

II

BETWEEN TWO EMPIRES: SERBIAN SURVIVAL IN THE YEARS AFTER KOSOVO

Nicholas C. J. Pappas

One of the least understood yet most important periods of Serbian history is the era of foreign subjugation from the battle of Kosovo in 1389 to the First Serbian Uprising in 1804. While this period began earlier and ended later for many Serbs, these dates are often mentioned as the twilight of medieval Serbia and the dawn of modern Serbia. Most Serbs have looked upon these 415 years as a dark age in which the glories of Serbia's medieval legacy were extinguished only to be rekindled with the rise of modern Serbia and the unification of the South Slavs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This period reveals a story of the endurance, fortitude, and courage of a people subdued by and subject to two mighty empires, the Ottoman and the Habsburg, who survived and reemerged as a proud independent nation in modern times. The story of this survival is a very complex one, involving many political, social, economic, and cultural trends and events, not only involving the Serbs' relations with the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, but also with Venice and other European states and societies. In recent years many books, articles and essays have been written on various aspects of the history of the Serbs in the period after Kosovo and have given us new insights into how and why the Serbs survived as a people and reemerged as a nation after centuries of foreign rule.

This brief study will limit itself to looking at five basic factors in the survival of the Serbs in the period of Turkish and Austrian Rule. These factors are: vassalage and autonomy, military service and armed resistance, migration and emigration, the Serbian Orthodox Church, and Serbian epic culture.

The first factor to be investigated is that of vassalage and autonomy. In order to understand the importance that vassalage and autonomy had as a factor in Serbian survival, it must be remembered that the Ottoman Empire, while being the most powerful and absolute monarchy in the world in the sixteenth century, was not an all-encompassing centralized state of later times. Most of the subjects of the Sultan were ruled indirectly through feudatories who were granted land and peasants to till it in return for military service. These feudatories, known as *sipahiler*, provided the main cavalry forces for the Sultan. Different areas had different degrees of imperial control and autonomy. In addition, the Ottoman *millet* (nation) system, which divided the empire's subjects according to religious affiliation, gave some authority in civil government and law to religious leaders. The Muslim, Jewish, Orthodox (Greek and Serbian), Armenian and other ethno-religious groups had their own courts within their respective *millets*. After the initial shock and destruction of conquest, the Ottoman state's main interest was in maintaining its revenues and armed forces. At its height the Ottoman administration was not as oppressive as other states in Europe. It only became onerous and stifling when its central authority began to break down from the late sixteenth century on and the population began to suffer from rapacious local governors, greedy landowners, freebooting soldiers, and corrupt tax collectors.¹

Similarly the Austrian or Habsburg Empire was not uniformly oppressive in the sixteenth through the eighteenth century. The Holy Roman Empire was a patchwork of different Habsburg patrimonies with different political, legal, and social conditions, as well as different relations with Vienna. The Serbs, who came under Habsburg rule as a result of emigration and military service, as well as Habsburg expansion, were often granted privileges from the crown which they had to defend from the encroachments of local nobility, administrators and Catholic clergymen. It was only from the late eighteenth century on,

when the Austrian empire tried to modernize and centralize its administration in order to halt the rise of nationalism, that the Serbs had to face direct oppression from Vienna and Budapest.²

In order to understand the development of vassalage and autonomy among the Serbs after Kosovo it must be kept in mind that the medieval Serbian state, nobility, and political institutions did not immediately disintegrate after that momentous battle. The battle was so costly to both sides that neither the victors completely conquered nor were the vanquished completely defeated. Some of the surviving Serbian nobility in the south accepted the Sultan's rule, maintaining their lands and privileges in return for loyalty and military service. Thus they became vassals of the Sultan rather than the Serbian tsar. They became Christian *sipahiler*, part of the feudal cavalry of the Sultan's army. On a larger scale Tsar Lazar's son and successor, Stefan Lazarević, made peace with the new sultan and became a vassal prince, serving with Bayazid's army at the battle of Ankara against the forces of Tamerlane. The death of Sultan Bayazid at Ankara in 1403 led to strife over the sultanic succession. This disarray among the Turks allowed Stefan Lazarević to restore, in part, the territorial integrity and independence of his patrimony. However, divisions among the Serbs, together with the restoration of Ottoman power in the Balkans, led to a whittling away of Serbian independence in the fifteenth century.³

Juxtaposed between the rising Ottoman Empire and the powerful Hungarian Kingdom, the Serbian rulers and nobility attempted to perform a precarious balancing act to preserve their autonomy. To do this, they at times aligned themselves with either the Turks or the Magyars or they participated in movements such as those of Skanderbeg and Jan Hunyadi. However, the end of Hungarian power after the battle of Mohacs in 1526 left most Serbs under Ottoman sway. A few remaining Serbian nobles joined the remnants of the Hungarian nobility in giving their allegiance to the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor of Vienna.⁴

Thus most Serbs, who were peasants and herdsman, came under direct Ottoman rule in the period between the battles of Kosovo (1389) and Mohacs (1526), but in most cases this rule was not completely direct. Most Serbs, as well as other Christian subjects of the Sultan, paid their taxes and fulfilled their feudal obli-

gations through village headmen known as *knezovi*. By Muslim law they could not bear arms and were obliged to pay an additional tax in lieu of military service. In some areas a form of impressment or conscription known as the *devşirme* was practiced to recruit Christian boys into the crack infantry units and the palace service of the Sultan. It was through the *devşirme* that many Serbs, converted to Islam, and rose to high positions in the Ottoman Empire. Among the most famous of these converts was the Grand Vizier Mehmed Sokoli, brother of Makarije Sokolović, first Serbian Orthodox Patriarch of Pec.⁵ With the exception of the *devşirme*, the burden of the Serbian peasant under Ottoman rule was less oppressive than that of most peasants in Europe until the 17th century.⁶

The burden was made less difficult by the existence or development of social and political institutions on a local level which protected individuals from the direct power of the state. The extended patriarchal family, the *zadruga*, the clan and the tribe in some areas, provided solidarity and a sense of belonging to weather the hardships of foreign rule. The development of self-governing institutions on the village level with the *knezovi* and village assemblies, together with the separate legal system of the Serbian Orthodox Church, allowed for a limited degree of autonomy in many areas. This limited autonomy gave the Serbs the wherewithal to retain a religious/cultural identity among the common people of their past, through the church, epic poetry, and folk customs.⁷

Certain communities, because of livelihoods, locations, military service or other reasons, were able to retain even more autonomy from Ottoman rule. Pastoral and border communities who provided *voynuklar* and *martoloslar* (see below) for the Ottoman army, as well as warrior communities such as Montenegro, maintained an even greater degree of self-rule. Montenegro, because of its social organization based upon a tribal system, its geographical inaccessibility, its proximity to areas under Venetian control, and its inhabitants' skill with arms, became *de facto* independent by the 18th century.⁸

As one can see in the above description of the factor of autonomy in Serbian survival, military power was an important element in the creation and maintenance of autonomy. Military ser-

vice was another important factor in the survival of the Serbs in the years of foreign domination, both inside and outside of the Ottoman Empire. Because they had created by skill of arms the last great empire in the Balkans under Tsar Dušan before the coming of the Turks, the Serbs were prized as soldiers by the Ottomans, the Hungarians, the Habsburgs, the Venetians, and other powers in the years after Kosovo. Serbs served in a host of military formations throughout the Balkans and beyond. They not only used their martial prowess for their employers as a livelihood, but also utilized it in movements to gain further autonomy or independence.⁹

Besides those islamized Serbian boys who were impressed into the Janissary corps of the Sultan, many Serbs served in the Ottoman armed forces without having to change their religion. As mentioned above, the Ottoman Turks not only employed Anatolian cavalry in their conquests, but also Christian feudal cavalrymen who acknowledged Ottoman rule. These Christian *sipahiler*, many of whom were Serbs, retained their landholdings and were exempt from certain taxes in return for service with Ottoman forces. Serbian *sipahiler* participated in campaigns with the Ottoman armies at Rovine, Ankara, Varna, and Constantinople, as well as providing security in regions that otherwise would have required garrisons of Turkish troops. Such auxiliary cavalry troops existed as long as the Ottomans were confident of their complete allegiance. This allegiance was not unqualified. Many Serbs joined Hungarian and other western armies in the various efforts to stem the Ottoman tide in Southeastern Europe. By the battle of Mohacs and the subsequent conquest of Hungary, most of the Christian *sipahiler* had been eliminated either by their conversion to Islam or the loss of their estates and status.¹⁰

Following the liquidation of the vassal Serbian Despotate of Smederevo by the Ottomans in 1459, the Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus formed a new Serbian Despotate in Hungarian lands to attract Serbs to his military service. During his reign, Serbs made up a significant component of the Black Legion, the King's standing army, the Danubian river flotilla (*czajikas*), and auxiliary border troops. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Serbian warriors shifted allegiances among Ottoman, Hungarian, Habsburg and other armies to maintain their

freedom of action and rights. To paraphrase one source, they chose to be soldiers rather than serfs, because with arms in hand they were better able to preserve their religious and ethnic identity being wedged between Catholic and Muslim powers. With the defeat of the Hungarians at Mohacs, the last remnant of a Serbian vassal state, the amorphous Serbian Despotate of Hungary, disappeared. Serbs continued to serve in the armed forces of the Ottomans and the western powers, most notably the Holy Roman Empire of the Habsburgs.¹¹

In the Ottoman army, Serbs served as troops known as *voynuklar* and *martoloslar*. The *voynuklar* were auxiliary infantry who served both as logistical and combat troops, and were exempt from certain taxes. One in ten of all pastoral Christian households had to supply one *voynuk*. In the Belgrade region these troops were so important that one out of five households supplied a *voynuk*. The higher officers of the *voynuklar* were Muslims, while the lower-echelon officers were Christians. The other important Ottoman military force in which Serbs widely participated in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the *martoloslar*. Like the *voynuklar*, they were exempt from some taxes and received some irregular pay in return for military service. They were organized much like the Janissaries, with Muslim higher officers and Christian lower officers. The *martoloslar* served at various times as infantry, cavalry, marines on the riverine flotillas on the Danube and Sava, border troops in Bosnia, and rural militia in interior provinces. Both the *voynuklar* and the *martoloslar* were phased out of the Ottoman army in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries as the internal dysfunctions and external defeats of the Ottomans led to insurrectionary movements among the Christians, often led by former *voynuklar* and *martoloslar*.¹²

Some of these disbanded troops no doubt took to brigandage and joined existing *hajduk* bands or formed new ones. *Hajduks* were bandits or outlaws from authority who were often considered heroes by the Serbian population for their armed resistance to oppressive government, be it Ottoman, Habsburg, or Venetian. *Hajduk* activity increased in the Ottoman realm as internal and external troubles beset the empire in the late sixteenth and

early seventeenth centuries. *Hajduks* participated in and often led insurrectionary movements in the seventeenth century. These in turn led to Ottoman reprisals and migration or emigration of Serbs. *Hajduks* used mountainous, forested or swampy areas as hideouts and as centers for operations. Depending on local situations, hajduks were organized into bands of varying sizes. They fought in an irregular style of warfare that entailed hit and run attacks, similar to guerrilla warfare today. When necessary, as in times of crisis, bands of *hajduks* could unite into larger formations to resist Ottoman forces more effectively.¹³

Many *hajduks*, also known as *uskoks*, *morlacchi*, *begovci*, or *prebezi*, often found refuge and irregular armed service in Habsburg and Venetian border provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. However their meagre pay and poor conditions of service often forced them to resort to banditry, using border regions as sanctuaries and entering new forms of freebooting such as piracy. In some cases, they formed autonomous communities, such as the *uskok* centers of Senj, Kotar, and Žumberak. Military service across the Ottoman border in Habsburg and Venetian lands was an option for Serbian fighting men and their families and was part of the military factor in Serbian survival.¹⁴

From the sixteenth through the nineteenth century, the Habsburg Empire organized and developed the military frontier (*militärgrenze*) to protect its crownlands from the Ottoman military threat which twice besieged Vienna. To man this frontier, the Austrians encouraged the settlement of Serbian refugees as farmer/soldiers who in time became the famous *grenzers* or *graničari*, who fought not only on the empire's eastern borders, but in campaigns all over Europe. Serbs were also organized into other auxiliary units by the Habsburgs, especially during the various Austro-Turkish Wars. These formations, known as *Freikorps*, *pandurs*, and by other names, were important in the insurrectionary movements of the Serbs because they were formed by the Austrians while on campaign in Ottoman territory. It is important to note that many of the rank and file of the First Serbian Uprising of 1804, including Karadjordje, served in the Austrian *Freikorps* in the Austro-Turkish conflict of 1787–1791, and in the latter Ottoman-sponsored militia of Hadji Mustafa. This

shows that the Serbs, caught between the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, used military service to maintain their fighting spirit and ethnic identity in preparation for independence.¹⁵

Serbian military prowess not only contributed to the Ottoman and Habsburg armies, but to other powers as well. Besides the *morlacchi*, *uskoks*, and other irregulars, the Venetian Republic employed Serbs in companies of light cavalry and infantry, along with Greeks, Albanians and Croats, as well as in the regular slavic infantry regiments (*Schiavone*). The Kingdom of Naples also recruited Serbs, along with Greeks and Albanians, for an eighteenth century light infantry formation known as the Royal Macedonian Regiment (*Reggimento Real Macedone*).¹⁶

Serbs also served in Russian armies as early as the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century as cavalymen along with other Balkan troops. With the rise of Russia as a European power under Peter the Great and his successors, military and political relations between Russia and the Serbs intensified. Serbs organized and participated in uprisings against the Ottomans during the Russo-Turkish Wars of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In particular there was close cooperation between Russia and the warrior community of Montenegro in this period. Also in the eighteenth century, Serbian military colonies were organized by the Russians along the lines of the Grenzer communities in Austria in the newly-conquered areas of the Southern Ukraine. At least two Serbian Regiments were organized from these settlers for service in the Tsar's army.¹⁷

It should be noted that Serbs fought for the United States in its first foreign war. During the Barbary wars in 1805, General William Eaton employed a mixed company of Serbs and Greeks commanded by the Serbian Captain Luka Ulović (Luca Ulovix) in the expedition against the Barbary stronghold of Derna. Together with twelve U.S. Marines, the Serbian-led Balkan troops distinguished themselves in the capture of the Libyan fortress town.¹⁸

Military service took Serbs to many parts of Europe and beyond. Indeed there is an important link between the military factor in Serbian survival and the factor of migration and emigration, in that the population movements of the Serbs often had military origins, be they rebellions, reprisals, or warfare. They of-

ten brought about refugee status or mercenary service. When conditions of existence worsened due to war, famine, pestilence, or oppressive government, the Serbian people moved elsewhere. The Turkish conquests of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries began a process of migration in which significant parts of the Serbian population sought refuge in the forested hill country of Šumadija (Serbia), the mountain regions of Montenegro, Bosnia, and Hercegovina, and the lands of the Danube and Sava river valleys. The migrations were ongoing, often reinforcing existing Serbian elements in those regions.¹⁹

In some cases the Serbs settled in areas nominally within Ottoman territory but which were not directly under Ottoman control. These communities maintained their self-rule through their clan or tribal organizations, as well as their inaccessibility, their proximity to Venetian or Habsburg territory, together with the martial prowess of their people. The Ottomans found it difficult and costly to subdue these areas and in time contented themselves with symbolic tribute. Often these areas became centers of *hajduk* activity and resistance, so intermittent armed conflict between the Ottomans and these communities continued. The most famous of these communities was Montenegro, which was never fully subjugated by the Ottomans. It maintained its autonomy and emerged as an independent state under its prince-bishops in the 18th and 19th centuries. Montenegro was recognized internationally as a fully independent state in 1878, although it was *de facto* independent much earlier.²⁰

As mentioned above, other Serbs settled on the borders of the Ottoman empire and were given some autonomy in return for military service as auxiliary troops such as *voynuklar* and *martoloslar*. Conversely, other Serbs migrated across the frontiers into Habsburg and Venetian areas, settled in border regions and served in both irregular and regular armed forces on the frontier, such as the *uskoks*, *morlacchi*, and *grenzers*. Many of the Serbs of Croatia, Lika, Dalmatia, Boka Kotorska, Northern Bosnia, and Vojvodina trace their origins to these military settlers.²¹

The insurrectionary movements against Ottoman rule from the late sixteenth century through the eighteenth century gave further impetus to these migrations. Mass emigrations occurred in the aftermath of these rebellions and large numbers of Serbs

settled in Habsburg and Venetian territories. However, the escape from Ottoman rule and potential reprisals did not end the Serbian struggle for survival. Serbs had to guard whatever rights and privileges they received as a result of their military service and frontier status from the encroachment of local civil, military, and ecclesiastical officials, who sought to infringe upon Serbian rights regarding land tenure, taxation, and freedom of religion. Nevertheless, many Serbs prospered in Habsburg and Venetian territories, rising in military rank or entering other fields.

Through emigration to Austrian and Venetian lands, Serbs came into contact with the burgeoning commerce and culture of Europe, and began to participate in the economic, political, social and cultural changes affecting Europe. A Serbian commercial class and Serbian merchant communities began to develop in such centers as Novi Sad, Szent Andrej, Sremski Karlovci, Vienna, Trieste, Smyrna, and Constantinople. Serbs from Hercegovina, Paštrović, Boka Kotorska, Vojvodina, and elsewhere who engaged in the overland and overseas trade between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, accumulated wealth, and fostered churches, schools, publishing houses and other institutions both in their native and adopted lands. It was within this milieu that modern Serbian nationalism was articulated. It was from this environment that a Dositej Obradović and a Vuk Karadžić emerged.²²

Migration and emigration was not only a factor for the survival of the Serbs after Kosovo, but it also was a factor in the revival and development of those institutions that would make them a modern independent nation. In later years Serbian emigration from Habsburg and other oppression in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was a factor in the development of the great Serbian communities in the United States.

One of the most important factors in the survival of the Serbian people after Kosovo was the Serbian Orthodox Church. With the slow disintegration of most Serbian political and cultural institutions following Kosovo, the only widespread institution that maintained or preserved elements of Serbia's great medieval past was the Church. Although Serbian political autonomy was lost in the years between the battles of Kosovo (1389) and Mohacs (1526), Serbian ecclesiastical autonomy was preserved until

1530 and revived in 1557. The Ottomans, unlike the Christian kings of Europe, displayed an unusual tolerance toward other religions, as long as non-Muslim religious authorities maintained the loyalty of their flocks toward the Sultan. Because of the important role of the Serbs, both Christians and converts to Islam, to the military and administration of the Ottoman Empire, and due directly to the personal intervention of Grand Vizier Mehmed Sokoli (of Serbian origin), the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate of Peć was established in 1556. Mehmed's brother, Makarije Sokolović, became patriarch, and the Serbian Patriarchate had a separate administration from that of the Greek Patriarch in Constantinople. The Serbs were recognized as a separate *millet* within the Ottoman Empire. Within a century the Patriarchate of Peć expanded its ecclesiastical authority over territories which included and went beyond the boundaries of the Serbian medieval state through a hierarchy of over forty metropolitans and bishops.²³

As long as the Ottoman state was prosperous and Ottoman rule relatively benign, the Serbian Church was content to maintain its loyalty to the Ottomans. However as internal and external disorders in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries weakened Ottoman power and made the nature of its rule abusive, Serbian clergy began to participate and in some cases lead insurrectionary movements against the Ottomans. As mentioned earlier, these revolts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, often instigated by the Habsburgs of other European powers, led to mass migrations of Serbs from Ottoman territory to escape reprisals. These emigrations were often led by church leaders. The most noted example of this was the great Serbian exodus of 1690–1691 in which Patriarch Arsenije III Črnjević led thirty thousand Serbian families from Kosovo and Southern Serbia to Vojvodina and Hungary; the number of refugees eventually numbered over 200,000. A similar exodus occurred in the wake of the Austro-Turkish War of 1736–1739 under Patriarch Arsenije IV. As the insurrectionary activities of the Serbs increased and Ottoman fortunes declined, the Sultan's government viewed the Peć Patriarchate as a liability rather than an asset and had its autonomy abolished and its domains absorbed by the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople in 1755.²⁴

The end of the Peć Patriarchate did not end the role of the Church as a factor in the Serbian survival, but rather increased it. In Ottoman territory, Serbian clergy and laity had to struggle against Greek ecclesiastical and cultural domination, as well as Ottoman rule. New centers of Serbian ecclesiastical authority emerged in the wake of Peć's demise. The Metropolitanate of Sremski Karlovci became not only the ecclesiastical and cultural focal point for Serbs in Habsburg lands, but also provided priests, monks, and teachers to Serbian parishes and monasteries in Ottoman lands. However the Serbian Church and people in Habsburg lands had to endure and resist other, more subtle, forms of persecution and pressure. The military frontiersmen of Lika, Slavonia, and Croatia, the settlers of Voivodina and the Banat brought their Serbian Orthodox faith with them and preserved it against the attempts by Catholic clergy to absorb them into a Uniate church during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The struggle against religious assimilation and absorption, together with the struggle against attempts to limit other Serbian rights, would be faced by the Serbs in the Austrian Empire until the twentieth century.²⁵

The other autonomous Serbian church organization after 1755 was the Church of Montenegro, whose bishop was not under the authority of the Patriarch of Constantinople, but was associated with Metropolitanate of Sremski-Karlovci or the Russian Synod. The *vladika* of Montenegro in the eighteenth century was not only the hierarch of a self-governing church, but also the prince-bishop of an autonomous warrior community, as mentioned above.²⁶

Throughout the period after Kosovo in both the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires, the Serbian Orthodox Church was instrumental in the survival of the Serbs and in the development of modern Serbian national identity and consciousness in its preservation of the medieval Serbian legacy and the maintenance of uniquely Serbian Orthodox religious customs. The Serbian Orthodox Church distinguished Serbs not only from their Muslim and Catholic neighbors and overlords, but also fostered traditions and customs which gave the Serbs a separate identity from other Orthodox Christians. The Serbian church preserved the

synaxary and feastdays which memorialized the great rulers and holy men of medieval Serbia and linked them with succeeding generations of Serbs. In this way every Serb could identify with Sts. Sava, Stefan Nemanja, Dušan the Mighty, and Lazar the Martyr. This identification with Serbia's medieval past through the veneration of Serbian saints, together with the tradition of Serbian epic poetry, helped to develop a Serbian national consciousness in modern times separate from that of the Greeks or other Balkan Orthodox. Indeed the Serbs, together with the Greeks, had the most well-developed ethnic identities in the Balkans by the time of the emergence of modern nationalism in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Another religious tradition or custom of the Serbs that distinguished them as a separate people was the *Krsna Slava*, the family patron saint. Unlike Catholics and most other Orthodox, the Serbs do not ritually celebrate the namesday of individuals on the feastday of the saint whose name they were given at Baptism, rather they celebrate a single patron saint of the family on the feastday. In the years of subjugation, this custom not only fostered family, clan, and in some areas, tribal solidarity, but also inculcated a sense of Serbian identity, since those Orthodox who celebrated the *Krsna Slava* were considered Serbs.²⁷

Another cultural element which, like the church, linked the Serbian past to later generations was the Serbian Epic Poetry. The epic poems (*pjesme*) kept alive the greatness of medieval Serbia and the spirit of resistance among the Serbs after Kosovo. These poems, sung by bards (*guslars*) to accompaniment of the *gusle*, extolled the qualities of *junačstvo* (heroism) and *čojstvo* (manliness) and maintained the memory of deeds of heroism of the past in an era in which histories were not written. The poems deal with great events and individuals, both real and legendary. The most famous cycle of this poetry is the Kosovo cycle, which recounts the monumental battle which issued in the twilight of Serbian freedom. It emphasizes the need to struggle and sacrifice to maintain liberty. Scholars have noted that the Kosovo cycle preserved the remembrance of a glorious past for the Serbs just as the Homeric epic poems preserved a collective memory of the

Mycenean past for the ancient Greeks. Other cycles of Serbian epic poetry, such as those dealing with Marko Kraljević, the *hajduk* chieftains, and the uskoks gave inspiration to the Serbs that their heroic past and their freedom could be revived. This epic element of culture is also linked to the Church and faith in that they are imbued with much Christian symbolism.²⁸

The epic poetry is also linked to other factors in the survival of the Serbs. They narrated deeds of valor and martial virtues, which were emulated by Serbs and helped to reenforce the Serbian military tradition. The poems tell of the suffering and sacrifice of the Serbs as they were dispersed to the mountain regions of Montenegro and elsewhere, to the frontiers, to the *uskok* communities, to the hajduk lairs, and to foreign lands, which link the epics to the survival factor of migration and emigration. The epic poetry, together with the Serbian Orthodox church and faith were cornerstones in the building of the Serbian national consciousness which was developed and articulated into a national movement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

To conclude, this short study discussed some of the main factors that contributed to the survival of the Serbs in the era of foreign rule after Kosovo. These factors were: vassalage and autonomy, military service and armed resistance, migration and emigration, the church, and epic culture. A reiteration of these factors and how they helped to preserve the Serbs as a nation during the centuries of foreign rule is in order.

The factor of vassalage and autonomy involved those conditions or compromises which allowed the Serbs a vestige of self-government, however transitory, precarious or limited. Forms of autonomy, which varied in different areas, cushioned the impact of foreign domination. Some areas, like Montenegro, had a large degree of political autonomy, while other regions depended upon familial and village institutions to preserve a semblance of self-rule. The extent of vassalage or autonomy depended upon the other factors mentioned.

The factor of military service and armed resistance allowed for the expression of the martial spirit and skill of the Serbs, which gave them the ability to maintain a measure of rights, privileges, and self-government from the Empires that dominated them.

The military factor also gave the Serbs the wherewithal to resist these empires if the Turks or the Austrians infringed upon their rights and self-rule. Military service was thus linked to armed resistance, which could take the form of banditry, armed insurrection or the defense of autonomous warrior communities such as Montenegro.

The factor of migration and emigration allowed the Serbs refuge from war and its aftermaths. It also gave them new opportunities for military service, land to till, or entry into other fields of endeavor, especially trade and business. The prosperity of the *prečani* Serbs in the Vojvodina and the diaspora communities in Vienna, Trieste, and elsewhere made for the economic and cultural development that would aid the movement for Serbian national independence.

The two interrelated factors of the Serbian Orthodox church and epic culture helped to maintain the religious and historical identity of the Serbs in the era following Kosovo. The former factor inculcated a sense of belonging to a national faith that was distinct, not only from Islam of the Ottomans and the Catholicism of the Habsburgs, but also from the Orthodoxy practiced by the Greeks, Bulgarians and other Eastern Christians. The Epic poetry maintained among the Serbs a sense of their history in an era in which literacy and written records were rare. Both of these factors preserved the moral and ethical elements of the Serbian medieval legacy and Serbian Orthodox religious customs which were all-important in the formation of modern Serbian national identity.

While these five factors in Serbian survival have been presented as separate entities, it must be emphasized that they were closely interrelated. They influenced and were influenced by one another, as discussion of these factors revealed. Military service and armed resistance, for example, influenced the development of autonomous institutions and brought about migration and emigration. The discussion of these factors was not made to answer and explain the whole historical experience of the Serbs in the period 1389 to 1804, but rather to provide a schema from which to analyze the complex story of the survival of the Serbs

after Kosovo. This story, as we have seen, was one of hardship and sacrifice, fortitude and patience, in which a proud people endured four hundred years of foreign rule and reemerged as a free nation.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

See footnotes below.

NOTES

1. On Ottoman rule, see: Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Nature of Ottoman Rule," *Slavic Review* (1965): 597–616; idem, "Some aspects of the Ottoman Legacy," in *The Balkans in Transition*, Charles and Barbara Jelavich, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 81–114; Nedim Filipović, "Pogled na Osmanski feudalism." *Godišnjak Istoriskog Društva Bosne i Hercegovine* IV (1952): 5–146, 70.

2. On Habsburg rule, see: Robert Kahn, *The Multinational Empire: Nationalism and National Reform, 1848–1918*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), pp. 147–159 and Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Serbs of Austria-Hungary," *Austrian History Yearbook* 3/2 (1967): 3–47.

3. On the battle of Kosovo and its consequences, see the comprehensive work by Thomas Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo 1389* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1990). On Kosovo and the modern Serbs, see Alex Dragnich and Slavko Todorovich, *The Saga of Kosovo: Focus on Serbian-Albanian Relations* (Boulder, Colorado and New York: Social Science Monographs, 1985). Also, see collective work, based upon the proceedings of the commemorative conference on Kosovo held at Stanford in 1989, Wayne S. Vucinich and Thomas E. Emmert (eds.), *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

4. On the role of the Serbs in the Hungarian-Ottoman struggle, see: Nicole, David, *Hungary and the Fall of Eastern Europe, 1000–1568* (London, 1988), pp. 37–38; Geza Perjes, *The Fall of the Medieval Kingdom of Hungary: Mohacs 1526–Buda 1541* (Highland Lakes, N.J.: Atlantic Research and Publications, 1979), pp. 62–63, 73–74; and J. Radonić, *Graf Djordje Branković i njegovo vreme* (Belgrade, 1911).

5. On the *devsirme* and the Serbs, see: Radovan Samardžić, *Mehmed Sokolović* (Belgrade, 1971); Ismail Hakki Uzunçarsili, *Osmanli Devleti Teşkilâtından: Kapikulu oclâri*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1943–1944).

6. On the conditions of the Serbian peasantry under Ottoman Feudalism, see: Branislav Djurdjev, "O knezovima pod turskom upravom,"

Istoriski Časopis 1–2 (1948): 132–166; Stojan Novaković, *Srbi i Turci XIV i XV veka* (Belgrade, 1893); Novaković, *Srpska baština u starim turskim izvorima* (Belgrade, 1892); Momčilo Ninčić, *Istorija agrarno-pravnih odnosa srpskih težaka pod turcima* (Belgrade, 1903); Jozo Tomasevich, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), pp. 73–78; Ciro Truhelka, "Historička podloga agrarnog pitanja u Bosni," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja* 28 (1915): 150–154.

7. On the development of cushioning institutions of the Serbs, see: Christopher Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organization and Values* (New York: AMS Press, 1983), pp. 15–64; *Communal Families in the Balkans: Zadruga: Essays by Philip Mosely and Essays in His Honor*, Robert F. Byrnes, ed. (South Bend, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1976); B. Popović, *Zadruga: Istoriska rasprava* (Sarajevo, 1921); Popović, "Zadruga: teorije i literatura," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja* 33–34 (1921–1922): 73–114; E. Sicard, *La zadruga dans le littérature serbe* (Paris, 1943); Wayne S. Vucinich, *A Study in Survival: The Katun of Bileca Rudine* (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1975); Vucinich, "Some aspects of the Ottoman Legacy," pp. 86–88.

8. Studies on the Warrior community of Montenegro in the English Language include: Christopher Boehm, *Blood Revenge: The Enactment and Management of Conflict in Montenegro and Other Tribal Societies* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), pp. 39–49; Alice Salzman, "Montenegro in Historical Perspective," in Boehm, *Montenegrin Social Organization and Values*, pp. 8–14; and Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Montenegrins: Who are They?" in *Festschrift für Nicola R. Pribic* (Neuried: Hieronymus Verlag, 1983), pp. 592–604. Extensive studies published in Yugoslavia include: Branislav Djurdjev, *Turska vlast u Crnoj Gori u XVI i XVII veku* (Sarajevo, 1964); Tomica Nikićević and Branko Pavićević, *Crnogorske isprave, XIV–XIX vijeka* (Belgrade, 1965); Gligor Stanojević, *Iz istorija Crne Gore u XVI i XVII veku* (Titograd, 1959); and Gligor Stanojević and Milan Vasić, *Istorija Crne Gore*, vol. 3, pt. 1 (Titograd, 1975).

9. An excellent overview and interpretation of Serbian military history is found in Wayne S. Vucinich, "The Serbian Military Tradition," in *War and Society in East Central Europe*, Béla Kiraly, et al, eds., vol. 1 (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1979), pp. 311–314. On the armed forces of Medieval Serbia, see: Stojan Novaković, *Stara Srpska Vojska* (Belgrade, 1893); and Nikola Stijepović, *Srpska feudalna vojska* (Belgrade, 1954).

10. On the Christian *sipahiler*, see: Bistra Cvetkova, "Novye dannye o Khristiānskikh-spakhīakh na Balkanskom poluostrove v. period

turetskogo gospodstva," *Vizantiiskii Vremennik* XIII (1958): 184–197; Branislav Djurdjev, "Hrišćani spahije u Severnoj Srbiji u XV veku," *Godišnjak istoriskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine* IV (1952): 165–169; Halil Inalcik, "Timariotes chretiens en Albanie au XV siècle," *Mitteilungen des österreichischen Staatsarchivs* 4 (1951–1952): 120–131.

11. On Serbian formations in the Hungarian Army, see: Nicole, pp. 37–38; Perjes, pp. 62–63, 73–74; and Vucinich, "The Serbian Military Tradition," pp. 298–299.

12. On *voynuklar* and *martoloslar*, see: Anhegger, R. "Martoloslar hakkinda," *Türkiyat Mecmuası* 7–8 (1942): 283–286; Ioannes Vasdravelles, *Armatoloi kai klephtes eis tēn Makedonia*, ed. 2 (Thessalonikē, 1970); Branislav Djurdjev, "O vojnicima (sa osvrtom na razvoj turskog feudalizma i na pitanje turskog agaluka," *Glasnik Zemaljskog Muzeja u Sarajevu* II (1947): 75–138; Orhonlu, Gengiz, *Osmanli imperatorluğunda derbend teşkilâtı* (Istanbul, 1967); Milan Vasić, *Martolozu u Jugoslovenskim zemljama pod turskom vladavinom*, Akademija Nauka i Umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, *Djela* 24 (1967): 19–25; and Olga Zirojević, *Tursko vojno uređenje u Srbiji 1459–1683* (Belgrade, 1974).

13. On the *hajduks*, see: Dušan J. Popović, *O Hajducima*, 2 vols. (Belgrade, 1930–1931); G. Rossen, *Die Balkan haiduken. Ein Beitrag zu intern Geschichte des Slawenstums* (Leipzig, 1878); and Radovan Samardžić, *Hajdučke borbe protiv turaka u XVII veku* (Belgrade, 1952).

14. The most extensive study in English on the Uskoks is Wendy Bracewell, "The Uskoks of Senj: Banditry and Piracy in the Sixteenth-Century Adriatic" (Stanford University: Doctoral Dissertation, 1985). Studies published in Yugoslavia include: Bare Popović, *Povijest senjskih Uskoka* (Zagreb, 1936); Gligor Stanojević, "Prilozi za istoriju Senjskih uskoka," *Istoriski Glasnik* 1–2 (1960): 111–141; Stanojević, *Senjski uskoci* (Belgrade, 1973); Jovan Tomić, *Iz istorije senjskih uskoka* (Novi Sad, 1901); Tomić, *Iz istorije senjskih uskoka* (Novi Sad, 1901).

15. On the Serbs in Habsburg service, see: V. Belić, "Odelo i oružje Trenkovih pandura i graničara," *Glasnik istoriskog društva u Novom Sadu* no. 27 (1937): 1–20; L. Ilić, *Baron Franjo Trenk i slavonski pandur* (Zagreb, 1845); Ferdo Šišić, *Franjo Barun Trenk i njegovi panduri* (Zagreb, 1900); Nil a. Popov, "Voennye poseleniia Serbov v Avstrii i Rossii," *Vestnik Evropy* VI (1870): 584–614.

16. On the Serbs in Venetian and Neapolitan service, see: *Dissertazione storico-cronologica delle Reggimento Real Macedone nella quale si tratta sua origine, formazione e progressi, e delle vicissitudini, che gli sono accadute fino all'anno 1767.* ed. 2 (Bologna, 1768); Lehasca, Attanasio. *Cenno storico dei servigi militari prestati nel Regno delle Due Sicilie dai Greci, Epiroti, Albanesi e Macedoni in epoche diverse* (Corfu,

1843); *Mnemeia Hellenikes Historias. Documents inedits à la histoire de la Grèce au Moyen âge*, Konstantinos Sathas, ed. (Paris, 1887–1890), vol. 7, pp. 69–73; vol. 8, pp. 332–334, 432–433; and vol. 8, p. 5; Nicholas C. Pappas, "Balkan Foreign Legions in Eighteenth Century Italy: *Reggimento Real Macedone* and Its Successors" in *Nation and Ideology: Essays in Honor of Wayne S. Vucinich*. Ivo Banac, John C. Ackerman and Roman Szporluk, eds. (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 1981), pp. 35–59; Matteo Scriambra, "Prime vicende della Comunità greco-albanese di Palermo e suoi rapporti con L'Oriente bizantino," *Bolletino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, n. s., 16 (Rome, 1962): 70–71; Gligor Stanojević, "Seoba crnogoraca u Kraljevinu Dveju Sicilija sredinom vijeka," *Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umjetnosti* IX–X (1960–1961): 171–177; Stanojević, *Jugoslovenske zemlje u mletačko-turskim ratovima XV i XVI vijeka* (Belgrade, 1970).

17. On Serbian-Russian Military Relations, see: S. Antoljak, *Misija kneza dolgorukova u Crnoj Gori* (Cetinje, 1949); Mirko Barjaktarević, "Sudbina oseljenih Srba u Ukrajini," *Zbornik Radova Srpske Akademije Nauka i Umjetnosti*, new series, I, Etnografski institut, no. 5 (1971): 139–150; Radi Boev, "Voенно-politicheskoe sotrudnichestvo mezhdu balkanskimi narodami i Rossiei v khode Russko-Turetskoj voiny 1768–1774 godov," *Études Balkaniques* 2 (1975): 123–124; z. Dragovich, "Chernogoriâ i eia otnosheniâ k Rossii v. tsarstvovanie Imperatora Pavla 1791–1801 gg.," *Russkaiâ Starina* 33 (1882): 419–443, 35 (1882): 362–373; Dyck, H. L., "New Serbia and the Origins of the Eastern Question 1751–1755," *Russian Review* 40 (1981): 1–19; B. N. Floria, "Vykhodtsy iz Balkanakh stran na russkoj sluzhbe," *Balkanskie issledovaniâ* 3. *Osloboditel'nye dvizheniâ na Balkanakh* (Moscow, 1978), pp. 57–63; M. M. Freidenberg, "Yugoslavski raboty o roli Rossii v natsional'no-osvoboditel'nom dvizhenii Dalmatsii i Chernogorii," *Istorii SSSSR* 6 (1971): 206–210; Mita Kostić, *Srpska naselja u Rusiji: Nova Srbija i Slavenosrbija*, *Srpski Etnografski Zbornik* XIV (1923): 1–135; K. Lalić "O tradicionalnom vezama izmedju Crne Gore i Rusije," *Istoriski Zapisi* 4/7 (1951): 273–293; S. Mjusković, "Učešće Bokelja u Ruskoj floti na Mediteranu za vrijeme velikog Rusko-Turka rata (1769–1774)," *Godišnjak Pomorskog Muzeja u Kotoru* 10 (1962): 145–159; Kh. Polenaković, "Makedonskie pereselentsi i formirovanie makedonskogo polka v Rossii x XVIII-m veke," *Makedoniiâ i Makedontsi v proshlom* (Skopje, 1970), pp. 171–178; Polon'ska-Vasylenko, N.D., *The Settlement of the Southern Ukraine (1750–1775)*, in *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States*, Summer-Fall Issue (1955); Aleksandar Solovjef, "Jugoslovenski Pukovi u ruskoj vojci XCIII veka," in *Rusko-jugoslovenski Alamanah 1934* (Pančevo, 1934), 69–75.

18. On the Serbs in American Service during the Barbary Wars, see: Nicholas C. Pappas, *Greeks in Russian Military Service in the Late Eighteenth Early Nineteenth Century* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1991), pp. 356–357.

19. On the migrations of the Serbs in Ottoman times see: Aleksa Ivić *Migracija Srba u Hrvatsku tokom 16, 17, i 18 stoleća* (Subotica: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, 1923); Ivić, *Migracija Srba u Slavoniju tokom 16, 17, i 18 stoleća* (Subotica: Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, 1926); Dušan Popović, *Srbi u Banatu do XVIII veka* (Belgrade, 1957); and Popović, *Srbu u Vojvodini* (Novi Sad, 1957).

20. On the foundation of the Montenegrin state, see: Wayne S. Vucinich, "Prince Danilo and His Place in Montenegrin History," *East Central European Society and War in the Prerevolutionary Eighteenth Century*, Béla Kiraly and Peter Sugar, eds. (Boulder Colorado and New York: Social Science Monographs and Brooklyn College Press, 1982), pp. 271–299; Nikičević and Pavičević, *Crnogorske isprave, XIV–XIX vijeka* (Belgrade, 1965); Gligor Stanojević, *Crna Gora pred stvaranje države 1773–1796* (Belgrade, 1962).

21. On the military frontiers, see: Miodrag Maticki, *Srpskohrvatska graničarska epika* (Belgrade, 1974); Gunther Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia, 1522–1747* (Urbana, Illinois, 1960); Rothenberg, *The Military Border in Croatia, 1740–1881* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966); Rothenberg, "The Habsburg Military Border System: Some Reconsiderations," in *War and Society in East Central Europe*, Béla Kiraly, et al, eds., vol. 1 (New York, 1979), pp. 361–392; Franz Vanicek, *Spezialgeschicthe der Militärgrenze aus den Originalquellen und Quellenwerken geschöpft*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1875); Dragoljub Josimović, "Vojna Krajina," in *Vojna Enciklopedija X* (1975), pp. 556–600.

22. On the *prečani* Serbs, see: Popović, *Srbi u Vojvodini* (Novi Sad, 1957); Jovan Savković, "Borba srba u Vojvodini za svoju teritorijalnu i političku samostalnost," *Zbornik Matice Srpske. Serija Društvena nauka*, no. 3 (1952): 22–51; Theodor S. von Vilvosky, *Die Serben im südlichen Ungarn, im Dalmatien, Bosnien und in der Herzegovina* (Vienna, 1884).

23. On the Serbian Orthodox Church and the foundation of the Peć Patriarchate, see: Svestislav Davidović, *Srpska pravoslavna crkva u Bosni i Hercegovini (od 960 do 1930 god.)* (Sarajevo, 1931); Branislav Djurdjev, *Uloga crkve u starijoj srpskog naroda* (Sarajevo, 1964); László Hadrovics, *Le peuple serbe et son église sous le domination turque* (Paris, 1947); Dušan Kasić, "Die Greichisch-Serbische kirchensymbiose in Norddalmatien vom XV. bis zum XIX jahrhundert," *Balkan Studies* 15 (Thessalonike, 1974): 21–48; Mirko Mirković, *Pravni polizej i karakter srpske crkve pod turskom vlašću, 1459–1766* (Belgrade, 1965); Ilarion Ruvarac, *O Pećkim*

patriaršima od 1557 do 1690 (Sremski Karlovci, 1931); Milenko Vukčević, *Srpski narod, crkva i sveštenstvo u turskon carstvu od 1459 do 1557 god* (Belgrade, 1896).

24. On the great migrations, see: Dušan J. Popović, *Velika seoba Srba 1690* (Belgrade, 1954); Rothenberg, *The Austrian Military Border in Croatia, 1522–1747*, pp. 92–94.

25. On the metropolitanate of Sremski-Karlovci, see: H. J. Bidermann, *Die Griechischen-Gläubigen und ihr Kirchenwesen Österreich-Ungarn* (Vienna: W. Braumüller, 1884); Radoslav Grujić, *Pravoslavna Srpska Crkva* (Belgrade, 1920); Charles Jelavich, "Some Aspects of Serbian Church Development in the Eighteenth Century," *Church History* 23 (1954): 3–11; Emmanuel Turczynski, "The National Movement in the Greek Orthodox Church in the Habsburg Monarchy," *Austria History Yearbook* 3/3 (1967): 83–135.

26. On the Montenegrin church, see: Branko Pavičević, "Misija mitropolita Vasilija Petrović u Rusiji 1765–1766 godine," *Istoriski Glasnik* 4 (1962): 51–68; Pavičević, "Vladika Sava Petrović u Rusiji 1743–1744 godine," *Istoriski Časopis* 14–15 (1963–1965): 93–109; and Wayne S. Vucinich, "Prince Danilo and His Place in Montenegrin History," pp. 271–299.

27. The most important study in English on the *krsna slava* and its associated institutions is an unpublished essay by Wayne S. Vucinich tentatively titled, "The Krsna Slava in Bileća Rudine".

28. On the *narodne pesme* about medieval Serbia, see: V. Bogišić, *Narodne pjesme iz starijih, najviše primorskih zapisa* (Belgrade, 1878); G. Gesemann, *Erlangenski rukopis starih srpsko-hrvatskih narodnih pesama* (Sremski Karlovci, 1952); Svetozar Koljević, *The Epic in the Making* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Krstivoj Kotur, *The Serbian Folk Epic: Its Theology and Anthropology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1977); Dragutin Mičović, "Krajina—Istoriska sadržina i epska inspiracija starije srpskohrvatske i albanske narodne poezije," *Balkanica* V (1974): 412–433; A. Schmaus, "Beiträge zu südslavischen Epenforschung," *Certa Monacensia* (Leiden, 1958), pp. 150–170; D. Subotić, *Yugoslav Popular Ballads: Their Origin and Development* (Cambridge University Press, 1922). English translations of the Serbian epics include: *The Ballads of Marko Kraljević*, D. H. Lowe, tr. (Cambridge University Press, 1922); *The Battle of Kosovo*, John Matthias and Vladeta Vučković, trs. (Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press, 1987); *Heroic Ballads of Serbia*, G. R. Noyes and L. Bacon, trs. (Boston, 1913); *Kosovo: Heroic Songs of the Serbs*, H. Rootham, tr. (Boston, 1920); and *Marko the Prince: Serbo-Croat Epic Songs*, Anne Pennington and Peter Levi, trs. (London: Duckworth, 1984).