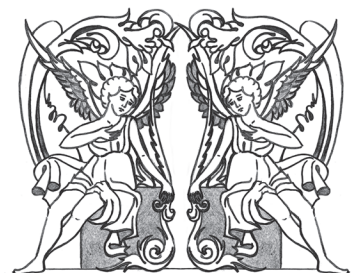


Aleksandar Krstić (Belgrade)

## *The Emergence of “Sırf Vilâyeti”: Serbian Migrations to the Territory of Banat by the Mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century and Their Results*



The migrations of the Serbian population to the area of present-day Banat from the late 14<sup>th</sup> century until the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were primarily driven by Ottoman conquests: first of the Serbian lands, and then of the Hungarian regions north of the Danube. In the years that followed the Battle of Kosovo (1389), Ottoman *akıncıs* began to make forays into the areas of Banat, wreaking havoc and taking slaves<sup>1</sup>. At the same time, migrants started to cross the Danube, seeking refuge from Ottoman attacks, raids, captivity and famine caused by the ravages of war. For instance, already in January 1400, the counts of Timiș held a meeting with the county nobility in Timișoara/Temesvár regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Б. Стојковски, *Српско-угарске везе 1389–1402*, [in:] *Кнегиња Милица – Монахиња Јевгенија и њено доба*, eds. С. Мишић, Д. Јечменица, Трстеник–Београд 2014, р. 39–51; В. Алексић, *Шумадија на српско-турско-угарској тремеђи*, [in:] *Шумадија у XV веку*, eds. С. Мишић, М. Копривица, Београд 2018, р. 33–38; Т. PÁLOSFALVI, *From Nicopolis to Mohács: A History of Ottoman-Hungarian Warfare, 1389–1526*, Leiden–Boston 2018, р. 51–55.

problems of the local population caused by the Slavs and Vlachs who, fleeing from the Turks, were settling in the area of this county<sup>2</sup>. To diminish the Ottomans' pressure on the southern borders of Hungary, King Sigismund entered into an alliance with Despot Stefan Lazarević in 1403, and starting from 1411, began to grant numerous estates to his new Serbian vassal across the kingdom. In the region of Banat, Despot Stefan received the castles of Becse/Bečej in Torontál County and Érdsomlyó (present-day Vršac) in Caraş/Krassó County with the appertaining estates<sup>3</sup>. After the death of Despot Stefan in 1427, these estates were inherited by his nephew Đurađ Branković. In addition to the despots, estates in southern Banat were also granted to some of the most distinguished Serbian nobles. Further north, Világosvár castle in Zaránd County was donated to Despot Đurađ by King Albert in 1439. A decade later, groups of Serbs were already settled in the area of Világosvár/Şiria<sup>4</sup>.

Free movement over the Danube and Sava border and regular trade links made it easier to get familiar with Hungarian lands and facilitated the migration of the Serbian population, who were fleeing from the Ottomans. Although some Slavic toponyms and hydronyms in the Banat area can be found earlier, the documents from the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century record for the first time a number of settlements with Slavic or Slavicised names in this region, mainly owned by Hungarian noblemen<sup>5</sup>. The Serbs were concentrated in large numbers around the fortresses along the Danube, such as Tornište (near Pančevo), Kovin/Keve and Haram (present-day Banatska Palanka) during the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. At the time of the first fall of the Serbian state under Ottoman rule in 1439, a great number of refugees moved from Serbia to Hungary, while those who had earlier settled in the Danube region moved further north, fleeing the Ottoman assaults. The inhabitants of Kovin thus founded the new settlement of Ráckeve on the

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<sup>2</sup> Zsigmondkori oklevéltár, vol. II.1, ed. E. MÁLYUSZ, Budapest 1956, p. 4; E. SZASZKÓ, *From Bestowal to Betrayal. The Military and Political Roles of Nicolas Csáki and Nicolas Marcali between 1399 and 1401*, [in:] *Politics and society in Central and South-East Europe: life under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire's expansion (15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, ed. Z. КОРЕЦЗНЫ, Cluj-Napoca 2021, p. 71–72.

<sup>3</sup> J. КАЛИЊ, *Немирно доба*, [in:] *Историја српског народа*, vol. II, ed. J. КАЛИЊ, Београд 1982, p. 74, 85–87; A. KRSTIĆ, *Familiars of the Serbian despots in and from the territory of Banat (1411–1458)*, [in:] *Politics and Society in the Central and South-Eastern Europe (13<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, ed. Z. IUSZTIN, Cluj-Napoca 2019, p. 94–95.

<sup>4</sup> A. KRSTIĆ, 'Which Realm Will You Opt for?' – *the Serbian Nobility between the Ottomans and the Hungarians in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century*, [in:] *State and Society in the Balkans before and after Establishment of Ottoman Rule*, eds. S. RUDIĆ, S. ASLANTAŞ, Belgrade 2017, p. 135–136.

<sup>5</sup> F. PESTY, *Krassó vármegye története*, vol. III, Budapest 1882, p. 287, 317–318, 321, 340–342; D. CSÁNKI, *Magyarország történelmi földrajza a Hunyadiak korában*, vol. II, Budapest 1894, p. 112.

Csepel Island on the Danube, downstream from Buda<sup>6</sup>. Refugees from the areas around Haram and Tornište could be seen in those years in Alpár and neighboring settlements in the counties of Csongrád and Outer Szolnok, on the estates of the Garamszentbenedek abbey<sup>7</sup>.

After the fall of the Serbian state under Ottoman rule in 1458/1459, *akıncı* raids from the Smederevo and Vidin Sanjaks to southern Hungary became frequent. Their incursions occasionally reached Timișoara and Oradea/Nagyvárad. They caused great devastation, migrations and depopulation<sup>8</sup>. Both powers used a strategy of depopulating of the enemy's and recolonizing of own territories. The Ottoman attacks were followed by Hungarian retaliations in Ottoman borderline territories, of which the campaigns of 1480 and 1481 were the most important with respect to demographic and ethnic changes in Banat. In 1480, during the incursions of the royal armies into northern Serbia and Bosnia, large Serbian populations – allegedly as many as 60,000 persons – were transferred to Hungary. During the following autumn, the army, led again by the captain of the Lower Parts Paul Kinizsi, penetrated up to Kruševac, taking around 50,000 persons to Hungary. Serbian exiles arrived in Timișoara, wherefrom they scattered around scarcely populated Banat and the Mureș/Maros region<sup>9</sup>. Kinizsi entered Serbia with his army in 1494 as well, when he again took the local Serbian population with him to Timișoara. The Serbs who were transferred across the Danube were settled, as

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<sup>6</sup> *Ráckevei okmánytár. Oklevelek és iratok (15–17. század)*, ed. A. MISKEI, Ráckeve 2015, p. 29–31, 81–84; М. СПРЕМИЋ, *Први пад Деспотовине*, [in:] *Историја српског...*, vol. II, p. 246–249; С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Сеобе српског народа у Краљевину Угарску у XIV и XV веку*, [in:] *Сеобе српског народа од XIV до XX века. Зборник радова посвећен тристагодишњици велике сеобе Срба*, Београд 1990, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, "Rasciani regales" Владислава I Јагелонца, "Зборник Марице српске за историју" 1, 1970, p. 79–82; А. КРСТИЋ, *Из историје средњовековних насеља Југозападног Баната (15. век – прва половина 16. века)*, "Зборник Марице српске за историју" 73, 2006, p. 39–44.

<sup>8</sup> О. ЗИРОЈЕВИЋ, *Турско војно уређење у Србији (1459–1683)*, Београд 1974, p. 65–87; Т. RÁLOSFALVI, *From Nicopolis to Mohács...*, p. 199–277; О. J. SCHMITT, М. КИРОВСКА, *Ottoman Raiders (Akıncıs) as a Driving Force of Early Ottoman Conquest of the Balkans and the Slavery-Based Economy*, "Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient" 65, 2022, p. 526–535, 554–559.

<sup>9</sup> V. ФРАКНОЉИ, *Matyás király levelei...*, vol. II, Budapest 1895, p. 158, 185, 190, 195–197; Ј. КАЛИЋ-МИЈУШКОВИЋ, *Београд у средњем веку*, Београд 1967, p. 198–199; М. СПРЕМИЋ, *Српски деспоти у Срему*, [in:] *Срем кроз векове: слојеви култура Фрушке горе и Срема*, ed. М. МАТИЦКИ, Београд–Беоцин 2007, p. 52; М. IVANOVIĆ, N. ISAILOVIĆ, *The Danube in Serbian-Hungarian relations in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries*, "Tibiscum" 5, 2015, p. 386–387. S. Ćirković noted that these figures are certainly exaggerated as he compared them with data on the population density in northern Serbia provided by the Ottoman defters, cf. С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Српска властела у борби за обнову Деспотовине*, [in:] *Историја српског...*, vol. II, p. 386–387.

before, in the Hungarian territory<sup>10</sup>. In 1502, the royal army once again transferred numerous Christians to Hungary from the Ottoman territory south of the Danube. They were settled in the area of Banat, between Timișoara and Belgrade<sup>11</sup>.

These mass and forced migrations were accompanied with an incessant and less noticeable process of individual migrations of the Serbian population to the territory of Hungary. Serbian exiles belonged to all social strata: they included members of the Branković dynasty and the old higher nobility (the Jakšićs, Miloš Belmužević), numerous members of the Serbian petty nobility and the new Christian elite engaged in the Ottoman military service, citizens and peasants. Serbian noblemen, as well as ordinary people, entered the royal service, and in return received possessions in Hungary or fought for a salary as soldiers and crew of the river flotilla (*nazadistae*, *šajkaši*)<sup>12</sup>. Over several decades, the attacks of the Ottoman *akıncı* forces on Banat and other areas of southern Hungary were led by Mihaloğlu Ali Bey and other border commanders. They were opposed by royal units, where Serbian soldiers also played a significant role, led by Despot Vuk Grgurević Branković and members of the Jakšić family<sup>13</sup>.

In the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbs in Banat were grouped mainly along the Danube, near the border, around Timișoara<sup>14</sup>, and along the Mureș, where there were significant parts of the Jakšićs' and Belmuževićs' estates. In

<sup>10</sup> A. BONFINIS, *Rerum Ungaricarum decades*, eds. I. FÓGEL, B. IVÁNYI, L. JUHÁSZ, vol. IV, Budapest 1941, p. 245–247; J. КАЛИЋ-МИЈУШКОВИЋ, *Београд...*, p. 209–210; А. КРСТИЋ, *Банат у средњем веку*, [in:] *Банат кроз векове: слојеви култура Баната*, eds. М. МАТИЦКИ, В. ЈОВИЋ, Београд 2010, p. 84.

<sup>11</sup> N. ISTVÁNFY, *Regni Hungarici historia*, Coloniae Agrippinae 1685, p. 32; А. ИВИЋ, *Историја Срба у Војводини од најстаријих времена до оснивања потиско-поморишке границе (1703)*, Нови Сад 1929, p. 44–45; С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Последњи Бранковићи*, [in:] *Историја српског...*, vol. II, p. 460; А. КРСТИЋ, *Банат...*, p. 84–85.

<sup>12</sup> J. КАЛИЋ, *Дунав у ратовима XV века*, [in:] *Пловидба на Дунаву и његовим притокама кроз векове*, ed. В. ЧУБРИЛОВИЋ, Београд 1983, p. 120–126; С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Последњи Бранковићи*, p. 431–435, 451–452, 458–460; IDEM, *Сеобе...*, p. 43–46; А. МАГИНА, *Le long voyage vers la terre promise: les migrations serbes en Banat (XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècles)* [in:] *Between Worlds: The age of Jagellonians*, eds. F. N. ARDELEAN, C. NICHOLSON, J. PREISER-KAPPELLER, Frankfurt am Main 2013, p. 133–135; А. КРСТИЋ, *Which Realm...*, p. 135–138; А. КРСТИЋ, А. МАГИНА, *The Belmužević family: the fate of a noble family in South East Europe during the turbulent period of the Ottoman conquest (the 15<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, “Revue des études sud-est européennes” 59, 2021, p. 109–114.

<sup>13</sup> С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Српска властела...*, p. 384–388; М. СПРЕМИЋ, *Породица Јакшић у Банату*, [in:] *Банат кроз векове: слојеви култура Баната*, eds. М. МАТИЦКИ, В. ЈОВИЋ, Београд 2010, p. 34–41; T. PÁLÓSFALVI, *From Nicopolis to Mohács...*, p. 35, 226–228, 250–260, 267–277.

<sup>14</sup> А. МАГИНА, *Acta et Documenta partes Regni Hungariae inferiores concernentia 1500–1552. Acte și Documente privitoare la părțile de jos ale Regatului Ungar 1500–1552*, Cluj-Napoca 2020, p. 116–122; IDEM, *Le long voyage...*, p. 137.

this regard, the case of Fellak (present-day Felnac) in Arad County is illustrative. When King Matthias donated Fellak to Stefan and Dmitar Jakšić in 1478, it was an uninhabited place (*predium*). The Jakšić brothers immediately started to populate Fellak and already in 1491 it was the settlement “populorum et habitatorum multitudine decoretur”. During the subsequent decades, Fellak became a market town (*oppidum*) with a weekly market and two annual fairs. The Jakšićs also built a castle in Fellak. After the Ottoman occupation, Felnac became the nahiye center and, as it can be seen from the first defters, it was inhabited by the Serbs<sup>15</sup>. However, numerous Serbian peasants also lived in the estates of Hungarian noblemen in this area<sup>16</sup>.

In the last decades of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and during the first decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a number of Slavic toponyms appeared in the area along the Begej/Bega River and its tributaries, around Reçaş, Ictar, Târgovişte and Mănaştior, such as Târgovişte itself (medieval Csikóvásárhely), than Topolovac, Hrabrovac, Vokšinac, Lukarovac, Slavinac, Dragotinac, Rakovac, Toplica, Suhodol, Tihomirovac, etc.<sup>17</sup> The process of immigration of the Serbs to this area continued afterwards, which is indicated by a further change in toponymy. In the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, some earlier Hungarian settlement names were recorded in Slavicized forms: Jacabfalva – Jakobovac; Királykuta – Kraljevac; Zalosfalva – Sladojevica; Bokorfalva – Bokorovac; Maysafalva – Mošnica; Balazsfalva – Blažovac.<sup>18</sup>

During the turbulent years that followed the Battle of Mohács in 1526, replete with the struggles between Ferdinand I of Habsburg and John I Szapolyai, the Serbs played a significant role in the Hungarian Kingdom. In 1526 and 1527, the movement of “czar” Jovan Nenad spread quickly from the Mureş region through Banat up to the Danube. However, it seems that the majority of Serbs in Banat areas crossed over to Szapolyai’s side after the murder of their self-proclaimed emperor<sup>19</sup>. At the time of preparations for the campaign to Buda after the death of King

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<sup>15</sup> L. MAGINA, *Dreptul de târg și procesul de urbanizare. Cazul Felnac*, “Analele Banatului” 18, 2010, p. 143–148.

<sup>16</sup> A. MAGINA, *Acta et Documenta...*, p. 28–30. For the numerous Slavic toponyms around Şoimuş and Lipova in 1510, see C. FENEŞAN, *Diplomatarium Banaticum*, Cluj-Napoca 2016, vol. I, p. 271–272.

<sup>17</sup> I. BORSA, *A Justh család levéltára 1274–1525*, Budapest 1991, p. 254, 264; F. PESTY, *Krassó...*, vol. III, p. 427, 430, 487, 494; J. PATAKI, *Domeniul Hunedoara la începutul secolului al XVI-lea. Studii și documente*, Bucureşti 1973, p. 292–293; D. CSÁNKI, *Magyarország...*, vol. II, p. 12, 25, 29, 39, 88.

<sup>18</sup> A. MAGINA, *Acta et Documenta...*, p. 232–233; İstanbul, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, *Tapu tahrir defterleri* [= BOA, TD] no. 290, p. 146–163, 215–232; P. ENGEL, *A Temesvári és Moldovai szandzsák törökkori települései (1554–1579)*, Szeged 1996, p. 175–177, *passim*. See the previous note.

<sup>19</sup> Б. СТОЈКОВСКИ, *Цар Јован Ненад: живот, дело и наслеђе Црног Човека*, Будимпешта 2018, p. 43–150.

John Szapolyai in 1541, an Ottoman document was compiled describing the situation in Hungary. It states that the area of present-day Banat was “the true Serbian region” (*asil Sırf vilâyetidir*), a shelter for fugitives from the Smederevo and Srem Sanjaks, from which the “infidels” were constantly making incursions into the Ottoman territory across the Tisza and Danube. This is why the conquest of Banat areas was recommended<sup>20</sup>. The aforementioned formulation from the Ottoman document corresponds to the inscription *Ratzenland/Rasciani* in the area between the Banat Mountains and the Danube on Wolfgang Lazius’s map of Hungary from 1556, which also testifies to the dominant Serbian presence in the area of southern Banat in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>21</sup>.

Over the following decade, Banat remained in the state of Szapolyai’s widow Queen Isabella, under the rule of the captain general of Lower Parts Petar Petrović. The efforts of the Habsburg court to place Transylvania under its control and conflicts between Archbishop George Martinuzzi and Petrović brought about the Ottoman conquest of Banat in 1551/1552<sup>22</sup>. The Serbs in Banat and their military importance in Szapolyai’s state, particularly in this period, when Petar Petrović greatly relied on Serbian soldiers, attracted significant attention of earlier researchers. These researchers shed light on the personalities and careers of some of the most important Serbs in Banat and the Mureş region between 1526 and 1552, such as Radič Božić, Nikola Crepović, Stefan Balentić, Petar and Dimitrije Ovčarević and others<sup>23</sup>. In autumn 1551, Serbian soldiers engaged in the Hungarian military service turned to the Ottomans and the beylerbey of Rumelia Sokol-

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<sup>20</sup> P. FODOR, *Ottoman Policy towards Hungary 1520–1541*, “Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae” 45.2–3, 1991, p. 315–316, 321; O. КРЕШИЋ, *Петровићев санџак*, “Историјски часопис” 61, 2012, p. 131.

<sup>21</sup> W. LAZIUS, *Karte des Königreichs Ungarn 1556. Regni Hungariae Descriptio Vera*, Vienne 1556. Such inscriptions appeared later on several other maps from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> and from the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries – A. КРСТИЋ, *Историја једне картографске заблуде – Ериомљо (Вришац) на старим географским картама*, “Историјски часопис” 69, 2020, p. 163 sqq.

<sup>22</sup> G. BARTA, *The Emergence of the Principality and its First Crises (1526–1606)*, [in:] *History of Transylvania*, Budapest 1994, p. 252–258; A. PAPO, G. NEMETH PAPO, *Frate Giorgio Martinuzzi. Cardinale, soldato e statista dalmata agli albori del Principato di Transilvania*, Roma 2017, p. 111–190; S. VARGA, *Péter Petrovics (1487–1557) in the Service of Queen Isabella*, [in:] *Isabella Jagiellon, Queen of Hungary (1539–1559)*, *Studies*, eds. Á. MÁTÉ, T. OVBORNI, Budapest 2020, p. 332–345.

<sup>23</sup> A. ИВИЋ, *Историја...*, p. 83–177; Н. ЛЕМАЈИЋ, *Српска елита на прелому епоха, Сремска Митровица–Источно Сарајево 2006*, p. 91–99; ИДЕМ, *Српско становништво Баната и Поморишја у XV и XVI веку (и њихови прваци и старешине)*, [in:] *Средњовековна насеља на тлу Војводине, историјски догађаји и процеси*, ed. Ђ. ХАРДИ, Сремска Митровица 2013, p. 12–19; S. IAŞIN, *Familii nobiliare sârbeşti din Banat în secolele al XV-lea şi al XVI-lea*, Cluj-Napoca 2015, p. 194–201.

lu Mehmed Pasha, dissatisfied with the treatment of King Ferdinand's governor, Cardinal Martinuzzi<sup>24</sup>. King Ferdinand did not manage to maintain the support of the Serbs in Banat, not even with the confirmations of all the privileges and rights of Serbian noblemen, communities and the entire Serbian people living "around the Timișoara fortress and in those areas", issued in Vienna on 19 July and 31 August 1551<sup>25</sup>. In the instruction given to his commissioners sent to Transylvania on 1 June 1551, the king drew special attention to the Serbs who lived mixed with the Hungarians and Romanians around the fortresses of Timișoara, Lugoj, Caransebeș, Recaș and Sâlha, as well as to those Serbs around the fortresses of Lipova, Șoimuș, Becej and Bečkerek<sup>26</sup>.

Some other sources also illuminate the significant Serbian presence in the area of Lipova during that period. The town seemed to be the center of the Orthodox ecclesiastical organization in Banat, since a house of a Serbian bishop of Lipova (*domus episcopii Rascianorum*) and Paul "presbiterus Rascianorum" are noted down in 1542, as well as the priest named Živko in 1539<sup>27</sup>. After the Ottoman conquest, Metropolitan Nestor was recorded in the first fiscal register of Lipova in 1554, while this *varoș* and the neighboring Radna were predominantly inhabited by the Serbian population<sup>28</sup>.

Soon after they conquered flatland parts of Banat and the Mureș region in 1552, the Ottomans conducted a census of the seized territory. The first Ottoman defter of the Timișoara Sanjak, which was completed in 1554<sup>29</sup>, is highly important for the analysis of the ethnic, demographic, ecclesiastical and economic structure, and the network of settlements in the Banat area at the start of the Ottoman rule. However, this defter not only contains data on this territory at the time, but also gives an insight into the situation in the same area on the eve of the Ottoman conquest. As our space is limited, we shall focus here only on the environs of Vrșac, i.e. a present-day borderline area which partly belongs to Serbia and partly

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<sup>24</sup> А. ИВИЋ, *Историја...*, p. 164–166, 411–412; Р. САМАРЦИЋ, *Турско освајање Баната (1551–1552)*, [in:] *Историја српског...*, vol. III.1, ed. Р. САМАРЦИЋ, Београд 1993, p. 176–187; А. РАРО, G. НЕМЕТН РАРО, *Frate Giorgio...*, p. 204–216.

<sup>25</sup> С. FENEȘAN, *Diplomatarium Banaticum...*, vol. I, p. 339–342.

<sup>26</sup> А. ИВИЋ, *Историја...*, p. 410; А. МАГИНА, *Le long voyage...*, p. 139.

<sup>27</sup> А. МАГИНА, *Documentele autorităților urbane din Lipova (1455–1548)*, "Banatica" 23, 2013, p. 612–614; IDEM, *The city and the church. Religious life in Lipova, the 14<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries*, [in:] *Common Man, Society and Religion in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Piety, morality and discipline in the Carpathian Basin*, ed. U. A WIEN, Göttingen 2021, p. 257.

<sup>28</sup> P. FODOR, *Lippa és Radna városok a 16. századi török adóösszeírásokban*, "Történelmi Szemle" 39, 1997, p. 319–322.

<sup>29</sup> BOA, TD 290. I thank my colleague Srđan Katić who enabled me to use the data from this defter.

to Romania. This territory belonged to the medieval Hungarian county of Caraş/Krassó, and in the early second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was part of the Ottoman nahiyes of Şemlik and Boğça (Bocşa). The sources about the Serbs and Serbian migrations to this area during the late Middle Ages are even scarcer compared to some other Banat counties (Timiş, Kovin, Arad).

At the time of the first Ottoman census of 1554 (unlike the later period)<sup>30</sup>, the Şemlik nahije, later called the Vršac nahije, was not defined in geographical terms. The eponymous *varoş* (medieval Érdsonlyó, present-day Vršac) was recorded in this nahije at the time, as well as 32 villages, which stretched from the banks of the Brzava River in the north, through the rims of the Veliki Vršački morass and Alibunar marsh in the north-west and west, to the Danube banks in the south. At the time, in the east and south-east, the Şemlik nahije also included several villages on the slopes of the Banat Mountains, though numerous settlements in the immediate vicinity of Vršac were part of the Boğça nahije<sup>31</sup>.

**Table 1.** Settlements of the Şemlik Nahije (1554)

Settlement	Medieval name	Taxable homes	Heads of households	Unmarried	Widows	Income in akçes
Şemlik	Ér(d)sonlyó	50	88	13	/	10000
Grebenac	Gerebenc	18	27	15	/	4070
Oča	Acs (Ocs)	12	20	6	/	3510
Vračev Gaj	Aracs	11	13	9	/	1700
Donja Vrela		11	12	5	1	2548
Gornja Vrela		5	6	4	1	1170
Vlatkovac/ Vladikovac	Szentlászló	3	4	1	/	730

<sup>30</sup> Cf. the maps in P. ENGEL, *A Temesvári és Moldovai szandzsák*, where nahije borders were drawn based on data of the later defters (1569, 1579), and T. HALASI-KUN, *Krassó county, and the Ottoman Nahiyes Boğça, Kırşova-Bıtlınlık, and Şemlit'. I: Boğça Nahiyesi*, "Archivum Ottomanicum" 10, 1985 [1987], p. 130–132; IDEM, *Krassó county, and the Ottoman Nahiyes Boğça, Kırşova-Bıtlınlık, and Şemlit'. II: Kırşova-Bıtlınlık Nahiyesi*, "Archivum Ottomanicum" 11, 1986 [1988], p. 129–131.

<sup>31</sup> BOA, TD 290, p. 320–370; A. КРСТИЋ, *Између брега и рута: Ер(д)шомљо – Вршац у средњем веку*, Београд 2019, p. 137–140, with the map. For the ubications of these toponyms, see also P. ENGEL, *A Temesvári és Moldovai szandzsák...*, p. 21–154.



*The Emergence of "Sırf Vilâyeti": Serbian Migrations to the Territory of Banat...*

Settlement	Medieval name	Taxable homes	Heads of households	Unmarried	Widows	Income in akçes
Dugi Potok (Bordogi/ Bordiski? Potok)		17	18	13	/	1800
Visokovac Potok		10	11	2	/	1200
Kameno Grobište		24	30	25	/	6170
Izvar	Izvor, Izvár, Vízvár	14	27	/	/	3000
Segedinac		10	10	6	/	1680
Mali Sokolovac		10	11	5	/	2130
Obla Crkva (Değirmi Kilise)		6	6	1	/	1800
Gornje Uzince/ Ozdinac?		6	6	4	/	1280
Bela Crkva	Fejéregyház	4	6	3	/	2420
Kusić	Kusák	18	24	11	2	2600
Sokolovac		22	32	20	/	5120
Crvena Crkva		6	6	2	/	1500
Hisarlik		30	32	17	1	7150
Levrinac	Lőrincfalva	7	9	2	/	1050
Vojvodinci	Vajdafalva	36	40	38	4	?
Šimon Đurka	Szent Margita	7	12	/	/	1350
Morminta		5	6	/	/	800
Kalvaš		8	8	2	/	5125
Vatin	Vát	4	11	4	/	1910
Firić (Stepkino Selište)	Stepkfalva	3	3	/	/	850
Šam	Sama	12	13	6	/	2772
Čam		4	5	/	/	420
Gornji Keveriš		1	1	1	/	198
Velika Škula	Oszkola	3	3	2	/	515
Dubovac	Dombó	5	5	4	/	?
Total		382	505	221	9	76568

**Table 2.** Villages in the Environs of Vršac which Belonged to the Boğça Nahiye (1554)

Settlement	Medieval name	Taxable homes	Heads of households	Unmarried	Widows	Income in akçes
Kutrec	Kutres, Kutrec	5	12	5	/	1350
Donje Središte	Szerdahely	30	40	3	/	5100
Donji Keveriš		7	7	3	/	1918
Grobište		3	3	1	/	1957
Uljma		8	10	2	/	2500
Ritišor		20	28	13	/	4500
Vlajkovac		11	13	/	/	2990
Jenova	Jenő	15	22	15		5102
Zagajica		4	4	3	/	1022
Subotica	Szombathely, Szobotica	7	7	6	/	2450
Potporanj		8	8	6	/	1830
Omor		5	6	4	/	3500
Vran[i]	Varány	33	35	30	5	18000
Varadia	Varadia	58	65	38	/	13058
Parta		8	9	4	1	2100
Donje Uzince / Ozdinac?		14	14	2	/	2820
Dupljaja	Duplaj	18	18	9	/	4950
Jasenovo		9	14	10	/	2315
Orešac		16	19	3	/	1917
Jabuka	Jabolnok	?	?	?	?	?
<b>Total</b>		279	334	157	6	79379

While a considerable portion of medieval settlements in the area of Caraş County has not been ubicated until today, Ottoman defters from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century contain many toponyms, to a large extent Slavic, which do not appear in medieval sources. As seen in the above tables, the same is true for the area of Vršac. Major demographic and ethnic transformations in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries brought about a significant change in the toponymy in that area, and all traces were lost for many settlements, or they continued to live under new names and with the new population.

The anthroponymy recorded in the defters of the Timișoara Sanjak from 1554 shows that the Serbian population was dominant in the area of south-western, flatland Banat, as well as in the area of Vrșac. As in other parts of Banat in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Serbian anthroponymy in the area of Vrșac featured mainly vernacular, primarily Slavic, and to a lesser extent Christian names<sup>32</sup>. At the time, the Serbs constituted almost the entire Christian population of the Șemlik varoș, i.e. Vrșac. The defter of 1554 records 88 heads of households and 13 unmarried, their relatives<sup>33</sup>. The Serbs were the only or by far the most numerous populations in all settlements belonging to the Șemlik nahiye at the time, apart from Vojvodinci, where the population was mixed (Serbian and Romanian, with a small number of Hungarians). The Serbs were also the dominant population in the settlements of the Boğça nahiye, which were in close proximity to Vrșac. In the villages of Kutrec (present-day Gudurica) and Subotinci (Banatska Subotica), the population was mixed, while the Romanians and a small number of Hungarians lived in the villages of Vărădia and Vran<sup>34</sup>. It is notable that these very settlements were the largest in the Vrșac area. Vărădia had somewhat more inhabitants even than Șemlik, which was, admittedly, one of the smaller urban settlements in the area of Banat in the early second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>35</sup>. Several other village settlements in the Boğça nahiye were larger than Șemlik in that period, particularly

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<sup>32</sup> For instance: Blagoje, Bogavac, Bogdan, Božidar, Bojić, Dabiživ, David, Damjan, Dimitar, Dimitrije, Dimitrašin, Dobrica, Dobromir, Dobrosav, Dojčin, Dragan, Dragaš, Dragiša, Dragić, Dragoje, Dragojlo, Dragomir, Dujko, Duša, Đurađ, Đura, Đurašin, Đurko, Gvozden, Grba, Grgur, Gruban, Grubač, Herak, Hlapen, Hran, Ivaniš, Ilija, Janko, Jovan, Jovašin, Kováč, Kraguj, Kuzma, Lazar, Ljubiša, Manojlo, Marko, Matej, Matijaš, Mikloš, Mijak, Miladin, Milić, Milko, Milovan, Milosav, Mitar, Mihal, Mihail, Nedeljko, Nestor, Nikola, Novak, Ognjen, Pava, Pavel, Pa(v)un, Pejo, Petar, Petko, Prodan, Radivoj, Radič, Radman, Rado, Radoje, Radovan, Radojica, Radonja, Radomir, Radosav, Radul, Rajin, Rajič, Raka, Ratko, Rusmir, Selak, Slavuj, Stanislav, Stepan, Stoja, Stojan, Stojko, Subota, Todor, Velihna, Vojin, Vujin, Vujić, Vujica, Vuk, Vukas, Vukac, Vukić, Vukdrag, Vukašin, Vukman, Vukmir, Vukoje, Vukosav, Vuksan, Vukan, Živko. Female names are incomparably rarer, as only widows were entered in the defter, for instance: Jovana, Marta, Marina, Draginja, Stojisava, Ilika, Kata, Đurka – BOA, TD 290, p. 320–370.

<sup>33</sup> Only three of them have Hungarian names – BOA, TD 290, p. 368–369; A. КРСТИЋ, *Између брега и пума...*, p. 144–145.

<sup>34</sup> On the methodological problems of using the defters for studying the ethnic structure of settlements in the Sanjak of Timișoara cf. K. HEGYI, *A török hódoltság várai és várkatonasága*, vol. I, Budapest 2007, p. 337–339.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, of the neighbouring *varoșes*, Gătaia and Bocșa (medieval Kövesd) had three times more households than Șemlik, while Denta and Ilidia were approximately double the size of Șemlik in terms of the number of households. When it comes to *varoșes* mainly inhabited by the Serbs, Pančevo, with 249 households, was two and a half times larger than Șemlik, while Kovin was half the size (42 households and 18 unmarried men) – BOA, TD 290, p. 277–279, 289.

those where mainly the previous population remained, such as Ciclova, Ticvaniu and Răcășdia<sup>36</sup>. This implies that the settlement of the Serbian population in southern Banat, in the decades and years that preceded the first Ottoman census, still could not sufficiently compensate for the negative demographic effects caused by the fleeing previous population.

The individuals with the designation “doselac” (newcomer) are seen not only in mixed, but also in purely Serbian villages, which means that the majority of the Serbs were present in the observed area for some time before the 1554 census. “Doselci” were certainly those people who had recently settled in those villages, unlike the majority of locals. According to Srđan Katić, the widespread use of surnames ending in “-ić” indicates the presence of the Serbian population in Banat back from the time of the Hungarian Kingdom. Namely, the Serbs arriving to Banat from southern Serbian areas during the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century used – instead of their surname – the name of the father, occupation, nickname derived from the place of origin or physical characteristic, class or ethnicity<sup>37</sup>.

In addition to two Christian sipahis who were Serbs, in 1554 there were also fifteen Serbian hussars in the Ottoman military service in the Şemlik *varoş*. Some Serbian hussars also lived in the surrounding settlements (in Oča, Vračev Gaj, Vatin, Šam and Jenova, one each; in Krstur, two, in Kusić and Donje Središte, three). According to the kanun for the Timișoara Sanjak from 1554, hussars in Banat – who were in Hungarian service “at the time of kings János and Petrović” – were exempted from taxes and other levies. In return, they were obliged to capture haiduks and collect taxes in peacetime, and to take part in campaigns in sanjak-bey’s army in wartime. According to the same kanun, each nahiye should have its *knez*, and each village its *primićur*. They were in charge of collecting taxes, guarding villages and roads from haiduks and settling the deserted settlements. They also had to participate in military campaigns. Moreover, their status originated from the time of King John and Peter Petrović<sup>38</sup>.

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<sup>36</sup> BOA, TD 290, p. 318–320, 321–324, 340–342.

<sup>37</sup> С. КАТИЋ, *Кнежевачко Потисје под турском влашћу*, [in:] *Историја Новог Кнежевца и околине*, ed. В. КРЕСТИЋ, Нови Кнежевац 2003, p. 153. I shall note some Serbian surnames in the area of Şemlik and its environs in the early second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for instance: Belosalić, Belošević, Bojić, Crnojević, Dobrosalić, Dragić, Dujjić, Dujković, Jovović, Kovačević, Lalinović/Lalatović, Lučić, Marković, Milanić, Milčević, Milić, Milojević, Milasović, Milošević, Mirković, Mihalić, Mihaljević, Nikolić, Pavlović, Panić, Petrović, Radević, Radić, Radović, Radenić, Radonjić, Radičević, Radosalić, Ranković/Rajković, Rašić, Sajić, Skrušević, Vladisalić, Vujović, Vuković, Vukotić, Vučihnić – BOA, TD 290, p. 320–370.

<sup>38</sup> In 1554, a total of 15 Christian sipahis, 25 knezes and 17 primićurs were registered in the entire sanjak – BOA, TD 290, p. 7–8, 327, 332, 357, 358, 362, 367, 368–369; A. AKGÜNDÜZ, *Osmanlı*

In the Şemlik nahiye, three Orthodox priests were recorded in 1554 in the eponymous *varoş* and in the villages of Grebenac, Dugi Potok, Crvena Crkva, Hisarlik and Dubova, one each. In the Boğça nahiye, as regards the villages in the wider environs of Vršac, priests were recorded in the villages of Donje Središte, Uljma, Ritišor, Orešac, Omor, Vran and Krstur. Two of them lived in Jenova, and a priest's son called Herak stayed in Donji Uzinac. One monk each was recorded in Grebenac and Donji Keveriš. It is interesting that some priests had Christian names (Sava, Jovan, Nikola) while others bore Slavic and vernacular names (Radič, Vuk, Vujica, Golobrad, Pejo, Petko, Novak, Sojka), as well as two monks (Radivoj, Đura)<sup>39</sup>.

The second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century was shaped by the efforts of the Ottoman authorities to repopulate the newly conquered areas, as well as by the spontaneous migration of the Serb population from the sanjaks of Smederevo, Kruševac, Zvornik and Vidin to the Eyalet of Timișoara owing to more favourable living conditions in the Pannonian Plain. At one moment, after the formation of the new Sanjak of Gyula in 1566, migration flows across the Danube became so intense that there was a threat of serious depopulation in the sanjaks in the Balkan Peninsula. This is why the Ottoman central authorities undertook measures to forbid the rayah's relocation to the sanjaks of Pannonia<sup>40</sup>. As a result of such ethnic movements, towards the end of the 1570s, the Serbs in the central and southern parts of present-day Serbian Banat, which belonged to the Sanjaks of Timișoara and Cenad, constituted almost 90% of the population. To the east of Cenad, a wide range of Serbian villages lined the southern and northern banks of the Mureș<sup>41</sup>. The significant presence of the Serbs in the areas of Banat, including their engagement in the Ottoman military service, played a major role during the uprising in 1594. Although the uprising in Banat was quelled in blood, the Serbs took part

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*Kapinnâmeleri ve Hukuki Tahlilleri*, vol. VII, İstanbul 1994, p. 134–135; Б. ЂУРЂЕВ, А. ЛЕБЛ, *Срем, Бачка и Банат*, [in:] *Историја народа Југославије*, vol. II, Београд 1960, p. 184; С. КАТИЋ, *Кнежевачко Потисје...*, p. 146; К. НЕГУЉ, *A török hódoltság...*, vol. I, p. 342–344; А. КРСТИЋ, *Између брега и рита...*, p. 147.

<sup>39</sup> BOA, TD 290, p. 322, 327, 329, 330, 342, 339, 350, 351, 357, 359, 364, 366, 368–369.

<sup>40</sup> С. КАТИЋ, *Кнежевачко Потисје...*, p. 150–151; Z. IUSZTIN, *Testimonies about Mobility in the Beckserek Nahije in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century*, [in:] *Politics and society in Central and South-East Europe: life under the shadow of the Ottoman Empire's expansion (15<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries)*, ed. Z. КОРЕЦЗНЫ, Cluj-Napoca 2021, p. 41–42; the book of CR. FENEȘAN, *Vilayetul Timișoara 1552–1716*, Timișoara 2014, is not available to me.

<sup>41</sup> Gy. KALDY-NAGY, *A Csanádi szandzsák 1567. és 1579. évi összeírása*, Szeged 2000, p. 15–269; А. ПАЧА, *Срби и Мађари у Чанадском санџаку у другој половини 16. века*, [in:] *Српско-мађарски односи кроз историју*, ed. З. ЂЕРЕ, Нови Сад 2007, p. 87–103; К. НЕГУЉ, *A török hódoltság...*, vol. I, p. 340–341; Z. IUSTIN, *Testimonies...*, p. 42–54.

in anti-Ottoman struggles over the years that followed as well<sup>42</sup>. However, even after the end of the Long War in 1606, the Serbs were present in the fortresses of the Eyalet of Timișoara, as in other areas of Ottoman Pannonia, particularly among martoloses and cavalrymen<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> A. ИВИЋ, *Историја...*, p. 196–206; P. САМАРЦИЋ, *Дуги рат између Аустрије и Турске (1593–1606)*, [in:] *Историја српског...*, vol. III.1, p. 226–247; С. ЂИРКОВИЋ, *Устанак банатских Срба*, “Рад Музеја Војводине” 37–38, 1995–1996, p. 239–245; С. КАТИЋ, *Кнежевачко Потисје...*, p. 173–180.

<sup>43</sup> K. HEGYI, *A török hódoltság...*, vol. I, p. 355–357; vol. III, p. 1359.

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*The Emergence of "Sırf Vilâyeti": Serbian Migrations to the Territory of Banat...*

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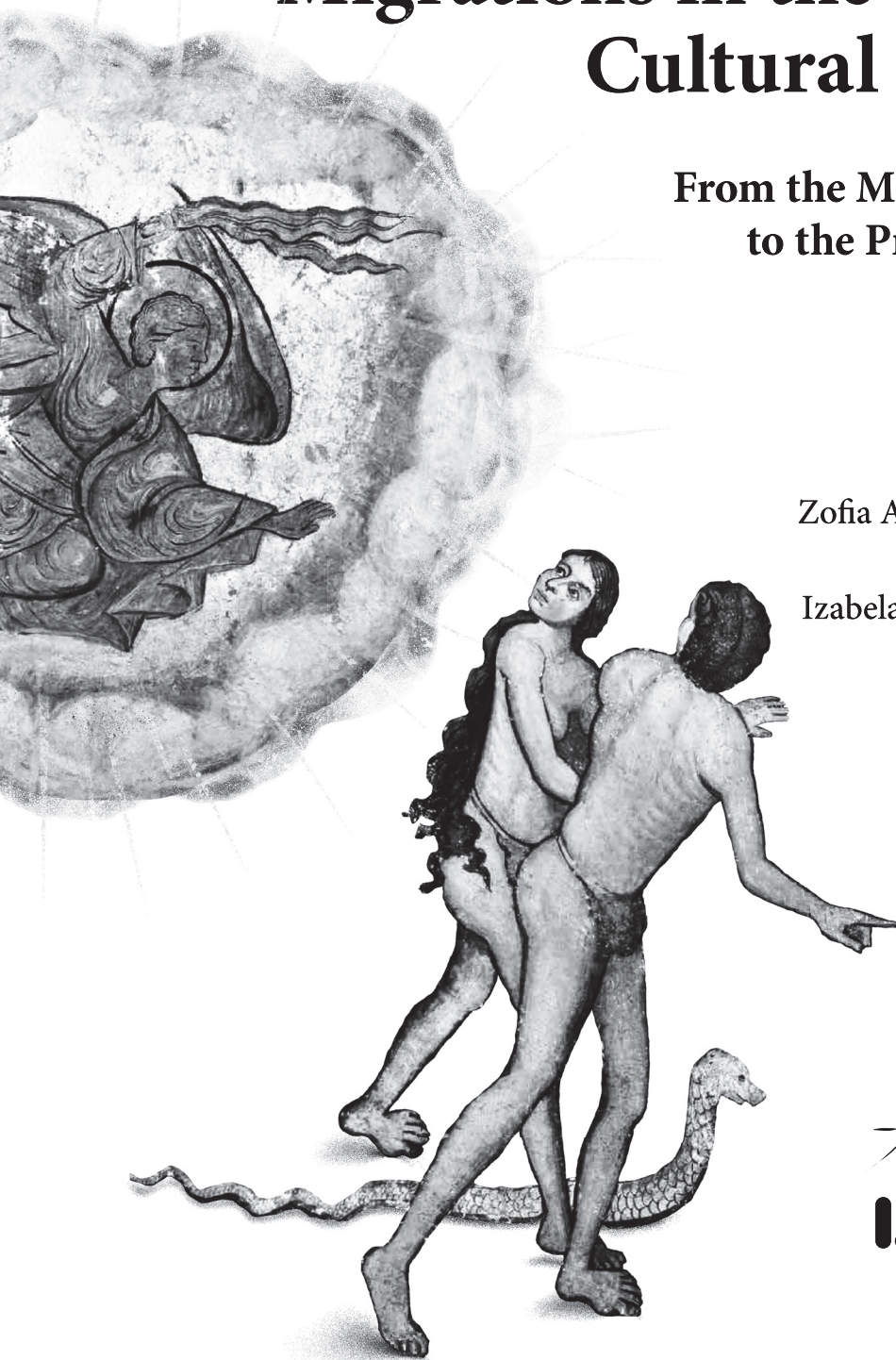


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# Migrations in the Slavic Cultural Space

From the Middle Ages  
to the Present Day

edited by  
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