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Austrian “Kingdom of Serbia” (1718-1739). The Infrastructural Innovations introduced by the Habsburg Domination

Fabrizio RUDI

Research assistant, University of Naples "Federico II"

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Austrian “Kingdom of Serbia” (1718-1739). The Infrastructural Innovations introduced by the Habsburg Domination

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From the Treaty of Passarowitz up to the Treaty of Belgrade, Austrian domination of Northern Serbia, and also of Posavina, Oltenia and Banat improved, although temporarily, the former Ottoman administrative apparatus even if only temporarily. While a *Commissio Neoacquistica* nominated the administrative personnel for the new acquired lands exclusively among the personalities of greater trust for the Viennese court, the local population knew some important infrastructural benefits whose effects weren't completely cancelled after the 1739 Peace Treaty. Northern Serbia, in particular, had therefore experienced the flourishing, albeit at an early stage, of a manufacturing economy and the beginning of an accumulation of capital. The Orthodox Church administration was also reformed with fundamental long-term effects and favoured the consolidation of the *Militärgrenze* in whose settlement it benefited, as also the Serbs, settled there and incorporated into the newly constituted territory. Emperor Charles VI interfered with them through granting land to the community's family members, exemption from feudal obligations, religious freedom, but also the obligation to fight against the enemies of the Empire, with the aim to create a national militia under his direct control, setting the stage for the future Serbian war and revolutionary history between the XVIII and the XIX century.

Three years after the Battle of Vienna (12 September 1683), the Serbian lands toward the Danubian line frontier became a military governorate for the first time, led by three commanders: Ludwig Wilhelm von Baden-Baden, Johann Norbert Piccolomini and Georg Christian von Braunschweig. Some portions of Bačka and Belgrade were conquered and for their administration of 29th July 1688 Emperor Leopold I issued an order instituting a first *Commission neoacquistica* in order to manage the relations of the imperial military administration and the local population. It had within itself two very influent personalities: the high court official Ferdinand Dietrichstein and the primate of Hungary cardinal Leopold (Lípot) Kollonics,¹ archbishop of Esztergom. The remaining members were borrowed from the Court War Council (*Hofkriegsrat*) and from the Court Chamber Council (*Hofkammer*). The main tasks of this new organ were accurately definite: to administrate the new lands and keep them safe, since an expansion toward the south of the Austrian military frontiers hadn't still expressly been planned.²

¹ See about, for example Joseph Maurer, Cardinal Leopold Graf Kollonitsch, Primas von Ungarn. Sein Leben und Wirken. Innsbruck 1887; Theodor Mayer, Verwaltungsreform in Ungarn nach der Türkenzeit. Wien 1911 (new edition 1980).

² On the military borders, see Jakob Amstadt, Die k.k. Militaergrenze 1522–1881 (mit einer Gesamtbibliographie). Dissertation, University of Würzburg, 1969; Die k.k. Militärgrenze, Österreichischer Bundesverlag, edited by Heeresgeschichtliches Museum Österreichs. Wien 1973;

Thirty years later, after the fortress of Belgrade fell in to the hands of the Austrians on 17th August 1717, in the joint decisions of a new *Commissio neoacquistica* the opinions expressed by the members of the *Hofkriegsrat*, chaired by Prince Eugene of Savoy, had the highest priority: on this specific decision-making model, the work of the *Commissio neoacquistica* would then be based thirty years later.³ It must be said that this second *Commissio neoacquistica* gave their first instructions well before the signing of the Treaty of Passarowitz (21st July 1718). As J. Langer reminded us, it was done following the model of Temesvar (Timișoara) and the Banat, conquered in the eponymous battle: a special commission for the organisation of that territory was established by the offices of the General Court Chamber [*Hofkammer*], called *Temeser Einrichtungs-Commission*, whose president was *General der Cavallerie* Claudius Florimund Mercy, one of Prince Eugene's main collaborators. Furthermore, the *Hofkammer* was composed of the *General-Feldwachtmeister* Count Wallis, the *Ober-Kriegscommissär* Haan, the *Cameral-Inspector* Slavic Kalanek, of Transylvanian descent. The same would have happened then for Belgrade, for the administration of which this commission was formed: the *Hofkammerrath* Augustin von Prosamer, the *Hofkammer-Concipist* Cooper and the *Raith-Officier* Helbling were sent to the Danubian fortress for this purpose, or “um das Oeconomicum unterdessen bis zu einer künftigen universalen und beständigen Einrichtung, so gut als de praesenti thunlich, zu respiciren und zu beobachten”.⁴

The recently acquired territories had a fundamental strategical importance: the new southern Habsburg boundaries improved the defensibility of the Danubian-Hungarian frontier, and for this reason all of this area, just as Banat, was directly controlled by the *Hofkriegsrat* and the *Hofkammer*.⁵ The conquered

Walter Berger, *Baut dem Reich einen Wall. Das Buch vom Entstehen der Militärgrenze wider die Türken*. Berlin 1979; Hans Bleckwenn, *Der Kaiserin Hayduken, Husaren und Grenzer – Bild und Wesen 1740–1769*, in: Joachim Niemeyer / Hans Bleckwenn (eds.), *Zum Militärwesen des Ancien Régime: Drei Grundlegende Aufsätze*. Osnabrück 1987, 23–42; Dragutin Pavličević, *Vojna krajina: povijesni pregled, historiografija, rasprave* [The Military Frontier: historical prospect, historiography, debates]. Zagreb 1984; Vojin S. Dabić, *Banska krajina. 1688–1751: prilog istoriji srpskog i hrvatskog naroda i krajiškog uređenja u Baniji* [The Banovina. 1688–1751: a contribution to the history of Serbian and Croatian people and of the frontier administration in Banovina]. Beograd, 1984; Idem, *Vojna Krajina: Karlovački generalat (1530–1746)* [The Military Frontier: the Generalate of Karlovac (1530–1746)]. Beograd 2000; Alexander Buczynski, *Gradovi Vojne krajine* [Towns in the Military Border]. Zagreb 1997; Ivan Jurišić, *Lika i Krbava od Velikog rata za oslobođenje do inkorporacije u Karlovački generalat (1683–1712)* [Lika and Krbava since the Great War of Liberation until incorporation in Karlovac general command (1683–1712)]. In: *Radovi* 37 (2005), 101–110.

³ Ema Miljković Bojanić / Miloš Đorđević, „Kraljestvo Srbija“ u istoriografiji. In: *Zbornik radova sa naučnog skupa “Nauka i savremeni Univerzitet”*, Filozofski fakultet u Nišu, 343–354. See also Miloš Đorđević, *Srbija kao provincija Habzburške Monarhie u prvoj polovini 18* [Serbia as a province of the Habsburg Empire in the first half of the 18th century]. Niš, 2015, 131–143; 137; Max Braubach, *Die Geheimdiplomatie des Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen*. Köln 1962, 13.

⁴ Joseph Langer, *Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung (1717–1739)*. In: *Mittheilungen des k. und k. Kriegsarchivs*, NF III (1889), 157–247, 160.

⁵ Michael Hochedlinger, *Austria's Wars of Emergence. War, State and Society in the Habsburg Monarchy, 1683–1797*. London 2003, 229. About the Austrian administration on the Banat, see in particular Sreta Pecinjački, *Podati o prihodima i rashodima banatske administracije u prvoj polovini XVIII veka* [Report on the incomes and the expenses of the Banat administration in the first half of the 18th century]. In: *Zbornik za istoriju* 8 (1973), 77–92; Jelena Ilić Mandić, *Banatska vojna krajina u 18. i 19. veku* [The Banat Military Frontier in the 18th and 19th century], in: Miodrag Maticki (ed.), *Usmena tradicija Banatske vojne granice: zbornik radova* [The oral tradition on the Banat Military Frontier: collection of papers]. Novi Sad, Matica Srpska, 2015, 17–35; Maja

lands were neither part of the Holy Roman Empire nor of the Kingdom of Hungary, and were referred to “Königreich Serbien”, not to be intended as an effective “kingdom”, but as a “crownland”, ruled by a military governor, the first having been General Johann Joseph Anton O’Dwyer. For this reason, these lands configured in the Austrian documents of the time as *absolutum dominium vel peculium regium*. This meant that Emperor Charles VI. administered it personally and for himself.⁶ This responded to a strictly military criterion: creating a border belt towards the Ottoman Empire, with the help of a Serbian militia to be constituted in order to avoid possible alliance between the Ottomans and potential Hungarian insurgents.⁷

On 7th October 1717, the second *Commissio Neoacquistica* was charged with some specific tasks of eminent economical kind, designed to improve the rural administration of those lands, which were still very backward in comparison to the remaining Habsburg lands. In essence, the provisions reported here can be summarised in this way: a general reform for the system of land rents, so as to bring the least possible damage to the new subjects, by adapting the imperial military conscription to the needs of the conquered lands⁸; it was also necessary for a reform for the system of taxation, which would have been certainly more burdensome than the previous Turkish one.

The new Commission, invested in these specific tasks, entered Belgrade on 21st October 1717.⁹ General O’Dwyer, close associate of Prince Eugen, received at the beginning of his mandate the qualification of “Generalwachmeister, würcklicher Obrist im Regiment zu Fuss, und deremahliger Commendant der Haupt- und Granitz-Vestung Belgrad im Königreich Serwien” and enjoyed the title of “Exzellenz”. Therefore, he continued the initiative of administrating Serbia in the same way as the Temeser Banat: According to his intentions, the administration of justice would have been guaranteed by the *Hofkriegsrat* and the finances by the *Hofkammer*.¹⁰

A separate administration however had to be instituted for Belgrade and it was structured, on 7th September 1720 by the successor of General O’Dwyer, Karl Alexander von Württemberg. This new administration had a Presidency, a Chamber of Commerce and several departments and jurisdictions, the main one dealing with customs control, the salt monopoly and the administration of the forests. The new administrations would have paid particular attention to the exploitation of Serbian mines: for this kind of activity, a large number of experts was employed for the “professional evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of

Sedlarević (ed.), *Vojna granica u Banatu i banatski militari u 18 i 19 veku*. Tematski zbornik [The Military Frontier in the Banat and the Banatian militaries in the 18th and 19th century. Thematic collection]. Novi Sad 2014. See also Franz Marschang, *Das Banat und die Banater Deutschen im Wandel der Zeit*. Karlsruhe 2002.

⁶ Dragoljub M. Pavlović, *Austrijska vladavina u Severnoj Srbiji (od 1718 do 1739)* [Austrian rule on Southern Serbia (from 1718 until 1739)]. Beograd 1901, 4.

⁷ Miloš Dorđević, *Kraljestvo Srbija, 1718–1739*. Niš 2018, 8–19.

⁸ Langer, *Serbien unter der kaiserlichen Regierung (1717–1739)*, 163–164.

⁹ Pavlović, *Austrijska*, 1–5. See also Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube, *Historische und geographische Beschreibung des Königreichs Slavonien und des Herzogthumes Syrmien: sowohl nach ihrer natürlichen Beschaffenheit, als auch nach ihrer jezigen Verfassung und neuern Einrichtung in kirchlichen, bürgerlichen und militärischen Dingen*. Leipzig 1777.

¹⁰ Pavlović, *Austrijska*, 59.

investments". As president of the administration, Carl Alexander von Württemberg was backed by his predecessor, General O'Dwyer, and by the second military administrative advisor, Johann Gottfried von Gassner. They were supported by the Military Commissioner Ackermann, who represented the *Hofkammer*, the secretary Matthias Grüber and his assistant Matthias Rührer.¹¹

Dorđević remarks that the salaries of all Austrian administrative employees were not very high, and this was probably due to the fact that the conquered and purchased lands were not yet very safe; that's the reason why Emperor Charles VI did not consider it appropriate spending too much of public budget in this area.¹² Equally provisional was the subdivision of the acquired lands in ten districts: Krajina, Poreč, Stig, Mlava, Resava, Šumadija, Kolubara, Posavina and Mačva; each of them was ruled by an *Überreiter*. Initially, not established districts were smaller than the former Ottoman ones, the *nahije*, but later they were given certain autonomy to the villages and to the *knežine*; this measure resulted particularly useful for assuring a more capillary taxation. Austrian Serbia counted, in total 264 villages in the year 1718. In each of these districts there was also an *Oberknez* with a local judiciary power who never went outside the districts themselves; they too, of course, were in charge of collecting taxes. In general, we can say that Charles VI. had transferred much of the responsibilities of the administration, finance and the judiciary to the national self-government organs.¹³

Unlike in other areas of the conquered lands, where judicial cases were also handled by a civil officer, in Belgrade, at least in the part inhabited, as we shall see, by Germans, there was a competent magistrate who, after the regulation which was introduced by Charles VI in 1724, the qualification of city judges (*Stradtrichter*), was assisted by four additional officers.¹⁴ The most serious cases were judged even by a war tribunal, and at the time of Metropolitan Vićentije Jovanović a regular Spiritual Court (*redovni duhovni sud*) was also established on 10th June 1736; this court had to decide, ultimately, even on the civilian population.

According to a dispatch of 24th November 1717 in the borough of Belgrade below the Sava lived in total 465 families, among which 455 were of Serbian ethnicity and 10 of German ethnicity. Within the walls of Belgrade lived 459 families, whose ethnicities Popović classified as follows:¹⁵

¹¹ Dorđević, *Kraljestvo Srbija*, 24–26.

¹² Langer, *Serbien*, 187.

¹³ Miroslav Svirčević, *Lokalna uprava i razvoj moderne srpske države* [Local administration and development of the modern Serbian state]. Beograd 2011 (Balkanološki Institut Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umetnosti, Posebna Izdanja, 114), 31–32.

¹⁴ Dušan J. Popović, *Srbija i Beograd, od požarevačkog do beogradskog mira (1718–1739)* [Serbia and Belgrade, from the Peace of Passarowitz to the Peace of Belgrade (1718–1739)]. Beograd 1950, 81, 203–205, 263.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 181.

Tab. 1: Belgrade's families according to ethnic groups and districts within the city walls (1717–1718)

District	Germans	Armenians	Serbian	Magyars	Ashkenazi Jews	Sefardi Jews
I	71	16	12	-	10	2
II	24	-	1	-	-	-
III	24	-	-	-	-	-
IV	34	-	-	-	1	-
V	64	10	12	3	-	-
VI	116	3	14	8	2	32
Total	333	29	39	11	13	34

Source: Popović, *Srbija i Beograd*, 181–182.

In total, 944 families meant approximately 5.000-6.000 inhabitants, already afflicted by the 1719 plague outbreak.¹⁶

German immigrants began to occupy the fortress area and the modern Dorćol neighbourhood, while Serbian indigenous people were massed around the Gorna Varoš, near the modern Holy Sava Temple (*Hram Svetog Save*). Emperor Charles VI. wanted the German nation for power in the most remote border area: effectively, in the 1730s the German population counted, according to estimates, around 5.000–6.000 inhabitants, and in 1739 it was supposed to have been 15.000 inhabitants.¹⁷ Although under the label of “Germans”, these new inhabitants came from different areas of the Holy Roman Empire: “pure Germans” subjects were, in particular, from Alsace, Lorraine and Worms; Italian subjects were from the Duchy of Milan and also from the Republic of Venice (especially from the area of the Garda Lake), and French ones were from Alsace and Lorraine too; there were also Hungarians, Czechs, Slovaks, *Deutschböhmer*, and catholic *Illyrer* (South Slavs).¹⁸ In addition to this, the population of Belgrade increased also because a considerable number of Uskoks, coming from Slavonia, Sirmia and Bačka took refuge there.¹⁹

Immediately after the imperial conquest, the old Turkish fortress in Belgrade was demolished, and a new reconstruction plan was proposed by the Swiss architect and engineer Nicolas Doxat de Morez, who was then *Oberstleutenant* and later *Generalfeldwachtmeister* (i.e. military engineer and army officer): the project was approved, and the edification of the new fortress began in 1723, finishing in 1736; Doxat de Morez died just in Belgrade two years later, tried and sentenced to death on 20th March 1738 for his behaviour as commander of the Austrian garrison of Niš.²⁰ The new citadel had to protect equally the *gornji grad*,

¹⁶ Gligor Stanojević, Epidemija kuge u Srbiji 1719. godine i preventivne mjere u Veneciji [The 1719 plague epidemic in Serbia and the preventive measures in Venice]. In *Srpski arhiv za celokupno lekarstvo* 11/12 (1973), 937–942.

¹⁷ Ibid., 182.

¹⁸ Ibid., 186.

¹⁹ Olga Zirojević, *Srbija pod Turskom vlašću, 1459–1804*. Drugo, pregledano i ilustrovano izdanje [Serbia under Turkish rule, 1459–1804. Second Revised and Illustrated Edition]. Beograd 2007, 214–215. See also Theodor von Stefanović-Vilovsky, *Belgrad unter der Regierung Kaiser Karls VI (1717–1739) mit Benützung archivalischer und anderer Quellen*. Wien 1908.

²⁰ In his obituary it was written that Doxat, with the grade of General-Feldmarschalllieutenant, conquered the Turkish fortress of Nissa “die unglückliche Ursache seines Falls gewesen”, and that “Er übergab nämlich dieselbe an die Türken mit Akkord, als diese kaum angefangen hatten, sie einzuschliessen; er wurde darüber in Arrest gesetzt, und hernach im Jahr 1738 zu Belgrad enthauptet”. See Markus Lutz, *Nekrolog denkwürdiger Schweizer aus dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert, nach alphabetischer Ordnung bearbeitet*. Aarau 1812, 116.

where the military buildings were located (the ancient *castrum Singiduni*)²¹ and the *donji grad*, where the arsenal was located. Along the shore of the Sava and the Danube were the storage warehouses. The civil settlement, extended as far as the modern Tašmajdan Park, and the German neighbourhood, called *Karlstal*, were protected by other fortifications some time later.²²

Concerning the Serbian Orthodox Church, Emperor Charles VI provided to concede the autocephaly to the Metropolitane of Belgrade, and allowed him to extend his jurisdiction to the Banat of Temeswar and Little Walachia (Oltenia) too;²³ but at the same time confirmed the position of the Metropolitane of Sremski Karlovci too, whose jurisdiction was instead extended to all Orthodox people in Hungary, Croatia and Slavonia. Serbian Orthodox clergy found this situation abnormal, and for this reason asked the *Hofkammer* for a reunification of the two jurisdictions. A first *de facto* unification occurred as the Metropolitane of Belgrade Vićentije Popović-Hadžilavić²⁴ designed as his successor Mojsije Petrović, Metropolitane of Sremski Karlovci; the unification was approved by the Patriarch of Peć, Mojsije I. Radović, and by the *Hofkammer*, but not by the Emperor, who had then to accept the *de facto* situation as Mojsije Petrović designed as his successor directly Vićentije Jovanović, who was Metropolitane of Belgrade. Charles VI accepted, but on the condition that this did not happen again. After the second Serbian migration, which had as chief the Patriarch of Peć Arsenije IV Šakabenta, the issue was settled with the unification of the Metropolitanes of Sremski Karlovci and Belgrade under the jurisdiction of Peć.²⁵

The *Commissio neoacquistica* favoured an important German immigration in Belgrade, because the Catholicism meant he had to be represented in the Danubian fortress and in Serbia. The diffusion in Serbia of the “true faith” was entrusted to two powerful religious orders: Jesuits, Franciscans and Capuchins.

²¹ It is known that the demonym *Belogradensis*, in the singular accusative case, appears for the first time in the Western historical documents in a letter of pope John VIII (who ruled from 14th December 872 until 16th December 882) dated April 16th, 878, to the Bulgarian khan Boris-Michael. Two weeks before (27th / 28th March) the Duke of Spoleto Lambert I had sieged the Leonine City, constraining the pope to flee to Troyes. See about Joannis Papae VIII Epistolae et Decreta, ordine chronologico digesta, Patrologiae cursus completus. Serie Latina, Vol. CXXVI. Paris, 1879, Epistula CVIII, Ad Michaelem Regem Bulgarorum (Anno 878).

²² Popović, Srbija i Beograd, 178. On the Swiss architect see Nikola Samardžić, Vladimir Abramović, Švajcarac u Beogradu – Nikola Doksat de Morez. In: *Limes Plus* 9 (2013), 41–50; Mirjana Roter Blagojević / Ana Radivojević, Les espaces publics et la vie publique à Belgrade au XVIII^e et au XIX^e siècle et leur transformation au XX^e siècle. In: *Études balkaniques* 14 (2007), 107–142; Ljubica Ćorović / Milorad Sofronijević (eds.), Život carskog generala i slavnog inženjera gospodina barona Doksata de Moreza pogubljenog 20. Marta 1738. u Beogradu: uz opis pojedinih dešavanja u tadašnjem ratu protiv Turaka [The life of the Imperial General and glorious engineer Mr. Baron Doksat de Morez, executed in Belgrad on 20th Mars 1738: with a description of some developments in the war then waged against the Turks]. Beograd, 2006.

²³ Serban Papacostea, Oltenia sub stăpînirea austriacă, 1718–1739. Bucureşti 1971.

²⁴ Bešlin, Evgenije Savojski i njegovo doba, 527–528.

²⁵ See about Isadora Točanac Radović, Srpsko narodno-crkveni sabori (1718–1735). Beograd 2008, 91–92; Idem, Beogradska i Karlovačka mitropolija. Proces Ujedinjenja (1722–1731) [The Archdiocese of Belgrade and Karlovac]. In: *Istorijski Časopis* 55 (2007), 201–217; Idem, Opštenarodni tutori [General People’s Tutors]. In: *Mešovita grada (Miscellanea)* 28 (2007), 7–20; Id., Parohije i sveštenstvo Gornjokarlovačke eparhije 1772 godine: I – Karlovački generalat [Parishes and clergy of the Gornji Karlovac Diocese in 1772: I – the Generalate of Karlovac]. In: *Mešovita grada (Miscellanea)* 33 (2012), 183–197; Id., Parohije i sveštenstvo Gornjokarlovačke eparhije 1772 godine: II – Banska krajina [Parishes and clergy of the Gornji Karlovac Diocese in 1772: II – the Banovina]. In: *Mešovita grada (Miscellanea)* 34 (2013), 131–147.

They proceeded to their missions by transforming some mosques in Catholic churches, with enclosed schools, and were authorised to build their own monasteries outside the city walls (but the Capuchin's one in the neighbourhood of the present *Studentski trg*). The Catholic Church was, indeed, the one that had the highest income, and its consecrated persons were almost all Germans, with some Serbs converted to Catholicism. They were even better paid than the Orthodox, and such was, at a certain point, the wave of conversions that Prince Alexander had to curb this. The first Catholic dioceses established in Serbia were those of Smederevo, based in Belgrade, and its first bishop, Anton Kasimir von Thurn und Valsassina, was to be related to the wife of Prince Alexander, who was a Thurn und Taxis.²⁶ Of course, there was also the diocese of Sremski Karlovci, the most important one.

Serbian economy was rural: Agriculture produced classic cereals, and even corn, but it was still small. In the whole of Serbia, Popović writes, 15,066 acres were cultivated exclusively. Wheat and corn were sown more in Belgrade's district. The cereals were ground at the waterways, on the Danube, Sava and Morava, and the mill owners rightly took a portion of their harvest. But all this was completely insufficient to create a minimum of economy.²⁷ Cattle too was exiguous: in 1721 this number of animals was recorded in Serbia 3,706 horses, 1,363 foals, 8,902 bulls, 8,961 cows, 3,246 three-year cattle, 6,941 two-year cattle, 7,595 calves, 27,276 pigs, 18,794 piglets, 35,129 sheep, 32,083 goats. The main breeding sites were the districts of Šabac, Belgrade, Jagodina and Smederevo. Beekeeping was a fundamental production asset, and above all it constituted one third of the contributions to be paid to the new Austrian authorities – in 1721 in Serbia, there were 48,243 hives – mainly in the districts of Požarevac and Šabac, and bee keeping flourished until 1725, but after that year it began to decline, mainly due to the monopoly of the honey trade and of wax, established by the *Hofkammer* in that year. Starting from 1726, giving the dramatic situation of this decline, Commissioner Alter proposed that these two trades should once again become free.²⁸ Viniculture, too, was flourishing, covering wider cultivation areas than those for breeding, and was practiced especially in Belgrade and Požarevac, where the highest quality wine was produced. But the production was not sufficient for domestic consumption, and for that it had to be imported from Hungary or Sirmia. It was thanks to Prince Alexander that this sector of agriculture increased a little. The cultivation of fruit, especially plums, was very small, used for the production of *rakija*. An innovation that might have concerned the Austrians, instead, it was the exploitation of the woods and mines, for which monopolies were imposed. The Serbian territory was scarcely covered by forests – they abounded especially around the Kolubara river – but the Austrian administration reforested some territories for the respective

²⁶ Joachim Bahlcke, *Ungarischer Episkopat und österreichische Monarchie. Von einer Partnerschaft zur Konfrontation (1686–1790)*. Stuttgart 2005, 197. The influence of Roman Catholic Church in Belgrade had its effects also on the architectonic point of view. See Marko Popović, *Baroque Reconstruction of Belgrade*, in: Vesna Bikić (ed.), *Baroque Belgrade, transformation 1717–1739*. Belgrade 2019, 38–58.

²⁷ Popović, *Srbija i Beograd*, 86–87. See also Miloš Dorđević / Slaviša Nedeljković, *Commerce and customs service on the Ottoman-Habsburg border in the First Half of the 18th century*. In: *Facta Universitatis* 17 (2018), 127–135; Bikić, *New Goods for a New Society*, 162–194.

²⁸ Dragoslav M. Pavlović, *Finansija i privrede za vreme austrijske vladavine u Srbiji*. Beograd 1901.

exploitation. Five new wooded areas were created with ten officials for the administration of the woods (all Germans) and as many as 50,000 labourers.²⁹

The true step of civilisation compared to the time of Ottoman rule – and to this Miloš Đorđević dedicated many pages– was however the exploitation of the mines. First it consisted of a series of not particularly organised initiatives; but the first excavations of mines were made in Smederevo and Rudnik, where the brother of Prince Alexander, Heinrich Alexander, succeeded in obtaining the first concession. It was only after 1724 that no less than a company, the *Caesarea privilegiata Societas Commerciorum Orientalium*, was founded,³⁰ of which Prince Alexander held twelve shares, his wife six, the Metropolitan of Belgrade six, the German community six, his president five and some officers and officials of the court two or three. All this was, of course, in the hands of the Germans: the Serbs were excluded. In the town of Rudnik, therefore, a true colony of workers was created, made up also of Saxons from Transylvania and of some Vlachs. In 1735 another company was created for the exploitation of the deposits of Mount Avala, where silver and lead were mined. General Marulli also tried to propose the sifting of the sands of Morava in search of gold, but it was an initiative that remained inapplicable. The Turks were already exploiting a copper mine in Majdanpek.³¹

The financial conditions during three wars – the “Great war” of 1683–1699, the Rákóczi insurrection of 1703–1711 and the war of 1716–1718 – were disastrous: from the already acquired land Serbian, Charles VI argued that it was possible to reacquire what was needed to replenish the coffers from the state, but its population was even in worse condition, and could hardly contribute to this purpose immediately. From the Turks the Austrians inherited three types of taxes, the *kontribucija*, a tax in money, similar to the capitation, the *desetak*, a tax in kind, especially on sheep and wheat, and similar to western tithe, and the monopoly on rakija and beer (the Austrians enhanced on salt and also on tobacco). In 1720 the Serbian subjects of Austria could contribute 90,000 to 100,000 florins a year, to which was added the tribute for court expenses, which amounted to 50,000–60,000 florins (an enormous figure, showing the simple kind of the Serbian economy). Popović, too, indicates how Austria introduced additional taxes indeed ill-tolerated by the Serbs. The initiative of Prince Alexander in winter 1721 proposed to increase the *kontribucija*, for which reason each village should have been grouped and made responsible for the collection: the indiction had to be annual, no longer than three years and the collection every three months; those who had to do so were the German officials and the *Oberkapitani*. The price of wine and the import duty for pigs were increased, and even the *hajduci* had to pay for the capitation. In this way, the income of the

²⁹ Popović, *Srbija i Beograd*, 89.

³⁰ Helga Tschugguel, *Österreichische Handelskompanien im 18. Jahrhundert und die Gründung der Orientalischen Akademie als ein Beitrag zur Belegung des Handels mit dem Orient*. Phil. Diss. Wien 1996; Numan Elibol / A. Mesud Küçükkalay, *Implementation of the Commercial Treaty of Passarowitz and the Austrian Merchants, 1720–1750*, in: Charles W. Ingrao / Nikola Samardžić, / Jovan Pešalj (eds.), *The Peace of Passarowitz, 1718*, West Lafayette 2011, 163; Franz Martin Mayer, *Die Anfänge des Handels und der Industrie in Österreich und die orientalische Kompagnie*. Innsbruck 1882; J. Dullinger, *Die Handelskompagnien Österreichs nach dem Oriente und Ostindien in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhundert*. Berlin 1900.

³¹ Srđan Katić, *Osmanska dokumenta o rudniku Majdanpek XVI–XVIII vek [Ottoman documents on the Majdanpek mine, 16th–18th century]*. Majdanpek, Muzej u Majdanpeku, 2009.

newly acquired lands would have amounted to 337,444 florins per year.³²

The Court Councillor Alter was more moderate: He proposed to increase the monopoly assets, and for this reason he proposed the increase the factories of leather, glass, and the ovens for bricks and lime, and above all the cloth factories, to increase the exploitation of mines; but, above all, to reduce the price of salt, the first market asset to have been subjected to a monopoly, and to reduce the number of *hajduci*, which were exempt from taxes. In fact, it was the larger cities that benefited most from the increase in craft activities, especially Belgrade. His proposal was fully accepted as much by the *Hofkriegsrat* as by the *Hofkammer*. But the initiative was a failure, and debt was risked, to such an extent that in 1727 the reduction of one fifth was proposed. General Marulli warned in 1731 that the *kontribucija* had to be distributed differently: in some areas neither wheat nor wine had been produced, in the previous year, apiculture had diminished a little everywhere, and in addition to this the commerce with the Ottoman Empire was still precarious.³³ For this reason, Marulli warned that if the taxes had not been reduced, mass migration would have occurred, and the conquest of 1718 would have been in vain.

Money loan was then tolerated. It was usually practised by Jews, and even village leaders and *hajduci*, even famous ones. The total loans, especially for the collection of tithes, could also amount to 2,500–4,000 florins. The collection of interest often gave rise to acts of violence, and before the end of his mandate, Prince Alexander, in 1735 received a Serbian deputation led by Metropolitan of Sremski Karlovci Pavle Nenadović, who launched a dramatic warning: many Serbs were immigrating to the Ottoman Empire because of huge taxation.³⁴

The peasants were not, at least initially, obliged to attend military service: they replaced it with a special capitation. They were divided, in effect, into two categories: that of the peasants as such, called *zemljoradnici* (earth workers) or even *komorski* – according to the correct observation of Olga Zirojević, so called because they were closely linked to the decisions of the *Hofkammer*, and, therefore, to the related tax authorities – and that of the peasants who had a military obligation, and were called *hajduci* (singular *hajduk*). They therefore went on to form the so-called *Srpska narodna milicija*, usually called to arms for direct clashes with the Ottomans.³⁵

The *hajduci* had the specific task of defending the borders, and as well: ensuring public dignity, especially along the road that led to Constantinople, the maintenance of other roads and points, responsible for supplies and so on. They were called to service practically every year. They were privileged: they received the most fertile and most beautiful lands in assignment, and were, at least at the beginning, exempt from all taxes. This, according to Pavlović, was the cause for which the *Komorski* peasants tried to equalise, and very willingly, with the

³² Popović, *Srbija i Beograd*, 111.

³³ *Ibid.*, 108.

³⁴ About him see, for example Predrag Puzović, Rad mitropolita Pavla Nenadovića na prosvetivanju sveštenstva i naroda [Work of the Metropolitan Pavle Nenadović on the education of priesthood and common people], in: *Tri veka Karlovačke mitropolije, 1713–2013*. Sremski Karlovci, Novi Sad 2014, 167–175.

³⁵ Popović, *Srbija i Beograd*, 75.

hajduci,³⁶ As, once again, Olga Zirojević remembers, the Serbian villages were divided into two categories: those inhabited by the *hajduci*, and for this reason also called *vojnička* or *hajdučka sela* (from *selo*, village), and those inhabited by *komorski*, and for this reason called *zemljoradnička* or *komorska sela*. We know that the defence of the border was the exclusive competence of the military authorities, and in the same way also the control of the work of the *hajduci*.³⁷

It has been said that the *hajduci*, in any case, were in charge of maintaining the roads. Well, this was all the more necessary since they were stationed in centres such as Šabac, Smederevo, Rudnik and Jagodina, which were guard posts of the Austrian armed forces. After the resumption of free trade in the Adriatic Sea, Fiume and Trieste immediately became ports of free export and import and we know that due to this there was a flow of trade, under Austrian control, in favour of Serbia and the Banat, and from here with the whole Balkan peninsula and the East. The creation of the new customs administration in Vienna, with branches in Belgrade and, precisely, Fiume and Trieste, favoured the beginning of this new state of affairs. A great contribution to this was given by the construction of the *Karolinška cesta* (Charles' Road), which, from 1726 connected Karlovac, right in Posavina, with Fiume. From Karlovac, trade continued, in the eastern quadrant, along the Danube and the Sava: of course, there were also some secondary riparian roads along these great arteries, and the task of keeping them was reserved for the *hajduci*, who also had to control the portion of the said "road" in the westernmost part of Posavina.³⁸

The Serbian territories, therefore, were divided into 18 commands, five more than the original ones, or "military districts", or, according to the denomination of the time, in *šančevi*. These military districts were divided into four groups:

1. First group, with operational headquarters in Crna Bara, and including Bela Crkva, Valjevo, Osečenica, Prnjavor, Cikote (or Novi Varoš), and Crna Bara;
2. Second group, Pranjani, Vitanovac, Kragujevac, Cvetke and Čačak;
3. Third group, with operational headquarters in Paraćin, and including Paraćin, Požarevac, Ravno, Resava and Stalać;
4. Fourth group, including Grocka and Hasanpašina (Smeredevska) Palanka.

Up to 1727, the *hajduci* could draw from the state stores for the bread they needed; after that date, on the contrary, the *hajduci* were paid in money (not, unfortunately, so generously), but above all, they were induced to abandon the Turkish customs and acquire national ones. It seems that the first officers and *hajduci* so settled and regimented had been named by Prince Eugene, as is clear from a written testimony of the same, which, too, is not mentioned. It was quite evident that members of families who had previously given war services had become *hajduci*: some of them would then have served directly in Austria. Some of these families were, as already seen, those of Isaković, Vitković and

³⁶ Zirojević, Srbija pod Turskom vlašću, 1459–1804, 214–215.

³⁷ Popović, Srbija i Beograd, 76–79.

³⁸ Zirojević, Srbija pod Turskom vlašću, 1459–1804, 216.

Prodanović. This whole class of hajduci, in essence was consolidated into itself, becoming a veritable military organ controlled by the Court itself.³⁹

Naturally, all this militia would have taken refuge in Sirmia, as seen, and above all from that moment the term *hajduk*, of Hungarian origin and associated with the concept of “herdsman”, became definitively synonymous with “bandit”. But are there indications of continuity with what would have been reversed in the first Serbian revolt?⁴⁰

In the fifty years that separated the Peace of Belgrade in 1739 from the beginning of the Austro-Turkish war of 1788, many other Serbian populations from elsewhere began to move within the *Pashaluk* of Belgrade: they were, according to Miroslav Svirčević, descendants of the medieval inhabitants of Serbia feudal and even former peasants linked to local agricultural production. This was decisive for the future fortunes of the first Serbian revolt, which broke out in 1804: from the old homeland, especially the Kosovo, the settlers had jealously preserved the traditions and the old institutions, among which a strong tendency towards self-government, in the form of *zadruga*; the Turks agreed not to break it down, because it was an exceptional means of collecting taxes; but on the other hand, it formed the nucleus of what would later be the organisation of the first Serbian uprising.⁴¹

But how did this self-government change during the Austrian rule? We recall that the control of the *Überreiter* on the ten temporary districts was very narrow, almost paternalistic, so that we could adapt to the social traditions of the Serbs belonging to the institution of the *zadruga*, in respect of which the previous *nahije* were further subdivided. As such, *starešine* (elder chiefs, translated by Vuk Karadžić in Latin, in his 1818 *Srpski rječnik*, as “patriarcha”, “pater familias”) were only tools for tax collection, but those who had real power were the *Oberknez*, who began to enjoy immense respect and reputation among the Serbs themselves. With the Peace of Belgrade, all the Serbian local administration migrated, as seen under the leadership of Patriarch Arsenije IV, north of the Danube, and it seemed that of all those innovations there would be no trace left: Miroslav Svirčević shows that it was not at all like that,⁴² and leads

³⁹ Popović, Srbija i Beograd, 74–79. See also Rajko Veselinović, Vojna krajina u Srbiji 1718–1739. In: *Zbornik Istorijskog muzeja Srbije* 21 (1984), 5–42; Vladimir Krivošejev, Valjevska kompanija srpske narodne milicije od 1720 do 1728 godine [The Valjevo Company of the National Serbian Militia from 1720 until 1728]. In: *Glasnik međuopštinskog istorijskog arhiva Valjeva* 30 (1996), 59–60.

⁴⁰ Popović, Srbija i Beograd, 79.

⁴¹ Svirčević, Lokalna uprava i razvoj moderne srpske države, 45.

⁴² Miroslav Svirčević, Knežinska i seoska samouprava u Srbiji 1739–1788. Delokrug i identitet lokalne samouprave u Srbiji od Beogradskog mira (1739) do Austrijsko-Turskog rata [Spheres of competence and identity of local self-government in Serbia from the Peace of Belgrade (1739) until the Austrian-Turkish War]. In: *Balkanica* 32/33 (2002), 183–196. About the figure of the *Oberknez* Vladimir Ćorović, Istorija srpskog naroda [A History of the Serbian people], Beograd, Srpska književna zadruga, I izdanje [edition] 1981–1993, II izdanje 1994, III izdanje 2000, VI Period, Novi saveznički rat protiv Turaka, Novo Doba, I, Začeci ustanka u Srbiji [VI Period, The new allied war against the Turks, New Era, I, The beginnings of the uprising in Serbia]; Ljiljana Stanojević / Nebojša Damjanović / Vladimir Merenik, The first Serbian uprising and the restoration of the Serbian state. Belgrade 2004; Dejan Mikavica / Vladan Gavrilović, Vladavina prava i građanska ravnopravnost Srba u Habzburškoj monarhiji 1526–1792 [Rule, law and civil equality of the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy 1526–1792]. In: *Teme* 37 (2013), 1643–1654.

us to some very brief considerations on the six decades following the Peace of Belgrade.

First of all, the re-establishment of Ottoman power in Belgrade, as was to be expected, still maintained the forms of local self-government prior to 1716 and also respected by Eugene of Savoy. In this context, the proposal to renegotiate the attribution of a certain prestige to the *Oberknez* within the assembly of the *knežina* was approved by the Ottoman rule, and thus the *Oberknez* continued to take care of monasteries and churches, maintain the roads, resolve the most serious disputes and other important issues; all this had to be done according to secular custom. In essence, it is as if within each district there was, indeed, a prince, precisely a *Knez*. But this does not mean that they were completely autonomous, since they were still controlled by the Turkish authorities of the *nahije*: the election of the *Knez* was carefully monitored by them, especially when the office of *Knez* became hereditary. Their functions were, therefore, three: police, tax collection, and representative of his community, and his reputation depended only on his abilities and not his position of elder chief. They were, however, the "princes" who had to deal with the notorious janissaries, especially during the related massacre, at the origin of the first Serbian uprising. The "princes" who survived later organised themselves shortly after the beginning of the revolt in the first government of modern Serbia: the *Praviteljstvujušći Sovjet*.⁴³

⁴³ At this point, it is quite interesting to report a famous Vuk's passage about its origin: "Кад један од прве Руске госпoде запита Српске посланике (прота Матију Ненадовића, Јована Протића и Петра Чардаклију) у Петерсбургу на свршетку године 1804., ко им је старјешина у Србији, прото [sic] Ненадовић одговори, да немају никаквога једног старјешине, него да нахије имају своје старјешине, које се између себе договарају и савјетују. На то им рекне онај Руски господин, да ваља да поставе *совѣтъ* састављен од људи из свију нахија, који ће народом и земљом управљати и заповиједати свијем старјешинама." We try, now, to translate this passage in English: "When one of the most important Russian politicians asked Serbians envoys in Petersburg (Father Mateija Nenadović, Petar Čardaklija e Jovan Protić) at the end of 1804 who was their leader in Serbia, Father Nenadović replied that they had no governor; rather, each *nahije* had his own chief, and each one of them deliberated and consulted each other. At this point, one of these Russian politicians replied that it was useful to gather a *sovjet* composed of representatives of each *nahije*, who would rule his own land and his own people making decisions with other leader." Vuk Stepanović Karadžić, *Istorijski spisi* [Historical works]. Beograd, Prosveta, 1969, 11.