Across the Danube

Southeastern Europeans and Their Travelling Identities (17th–19th C.)

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Contents

PART 3
Old Settlements, Nation States, New Networks

Migrations and the Creation of Orthodox Cultural and Artistic Networks between the Balkans and the Habsburg Lands (17th–19th Centuries)

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The political and cultural history of the Balkans in the early modern times was marked by the disappearance of medieval states, Ottoman conquest, and numerous wars.[1] Under such circumstances, collective and individual migrations took place from the Ottoman Empire to Habsburg lands. This mainly pertains to the Orthodox Christians, who migrated both during forced mass movements and individually for economic, religious, and political reasons.[2] The most important migrations of the Serbs into the Habsburg Monarchy have been noted in historiography as the Great Migration in 1690 and the Second Migration in 1739.[3] Migrations also occurred at the end of the 18th century, after the Ottoman-Habsburg wars and after the crush of the First Serbian Uprising in 1813. Apart from collective migrations, individual migrations constantly took place. They were economic in nature and therefore contributed to the numbers of the Balkan traders settled in Habsburg cities.

The migrations from the Ottoman Empire into Habsburg territories might also have come as a consequence of the modification of the borders. Due to alternate Ottoman and Habsburg conquests of the Balkans and southern Hungary during the 17th and 18th centuries, the population changed its state without changing its place of residence. Alternate presence of different state authorities, Christian or Islamic, contributed to intense changes of cultural models in border territories. This is particularly evident in regions such as the Banat, which was under the Ottoman rule until 1716.[4]

The migrations of the population from the Ottoman Empire into Habsburg lands did not mark the end of communication between the old homeland and the new state or a rapid change of cultural models of the migrants' private life.[5] On the contrary, migrations contributed to the creation of unique cultural and

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1 Stavrianos, *The Balkans since 1453*, pp. 33–412.
2 Samardžić, "Migrations in Serbian History".
3 Veselinović, "Velika seoba 1690"; Veselinović, "Srbi pod austrijskom vlašću", p. 160.
4 Pejin, "Banat pod turskom okupacijom".
5 Katsiardi-Hering, "Southeastern European Migrant Groups".

artistic networks of the Orthodox population, which surpassed state borders and connected the Ottoman Balkans with Habsburg lands. This is evident in the constitution of the network of Orthodox parish churches and monasteries on the territory of the Habsburg Empire, the transfer of icons and sacred objects from the Balkans, and in the activity and influence of artists from Habsburg lands in the Balkans.

Migrations and the Constitution of the Orthodox Church Network in the Habsburg Monarchy

The foundation of Orthodox monasteries in Habsburg lands began in the late Middle Ages. During the 14th and 15th centuries, the first Orthodox monasteries were established in the territory of South Hungary, such as the monasteries of Kovilj[6] and Krušedol, a foundation of despot Georgije Branković (Bishop Maksim).[7] After the fall of the Serbian medieval state, Serbian population inhabited some Hungarian cities. Serbs lived in Buda, Győr, Esztergom, and Komárom. The Serbian part of a city was named 'Ratzenstadt'.[8] Under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, a number of churches and monasteries were established in conquered Habsburg territories. These churches were under the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Peć, the Serbian church organization led by the patriarch.[9]

The Serbian Orthodox church parochial and monastic network was finally formed after 1690. In 1690 the so-called Great Migration took place, when a part of Serbian Orthodox population and clergy from the Patriarchate of Peć, led by the patriarch Arsenije Čarnojević (Černojević), came to the Habsburg Monarchy. Although this migration was caused by the defeat of the Habsburg army in the Austrian-Ottoman war, the Serbian migration was not chaotic. Patriarch Arsenije crossed into Habsburg territory only after being granted privileges that secured his position and religious rights of the Serbian population.[10] Serbs mostly settled along the Habsburg–Ottoman military frontier and were thus located in the wide region from Banat to Lika.[11] The patriarch spent the first few years after the migration organizing church life and was

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6   Banjac, *Manastir Kovilj*, pp. 31–35.
7   Timotijević, *Manastir Krušedol*, pp. 14–22.
8   Davidov, *Spomenici Budimske eparhije*, pp. 43–137.
9   Petković, *Zidno slikarstvo,* pp. 166, 187, 191–92, 204–07.
10   Veselinović, "Velika seoba 1690"; Davidov, *Srpske privilegije,* pp. 14–147.
11   Veselinović, "Velika seoba 1690".

especially active in protecting the Orthodox population from conversion into Roman Catholicism.

The settlement of Szentendre testifies to the significance of the Great Migration for the formation of Orthodox culture in the monarchy. Szentendre is a small town close to Buda, where the patriarch and Serbian church leaders originally found shelter. After the Great Migration in 1690, seven Orthodox churches were erected in Szentendre by migrants coming from different regions. Thus some churches were named after the regions they came from: Belgrade, Požarevac, Chiprovtsi or Opovo.[12] Although patriarch Arsenije Čarnojević came to the Habsburg Monarchy, the patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox church remained in the Ottoman Empire near the town of Peć in the Metohija region.

In 1739 the Second Migration took place, led by the patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta.[13] On this occasion, part of the clergy and Orthodox population also relocated. The aftermath of the migration was the division of the Serbian church organization in the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire. In the Habsburg Monarchy, the Metropolitanate of Karlovci remained active, with the seat in Sremski Karlovci (Karlowitz), while the Patriarchate of Peć survived until 1766, when it was abolished by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople.[14] In the revolution of 1848, the Metropolitanate of Karlovci was elevated to a patriarchate.[15]

The migrations of the Serbian Orthodox population led to the erection of a great number of churches and monasteries, and to the formation of an Orthodox Church culture in the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy. Habsburg authorities controlled the construction of Orthodox churches. They prescribed the appearance of church exteriors, but not their interiors. Thus the interiors of Serbian churches were organized according to the Orthodox liturgical practice.[16] Some icon painters, such as Hristofor Džefarović and Janko Halkozović, came from southern Balkan areas.[17] These icon painters came from Aromanian communities and honed their painting skills in southern Balkan regions, mostly in Albania, Macedonia, and Epirus. Operating in the Habsburg Monarchy, they transferred Balkan Orthodox art to the north.

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12   Davidov, "Srpski kulturno-istorijski", pp. 108–48.

13   Veselinović, "Srbi pod austrijskom vlašću", p. 160.

14   Slijepčević, *Istorija srpske*, vol. 1, p. 421.

15   Slijepčević, *Istorija srpske,* vol. 2, pp. 152–54.

16   Timotijević, *Crkva Svetog Georgija.*

17   Timotijević, *Srpsko barokno*, pp. 89–91.

The work of Balkan icon painters in the Habsburg Monarchy continued throughout the 18th century. Thus icon painter Teodor Simonov from Moschopolis [Voskopolje, today in Albania] worked for Orthodox Serbs during the eighth decade of the 18th century. He painted the walls of the church in Székesfehérvár/Stolni Beograd.[18] The works of Jovan Četirović Grabovan also provide an interesting example.[19] This icon painter was born in Albania, but he painted in the Habsburg Monarchy. He completed part of his education in Russia, and returned to the Ottoman Empire. He finally settled in Slavonia, where he developed a rich icon-painting activity. The example of Četirević Grabovan clearly shows to what extent the Orthodox population was connected, regardless of the borders of empires. His work obviously revolved around Orthodox cultural networks and his art was one of the most representative forms of Orthodox icon painting.

Migrations and the Transfer of Icons and Relics

Great migrations included not only the movement of people from the Ottoman into the Habsburg Empire, but also the transfer of a number of relics, sacred objects, icons, and prayer books. Pious people, monks, and priests carried necessary sacred objects as well as various valuables from their homeland.

The monks from particular monasteries carried the most significant relics with them during migration. The monks of the Ravanica monastery in Serbia carried with them the relics of Prince Lazar, the medieval Serbian ruler who died in the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Prince Lazar was one of the most significant Serbian national saints, whose cult developed under Ottoman rule. He was a symbol of a holy victim in the battle against the Ottoman Empire, which was particularly highlighted in oral folk tradition.[20] After the Great Migration in 1690, the relics of Prince Lazar were first brought to Szentendre[21] and were subsequently placed in the Vrdnik monastery, which was named Sremska Ravanica. The relics of Prince Lazar were placed in a church, where a huge church celebration took place on Vidovdan, 15/28 June (St. Vitus Day, the day of the Battle of Kosovo).[22] Until 1941, when the relics were transferred to Belgrade,

18   Ševo, *Crkva Rodjenja,* pp. 49–51.
19   Todić, *Srpski slikari*, pp. 281–90.
20   Popović, *Vidovdan i časni krst*, 1998; Mihaljčić, *Lazar Hrebljanović*.
21   Davidov, "Srpski kulturno-istorijski spomenici", p. 71.
22   Makuljević, *Umetnost i nacionalna ideja*, pp. 309–10.

Vrdnik monastery and the relics of Prince Lazar formed one of the most significant Serbian cultural and historical centers.

Before the attack of the Ottomans, Serbian Orthodox clergy also fled with venerated icons. The monks of the Rakovica monastery, nearby Belgrade, received the icons from Russia, because of the merits of a monk called Grigorije, who had helped the Russian diplomats during the negotiations with Ottomans in 1698 and 1699.[23] The monks abandoned Rakovica in 1737 because of the Ottomans and settled in the Velika Remeta monastery in Fruška gora, a mountain in north Srem. They brought with them the icons from Russia, church books, and sacred objects.[24]

The nature of migrations is exemplified by the monks of the Rača monastery on the Drina river. In this monastery, significant transcription and literary activities developed. During the migration in 1690, the monks from Rača brought a large number of manuscripts with them. They first settled in Szentendre, but later they moved to other monasteries, where they continued the transcription of Serbian church literature.[25] Their activity in the Habsburg territory contributed to the preservation and development of the Serbian Orthodox literature and culture.

There is also a famous example of an Epitaphios (an icon for the Good Friday services) from the Mileševa monastery, near Prijepolje in southwest Serbia. This Epitaphios was a gift by prince Alexandru and princess Ruxandra Lăpușneanu from Moldavia to the monastery Mileševa in 1567. During the migration in 1688, the monks from Mileševa carried the Epitaphios to the Gomionica monastery in Bosnia, and later to the Pakra monastery in Slavonia, where it was revered as one of its most valuable objects.[26]

An example that shows the importance of the transfer of icons for the Orthodox culture in the Habsburg lands is an icon of the Mother of God Bezdinska. This icon was a copy of a famous Russian wonderworking icon of the Theotokos of Vladimir, brought from Kiev by the monk Paisius the Greek in 1727. The icon was first placed in the Orthodox Cathedral in Belgrade and subsequently in the nearby Serbian monastery of Vinča. Before the attack of the Ottomans in 1739, the monks from Vinča migrated to Banat and placed the icon there. It subsequently became one of the most revered icons believed to be wonderworking on the territory of the Metropolitanate of Karlovci.[27]

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23   Rakić, Z., "Velikoremetske ikone".

24   Ibid.

25   Medaković, "Izučavanje srpskih starina u Madjarskoj", pp. 54–55.

26   Kučeković, *Umetnost Pakračko-Slavonske eparhije*, pp. 315–16.

27   Timotijević, "Bogorodica Bezdinska".

The Transfer of Icons from the Habsburg into the Ottoman Empire

Although the Orthodox population was divided between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, and therefore lived in different cultural models, strong cultural links were preserved, a fact which was confirmed by communication and the creation and acquisition of icons and liturgical vessels to Orthodox churches in the Balkans.

This strong connection between Orthodox culture in the Habsburg lands and in the Ottoman Balkans is confirmed by the activity of Hristofor Džefarović, an icon painter and copperplate engraver. He came from the vicinity of Dojran and moved to the Habsburg Monarchy at the beginning of the 18th century. As an icon painter, Džefarović painted the church of Bodjani monastery in Bačka [today in Vojvodina, northern Serbia], and then dedicated himself to making engravings. He collaborated with Thomas Mesmer in Vienna, where he developed a large production of engravings.[28] He produced engravings as icons, monastery representations and illustrated books for numerous Orthodox commissioners in the Habsburg Empire as well as in the Ottoman Empire.[29] Džefarović worked for various ethnic groups – Serbs, Greeks, and Vlachs,[30] which resulted in his flexibility in the use of Greek and Slavic language.

One of the most important books that Džefarović illustrated was the *Description of Jerusalem*, which was commissioned by the archimandrite of Jerusalem Simon Simonović. It was printed in Vienna in 1748, first in Serbian, and then in Greek in 1781. The *Description of Jerusalem* was a guide book, used by Serbian, Greek, and Russian pilgrims to the Holy Land.[31]

On the territory of the Habsburg Monarchy, the production of engravings was developed for Orthodox monasteries in the Ottoman Empire. However, such production was not developed in the Balkans, most likely due to the application of copperplate-engraving technology. Therefore the engravings of some monasteries in the Balkans were printed in Vienna. In 1733 Serbian patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta commissioned in Vienna the engraving of the Studenica monastery.[32] The representation of the Dečani monastery and printed icons of St. Stefan Dečanski have been published in Vienna during the 18th and 19th centuries.[33]

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28   Davidov, *Srpska grafika,* pp. 105–57.

29   Gratziou, "Searching for the public", pp. 98–103.

30   Peyfuss, *Die Druckerei von Moschopolis,* with information on Djefarovic's prints and the donors.

31   Žefarović, *Opisanije Jerusalima*.

32   Šakota, *Studenička riznica*, pp. 223–24.

33   Šakota, *Dečanska riznica,* pp. 315–23.

One of the important practices of the transfer of icons and iconography was developed at the border between the Habsburg and Ottoman Empire during the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. The border was not closed, but rather enabled communication. Thus there was a notable import of icons from the Habsburg Monarchy, while some painters crossed the border and started working in Serbia. The 19th century brings an important political and cultural turn. National revolutions led to the creation of new states such as Serbia and Greece, which resulted in the need for transformation of Ottoman culture and the creation of a national visual identity. In this process, an important place was given to the artists and architects from the Habsburg territories who crossed the borders. This applies especially to the border culture of the Sava and Danube regions of Serbia.[34]

The example of activity and transfer of painters from the Habsburg Monarchy into the newborn state of Serbia is especially indicated by the artists from border Danube towns such as Zemun (Semlin) and Bela Crkva. Zemun painter Nikola Apostolović worked actively in Serbia – in Belgrade, in the first half of the 19th century.[35] Particularly distinguished were the painters from Bela Crkva: the Jakšić family and Arsenije Petrović. Simeon, Arsenije, and Dimitrije Jakšić mainly developed church painting in northeastern Serbia,[36] while Petrović explored portrait painting in the same region.[37] In the mid-19th century, the restoration of the church and the rise of the civil society prompted Serbian painters, not only those from the border regions, to transfer from the Habsburg Empire to Serbia, thereby transferring the ideals of Central European art. This included artists such as Dimitrije Avramović, Uroš Knežević, Pavle Simić, Jovan Popović, Katarina Ivanović, and Đura Jakšić.[38] These painters worked alternately in the Habsburg Empire and in Serbia, and this led to the formation of strong cultural ties among the Serbian people despite the fact that Serbs lived in different states, and the establishment of a national artistic network/scene.

Migrations also contributed to the creation of strong trade links between Orthodox people in the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. Traders brought back numerous icons from their trips and donated them to churches and monasteries. The transfer of icons is indicated by Sarajevo traders. They had a developed trading network that encompassed the area between the Adriatic

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34   Vujović, *Umetnost obnovljene Srbije*, pp. 226–35.
35   Ibid., pp. 228–32.
36   Ibid., pp. 244–45.
37   Ibid., pp. 279–80.
38   Jovanović, *Medju javom i med snom*, pp. 76–260.

Sea, the Balkans and Central Europe. One of the richest Sarajevo traders was Jovo Miletić. He donated to the Sarajevo church of the Holy Archangels, among other things, icons transported from the Habsburg Monarchy, as well as valuable embroidered curtains for the iconostasis – the so-called 'Miletića skute', made in Vienna in 1776.[39]

In the 19th century, the links between the Ottoman Balkans and the Habsburg Monarchy were very strong. Vienna became one of the most significant educational centers for students from the Balkans. Thus numerous architects and painters brought the experience and models of European art to the Balkan states.[40]

Anastas Jovanović[41] is one of the most interesting examples of cultural transfer from Vienna to the Ottoman Balkans in the 19th century. He was sent by prince Miloš Obrenović to study art in Vienna. There he mastered the lithography technique, as well as photography, and thus became one of the first photographers in the Balkans.[42] Anastas Jovanović developed a big artistic production for Serbian and Balkan society. He created a map of Serbia, a lithographic album 'Spomenici srbski', which represented the most significant events and characters from the Serbian history, and religious engravings.[43] His lithographs were sold both in the Habsburg monarchy and in Serbia, and thus they contributed to the creation of Serbian national identity. Although they were nationally engaged, Jovanović's engravings were not of an anti-Habsburg nature. They were being created around 1848, when the Serbian national movement was on the side of the central government in Vienna, and was opposed to Hungarian aspirations.[44] The significance of Anastas Jovanović is manifold. After his stay in Vienna, Jovanović returned to Serbia, where he was hired as an administrator at Prince Mihailo Obrenović's court between 1860 and 1868. The experience and the knowledge he had gained in Vienna must have contributed to the way he created visual programs at Serbian court, such as memorial medals on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Second Serbian Uprising in 1865.[45] Anastas Jovanović adopted numerous forms of contemporary artistic expression in Vienna, and used that Central European experience for the artistic creation of the Serbian national identity.

39   Skarić, *Srpski pravoslavni,* pp. 47–48.

40   Jovanović, *Srpsko crkveno,* pp. 69–77; pp. 109–30.

41   Vasić, *Anastas Jovanović (1817–1899).*

42   Antić, *Anastas Jovanović,* pp. 7–50.

43   Vasić, *Anastas Jovanović.*

44   Gavrilović, *Srbi u Habzburškoj monarhiji.*

45   Timotijević, *Takovski ustanak,* pp. 215–221.

During the early modern times, there were numerous collective and individual migrations of Orthodox Christians from the region under Ottoman rule into the Habsburg lands. Migrations did not break the religious, cultural, and artistic connections, but instead contributed to the creation of a unique cultural network between Balkans and Habsburg lands.

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