

Original paper
UDC 262.12 Stojković, I.
UDC 239:262.12 Stojković, I.

THE CONCEPT OF AUTHORITIES IN THE TREATISE *TRACTATUS DE ECCLESIA* BY IVAN STOJKOVIĆ

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ABSTRACT: The Dubrovnik-born Dominican friar Ivan Stojković (1392/5-1443) was actively engaged in the Church Councils in the first half of the 15th century, especially in the Church Council of Basle. Although the disputes he led with the Hussites and the Byzantines did not bring any practical success, he wrote a book, *Tractatus de Ecclesia*, where he expressed his ideas about how to overcome the existing divisions within the Christian world, and about how the Church had to be reformed from within. His hopes were projected in the universal ecclesiastical community named *Ecclesia militans*. Looking for new authorities which would corroborate his ideas, Stojković found them in the universities.

Introduction

The crisis within Christendom in the 15th century was manifest in three main spheres. Crisis was seen in the insecure position of the papacy, in the appearance of the Wycliffite and Hussite heresies in the West, and, in the East, in the increasing pressure on the Byzantine Empire from the Ottoman Turks. Since the papacy had already been shaken by the Avignon captivity and the subsequent Great Western Schism, it was no longer expected that the papacy would succeed in restoring its role as the supreme religious authority in the

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This article has already been published in Croatian under the following title: »Shvaćanje autoriteta u djelu *Tractatus de Ecclesia* Ivana Stojkovića«. *Anali Zavoda za povijesne znanosti HAZU u Dubrovniku* 42 (2004): pp. 21-52. Translated by the author.

Christian World. The Church Councils had begun to play a greater role in the ecclesiastical organisation, and the idea was established that the Councils would have the leading role in the Catholic Church instead of the papacy.

The roots of the conciliaristic theory derive from the discussions of some canonists, who tried in the 12th and 13th centuries to establish the legal boundaries of papal power. In this direction, a further step was taken one century later by Marsilius of Padua, who rejected the Divine origin of the papal institution.¹ William Ockham, who thought that it was only the Church as a whole that could not commit an error against the faith, while neither the Pope nor the Council was safe from such a danger, was ordered to go to Avignon in 1324 to justify his ideas before the Pope.²

From the example of these thinkers, it is clear how the university as an institution was becoming increasingly important in resolving issues of faith. The role in this entire process played by the renowned University of Paris became especially significant in the 15th century, when conciliarism was in full momentum. The adepts of conciliarism were then active in numerous consultative bodies in the Church institutions and European courts. At the same time, the theoretical basis for the entire conciliaristic movement was laid. Let us try to discover what role was played in all this by Ivan Stojković (1392/5-1443), one of the most respected 15th-century theologians, a man who was proud to have Dubrovnik as his native city, to be a member of the Dominican Order, and to have the University of Paris as his *Alma Mater*.

The conciliaristic theory was dominant in the Council in Constance (1414-1418) and later in the great Council of Basle (1431-1449). Acting as the general secretary of the Council of Basle, Stojković had the most prominent role in determining the Council policy towards the Roman See and defining the standpoints towards the traditional values of Christianity. He completed his difficult task by writing a theoretical work—the *Tractatus de Ecclesia*—‘the first complete treatise on the Church in the history of Catholic theology’.³

The particular value of this work lies not only in its originality, but also in the fact that the author competently connects two apparently detached issues.

¹ Colin Morris, »Christian Civilization (1050-1400)«, in: *The Oxford History of Christianity*, ed. John McManners. Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 1993: p. 240.

² Maria Teresa Fumagalli Beonio Brocchieri, »The Intellectual«, in: *The Medieval World*, ed. Jacques Le Goff. London 1997: p. 197.

³ Franjo Šanjek, »Ivan Stojković Dubrovčanin (1392/95-1443), diplomat i pobornik europskih integracija«. *Zbornik Diplomatske akademije* 4 (1999): p. 135.

These are the need to suppress the danger represented in those days by the Hussite movement, as well as the necessity to initiate a Church reform from within. For Stojković the response lay in the process of delivering knowledge, and he expected the university to play an important role for the future of Christianity. In order to understand the reasons for this, it is necessary first to consider some biographical data and historical events in order to depict the context in which his ideas emerged.

Dubrovnik as the primary source of inspiration

In the course of its history Dubrovnik has been a faithful Catholic town, loyal to the Catholic Church and to the Pope. However, Ragusan authorities felt free to put the interest of the state above loyalty to the Church, if circumstances required. Stojković adopted a similar kind of flexibility in his own actions, although his devotion to the Roman Church was deep and sincere.

He had already decided to become a Dominican friar at a young age. The Dominicans were traditionally considered as a prestigious Order in the old Dubrovnik, and were usually the offspring of wealthy parents.⁴ As a most promising student, Stojković was sent at public expense to Padua to receive university education. Leonardo Dati, the General of the Dominican Order from 1414 to 1425, noticed him there and recommended him to the University of Paris, where Stojković obtained his Master's and Doctoral Degree in Theology in 1420.⁵

The young and successful Dominican remained grateful and deeply connected to his hometown. Not only did he prepare a speech to express his gratitude for the generous scholarship, but he also proposed to the Ragusan authorities in 1424 the establishing of a university in Dubrovnik, where he would personally teach theology in Latin and in vernacular (*modo vulgari*,

⁴ They were also famous as highly educated. See Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, vol. 1, ed. Stjepan Kراسić. Zagreb: JAZU, 1975: p. XIV, in context of the 18th century. But, it was similar also four centuries earlier.

⁵ For general information about Stojković's life, see Ivica Tomljenović, »Prilozi za biografiju Ivana Stojkovića«, in: *Misao i djelo Ivana Stojkovića*, ed. Franjo Šanjek. Zagreb: Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1986: pp. 111-132; Franjo Šanjek, »Hrvati i Pariško sveučilište, 13.-15. st.«. *Rad HAZU* 476 (1998): pp. 129-138; idem, »Ivan Stojković Dubrovčanin«: pp. 131-141.

modo litterali sermone), free of charge.⁶ According to his proposition, his fellow citizens would follow the example of famous cities, especially those in near-by Italy, in establishing a university in honour of their native city and for the sake of its progress. The idea of a university must have seemed too liberal and repugnant to the conservative government of Dubrovnik, because students were always considered as a source of potential rebellion and disorder. In any case, rich nobles from Dubrovnik obtained their degrees at Padua or at some other university, and the government saw no need to change this custom.

But Stojković did not make his proposition merely out of gratitude to his native city. He had already formed the idea that the university was a very important element for the proper development of a true religious community. In his subsequent work, he gave an appropriate form to his early theories.

Stojković's career was marked by various diplomatic missions. He represented the University of Paris at several meetings with the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, he participated in the Church Councils in Pavia, Siena and Constance, but most noteworthy was his role in the Council of Basle. He acted there as the deputy of the Council President, Cardinal Julian Cesarini, whom Pope Eugenius IV had chosen for that duty. It has already been argued that Stojković's role may be properly described as Secretary General of the Council.⁷ His duties can be divided into the three main groups:

- a) to win the Hussites over to the Roman Church and to prove the supposed errors of their teaching in a direct verbal clash;
- b) to try to persuade the Byzantines to accept the Council's invitation and to organize a joint council so that the consequences of the Schism of 1054 could finally be resolved;
- c) to consolidate and impose the will of the Council over papal authority, since it had become obvious that they were sharply divided and a compromise was hardly possible.

Besides the various efforts needed for each of these tasks separately, Stojković never forgot the interests of Dubrovnik. It is above all to his credit that the Council of Basle allowed Dubrovnik to extend the sea commerce with

⁶ *Magistri Iohannis (Stojković) de Ragusio Ordinis Praedicatorum Tractatus de Ecclesia*, ed. Franjo Šanjek. Zagreb: Hrvatska dominikanska provincija i Kršćanska sadašnjost, 1983: introduction, pp. vii-viii.

⁷ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. viii; Josip Turčinović, »Ivan Stojković u službi zajedništva crkve«. *Croatica Christiana Periodica* 25 (1991): p. 215.

the 'infidels', that is, with the Muslims. The bull *Privilegium Navigationis Ad Partes Orientis*, issued in 1433, undoubtedly had a great impact on the prosperity of the city and laid the foundation of the golden age of Dubrovnik in the 16th century, when Ragusan commerce across the Mediterranean reached its height.⁸ But Stojković also expected a return favour from his hometown, bearing in mind its longstanding connections with the members of the dualistic Bosnian Church in the hinterland. The Church Fathers gathering in Basle saw a unique opportunity to resolve all the current heresies, and the Bosnian Church was one of them. According to the number of its adherents it was not perhaps so important and influential as some other heretic movements, but centuries of continuous fruitless attempts by the Hungarian and Croatian kings to break it showed how persistent and strong it was. Different official reports even spread the rumour that 'a heretical pope had his residence somewhere in Bosnia' and that 'he coordinated his activities with other heretical centres in southern France and northern Italy'.⁹

It was Stojković's idea that the representatives of the Bosnian Church should also come to a council where this matter would be forever settled. Thus he asked his fellow citizens in Dubrovnik to send envoys to Bosnia and then to Serbia to invite their feudal lords to reject their dualistic or Orthodox beliefs and to join the future Council. The Senate of Dubrovnik agreed with Stojković's request. According to one report, it sent envoys to the Bosnian king Tvrtko II, to some Bosnian lords, and to the Serbian duke Đurađ Branković, asking them to support the Holy Roman Church and to go to the Council of Basle. But the envoys failed to achieve anything. They returned home reporting that nobody wanted to obey the Roman Church or to reject the religion of their ancestors.¹⁰

This answer must have come as a serious disappointment and even as a personal failure to Stojković. In 1435, just a few months before he was sent from Basle to Constantinople as the head of a diplomatic mission of the Church

⁸ A good analysis of the commercial and social development of Dubrovnik in that period is made by Josip Lučić, »Gospodarsko-društveni odnosi u Dubrovniku u Stojkovićevo vrijeme (1392-1442)«, in: idem, *Dubrovačke teme*. Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Matice hrvatske, 1991: pp. 208-235.

⁹ Miroslav Brandt, »Bosanski dualistički pokret«, in: idem, *Izvori zla. Dualističke teme*. Zagreb: August Cesarec, 1989: p. 255.

¹⁰ Seraphinus Maria Cerva, *Bibliotheca Ragusina*, vol. 2, ed. Stjepan Krasić. Zagreb: JAZU, 1977: pp. 251-252.

Council, Stojković tried once more to resolve the problem of the Bosnian dualists. Relying on some reports from Dubrovnik, he claimed that it would be easy at that moment to convert them to Christianity. His opinion was further corroborated by the bishop of Thermopylas, Nicholas of Treviso, who travelled to Bosnia in 1434 and who tried to assure the Council of Basle that the conversion of 'all the Manichaeans in Bosnia' was feasible.¹¹ But everything was in vain and the Council did not take any concrete measure to win the Bosnian dualists over to the Catholic Church. They were treated as any other sect, and Stojković must have been greatly disappointed. The tone of his discussions of various sects in the *Tractatus de Ecclesia* is deeply embittered and negative. He already knew from personal experience that the task of winning over the small sects would be more difficult than converting members of an established Church, like the Byzantine Church. Stojković travelled to Constantinople in September 1435 as the head of the delegation from the Church Council of Basle to the Byzantine Emperor and to the Patriarch of Constantinople. He spent two years there trying to persuade the highest Byzantine officials to accept the union of the Churches as imagined by the Council of Basle. In the end, the Byzantines let him down and decided to accept the rival offer, which was sent by Pope Eugenius IV.¹² The main reasons for the failure of Stojković's mission to Constantinople were more of a political than a theological nature. He could not assure the Constantinopolitan Patriarch Joseph II that the Pope would personally come to the Council, which was the Patriarch's main request if he was to attend the meeting. Also, Stojković could not offer any guarantee to the Byzantines that they would soon receive adequate financial and military help against the Ottoman Turks, which was practically the only matter that concerned Emperor John VIII Palaeologos (1425-1448).

Stojković's third practical defeat came in 1433, in the debate against the representatives of the Hussite movement. According to some authors, the Council of Basle was convoked for the main purpose of settling the matter with the Hussites. A heavy defeat in the battle of Taus in the Kingdom of Bohemia on 14 August 1431 showed that the Western imperial military forces were too

¹¹ Zvezdan Strika, »Dubrovnik i ujedinjenje Crkve na saborima 15. st. u svjetlu povijesnih izvora«, in: *Tisuću godina dubrovačke (nad)biskupije*, ed. Želimir Puljić and Nedičko A. Ančić. Dubrovnik-Split: Biskupski ordinarijat and Crkva u svijetu, 2001: pp. 371-372.

¹² Stojković wrote a report on all the events that occurred during his mission in Byzantium. It is published under the title *Relatio de missione Constantinopolitana D. Joannis de Ragusio*, in: *Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio*, ed. Joannes Dominicus Mansi, vol. 31A. Graz 1961(reprint): pp. 248-272.

weak to break the Hussite resistance,¹³ and it was obvious that negotiations had to be held with the representatives of the Hussite movement. Four issues for discussion were prepared in advance, with the proposition that everybody should freely preach the Word of God, that each Christian should receive Communion under both kinds, that priests should be forbidden to possess worldly goods, and that anyone in the state of mortal sin should be punished by the civil authorities. Each side had to choose a representative in the discussion of each article, and Stojković was selected to confront the Hussite theologian Jan Rokyzana.

It seems that it was their confrontation that was the most significant. Rokyzana was a formidable opponent. He had listened to the lectures of Jan Hus at the University of Prague. After his teacher's death, Rokyzana became a member of the Calixtines or the Utraquists, a moderate wing of Hus's followers. In 1427 he became a professor at the University of Prague. The Hussites formally elected him to lead their delegation at Basle and to coordinate all the discussions on their side. In 1435 Rokyzana became the Archbishop of Prague and he remained the leading figure of the Hussite movement until his death in 1471.¹⁴ The discussions at Basle lasted from January until April 1433, when the unsatisfied Hussites left the Council. No agreement was reached.

With these three troublesome experiences on his mind, Stojković wrote the *Tractatus de Ecclesia*. It was intended to be a doctrinal treatise on the organisation of an ideal religious community, but it also bears the stamp of a polemical text in defence of the Catholic Church, containing many reminders of the discussions Stojković had already conducted. It can be concluded that Stojković began to write his treatise in 1422-23, developing it later in 1433 after the discussion with the Hussites, and finally finishing it in 1441-1442.¹⁵ Formally speaking, the *Tractatus de Ecclesia* has a direct precursor in Stojković's speech *Oratio de communione sub utraque specie*, 'A Speech on Communion under both kinds', which he had prepared for the dispute against Jan Rokyzana. But the *Tractatus de Ecclesia* has clearly independent points that establish it as Ivan Stojković's most serious and profound theological work. Although it contains references to theological discussions from previous centuries, these are skilfully incorporated into the text which formulates

¹³ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: introduction, p. xii.

¹⁴ Bonaventura Duda, *Joannis Stojković de Ragusio O. P. (-1443.) Doctrina de Cognoscibilitate Ecclesiae*, Romae: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1958: p. 58.

¹⁵ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: introduction, p. xviii.

a precise doctrinal programme for overcoming the then existing crisis within Christianity.

It may be said that the main point of Stojković's efforts was to consider how the papal position should be treated. The fact that the medieval papacy was then, for the last time, undergoing a schism significantly influenced Stojković's later writings. He fought against Pope Eugenius IV until the end, blaming him for the unsuccessful outcome of the Church Council's work. The conciliaristic theory was not invented by Ivan Stojković, but he was one of its most ardent and consistent followers. In this way, he gave a new explanation of the phenomenon of the ecclesiastical community. Yet he relied on tradition as far as he could, as much in argumentation as in formulation. How did he bring together these two extremes: the exposure of new ideas through old argumentation? What is the real innovation in Stojković's effort? Does it lie only in the fact that he was really the first Western Catholic author who wrote about this issue? The following analysis of his treatise will show that there are other reasons too, and that it might be on account of his personal experience that Stojković succeeded in expressing them so clearly.

The main messages of the Tractatus de Ecclesia: Innovation in the light of traditional religious disputes

It is clear that the *Tractatus de Ecclesia* was written as a polemical text. This can be seen in its form, which represents a response to Jan Rokyzana's discussion at the Council of Basle. It begins with: 'Finally the abovementioned in his answer touches on the matter of the Church',¹⁶ and it ends with: 'Here ends the Treatise on the Church, prepared by Master Ivan of Dubrovnik, a Dominican friar, in Basle, while he was disputing in the General Council with the Czech Master Jan Rokyzana, a heretic, in which he talked about the Church as far as the aforementioned heretic gave him an opportunity to talk'.¹⁷ After the form, of course, comes the content. In Stojković's opinion, different religious teachings which condemn the Roman Church and the papal authority belong to one general heresy. Before we examine which 'heresies' he actually had in

¹⁶ 'Finaliter prefatus replicans aggreditur materiam de ecclesia...' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 9).

¹⁷ 'Explicit tractatus de ecclesia quem magister Johannes de Ragusio Ordinis Praedicatorum Basileae, dum in Concilio generali cum magistro Iohanne de Rochizana, Bohemo haeretico, disputaret, compilavit, in quo tanta de Ecclesia locutus est, quantum sibi praefatus hereticus praestitit loquendi occasionem' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: pp. 313-314).

mind and whether he followed in this approach any previous author, it is necessary first to understand why he decided to issue this text.

Stojković wished to oppose Hussite teaching. It is not by chance that Stojković's work bears the same title as the treatise written by Jan Hus.¹⁸ Theologians who defended the positions of the Roman Church felt a need to answer Hus in the same way. But their arguments went no further than the conciliaristic theory, which was perceived as the best remedy for Hussite extremism.¹⁹ So, they thought it was not necessary to confirm that theory with new evidence, not even by reviving memories of the great Church Fathers from the past whose words could have been used to reject Hussite principles. However, the theory needed new arguments, and they had to be presented in a systematic and coherent way, by an author who was well acquainted with the structure of the Church. This is exactly what Stojković could provide. He confuted Hus's opinion on the 'Church of the predestined Ones', and at the same time, as a representative of conciliarism, he emphasised that the 'infallibility of the Apostle See is not applied to the Pope as a person, but stretches to the "body of the Church", which is hierarchically subordinated to that person with whom it makes a Council community'.²⁰ In his treatise, Stojković succeeded in connecting the theory of conciliarism with his polemical aim, as well as in presenting the organization of the Catholic Church. The instrument he used to complete his complex task was the notion of the *Ecclesia militans*.

Stojković first states that the *ecclesia* represents a community of people gathered under one rule (*congregatio populi sub uno regimine contenti*).²¹ In explaining what an *ecclesia* is and to which type of community it belongs, quoting Aristotle's opinion on *ecclesia* as an assembly of all the citizens,²² he makes a distinction within the single community of 'the good and the faithful', *Ecclesia bonorum et fidelium*. He divides this community into three parts. The first is made up of angels and people in the presence of Christ (in Paradise), the second is people in Purgatory awaiting absolution of their sins,

¹⁸ B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković... Doctrina*: p. 1.

¹⁹ About the early treatises on the Church see B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković... Doctrina*: p.2.

²⁰ F. Šanjek, »Hrvati i Pariško sveučilište, 13.-15. st.«: p. 133

²¹ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 12.

²² '*Ecclesia autem participant omnes*' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 12). The quotation of Aristotle comes from *Politics*, II, 10, 1272a10. It is taken from the context, saying that '...all the Cretans are members of the Assembly...', taking 'assembly' as the equivalent of *ecclesia* (Aristotle, *Politics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984: pp. 151-152).

and the third and the largest one is the *Ecclesia militans*. Stojković defines it very broadly: ‘a congregation or community of the good and bad believers of both sexes, who keep the true faith by joining the Church sacraments’.²³ It should be stressed that Stojković’s concept of *Ecclesia militans* goes back to Marsilius of Padua who had claimed that ‘all Christ’s faithful are churchmen’.²⁴ The notion of *Ecclesia militans* is symbolically connected to the Old Testament tradition of the martyrdom of the seven brothers Maccabees who preferred to die than to eat forbidden and unclean food.²⁵ The turbulent period of the medieval Church, beginning at the end of the 11th century, brought new understanding to this formerly pure symbolic issue. The escalation of the crusades, the holy wars fought in the name of Christ, led to the establishment of a much more literal and direct notion of *Ecclesia militans*. The idea of a tough military struggle against non-believers, heretics or simply enemies of Christ began to dominate. But the appearance of new Church leaders, founders of the new Church orders in the 13th century, gave it still another dimension. The *Ecclesia militans* was one of the key points in St Dominic’s theological work and was constantly promoted in his own preaching activities.²⁶ St Dominic attempted to suppress opposition to the Roman Church by relying not only on the Patristic authorities, but also on the strong hierarchical organisation of the Church itself, with the undisputable papal position on top. However, later centuries showed that the papal authority had its limits. Stojković was aware of them and he expounded them in his treatise. He offered a new and comprehensive meaning of the idea of *Ecclesia militans*, connecting his sharp attacks on the Hussites with a vision of how the Church had to be reformed.

Stojković’s starting point was the *Ecclesia* as a joint community of the governing people, a model he borrowed from Greek antiquity. Not only did he quote Aristotle to define what the prototype of the *Ecclesia* was, but he also directly connected antique Greek wisdom with the later concept of the true Christian faith. In his words, ‘while Greece was engaged in studies of literature and philosophy, she enjoyed the integrity of faith, the peace of God and glory

²³ ‘*Congregatio sive universitas fidelium bonorum et malorum utriusque sexus orthodoxam fidem tenentium in sacramentis ecclesiasticis societatem habentium*’ (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 14).

²⁴ C. Morris, *Christian Civilization*: p. 240.

²⁵ This according to *Leksikon ikonografije, liturgike i simbolike zapadnog kršćanstva*, ed. Anđelko Badurina. Zagreb: Sveučilišna naklada Liber and Kršćanska sadašnjost, ²1985: p. 417.

²⁶ William Hinnebusch, *Dominikanci: Kratka povijest reda*. Zagreb: Hrvatska dominikanska provincija and Nakladni zavod Globus, 1997: p. 8.

all over the World, but when she lost her studies, she was also deprived of all the rest'.²⁷ A similar argument was used in the controversies with the Byzantine Church, which had stayed on the agenda since the schism of 1054. Practically all the Western polemical endeavours hit the same spot in attacking their Greek contemporaries: that they had abandoned the true path of religion established by the Great Fathers in the early centuries of Christianity. It is precisely this point that was adopted by Stojković in his approach towards the Orthodox Greeks. We can also see this, for example, in the part where he discusses the precedence of St Peter over all the other apostles. He claims that 'only the modern Greeks', thinking of those after the schism of 1054, 'established the belief that all the Apostles were equal and that St Peter was not the first among them.' In his words: 'the modern Greeks themselves...are not afraid to claim this in excuse of their own schism, notwithstanding the aforementioned authorities of the Holy Scripture and of the Doctors, that no Apostle was elder by right than the others, but that they were all brothers and equals, according to the sentence: "You are all brothers, and do not look for a father on Earth" (Mt. 23, 8-9), failing to understand that the Lord in these words wished to remove the sin of ambition, and not the duty of precedence.'²⁸

Stojković proceeds in the same polemical fashion by discussing various sects. He emphasises the contrast between the absolute unity of the Roman Church and the numerous teachings of different sects. He stresses that in the Roman Church there is only one faith and no variety in beliefs, one baptism and ritual unity through all the sacraments. No one is allowed to feel differently in these matters. Only the Church itself, guided by the Holy Spirit, is competent to deliberate on religious issues. But it is not so 'among Indians and Greeks, among whom there are almost as many sects and varieties in beliefs as peoples, or at least as the names of the heretics. Some of them are called Sabellians, some Nestorians, some Pelagians, some Arians, some Manichaeans, some Ebionites, some Tatians, some like this and the others like that are called by numerous

²⁷ *'Graecia enim quamdiu litterarum et sapientiae studia habuit, fidem integram, pacem divinam et universam mundi gloriam obtinebat, sed studiis perditis, etiam consequentia ammisit...'* (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 14).

²⁸ *'...ipsi moderni Graeci...qui in ipsorum schismatis excusationem non verentur asserere, non obstantibus supra inductis auctoritatibus Scripturarum et doctorum, quod nullus apostolus fuit in jurisdictione maior altero, sed quos omnes fratres fuerint et pares iuxta illud: "Vos omnes fratres estis et patrem nolite vocare vobis super terram" (Mt. 23, 8-9), non intelligentes quod Dominus in praedictis verbis non officium praelationis, sed vitium ambitionis voluerit amovere'* (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 140).

names and sects.... So, there is no Catholic faith or Church where such a variety of sects and division in faith exists'.²⁹

It is very important to note that in enumerating these various sects Stojković had a direct precursor who was also an eminent Western theologian. This was Peter the Venerable (1094-1156), the abbot of the Benedictine monastery Cluny. In the 12th century, at the time of the crusades, interest in Islam in Christian Europe increased.³⁰ In his polemical attack against Islam, Peter the Venerable tried to define whether Muslims were heretics or pagans, and, therefore, issued a list of early Christian heresies which were condemned by the Church Fathers. Among those who had particularly endangered the Church, Peter mentioned the Manichaeans, Arians, Macedonians, Sabellians, Donatists, Pelagians, Nestorians and Eutychians.³¹ This list contains many names of the sects, which can be found in Stojković. But this is not the only connection between the two authors. Stojković also showed interest in Islam, dedicating to it a couple of lines in the *Tractatus de Ecclesia*. His opinions on that issue are not original and he literally borrows from St Thomas Aquinas's *Summa contra gentiles*, book I, chapter 6. Let us mention here only the general accusations against the Prophet Muhammad personally and against his teaching: Muhammad is accused of promoting lascivious behaviour among his followers; of being a false prophet, since he made no miracles and brought no written testimonies about his mission; of spreading his faith by using violence and seducing rude and ignorant people living in deserts; and finally of distorting the texts of the Old and New Testaments, which he also forbade his followers to read, so that they could not reach the truth.³²

²⁹ 'Nam in ipsa Ecclesia Romana est una fides et nulla varietas in credendis, unum baptisma idemque ritus omnium sacramentorum et usus, nec alicui licet in hiis quae necessaria sunt ad salutem aliter sentire vel aliter, nisi prout ipsa Ecclesia, quae a Spiritu Sancto dirigitur, dictaverit. Non sic autem est inter Indianos et Graecos christianos, inter quos tot paene sectae sunt et varietates in credendis quot homines vel saltem quot nomina hereticorum. Alii enim sabeliani, alii nestoriani, alii pelagiani, alii arriani, alii manichaei, alii ebionitae, alii tatiani, alii sic et alii sic innumeris nominibus et sectis nominantur... Non ergo fides catholica aut Ecclesia ubi est tanta varietas sectarum et divisio fidei' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 236).

³⁰ Franjo Šanjek, »Herman Dalmatin (oko 1110 - posl. 26. 2. 1154.). Bio-bibliografski prilozi«, in: Herman Dalmatin, *Rasprava o bitima*, vol. 1, ed. Antun Slavko Kalenić. Pula: Čakavski sabor etc., 1990: p. 25.

³¹ 'Dico autem Manichaeos, Arianos, Macedonianos, Sabellianos, Donatistas, Pelagianos, omniumque ultimos Nestorianos et Eutichianos' (*Prologus domini Petri abbatis Cluniacensis in Libro contra nequissimam Sectam sive Haeresim Saracenorum*, in: *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina*, vol. 189, ed. Jacques Paul Migne: p. 665).

³² *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 111.

Thomas himself used Peter the Venerable's *Tractatus adversus nefandam sectam Saracenorum*, the 'Treatise against the impious sect of Saracens' to form his own opinion on Islam, thus playing an intermediary role between Peter the Venerable and Stojković. During his stay in Constantinople, Stojković used the opportunity to learn more about Islam. He ordered a transcription of the *Collectio Toletana*, a collection of texts translated from Arabic into Latin by a group of translators in Spain in the 1140s, sponsored by Peter the Venerable. It included the first complete Latin translation of the Koran and some other texts believed to be relevant for an understanding of the nature of Islam, although they were nothing more than legends.³³ In a letter to Cardinal Cesarini written in Constantinople on 9 February 1436, Stojković concludes that 'there are also many other things in which Muslims themselves are confused and in which they deride each other; on these issues I will more completely inform myself before I depart from here'.³⁴ Yet it seems that Stojković included a short discourse on Muslims in his treatise only because he wanted to mention every teaching that put the 'ideal Church' in danger. He was also aware of the growing Ottoman threat, not only to the exhausted Byzantine Empire, but to his native land and Western Europe too.

In his criticism, Stojković did not search for similarities between Islam and the Byzantine Orthodox Church. However, on several occasions, he emphasises the parallels between the Byzantine and the Hussite doctrines. In his eyes, the Byzantines are usually seen as the teachers and authoritative leaders of the Hussites. He connects them in the previously mentioned discussion about the supremacy of St Peter, claiming that 'the Hussites and the Wycliffites call above all on the authority of the Greek Doctors to question St Peter's primacy, like the contemporary Greeks, from whom they seem to have sucked the poison of sin in this matter'.³⁵ Furthermore, expressing his idea that the decline of knowledge and studies had provoked a crisis in the Byzantine Church and religion, Stojković concludes the same about the Kingdom of Bohemia. In his opinion, 'as long as studies at the University of Prague were flourishing, the

³³ F. Šanjek, »Hrvati i Pariško sveučilište, 13.-15. st.«: p. 139.

³⁴ 'Multa sunt alia, de quibus ipsimet machumetiste confunduntur et de quibus inter se derident; de quibus, antequam hinc descendam plenius me informabo' (A. Krchnak, *De vita et operibus Ioannis de Ragusio*. Romae 1960: p. 60).

³⁵ 'Praecipue enim doctorum graecorum hic aducuntur auctoritates super primatu Petri, ut ipsi moderni Graeci, a quibus wiclefistae et hussitae videntur in hac materia suxisse erroris venenum...' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 140).

Kingdom of Bohemia was said to be faithful, peaceful and glorious all over the World. But since the others have abandoned and destroyed the University, it is being said all over the World that the Kingdom is shameful and full of various heresies and thieves'.³⁶

In fact, the Byzantines themselves were very much concerned to avoid any mention of their Church and the Hussites in the same context. Not only did they think that this could harm their plans of achieving a reunion of the two Churches, but they were also afraid that it could jeopardise their hope of obtaining considerable help from the West for their desperate fight against the Ottoman Turks. From their point of view, any comparison with the Hussites would be inappropriate and directly offensive, too. The Patriarchate of Constantinople claimed a thousand years' tradition of practically being the second head of Christianity, and only the Roman See could compete with its contribution to ecclesiology. No wonder, then, that the Byzantines indignantly opposed any attempt to present them in the same context as the Hussites. They would even have been willing to sacrifice any agreement with the Council of Basle if the representatives of the Council had not assured them that any comparison between the Byzantines and the Hussites would in future be avoided. Eventually, it was Stojković who had to reassure them that the Council Fathers did not want to discredit the Byzantine Church, or to do it any injustice. While he was negotiating with the representatives of the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate in 1435,³⁷ the Byzantines knew exactly that during the disputes in 1433 and later, Stojković had associated them with the Hussites in their dissension from the Roman Church. Strangely enough, two years later, it was Stojković who was sent to Constantinople as an envoy from Basle, to win them over for the Council and to make them reject the offer of Pope Eugenius IV. Stojković needed all his diplomatic skills to convince his hosts that it was not the intention of Basle to insult the Byzantines by mentioning them and the Hussites in the same context. And yet it was again Stojković who wrote in such a disapproving way of the Byzantines and their Church in his treatise in the 1440s. Why did he constantly change his opinion? Why did he first connect

³⁶ *'Similiter in Bohemia, quamdiu praeclarum universitatis Pragensis studium viguit, regnum Bohemiae fidele, pacificum et gloriosum per universum orbem praedicabatur, quo parum alios homines desolato et destructo, diversis haeresibus et latronibus iam repletum regnum per orbem ignominosum proclamatur'* (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: pp. 227-228).

³⁷ *'...eodem contextu sermonis sit mentio de nobis et Bohemis...quia coiungit nos cum Bohemis, in ratione dissidii'* (*Relatio de missione Constantinopolitana*: p. 251).

Hussite teaching with the Byzantine Church in his discussions against the Hussites, then a couple of years later try to convince the Byzantines that they should not be afraid that the Council might link them with the assumed Hussite heresy? And why did he finally accept the opinion that they indeed shared the same erroneous understandings?

We might seek the answer in Stojković's political pragmatism. The constant military defeats of the Imperial Catholic armies meant that it was necessary to negotiate with the Hussites and to beat them on doctrinal grounds. Almost any means were mobilised for that purpose. There is strong evidence that Stojković made significant aberrations from the agreement on which matters the Council would discuss, and his opponents interrupted him not only once, for he spoke about the matter that had nothing to do with the article on the Communion *sub utraque specie*. Actually, in his speech he made a discourse on the Church itself, which was unacceptable to the Hussites who did not want to talk about that general issue. When he openly invited them to obey the Council as a part of the Catholic Church, they interrupted him with indignation, claiming that he was trying to falsely accuse them of not being members of the Catholic Church, which in their opinion was simply not true.³⁸

However, three years later in Constantinople Stojković tried to promote the same idea that the Council of Basle was the head of the whole of Christianity. The Byzantines utterly rejected this claim as an insult to their Church. They asked whether 'the fact that your Council seems to call itself older than all the Christians means that, consequently, those who are not its sons through obedience to and acceptance of its dogmas are not faithful Christians?'³⁹ In his response Stojković applied the same approach as before when trying to convince the Byzantines that they were not treated by the Council in the same manner as the Hussite heretics. He simply explained that that these lines did not contain any insult to the Byzantine Church.⁴⁰

It is also possible to present a considerable proof of Stojković's persistence in politics as well as in theology. He stubbornly fought for the benefit of the Council. It was not his fault that the Hussite delegation left Basle without any

³⁸ B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković... Doctrina*: p. 64.

³⁹ '...quod Synodus vestra videtur se appellare maiorem omnium Christi fidelium, et per consequens, qui non est eius filius per obedientiam et acceptationem suorum dogmatum non est Christi fidelis' (*Relatio de missione Constantinopolitana*: p. 251).

⁴⁰ 'Circa predicta multa diximus, per quae clare ostendimus nullam iniuriam in predictis contineri' (*ibidem*).

compromise being reached, and until the very last moment he did his best to persuade the Byzantine Emperor John VIII to accept the Council's invitation. Stojković pursued his task until the end in spite of some open threats to his life by the Papal envoys in Constantinople.⁴¹ Therefore his shifts in opinion are to be explained by his constant efforts to create, not only in theory, but also in practice, the idea of a perfect ecclesiastical community, which could be attained only by starting from the existing community called the *Ecclesia militans*. How did he perceive it? We have already seen that for him it was a complete community of all the faithful, both the good and the bad, of both sexes, who shared the same ecclesiastical sacraments, which the Hussites denied. But by definition it was also *Ecclesia militans seu viatrix*,⁴² that is to say: the Fighting or the Travelling Church. The idea of travelling was both literal and contemplative.

Stojković was a Dominican monk, a member of the Order of Preachers, whose main duty was to travel, and by preaching to look for new converts or to consolidate the faith among those who had begun to waver. The Dominicans were hardly connected to a single place, since much of their time was spent on journeys. The life of Ivan Stojković itself was a continuous movement. From his native soil he left for Italy, then for France to finish his education, for the Imperial Court in the West and for the early 15th-century Church Councils (as an envoy of the University of Paris), finally for Basle, and from there to Constantinople and back to Switzerland, where he died a few years later. Wherever he went, he wanted to be at the service of his imagined *Ecclesia* by travelling and fighting for it. Therefore, he described it as the *Ecclesia militans seu viatrix*. At this point it is possible to connect Stojković's ideals with those of the 12th-century translators from Arabic into Latin, gathered around Peter the Venerable. Not only had they also travelled a great deal, but in their actions they followed similar principles. Just as Stojković wanted to win over the Hussites and the Byzantines for the benefit of the entire ecclesiastical community, Peter the Venerable with his associates had clashed with the Muslims.

But their approaches were different. Peter the Venerable did not refrain from using the Islamic texts, especially the Koran, to try to show the Muslims from the perspective of their own texts that their religion was contradictory,

⁴¹ He even had to escape to Pera from the soldiers who had attempted to kill him. About this episode, see A. Krchnak, *De vita*: p. 39.

⁴² B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*, p. 67.

sinful and thus had to be rejected. However, he was attacking the faith and not the people. He approached the Muslims in an almost friendly fashion, claiming: 'I fight against you with words, and not with arms, as our (crusaders) often do; by the power of reason and not by brute force, in love and not in hate.'⁴³ On the other hand, Stojković never quoted any text written by Jan Hus and his followers, or by John Wycliffe, whom he often alleged was Hus's teacher and precursor. On several occasions in his *Tractatus de Ecclesia* Stojković mentions Hus and Wycliffe, but he never explicitly says anything about their writings or discussions. There is no doubt that Stojković was familiar with their main ideas much before he started the discussion with Jan Rokyzana, but he simply does not mention their works. It leads us to suppose that he was following an instruction from the former General of the Dominican Order, Leonardo Dati, the person who had protected young Stojković and enabled him to go to Paris. Dati was an experienced inquisitor and was present at the trial of Jan Hus at the Council of Constance in 1415, where the Czech was condemned for his confirmation of conciliarism. He stated that there should be no long discussions with heretics, and, according to Dati, Hus's thoughts on the Church were openly heretical. Stojković was also impressed by an analysis of Hus's treatise *De Ecclesia* made by Jean Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris. Gerson openly requested that any discussion with heretics be avoided.⁴⁴

Faced with these two authorities, whom he deeply respected, Stojković easily accommodated his opinion to theirs, and subsequently avoided naming the treatises of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus, although, as his own words show, he was familiar with them. In his discussions with the Byzantines, however, Stojković quoted early medieval Byzantine authors as the true defenders of the Christian faith, claiming that the main fault of his Byzantine contemporaries was for having abandoned their path and thus for alienating themselves from the Roman Church. The Byzantines were not heretics for him, although he believed that they had influenced the Hussites.

We cannot say that the *Ecclesia militans seu viatrix* bears its name only on account of its direct action and travelling. The other part, the contemplative one, was at least equally important. As Stojković says, in the Travelling Church the greatest part is made up of those who are imperfect and who are mostly

⁴³ F. Šanjek, »Herman Dalmatin«: p. 25.

⁴⁴ Amedeo Molnar, »La pensée hussite dans l'interprétation de Jean Stojković de Raguse«, in: *Misao i djelo Ivana Stojkovića*: p. 230.

led by their sense and by the visible appearing.⁴⁵ So, it is necessary for them to make great effort to purify themselves and thus to reach salvation. This could be a long and difficult journey, but it was the only way to change the inner condition in the Christian World itself. And, in Stojković's opinion, this fight was perhaps even more difficult than the doctrinal clashes against the outer opponents of the Christian community, like the Hussites, the Byzantines and Islam. It is tempting to suppose that it was precisely this struggle that was his main objective, while the controversies against the 'heretics' and the 'schismatics' were just a preparation for the final battle. He had to prove that the Catholic Church needed reform, that the papal position should not be treated any more as inviolable, and that the true authority was not a monopoly of one person or one body alone. The task was even more difficult since, faced with the sharp Hussite attacks, it was necessary to protect the papal authority as a cohesive link in the Church as a whole. In his attempt to find a strong authority which would stand behind his theories, Stojković turned to the university.

The role of universities in overcoming the crisis and in the establishment of new authorities

Theological disputes with the opponents of the Catholic Church in previous centuries had been conducted with the help of texts written by the Church Fathers. Their wisdom and integrity were the main weapon in the attacks against the Byzantine Orthodox Church, Muslims, Jews and various heterodox religious movements within the Roman Church itself. When he mentioned different 'heretical' teachings that were undermining and distorting the real message of the Word, Peter the Venerable raised against each of them the name of at least one Father whose writings had condemned it. It was precisely known whose authority served to suppress which heresy. While he was writing about the old opponents of the Catholic Church, about the Orthodox Church and Islam, Stojković followed the same path. His lines contain many quotations from the Old Byzantine Fathers.

The controversies on religious matters in the centuries before Stojković's time had some typical long-lasting features. For example, disputes against Islam and the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate reached their climax in the 12th

⁴⁵ '...in Ecclesia peregrinanti maxima pars est imperfectorum, qui sensu potius et visibilibus ducitur' (Tractatus de Ecclesia, quoted in: B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 105).

century, when the crusades were in full progress and when the imperial politics of Manuel I Komnenos (1143-1180) was perceived in the West as a threat. In the following centuries the doctrinal clashes against Islam were not renewed, while the Ottoman territorial advance had no significant impact on the situation. There were more disputes against the Byzantine Church, but these were mostly reduced to invectives against some of its prominent members who were opposed to the reunion of the Churches, without battles against the entire orthodox ecclesiastical hierarchy as had been the case before. As far as the heretical movements in the medieval West are concerned, it was common practice for the Roman See to organise minor crusades against them, instead of attempting theological persuasion. There was no need to waste time in fruitless attempts to win over some stubborn and mostly isolated heretics whose ideas usually had more of a social than religious impact.

However, Stojković's time brought significant changes in the established pattern. Apart from the fact that it was scarcely possible to break the Hussite movement by military strength alone, this movement had firm theological fundamentals and educated leaders who proved their skill in religious debates and in spreading their message. They knew the methods applied by the Roman Church and were ready to use them independently. Besides, in contrast to practically all the previous challenges imposed on the Roman See, they claimed to be good Catholics themselves. In his discussion, Stojković wanted to reveal them as yet another kind of heretical group, though more dangerous than the previous ones. He wrote a treatise, polemical both in form and content, with the intention of disputing not only against the Hussites, his direct opponents, but with the aim of questioning the position of the Roman See as well. Arguments for both tasks had to be borrowed from the writings of the Church Fathers, as was the custom at that time. Stojković's Hussite opponents used the same approach in the polemic. Let us first examine what they had in common and then see how differently they interpreted the same authors in support of their own cause.

The best example is the reference to St Augustine. The bishop of Hippo enjoyed a sacred status in the eyes of the contestants of both sides as one of the most eminent theologians in the history of the Christian Church. They used his work, however, to prove some completely contrary claims. While Jan Hus, during his interrogations at the Council of Constance, repeated that his teaching was in absolute harmony with St Augustine's ideas, the motto of the Council Fathers in Basle some fifteen years later was St Augustine's thought:

'I would not believe in the Gospel, if the authority of the Catholic Church did not compel me to'.⁴⁶ The Hussites saw the Holy Scripture as the highest and indisputable authority, which required no further explanation in determining the true Christian faith. Jan Rokyzana extolled the Gospel as the absolute principle of the faith, and praised the Primordial Church as the best model for religious life, paying no respect to other authorities, especially not to the Roman Church. Contrary to this, Stojković claimed that the Holy Scripture contained many questions which required further explanation, such as which Books were divinely given or how to understand those parts of the texts which were not clearly expressed. In his view, interpretation was essential, and he took 'the infallible authority of the Roman Church as the supreme principle of Theology'.⁴⁷

The fact that the Hussites depended to such an extent on the Holy Scripture should be explained not only as mere hostility towards the institutions of the Roman Church. This attitude was connected with the new role that the universities had begun to play. On more than one occasion Stojković mentions together John Wycliffe and Jan Hus. Their activities were connected through the intermediary of Peter Payne, a theologian and Professor at the University of Oxford, who embraced Wycliffe's ideas, became one of the Lollards and, when confronted with imminent persecution, escaped from England. He joined the Hussites and represented them in discussions at the Council of Basle, where he disputed against Juan de Palomar, the Archdeacon of Barcelona, on the fourth article agreed for discussion, that civil authorities should punish anyone in a state of mortal sin. Payne's thesis, that 'everything in this world happens out of necessity',⁴⁸ was very suspicious to Stojković, for he interpreted it to mean that the Hussites had come to Basle not to reach a genuine agreement with the Roman Church, but to try to distort it according to their own interests.

It has been argued in several places that the teachings of John Wycliffe and Jan Hus were similar, both directed against the papal hierarchy and both having a significant social component. Wycliffe and Hus were also similar in insisting

⁴⁶ *Non crederem Evangelio, nisi me Catholicae Ecclesiae commoveret auctoritas* (Bonaventura Duda, »Biblijska hermeneutika Ivana Stojkovića«, in: *Misao i djelo Ivana Stojkovića*: p. 248. It is quoted from *Contra Epistulam Manichaei quam vocant 'Fundamenti'*, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 42: p. 175).

⁴⁷ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: introduction, p. xiii.

⁴⁸ A. Molnar, »La pensée hussite«: p. 229. For the general information on Peter Payne's life, see the biographical article in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica, Micropaedia*, vol. 9. Chicago etc. ¹⁵1993: p. 219.

on the use of national language, perceiving it as a weapon against the Roman clergy and, especially in Hus's case, as a device to promote national feelings. But above all they had a similar position: both Wycliffe and Hus were university teachers. Thus, they had direct contact with the young generations of future theologians and had an opportunity to teach them their radical ecclesiastical ideas. They could have counted on many persistent and devoted followers in the future. It seems even more important that, as university teachers, they had to be acquainted with the theological achievements of the Christian authors, while at the same time they enjoyed almost absolute freedom in interpreting them and forming their own opinion. Universities were free and protected by special charters issued either by kings or by the pope himself. In practice, they were not responsible for their work to anyone above them and their influence among large numbers of students was limitless. Intellectuals from previous centuries could only have dreamed of such a favourable situation. Usually, they had been hindered in their work by the harsh discipline imposed in monasteries, which were often not equipped with large libraries, or they underwent constant and long journeys, trying to please one or another Maecenas. The cathedral schools were far behind the late medieval universities, both in their facilities and in their influence. The inheritors of Jan Hus, people like Jan Rokyzana or Peter Payne, also held university chairs. The connection with the university had already become so strong, that the Hussite movement was hardly separable from the University of Prague.

The Hussite leaders were sharp and well educated theologians, capable of defending their beliefs persistently. Nevertheless, Stojković was a perfect match for them. His own educational qualities were indisputable, and he was highly praised at the prestigious University of Paris. He fully realised the importance of sites of learning for the proper understanding of theology. We have previously mentioned how he equated the decline of studies in 'Greece and Bohemia' with the decline of the states themselves and with the appearance of various heresies. He directly says that '...because the Czechs have expelled the University from their kingdom, it was thus necessary that the most sincere wisdom of their faith also be driven out and exiled with it'.⁴⁹ Writing about 'the exiling of the university', Stojković must have had in mind not only the fate of the German professors and students who had to abandon Prague and

⁴⁹ *'Quas universitates...quia Bohemi de suo regno expulerunt, necesse fuit ut etiam sincerissima sapientia fidei pelleretur et exularet cum eisdem'* (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 228).

who later established the University of Leipzig in 1409.⁵⁰ He saw in this separation a tragic event for the Catholic Church itself: any division was harmful to the desired unity of the *Ecclesia*. Universities were, in Stojković's point of view, one of the crucial cohesive forces: '... because of many wars, both private and civil, obedience to the Roman Church is being increasingly abandoned, yet the studies of wisdom are still flourishing, keeping the unity of faith'.⁵¹ He further enumerates universities throughout the Catholic West: in England, France, Spain, Germany and Italy. As might be expected, he particularly emphasises the four general colleges of the Dominican Order, 'which, like the four rivers of Paradise, irrigate with the waters of wisdom the whole Catholic Church.'⁵²

Stojković rightly felt that universities had such an important place in determining the new religious conflicts. The University of Paris was defending the conciliaristic theory, especially at the Council in Constance, and Stojković applied in practice and further developed his theoretical knowledge acquired at that university. There is evidence in his treatise to show how he differentiates between the old authorities and the new ones, found at the universities as the new centres of knowledge and religious power. In the first part of the treatise, he analyses the Hussite use of St Augustine as the most respected authority whose words would confirm their opinion on the Church. Stojković, on the contrary, established his original opinion that the Church was characterised by unity in faith, in the use of the Holy Sacraments and in obedience to the legitimate hierarchy founded by Christ, and that both the good and the bad shared these premises.⁵³ Stojković continued his treatise with St Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher of his Order, who deeply influenced him. St Thomas was his main source for the brief anti-Islamic discourse, and in a significant part for the writings of many Greek Fathers too. Against the Hussites who were inspired by the politics of the contemporary Byzantine Church and its opposition to Rome, Stojković quoted many testimonies and examples from

⁵⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *Intelektualci u srednjem vijeku*. Zagreb: Grafički zavod Hrvatske, 1982: p. 174.

⁵¹ '*Nam licet multis et domesticis et civilibus guerris obedientia Romanae ecclesiae intra se ipsam, quam permaxime desoletur, nichilominus studia sapientiae adhuc vigent, quibus unitas fidei conservatur*' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 228).

⁵² '*...quae quasi quatuor flumina paradisi aquis sapientiae irrigant universam Ecclesiam catholicam*' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 228).

⁵³ B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 76.

the Greek Patristic. Unfortunately, he mostly took them from St Thomas's work *Contra errores Graecorum*, 'Against the errors of the Greeks', which was based on an apocryphal text. More precisely, at the end of 1263 or at the beginning of 1264, St Thomas wrote this treatise when reading the text 'On Faith in the Trinity against the errors of the Greeks', written by Nicholas, a Greek from Durazzo who later became the bishop of Crotona in southern Italy.⁵⁴ But, the references there to the texts of the Greek authors were not reliable and, indeed, St Thomas himself refrained from quoting them in his own work. This experience might have had an effect on Stojković's unfavourable opinion of the Byzantine Church. However, he mostly used St Thomas's texts to illustrate and confirm his thought that the conception of the Church, as he had expressed it, was made of symbols, which he also named 'conditions'. These were the unity, sanctity, apostolicity and catholicity of the Church, following St Thomas's 'Exposition on the Symbol'.⁵⁵ Finally, Stojković includes in his written dispute some contemporary works issued by the other opponents of the Hussites, such as Stephen of Palec's *Tractatus de Ecclesia*, or Stanislav of Znoymo's *Tractatus de Romana Ecclesia*. Both authors had begun as followers of Jan Hus, but they abandoned him later and joined his accusers in Constance in 1414-15.⁵⁶

It is obvious that these recent texts were to Stojković's benefit and to the detriment of the Hussites. However, these 'new authorities' did not have the weight of their famous predecessors. If it is possible to compare St Thomas Aquinas with St Augustine in terms of their contribution to the Christian Church and to theology, we cannot put either of these two on the level of the early polemicists fighting against Jan Hus. So, in Stojković's time of disputes and great turbulence throughout Christendom, the very idea of authority had slowly begun to change. The figures of the great thinkers whose words had to be followed were increasingly being replaced by the ideas themselves, ideas which were completely original, although their authors wanted to present them as having their roots in the texts of the past, in order to increase their credibility. Stojković's ideas on the Church, and especially on the community called *Ecclesia militans*, began to find their place as part of these new authorities.

⁵⁴ Yves Congar, »La Place de Jean de Raguse dans l'histoire de l'ecclésiologie«, in: *Misao i djelo Ivana Stojkovića*: p. 283.

⁵⁵ *Expositio supra Symbolo* (B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 77).

⁵⁶ B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 83.

In his writings, Stojković felt the need to warn against the teaching of the Valdenses who were denying the cult and hierarchy of the Catholic Church, establishing 'a certain spiritual Church'.⁵⁷ By condemning the Valdenses because of their 'spirituality', Stojković saw another opportunity to connect the Hussites with the already condemned heretics. To Hussite spiritualism he opposed three main elements, Baptism, Faith and Love, especially emphasising Faith as the evident value of the *Ecclesia militans*.⁵⁸ Spiritualism, in his opinion, could become dangerous if it was not properly restricted to the frames given by the Holy Scripture or, even more, by the Church as an institution. This is why Stojković pointed to the importance of a firm ecclesiastical organisation. At the very fundament of his imagined ecclesiastical community, broadly defined as *Ecclesia militans*, he placed Grace. In his own words, 'Grace is the complete root, spring and origin of the Church militant, about which we are now talking'.⁵⁹ In the same way as he made a triple division of the Church, he named three parts of Grace. These are the Grace of Predestination, Grace leading to Benevolence, and Grace freely given.⁶⁰ A connection between Ivan Stojković and St Thomas Aquinas has already been mentioned. It can be seen how deeply Stojković was influenced by the famous *Doctor Angelicus*, since the quoted words remind us of St Thomas' capital work *Summa theologiae*, which mentions the same forms of Grace.⁶¹

But when he was writing about the Grace of Predestination, Stojković wanted to rebuke his opponents' ideas on predestination. They expressed the opinion that the Catholic Church was made only for the predestined, that the chosen or the predestined were members of Christ's body, and that they become predestined only through Grace.⁶² Even during his discussions with the Hussites, Stojković realised that the most important question was the relation between

⁵⁷ B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 82.

⁵⁸ Yves Congar, »La Place de Jean de Raguse«: p. 283.

⁵⁹ 'Totalis radix, fons et origo Ecclesiae militantis de qua in presenti loquimur est gratia' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 23).

⁶⁰ 'gratia predestinationis', 'gratia gratum faciens', 'gratia gratis data' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: pp. 23-25).

⁶¹ Stojković repeats St Thomas's teaching on *gratia praedestinationis*, *gratia gratum faciente* and *gratia gratis data*. See B. Duda, *Joannis Stojković ... Doctrina*: p. 95.

⁶² '...posuerunt sanctam catholicam Ecclesiam et corpus Christi mysticum tantummodo ex praedestinitis constare, et per consequens solos electos seu praedestinos esse membra corporis Christi, et per consequens membra Christi per solam gratiam praedestinantur' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 69).

predestination and the Holy Scripture, because both these elements in the end lead to the core of the entire conflict: the understanding of Church authority. Therefore, he prepared a systematic analysis of ecclesiology.⁶³ He perceived the Hussites as perfect heretics, especially because they extolled the individual as an independent judge of the Holy Scripture, the Church, the Council and civil government. In contrast, he wanted to preserve the conciliaristic principle in the Church. From this point of view, Stojković was ‘a conservative reformer of the existing ecclesiastical structures’.⁶⁴ He felt a need to renew the Church and thus to prevent a possible further escalation of heresies. His attention was drawn to the institution of the papacy. However, his attitude towards the Head of the Roman Church was full of paradoxes. He defended the Pope in front of the Hussites, because the Pope united Western Christianity. But, for the sake of that same Christianity, Stojković wanted to establish a kind of control over the Pope himself by giving him a place with clearly designated rights and responsibilities. In Stojković’s opinion, the Pope should be only a member of the Church, because nobody and nothing on Earth should come above it. He defined the Church also through his idea of Grace. To him, Grace was a kind of Divine authority, and it was equally given to the Hussites and to good believers, *bonos fideles*. Everybody enjoyed the same Grace and it was everyone’s personal responsibility to choose how he would use it. At the same moment, however, everyone was equal under Divine Grace, and this meant that some exclusive papal rights were endangered.

In his criticism of the Pope—not only of Eugene IV personally but of the entire papal institution—Stojković came rather close to the Hussites. In fact, just a few years later the Council of Basle split into two factions, when a minority accused the others of going too far in their opposition to the Pope and indignantly left for Italy to pay their respect to Eugene IV. On that occasion, Stojković persisted in his views, remained devoted to the principles of the Council and helped the election of the Antipope Felix V. Besides his personal dislike of Pope Eugenius IV, Stojković indeed had friendly relations with Duke Amedeo of Savoy who became the Antipope Felix V. Stojković’s efforts in his promotion were not insignificant, and Felix V expressed his gratitude by giving him the rank of cardinal. Yet Stojković’s previous activities and writings prevent us from drawing the conclusion that his active role in the election of an antipope was motivated only by personal reasons.

⁶³ For more details, see J. Turčinović, »Ivan Stojković«: p. 216.

⁶⁴ J. Turčinović, »Ivan Stojković«: pp. 219-220.

Before the Hussites, Stojković had always argued that the Church hierarchy, with the Pope on top, was just part of a virtual ecclesiastical community, not even the most important one, let alone a part that acts for the entire body. Stojković tended to draw a line between the Hussites and the Byzantine Church, suggesting that the Byzantines significantly influenced and even taught the Hussites. But their completely opposite attitudes towards the Pope show that he was not right. The Hussites rejected any thought of the Pope as the supreme Head of the Church and, by denying the ecclesiastical hierarchy itself, denied also his right to be the leading figure within it. The Byzantine clergy, on the other hand, requested that the Pope be personally present at the future council of reunion. The Constantinopolitan Patriarch Joseph II showed Stojković that he firmly wished to meet at the council the person who would be his peer. Stojković was aware of the growing crisis in the relations between the Pope and the Council of Basle, and he could not guarantee to the Patriarch that Eugenius IV would be present. But when he proposed, with some hesitation, that 'one pope would certainly come to Basel', Joseph II refused with indignation to join the Council, whose members he suspected were prepared to elect another pope just to persuade him to come.⁶⁵ It is clear that the Byzantines insisted on their meeting with the Pope only because they thought that this would display the dignity of their Church in the most suitable way. For this reason, it was crucial to negotiate the reunion with the Pope himself, and not with a complex and diffuse body like the Council. It was more important to keep the form than the content, and the theological differences were not regarded as the crucial issue. Besides, the Byzantines were also governed by political necessity, and they expected that the Pope would send them financial and military help. Returning to the question about why Stojković in the *Tractatus de Ecclesia* connected the Hussites and the Byzantines, since the facts spoke against this, the likely response is that for him they were simply both enemies of the Catholic Church. He therefore thought there must have been a link between them.

⁶⁵ J. Turčinović, »Ivan Stojković«: p. 217.

The ideas of Tractatus de Ecclesia in the context of Stojković's career

Tractatus de Ecclesia is divided into three parts. The first part is intended to explain how perilous it is to be out of the Catholic Church, the second describes the inner characteristics of the Church, and the third explains the position of the Church in the World. Each of these parts is clearly stamped by St Augustine's thought. Opening his treatise with an analysis of the notion of Catholic Church by various authors, Stojković follows St Augustine's idea that 'great effort should be put into investigating what the Church is, so that someone does not deceive us in the name of the Church'.⁶⁶ It is apparent that Stojković, writing about the Catholic Church, does not think only of the Roman Church, but includes the other Christian Churches, giving thus to the adjective 'catholic' its literal meaning in the Greek language, 'overall'. We meet St Augustine again at the beginning of the second part of Stojković's book. While he is looking for the real nature of the Church, Stojković quotes St Augustine's sentence that 'the body of Christ must be the Church, which cannot be divided into two'.⁶⁷ Finally, in order to show the true place of the Church,⁶⁸ Stojković differentiates among five signs, again borrowing from St Augustine. These signs pertain to the sincerity of wisdom and integrity of faith, to the consensus of all the people, to the miracles that enlarge Church authority, to the succession of the *sacerdotes* on St Peter's Chair in Rome, and to the very name of the Catholic Church, which literally means that the Church is omnipresent.⁶⁹ Stojković pays significant attention to the 'romanity' of the Church, *Romanitas Ecclesiae*, seeking in this notion another form of Church universalism, as the idea of the Eternal City becomes connected both with its glorious history and with the Christian Empire contemporaneous with Stojković. He defended his opinion about the unity that is characteristic of the Catholic Church by contrasting with it not only the different heretical movements, but the national orthodox churches too. In a brief passage on the Prophet Muhammad and his followers, borrowed from St Thomas's *Summa contra gentiles*, Stojković

⁶⁶ '...praesupponens cum Augustino, quod cum magna sollicitudine quaerendum sit quid sit Ecclesia, ne quis nos fallat in nomine Ecclesiae' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 9; quoted from Augustinus, *Enarrationes in psalmos*, Ps. 69, n.3).

⁶⁷ 'Corpus Christi constat esse Ecclesiam, quae in duo dividi non potest' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 60).

⁶⁸ '...quod Ecclesia Catholica certa est et in manifesto posita' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 211).

⁶⁹ *Tractatus de Ecclesia*: pp. 7-8.

stresses that the Prophet made no miracles and that this fact is enough to discredit his mission as unworthy and false. The succession of popes, St Peter's inheritors in the Holy See in Rome, is presented as another proof of the Divine and natural foundation of the Roman Church, but Stojković's argumentation does not finish by taking this as the final proof, as might have been expected. For him, the papacy is to be a link between various groups in the Catholic Church; it has to assume a cohesive role that cannot be played by any other body. However, the Pope does not have an absolute right to rule; neither may he be considered as a direct intermediary between God and His people. The Pope must become just *primus inter pares* and his word must not prevail in confrontation with the Fathers gathered in the Church Council. This opinion and understanding of the Pope's role as being 'the first among equals' connects Stojković once more with the ideal view on the ancient Roman Empire.

It is interesting that in spite of Stojković's sincere doctrinal adherence to the idea of Roman universalism we also read in his lines about devotion to national particularity. He shows this in two ways: by being aware of the Slavic origins that he shares with practically all the Hussites, and by remembering his Dalmatian native land. Several facts illustrate these points. During bitter confrontations with the Hussites, he was once interrupted by Procopius Rasmus, who claimed that Stojković had insulted them by calling them heretics, although he was 'their countryman'. Stojković replied that it was precisely because 'he was from the same country as them and spoke the same language that he wanted all of them to profess the same faith, in the bosom of the same Church'.⁷⁰ Of course, the idea of the same language and, above all, of the same country should not be taken too literally, but as an expression of feeling close Slavic roots. Something similar happened during Stojković's mission in Constantinople, where he often had the opportunity to speak with the Patriarch Joseph II. Since the Patriarch was of Bulgarian origin, Stojković wrote about him that 'he was a Bulgarian, speaking my own native language, and very attached to me'.⁷¹ We notice Stojković's devotion to his native land in his quotations of St Jerome too. This saint, who is traditionally revered as the patron saint of Dalmatia, was evoked by Stojković in his discussion. For Stojković, St Jerome is 'the most famous Doctor, whom both the East and the West everywhere extol by unspeakable praises and lauds and whose authority should mostly touch Bohemia

⁷⁰ I. Tomljenović, »Prilozi za biografiju«: p. 118.

⁷¹ 'Bulgarus natione est et de lingua mea, multumque mihi afficitur' (quoted by J. Turčinović, »Ivan Stojković«: p. 217).

and all the provinces and kingdoms of our Slavs, since he was of the same language and homeland and he adorned with his glorious origin our own Kingdom of Dalmatia and the town of Stridon'.⁷²

All these lines show that Stojković was not immune to warm feelings for his origin, language and native soil. He felt this regardless of his praise of a universal *Romanitas* which he gave as a symbol of the universal Catholic Church, regardless of his fervent defence of unity as one of the main principles of the same Catholic Church. This issue may also be perceived in Stojković's longstanding efforts to bring to the Council of Basle the representatives of the dualistic Bosnian Church and those of the Serbian Orthodox clergy. It must again have been a matter of his native soil that had so attracted him to their case.

In his contacts with his fellow Slavs, Stojković emphasised that the only distinction between them was religious, and he was convinced that it was his duty to remove this difference. In writing about his close contacts with Patriarch Joseph II, he was trying to show that the religious difference could be overcome. It is obvious that he did not achieve his aim, just as his attempts to establish a new ecclesiastical community were finally unsuccessful.

Conclusion

The contribution of Ivan Stojković to overcoming the crisis in Christendom in the middle of the 15th century has been the main topic of this paper. Stojković was asked to represent the Roman Catholic Church in the disputes against the Orthodox Christians and against the members of the most active heretical movement of his time, the Hussites. Although he had original ideas about a possible solution, he conducted polemics in the traditional way, relying on the authority of the Church Fathers. He considered that all his opponents, the Hussites and the Orthodox, had joined one doctrinal front against the Roman Church. At the same time, Stojković favoured the idea of a Christian Commonwealth and in that context he did not wish to hide his personal affection for

⁷² '...hic gloriosissimus doctor quem utique tam Oriens quam Occidens ineffabilibus extollit praeconiis et laudibus et cuius auctoritas maxime deberet commovere Bohemiam et universas nostrorum Slavorum provincias atque regna, cum ipse eorumdem linguae fuerit et patriae ipsumque nostrum regnum Dalmatiae et oppidum Stridonis sua gloriosa origine decoraverit...' (*Tractatus de Ecclesia*: p. 218).

his fellow Slavs, hoping that in the future they would no longer be divided by religious differences.

He was not only a polemicist, trying to win ‘heretics’ and ‘schismatics’ over to the Catholic religion, but he also genuinely wanted to improve the Catholic Church itself. The perturbations within the Catholic Church significantly influenced his work, especially when the Church Councils opposed the papacy in the struggle for leadership. Stojković’s theological work shows his devotion to the precedence of the Church Councils over the popes. He perceived that the Church Council was the only body capable of leading the Church, expecting that the Pope would lose his until then undisputed authority.

Stojković sought a new authority to support his theological ideas. He realised that the role of universities at the time had changed: they were not only the leading centres of learning, but they had influence in religious matters too. However, these circles were rather inconstant. The University of Paris during the Western Schism first supported the Pope, and then, under the pressure of the French king, required a Church Council to be summoned in order to resolve the Schism through the abdication of the confronting popes. This is how the University became a supporter of the Church Council’s supremacy over the Pope. The University of Paris saw its principles win the day at the Council of Constance, but eventually the Church Council of Basle represented its defeat and the victory of the papacy.⁷³

Together with distinguished theologians like Thomas Aquinas, Marsilius of Padua, William Ockham, John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Jan Rokyzana and Peter Payne—who took part both in the ecclesiastical ferments of Western Christianity and in the intellectual movements at the universities of Paris, Padua, Oxford and Prague—Ivan Stojković paid tribute to the academic circles from which he had risen. He clearly realised that the university, through its activities and by its inner structure which greatly resembled a Church Council, should play an essential role in the determination of the true faith.

⁷³ J. Le Goff, *Intelektualci u srednjem vijeku*: pp. 175-176.