

Vukašin and Ulješa Mrnjavčić, Knez¹ Lazar Grebljanović, who was afterwards to achieve immortal fame on the field of Kossovo, Vuk Branković, the brothers Balša, and Knez Vojslav Voinović. This last and the Balšas obtained their independence during the lifetime of Uroš. In 1367 the last of the Nemanjas died, murdered, it is said, by Vukašin's followers while out hunting. Vukašin himself, who had been greatly favoured by Dušan and appointed, by the terms of the Tsar's will, chief State Councillor to Uroš, succeeded to the throne. But this only hastened the disruption of the Empire, for Knez Lazar, Vuk Branković, and Nicholas Altomanovic (the Governor of the Danubian provinces) rose against him, and not only proclaimed their own independence, but occupied part of his immediate possessions.²

Of the various states into which the Servian Empire split up the first to be formed was the Zedda, ruled by the Balša family. These were, according to some authorities, of French origin, and according to others were descended from the Nemanjas.³ A Balša had served in Dušan's armies, and was afterwards made governor of the Zedda. In a privilege of 1360, in which Stephen Uroš IV. grants trading rights in his states to the Ragusans, the "Zedda of Balša" is mentioned, showing that the province was still under Servian suzerainty. It consisted of the region round the lake of Scutari,

¹ Knez means lord or count.

² The decadence of Servia can be traced in the titles of its rulers. Uroš IV. was the last Tsar, Vukašin was only Kral or king, and his son was Marko Kraljević, "the King's son."

³ Du Cange, Farlati, Lenormant, and Rovinski take the first view, Gclch (*La Zedda*, p. 28) and Šafažik the second.