

THE MARRIAGE-ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN CONSTANTINE XI¹ PALAEOLOGUS AND THE SERBIAN MARA (1451)

After the dissolution of the State of the Nemanjas (1371) a new period begins in the history of Byzantino-Serbian relations. The old conflicts do not exist any longer. On the contrary, the feeling grows stronger that these two Orthodox States on the Balkan Peninsula need to cooperate, being equally subject to the Turkish danger. Gradually, attempts are made on both sides to smooth out the existing ecclesiastical conflicts that thwarted friendly political relations. Especially, when Stephen Lazarević received the office of Despot² from John VII Palaeologus, the co-emperor, in 1402, the relations between Byzantium and the Serbs became entirely friendly.

This genuine friendship can be discerned in a series of marriages contracted between the ruling families of Byzantium and Serbia. The last Despot of medieval Serbia, George Branković, as well as his son and heir, Lazar, both marry Byzantine princesses; the former married Irene Cantacouzena and the latter, Helena Palaeologina.³ But also from among the princesses of medieval Serbia we find Helena, daughter of the Serbian archon Constantine Dragases⁴

1. The opinion of B. Sinogowitz, "Über das byzantinische Kaisertum nach dem vierten Kreuzzuge 1204-1205", *B.Z.* 45, 1952, 353 foll., seems foundless: that Constantine Lascaris, who according to Nicetas Honiates (p. 756₁₁) «τὰ τῆς βασιλείας οὐ προσέτετο σύμβολα» was, in 1204/5, the real Emperor in Nicaea, and that Theodore Lascaris was proclaimed Emperor in 1205 after the alleged death of his brother Constantine. In fact, Greek sources know nothing about the further activity of Constantine Lascaris in Nicaea, whereas the Roman historian Villehardouin (ed. Feral, vol. 2, p. 130), the only author to mention him, when he discusses the struggles of the Empire of Nicaea in Asia Minor, merely calls him a faithful assistant of Theodor and "one of the best Greeks in Romania" (cf. also v.l, p. 168) and never considers him an Emperor; Cf. also G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantije*, Beograd, 1952², p. 401, note 3.

2. See B. Ferjančić, *Despoti u Vizantiji i Južnoslovenskim Zemljama*, Beograd, 1960, p. 182 foll.

3. See M. Lascaris, *Vizantiske Princeze u Srednjevekovnoj Srbiji*, Beograd, 1926, p. 97 foll.

4. Contemporary historians usually give Constantine and his older brother John the common name Dejanovići from the name of their father Dejan, who was Sevastokrator and Despot. In the sources, however, they are never called that. Extant diplomas show that John,

marrying the emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and becoming a Byzantine Empress.⁵

In this paper it is our purpose to examine another attempt, again made by the Court of Constantinople, for Constantine XI Palaeologus, the last Byzantine Emperor, to marry the Serbian Mara, who was the widow of Murad II.

John VIII Palaeologus, the Byzantine Emperor, died childless on 31 October 1448, and as his brother Theodore had died a little before it was Despot Constantine, fourth son of Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus and Helena Dragases, who ascended the Byzantine throne. Constantine XI Palaeologus, who is also called Dragases from the name of his Serbian grandfather,⁶ after his coronation in Mistra (6 January 1449), arrives at Constantinople in March of the same year.⁷ The new Emperor, having been made a widower for the second time⁸ wanted to marry for a third time. His faithful friend, George Sfranzdes⁹ the historian, distinguishes himself in the negotiations for the third marriage. Emperor Constantine sent him to Iberia and Trebizond in October 1449¹⁰

beside his name, also bears the surname Dragases. On the other hand, in several sources we find the surname Dragases also given to his younger brother, Constantine; see Ferjančić, *op. cit.* p. 173, note 97.

5. About this Empress see D. Anastasijević, "Jedina Vizantiska Carica Srpkinja," *Bratstvo* 30, 1959, 26 foll., 31, 1940, 78 foll. and 32, 1941, 50 foll.

6. It is difficult to accept that the last Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI Palaeologus, bears the surname Dragases from his mother's uncle, John Dragases, as it is mentioned in several historical works. Constantine's grandfather, too, bears the surname Dragases, as was mentioned above; and it seems natural that Constantine should have taken the surname Dragases directly from his grandfather, and not from his mother's uncle. It is worth nothing, that Constantine was the only one of the sons of the Emperor Manuel II and the Serbian Elena to be called Dragases. The explanation of this can be sought in that Constantine alone among his brothers bears his grand-father's name, which also was Constantine, and that the surname Dragases was then added to it for that reason. Cf. G. Ostrogorski, "Gospodin Konstantin Dragaš" *Zbornik Filozofskog Fakulteta Beogradskog Univerziteta* 7, 1963, 287 foll.

7. About this see G. Ostrogorski, *Istorija Vizantinja*, Beograd, 1959², p. 525.

8. Ekaterini, daughter of the Governor of Lesvos, Dorino à Gattilusi, was the second wife of Constantine; she died in 1442. D. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, Paris, 1932, v. I. p. 216.

9. We do not use Frandzis, but Sfranzdis, which appears to be more correct; vid. V. Laurent, "Σφραντζῆς et non Φραντζῆς" in *B.Z.* 44, 1951, 373 foll. and by the same author, "Sphrantzes à nouveau", *Revue des Etudes Byzantines*, 9, 1951, 170 foll.

10. Sfranzdes, *Chronicon Minus* ed. Migne P.G. vol. 156, line 1052 B-C. But in the *Chronicon Maius*, ed. Bonn, p. 206⁹⁻¹¹, it is wrongly mentioned that this mission of Sfranzdes took place in 1446. About that mission of Sfranzdes, see J. Papadopoulos, 'Ο πρεσβευτής Κωνσταντινίου τοῦ Παλαιολόγου Γεώργιος Σφραντζῆς ἐν Τραπεζοῦντι καὶ Ἰβηρίᾳ (George Sfranzdes, the ambassador of Constantine Palaeologus, in Trebizond and Iberia), *Arheion*

so that he might investigate and suggest a lady to be his wife, choosing the most appropriate one from any of these two courts. Sfrandzes gives the details of that long and adventurous mission in his chronicle, but his narration is confused and often interrupted. We shall try to give as clear a picture as possible of that mission, clarifying and completing the confused and vague narrations of the historian.

Sfrandzes, when he started off for Trebizond and Iberia for "match-making," had a choice between the daughters of George Mepen the king of Iberia and of John IV Meghalocomnenus, Emperor of Trebizond.¹¹ Moreover, in order to avoid responsibility, he was to investigate first and then state by letter to the Emperor "what was good and what was disadvantageous in both parties." After that, he was to wait for the Emperor's answer.¹² Constantine, when he received the news of Sfrandzes' report, answered by sending letter-bearers.¹³ But these were shipwrecked¹⁴ near Amisus and thus Sfrandzes, not receiving an answer from the Emperor, was compelled to stay in those parts for a very long time.

Meanwhile, Sultan Murad II died in February 1451 and was succeeded on the throne by his son Muhammed II, who believed the capture of Constantinople to be the necessary crowning of Turkish conquests. This necessity, of which his father Murad II was certainly conscious when in 1444 he wanted to have his armies cross from the Asiatic over to the European coast to fight the Hungarians, had now become a fixed idea in the young Sultan's mind.¹⁵ Indeed, the new Sultan displays a peace-loving attitude at the beginning of his reign, in order to be able to proceed with the necessary preparations for

Pondou 18, 1953, 202 foll. who, however, p. 203, wrongly places this fact in 1447. We do not know where the Serbian historian Čedomil Mijatović found the view he expresses in his work *Despot Djuradj Branković*, Beograd, 1880-1882, v. 2, p. 181, that this mission started off in the beginning of 1451.

11. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1052 C-D, cf. also *Maius*, p. 206₃₁ foll.

12. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1052 D, cf. also *Maius*, p. 210₈₋₁₀

13. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, l. 1052 D, cf. also *Maius*, p. 210₁₀₋₁₁

14. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, l. 1052 D: «Καὶ ἔστειλα γραφὰς μετὰ ἀνθρώπων, καὶ πάλιν ἄλλους ὁ αὐθέντης μου ἀπολογησόμενος· καὶ ἐρχόμενοι περὶ τὴν Ἀμισὸν ἐναυάγησαν». But the *Chronicon Maius*, 210₁₁, has ἐναυάγησα instead of ἐναυάγησαν which clearly refers to the letter-bearers. Cf. John Papadopoulos, *op. cit.*, p. 203. Spyridon Lambros, in «Ὁ Κωνσταντῖνος Παλαιολόγος ὡς σύζυγος ἐν τῇ ἱστορίᾳ καὶ τοῖς θρύλοις» [Constantine Palaeologus, as a husband, in history and in legends], *Neos Ellenomnemon*, 4, 1907, 441, takes on this mistake without checking and believes that it was Sfrandzes who had drowned.

15. See speeches of Muhammed II to ambassadors of Constantine, Doukas, ed. V. Grecu, pp. 297-299. Cf. also Ap.E. Vakalopoulos, *Ἱστορία τοῦ συγχρόνου Ἑλληνισμοῦ* [History of Modern Hellenism], Thessaloniki, 1961, vol. I, p. 249.

an attack undisturbed. He vows to live in peace with Constantine (he even returns Heracleia), extends the validity of the peace treaties with Hunyadi and renews the peace treaty with Venice.¹⁶

The relations of Sultan Muhammed II with the Serbs are especially friendly. He receives the Serbian ambassadors in Adrianople with great ceremony, returns the districts of Toplica and Glubočica (near Leskovac) to the Despot of Serbia, George Branković, and sends Mara, widow of Sultan Murad II, back to him with honours.¹⁷

When Sfrandzes, who had meanwhile left Iberia and was in Trebizond, learned of Sultan Murad's death and the return of amirisa Mara¹⁸ to the Serbian court, he decided that the marriage of Constantine with her would be more expedient than the matches of Iberia or Trebizond. He therefore wrote two letters to Constantine, which he sent to him by trustworthy messenger from his own escorts together with many presents that George Mepen, king of Iberia, had given him.

In his first letter Sfrandzes reported on his activities in Iberia, his thoughts on his future activities in the court of Trebizond and the reasons why he had to linger on in those parts. The messenger and letter-bearer was, according to Sfrandzes' instructions, to hand in the first letter to Constantine on the first day of his arrival, as soon as he had bowed to him, and then he was to explain to Constantine by word of mouth how things were with the mission of Sfrandzes to Iberia and Trebizond. The second letter was to be handed in on the following day.¹⁹ In the second letter, Sfrandzes suggests to Constantine that he should take Mara as his wife, because according to Sfrandzes' opinion the marriage of the Emperor with her would be better than the matches of Iberia and Trebizond. Sfrandzes admits to four reasons that Constantine might

16. See N. Jorga, *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, Gotha, 1908-1913, v. 2, pp. 8-9 and F. Babinger, *Mehmet der Eroberer und seine Zeit*, München, 1953, pp. 69-70, 73.

17. Doukas, *op. cit.* p. 289. Chalcocondylas, ed. E. Darko, v. 2, pp. 142-143, Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1053, *Chronicon Maius*, p. 213. Cf. also K. Jireček, *Istoriija Srba*, Beograd, 1952, t. I, p. 375.

18. Mara, a daughter of George Branković, the Serbian Despot, had been given as a wife to Sultan Murad II on 4 September 1435; she was one of those female characters who distinguished themselves and she played a most important role in the history of the peoples of the Balkan peninsula in the 15th century. Her life and also her diplomatic activity have drawn the attention of many Yugoslav and other historians. See St. Novaković, "Carica Mara. Istorijske Crte iz XV. Veka," *Letopis Matice Srpske* 174, 1893, I foll. This work was published again in the *Balkanska Pitania*, Beograd, 1906, p. 189 foll. K. Jireček, v. I, pp. 359, 365, 369, 375, 377, 385-386, 388, 407-409, 410 and 423; vol. 2, pp. 327, 371-372, 373 and 389. F. Babinger, pp. 13, 16, 27, 69, 156, 173; 175, 294, 309, 320, 371 and 422.

19. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 B and *Maius* p. 213₂₋₂₀.

possibly have for declining a marriage to Mara. These reasons were: first, Mara's humble origin, second, refusal of the church to bless the wedding because Constantine and Mara were relatives,²⁰ third, the fact that her first husband was a Turk and fourth, that Mara was of advanced age²¹ and hence unlikely to bear children. Sfrandzes refutes such probable objections of Constantine by bringing up various arguments. In the first place, Mara's origin is not any humbler than that of Constantine's mother,²² second, the church would be more eager to give its blessing if the Emperor married the Serbian Mara, than if he were to take the daughter of the Emperor of Trebizond as his wife, because Mara's father had presented the Church with great gifts for which the Church was extremely grateful. Third, it was not at all unreasonable that Mara's first husband should have been a Turk, for the Emperor's

20. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 B and *Maius* p. 214, calls Mara a cousin of John IV Megalokommenus, Emperor of Trebizond 1429-1460, perhaps a daughter of his sister whose name we do not know; cf. also Sp. Lambros, *op.cit.*, p. 442, note 1. Constantine, on the other hand, was related to the House of Comnenoi of Trebizond, because his brother John VIII Palaeologus had as his wife Maria a sister of John IV Meghalokommenus. See A. Papadopoulos, *Versuch einer Genealogie der Palaiologen 1259-1453*, München, 1938, p. 59, Nr 90.

21. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 B «Καὶ τέταρτον ὅτι ἐνὶ χρόνου πλείονος». But the *Chronicon Maius*, p. 214₁₄, says that Mara was then exactly fifty years old «Καὶ τέταρτον ὅτι πεντηκονταετῆς οὖσα τῇ ἡλικίᾳ». I think that we should consider this piece of information from the *Chronicon Maius*, namely that Mara was then exactly fifty years old, with some reservation. (In this connection, i.e. how trustworthy the *Chronicon Maius* is, see G. Ostrogorski, *op. cit.*, p. 438, note 5). My suggestion is further supported by the fact that *Chronicon Maius* p. 215₁₄ does not repeat the exact figure, namely fifty years, further on in the text, but has «εἰ καὶ ἐτῶν πλειόνων ὑπάρχει» like the *Chronicon Minus*. I do not, however, agree with the opinion of F. Babinger, "Witwensitz und Sterbeplatz der Sultanin Mara" *Epeteris Eterias Vizandinon Spoudon*, 23, 1953, 240-241, who says that Mara was probably born in 1417, and that she was almost 18 when she was given to Sultan Murad II as a wife. If we accept this contention, Mara should have been about 35 in 1451, when the match was being arranged, which means that she must have been younger than Constantine who then was 47 years old (About the year of birth of Constantine, see Sfrandzes in *Chronicon Minus*, line 1025 B.) and Sfrandzes, who was genuinely interested in arranging a match for his master, and who should have known Mara's age, would not have stressed the fact that she was of advanced years. We have no reason to doubt the trustworthiness of *Chronicon Minus* as we would in the case of *Maius*. In my opinion, which is based on *Chronicon Minus*, better to be trusted than *Maius*, Mara must then have been older than Emperor Konstantine, or at least she must have been as old as he was.

22. «Ἐπεὶ οὐδὲν ἐνὶ ἐλάττωτος γένους τῆς κυρίας μου καὶ ἀοιδίμου μητρὸς σου». *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 B, cf also *Maius*, p. 214₁₉₋₂₀. Sfrandzes, in this brief expression, means: Mara is indeed a daughter of a Serbian nobleman, but Constantine's mother was not anything more than the daughter of a Serbian nobleman either.

grand-mother Eudocia²³ also had had a Turk as her first husband, and a comonomer at that, by whom she had had children, too. But Mara, the daughter of the Serbian Despot, had been the wife of a distinguished Turkish Sultan, and she was said to have remained a virgin, having had no children by him. Fourth, it is really in the lap of God whether Mara would have children advanced as her age was. Refuting such probable objections on the part of the Emperor, Sfrandzes was urging him to contract marriage with Mara.²⁴

Sfrandzes was not the only one to give the Emperor such advice, but there were others wishing him to marry the amirisa. But the widow of Protostrator Cantacouzenus²⁵ outdid them all in her eagerness to see Constantine married to Mara, for she was a relation of hers and gave solemn promises of presents and a dowry.²⁶ But the great major-domo²⁷ opposed this and, together

23. Eudocia, daughter of Alexius III, Emperor of Trebizond 1349-1390, had as her first husband a Turk, Tatziatini, amiras of the Lemnians. After his death, she becomes the wife of John V Palaeologus, the Byzantine Emperor, 1341-1391, grandfather of Constantine; see, W. Miller, *Trebizond, the last Greek Empire*, London, 1926, p. 68; and A. Papadopoulos *Versuch einer Genealogie...* op. cit., p. 46, Nr 73.

24. Sfrandzis, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 B-D, and *Maius*, 214-215.

25. In all probability, this protostratorisa mentioned by Sfrandzes (ed. I. Papadopolou, p. 115₂₄₋₂₅) is the wife of protostratoras Manuel Cantacouzenus, in 1419-20 and not in 1410 as M. Lascaris mentions (*Vizantiske Princeze*, op. cit., p. 98 note 4). Sfrandzes mentions a protostratoras Cantacouzenus in another place as well (p. 141₁₉₋₂₀), who is probably the same Manuel protostratoras Kantacouzenus. Ch. Hopf, *Chroniques Greco-Romanes*, Berlin 1873, p. 536, thinks that this protostratoras Manuel Cantacouzenus is the father of Irene Cantacouzena, wife of George Branković, the Serbian Despot. But I think that this protostrator is only a remote relation of Irene. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Maius*, ed. Bonn. p. 221, calls protostratorisa Kantacouzena "a relation" of Mara, which does not at all imply that this protostratorisa is Irene's mother; cf. M. Lascaris, op. cit., p. 98, note 4.

26. «Ἐλθοῦσα ἡ πρωτοστρατόρισα συνέτυχέ μοι περὶ τοῦτου καὶ πολλὰς δόσεις καὶ ἐπαγγελίας εἰς τὸ μέλλον ὠφελίμους ἔταξεν». Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1056 A. and *Maius*, p. 221₂₋₃). Čedomil Mijatović, however, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 184, misinterpreting the source, thinks that George Branković, the Despot of Serbia, himself proposed it to Constantine that he should take his daughter Mara as a wife.

27. Thus, anonymously, he is mentioned by Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1056 B and *Maius*, p. 221 and by the Moskow chronicler of the capture of Constantinople, *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* edit. Ph. Déthier, vol. 22, part I, pp. 1096 and 1098. But in a treaty between the Emperor of Byzantium, John VIII Palaeologus, and the Doge of Venice, Francis Foscari, on 21 April 1448 we find a witness signing it as "the great major-domo Mr Andronikos Palaeologus Cantacouzenus"; vid. F. Miklosich et J. Müller, *Acta et Diplomata Graeca Medii Aevi Sacra et Profana*, Vindobonae 1865, 3, p. 224₂₆₋₂₇ and Sp. Lambros «Συνθήκη μεταξύ Ἰωάννου Η' Παλαιολόγου καὶ τοῦ δουκὸς τῆς Βενετίας Φραγκίσκου Φόσκαρη». [Treaty between John VII Palaeologus and the Duke of Venice Francis Foscari] *Neos Ellenomnemon*, 12, 1915, 170₂₅₋₂₇; and perhaps this great major-domo of the treaty is the

with John Cantacouzenus, urged the Emperor to make the match with the daughter of the Emperor of Trebizond.²⁸ The attitude of Grand Duke Notaras is not known; we only hear of Constantine telling Sfrandzes the following about him: "Notaras, both ostentatiously and in secret, says that all the rest is of no use, except his own; and he moves every stone, like persuasion as you know better than anybody else."²⁹ Unfortunately, Sfrandzes did not deem it necessary to put down in his Chronicle what he knew about the opinion and activities of the Grand Duke.

All these conflicting opinions had influenced the Emperor and he hesitated in making a decision. Just at that time, on the 28th of May 1451, Sfrandzes' messenger arrived at Constantinople. When the Emperor read the first letter he was upset and felt displeased with Sfrandzes for lingering on. When, however, on the following day, the letter-bearer gave him the second letter to read, where Sfrandzes told about the match with Mara, he was pleased and he was finally persuaded to contract this marriage.³⁰ The opinion of his faithful counsellor Sfrandzes undoubtedly had a great bearing on Constantine's final decision; on the other hand, we think the Emperor was also greatly influenced by the promise Protostratorisa Cantacouzena had made about a large dowry, which Constantine was in great need of, since the finances of the State were then in a deplorable condition.

Without any delay, Constantine sent Manuel Palaeologus,³¹ the nephew of the Protostratorisa Cantacouzena, as well as Evdhaimon Ioanis to the Ser-

same person who is anonymously mentioned by both Sfrandzes and the Moskow Chronicler of the capture of Constantinople.

28. John Cantacouzenus is a person of the intimate environment of Emperor Constantine. Already in 1446, before Constantine became Emperor and when he was still in Mistra, Cantacouzenus is governor of Corinth; Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1050 D and *Maius*, p. 198₂₃. He plays a major role in the negotiations between Emperor Constantine and John Hunyadi in 1452; Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1063 C and *Maius*, edit. Bonn, p. 327₁₀₋₁₆. Cf. also Gy. Moravcsik, "Ungarisch-byzantinische Beziehungen zur Zeit des Falles von Byzanz" *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 2, 1954, 356, note 22. To the end of his life he remained faithful to the Emperor and together with him died a heroic death at the capture of Constantinople by the Turks; Chalkokondylas, edit. Darko, vol. 2, p. 159₂₀₋₂₅.

29. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1056 B. cf. also *Maius*, edit. Bonn, p. 221₁₂₋₁₈.

30. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1054 D-1055 A and *Maius*, p. 216.

31. F. Babinger, "Ein Freibrief Mehmeds II", *B. Z.* 44, 1951, 12, note 7, believes that Manuel Palaeologus, the messenger of Emperor Constantine to the Serbian Court, is the same person as the nephew of Constantine, Manuel Palaeologus who is identified as Mesih-Paša, the later Turkish admiral. Wrongly, however; for this Manuel Palaeologus, who is sent to the Serbian Court by the Byzantine Emperor, in 1451, has no connection with the Emperor's nephew Manuel Palaeologus, second son of Despot Thomas Palaeologus, only

bian court, that they might discuss the marriage. George Branković, the Despot of Serbia, and his wife Irene Cantacouzena, accepted the proposal of Constantine with pleasure, but the match eventually fell through because Mara refused it. While Murad II, her husband, was still alive, she had made a vow never to marry another man, if God would free her from the hands of the infidels; instead, she would devote the rest of her life to God in gratitude for the freedom he would grant her.³² After this match had fallen through, Emperor Constantine proceeded to contract a marriage with the daughter of George Mepen, the King of Iberia, and a mission headed by Sfrandzes was to go to Iberia and bring back the bride. Meanwhile, however, it was 1452, and the danger that threatened Constantinople from the imminent attack of the Turks caused the mission to be cancelled. Thus, Constantine was single when he was killed fighting for the defense of the imperial city, on May 29, 1453.

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born on the 2nd January 1455; See A. Papadopoulos, *Versuch einer Genealogie*. op. cit., p. 68, Nr. 101.

32. «'Αλλ' ηύρέθη ὅτι ἡ ἀμήρισσα ἐδεήθη τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἔταξεν, ἵνα, εἰ διὰ τινος τρόπου ἐλευθερώσῃ αὐτὴν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὀσπήτιον τοῦ τάχα ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς, ἄνδρα ἕτερον εἰς ὅλην αὐτῆς τὴν ζωὴν νὰ μηδὲν ἐπάρῃ, ἀλλὰ νὰ μένῃ ἐλευθέρη καὶ κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν θεραπεύουσα τὸν τὴν ἐλευθερίαν αὐτῇ δεδοκότα». [But it was found that the amirisa had prayed to God and vowed that, if by some means he would free her from the house of her alleged husband, she would not marry another man all her life, but remain free and as best she could serve Him who had given her freedom]. Sfrandzes, *Chronicon Minus*, line 1055 A; cf. also Maius 216-217.