Society*, JÖB 31/1 (1981) 233–260; *Women, Men and Eunuchs. Gender in Byzantium*, ed. L. James, London – New York 1997; C. Connor, *Women of Byzantium*, New Haven – London 2004; *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience 800–1200*, ed. L. Garland, London 2006.

<sup>5</sup> L. Garland, *Byzantine Empresses. Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527–1204*, London – New York 1999; J. Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, Princeton 2001; ead., *Unrivalled Influence. Women and Empire in Byzantium*, Princeton–Oxford 2013; É. Malamut, *Pouvoir et influence des impératrices de Thessalonique. Trois exemples célèbres du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Villes méditerranéennes au Moyen Âge, ed. É. Malamut et al., Aix-



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b

Fig. 3 a) *Anna and Thomas*, Arta relief; b) *Constantine and Eudokia Ingerina*, nomisma

Сл. 3 а) *Ана и Тома*, рељеф из Арте; б) *Константин и Евдокија*, златник

This essay reconsiders the issues I raised long ago,<sup>6</sup> delving into the regents' imagery more deeply because institutions of regency and co-rulership existed in Byzantium from the earliest times, with strong women as sole rulers or only mother queens.<sup>7</sup> Although such cases were rare, the salient female consorts are found throughout history, from the impressive reign of Hatshepsut, the Egyptian she-pharaoh,<sup>8</sup> to truly adventurous life of Tamta.<sup>9</sup>

Sources reveal various titles in usage for imperial women (*augusta*, *basilissa*, *despoina*, *autokratorissa*) but which, despite apparent strict prescriptions, occur in rather nuanced contexts reflecting realities of political twists.<sup>10</sup> The Byzantine royal feminine left their mark over charters they issued,<sup>11</sup> in roles played at the court and in ceremonial, private and public,<sup>12</sup> being founders or refounders of monasteries, and also patrons of distinguished rhetors or reputable monks.<sup>13</sup> But their potentials as princesses, brides and consorts sometimes turned to dark outcome due to their weak positions once they became widows,

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en-Provence 2014, 59–74.

<sup>6</sup> B. Cvetković, *Iconography of Female Regency: An Issue of Methodology*, Niš & Byzantium X (2012) 405–414.

<sup>7</sup> A. Χριστοφιλοπούλου, *Ἡ ἀντιβασιλεία εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον*, Βυζαντινά Σύμμεικτα 2 (1970) 1–144; J.-C. Cheynet, *Les impératrices byzantines et leurs réseaux (1028–1203)*, *Augusta, Regina, Basilissa. La souveraine de l'Empire romain au Moyen Âge. Entre héritages et métamorphoses*, ed. F. Chausson et al., Paris 2018, 141–158.

<sup>8</sup> *Hatshepsut from Queen to Pharaoh*, ed. C. H. Roehrig et al., New York 2005.

<sup>9</sup> A. Eastmond, *Tamta's World. The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia*, Cambridge 2017.

<sup>10</sup> E. Bensammar, *La titulature de l'imperatrice et sa signification. Recherches sur les sources byzantines de la fin du VIII<sup>e</sup> siècle à la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, *Byzantion* 46 (1976) 243–291; B. Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium 1025 – 1204: Power, Patronage and Ideology*, London – New York 2014, 96–119 (chapter on titles).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ф. Баришић, *Повеље византијских царица*, ЗРВИ XIII (1971) 143–193.

<sup>12</sup> É. Malamut, *L'impératrice byzantine et la cour (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ЗРВИ L (2013) 645–661; ead., *L'impératrice byzantine et le cérémonial (VIII<sup>e</sup>–XII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, *Le saint, le moine, le paysan: Mélanges d'histoire byzantine offerts à Michel Kaplan*, ed. O. Delouis et al., Paris 2016, 329–374.

<sup>13</sup> C. Galatariotou, *Byzantine Women's Monastic Communities: The Evidence of the Typika*, *JOB* 38 (1988), 263–290; V. Dimitropoulou, *Imperial women founders and refounders in Komnenian Constantinople*, *Founders and refounders in Byzantine Monasteries*, ed. M. Mullett, Belfast 2007, 87–106; *Female Founders in Byzantium and Beyond*, ed. L. Theiss et al., Wien – Köln – Weimar 2014; T. Leber, *Stifterinnen und ihre Stiftungen auf dem Balkan des Spätmittelalters*, Wiesbaden 2023.



Fig. 4 a) *Justin II and Sophia*, follis; b) *Eirene*, nomisma; c) *Eirene*, seal; d) *Constantine VII and Zoe*, nomisma; e) *Nameless Empress*, Trier ivory; f) *Eudokia Makrembolitissa*, seal

Сл. 4 а) *Јустин II и Софија*, фоллис; б) *Ирена*, златник; в) *Ирена*, печат; д) *Константин VII и Зоја*, златник; е) *Безимена царица*, Слоновача из Трира; ф) *Евдокија Макремволитиса*, печат

outcast mistresses, refugees or prisoners making some of them even victims of torture and violent death.<sup>14</sup> This array of historical women in Byzantium was duly echoed in textual and pictorial representations.<sup>15</sup>

The question this article aims to explore has recently been briefly expounded when I dealt with issues of re-dating Ravanica and historical portraits in the nave,<sup>16</sup> revisiting my claim from 30 years ago that Princess Militsa (1389–1405) was there shown as regent.<sup>17</sup> My arguments then centered on insignia and costume, *sakkos* as typical garb of male rulers and ostensibly cruciform scepter, as seen on regency portraits from coinage of Theodora (842–856), to the marble likeness of basilissa Anna (1296–1313) in Arta.<sup>18</sup> Assessing these issues T. Starodubcev noticed that the flaked fresco prevents detecting of actual form of scepter held by Militsa,<sup>19</sup> while in Ljubostinja she is depicted with a branch scepter, named by Byzantine sources *το βᾶιον*.<sup>20</sup> Along with this rightful note, Starodubcev downplayed importance of the fact that Militsa on both these portraits has *sakkos*, arguing that Serbian royal consorts were usually depicted in such a manner, stressing especially Queen Helena (ca 1250–1314).<sup>21</sup> However, the material reveal quite the opposite, that queens or empresses of medieval Serbia are usually not shown in tight-fitting *sakkoi* with narrow sleeves but

<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Eastmond, *Diplomatic gifts: Women and art as imperial commodities in the 13<sup>th</sup> century*, Liquid & Multiple: Individuals & identities in the thirteenth-century Aegean, ed. G. Saint-Guillain et al., Paris 2012, 105–133; A. Karagianni, *Female Monarchs in the Medieval Byzantine Court: Prejudice, Disbelief, and Calumnies*, Queenship in the Mediterranean. Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras, ed. E. Woodacre, New York 2013, 9–25; K. Nikolaou, *Empresses and Augustae as wives, paramours and mistresses (5<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, *Byzantinoslavica* 75/1-2 (2017) 43–54.

<sup>15</sup> For one recent research see L. A. Wainwright, *Portraits of Power: The Representations of Imperial Women in the Byzantine Empire*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham 2018.

<sup>16</sup> B. Cvetković, *Revisiting Chronology Issues in Ravanica*, Niš & Byzantium XXI (2023) 293–302, fig. 4–8. Also, see id., *Вук Лазаревић у писаним и ликовним изворима*, Средњи век у српској науци, историји, књижевности и уметности XII, ур. Г. Јовановић, Деспотовац – Београд 2022, 60–68, сл. 5–7.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Б. Цветковић, *Нови прилози проучавању ктиторске композиције у Раваници*, Саопштења XXVI (1994) 37–51.

<sup>18</sup> B. Cvetković, *The Investiture Relief in Arta, Epiros*, ЗРВИ XXXIII (1994) 103–112.

<sup>19</sup> Т. Стародубцев, *О портретима у Раваници*, ЗРВИ XLIX (2012) 333–352; ead., *Српско зидно сликарство у земљама Лазаревића и Бранковића II*, Београд 2016, 31–48.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. R. Macrides et al., *Pseudo-Kodinos and the Constantinopolitan Court: Offices and Ceremonies*, Farnham – Burlington, VT 2013, 222–227, n. 648.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Т. Стародубцев, *Владарске инсигније кнегиње Милице*, Niš & Byzantium XI (2013) 267–277.



Fig. 5 a) *Maria of Alania*, Khakhuli triptych; b) *Maria of Alania*, seal; c) *Maria of Alania*, Coisl. 79, fol. 2v; d) *Theodora*, seal

Сл. 5 а) *Марија Аланска*, Хахули триптих; б) *Марија Аланска*, печат; с) *Марија Аланска*, Coisl. 79, л. 2б; д) *Теодора*, печат



Fig. 6 a) *Zoe and Theodora*,  
 histamenon; b) *Theodora*,  
 nomisma; c) *Constantine  
 X Doukas and Eudokia  
 Makrembolitissa*, follis

Сл. 6 а) Зоја и Теодора,  
 златник; б) Теодора, златник;  
 с) Константин X Дука и  
 Евдокија Макремволитиса,  
 фолис



in wide gowns with broad, hanging sleeves.<sup>22</sup> Although there are variants in depicting regalia the scholars operate with confusing viewpoints being dug in reductionist methodology.<sup>23</sup>

The corpus of royal feminine imagery in Byzantium and the neighbouring realms disclose subtle nuances in usage of costume and insignia, closely connected to specific and unique, more durable or shorter periods of rule of imperial women. Comparative analyses of official images in coinage,<sup>24</sup> as well as on seals,<sup>25</sup> reveal distinctive forms for both the court or public audiences, expressing sacred origin of the royal power, terrestrial role of rulers as heavenly vicars, and their political authority.<sup>26</sup> Variables exist in monumental and miniature portrayals which is why no far reaching conclusions can be drawn if based only on one element of depiction. Therefore the very form of scepters, as perusal of sources testify, was not relevant in its own as was neither a type of dress alone, nor a crown,<sup>27</sup> because it was the imagery in entirety that mattered making sense if controlled by all other sources. For a proper research of depictions of influential female royals in Byzantium (regents, consorts, co-rulers, empresses-regnants) one needs holistic, not reductionist approach, i.e. complete historical background, ideological context, and minute insight of pictorial strategies, which may help elucidating similarly rare cases in medieval Serbia.

This issue is discussed in analysis of distinct categories of the material in various genres. Perhaps the best known images of regency are the so-called *Triumph of Orthodoxy* icons which commemorate both the synod from 843 that officially ended iconoclasm, and eponymous Sunday feast, established in

<sup>22</sup> For portraits of women consorts of Serbian rulers from Studenica, Arilje, Gračanica, Nagoričino, Karan, Pološko Dečani, Mateič and Lesnovo, see Б. Поповић, *Српска средњовековна владарска и властелска одећа*, Београд 2021, 24, 62, 117, 145, 152, 218, 267, 330, 351, 423, 426, 427, 429, 435, 439–441, 457, 463.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Љ. Винуловић, *Портрети жена ктитора у време Лазаревића*, *Култура* 165 (2019) 327–331.

<sup>24</sup> Ph. Grierson, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection Vol. Three, Parts 1-2*, Washington D.C. 1973; M. F. Hendy, *Coinage and Money in the Byzantine Empire 1081-1261*, Washington D.C. 1969; Ph. Grierson, *Byzantine Coins*, London – Los Angeles 1982; M. F. Hendy, *Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection Vol. Four, Parts 1-2*, Washington D.C. 1999; *ibid*, *Vol. Five. Parts 1-2*, Washington, D.C. 1999.

<sup>25</sup> G. Zacos, A. Vegliery, *Byzantine lead seals 1/3*, Basel 1972; J. Nesbitt, C. Morrisson, *Catalogue of Byzantine Seals at Dumbarton Oaks and in the Fogg Museum of Art Vol. 6*, Washington D.C. 2009.

<sup>26</sup> G. Galavaris, *The Symbolism of the Imperial Costume as Displayed on Byzantine Coins*, *American Numismatic society museum notes* 8 (1958) 111–113; Zh. Zhekova, *The Byzantine Empress on Coins and Seals*, V. Turnovo 2017. Also see Љ. Максимовић, *Печат автократора Михаила VII Дука и почетак његове владавине*, *ЗРВИ* 23 (1984) 89–94; J. Шаранац Стаменковић, *Иконографија печата и новца династије Дука*, *Зограф* 37 (2013) 55–76. Cf. J. Jasperse, *Manly Minds in Female Bodies: Three Women and their Power through Coins and Seals*, *Arenal* 25:2 (2018) 295–321.

<sup>27</sup> V. Rousseau, *Emblem of an Empire: The Development of the Byzantine Empress's Crown*, *Al-Masāq* 16/1 (2004) 5–15.

memory of this event itself.<sup>28</sup> Leaving aside enigmatic origin of its complex iconography it is essential to note differences rendering the regent Theodora and her minor son, Emperor Michael III. The oldest specimen, the one in the British Museum, shows a boy in tight red *sakkos* and *loros*, holding a scroll in his left hand and a long cruciform scepter in his right, with *stemma* crown on his head; his regent mother, on the contrary, has *loros* on a wide red gown with broad sleeves, tall open crown on head, gesturing with her right hand towards the Virgin's icon held by two angelic deacons, while with her left holds a cruciform scepter; both stand on the red cushions (Fig. 1a).<sup>29</sup> The Velimezis collection keeps an almost identical, though a damaged icon, with the royals shown in the same way.<sup>30</sup> But the icon from the Hellenic Institute in Venice reveals some differences: while the minor Michael is shown as in previous icons, both cushions are gone here, the regent holds an icon in her right hand, wears *loros* with red tight-sleeved robe, covered by green mantle embroidered in gold (Fig. 1b).<sup>31</sup> The Benaki Museum icon has even more additions: the both royals have red mantles and unfurled scrolls with appropriate quotations while the regent holds two joint *tondi* in her right hand and under the wide gown with *loros* and broad sleeves wears one more robe, a tight-fitting sleeved tunic (Fig. 1c).<sup>32</sup> Distinctions of garbs, however, do not affect the overall structure made up of the regent and the minor.

Different costume guises of the regent Theodora in these icons expose the question found in all other instances from royal imagery: to what degree representation of insignia followed true regal items used by rulers at court and ceremonies? Close study warned that despite all the codes and customs, the Byzantine reality was different,<sup>33</sup> and official imagery was more the convention than reflection of imperial persons and regalia they possessed. This would become more evident in later periods, with decline in customs, according to Nikephoros Gregoras,<sup>34</sup> and his claim that John VI had no proper crown for

<sup>28</sup> N. Chatzidakis, *La restitution du culte des images sur les icônes: Variations du contenu dogmatique, L'aniconisme dans l'art religieux byzantin*, ed. M. Campagnolo et al., Geneva 2015, 115–125.

<sup>29</sup> For the recent study on this icon, see T. Стародубцев, *О светителѣма представљеним на византијској икони Недеље православља у Британском музеју у Лондону*, ЗРВИ LIV (2017) 251–278 (with bibliography).

<sup>30</sup> N. Chatzidakis, *Icons. The Velimezis Collection. Catalogue raisonné*, Thessaloniki 1998, 86–91, No. 5.

<sup>31</sup> M. Chatzidakis, *Icônes de Saint-Georges des Grecs et de la collection de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise*, Venise 1962, 96, No. 63, Pl. 48.

<sup>32</sup> A. Δρανδάκη, *Η Αναστήλωση των Εικόνων: παράδοση και ανανέωση στο έργο ενός Κρητικού ζωγράφου του 16ου αιώνα*, Μουσείο Μπενάκη 1 (2001) 59–77.

<sup>33</sup> A. Cameron, *The construction of court ritual: the Byzantine Book of Ceremonies, Rituals of Royalty. Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, ed. D. Cannadine et al., Cambridge 1987, 106–136.

<sup>34</sup> M. G. Parani, *Cultural Identity and Dress: The Case of Late Byzantine Ceremonial Costume*, JÖB 57 (2007) 95–134. Cf. A. Eastmond, L. Jones, *Robing, Power, and Legitimacy in Armenia and Georgia, Robes and Honor the Medieval World of Investiture*, ed. S. Gordon, New York 2001, 147–191.

his own coronation.<sup>35</sup> Plethora of data on office holders, their costumes and insignia in the *De ceremoniis* and *Treatise on offices*, compiled by Constantine VII and Pseudo-Kodinos respectively, are oft imprecise since they describe customs in retrospective, since these works were not made as manuals. Likewise, the precious miniatures of the so-called *Epithalamion* in Vatican, despite being pregnant with all sorts of attire, are differently dated and interpreted.<sup>36</sup> Given that repainting and interpolations took place due to dynamics of politics and life as with the mosaics in San Vitale in Ravenna,<sup>37</sup> lack of captions next to imperial figures there normally has led to new analyses.<sup>38</sup> Notwithstanding various problems in research, the prominent royal consorts were noted from the early stages of Late Antique era.<sup>39</sup> Some of them had solemn portrayals in ivory,<sup>40</sup> while importance of others was displayed in coinage,<sup>41</sup> manuscripts,<sup>42</sup> and architecture they had sponsored.<sup>43</sup> Even enigmatic personalities, hardly identified despite being represented as saintly figures, are precisely defined as royalty after their costume.<sup>44</sup>

The basic motives for the following classification of the Byzantine imperial feminine are rare instances of medieval Serbian female royals depicted in tight-sleeved *sakkoi*, which seem to indicate special contexts. The first was already mentioned Queen Helena, wife of King Uroš I, as on her figure in Sopoćani (Fig. 1d), although scholars tend not to see in it any particular position she held, apart being mere a consort of the king.<sup>45</sup> This issue will be treated in

<sup>35</sup> Nikephoros Gregoras, *Byzantina Historia II*, ed. L. Schopen, Bonn 1830, 788.15–789.8; R. Macrides, *Ceremonies and the City: The Court in Fourteenth-Century Constantinople*, Royal Courts in Dynastic States and Empires. A Global Perspective, ed. J. Duindam et al., Leiden – Boston 2011, 218.

<sup>36</sup> C. Hennessy, *The Vatican Epithalamion*, A Companion to Byzantine Illustrated Manuscripts, ed. V. Tsamakda, Leiden – Boston 2017, 177–182 (with references to various interpretations).

<sup>37</sup> I. Andreescu-Treadgold, W. Treadgold, *Procopius and the Imperial Panels of S. Vitale*, *Art Bulletin* 79/4 (1997) 708–723.

<sup>38</sup> L. James, *Global or Local Art? The Mosaic Panels of Justinian and Theodora in S Vitale, Ravenna*, *Global Byzantium*, ed. L. Brubaker et al., London 2022, 123–137.

<sup>39</sup> K. H. Holum, *Theodosian Empresses: Women and Imperial Dominion in Late Antiquity*, Los Angeles 1982; L. James, *Empresses and Power in Early Byzantium*, London 2001.

<sup>40</sup> A. Χριστοφιλοπούλου, *Τίνα αυτοκράτειραν απεικονίζει η εξ ελεφαντοστού πινακίς του εν Φλωρεντία Bargello*; *ΔΧΑΕ* 5 (1969) 141–148; D. Angelova, *The Ivories of Ariadne and Ideas about Female Imperial Authority in Rome and Early Byzantium*, *Gesta* 43/1 (2004) 1–15.

<sup>41</sup> L. Brubaker, H. Tobler, *The Gender of Money: Byzantine Empresses on Coins (324–802)*, *Gender & History* 12/3 (2000) 572–594.

<sup>42</sup> B. Küilerich, *The Image of Anicia Juliana in the Vienna Dioscurides: Flattery or Appropriation of Imperial Imagery?*, *Symbolae Osloenses* 76:1 (2001) 169–190.

<sup>43</sup> F. Stroth, *The Church of St. Polyeuktos at Constantinople*, Cambridge 2024 (with bibliography).

<sup>44</sup> Sh. E. J. Gerstel, *Saint Eudokia and the Imperial Household of Leo VI*, *Art Bulletin* 79/4 (1997) 699–707.

<sup>45</sup> Б. Тодић, *Краљица Јелена и Сопоћани*, id, *Фреске манастира Сопоћани*, Нови Сад 2021, 235–251, 278–281.



Fig. 7 a) *Theophano*, seal; b) *Michael, Eudokia Makrembolitissa and Constantine*, nomisma; c) *Eirene*, Monomachos Crown; d) *Eirene (Bertha) (?)*, Pala d'Oro; e) *Theodora*, Sinaït. gr. 364, f. 3r; f) *Theodora*, lead weight; g) *Theodora Palaiologina*, seal; h) *Anna of Savoy*, assarion

Сл. 7 а) *Теофана*, печат; б) *Михаило, Евдокија Макремволитиса, и Константин*, златник; в) *Ирена*, Мономахова круна; д) *Ирена (Берта) (?)*, Pala d'Oro; е) *Теодора*, Sinaït. gr. 364, f. 3r; ф) *Теодора*, оловни тег; г) *Теодора Палеологина*, печат; х) *Ана Савојска*, асариион



Fig. 8 a) *Eudokia Makrembolitissa*, Moscow Reliquary; b) *Romanos IV Diogenes and Eudokia Makrembolitissa*, seal

Сл. 8 а) *Евдокија Макремволитиса*, Московски реликвијар; б) *Роман IV Диоген и Евдокија Макремволитиса*, печат



Fig. 9 a) Zoe, St Sophia, Constantinople; b) Irene-Piroška, St Sophia, Constantinople; c) Zoe and Theodora (?), Khakhuli Triptych

Сл. 9 а) Зоја, Св. Софија, Цариград; б) Ирина-Пирошка, Св. Софија, Цариград; в) Зоја и Теодора (?), Хахули триптих



Fig. 10 a) *Otto and Theophano*, Musée de Cluny, Paris; b) *Romanos and Eudokia*, BNF, Paris; c) *Marriage of Theophobos and a Byzantine Princess*, Madrid Skylitzes, f. 53v  
 Сл. 10 а) *Отон и Теофана*, Музеј Клини, Париз; б) *Роман и Евдокија*, BNF, Париз; в) *Венчање Теофоба и византијске принцезе*, Мадридски Скилица, л. 53б



a separate essay so suffice it to say her actual origin as an imperial offspring,<sup>46</sup> was probably reason for adopting the tight-fitting *sakkos* with tight sleeves.<sup>47</sup> The similar could be with a consort in Ramaća that was recently identified as Helena Gattilusi, wife of despot Stefan Lazarević.<sup>48</sup> More issues arise with portraits of Queen Helena from the reigns of two of her sons, which are usually seen to accord to her position of nun.<sup>49</sup> However, although she did take a veil after her husband's demise, this was a rather formal step as captions on her portrayals continued to style her as queen, while the robes she was shown with were not real habits of nuns.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the fact that from 1282 until her death in 1314 she ruled a separate region as one of three co-rulers with her sons kings Dragutin and Milutin, make her role resemble that of Anna Dalasene, mother of Alexius I Comnene, well known for exercising top power during most of her son's reign, as queen mother, *first nun* and regent.<sup>51</sup> Princess Militsa also has *sakkoi* and *loroi* on both her regent portraits, in the Ravanica nave, painted during her regency 1389–1395, and in the narthex of Ljubostinja, on frescoes from ca 1412 (Fig. 1e).<sup>52</sup>

As the icons discussed above, coinage of the regent Theodora (842–856) display nuances which echo her complex regency. On *nomisma* she is shown as crowned regent in *loros*, holding cruciform scepter and *globus cruciger* (Fig. 2a), while her son Michael and daughter Thekla have *chlamys* and *loros* respectively, with shared regalia (Fig. 2b).<sup>53</sup> Identical likeness of Theodora as regent is found on her lead seals too (Fig. 2c).<sup>54</sup> Final phase of her regency exemplifies

<sup>46</sup> G. L. McDaniel, *On Hungarian–Serbian Relations in the Thirteenth Century: John Angelos and Queen Jelena*, *Ungarn Jahrbuch* 12 (1982/3) 43–50. Cf. F. Van Tricht, *Latin Emperors and Serbian Queens: Anna and Helena. Genealogical and Geopolitical Explorations in the Post – 1204 Byzantine World*, *Frankokratia* 1 (2020) 1–52.

<sup>47</sup> B. Cvetković, *Franciscans and Medieval Serbia: the Evidence of Art*, *Ikon* 3 (2010) 247–259.

<sup>48</sup> Б. Цветковић, *Владарски портрети у Рамаћи*, *Средњи век у српској науци, историји, књижевности и уметности X*, ур. Г. Јовановић, Деспотовач 2019, 179–211.

<sup>49</sup> О. Кандић, *Градац. Историја и архитектура манастира*, Београд 2005, 49–57, Т. II/3-7.

<sup>50</sup> M. Mihajlovic-Shiple, *An Unexpected Image of Diplomacy in a Vatican Panel, Byzantium in Eastern European Visual Culture in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. M. A. Rossi et al, Leiden – Boston 2020, 91–118.

<sup>51</sup> É. Malamut, *Une femme politique d'exception à la fin du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle: Anne Dalassène*, *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (VI<sup>e</sup>–X<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, ed. S. Lebecq et al., Lille 1999, 103–120; В. Станковић, *Комнини у Цариграду (1057–1185). Еволуција једне владарске породице*, Београд 2006, 17–36, 102–118; E. McGeer, J. Nesbitt, *Byzantium in the Time of Troubles: The Continuation of the Chronicle of John Skylitzes (1057–1079)*, Leiden 2020, 14–17.

<sup>52</sup> On the chronology see Б. Цветковић, *О династичкој слици Лазаревића и проблему датовања љубостињског живописа*, *Саопштења XXVII–XXVIII* (1995/6) 67–78. Cf. Стародубцев, *Српско зидно*, 88–98.

<sup>53</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue* 3, 452–470; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 63.

<sup>54</sup> Nesbitt, *Morrisson, op. cit.*, 79–80; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 85–87.

*nomisma* with joint busts of Theodora and Michael III (Fig. 2d): it is significant to note that neither of the two holds scepters or orbs, hierarchy being achieved through employment of different robes.<sup>55</sup>

A marble *proskynetarion* constructed above the tomb of St Theodora Petraliphina in Arta carries the only known monumental regency effigies, probably of *basilissa* Anna Kantakouzene Palaiologina and of her minor son despot Thomas (Fig. 3a).<sup>56</sup> Due to position of portraits, some scholars still tend to identify them as Theodora and her son Nikephoros.<sup>57</sup> But it is the absence of an adult male ruler, while figures of a boy and a woman in royal attire hold insignia, that define them as ruling couple, matching the historical context and the only known regency of the time,<sup>58</sup> that of *basilissa* Anna, whose influence was exceeding in Arta.<sup>59</sup> The tools used in representing the regency in Arta were the same as on coins of Michael III, as seen above. These same means served in displaying Eudokia Ingerina and her stepson Constantine (Fig. 3b), on commemorative gold coins issued by Basil I.<sup>60</sup> The importance of this empress, as shown on the coin struck after her demise, echoes her special position during her lifetime, which is obvious on her lush portrait in the manuscript Par. gr. 510,<sup>61</sup> and, perhaps even more overtly, on the ivory casket reliefs in the Palazzo Venezia.<sup>62</sup>

The central issue of this research regards usage of cruciform scepter with royal feminine imagery.<sup>63</sup> The material reveals that empresses were shown with cross scepters in rather different contexts. Already it appears on coins minted by Justin II, and it is noteworthy that Emperor holds the orb while Empress Sophia wields cruciform scepter (Fig. 4a), which duly reflects influential role played

<sup>55</sup> M. Ch. Vrij, *The Numismatic Iconography of the Period of Iconomachy (610-867)*, PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham 2016, 215–239.

<sup>56</sup> Б. Цветковић, *Света Теодора у Арти: култно постројење и портрети владара*, Саопштења L (2018) 51–71 (with extensive bibliography).

<sup>57</sup> Β. Παπαδοπούλου, *Θεοδώρα Πετραλείφα – Άννα Παλαιολογίνα Καντακουζηνή. Δύο βυζαντινές βασιλίσσες στην αυλή του Δεσποτάτου της Ηπείρου*, ΔΧΑΕ 42 (2021) 169–187. Cf. A. Weyl Carr, *Portrait of a lady. The Eloquence of Art. Essays in Honour of Henry Maguire*, ed. A. Olsen Lam et al., London – New York 2020, 85–86, 90.

<sup>58</sup> N. Melvani, *Late Byzantine Sculpture*, Turnhout 2013, 65, 105, 149, 198, fig. 51; M. Studer-Karlen, *Mise en scène multiple et lecture simultanée: la « création » d'une sainte*, Parerga: pour Victor I. Stoichita, ed. J. F. Corpataux, Genève 2022, 79–94.

<sup>59</sup> M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, *The Basilissa Anna Palaiologina of Arta and the Monastery of Vlacherna*, Women and Byzantine Monasticism, ed. J. Y. Perreault, Athens 1991, 43–49.

<sup>60</sup> Nesbitt, Morrisson, *op. cit.*, 481; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 65.

<sup>61</sup> L. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium. Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge 1999, 162–163, 406, fig. 2; Sh. Tougher, *Eudokia Ingerina and the “Macedonian Dynasty”: The Visible Woman*, Mujeres imperiales, mujeres reales. Representaciones públicas y representaciones del poder en la Antigüedad tardía y Bizancio, ed. M. C. Chiriatti et al., Paderborn 2021, 357–372.

<sup>62</sup> H. Maguire, *The Art of comparing in Byzantium*, Art Bulletin 70 (1988) 88–103.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Parani, *Reconstructing*, 32 who states it was exceptionally represented with empresses, naming only Maria of Alania from the Khakhuli triptych and the plaque in Arta, cf. *ibid.*, 317, 324, Appendix 2, No. 19, 54.

by this consort of Justin II, so well attested in the coinage struck from 565 to 578.<sup>64</sup> The most unusual reign in long history of Byzantium was the sole rule of Empress Eirene (797–802), as best exemplified by her gold coins with her bust on both sides in full regalia (Fig. 4b).<sup>65</sup> Although her double portrait had no precedents in coinage and may look subversive, actually it was followed by some subsequent rulers.<sup>66</sup> Identically set is her likeness on her seals with Eirene displayed in *loros*, holding orb and cruciform scepter (Fig. 4c).<sup>67</sup> The long cross scepter is to be found on coins issued during regency of Zoe Karbonopsina (913, 919) where she and her minor son Constantine VII hold it jointly, she being dressed in *loros* and the boy in *chlamys* (Fig. 4d).<sup>68</sup> The same model was followed on their seals.<sup>69</sup> Since cruciform scepters appear indiscriminately on images of regents, empresses-regnant, and consorts of considerable influence speaks for itself that cross scepter had special place in royal symbolism. That is why, but much more complicated than with the marble plaque in Arta, there were extreme disagreements to date the so-called Trier ivory and identify female figure wielding a long cruciform scepter over her shoulder (Fig. 4e).<sup>70</sup> The older scholarship opted for Early Byzantine empresses (Martina, Pulcheria, or Eudoxia),<sup>71</sup> while more novel argued that complex depiction of an advent or relic transfer includes Empress Eirene as central figure.<sup>72</sup> The outstanding position of this feminine and conspicuous rendition of scepter has recently produced a new suggestion making it full circle with the icons of *Triumph of Orthodoxy* in that it identifies imperial figures as Michael III and the regent Theodora.<sup>73</sup> There is no need to go deeper into this matter, since a cross scepter may serve as overwhelming argument for any of the given proposals. It is especially so in

<sup>64</sup> Brubaker, Tobler, *The Gender of Money*, 583–544, fig. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 347–351. Also, see K. Kotsis, *Defining female authority in eighth-century Byzantium: the numismatic images of the Empress Irene (797-802)*, *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5 (2012) 185–215; N. A. Ingot, *Iconography of Persuasion: Re-evaluating Empress Irene in her Numismatic Context*, MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, Vancouver 2019, 54–61, 97.

<sup>66</sup> L. James, 'The world turned upside down': *Art and subversion in Byzantium*, *Power and Subversion in Byzantium*, ed. D Angelov et al., Farnham 2013, 117–119, fig. 7.4.

<sup>67</sup> Nesbitt, Morrisson, *op. cit.*, 65–67; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 81–83.

<sup>68</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 526–574; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 65–66.

<sup>69</sup> Nesbitt, Morrisson, *op. cit.*, 94–97; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 87–89.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. P. Chatterjee, *Iconoclasm's Legacy: Interpreting the Trier Ivory*, *Art Bulletin* 100/3 (2018) 28–47.

<sup>71</sup> S. Spain, *The Translation of Relics Ivory, Trier*, *DOP* 31 (1977) 281–304; K. G. Holum, G. Vikan, *The Trier Ivory, Adventus Ceremonial and the Relics of St. Stephen*, *DOP* 33 (1979) 115–133; J. Wortley, *The Trier Ivory Reconsidered*, *GRBS* 21/4 (1980) 381–394; L. J. Wilson, *The Trier Procession Ivory. A New Interpretation*, *Byzantion* 54/2 (1984) 602–614.

<sup>72</sup> L. Brubaker, *The Chalke Gate, the Construction of the Past, and the Trier Ivory*, *BMGS* 23/ 1 (1999) 258–285; P. Niewöhner, *Historisch-topographische Überlegungen zum Trierer Prozessionselfenbein, dem Christusbild an der Chalke, Kaiserin Irenes Triumph im Bilderstreit und der Euphemiakirche am Hippodrom*, *Millennium* 11 (2014) 261–287.

<sup>73</sup> A. Calahorra Bartolomé, *El marfil de Tréveris: una iconografía clave en el context de la propaganda politico-religiosa del Triunfo de la Ortodoxia*, *Erytheia: Revista de Estudios Bizantinos Y Neogriegos* 39 (2018) 9–54.

regard to the precious portrayal of the regent Eudokia Makrembolitissa (1067, 1071), as displayed on her seals (Fig. 4f).<sup>74</sup> Unlike the empress on the Trier ivory who is dressed in *chlamys*, on the seal Eudokia has the long female robe with *thorakion* and wide hanging sleeves, also wielding the long cruciform scepter.

Within this group of images there is a special subgroup of female royal portraits depicted with floriated cross scepters. One of the best known is the miniature figure of Empress Maria of Alania (1071–1081), consort of Michael VII, from the famous Khakhuli triptych (Fig. 5a).<sup>75</sup> She played highly important role during not only reign of this last ruler of the Doukas clan, but also that of her second husband, Emperor Nikephoros III.<sup>76</sup> Identical scepter exists on a seal featuring a crowned female, variously recognized as either Maria of Alania or Maria Skleraina, but due to her sumptuous dress resembling a mantle, one should argue this is more probably the Georgian, i.e. Alanian (Fig. 5b).<sup>77</sup> The same floriated scepter is also found on another portrait of Maria of Alania in the luxuriously illustrated manuscript Coisl. 79 (Fig. 5c). As on the Khakhuli triptych she has a female *thorakion* robe with wide, hanging sleeves.<sup>78</sup> One may surmise that inclusion of this form of cross scepter reflects her political role, because Empress Theodora Porphyrogenneta (1055/6) was also represented with such a scepter on one of her own seals (Fig. 5d).<sup>79</sup>

Female rulers of Byzantium were also shown wielding *labarum*, which was used in royal iconography since Constantine I. Therefore, as the Christian triumphal token *par excellence* it is found on gold coins issued during the joint reign of Empresses Zoe and Theodora (Fig. 6a),<sup>80</sup> but also on *nomisma* minted by Theodora (1055–1056) as sole ruler (Fig. 6b).<sup>81</sup> It should be stressed that it appears on the coins of Emperor Constantine X Doukas too, where he holds the *labarum* together with Empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa (Fig. 6c), an obvious sign of her distinguished political and dynastic position.<sup>82</sup>

The type of a scepter was not decisive agent for official representations of regents or the empresses-regnant, as proved by sequence of images of Byzantine female royals in all forms of their imperial roles with the typically female branch scepter, *το βᾶϊον*. Already it is seen on rare seals of Empress Theophano (963), dated to her regency (Fig. 7a),<sup>83</sup> and also it features on coins echoing the special position of Eudokia Makrembolitissa, based on her regency, where she alone

<sup>74</sup> Nesbitt, Morriison, *op. cit.*, 136–137; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 91–93.

<sup>75</sup> T. Papamastorakis, *Re-deconstructing the Khakhouli Triptych*, ΔΧΑΕ 23 (2002) 225–251.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. I. Kalavrezou, *Female Popular Beliefs and Maria of Alania*, JTS 36 (2011) 85–101.

<sup>77</sup> Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 97, 99.

<sup>78</sup> J. Spatharakis, *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*, Leiden 1976, 107–118.

<sup>79</sup> Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 83–85.

<sup>80</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 731–732; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 57–61.

<sup>81</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 748–753; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 59–61.

<sup>82</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 779–784.

<sup>83</sup> Nesbitt, Morriison, *op. cit.*, 103–104; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 89–91.

stands on a dais between her sons Michael and Constantine (Fig. 7b).<sup>84</sup> More importantly, branch scepters appear even on images of empresses-regnant, as on the portrait of Empress Zoe from the so-called Monomachos crown (Fig. 7c).<sup>85</sup> Also, it features on the figure of an empress on Pala d'Oro in San Marco, Venice (Fig. 7d), but as with the Trier ivory, her name Eirene does not help in detecting her actual identity, and this may even be Eirene-Bertha.<sup>86</sup> Again, branch scepters are held by the both sister empresses Zoe and Theodora in the manuscript Sinait. gr. 364 (Fig. 7e),<sup>87</sup> where they flank Emperor Constantine IX Monomachos, who is shown wielding *labarum*.<sup>88</sup> One of the most exclusive objects in its kind and perfect clue for the issues treated here, is the weight, an imperial donation bearing the bust of Empress Theodora as the sole ruler, who holds branch scepter (Fig. 7f).<sup>89</sup> Some Byzantine feminine who were not empresses were depicted in the same manner, as Sebastokratorissa Irene,<sup>90</sup> in the Manasses chronicle manuscript Vind. Phil. gr. 149, where she has not only a branch scepter but also a tall segmented headgear.<sup>91</sup> Empress Maria of Antioch, who sadly as regent faced terrible demise,<sup>92</sup> is pictured in the manuscript Vat. Gr. 1176 along her husband Emperor Manuel I in exactly the same manner.<sup>93</sup> It was the presence itself of official image that bespeaks on significant empresses as was with Theodora Palaiologina, consort of Michael VIII,<sup>94</sup> from her seals (Fig. 7g),<sup>95</sup> to her monumental portraits.<sup>96</sup> The status of these women allowed them to issue charters, and endow institutions, being represented accordingly as consort empresses in *thorakion* robes and with branch scepters, as with the

<sup>84</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue 3*, 798–820.

<sup>85</sup> H. Maguire, *Davidic virtue: the crown of Constantine Monomachos and its images*, *The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art. Studies in Honor of Bezalel Narkiss on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. B. Kühnel, Jerusalem 1997, 117–123. Cf. T. Dawson *The Monomachos Crown: Towards a Resolution*, *Byzantina Σύμμεκτα* 19 (2009) 183–193.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. S. Bettini, *Venice, the Pala d'Oro, and Constantinople*, *The Treasury of San Marco, Venice*, ed. D. Buckton, Milan 1984, 39–42; Станковић, *Комнини*, 136–140.

<sup>87</sup> Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 99–102.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Parani, *Reconstructing*, 315.

<sup>89</sup> Ch. J. S. Entwistle, *Silver-gilt weight from the reign of Theodora*, *Byzantium. Treasures of the Byzantine Art and Culture from British Collections*, ed. D. Buckton, London 1994, 149–150; *ibid.*, Byzantium 330–1453, 161, 408.

<sup>90</sup> Станковић, *Комнини*, 132–136.

<sup>91</sup> Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 158–159, fig. 100. Also see E. Jeffreys, *The Sebastokratorissa Irene as Patron*, *Female founders*, 177–194.

<sup>92</sup> Станковић, *Комнини*, 140–147.

<sup>93</sup> Spatharakis, *The Portrait*, 208–210.

<sup>94</sup> A.-M. Talbot, *Empress Theodora Palaiologina, Wife of Michael VIII*, *DOP* 46. *Homo Byzantinus: Papers in Honor of Alexander Kazhdan* (1992) 295–303.

<sup>95</sup> Nesbitt, Morrisson, *op. cit.*, 195–196; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 107.

<sup>96</sup> Cf. R. H. W. Stichel, »Vergessene Portraits« *spätbyzantinischer Kaiser. Zwei frühpalaiologische kaiserliche Familienbildnisse im Peribleptos- und Pammakaristoskloster zu Konstantinopel*, *Mitteilungen zur spätantiken Archäologie und byzantinischen Kunstgeschichte* 1, ed. J. G. Deckers et al., Wiesbaden 1998, 75–103.

acting regents or even empresses-regnant. And this was so with the last known Byzantine regent, Empress Anna of Savoy (1341–1347), as attested on her coinage (Fig. 7h),<sup>97</sup> and seals which style her *augusta* and *autokratorissa*.<sup>98</sup>

The most important clues for the point made in this essay, that totality of information of an image prevails over one or parts of regalia, are portrayals not dependent on particular insignia. This matches the fact that Byzantium never objectified individual items, such as orbs, crowns, or scepters as Western Europe did, attested by subsequent “destiny” of the so-called Holy Crown of Hungary.<sup>99</sup> The case of point is the famous *St Demetrius reliquary* in Kremlin, where along other figures there are embossed gilt portraits of Constantine X Doukas and Eudokia Makrembolitissa (Fig. 8a); while Emperor wields both *labarum* and orb, Eudokia has only the orb, but her crucial position is revealed through her title of *bassilis* and her *sakkos*, identical as with Emperor.<sup>100</sup> In a similar manner her importance is achieved on coins where she stands together with Romanos IV Diogenes, both being blessed by the Virgin (Fig. 8b).<sup>101</sup>

This all encompassing attitude to royalty images is exemplified by the famous mosaics in the gallery of St Sophia in Constantinople. The well known portraits of Constantine IX and Zoe, originally probably images of Zoe with one of her previous husbands display her wearing *sakkos*, quite like one of her partner (Fig. 9a).<sup>102</sup> It is not so with neighbouring figures of Emperor John II and Empress Irene-Piroška, (Fig. 9b), although pose and gestures of the two are similar.<sup>103</sup> Unlike Zoe, Piroška has costume with wide, hanging sleeves which also is in all other segments different from both those of John II and Zoe. The crucial role played by several female royals as the consorts, regents or rulers of their own has been detected by scholars in that such prominent individuals ser-

<sup>97</sup> T. Bertelè, *Monete e sigilli di Anna di Savoia, imperatrice di Bisanzio*, Rome 1937; D. Nicol, S. Bendall, *Anna of Savoy in Thessalonica: the numismatic evidence*, *Revue numismatique* 19 (1977) 87–102; É. Malamuth, *Jeanne-Anne princesse de Savoie et impératrice de Byzance*, *Impératrices, princesses, aristocrates et saintes souveraines. De l’Orient chrétien et musulman au Moyen Âge et au début des Temps modernes*, ed. É. Malamuth, et al., Aix-en-Provence 2014, 85–118.

<sup>98</sup> Nesbitt, Morrisson, *op. cit.*, 200; Zhekova, *op. cit.*, 93–95.

<sup>99</sup> S. J. Hilsdale, *The Social Life of the Byzantine Gift: the Royal Crown of Hungary Re-invented*, *Art History* 31/5 (2008) 602–631.

<sup>100</sup> И. А. Стерлигова, *Реликварий святого Димитрия Солунского*, *Christian relics in the Moscow Kremlin*, ed. A. M. Lidov, Moscow 2000, 115–118.

<sup>101</sup> Grierson, *Catalogue* 3, 785–797.

<sup>102</sup> Cf. N. Oikonomides, *The Mosaic Panel of Constantine IX and Zoe in Saint Sophia*, *REB* 36 (1978) 219–232; R. S. Cormack, *Interpreting the Mosaics of St Sophia at Istanbul*, *Art History* 4 (1981) 141–146; I. Kalavrezou, *Irregular Marriages in the Eleventh Century and the Zoe and Constantine Mosaic in Hagia Sophia*, *Law and Society in Byzantium: Ninth – Twelfth Centuries*, ed. A. E. Laiou et al., Washington D.C. 1994, 241–259; N. Teteriatnikov, *Hagia Sophia: The Two Portraits of the Emperors with Moneybags as a Functional Setting*, *Arte Medievale* (1996) 47–67; B. A. Pollick, *Sex, Lies, and Mosaics: The Zoe Panel as a Reflection of Change in Eleventh-Century Byzantium*, *ARTiculate* 1/1 (2012) 22–38.

<sup>103</sup> Ch. Mielke, *The Many Faces of Piroška-Eirene in Visual and Material Culture*, *Piroška and the Pantokrator: Dynastic Memory, Healing and Salvation in Komnenian Constantinople*, ed. M. Sághy et al., Budapest 2019, 153–173.

ved not only as mothers of heirs, but at precarious moments the decisive factors to provide transitory regency and, more importantly, legitimacy of the upcoming rulers.<sup>104</sup> Being undisputed heirs by their descent and imperial blood, even miniatures displayed female wielders, as on the enamels with the reigning sister empresses Zoe and Theodora on the Khakhuli triptych, dressed in *thorakion* garbs and holding only scrolls (Fig. 9c).<sup>105</sup> In the same manner, it was not required to wield portable insignia in order to represent royalty, as shown on seals of Constantine VII and Zoe from 918/9, or on portraits of Constantine X and Eudokia Makrembolitissa in the manuscript Barb. gr. 1185,<sup>106</sup> and Queen Tamar in various churches.<sup>107</sup> The special importance of different imperial garb is best attested on famous ivories depicting Emperor Otto and Empress Theophano (Fig. 10a),<sup>108</sup> or Romanos II and Eudokia (Fig. 10b).<sup>109</sup> That these examples were not rare disclose miniatures from the manuscript of the Madrid Skylitzes; the one on the folio 53v (Fig. 10c), represents the *Marriage of Theophobos with a Byzantine Princess*, perhaps a sister of Emperor Theophilos, where only the Princess has the *loros* costume since Theophobos was not of an imperial descent.<sup>110</sup>

Today one may only surmise on how non-existent images of Anna Komnene could look like, in regard both to her imperial status and her political ambitions,<sup>111</sup> but also in view of her monumental chronicle, the *Alexiade*.<sup>112</sup> The seeming inconsistency of the insignia usage speaks the royal imagery must not be looked at through lenses of automatism but as reflection of precise historical context. Therefore, the portrayals were much more images of the political

<sup>104</sup> Cf. B. Hill, L. James, D. Smythe, *Zoe: The Rhythm Method of Imperial Renewal*, New Constantines. The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Centuries, ed. P. Magdalino, Aldershot 1994, 215–229.

<sup>105</sup> K. Kotsis, *Mothers of the Empire: Empresses Zoe and Theodora on a Byzantine Medallion Cycle*, MFF 48/1 (2012) 5–96.

<sup>106</sup> Α. Μαραβά-Χατζηνικολάου, *Τριφεγγής ένθεος μοναρχία*, ΔΧΑΕ 21(2000) 221–226.

<sup>107</sup> A. Eastmond, *Royal Imagery in Medieval Georgia*, University Park PA 1998; Z. Skhirtladze, *Another Portrait of Queen Tamar?*, Anadolu Kültürlerinde Süreklilik ve Değişim Dr. A. Mine Kadiroğlu'na Armağan, ed. A. Ceren Erel et al., Ankara 2011, 505–523.

<sup>108</sup> C. T. Little, *Christ Blessing Emperor Otto II and Empress Theophano*, The Glory of Byzantium. Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era A. D. 843 – 1261, ed. H. C. Evans et al., New York 1997, 499–501; L. James, *Votive Plaque with Christ Blessing Emperor Otto II (967–983) and Empress Theophano (982–83)*, Byzantium 330 – 1453, ed. R. Cormack et al., London 2008, 127, 398.

<sup>109</sup> M. G. Parani, *The Romanos ivory and the New Tokali kilise: imperial costume as a tool for dating Byzantine art*, CA 49 (2001) 15–28.

<sup>110</sup> V. Tsamakda, *The Illustrated Chonicle of Ioannes Skylitzes in Madrid*, Leiden 2002, 97, 289–290, fig. 126.

<sup>111</sup> *Anna Komnene and Her Times*, ed. Th. Gouma-Peterson, New York – London 2000; Станковић, *Комнини*, 119–125; L. Neville, *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*, Oxford 2016.

<sup>112</sup> *Annae Komnenae Alexias*, ed. D. R. Reinsch et al., Berlin – New York 2001; Anna Komnena, *The Alexiad*, tr. E. R. A. Sewter, London 2003. Cf. L. Vilimonović, *Observations on the Text and Context of Anna Komnene's Alexiad*, Belgrade Historical Review IV (2014) 43–58.

rather than personal bodies,<sup>113</sup> though without values of discernible individuals the body politic could never be effective.<sup>114</sup> The analyzed material also proves decisively that rare occurrence of the *sakkoi* in the imagery of female royals in medieval Serbia should not be taken for granted, but due to their conspicuous renditions must be thoroughly explored.

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*REALIA VERSUS REGALIA: ИНСИГНИЈЕ РЕГЕНАТА У КОНТЕКСТУ*

Рад је посвећен изучавању званичног представљања жена као носилаца власти у Византији с намером да се анализира употреба регалија, посебно код ретких случајева регентстава. Истраживање грађе, укључујући ликове у живопису, на минијатурама, кованом новцу и печатима, показује да су представе различитих група владарки могле садржавати инсигније од којих су поједине биле обично приказиване на портретима царева. Ова привидна недоследност указује на то владарски портрет не треба посматрати кроз призму аутоматизма јер је свака представа одраз специфичног културно-историјског контекста. У том смислу, царски портрети били су више слике политичког него стварног тела неког владара, иако без сасвим конкретних особина једне личности није било могуће ни политичко тело владара као таквог. Грађа такође пружа основу за закључак да ретка појава царског сакоса на представама жена владара како у Византији, тако и у средњовековној Србији, није била случајна појава, већ њихов значај одражава посебне околности које је нужно темељно истражити. Различите инсигније, више или мање истакнуте на портретима владарки, увек су биле показатељ истакнутог положаја жена на двору и у политици јер су у питању носиоци највише власти и изузетног утицаја на државу и друштво, пошто су оне биле мајке наследника престола, регенти, савладарке царева, самостални владари као и даваоци легитимитета новим царевицама.

<sup>113</sup> Cf. A. Eastmond, 'It began with a picture': *Imperial art, texts and subversion between East and West in the twelfth century*, *Power and Subversion*, 121–143.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. E. H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology*, Princeton 1957.