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TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE ON THE TRIPLEX CONFINIUM

Approaching the "Other" on the Borderlands Eastern Adriatic and beyond 1500-1800

edited by
EGIDIO IVETIC and DRAGO ROKSANDIĆ

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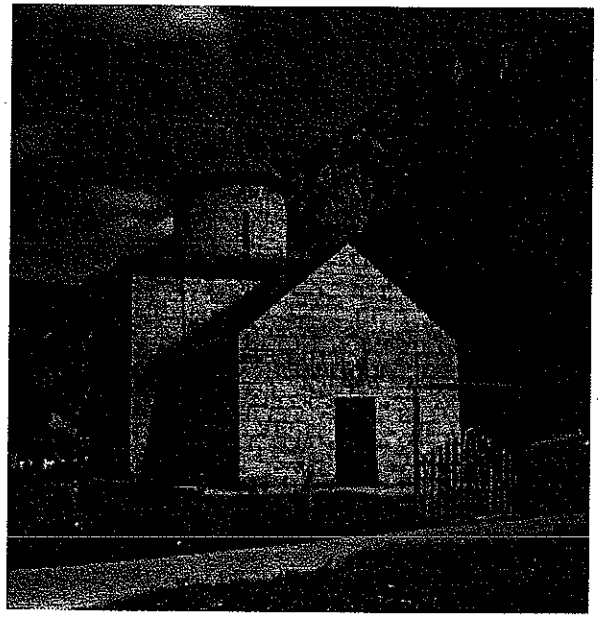

Fig. 6 - Rmanj today.

Nataša Štefanec

TOLERANCE AND INTOLERANCE IN THE CROATIAN-SLAVONIAN KINGDOM AT THE TURN OF THE 17th CENTURY[1]. CONTEST FOR GOMIRJE

Introduction

Migrations from the Ottoman to the Croatian and Slavonian Military Border in the second half of the 16th and first half of the 17th century have been reconstructed by many historians in Croatia and elsewhere[2]. This paper

[1] Following several Ottoman offensives from the 1520s till the 1550s, the territory of the Croatian and Slavonian Kingdom was reduced to a thin belt of territory - the so-called *reliquiae reliquiarum*. Pushed by the Ottoman conquest, the Diets and Estates of the Croatian and Slavonian Kingdom started to cooperate more closely (from 1558, the Croatian and Slavonian Diets convened together). The unconquered territorial belt was during the 16th century organised as a defensive zone and divided into two main sections - Croatian and Slavonian Military Border (later on the Generalate of Karlovac and the Generalate of Varaždin). In the period considered the territory of two Kingdoms and two Borders overlapped stretching from the Adriatic Sea to River Drava, along the frontier of Austrian Hereditary Lands, Styria and Carniola.

[2] Radoslav Lopašić published three volumes of sources on the considered subject. R. LOPAŠIĆ, *Spomenici Hrvatske krajine*, vol. I. (1479-1610), Vol. II. (1610-1693), Zagreb 1884-1885 (further SHK). Furthermore, the extensive elaboration on Vlach migrations was given in following studies: A. IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju. Prilog ispitivanju srpske prošlosti tokom 16. i 17. veka*, Sremski Karlovci 1909; A. IVIĆ, 'Prilozi za povijest Hrvatske i Slavonije u XVI i XVII vijeku', *Starine. Jugoslavenska Akademija Znanosti i Umjetnosti*, vol. XXXV, Zagreb 1916, pp. 295-374; V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, Zagreb 1982 (reprint); F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha i izdvajanje Vojne krajine kao posebnog teritorija', in *Historija naroda Jugoslavije*, vol. II, Zagreb 1959, pp. 689-701; F. MOAČANIN, 'Pokušaji organizacije Vojne krajine na novim osnovama', in *Ibidem*, pp. 406-411; J. ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi u Hrvatskoj od sredine XV. do kraja XVII. stoljeca*, Zagreb 1980; K. KASER, *Freier Bauer und Soldat. Die Militarisierung der agrarischen Gesellschaft in der kroatisch-slawonischen Militärgrenze, 1535-1881*, Graz 1986 (Zagreb 1997). See also N. KLAIĆ, 'Borba plemstva za

investigates patterns of tolerance and intolerance practiced by institutions and social groups towards population that migrated from the Ottoman to the Habsburg side of the military border. It focuses on the case of Gomirje that became a multi-ethnical and multi-confessional locality in the course of these migrations. This paper will explore the extent of intolerant and tolerant behaviour as well as the motives (triggers) behind them. Intolerant behaviour was not just performed through aggressive and violent acts but could also have been performed through codification and regulation enforced by domestic institutions that were inaccessible to the new-coming population.

In the period considered, extreme religious intolerance surrounded the region under examination. Conflict between the Islam and Christianity became epic in its proportion. Fierce religious clash was affecting everyday life and politics in neighbouring Inner-Austrian Lands. Catholics and Protestants of various social statuses in Inner-Austria (and elsewhere in Europe) were exhibiting various forms of intolerant behaviour, from verbal insults to physical attacks[3]. It heightened from the 1580s to 1629. In Hungary, religious conflict between Protestants and Catholics resolved in the Bocskay uprising (1604-1606)[4]. It happened simultaneously to intense migrations of Orthodox population to the Croatian and Slavonian Border. In the Ottoman Empire, throughout the 16th and 17th century the Orthodox hierarchy and the Catholic Church were fighting for the spiritual care over Christians in the Ottoman Empire[5]. Moreover, judging to the research of

vlast u krajini' in *Historija naroda Jugoslavije*, vol. II, Zagreb 1959, pp. 701-712; N. MOAČANIN, *Turska Hrvatska. Hrvati pod vlašću Osmanskog Carstva do 1791. Preispitivanja*, Zagreb 1999; V.S. DABIĆ, *Vojna krajina: Karlovački Generalat, 1530-1746*, Beograd 2000; J. BURIĆ, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška u XVIII. stoljeću*, Gospić-Zagreb 2002.

[3] See for example J. LOSERTH, *Die Reformation und Gegenreformation in den innerösterreichischen Ländern im XVI. Jahrhundert*, Stuttgart 1898; R. PÖRTNER, *The Counter-Reformation in Central Europe. Styria 1580-1630*, Oxford 2001. For a detailed research on concepts and manifestations of tolerance and intolerance in early modern Europe see H. KAMEN, *The Rise of Toleration*, New York 1967; O.P. GRELL and R.W. SCRIBNER (eds.) *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*, Cambridge-New York 1996; P. ZAGORIN, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West*, Princeton 2003.

[4] Extensive description of events leading to the Bocskay uprising and following it in V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5???, pp. 564-581.

[5] S.M. DŽAJA, *Konfesionalnost i nacionalnost Bosne i Hercegovine. Predemancipacijsko razdoblje 1463.-1804*, Mostar 1999. See also M. BOGOVIĆ, *Katolička crkva i pravoslavlje u Dalmaciji za vrijeme mletačke vladavine*, Zagreb 1993, p. 13.

Josip Buturac various Catholic Bishops in Slavonia were in constant conflic with the Franciscan order for the spiritual care of the Catholic population. They also struggled over the right to collect taxes from Christian believers[6].

Gomirje in the Regional Context

Gomirje was a village on the Croatian Military Border (later the Generalate of Karlovac), some 6 km south of the Carniolan border (Carniola or Crain was the Inner-Austrian Habsburg province). In the 15th century Gomirje was one of several settled places in the mountainous and forested region (Gorski kotar), including places such as Vrbovsko, Moravice, Delnice, Brod, Lić and so on. An entire region was repeatedly plundered by Ottoman troops from the last decades of the 15th century, being positioned on the most frequented Ottoman plundering route Plaški-Ogulin-Gomirje and further on to the Carniola[7]. By 1486, destruction of the estates by the Ottomans motivated the Frankopans to reduce cash dues to serfs in Gomirje and in several other villages on their Modruš estate[8]. By the 1570s and 1580s, following an entire century of Ottoman raids to Carniola, the area was depopulated and the lands uncultivated.

The organisation of defence in this region became more solid towards the 1560s. The Captain-in-Chief of the Croatian Border, Ivan Lenković, a renowned Carniolan nobleman, started to introduce improvements into the defence system. Moreover, in the 1570s numerous defence plans were developed, mainly by the Inner-Austrian Estates (Styrian, Carinthian and Carniolan), to reorganise and systematize the defence and financing of the Croatian and Slavonian Borders/Kingdoms[9]. The basis of the defence system

[6] J. BUTURAC, *Katolička crkva u Slavoniji za turskoga vladanja*, Zagreb 1970, pp. 57-164.

[7] V. SIMONITI, 'Slovenska historiografija o turških vpadih in obrambi pred njimi' in V. ĆUBRILOVIĆ (ed.), *Vojne krajine u jugoslovenskim zemljama u novom veku do Karlovačkog mira 1699*, Beograd 1989, pp. 291-303; S. VILFAN, 'Počeci finansiranja Hrvatske i Primorske Vojne krajine sa strane Koruške i Kranjske' in *Ibidem*, pp. 237-256; V. SIMONITI, *Vojaška organizacija na Slovenskem v 16. stoletju*, Ljubljana 1991.

[8] R. LOPAŠIĆ, *Hrvatski urbari - Urbaria lingua Croatica conscripta*, Zagreb 1894, pp. 28-29; ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, p. 59.

[9] Throughout the 16th century, the Croatian and Slavonian nobility was not able solely to organise a systematic defence of its Kingdom. Amongst other factors, it was due to the devastating consequences of initial Ottoman raids, dispersal of noble financial assets to individual defence organisation, internal conflicts of interest between the Croatian and Slavonian nobility and magnates and their consequent inaptness to jointly react to the Ottoman advance on an institutional level, limited financial and organisational power of

was set at the Viennese Assembly in 1577 and at the General Diet of the Inner-Austrian Estates in 1578[10]. In 1579, the largest fortress on the Croatian Border was built, mainly with Inner-Austrian capital. It was Karlovac that immediately became the centre of the Croatian Border taking the edge off Ottoman offensives in the region. Located some 20 km from the Inner-Austrian Border, it was at the epicentre of transit routes between the Adriatic Sea, the Ottoman Bosnia and Habsburg Carniola. Furthermore, in the 1570s and the 1580s, the Inner-Austrian military administration attempted to turn Ogulin (castle and town some 15 km south-east of Gomirje) into the central logistic stronghold on the Croatian Border[11]. The erection of Karlovac and the arrangements envisaged for Ogulin benefited Gomirje. Ottoman invasions into Carniola were significantly reduced. Gomirje and other places in Gorski kotar entered a more peaceful period of time.

Consequently, the area attracted the attention of many parties. First, the nobility that possessed the surrounding land saw a chance to revitalize its estates. For such an enterprise they needed to settle the estates again. Secondly, the area became appealing to the Inner-Austrian military administration on the Croatian-Slavonian Border. The military administration had two factions, the archduke and the Inner-Austrian Estates. Their defence goals were similar – both attempted to undermine the landownership rights of Croatian nobles settling newcomers as soldiers on the noble's estates. Still, their interests diverged in political and religious domains, which were also reflected in Gomirje's case. Thirdly, old settlers and the remaining autochthonous population defied newcomers who threatened their 'ancient rights'. Fourthly,

the Croatian-Slavonian Diet, etc. As a consequence, the Inner-Austrian Estates, led by the Archduke, managed to introduce their military administration into foreign Kingdoms - not restrained by alternative solutions. W. SCHULZE, *Landesdefension und Staatsbildung. Studien zum Kriegswesen des inerösterreichischen Teritorialstaates (1564-1619)*, Wien-Graz-Köln 1973; KASER, *Freier Bauer und Soldat*; N. ŠTEFANEC, *Diet in Bruck an der Mur (1578) and the Estates on the Croatian, Slavonian and Kanisian Military Border*, Doctoral dissertation, Central European University Budapest, Budapest 2004.

[10] Universitäts Bibliothek Graz, Manuscripten Sammlung, MS 432. *Uniuersäl Landtag So Ihr Fürstl: Durchl: Erzhörzog Carl mit Steyer, Kärnten, Crain, vnd Görz, zu Prugg an der Muehr gehalten im 1578 Jahr.* (265 fol.); Vienna, Kriegsarchiv, Alte Feldakten, 1577-13-2, *Haubt Beratschlagung vber Bestellung der Hungrischen Windischen vnd Cravatischen Granitzen vnd deren zuegehörigen Notturfften, Wie die auf beuelich der Rom: Kay: Mtt: etc. vnsers allergnedigisten Herrn zu Wien im August vnd September des 77ten Jares gehalten, durch Irer Mt: etc. Kriegs Secretarien Berhardten Reisacher verfasst vnd dan im October, Nouember vnd tails December Irer Mt: auf diese Form fürbracht worden.*

[11] M. KRUHEK, *Krajiške utvrde i obrana Hrvatskog Kraljevstva tijekom 16. stoljeća*, Zagreb 1995; ŠTEFANEC, *Diet in Bruck an der Mur.*

the Slavonian and Croatian nobility as well as its representative bodies – the Croatian-Slavonian Diet and Ban – also reacted. Fifthly, the Habsburg king balanced between the interests of the Inner-Austrian military administration and the interests of the Croatian noblemen and Diet, de facto assisting the first and simulating support for the latter. The majority of newcomers were supposed to arrive from the Ottoman side of the Border. After being invited and attracted by the military border commanders, they began arriving in groups, mostly in an organised manner. Their status and rights were assured or even to be improved beyond the levels that they had under the Ottoman Empire.

Gomirje, an irrelevant and abandoned place on the Croatian Border, came to the focus of attention of various parties towards the end of the 16th century. Due to the quantity of sources, the case of Gomirje would therefore serve as a good case study for the proposed examination on tolerance/intolerance patterns – though it was just one exemplary contested zone, among many similar in contemporary Croatian and Slavonian Military Borders/Kingdoms[12].

In the described circumstances the grounds for intolerant behaviour towards newcomers could be manifold – economic, social, religious, military and so on. In which form did the intolerant behaviour appear or did it appear at all? Did the domination of economic interests result with religious tolerance? These questions remain to be examined.

The newcomers

The first "actors in this story" were newcomers - Ottoman subjects of Christian faith who were convinced into moving with various promises. They were mostly Slavs. Up to the 1570s a relatively small number of Croat Catholics remained on the Ottoman side. Those who could still be lured to relocate were the groups of Orthodox Vlachs. People arriving on the Habsburg side were mostly called Vlachs (*Walachos*), though often they could be referred to as *Rasciani* or *Rascianer*[13]. They were either transhumant cattle breeders

[12] Chronology of conflicts for Gomirje was presented by Milan Radeka. M. RADEKA, *Gornja Krajina ili Karlovačko vladičanstvo: Lika, Krbava, Gacka, Kapelsko, Kordun i Banija*, Zagreb 1975, pp. 54-63.

[13] IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 11-12. Though Aleksa Ivić presented many citations from sources where Vlachs were identified as Rascians (*Ibidem*, pp. 11-16) this is still an inadequate evidence for the identification of all Vlachs as Serbs. Vjekoslav Klaić and Ferdo Šišić also identified Vlachs as Serbs at the time (though with somewhat different

or already sedentarized transhumant population, living in extended families and possessing thousands of livestock[14]. They were under the jurisdiction of the Serbian Patriarchy of Peć (It was a period of time when some patriarchs of Peć maintained close relations with the Pope.). They mostly spoke new-štokavian, ijekavijan dialect. On the Bosnian-Croatian border at the time, they were relatively numerous. Their economic and confessional status on the Ottoman side significantly aggravated during the Long War (1593-1606). Many of these Vlachs, even entire villages, were motivated to abandon the Ottoman vassalage and enter into the Habsburg service.

Transfers were negotiated with the Croatian nobility and military authorities. Military authorities sent their commanders to the Ottoman side promising privileges. On the Vlach side, Orthodox priests, mostly Orthodox monks (*kaluđeri*) played a large part in the negotiations. Seniors from Vlach communities were commonly closely related to these priests and monks, through family relations or by interest. Relocations and settlements started to be increasingly arranged from the 1590s. Settlement contracts were made by the Zrinski and Frankopan families or the military commanders and the Croatian Ban on one side and by the senior Vlachs and Orthodox monks on the other.

From 1599 and in subsequent years several hundreds of souls would be settled in a number of waves. It decreased the military potential of the Ottomans whom Vlachs had served until that time. Vlachs were experienced in war but much less in the cultivation of land. They needed a lot of space for cattle breeding and strong logistical backup in terms of initial financial means and victuals for their upkeep in the first years of their arrival. These were promised (though seldom provided) by military authorities or the nobility – regarding under whose conditions the Vlachs arrived. Vlachs also required numerous religious and traditional Vlach privileges.

objectives). Due to numerous reasons, there is no ground for the attribution of nationality as early as the 16th and 17th centuries, especially for such culturally and ethnically complex populations as the Vlachs.

[14] For the outstanding explanation of Vlachs in socio-economic and cultural terms see Bogović, *Katolička crkva i pravoslavlje*, pp. 14-17. See also a detailed study of complex relations between the Roman Catholicism and Serbian Orthodox faith on the Military Border from the 16th to the 19th centuries in D. Roksandić, 'Religious Tolerance and Division in the Krajina: The Croatian Serbs of the Habsburg Military Border', in *Christianity and Islam in Southeastern Europe, East European Studies. Occasional Paper*, nr 47, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington D.C. 1997, pp. 49-82. On the status of Vlachs see also Burić, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, pp. 167-173.

Vlachs preferred to become free *soldiers* under the military authorities. Soldiers obtained land in return for their military service and were not obliged to feudal dues. Heads of the Zrinski and Frankopan families wanted to settle them as *private Vlachs* or *serfs*[15]. A private Vlach of some nobleman was a free person serving in the nobleman's military troops, liberated of manual labour (*robat*) and paying lower or higher cash dues to the nobleman as well as Vlach tithe (*vlaška desetina*)[16]. A serf was personally bound to the nobleman and was obliged to an entire spectrum of feudal dues from manual to cash dues. When their status as free soldiers was violated by the military officers or by the nobility, newcomers complained intensely to the king.

Military Border authorities

Vlachs mostly arrived on the Habsburg side of the Border on the invitation of border commanders. Negotiations started when in 1580 the Ottomans extensively started to settle Vlachs into the Lika region and the area of Brekovica and Stijena[17], which significantly increased combat potential of Ottoman border troops. Croatian Border commanders like Weikhard Auersperg, until 1581, and Jobst Joseph von Thurn after him were attacking the Ottoman territory attempting to stop Vlach settlements, but without success[18]. The Habsburgs could not engage additional paid soldiers and efficiently answer this threat. After a sequence of failures they changed their tactics. As a countermeasure they started to attract Vlachs to the Habsburg side of the Border promising similar privileges as they had on the Ottoman side.

Since this paper focuses on the Gomirje region, it will provide just the necessary framework as to the migrations to the rest of the Croatian Border. Negotiations and migrations on the Croatian Border started in the middle of the 1580s. A better organised and better documented phase followed from the middle of the 1590s. In the mid 1590s, as already observed by Aleksa Ivić, the commanding personnel at the military border changed. Juraj Lenković became the commander-in-chief of the Croatian Border in March 1594 and Sigismund Herberstein became the commander-in-chief

[15] F. Moačanin, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', pp. 690-691.

[16] Adamček, *Agrarni odnosi*, pp. 519-521, pp. 533-534, pp. 540-541.

[17] Ivić, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 7-8; Burić, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, p. 170.

[18] Ivić, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 7-8.

of the Slavonian Border in May 1594. In 1595, Archduke Maximilian was replaced by the active and energetic Archduke Ferdinand[19]. Dominated by military objectives, all of them were most ardent supporters of Vlach migrations. Lower ranking commanders followed, for example captains of Senj - Josip Rabatta until 1601 and Daniel Frankol after 1601. From 1597, waves of settlers began to move to the Habsburg side. Such chronology of migrations on the Croatian Border corresponds to the one on the Slavonian Border that has been presented by Karl Kaser[20]. All in all, higher and lower ranking officers attracted hundreds of Vlach families from the Ottoman to the Habsburg side of the Border i.e. the Croatian and Slavonian territories though historiography still awaits additional research to adequately reconstruct migrations in the area[21].

In order to maintain strategic functioning of the defence system they financed, Inner-Austrian Estates had to have a military control on the Border. They considered it to be necessary to control the shortest connection between the Border and the Inner-Austrian Lands, which went north-south, from Graz to Karlovac, disregarding the fact that this would intersect the Zrinski family interest route that went east-west. The economic prosperity of Croatian nobles and estates was not their priority. They wanted to repopulate the area. In their design the Vlachs were at their disposal and could be well used for military service. Since money was short, the newcomers were supposed to be granted with lands in return for military service. The land was easy to give since it mostly belonged to the Croatian nobility and not to the archduke or the Inner-Austrian Estates[22]. At the request of military commanders, nobility would accept settlers at first, but soon it began to utter complaints. The archduke would often reject these complaints claiming that the land had been abandoned and desolate for decades.

[19] *Ibidem*, p. 17.

[20] A comprehensive list of the documented arrivals of Vlachs to the Slavonian Border from 1587 to 1600 was made by Karl Kaser. KASER, *Freier Bauer und Soldat*, Croatian ed. Zagreb 1997, vol. I, p. 89. See also F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', pp. 689-690, and further ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, pp. 519-541.

[21] From 1584, Vlachs from Lika were on two occasions brought from Lika to the Croatian Border by commander-in-chief Andrew Auersperg. Smaller groups followed. In 1586, Vlachs from villages Dugonoge, Breznik, Rista and Humić surrendered to the Habsburgs. In 1600, Lenković worked on the transfer of Vlachs and from 1601 his work was continued by Veit Khisl. In August 1601, one group was brought by the Captain of Senj Joseph Rabatta. In the winter of 1601, one group was brought by Captain Daniel Frankol, and so on. IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 9, 29-30, 33. More on various settlements among others also in ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, pp. 520-521.

[22] On the paradigm "peasant-soldier" see KASER, *Freier Bauer und Soldat*.

Border commanders who were mainly Inner-Austrian also attempted to exploit the Vlachs. They imposed various charges upon them. Vlachs would have to pay judicial fees and offer gifts (or often even bribes) or a share of spoils to them. Even the Archduke disapproved of it. He did not financially profit from it and he did not want to risk any Vlach riots or their return to the Ottoman Empire. He often demanded of his Estates to behave correctly.

By defending their own Lands on the territory of the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom, Inner-Austrians always tackled the interests of some Croatian or Slavonian noblemen[23]. Conflicts with feudal owners were unavoidable. They intensified through the struggle for well paid military posts - mostly given to Inner-Austrian noblemen. Their dominant positions in the military hierarchy ran into strong and long-lasting disapproval from the Croatian-Slavonian Estates and Diet. Vlachs added yet another dimension to the conflicts that were resolved differently on the Croatian and Slavonian Borders.

Croatian magnates-families Zrinski and Frankopan

In the 16th century the Zrinski and Frankopan families held the highest offices in the Hungarian Kingdom. They were keeping their private military troops on the Croatian Border from the time when the Ottoman invasions began. Being unable to resist the Ottomans by themselves, they entered Inner-Austrian military service as experienced commanders, enrolling their horsemen and foot-soldiers into the Habsburg service, but retaining their private troops at the same time[24]. In sum, they were among a few domestic magnate families that shaped the affairs of the Hungarian-Croatian Kingdom.

In the 16th century the Zrinski and Frankopan families were also two major landowners in the remnants of the Croatian Kingdom/Croatian Border. The Zrinski family had even strengthened its position by the end of the 16th century. Its vast possessions stretched from Royal Hungary to the Adriatic Sea which enabled it to control communication routes along

[23] Fedor Moačanin notes that in some periods Carniolan Estates counted to the Croatian noblemen as their ally in their conflict with the Inner-Austrian archduke. When internal Carniolan conflicts intensified they acted in favour of Zrinski and other Croatian nobility in Vlach questions. In 1608, Carniolan Estates rejected to solve the question of the jurisdiction over Gomirje before the status of the Zrinski family was cleared. They did not want to act against the Zrinski family. F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', p. 698.

[24] N. ŠTEFANEC, *Heretik njegova veličanstva. Povijest o Jurju IV. Zrinskom i njegovu rodu*, Zagreb 2001.

the entire border with Inner-Austrian provinces - Carniola and Styria. The Zrinski and Frankopan families were the leading estate owners in the area of Gomirje. As mentioned above, the estates in this region were devastated and depopulated. Lands were left uncultivated for decades, even turning into woodland.[25] With the consolidation of defence the Zrinski and Frankopan families became interested in the re-population of these lands. The newcomers were welcomed. Some peasants were even attracted from Carniola[26] but the majority came from Ottoman territory.

Zrinskis and Frankopans, interested in the military and economic potential of the settlers, participated in the negotiations upon their arrival arranging it with the rest of border commanders. At the requirement of the Archduke and/or military commanders, the Zrinskis and Frankopans often agreed to bestow some of their lands for the settlement of Vlachs. On some occasions, border commanders asked noblemen to provide lands for Vlachs only after they had arrived. Commanders would agree upon the transfer, Vlachs would arrive on the Habsburg side but the place of settlement would often remain an open question[27]. After their arrival Vlachs have been given the status of soldiers subordinated to the military hierarchy or the status of private Vlachs subordinated to Zrinski and Frankopans as their masters.

In July and August 1600, 325 persons, of whom 125 were well-armed were settled in Gomirje by the arrangement of Commander-in-Chief Juraj Lenković (Lenković was, by the way, the son-in-law of Juraj Zrinski)[28]. Lenković asked the Inner-Austrian Aulic War Council in Graz to support the newcomers with food until they were settled and built houses. The War Council ordered Carniolan Estates to help Vlachs but they only offered meagre help replying that they also had a lack of food[29]. The settlement of Vlachs in Gomirje was followed by several other waves of settlements in the

[25] The session or household (*dim, fumus*) was considered deserted for 10 to 15 years at the most. After this, it lost the characteristics of the cultivated land and was no longer considered a taxable unit. ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, p. 59.

[26] *Ibidem*, pp. 532-533.

[27] In August 1605, after Vlachs already came, the archduke asked Zrinski to give additional lands around Moravice and Delnice for the settlement of "*fine and respectable*" Vlachs with their wives and children brought recently from Ostrožac field by Captain Veit Khisl. SHK, vol. I, p. 345.

[28] IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 29-30. Adamček states that the commander of the Croatian Border settled two large groups of Vlachs (around 300 persons) from Bosnia to Gomirje in August 1600. ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, p. 520.

[29] At the end, the newcomers in Gomirje were given yearly provision in cash (200 guldens) from 1605. SHK, vol. II, p. 154; IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 29-30.

adjacent areas of Moravice and Vrbovsko, belonging to the Frankopans and to Lič, belonging to the Zrinskis[30].

Shortly after the arrival Zrinski and Frankopans intended to turn the Vlach soldiers in Gomirje into private Vlachs. This meant the imposition of Vlach dues and their extensive military use - if necessary. On 26th March, 1601, Juraj Zrinski began to protest. He asked Archduke Ferdinand for direct control over those Vlachs that were settled on his lands in Gomirje *without his knowledge* some two years before[31]. Zrinski started to provide numerous reasons for the subordination of Vlachs and their withdrawal from the military authority of the Archduke and Inner-Austrians. He wanted to make them subordinate because "Vlachs are committing significant and intolerable damages to me and my poor subjects and this should not be allowed to happen because they are on my land and they legally belong to me"[32]. Furthermore, Vlachs in Gomirje "are not harming only me and my poor subjects but also, as I found out from the truthful reports of my officials, that Vlachs are secretly stealing young children and selling them to the Turks". After some time he again wrote to Archduke Ferdinand saying that "there is so little use of Vlachs and so much damage to everybody since they still faithfully correspond with the Turks and rob passengers threatening public security"[33]. Still, since he had "many other of the same Vlachs on his properties that always hurried to the designated place to help in dangerous times" he promised to continue with such practice and aid the Croatian Border commander whenever he would ask[34].

In April 1602, a group of some 300 Vlachs complained to the Carniolan Estates that they came to Gomirje persuaded by the commander-in-chief Lenković and Captain Frankol, gaining nothing in return. "The possessions we brought with us were spent or sold", they said, and "we were experiencing

[30] In May 1605, a group of 500 (Ivić states 700) people, of whom 200 soldiers were brought by Captain Frankol from Kotari in Lika (Krmpote) to Lič. In May 1605, a group from Ostrovica was brought by Captain Khisl to the Frankopan lands from Mrežnica to Tounj and to Moravice and Delnice. SHK, vol. I, pp. 350-351; V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, Zagreb 1973, pp. 623-624; IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 34-39.

[31] "Euer fr. Dht. in vnderthenigkhait hiemit zu behelligen habe ich gehors. nit vmbgehen khönnen Das wie vngefähr vor zwayen jahren der herr baan vnd generall obrister in Cravatten herr Georg Lenkowitsch, mein herr aiden, was Wallachen auss der Tüerkhey gebracht, sie auf meinen aigenthumblichen grundt vnd poden ohne mein vorwissen bey Goimer genandt gefuert vnd soliche gegendt ihnen zu bewohnen eingegeben..."; in SHK, vol. I, p. 293.

[32] SHK, vol. I, p. 293.

[33] SHK, vol. I, pp. 310-311.

[34] On 26th August, 1602. SHK, vol. I, pp. 308-310.

harsh death and famine". Besides this, they said, "the Zrinskis were treating us as peasants or forcing us to leave, while we only wanted to settle abandoned lands around Vrbovsko and Moravice held by the Zrinskis, and Kamensko held by the Frankopans that were promised by commander Lenković. We are not able to serve two masters in the same time", they concluded[35]. The Vlachs were increasingly dissatisfied by the way they were being handled. They required the confirmation of their status and privileges threatening that they will return to the Ottoman side[36].

Juraj Zrinski insisted on his own viewpoint: "Since these Vlachs are settled on my land and keep their sheep and other cattle here during winter, I took the tithe from them in accordance with the custom... I am also a poor soldier and my land was taken to be given to another. Therefore, I am not asking from Vlachs anything more than from the others. ...I simply can not stand to have them on my land in such status any longer"[37]. The Zrinskis asked the archduke Ferdinand to give another property to Vlachs or to officially submit Vlachs to them as private Vlachs[38]. Still, they had little success[39].

Vlachs from Lič took an oath of subordination to the Zrinskis in 1605 as their private Vlachs. Here, Zrinski wanted to turn private Vlachs into serfs. This meant the imposition of all seigniorial dues and taxes. In 1606, Vlachs from Lič revoked their pledge to the Zrinskis[40]. They complained that "they are in many ways molested by Zrinski and regarded as his peasants which they could allow or bear no longer".[41] They fiercely protested wanting to

[35] SHK, vol. I, p. 306.

[36] IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, pp. 38-39.

[37] On September 25, 1602. "*I would also like to obtain 25 haramias that would be paid from Karlovac, for the tower in Lič* (Vlachs were also settled in Lič, N.Š.), *which I built for the defence of the Maritime Border, Croatia and Carniola*. SHK, vol. I, pp. 310-311. Zrinski also wrote directly to the King. King Rudolf II answered on 22th October, 6002, stating that he would request a report on Vlachs who are known for their malevolent behaviour. SHK, vol. I, p. 313.

[38] Between two Diet sessions, Juraj wrote a letter to the Archduke on 26th August, 1602, explaining that Gomirje is his property and asking the Archduke to subordinate Vlachs on his territory to him so that he could designate a commander for them. SHK, vol. I, pp. 308-309. On 5th September, 1602, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet supported the claim made by the Zrinski asking the archduke to subordinate the Vlachs or to transfer them to some other place. F. ŠIŠIĆ, *Acta comitialia Regni Croatiae Dalmatiae Slavoniae*, vol. IV, Zagreb 1917, p. 428; R. SAMARDŽIĆ, R. VESELINOVIĆ and T. POPOVIĆ (eds.), *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. III/1, *Srbi pod tuđinskom vlašću 1537-1699*, Beograd 1993, p. 460.

[39] See also RADEKA, *Gornja Krajina*, pp. 54-63.

[40] F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', p. 696; ADAMČEK, *Agrarani odnosi*, p. 533.

[41] April 25, 1606. SHK, vol. I, p. 350.

change their lord following the example of other Vlachs who mostly settled as soldiers[42].

The Zrinski and Frankopan families were unanimous in their attitude towards the Vlachs. Still, the affair was complicated further by the internal conflicts between these two families – each claiming to be the rightful owner of Gomirje and its surroundings from ancient times. The Frankopans and Zrinskis started their private duel over Gomirje property rights just when Vlachs started to settle there and the estates could be profitable again. Both families started with intense lobbying to solve the property litigation to their own advantages. Both of them wanted the territory on the basis of some ambivalent clauses from the Zrinski-Frankopan private contracts of mutual inheritance from 1544 and 1550. The Zrinskis had more success at first. Juraj often wrote to the Archduke: "Gomirje is mine and if Frankopan has some possessions nearby, he does not have Gomirje. It has been a patrimony of the Zrinski family for years"[43]. Moreover: "Frankopan never had a claim over it, and he will not have it in the future ... and I am, once more, asking the Archduke ... to subordinate these Vlachs to me so that I could punish them for their misdeeds..."[44]. The Frankopans required the same, sending almost identical letters about the evil-doings and untrustworthiness of the Vlachs.

Archduke Ferdinand and the military authorities stuck to their agenda. The Archduke replied negatively to Zrinski and Frankopan requests, firstly on 4th October 1601, declaring that "he could not subordinate these Vlachs to him or to the Frankopans because the Emperor himself privileged them for a certain period of time, as well as all other Vlachs arriving from the border, in order to use them in military service in the case of need"[45]. The son of Juraj Zrinski continued to exchange such letters without real results[46].

[42] SHK, vol. I, pp. 343-344, pp. 348-351.

[43] On August 26, 1602. SHK, vol. I, pp. 308-309.

[44] SHK, vol. I, pp. 310-311.

[45] SHK, vol. I, pp. 296-297.

[46] On 11th November, 1602, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet extensively discussed the dispute between the Zrinski and Frankopans since none of them wanted to admit defeat. I. ERCEG, *Šišićeve bilješke za povijest Hrvatskih sabora u XVI. stoljeću*, Zagreb 1954, pp. 474-475. The Frankopans stated that: "Lenković came exactly to them to ask them if he could settle mentioned Vlachs in Gomirje. Besides, Juraj Zrinski should recollect that he handed over Gomirje along with Severin (Lukovdol) to the Frankopans". Juraj did not remember this, just the opposite, providing the evidence. He proved that Zrinski collected some dues from mentioned Vlachs. Frankopans, on the other hand, had to admit that "from the time Vlachs settled there, they did not collect one penny from them, having no incomes of them" ("i od pokle zw ondy recheny Wlahy naztanyeny, da ym yoschye nyzw nyedne hazne wzely ny dohodka nyeednoga od nyh ymyly"). SHK, vol. I, p. 312.

Over subsequent years the captains and the Archduke often warned the Zrinskis and the Frankopans to leave Vlachs in peace and stop exploiting them, since they were soldiers. In 1604, the Archduke announced that he could give the Vlachs as subjects to the Zrinskis if they pay him 80,000 guldens, which he had already spent on their maintenance. The sum was far too exaggerated[47].

In the end the Frankopans were entitled as the owners of Gomirje. Since Vuk Frankopan was captain in Ogulin from 1611 and commander-in-chief of the Croatian Border from 1626 to 1652, it probably helped the family's cause. Some Vlachs from Gomirje went to the Slavonian Border and the rest of Vlachs had to submit to the Frankopans to be their landlords. Shortly after they withdrew their loyalty and disagreements continued[48]. Finally, in 1657, after many negotiations, the Vlachs contractually bought out Gomirje from Frankopans for 15,000 guldens[49].

The "Local Inhabitants"

In the territory considered, there still existed an autochthonous population in nearby Ogulin and the surrounding area. Through the 16th century, the 'natives' in and around Ogulin were permeated by smaller groups of settlers, arriving around 1530 and after and often serving as soldiers and spies to the Ottoman territory[50]. These old settlers could enjoy privileges for their military service given by feudal owners. It meant that they were liberated from *robat* in return for their brave military service but they still had to pay dues to their feudal owner and tithe to the Catholic Church[51]. Even better status was promised to new settlers, upon their arrival to Gomirje and

[47] Archduke Ferdinand also ordered that Vlachs should be given 2,000 forints annually. ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, p. 520.

[48] SHK, vol. II, pp. 157-161.

[49] In 1657 Vlachs had to promise that they would return the land to Frankopans if they pay them back 15,000 guldens, if borders of Croatia would extend and if Vlachs from Gomirje would be resettled closer to the new borders. Only after this settlement with Frankopans would Vlachs from Gomirje obtain their "privileges", in 1660. F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', pp. 696-697; ADAMČEK, *Agrarni odnosi*, pp. 520-521.

[50] BURIĆ, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, p. 170. In 1579, Inner-Austrian military authorities commanded that the Vlachs should be settled away from the frontier in order to prevent spying and that the imprisoned Ottoman soldiers should not be kept on the border or in the area around Metlika but relocated as far as possible. SHK, vol. I, p. 80.

[51] Their privileges were renewed from time to time. SHK, vol. II, pp. 126-127, 154, 162.

surroundings. It directly compromised the status of the 'old settlers' and domestic population around Ogulin in military and economic terms. Vlach arrivals to various parts of the Border incited new patterns of intolerant behaviour. Conflicts escalated over the usage of pastures and woods. Vlachs who arrived in Gomirje immediately started to clear lands and cultivate them still retaining a large number of cattle as one of the main sources of their subsistence[52]. Vlachs often did not obtain enough land for their needs so they used pastures and woods that did not belong to them. They used alternative - intolerant and unofficially permitted methods - to provide for their cattle. It incited discontent and revolts in the locals who had little understanding of the Vlachs' situation and acted rather intolerantly towards them. This also happened in the area of Ogulin and Gomirje where old settlers (old frontiersmen) defended their exclusive rights to designated pastures and woods[53]. Noble landowners that started to restore their estates in the region contributed to the tensions because they claimed additional lands.

Military Border officers constantly attempted to extract financial benefits from the population in the area (they ran judicial affairs and earned money from various legal fines, took gifts and bribes and participated in spoils). Frankopans were among these officers[54]. Every commander-in-chief of the Croatian Border claimed his direct jurisdiction over the newcomers, denying jurisdiction to captains and lower officers. It caused constant conflicts between the officers on various levels of the hierarchy. It was rather vivid in the case of Gomirje, because the captain in Ogulin (Vuk Frankopan) had to constantly struggle for his jurisdiction over the newcomers from Plaški to Gomirje which was questioned by the commander-in-chief on the Croatian Border[55].

The Croatian-Slavonian Diet

The Diet summoned lesser nobles. Since they were individually too weak to efficiently protest on their own in various complex matters, they were using the Diet to utter their vote institutionally, through legislation. The Inner-

[52] F. MOAČANIN, 'Pokušaji organizacije Vojne krajine', pp. 410-411.

[53] DABIĆ, *Vojna krajina*, pp. 79-80. See also BURIĆ, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, p. 169.

[54] Even if Vlachs were given inner judicial autonomy, border officers found a way to involve and control them, extracting legal and illegal benefits. F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', pp. 697-698.

[55] SHK, vol. II, 115-116; F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', pp. 697-698.

Austrian success in the settlement plans would result with the alienation of noble's lands from their feudal owners, additionally weakening the economic basis of the Croatian-Slavonian nobility and the Croatian-Slavonian Diet as its institution. Therefore, the Diet strongly opposed the settlement of Vlachs as soldiers[56]. The majority of Croatian-Slavonian noblemen were Catholics, unhappy with Protestants in the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom. The Diet also endorsed laws against Protestants with the religious pretext and prescribed laws against Vlachs who were mostly Orthodox, under an economic and religious pretext:

a) The Protestants in the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom were influential magnates (Zrinski, Tahy, Erdödy, Ungnad, etc.) as well as 'German' soldiers and commanders in border fortresses protected by Inner-Austrian Protestant Estates. The Diet had been articulating laws against Protestants since 1567, after Juraj Drašković, who was the Ban and the Bishop of Zagreb, returned from his successful participation in the Council of Trent. Article 1 of the conclusions of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet from 1604 (sanctioned by King Rudolf II in 1608) states that Croatian-Slavonian Estates are firmly deciding to expel all heretics and especially preachers of the Protestant faith from the Zrinski estate Ozalj or those arriving from Styria or others, while the Bishop of Zagreb should keep an eye on and prevent all those heresies[57]. In 1606, when the Viennese Peace Treaty asserted the freedom of confession in the Hungarian Kingdom for a long period to come, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet discussed the issue again and reinforced the decision that Protestants should be expelled from the Kingdom. Commissaries of the Zrinski and Erdödy families at the Diet protested against confessional restrictions but were quietened down. The Bishop of Zagreb was even prompted to use Ban and his army to evict Protestants from the Kingdom[58]. Although the laws against Protestants were welcomed and assisted by the Habsburgs, implementation of such intolerant policy toward Protestants depended on the extent and reach of the Diet's and the Bishop's executive power – and it was rather limited!

b) According to Article 4 of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet from 1604 (1608), all Vlachs should pay tithe to the Catholic Church acknowledging its jurisdiction in religious domain. The Vlachs should also give *terragium* to their landlords and personally subject to them[59]. The Diet actually offered three possible solutions to the Vlach question. Firstly, Vlachs should be subordinate to the landowners in feudal terms, accept the Bishop of Zagreb as their religious authority (including the payment of tithe to the Church) and submit to the jurisdiction of the Croatian-Slavonian Ban and Diet in political terms[60]. Secondly, the landowners should be awarded with other land if Vlachs remained on their land. Thirdly, the Vlachs should be completely removed from the noble's land.

Regarding Vlachs Croatian-Slavonian magnates and nobility united around one goal. Consequently, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet supported the claim made by Protestant Juraj Zrinski who asked the Archduke to recognise Zrinski's seigniorial rights or to resettle Vlachs somewhere else[61]. The Diet became annoyed by Zrinski's non-attendance at the Diet, his disrespect of the Diet's decisions and his Protestant orientation. However they supported his demands on principal as support to all noblemen in the Kingdom. Possible religious discord with the Orthodox Vlachs was secondary to the establishment of feudal rights for a time being (a few decades later it would change).

The Habsburgs sanctioned the Article 4 but they did not support it *de facto*. The Habsburgs did not really want to cause detriment among the Vlach population, quite the opposite. The Habsburgs and Inner-Austrians worked against the Croatian-Slavonian Diet in this instance. Again, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet and Ban, as two essential institutions in the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom, were again not strong enough to execute the Diet's decisions since they did not have enough executive power.

First of all, throughout the 16th century the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom did not develop effective institutions. The Kingdom was from the 15th century exposed to intensive Ottoman conquests, followed by migrations and destruction of the economic basis of the Croatian-Slavonian nobility. Moreover, the Croatian and Slavonian nobility was from the 15th century avoiding the tax agreement with the King which was a basis for the process of

[56] Settlement of Vlachs as military was a significant part of the process known as the "militarization" of the Military Border. Term was theoretically well elaborated by Fedor Moačanin.

[57] D. Roksandić, *Etnos, konfesija, tolerancija*, Zagreb 2004, pp. 55-66. This article was a positive response to controversial Article 22 of the Pozsony Diet from 1604. King Rudolf II added Article 22 to the conclusions of the Pozsony Diet although its content was not discussed at the Diet. The Article 22 was directed against Protestants. It caused dissent and disbelief in the Hungarian Kingdom but it was joyously received by the Croatian-Slavonian Diet that responded with his article 1 from 1604. V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, pp. 566-568.

[58] Article 22 from 1604 was withdrawn. *Ibidem*, pp. 577-579.

[59] *Idem*. This article follows article 14 of the Pozsony Diet from the same year (1604), *Ibidem*, p. 568.

[60] F. Moačanin, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', p. 690.

[61] Šišić, *Acta comitalia*, pp. 428, 489.

state building in the west, in France[62] as well as Spain[63]. Croatian and Slavonian estates did not succeed to develop institutions of a modern state in their own Kingdom. Royal institutions were located outside the Kingdom so that they did not adequately participate in the functioning of royal institutions either. It had grave political and financial consequences[64]. Domestic institutions

[62] Comparative analysis of French provinces from the end of the 15th century onwards, presented by Donna Bohanan, points out to the all-encompassing bureaucratisation of the French society where the major role on the local level was played by the nobility which the crown had to contend with in order to increase its direct tax incomes. The crown grew in strength only when it managed to collect more taxes. Therefore, it developed various patterns of behaviour in various French provinces siding with those noble groups that could execute its goals. The nobility complied with its desires if obtaining an exemption from taxes or a share in political power (offices) or both. Such interaction of kings and nobility in Western Europe in the sphere of taxation resulted with the institutionalisation of the Kingdoms and often, though not always, with the ongoing centralization of 'early modern state' management. Power was mainly exhibited through the institutions. Patronage and clientage were used in order to control the institutional functioning, especially in remote parts of the Kingdom. Consequently, the strata that had the most use of such institutionalisation was the nobility but transformed nobility, with fewer old families and more of those newly ennobled on the basis of merit and office. D. BOHANAN, *Crown and Nobility in Early Modern France*, Houndmills-Basingstoke-Hampshire 2001. It was the time when the fierce wars of religion were taking place in France (1562-1598) escalating with the St. Bartholomew's Eve. These wars also manifested as the wars between several great noble houses (Burbon, Valois, Guise and Montmorency) each with its own ramified clientage. The king had to carefully balance each step in order to remain in power, especially with regard to foreign threats. PH. BENEDICT, 'The Wars of Religion 1562-1598', in M.P. HOLT (ed.), *Renaissance and Reformation France, 1500-1648*, Oxford 2002, pp. 147-175; D. MALAND, *Europe in the Sixteenth Century*, Houndmills-Basingstoke-Hampshire-London 1982 (1973), pp. 315-333.

[63] Hillay Zmora discussed the long-lasting balancing of power between the nobility and the crown in the state making process of the early modern Europe. The large Kingdoms of the 15th century witnessed a compromise between the nobility and the ruler. In Spain and France, rulers managed to turn indirect taxes into direct taxes, but the Estates retained the right to approve them again and again. By this, the nobility agreed to pay taxes but also supervised their collection and spending. Therefore, the basis for the development of the modern state was set. The state obtained its incomes, it could develop its institutions and the nobility ensured its political influence and its promotion opportunities through inclusion into the institutional functioning. It was not achieved in Germany since the *Kurfürsten* retained their regal powers and the king was not strong enough to impose himself. H. ZMORA, *Monarchy, Aristocracy and the Estate in Europe 1300-1800*, London-New York 2001.

[64] Bohannan and Zmora are discarding the phrase "the crisis of the aristocracy", mainly based on the research of James Wood. Constant struggle of the nobility for power within a growing state mechanism went parallel with the transformation of the noble strata. The aristocracy remained in power - it only underwent an inner transformation. ZMORA, *Monarchy, Aristocracy*; BOHANAN, *Crown and Nobility*. On the ennoblement strategies of the 16th and 17th century French nobility see also J.-M. CONSTANT, *La noblesse française aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles*, Paris 1994, pp. 93-166, pp. 193-215. On the creations and promotions of the nobility in the English

were ineffective, unadjusted to new circumstances and financially weak[65]. As a result they had to accept ramified military administration controlled by the Inner-Austrian estates in their own Kingdom which drastically weakened the military and political authority of the Croatian-Slavonian Ban also[66].

Secondly, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet was a congregation of the lower and middle nobility. Throughout the 16th century, magnates often ignored the decisions of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet and settled their issues at the Hungarian Diet in Pozsony. The Croatian-Slavonian Diet even threatened to exclude them from its work, but it was an empty threat since the Kingdom needed those magnates and their troops as defence. Even if sanctioned by the King, the Diet's decisions could be implemented only if they did not tangle with opposing interests of some magnates, or the interests of the Habsburg King and his relatives in Inner-Austria. The Croatian-Slavonian Diet simply did not have political and financial stronghold to execute its own decisions.

As a consequence, only a few magnates managed to solve the Vlach question to their own advantage, but the affairs were settled with the Habsburgs individually and not through a Diet. Zrinski managed to avert the Habsburgs from issuing Vlachs in Lič with "privileges", but it was done through Zrinski's private action directly in the Habsburg's court in Prague and not through the Diet. According to Fedor Moačanin, Nikola Zrinski probably interrupted the expedition of already signed "privileges" to Vlachs in Gomirje[67]. The Frankopan possession of the Gomirje area was recognised but not because of the Diet's pressure but because of their military value for the Habsburgs on the Croatian Border.

Therefore, intolerant decisions and actions of the Diet towards Protestants and Orthodox in the Kingdom had to be investigated bearing in mind the Kingdom's institutional insufficiencies, individual magnate strategies and the balance between economic and religious policies of all involved parties.

case, where mentioned issues resolved differently, see H. MILLER, *Henry VIII and the English Nobility*, Oxford 1989 (1986), pp. 6-37.

[65] Nada Klaić also called attention to the illusory politics of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet and its incapability that was again and again visible in naïve requests addressed to the king. N. KLAIĆ, 'Borba plemstva za vlast u krajini', pp. 704-705.

[66] By the end of the 16th century the Ban's troops were cut by half - to some 500 men. The Ban and the Diet could not finance even them. In military terms, from 1578 the Ban had no jurisdiction over Border commanders. The Croatian-Slavonian Diet had no steady financial incomes (incomes from taxes were meagre and irregular). One of the main claims of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet in the 16th and 17th century is the return of Ban's authorities, both military and political. V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, passim; ŠTEFANEC, *Diet in Bruck an der Mur*.

[67] F. MOAČANIN, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', p. 696.

The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church had religious jurisdiction over the entire Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom. In the Protestant case, the Catholic Church was of the outmost importance to the Habsburgs. Namely, from circa 1540s to 1600 almost 90% of the nobility, and the prevalent amount of the remaining population in Habsburg Hereditary Lands and the Hungarian Kingdom was Protestant. A large number of Protestants was also present in the Czech Kingdom. Fierce counter-reformation led by the Habsburgs in all of their provinces began from 1560s, intensifying towards 1590s – just in the period when the repopulation of the Croatian and Slavonian Border was under way. The counter-reformation was the most important Habsburg agenda next to the anti-Ottoman defence. Due to the strong position of the Catholic Church in the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom, the Habsburgs did not have to worry about the religious orientation of the majority of the Croatian and Slavonian nobility. They were dominantly Catholic with the exception of magnates (Zrinski, Erdödy, Tahy, etc.). In the period considered, the Catholic Church could not convert those magnates though it tried. Despite intolerant politics towards Protestants, it had to cooperate with Protestant magnates as well as the Habsburgs had.

The Catholic Church had limited influence on Gomirje affairs, but I will shortly present its position since it greatly influenced the attitudes and actions of the Croatian-Slavonian Diet. In the 16th century the Catholic Church was one of two strongest feudal owners in the Slavonian Kingdom – next to the Protestant Erdödy family[68]. The Catholic Church had economic interests in subordinating the newcomers on its estates conducting a policy equivalent to the majority of Croatian and Slavonian noblemen and magnates. Until 1609, many more Vlachs settled on the Slavonian Border than on the Croatian Border. Furthermore, settlement in Slavonia was rapid and more organised. The greatest problem for the Catholic Church was the settlement of Vlachs on Church properties, especially those near Ivanić. From 1599, they repeatedly wrote to the Archduke to subordinate newly arrived Vlachs under their

[68] Tomo Erdödy was Croatian-Slavonian Ban until 1595, cooperating with the Habsburgs. Still, he abandoned the office because he was poorly and irregularly paid by the Habsburgs. He was replaced by two proxies - Ivan Drašković and Bishop of Zagreb Gašpar Stankovački because the king wanted to additionally weaken the position of the Ban and guarantee military supremacy to his "German" commanders. V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, 512-515; IVIĆ, *Seoba Srba u Hrvatsku i Slavoniju*, p. 17.

feudal and religious jurisdiction[69]. The King was rather sympathetic and considerate in this particular case. He ordered the Archduke to please the Bishop of Zagreb as much as possible. The King actually said that it would only be fair to subordinate the Vlachs to the Bishop if they were settled on Church properties, allowing the Church to privately negotiate with the Vlachs about their possible privileges[70]. Bishop Nikola Selnički was satisfied but the Archduke had problems since he had already promised military status to these Vlachs and could not revoke it. In the end the Archduke won[71]. Probably, the whole issue was arranged between the King and the Archduke, attempting to show the King's consideration while the Archduke should take blame and guilt in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Regarding Vlachs, the Habsburgs and the Catholic Church had diverse military and economic interests.

Vlach settlers were led by Orthodox bishops and priests. They were addressing Habsburg authorities as Christians, explicitly appealing to the Christian unity in the conflict with the *Mahometan unchristian faith*[72]. Their attitude could be well illustrated through their following statements: "We fled from the tyrannical Turkish service and power to the Christian land to be subordinate to the Emperor's power and service [*gwalt und dienst*]. With our honour, wives and children and with our lives and properties, we will always be loyal and obedient to the Emperor, as soldiers and frontiersmen of the beloved Christianity against the universal enemy of the Christian faith ... we will not accept any other authority as some ordinary peasants that can be taxed or burdened with various dues and labour services". Or: "We came here from the Mahometan servitude humbly accepting the rule of Your Majesty and desiring to protect our loving homeland ...", and so on[73]. These were common place in Vlach complaints and a Vlach standpoint for the next several decades. They emphasized their Christian faith as a factor uniting them with the Emperor against the common enemy of Christianity. How could it be that religion was not the primary problem in the negotiations of the Catholic Church with Orthodox Vlachs in the period considered[74]?

[69] SHK, vol. I, pp. 269-270; V. KLAIĆ, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, pp. 543-544; N. KLAIĆ, 'Borba plemstva za vlast u krajini', pp. 704-705.
[70] SHK, vol. I, pp. 270-271.
[71] SHK, vol. I, pp. 272-273.
[72] From 1595 to 1597. SHK, vol. I, pp. 214-222.
[73] SHK, vol. I, pp. 348-349, 350.
[74] See ROKSANDIĆ, 'Religious Tolerance'.

Vlachs came to the Slavonian Border in such large numbers that they were already, by 1609, allowed to establish an Orthodox Bishopric (*Pravoslavna episkopija*) centred in the Marča monastery. The Bishopric should serve the religious needs of all Orthodox believers in Hungary, Croatia, Slavonia and to the furthest borders of Carniola[75]. Orthodox Vlachs and their priests and bishops had to recognise supreme papal authority and subordinate themselves hierarchically to the bishops of Zagreb (Church Union). The bishops of Zagreb even provided them with lands[76]. Orthodox hierarchy in Slavonia accepted this solution at first[77]. The Union softened the possibility of religious clashes, appeased the Catholic Church and enabled the Habsburgs to introduce large groups of Vlachs onto the Slavonian Border and to grant them special status in 1630, known as *Statuta Valachorum*[78]. Most of the domestic nobility was also pacified by the Church Union, although grudging the Protestant military commanders and Protestant Croatian-Slavonian nobility who were settling Vlachs without regard to their Orthodox faith[79].

As far as the Gomirje region was concerned, the Catholic Church was not so strong here. Protestant nobles and a number of Inner-Austrian Protestant military commanders were much less concerned by the Orthodox beliefs of the Vlach population. In 1602, several monks (*kaluđeri*) from the Krka monastery in Ottoman Dalmatia joined the Vlach population[80]. They

[75] Burić, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, pp. 174-175, pp. 180-181. See also: D.Lj. Kašić, *Otpor marčanskoj uniji. Lepavinsko-severinska eparhija*, Beograd 1986; Z. Kudelić, *Pravoslavlje i pitanje crkvene unije u Hrvatskoj od Žitvanskog mira 1606. godine do izbora unijatskog biskupa Pavla Zoričića 1670*, Ph.D. thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Zagreb 2000.

[76] For example, the bishop of Zagreb, Ivan Domitrović, granted lands around Marča to Simeon Vratanja. M. Sladović, *Povesti Biskupijah Senjske i Modruške ili Krbavske*, Trieste 1856, pp. 431-433.

[77] The problem for the Bishopric of Zagreb through most of the 17th century was how to establish a real Union and to prevent Orthodox hierarchy to accept Union only in time of election of various officials and continue with old practices as soon as they did no longer needed the King's approval. The Bishopric of Zagreb wanted to abolish the Orthodox Bishopric and the Habsburgs did not, since it could incite rebellions. F. Moačanin, 'Masovno naseljavanje vlaha', p. 699.

[78] They obtained a status of "free peasant-soldiers", unbound by feudal lords, and possessing their own land and autonomous government in return for military service. *Statuta Valachorum* had complex consequences in the history of Military Border and civil Croatia in the future. See *Statuta Valachorum. Prilozi za kritičko izdanje*, edited by D. Roksandić and Č. Višnjić (translation Z. Blažević), Zagreb 1999.

[79] V. Klaić, *Povijest Hrvatske*, vol. 5, p. 567.

[80] Sladović, *Povesti Biskupijah*, p. 436. According to Dušan Kašić, one old monk came with the Vlachs in 1600. In 1602, several more followed (six or seven depending on the author). D. Lj. Kašić, *Manastir Gomirje. Povodom proslave 400-godišnjce osnivanja manastira*, Beograd 1997, pp. 12-13. A study of the monastery of Gomirje with an emphasis on the 18th and 19th centuries in D.Lj. Kašić. *Srpski manastiri u Hrvatskoj i Slavoniji*, Beograd 1971, pp. 37-94;

[81] The most prominent monks were Aksenije Vranković, Visarion Vučković and Mardarije Orlović. In 1621, they erected a watchtower next to the monastery. The watchtower was turned into the church tower in 1719 and next to the church tower a church was built (1730). Burić, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, p. 195; Kašić, *Manastir Gomirje*, pp. 12-15.

[82] Burić, *Biskupije Senjska i Modruška*, pp. 194-196; Kašić, *Manastir Gomirje*, pp. 16-26.

assisted the settlement and had to be rewarded and carefully handled by magnates and the military administration. They were not forced to enter the Union though they adhered to it throughout most of the 17th century. They erected a small wooden monastery with the Church of St. John the Baptist and brought with them necessary religious books and liturgical items[81]. From the beginning of the 18th century, the Orthodox monastery in Gomirje became a prominent centre of anti-unionist policy[82]. Vlachs in the Gomirje region, or in the Croatian Border as a whole, could not obtain a long-lasting judicial communal autonomy as Vlachs on the Slavonian Border had since the Zrinski and Frankopan families were gravely opposed to it. Still, their religious beliefs were not perceived as dangerous as in the Slavonian case.

Conclusion: Tolerance and Intolerance as a Play of Interest

Finally, several conclusions need to be made. I have presented one case study indicative for the large part of the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom in the 16th and the first half of the 17th century. The examined actors - the newly-arriving Vlachs, the noblemen, the military authorities, the Croatian-Slavonian Diet, the Catholic Church, the King and so on attempted to resettle desolated territory and accomplish diverse goals. Along the way they exhibited variously motivated patterns of intolerant and tolerant behaviour towards the newcomers.

To sum up, the military authorities were attempting to retain the military potential of the nobility and to establish a self-reliant and self-financing defensive system with the lowest financial input. They constantly insisted on the military value of the Vlachs, claiming that the noble's land was abandoned and unused for decades. Settling Vlachs as soldiers onto the nobles' estates and providing them with lands and special status was the least expensive method if the noble resistance was defeated. After the Vlachs were settled they were often mishandled by the military officers. The attitude towards Vlachs was dominantly opportunistic and could in no way be described as

tolerant. The attitude towards landowners and noblemen was consciously and perennially intolerant in legal terms, disrespecting their right to dispose with their lands.

Nobility was primarily interested in the economic functioning of their estates and their protection, attempting to intertwine these two goals. The landowners acted intolerantly towards the Vlachs, restricting economic and personal freedoms that were promised to them – whether the status of private Vlachs or the status of soldiers. They welcomed them under false pretences and shortly after their arrival they attempted to subordinate them as private Vlachs or serfs. Zrinski and Frankopan as well as military commanders attempted to disseminate stereotypes about Vlach treacherous and criminal behaviour mainly to facilitate fulfilment of their goals. Admittedly, Vlachs were damaging the surrounding people, robbing and plundering, using pastures that were not theirs and so on. Still, positive or negative opinions of the Vlachs became irrelevant as soon as they were subordinated.

Vlachs came explicitly because of the privileges offered, in order to improve or retain their social and economic status. Leaders of Vlach groups – in the majority of cases these were Orthodox priests or monks – were often provided with more land in return for their faithful service. Vlachs desired to obtain a status of soldier in emperor's service, exhibiting various patterns of tolerant/intolerant behaviour. They were mostly justifying their requests by the common Christian aim – the Christian unity against the Ottomans whom they had served until that time. Their status was perceived as dangerous by the "old Vlachs" and privileged inhabitants of Ogulin which resulted with respective patterns of behaviour.

In the period considered Habsburgs were waging a war against Protestants in the most of their territory. The Croatian-Slavonian Diet was prescribing fierce intolerant laws against the Protestants - though with meagre results. Similar laws were still not directed against the Orthodox. In the case of Orthodox Vlachs the Diet and the Habsburgs were almost completely preoccupied with legal, economic and military status of newcomers and not with their religious affiliation. In the examined sources there were slight signs of religious dispute between the Protestant military officers and magnates (Zrinski), Orthodox Vlachs and Catholic Habsburgs. Due to the Union, religious differences between the Catholics and the Orthodox were still considered secondary and religious issues were in practice handled from the viewpoint of Christian unity in opposition to Islam. Counter-reformation was so dominant in the religious affairs of the Croatian-Slavonian Kingdom that the majority, along with the Habsburgs, was convinced that the Orthodox population could be assimilated through the Union. The establishment and

continuation of Orthodox monasteries in Gomirje and Marča supports this line of argument. As the attempts of Union failed and the Orthodox hierarchy strengthened towards the end of the 17th century, patterns of behaviour against the Orthodox became more intolerant[83].

The main reasons of intolerant patterns of behaviour were legal status, economic advancement and military considerations – depending on the faction. On the very frontier of Islam and Christianity religious discord within Christianity resulted with religious intolerance on institutional and legal levels. Still, due to numerous presented reasons, religious intolerance did not trigger such violent practices as demonstrated in neighbouring Habsburg lands. The religious 'reconciliation' in the period and area considered was a result of interest oriented intolerance.

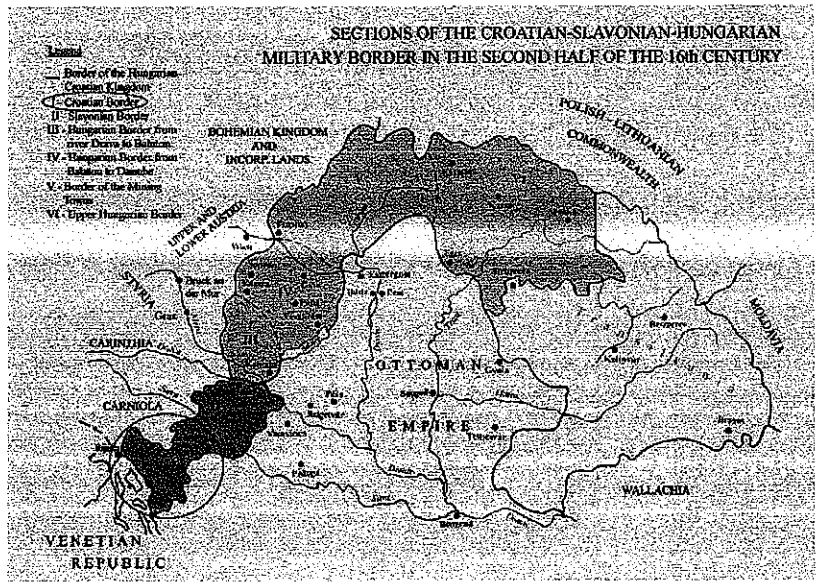

Fig. 1 - Border Sections.

[83] A comparative case is provided by Mile Bogović. He shows in the case of Dalmatia that the patterns of behaviour of both Catholic and Orthodox side became more intolerant when the Union ceased to be seen as a possible solution and with the development of the hierarchy of the Serbian Orthodox Church – around the beginning of the 18th century. BOGOVIĆ, *Katolička crkva i pravoslavlje*.

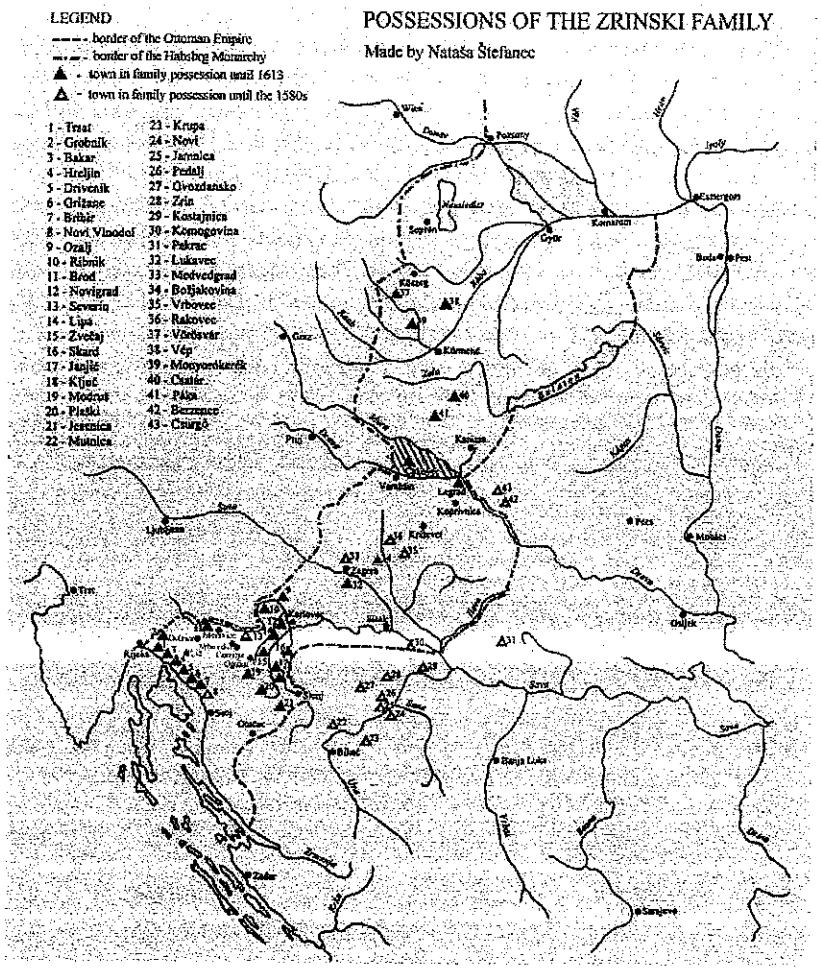

Fig. 2 - Zrinski possessions.

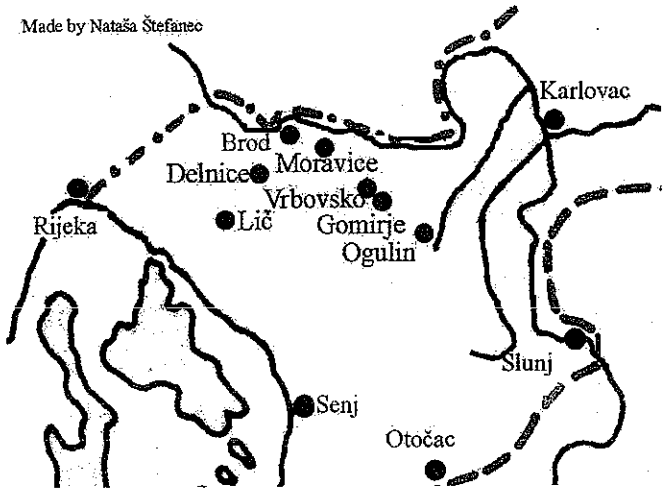

Fig. 3 - Gomirje region.