territory, which as a geographical and political unit was called *Zhupa* or *Zhupaniya* (county), the political and military chief of which was called *Zhupan.* The country was divided into many such Zhupaniyas, which were originally independent of each other. The history of the Serbs during the first five centuries after their arrival in their present country was a struggle between the attempts at union and centralization of the Zhupaniyas into one state under one government, and the resistance to such union and centralization, a struggle between the centripetal and the centrifugal political forces. The more powerful Zhupan was tempted to subjugate and absorb the neighbouring less powerful Zhupaniyas. If successful, he would take the title of *Veliki Zhupan* (Grand Zhupan). But such unions were followed again and again by decentralization and disruption. It is not to be wondered at that this struggle gave occasion for wars between the Zhupaniyas, for civil wars within the Zhupaniyas, for popular risings, court revolutions, dethronements, political assassinations and such like. The earlier history of the Serbs on the Balkan territory is especially turbulent and bloody. One of the minor causes of that turbulence is to be found in the struggle between the ancient Slavonic order of inheritance, according to which a Zhupan ought to be succeeded by the oldest member of the family and not necessarily by his own son, and the natural desire of every ruler that his own son should inherit the throne.

This internal political process was complicated by the struggle between the Greek Church and Greek emperors on the one side, and the Roman Catholic Church and the Roman Catholic Powers (Venice and Hungary) on the other side, for the possession of exclusive ecclesiastical and political influence in the provinces occupied by the Serbs. The danger increased when the Bulgarians came, towards the end of the 7th century, and formed a powerful kingdom on the eastern and south-eastern frontiers of the Serbs. Practically from the 8th to the 12th century the bulk of the Serbs was under either Bulgarian or Greek suzerainty, while the Serbo-Croat provinces of Dalmatia acknowledged either Venetian or Hungarian supremacy.

*The Visheslav Dynasty.—*The first Serb princes who worked with more or less success at the union of several Zhupaniyas into one state, belonged to what might be called “ the Visheslav dynasty.” Zhupan Visheslav lived in the beginning of the 9th century, and seems to have been the descendant of that leader of the Serbs who signed the settlement treaty with the emperor Heraclius towards the middle of the 7th century. His ancestral Zhupaniya comprised Tara, Piva, Lim (the neck of land between the Montenegro and Servia of our days). Visheslav’s son Radoslav, his grandson Prissegoy, and his great-grandson Vlastimir, continued his work. Vlastimir successfully defended the western provinces of Servia against the Bulgarian attacks, although the eastern provinces (Branichevo, Morava, Timok, Vardar, Podrimlye) were occupied by the Bulgars. The Bulgarian danger, and probably the energetic and successful operations of the Greek emperor Basil the Macedonian (867-886), determined the Servian Zhupans to acknowledge again the suzerainty of the Greek emperors. One of the important consequences of this new vassalship to the Byzantine empire was that the entire Servian people embraced Christianity, between 871 and 875. In all important transactions the Servians were led by the Grand Zhupan Mutimir Visheslavich (d. 891). During the reign of his heirs almost all the Servian provinces were conquered by the Bulgarian Tsar Simeon (924). In 931 Chaslav, one of the princes of the Visheslav dynasty, liberated the largest part of the Servian territory from Bulgarian domination, but to maintain that liberty he had to acknowledge the Byzantine emperors as his suzerains.

*The Princes of Zetta and the First Serb Kingdom.—*Towards the end of the 9th century the political centre of the Serbs was transferred to Zetta (Zeta or Zenta: see Montenegro) and the Primorye (Sea-Coast). The prince (sometimes called king) of Zetta, Yovan Vladimir, tried to stop the triumphal march of the Bulgarian Tsar Samuel through the Serb provinces, but in 989 was defeated, made prisoner and sent to Samuel’s capital, Prespa. The historical fact that Vladimir married Kossara, the daughter of Samuel, and was sent back to Zetta as reigning prince under

the Bulgarian suzerainty, forms the subject of the first Serb novel, *Vladimir and Kossara,* as early as the 13th century. Vladimir, who seems to have been a noble-minded and generous man, was murdered by Samuel’s heir, Tsar Vladislav (1015). By the Christians of both churches in Albania he is to this day venerated as a saint. But after the death of Samuel the Bulgarian power rapidly lost the Serb provinces, which, to get rid of the Bulgarians, again acknowledged the Greek overlordship. About 1042, however, Prince Voislav of Travuniya (Trebinje), cousin of the assassinated Vladimir of Zetta, started a successful insurrection against the Greeks, and united under his own rule Travuniya, Zahumlye and Zetta. His son Michael Voislavich annexed the important Zhupaniya of Rashka (Rascia or Rassia), and in 1077 proclaimed himself a king *(rex),* receiving the crown from Pope Gregory VII. His son Bodin continued the work of his father, and enlarged the first Serb kingdom by annexing territories which up to that time were under direct Greek rule. A body of Crusaders under Count Raymond of Toulouse passed through Bodin’s kingdom about 1101. After Bodin’s death the civil wars between his sons and relatives materially weakened the first Serb kingdom. Bosnia reclaimed her own independence; so did Rashka, whose Grand Zhupans came forward as leaders of the Serb national policy, which aimed at freedom from Greek suzerainty and the union of all the Serb Zhupaniyas into one kingdom under one king. The task was difficult enough, as the Byzantine empire, then under the reign of the energetic Manuel Comnenus, regained much of its lost power and influence. About the middle of the 12th century all the Serb Zhupaniyas were acknowledging the suzerainty of the Byzantine emperors.

*The Nemanyich Dynasty and the Serb Empire.—*A change for the better began when Stephen Nemanya became the Grand Zhupan of Rashka (1169). He succeeded in uniting all the Serb countries under his rule, and although he never took the title of king, he was the real founder of the Serb kingdom and of the royal dynasty of Nemanyich, which reigned over the Serb people for nearly 200 years. The youngest son of Stephen Nemanya, Prince Rastko, secretly left his father’s royal court, went to a convent in Mount Athos, made himself a monk, and afterwards, under the name of Sava, became the first archbishop of Servia. As such he established eight bishoprics and encouraged schools and learning. He is regarded as the great patron and protector of education among the Serbs, as a saint, and as one of the greatest statesmen in the national history. After Stephen Nemanya and Sava the most distinguished members of the Nemanyich dynasty were Urosh I. (1242-1276), his son Milutin (1282-1321) and Stephen Dushan@@l (1331-1355). Urosh married Helen, a French princess of the house de Courtenay, and through her he kept friendly relations with the French court of Charles of Anjou in Naples. He endeavoured to negotiate an alliance between Serbs and French for the overthrow and partition of the Byzan- tine empire. His son Milutin continued that policy for some time, and increased his territory by taking several fortified places from the Greeks; but later he joined the Greeks under the emperor Andronicus against the Turks. Milutin’s grandson, Stephen Dushan, was a great soldier and statesman. Seeing the danger which menaced the disorganized Byzantine empire from the Turks, he thought the best plan to prevent the Turkish invasion of the Balkan Peninsula would be to replace that empire by a Serbo- Greek empire. He took from the Greeks Albania and Macedonia excepting Salonica, Kastoria and Iannina. Towards the end of 1345 he proclaimed himself “emperor of the Serbs and the Greeks,” and was as such solemnly crowned at Usküb on Easter Day 1346. At the same time he raised the archbishop of Ipek, the primate of Servia, to the dignity of patriarch. Three years later he convoked the *Sabor* (parliament) at Usküb to begin a codifica­tion of the laws and legal usages. The result was the publication, in 1349, of the *Zakonik Tsara Dushana* (Tsar Dushan’s Book of Laws), a code of great historical interest which proves that Servia was not much behind the foremost European states in

*@@@1 Dushan* is a term of endearment, derived from *dusha,* “the soul,” and not, as formerly believed by Western philologists, from *dushiti,* “ to strangle.”