

History of the Serbs in Croatia, Slavonia and Dalmatia from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the House of Habsburg ruled the Kingdoms of Croatia and Slavonia through Hungary. Venice ruled in Dalmatia up to the end of the eighteenth century, only to be succeeded by France and Habsburg Monarchy. There are some similarities in the position of the Serbs in these two states, but there are many differences as well. That is why the history of the Serbs in these areas will be presented in two separate sections.

I. Croatia, Slavonia and Southern Hungary

Settling down

Ottoman conquests forced the Serbs to move to Croatia and Slavonia. During the rule of Suleiman II the Magnificent (1520-1566) and Selim II (1566-1574) the Ottomans conquered the largest parts of Southeast Europe. The last Hungarian ruler of the Jagellon dynasty died in the battle of Mohach, in 1526, after which Hungary fell under Ottoman rule. In 1520s and 1530s the Ottomans conquered the larger part of the Kingdom of Croatia. Founding of the Sanjak of Čazma in 1557 marked the end of the conquest of Lower Slavonia. (Later this was known as the Sanjak of Pakrac, and then of Černik).¹ In the meantime, Ferdinand of Habsburg and Jovan Zapolja fought for Hungarian Crown, with Ferdinand emerging a winner in 1538. This conflict severely weakened defence of the Christian world: by 1538 Croatia was reduced to "reliquiae reliquiarum", as one contemporary document put it. Fear from the Ottomans, hunger, disease, and putting down of a peasant rebellion in 1573 forced large masses of Croatian population to flee and settle in Habsburg Monarchy, parts of Hungary and Slovakia. At the time when the Serbs inhabited this area, the land was deserted with owners dead or unable to prove property rights.

The most important areas under migration were both banks of the river Una, from which migrations both started and ended up. *Uskoks* from Bosnia were the earliest Serbian immigrants:

in 1526 they moved to the surroundings of the castle Sichelburg, between Croatia and Carniola (the whole area was named *Žumberak* after the castle). The second wave of immigrants, originating from the Una and Glamoč, reached this area in 1530. Their arrival was sanctioned by Erasmo Thurn, the commander of Bihać, and Ivan Kacijaner, the captain of Carniola, Carinthia and Styria. Žumberak belonged to Ferdinand of Habsburg and in 1534 was given to the Serbs as a hereditary land, with double privilege - those for *uskoks*, and those for their princes. The Serbs had free status, having only been bound by military service. Migrations to Žumberak were completed until the middle of the sixteenth century. The Serbs lived in Slavonia even before the 1530s, but their number increased there after the Ottoman conquests, and the forming of the Sanjak of *_azma*. Slavonia was then divided into Lower Slavonia (under the Ottoman rule), and Upper Slavonia (under the Habsburg rule). The Serbs made the majority in the surroundings of Pakrac, Požega and Voćin, and this area was called "small Wallachia".² The next wave of migrations started during the Long War between Ottoman Empire and Habsburg Monarchy (1593-1606). Migrations were most frequent from 1595 to 1600, when the Serbs from the eparchy of Požega negotiated with General Herberstein, the commander of the Slavonian military border. The greater number of them were coming, led by their secular and spiritual leaders.³ In the beginning of the seventeenth century the whole area of Križevci (Upper Slavonia) was well populated. This population inhabited feudal lands, not those belonging to the Crown, as was the case in Žumberak, and that was the cause of great problems and clashes.⁴

Immigrations to Slavonia stopped after the peace treaty had been signed in Žitva in 1606. They started again in 1690, during the Great Viennese War (1683-1699). Having hoped to win the privileges promised by the Emperor, a great number of people left Serbia, guided by Patriarch Arsenije III Čarnojević. This was the so-called "Great Migration of the Serbs" - called "great" not only because so many people left Serbia, but also because it changed the legal position of the Serbs in Habsburg Monarchy, now guaranteed by Emperor's privileges. In this war Slavonia was terribly devastated. The Ottomans seized Belgrade again in 1690, so that further migrations were reduced - much to the disappointment of the Habsburg authorities. From then on, the people from

¹ In 1527, when Jajce fell, the Captaincy of Bihać was established. In the same year fell Lika, in 1528 Krbava, and in 1537 Klis, a stronghold of the *uskoks*, who then moved to Senj. In Slavonia, Požega was conquered in 1536 and the Sanjak of Požega formed; in 1552 Virovitica and Čazma fell.

² The notion of "Wallach" means easily movable cattle breeding population that in the feudal society of the mediaeval Serbia, and later in the Ottoman Empire, had privileges which differentiated them from the serfs. The term, therefore, denotes a social group, but most frequently coincides with the ethnic group, since the immigrated Serbs were movable and had privileges which differentiated them from the Croatian serfs.

³ In 1595, Vasilije, the bishop of Požega, negotiated with Habsburg military authorities, and brought a larger group of people to the Habsburg territory. In 1597 and 1598 General Herberstein transferred a significant number of the Serbs from Lower to Upper Slavonia, which was a part of Habsburg military border.

⁴ See more on this in the section on Military Border.

Serbia mainly moved to Hungary, while in the end of the seventeenth century Slavonia was populated mainly from Bosnia, especially in 1697, after the successful Bosnian campaign of Eugen of Savoy.⁵ Later migrations were not caused by wars, but by the promises made by frontier commanders that the free status would be given to Bosnian people. They found those promises attractive as their position in Bosnia was not legally defined and secure.

Migrations to Croatia, from Ottoman towards Habsburg parts, began in the beginning of the seventeenth century, later towards Slavonia. Since 1577 the Ottomans have been renewing fortifications in Lika, populating the region with the Serbs as well. During the Viennese War Habsburg Monarchy re-conquered those parts, and the great number of the population found themselves under the Habsburg rule. In 1600, the first large group of the Serbs came to Croatian border (the Generalcy of Karlovac), to the areas of Gomirje, Moravice and Vrbovsko.⁶ After 1667 they gained the right to grant entrance to new settlers to the region, by which the ethnic structure of the Serbs was preserved. During the Viennese War (1683-1699) as well, many Serbs came to Croatian border. They were coming constantly and in smaller groups so that the number of the Serbs in the Generalcy of Karlovac increased during the seventeenth century. In this period the ethnic structure in Lika and Krbava was changed. Before 1683 only Serbs and Moslems lived there. The oldest Croatian population in these parts were the Moslems who converted to Catholicism. In this war, the population of Lika suffered from two sides - from the *uskoks* and from Habsburg Monarchy. After 1699, the people from Ottoman and Venetian territories started moving towards Lika and Krbava, which remained populated entirely by the Serbs, since in Croatia and Carniola there were not many Catholics willing to come to this desolated country.⁷ During the wars in the eighteenth century there were many migrations from the Generalcy of Karlovac to Slavonia, Strymnia and Baranja, while at the same time Lika, Banija and Kordun were being populated by people coming from Bosnia (1716-1718; 1733; 1736-1739).

Before the Viennese War a small number of the Serbs lived in Banija; only those who arrived there in 1640 and 1680. When in 1688 the Emperor's army passed over the river Kupa, large groups of the Serbs left the area between the Kupa and the Una. Military authorities were

⁵ The Serbs from Bosnia used to settle more in western Slavonia, and to a lesser extent in the eastern Slavonia, where Bosnian catholics used to go more often. The reason thereof was that Patriarch Arsenije directed the Serbs to Small Wallachia, a region in western Slavonia largely inhabited by the Serbs, where he wanted to form a compact Serbian region. The catholics, however, because of the feud between Bosnian and Zagreb bishops, run further away from Zagreb. That is how Bosnian Friars created a basis for the renewal of the Bishopric in _akovo. See: V.Dabić, *Seobe Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju od početka 16. do kraja 17. veka*, *Catena Mundi I*, (Migrations of the Serbs towards Croatia and Slavonia since the beginning of the sixteenth to the end of the seventeenth century), Beograd-Kraljevo 1992, pp 265-282.

⁶ These lands belonged to the families of Zrinski and Frankopan. A long dispute over the property was so resolved that the Serbs bought the land from them, and in this way their free status was maintained.

⁷ See, V.Dabić, *op. cit.*

settling them there during the war, mostly from Bosnia and Hercegovina, promising them a free status subject to the Emperor exclusively. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Banal Border was populated by the Serbs only, while the fiefs were populated by Croats, since the Serbs were banished from these areas in 1731. The frontiers between the Border and the fief areas remained ethnic as well, and that was also the line of confinement between the *štokavski* and *kajkavski* dialect of the present BSH language.⁸

II. Legal and political position of the Serbs in the Habsburg Empire

In the *lettera invitatoria* of April 6, 1690, Emperor Leopold I called all Balkan peoples to rise against the Ottoman Empire. He promised that he would respect all Serbian rights - free election of the Duke, nobles' titles, religious freedom, obligation to free them from financial taxes, the possession of all the lands that would be taken away from the Ottomans. Patriarch Arsenije III Černojević responded to these summons, the result of which was the Great Migration in 1690. In return, on August 21, 1690, Emperor Leopold I granted a privilege to the Serbs as to a religious and ethnic community. Since then, privileges were legal acts by which the legal position of the Serbs in Habsburg Empire was determined. This first privilege was the basic state and legal act by which the position of the Serbian people under the rule of the Emperor was defined so that the Serbs were recognized as a separate ethnic and a religious community, respectively. The legal and political status of the Serbs in Habsburg Monarchy, however, should not be estimated only through privileges, for often they were not respected. Even the rulers themselves who granted them used to narrow and interpret them differently. To understand this status completely one should take into consideration the social structure of the Monarchy of the time, the general characteristics of feudalism, and the special problem of relations between the Hungarian and Croatian secular and clerical estates on one side, and the ruler on the other. Thus, the Serbian problems were treated in two different manners. To the Court, the Serbs were "*patrimonium domus Austricae*", a property of the ruler, which is the term stemming more from private, than from public law. According to the Hungarian, and also to the Croatian estates, the problems of the Serbs should have been treated within the "*Provinciale et politicum Hungarie*", as if they were subject to the laws of the country. This is precisely the contradictory nature of the Serbian status. Essentially, it depended on the will of the Court and its alternative politics. During wars, the privileges were confirmed, even widened, while in times of peace they were narrowed as suggested by estates and the Catholic clergy.

⁸ For Banal border see section on Military Border and V. Dabić, *Banska krajina (1688-1751) (The Banal Border)*, Beograd-Zagreb, 1984.

In the Habsburg Monarchy, the Serbs lived under three different administrative systems, by which their position became more complicated. In Military Border (*Vojna Granica*) they were placed under the jurisdiction of the *Hofkriegsrat*, and in Crown districts under the jurisdiction of the *Hofkammer*, with some autonomous privileges; finally, in the Hungarian and the Croatian *Provincial* the Serbs were serfs under the Hungarian authorities and landowners. From the beginning, the Serbs requested to be settled together, on a compact territory in the so-called Small Wallachia (around the cities of Pakrac, Voćin and Slatina).⁹ However, the privileges referred to personal rights, not to territorial ones, which the Court tried to avoid at all costs, so that the Serbs could not become a political community equal to other lands in the Habsburg Monarchy. The Serbs were thus offered a territory in Banat, with personal privileges for the Serbian clergy and nobility. It should be emphasized that in the feudal society only the nobility was politically significant, while the rest of the people were only subjects to the Crown with no political rights.

The Serbs were not assigned privileges as a political community, but as a religious one, and so their position depended on the position of the church in general. The on-coming era of enlightened absolutism meant decline of the influence of the church in favour of the state. Therefore, the legal position of the Serbs based on privileges was getting weaker. It was completely lost during the reign of Maria Theresa (1740-1780) when the absolute monarchy was consolidated. Many reforms were performed in administration, as well as in military system, so that the position of the Serbs was changed. The lands of the *Hofkammer* were disappearing in the Hungarian Provincial, and the Serbs who lived there were turned into serfdom, retaining autonomous privileges only in the Crown Districts and in the *Liberæ civitates regiae*.¹⁰ In the general centralization of the state, the *Hofkommission per Illyricum* was established in 1745. It was directly subordinated to the Crown,¹¹ so that the Serbian privileges found place on the highest level of the government. Regulations of 1770 and 1777 meant further centralization of the state. These were the systematic scale of norms compiled from all previous documents regarding the Serbs, through which they, together with their clergy, fell into a stronger power of the state.¹² The legal position of the Serbs was reduced to the church and school autonomy, while the privileges stemming from personal rights were cancelled during the reign of Maria Theresa. From

⁹ This demand was brought out for the first time at the people's congress in Baja, in 1694.

¹⁰ Those were the Crown District of Veliki Bečej, formed June 28 1751, after demilitarization of the Theiss-Maros Border, and the Crown District of Velika Kikinda, formed in November 12, 1774. *Liberæ civitates regiae* (free communities of the realm), were Novi Sad, Budim, Segedin and others.

¹¹ The *Hofdeputation per Illyricum* grew in 1774 into the *Hofdeputation in Transsylvanicis, Banaticis et Illyricis*. Soon it was discontinued due to responsibilities on the part of the Hungarian Court Chancellery, and because of its opposition.

that time on, the Serbs fought for a political and territorial autonomy on the basis of a modern state. The first demand of this kind was raised as early as 1790, at the Congress of Timisoara, as continuously repeated throughout the whole nineteenth century, until the fall of the Monarchy.

III. The Serbs in the Military Organization of the Habsburg Monarchy

The majority of the Serbian population in Croatia and Slavonia were included into the organization of the Military Border. Their basic function in the new state was to defend the Habsburg border from the Ottomans, the result of which was their legal and political status. That is why the history of the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy until the eighteenth century was tightly linked to the history of the Military Border.

After Bosnia had fallen under the Ottoman rule in 1463, the attacks on Croatia and Slavonia intensified. The defence was weak and insufficient, although it should have been a common concern of the Crown and the “inner Austrian estates”, i.e. Carniola, Carinthia and Styria (the center of which was in Graz).¹³ They never managed to agree upon the taxes for the Border. Nevertheless, the defence system was improved gradually. Once the inner Austrian estates realized that the defence farther away from their estates was advantageous, they agreed to finance the Border themselves. In the Congress of inner Austrian estates in Bruk on the Mura in 1578, the Border was unified and established as a permanent institution. Afterwards, the *Kriegsrat* (War Council) was founded in Graz, and the Border area was divided into the three following parts:

Croatian border (the so-called Generalcy of Karlovac, from Senj to the Kupa)¹⁴

Banal border (from Karlovac to Ivanić) which was given to the Croatian Ban and the estates,¹⁵ and

Border in Upper Slavonia (from Ivanić to the Drava), later named the Generalcy of Varaždin.

¹² The process of abolishing the Serbian privileges was finished with the Declaratory Rescript in 1779, that prescribed the organization of the Serbian Church, and with the Consistorial System in 1782.

¹³ Carniola, Carinthia and Styria were hereditary lands of the Habsburg family. When in 1564 Emperor Ferdinand divided the land between his three sons, the Archduke Karl got these regions. In 1578 he began the supervising of the defence of Croatia and Slavonia, and founded the War Council (*Kriegsrat*) at Graz.

¹⁴ Called after the city of Karlovac (which was named after the Archduke Karl), built for the defence from the Ottomans in 1579.

¹⁵ The Croatian Ban was also subject to the Archduke Karl II, who was the administrator of the Border, which was recognized by both Croatian and Hungarian estates.

Regardless of this organization the estates were not able to maintain and supply the fortresses surrounded by Ottoman territories. That is why the status of free peasants - frontiersmen was given to the immigrated Serbs by military commanders. In this way, the population itself, consisting of the Wallachians, who were easily movable herdsmen, could take up its share of the defence.

The first continuous Serbian immigration to the Upper Slavonia took place in 1538. Led by their dukes, they came and received the Border privileges (the status of free peasants - soldiers), thus forming three captaincies - Koprivnica, Križevci and Ivanić. The Serbs from Žumberak were also granted privileges and were organized militarily in 1535. This was the beginning of the history of the Military Border as an organization. The creation of military administration was initiated in 1559, when the Slavonian and Croatian borders were formed, put out of the power of the inner Austrian estates and put under the command of captain Ivan Lenković. The Border in the Upper Slavonia was strengthened by continuous migrations in the sixteenth century, and a militia was organized. The Croatian and Slavonian borders were officially established when Karlovac was built in 1579, and its Generalcy formed.¹⁶ After the new migrations during the "Long War" (1594-1606), the captaincies of Kupa and Petrinja were formed in the Banal Border.

The Serbs fought to preserve their border privileges, according to which they were free soldiers who recognized the authority of the Emperor and his Generals only. In no way would they agree to be serfs of the lords whose abandoned lands they inhabited. They wanted to be the free owners of the soil they tilled and to preserve their Orthodox faith. During the seventeenth century the Croatian and Slavonian estates fought a constant battle against the commanders of the Borders for the status of the "Wallachians". They wanted to turn them into serfs they needed to work on their estates, and the Bishop of Zagreb demanded that they pay taxes for the Catholic church. The frontiersman appealed to Generals, usually with success, because they were irreplaceable in the defence. As feudal lords were not equipped for the defence on their own, they were usually losers in these disputes. The Serbs were coming from Bosnia to take the lands of Zrinski and Frankopan families, and they enjoyed the Archduke's protection. Almost half a century long dispute between the Frankopans and the Serbs in the areas of Gomirje, Moravice and Vrbovsko was resolved in 1657: the Serbs purchased that land and the Emperor confirmed their privileges of an autonomy. The attempt of the King Mathias III in 1615 to subjugate the Serbs to the secular and church nobles through the "Wallachian Commission" (*Commissio Valachorum*) was not successful. During the Thirty-years war (1618-1648), the Serbs decisively refused to subjugate themselves to the decisions of the Commission in the rally in Rovište, and

¹⁶ The Generalcy of Karlovac was lagging behind the Generalcy of Varaždin, and the paid militia was much smaller than in Vara_din.

threatened by rebellion. That is why Emperor Ferdinand decreed the *Patent Buch* in 1627, with which he confirmed all Serbian privileges. Caused by the uprisings and disorders in the Slavonian Border, the Emperor confirmed the Border special rights in 1630, with a document called *Statuta Valachorum*.¹⁷

After the Viennese War (1683-1699) a new situation was created. The migration of the Serbs in 1690 significantly influenced the history of the Border, because the number of the frontiersmen greatly increased and the privileged status was consolidated. After 1699 the Border was definitely stabilized on the Sava and the Danube. A conflict between military and church authorities broke out on the issue of organization of the newly conquered regions. The bishops and Court Chamber tried to turn as many Serbs as possible into serfdom, while the Generals tended to have them all in military service for the new parts of the Border. The status of the Border Guard was favoured among the population, and it was very difficult to distinguish the guardsmen from the contributors. It was done in 1703, although incompletely, so that the chaos of the disposition of population continued during whole first half of the eighteenth century, until the reforms of Maria Theresa in 1740s. After the Lower Slavonia had been liberated from the Ottomans, the new parts of the Border were formed in 1701 and 1702: on the Sava, the Danube, and the Theiss-Maros military districts.¹⁸ The whole area between the Kupa and the Una was also re-conquered in this war. The Banal Border was enlarged and dominated by the ruler, while a great part of it was subordinated to the Bishop of Zagreb and the *Kaptol*. The Emperor gave land to the population to use it only for acquiring soldiers in return, with the Croatian Ban as a commander. The Croatian Council (the *Sabor*) took part in re-conquering the areas between the Kupa and the Una. At that time, Croatian help was needed by Vienna for the uprising in Hungary (the insurrection of Rakoczy 1703-1711), so that the Ban was appointed a commander by the Court. Since 1703 the Banal Border has been subjugated to the *Hofkriegsrat* (War Council) in Vienna. All the hinterland was assigned to the *Hofkammer* and *županije* (comitats).

¹⁷ It was a kind of a Constitution of the Border determining the civil, legal and property relations in the Generalcy of Varaždin. Precisely defined is the framework of the autonomy, with the free election of the judges as an especially important privilege. The institution of the Supreme Judge was discontinued in 1666 due to the rebellion of Stefan Osmokruović, the Supreme Judge of the Captaincy of Križevci. Judicious power passed to the Captain, who also held the administrative power, which enabled a gross power abuse. Such difficult condition at the Border preceded the 1683-1699 war.

¹⁸ The Danube, Theiss and Maros borders did not belong to the territories of the Kingdom of Croatia and Slavonia, but to Hungary. However, within the defence system they were all the part of the border on the Sava. The borders of Theiss and Maros were demilitarized in 1749-1750, which brought about the migration of the Serbs from that territory to Russia. See: A Fori_kovic, Seobe Srba u Rusiju tokom 18. veka, Istorija srpskog naroda IV-1, Beograd 1986 (Immigration of the Serbs to Russia during the eighteenth century); The History of the Serbs IV-19; M.Kostić, Srpska naselja u Rusiji: Nova Srbija i Slavenosrbija, (Serbian settlements in Russia: New Serbia and Slavenoserbia), Beograd 1923; S. Pišcević, Memoari, Beograd 1963.

During the first half of the eighteenth century the disposition of the population, as well as the division between the *paor* (serfs) and military men was completely chaotic. Bandits and uprisings spread all over the area. The Border was organized no sooner than the middle of the century, when the reforms were issued by Maria Theresa. During the “War for Austrian Succession” (1741-1748) the Border troops were to be used in European battlefields, so that the standardization and unification of the Border were initiated. In 1743 the Empress dissolved the *Kriegsrat* in Graz, and in 1748 the maintenance of the Border was transferred to the state budget, and the administration handed over to the *Hofkriegsrat*. The forming of regiments was ended until 1750.¹⁹ In 1754 the reforms were rounded up with new administrative and court regulations, named *Militaer-Grenz-Rechten*.

Thus, in the era of Enlightened Absolutism, the process of reconstruction of the Military Border was completed and it became subordinated directly to the Court as a *corpus separatum* and the ruler's instrument. Thus, the constant conflict with the estates was originated. Since the estates did not want to bear costs for the defence any longer, and the Court could not do it, the military fief for the support of the communal household was established. Thus, the fief became the basis and the main source of the communal household economic independence.

Beside the military fief, the basis of the military organization was the *zadruga* (joint family household) and regiment organization.²⁰ By the regulations many rebellions were provoked due to the fear of the frontiersmen of losing their special status.²¹ Nevertheless, the second half of the eighteenth century was mainly a peaceful period of the history of the Border, and the economic progress was notable. The position of the Serbs in the Border was much better than that in the Provincial. That is why some convulsions occurred when *županije* (comitats) were divided from the Border. That, however, brought stabilization of population and more favourable economic conditions. The "Wallachian privileges" disappeared, the frontiersmen were exposed to severe regulations, while those in the Provincial were reduced to the peasant status. Within the Border the Serbs could reach higher military positions, while in the Provincial they could not participate in the *županija* political bodies. In the system of the rural and city autonomy the Serbs were not discriminated, and they were given the largest autonomy within their church communities.

¹⁹ The border was divided into 11 regiments. The Upper Border consisted of four: the regiments of Lika, Otočac, Ogulin and Slunj. The Banal Border was divided into two regiments: the first and the second Banal regiment. The Lower Border, i.e., the Border of Slavonia, consisted of five regiments: the regiments of Križevci, _urdevci, Gradiška, Brod and Pertovaradin.

²⁰ To enhance economy in the Border, the so-called “military communities” were formed: the cities within the Border, in which crafts and trade were developed. The first military communities, formed in 1748, were Petrovaradin, Zemun and Sremski Karlovci. In 1779 the *Communitaeten-Regulativ* was issued.

To the end of the Border history (until 1873), no significant changes in the Border organization occurred. Its importance was decreasing; it was incapable to adapt to the demands of the time, both in military and economic respect. In 1787, Joseph II attempted to share the power between the military and civilian authorities in the regiments. This corresponded to his ideas about the functioning of a modern state, but after his death this experiment, as well as most of his reforms, failed. The last attempt to modernize the Border - the reforms of Archduke Karl - occurred at the beginning of the next century, in 1803, but it was also a failure. The frontiersmen supported themselves by tilling the soil, without any time spare to learn new military skills. At the same time, both the ideas of French revolution and nationalism spread amongst them. During the First Serbian Uprising (1804-1813) the Serbs from both sides of the Border were bound together in the joint attempt to overthrow the Ottoman rule over Serbia, so that for the first time in the history of the Serbs in Habsburg Monarchy the question of their loyalty to the Emperor was set. French government, from 1809 to 1813, brought no radical changes, so that the expectations of the frontiersmen were not answered. In 1814, the Border was returned to the Habsburgs, and its significance rose again, because the other troop shipments of the Monarchy were noticeably reduced. The authorities persistently opposed the dissolution of the family *zadruga* and the introduction of the private enterprise in economy, because that would have annihilated the military character of the Border.

Regardless of the penetration of nationalism, the Border allegiance to the dynasty was not seriously endangered, for as long as the serfdom existed, the status of a frontiersman was highly rated. That is why the frontiersmen opposed the Croatian aspirations to reincorporate the Border into the Kingdom of Croatia, which was later considered to be one of the causes of Serbo-Croatian conflict.

IV. The Organization of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Croatia and Slavonia and the Religious Position of the Serbs

The beginnings of the organization of the Serbian Orthodox Church on the territory of Croatia and Slavonia coincided with the period of the Long War (1593 - 1606), when the number of the Serbs and their priests was significantly enlarged in these areas. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the monasteries of Gomirje (1602, between Senj and Ogulin), Komogovina (1603, between Kostajnica and Petrinja), Marča (1608-1609, near Ivanić) were erected, and the monastery of Lepavina (1636, between Križevci and Koprivnica) was renewed. Marča was the

²¹ These rebellions reached their climax in the Varaždin rebellion in 1755, and the rebellion of Petar Ljubojević in Croatia, in 1758. The most famous rebellion in Banal Border was that of Teodor Kijuk, in 1751.

center of the first Serbian eparchy in Croatia that was granted privileges of not paying taxes to the lords and the Bishop of Zagreb. The development of the church organization continued during Arsenije III, which was supported by the Emperor's privileges. After the death of Arsenije III (in 1706), a People's Congress was held in Krušedol, in 1708, and the monastery of Krušedol was proclaimed the Metropolitan's residence (later to be known as the "Metropolis of Krušedol"). The privileges issued on August 21, 1690 included the right of the Serbs to appoint an archbishop. The title of patriarch was repealed, and no Serbian leader in Habsburg Monarchy held it until Josif Rajačić in 1848. During his lifetime, Arsenije III appointed his successor, Stefan Metohijac - Pećanin, whose position, just as Arsenije's, was that the Serbian church in Habsburg Monarchy ought to have been autonomous within the framework of the Patriarchat of Peć. The position of the Bishop of Jenopolje, Isaija Čaković, was the opposite, and as such, supported by the Court - that is, the Serbian Church in Habsburg Monarchy ought to have been completely independent. Although Metohijac was more supported by the Serbs, he withdrew the candidacy as to preserve the unity of the people. Thus Čaković was elected at the Krušedol Congress, in the presence of the Emperor's commissioner, promising to acknowledge the precedence of the Patriarchat of Peć.²² In 1710, the Patriarch of Peć, Kalinik I, acknowledged the autonomy of the Metropolis of Krušedol. Due to the efforts of Atanasije Ljubojević, the Metropolis included the Bishopric of Gornji Karlovac. The Patriarchat of Peć had the right to confirm the chosen metropolitan, to grant honorary titles to the bishops, the right of the supreme spiritual court of justice, the right to anathemize, and to participate by suggesting the convocation of the people's and church congresses. However, the Serbian Church in Habsburg Monarchy did not depend upon Patriarchat of Peć financially.

In 1713, the Church Congress divided the eparchy of Gornji Karlovac into two parts: that of Karlovac, Senj and the Littoral, and that of Kostajnica, in order to facilitate the resistance to the Uniation. In the war of 1716-1718, the Ottomans destroyed Krušedol, and the residence of the Metropolis was transferred to Sremski Karlovci. (Since then, it has been named "the Metropolis of Karlovci").

During Habsburg occupation of Serbia 1718-1739, the Belgrade metropolis also became an autonomous unit of the Serbian Church. By Gramat of 1721, the Patriarch of Peć, Mojsije Rajović, recognized its autonomy, and after the death of Vićentije Popović, his demand was that both Metropolises be united into one. The Court was against it, but had to accept the "fait accompli" when in 1726 the people's and church congress unanimously voted the Metropolitan

²² Atanasije Ljubojević, the Bishop of Lika, was also present at this rally, although the authorities tried to prevent it, since the privileges were not granted to the Serbs in Croatia, but only to those in Hungary. The Serbs, however, had a permanent drive to be treated as one political unit, and not to be separated.

of Belgrade, Mojsije Petrovi, for the Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci.²³ Then the Metropolis of Belgrade and Karlovci was founded, to continue to these days.

The Court in Vienna tolerated religious rights of the Serbs, because they were needed as warriors. That attitude depended greatly upon the imminent danger of the war. The Court always hesitated between loyalty to the Catholic Church and the interest of the state. The Catholic Church was intolerant towards the Serbs both because of religious and financial reasons, since they refused to pay contributions to the Church. The bishops of Zagreb were continually trying to convert the Serbs, most frequently in an indirect way, through Uniation, which meant keeping the Orthodox rites while recognizing the Pope's supremacy. The "prozealytism" was especially enhanced after 1622, when *Congregatio per Propaganda Fidae* (Congregation for Religious Propaganda) was established in Rome. The conversion into Catholicism meant loss of the free status, and was considered by the Serbs as a loss of ethnic identity. In time, the difference between the Croats and the Serbs became ethnic, as it was at this time in religion, and social status. In case of the Serbs and the Croats, ethnicity was equated to religion.

From the very beginning the bishops of Marča were exposed to double pressure - that from Rome, especially from the bishops of Zagreb who tried to impose Uniation onto them, and from their people, who were severely against it. From 1609 to the second half of the eighteenth century the bishops of Marča were promoted in Peć, having jurisdiction over the Serbs in western Hungary, Baranja, Slavonia and Croatia to the littoral of Senj. The Congregation for Religious Propaganda tried to keep the Orthodox priests from Ottoman Empire away from the Habsburg territory, and to banish those who were already there. These efforts gave no results. The Orthodox priests were crossing the Habsburg lands during the whole seventeenth century. During the wars they enjoyed support from Generals of Karlovac, so that Uniation was not as successful as was expected.

The last bishop of Marča that was promoted by the Orthodox archbishop was Gavriilo Mijakić (1663-1668). The Emperor deprived him of the dignity because of the rebellion (1666) of the Great Judge Stefan Osmokruović in the Generalcy of Varaždin, who was Gavriilo's relative. Having been involved in the conspiracy of Zrinski and Frankopan in 1670,²⁴ he was taken to prison in Silesia (where he died in 1686). Since then, the second period of Marča bishopric has begun - a period of imposed Uniation. A Uniate Pavao Zorčić was assigned the post of bishop, and in 1671 he expressed loyalty to the Roman Church, and broke off relations with the Patriarchat of Peć. He was hated by the people, which caused an unsuccessful uprising. The

²³ The title of a Serbian Patriarch has been containing the title of "Metropolitan of Belgrade and Karlovci" to the present day.

Uniation was imposed by violent means. In 1715 there was an uprising against Rafailo Marković, the Uniate bishop of Marča. In 1732 the Court sent a Commission to the Generalcy of Varaždin to divide the Orthodox from the Catholics. The frontiersmen proclaimed their loyalty to the Orthodox Church, and were assigned a bishopric with a seat in monastery Lepavina. Marča was kept for the Uniates, although the Hildburgshausen commission in 1736 ascertained that Marča belonged to the Serbs. That is why the Serbs burnt the monastery in 1739, having removed the archives from it.

The Serbs were also exposed to the uniation in the Generalcy of Karlovac. From 1681 to 1688, the head of the Bosnian metropolis was Atanasije Ljubojević, a man of a great reputation among the Serbs. Due to the violence of Marko Mesić, the Catholic archdeacon for Lika and Krbava, Ljubojević had to go to Dalmatia in 1688, from where he ran his eparchy in Lika and Krbava. When these areas were re-conquered from the Ottomans in 1691, they were given to the bishop of Senj, who performed Uniation, and Atanasije was not allowed to return. In 1696 Arsenije III Čarnojević confirmed him a bishop in Banal Border and the Generalcy of Karlovac. Until his death in 1713, Ljubojević resided in the monastery of Komogovina in Banal Border, defending his congregation. In attempts to impose a Uniate bishop to Lika and the Banal Border, the War Council in Graz and the Lower-Austrian Court Chamber always sided with Catholic clergy, while *Hofkriegsrat* in Vienna defended the Serbs because they were irreplaceable in the wars against the Ottomans.

When the “War for Austrian Succession” was over in 1748, Maria Therese started to impose the uniation through the *Hofdeputation per Illyricum*. It was done secretly, as to avoid the interference of Russia, then an ally of Habsburg Monarchy.²⁵ Metropolitan Pavle Nanadović was ordered in 1753 that Orthodox clergy should not interfere in the Uniate affairs. Since the middle of the eighteenth century, and in the following twenty years, a fierce pressure continued, the entire areas were uniated, while Serbian bishops were prevented from performing canonical visitations. However, the uniation was successful only in Žumberak, due to the brutal pressure and violence of General Petazzi over Serbian clergy and people, and also due to the fact that the area was geographically isolated from other areas populated by the Serbs. The heroic resistance of Danilo Jakšić, the bishop of Gornji Karlovac, was of no avail. Even the Russian Synod

²⁴ See: Nada Klaić, *Urota zrinsko-frankopanska 1671* (The conspiracy of Zrinski and Frankopan in 1671) u: *Društvena previranja i bune u Hrvatskoj u 16. i 17. stoljeću*, (Social instability and rebellions in Croatia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries), Beograd 1976.

²⁵ The Petitions of the Croatian estates to discontinue the “schismatic bishopric” were not accepted by Maria Theresa. She turned them down for three times, on behalf of the state reason. In 1741 she refused them because of the War for the Austrian Succession, in 1751 because of the alliance with Russia, and in 1764 because of her conflict with the Hungarian estates. Maria Theresa endeavoured to resolve the problem of the Orthodox believers to the

interventions (in 1753 and 1757) on behalf of the Serbs were in vain. Therefore, the Serbs were turned towards Russia, from where they were supplied by religious service books and instructors.

The new reforms of Maria Theresa were aimed against this cultural orientation of the Serbs, trying to direct them towards German culture. The Regulation of 1770 ascertained a permanent system for controlling the life of Serbian people and the Orthodox Church in the Monarchy. The Emperor Franz II (1792-1835) was the last Austrian ruler who tried to perform Uniation. Everywhere, except in Žumberak, it ended with failure. The Serbs succeeded in preserving their cultural and spiritual unity, partly due to their economic and military importance for the Empire. The Metropolis of Karlovci, Serbian merchants and craftsmen, and the Military Border (at least by the Habsburg Serbs) played their part in forming the future Serbian nation.

V. Dalmatia under Venice Rule (untill 1797)

The Serbs in Dalmatia were the native population in the area between the Cetina and the Neretva, and further to the South. In his scripture *De administrando imperio* from the tenth century, the Byzantine emperor Constantine Porfirogenitus mentioned the Serbian tribe of Narentani (the “princedom of Pagania”), who lived in this area.²⁶ Since the beginning of the Ottoman conquests of the Serbian lands (the 14th and the 15th centuries) migrations towards Dalmatia never stopped and the number of the Serbs permanently grew. They were most frequent during the wars between Venice and the Ottoman Empire (1537-1540; 1570-1573; 1645-1649; 1683-1699; 1716-1718), but both organized and individual migrations continued in times of peace. The people from Bosnia and Herzegovina were the main population migrating to these areas, because it was difficult for them to preserve their border status, due to the border position of Bosnia and a latent state of war. The "Wallachians" were frequently turned into Ottoman *raja*, and vice versa. The number of users of the "timar" system (the lease of the fief) was immensely multiplied. Refugees from Bosnia became the rural and suburban population of Venetian Dalmatia and were called "Morlacs".²⁷

advantage of the Catholic Church and of the state, and not to the advantage of the estates, in order to perform the centralization of the state.

²⁶ See: Sima Ćirković, *Obrazovanje srpske države*, (The Creation of the Serbian State), *Istorija srpskog naroda I* (The History of the Serbs, vol.I). Beograd 1981.

²⁷ There are two interpretations of this term: “black Wallachians”, or “more vallacho”, which would mean “of the Wallachian religion”.

One of the largest immigrant waves came to Dalmatia during the long-lasting Candian War (1645-1669).²⁸ In this war the battles were fought from northern Dalmatia to the surroundings of Constantinople. The Border laid on the both sides of the frontier, so the Serbs were divided by the state border and thus made fight each other. Migrations were continuing all over this period. Venetians organized them to fill up their Border. Besides, they were also forming the *uskok* homelands (in Ravni Kotari, the Makarska Border, and Boka Kotorska). In the first half of the war the Serbs populated the areas of Zadar, Šibenik and the middle-Dalmatian islands (Brač, Hvar, Korčula), and to a lesser extent of Istria. On the islands and in Istria, shortly after that, they were turned into Croats. In the second half of the war the migrations were directed from Herzegovina to Boka. In 1684 Venice entered the war which Habsburg Monarchy made against the Ottomans after the siege of Vienna in 1683. In Venice this war was known as the Morean war. The number of the Serbs who were coming from Lika and Bosnia to the middle and northern Dalmatia was still increasing.

After this war the territory of Venetian Republic was significantly enlarged, including the whole Dalmatian land between the Zrmanja and the Cetina, with the fields of Knin, Drnić and Sinj, all to Neum (the border with the Republic of Dubrovnik). From Sutorina in the South, the Venetian territory was increasing over Herceg Novi, Risan, and Paštrovici. After the Treaty in Požarevac in 1718, the territory was widened farther then Neum, to Metković and Imotski, as well as to the area south of Boka: Grbalj, Maine, Pobori and Braiči. From the fifteenth to the eighteenth century the territory of Venetian Republic doubled.²⁹ Caused by frequent wars and hunger, the organized and spontaneous migrations continued into the eighteenth century.

All the land that was taken away from the Ottomans was proclaimed the property of the state and was given in hereditary usage of the Serbian families, monasteries and parishes, provided they paid one tenth of the annual income. It was the so-called *kolonat* system, which was of the contractual nature. In this way peasants rented their land out to the monasteries and vice versa. The climate and the soil of Dalmatia were very unfit for agriculture. There was a lack of cultivated soil, and fishing was the main occupation at the seaside. A greater part of the country was covered by marshes. At the beginning of each year³⁰ the state placed advertisements to rent out ten percent of all fruits, and the money was paid to the state treasury.³¹

²⁸ The war was fought for the island of Crete, which was the property of Venice, named "Candia". The Ottomans did not manage to take it over, and the war produced no essential changes.

²⁹ Before the Morean War, the Venetian territory in Dalmatia was called "*aquisto vecchio*", and the frontier "*linea Nani*" (after the name of a general "providur"). After 1699 the territory was enlarged to "*aquisto nuovo*" with the border "*linea Grimani*", and after 1718 it was "*aquisto novissimo*" with "*linea Mocenigo*".

³⁰ In Venice the year began on March 1.

³¹ Rebellions broke out caused by the abuses of the lease-holders. The most famous was the rebellion of Kurudža in 1704 in Bukovica, Kotari, at the littoral of Biograd.

On the territory of Venetian Dalmatia the administration system was established by the beginning of the eighteenth century. An autonomous government already existed on *acquisto vecchio*, which had been created even in the classical period. On *acquisto nuovo* a military administrative system was built, with the autonomy persistent according to the common law. The majority of the Serbs lived in that area, whereas the autonomy was discontinued because of the local rebellions. Beside the regular army in garrisons, there was a militia in Military Borders. *Kotar*, also called *krajina*. or *district*, was a territorial, military and administrative unit.³² The supreme chief of the *kotar* was *kolunel*, with hereditary power, appointed by *general providur*, who was confirmed by Venetian Senat. *Kotar* was divided into *serdarias* under the rule of *serdar* with a monthly pay. *Serdaria* was divided into villages, headed by a *harambaša*. Their duty was to head the company of *panduri*, which persecuted the villains and collected the taxes. Soldiers were sent to battlefields all over the country, such as the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714), for instance.

The position of the Serbian Orthodox Church was not favourable, neither in Venetian Republic, nor in Habsburg Monarchy. The Venetian government was never inclined towards Orthodox believers. Even before the fall of Constantinople in 1453, Orthodox services were forbidden on Venetian territory. The importance of the Serbs as defenders against the Ottomans, made Venetian government very tolerant towards their religion, especially during the wars. That is why sometimes the conflict between the Republic and Papal Curia occurred, although the Republic itself tended towards uniation. It should be said that even the Curia itself did not systematically pursue the matter of the conversion of the Serbs. It used to set its prelates see to it. In this the bishops from Zadar were especially zealous.

The monasteries of Krka, Kupa and Dragović, situated in the hinterland of Zadar and Šibenik, and built in the fourteenth century, were the center of Serbian culture in Dalmatia. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Serbs in Dalmatia were under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan of Dabar and Bosnia, the exarch of the Patriarch of Peć, who resided in the monastery of Rmanj in Lika. In Venetian Republic resided the Metropolitan of Philadelphia to whom, in 1644, the Patriarch of Constantinople acknowledged the right of exarch over all Orthodox churches on the Venetian territory. By no means this could be accepted by the Serbs, insomuch as no connection with the Patriarchat of Constantinople had existed. In the southern Adriatic littoral, there were four monasteries and the position of the Orthodox believers was better there than in the middle and northern Dalmatia. Interreligious marriages became more frequent, over which the Catholic circles used to worry very much. A difficult time for the Serbs was the beginning of the eighteenth century, when general *providur* was Justin Riva, with Vićentije Zmajević as the arch-bishop of Zadar, who was a bitter opponent of the Orthodox faith.

³² In 1735, there were ten kotars: Nin, Zadar, ostrva, Šibenik Trogir, Split, Makarska, Sinj, Imotski, and Knin.

He also had enormous authority as the Apostle's commissioner for the whole Balkans. Throughout the whole eighteenth century the Serbian bishops in Dalmatia had difficulties in gaining recognition by the Venetian authorities. Frequently their work was hindered, so they were forced to leave Dalmatia and take care of their parishes through their agents.³³ Periodically general *providurs* interceded in favour of the Serbs and opposed the pressure from the Curia. In 1720, providur Alvise Mocenigo refused to remove bishop Stefan Ljubibratić on two occasions, sending a long report to the Senat, in which he impartially described the state in Dalmatia. The Serbs always demanded an Orthodox bishop, instead of a Catholic one, asking for help in this matter from the Metropolitan of Karlovci, Stefan Stratimirović, and pleading to Russia as well. It was all in vain. After the death of Simeon Končarević in 1769, Serbian bishops were not appointed any more because of the constant opposition of the arch-bishop of Zadar, Mateo Karaman, and of the Dalmatian clergy, which lasted until the fall of the Venetian Republic.

On the territory of the Republic of Dubrovnik there was a small number of Orthodox believers. The Republic forbade the Serbs to come, since it had already been surrounded by Serbian population that would supposedly, if granted religious freedom, immigrate from Ottoman Empire in a great number. Only the monks were allowed to reside in Dubrovnik.

As far as culture was concerned, the Serbs succeeded in preserving their ethnicity in Dalmatia by opening schools in villages, cities, and near the monasteries. The schools were supported by private resources, since the authorities did not allow the lower classes to be educated, in order to prevent the coordination with Orthodox Russia. In Serbian schools both Cyrillic and Latin letters were used. There were private tutors in these schools, as well. On certain occasions those were Dositej Obradović and Sava Mrkalj, the first educated philologist among the Serbs.

VI. The Serbs in Dalmatia since the Fall of Venice until the Revolution 1797-1848

³³When in 1705 the Serbs were put under jurisdiction of a Catholic bishop, bishop Nikodim Busović was disturbed in performing his duty. Due to the people's uprising, which was caused by that, he had to go to Montenegro. Bishop Stefan Ljubibratić, under a great pressure from the archbishop of Zadar, Vićentije Zmajević, had to retreat to Lika in 1723. In 1750, Serbian bishop Simeon Končarević, who was elected at people's rally at Dalmatian Kosovo, had to retreat to Lika under the pressure of the archbishop of Zadar, Mateo Karaman; in 1757 he went to Russia, where he died. He wrote "Letopis crkvenih i gra_anskih doga_aja" (The Chronicle of the Religious and Secular Events") which is an important source for the history of the Serbs in Dalmatia.

In 1797, after the Treaty at Leoben, Venice, Istria, Dalmatia and Boka Kotorska passed to the Habsburg rule. During the "first Habsburg rule" (1797-1805), the clergy of both religions were anti-German. The Metropolitan of Karlovci, Stefan Stratimirović, went to Vienna to demand the establishment of a Serbian eparchy in Dalmatia, but did not succeed. During Napoleon's rule (1805-1813), the position of the Serbs was improved. In 1808, the new authorities acknowledged Orthodox religion in Dalmatia, and under the regent Enrico Dandolo an assembly was convoked and the organizational statute of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Dalmatia was passed. That is why, at the beginning at least, the Serbs favoured the French rule. In 1810, Napoleon assigned Benedikt Kraljević, a former Metropolitan of Sarajevo, to the post of bishop. Kraljević joined the Uniation later, and worked towards its implementation during the "second Habsburg rule" (1813-1848), acting against Serbian bishops Gerasim Zelić and Josif Rajačić. After an attempted assassination he left the country in 1821.

During the "second Habsburg rule", the Uniation was carried out until 1841, during the rule of Emperor Franz II, who was personally controlling this action, collaborating with regents General Franja Tomašić and Venclav Lilienberg. As a result of the strong resistance of the Serbian tradesmen and intellectuals, these attempts ended after 1841. Bishop Josif Rajačić (1829-1933) was responsible for improving the position of Orthodox believers in Dalmatia, by opening seminary and a religious court in Šibenik.

The Serbian upper class was significantly stronger in the nineteenth century. The school system was also improved. According to the data from 1847, there were 52 schools in Dalmatia, supported by church communes and benefactors. No sooner than 1807, Jovan Bovan, the merchant from Šibenik, founded the first Serbian public school. Djordje Nikolajević founded the school in Dubrovnik in 1830. Several Serbian schools in Šibenik were built as result of better economic conditions there. There were four types of Serbian schools: those in monasteries, in parishes, part-time, and foundation schools.³⁴

During the French rule, civil rights of the Serbs were equal to those of the Catholics for the first time. This had a positive impact on their political and religious consciousness. That is why they strongly resisted uniation later, under the Habsburg rule, and succeeded not only to survive as a community during the nineteenth century, but to create a significant class of tradesmen and intellectuals, who would play an important role in the era of national revival after 1860.

³⁴ The most important Serbian schools in Dalmatia were: Secondary school in Kotor, Nautical school in Kotor, and Serbian marine school in Herceg-Novi.