

Religious situation in the Hum land (Ston and Rat) during the Middle Ages

Summary

The area of the Hum land was by the end of the 12th century in the jurisdiction of the Ston Catholic bishop. Beside Latin, Slavic, being dominant in this region, was also used in liturgy. As the diocese was situated at the crossroads of the East and the West, there was a "mixture" of the Western and Eastern rites. At the end of the 12th century, when the Hum land came under the rule of Prince Miroslav Nemanjic, the bishop of Ston was exiled. With the establishment of the Serbian Orthodox Archbishopric in 1219 these areas came under the influence of the Eastern Church. Its founder Rastko (Sava) Nemanjic appointed an episcope in Ston who recognized his jurisdiction and established the Hum episcopate. On the ground, things did not change due to the closeness of languages and church rites. There were no clashes over the church rites. The Bishop of Hum in Ston and Rat, and the Benedictines of the monastery of St. Mary on Mljet coexisted in this area. Due to unstable political situation the Bishop of Hum in the mid-13th century moved the seat of the eparchy to the monastery of St. Peter in Lim. In the mid 80s the appointment of the bishops of Ston was renewed. The Catholic Church recognized the diversity of languages and rites so that Catholic bishop and eastern "Raska" monks and priests, who celebrated the service in the Slavic language and, probably, eastern rites, could coexist again. When Ston and Rat fell under the rule of Dubrovnik, a major change occurred. Dubrovnik wanted to see the residents of Ston and Rat more tied to the Republic and blocked the Ston-Korcula bishop's jurisdiction in Ston and Rat bringing the priests and friars (foreigners?) from Bosnian vicariate, who introduced "Roman" rites and Latin in liturgy. It caused a conflict between Dubrovnik and the Ston-Korcula's bishops, which was resolved by the Holy See. Dubrovnik, in order to win this dispute, took all the credit for Catholicism. They even labeled the residents of Ston and Rat as "schismatics" representing thus to the Holy See the credit of Dubrovnik in their conversion. The same was done by the Franciscans after they were deprived of their congregation in Ston and Rat. Unlike Dubrovnik and the Franciscans, the bishops of Ston and Korcula did not see them as schismatic. Believers in Ston and Rat because of the turbulent political situation and the lack of care of their shepherds were certainly religiously neglected so that such negligence could be characterized as "schismatic" and later as "heretic".

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