

VLACH COMMUNITIES IN THE DRAVA RIVER BASIN ECOSYSTEM: BETWEEN CONSISTENCY AND ADJUSTMENT (16TH TO 17TH CENTURY)

VLAŠKE ZAJEDNICE U EKOSUSTAVU DRAVSKOG PORJEČJA: IZMEĐU POSTOJANOSTI I PRILAGODBI (16. – 17. STOLJEĆE)

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SUMMARY

This paper analyses migrations of Vlach communities from the Dinaric area to the imperial border area in the Slavonian interfluvium of the 16th century and the impact of these farmer colonists on the Drava River basin ecosystem and vice versa. The paper investigates changes to the environment caused by pastoralisation and deforestation on the one hand, and the dynamics of adjustments and consistency of Vlach socio-economic structures on the other. The changes are estimated in terms of how much they reflected the ability to adjust in the new climate conditions, and how much they were a result of the economic cycles and the steering processes conducted by the imperial structures. Apart from the environmental and the economic factors, this was also the result of the imperial conflict-prone military and political strategies on the border. History has shown that the most successful adaptations usually take place in the realm of economic structures. Thus, among the Vlachs, sheep farming was in gradual decline and extensive livestock animal was losing its importance. The most difficult to adopt was the other culture's value system, and especially the mindset and the customs, and in the case of the Eastern Orthodox Vlachs, also the religion. It can be concluded that until the end of the 17th century, the Vlach communities, both on the Ottoman border and in the Varaždin generalate, were completely agrarian, but they preserved their traditional organization of “knežina” and extended family structures.

Key words: Vlachs, Podravina, Early Modern Age, environmental history, economic history, migrations, Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Monarchy, Military Frontier, Ottoman *serhat*, Varaždin Generalate

Ključne riječi: Vlasi, Podravina, rani novi vijek, povijest okoliša, ekonomska povijest, migracije, Osmansko Carstvo, Habsburška Monarhija, Vojna krajina, osmanski *serhat*, Varaždinski generalat

It is a well-known fact that the Ottoman expansion into the Central European area in the 16th century brought about great colonisation movements and demographic changes. The indigenous population retreated and moved up north and northwest, while new, heterogenous population from the Balkans area to the south of the Sava and the Danube was deliberately brought to the deserted area by the Ottomans. The mobile Vlach livestock farmers from the Dinaric Mountain area played an important part in these migrations. Their colonisation of the Slavonian interfluvium in the 16th century was a part of the Ottoman

colonisation policy (*istân, istimâlet, sürgün*).¹ This Vlach migration flow, originating from Herzegovina and from Montenegro, settled in the Ottoman border area between the Sava and the Drava, but did not spread further, across the River of Drava.² During the migrations, they spread their social structures and traditions, they changed the language and the dialect distributions by spreading Neo-Shtokavian idiom, and they also contributed to the changes to the geography of confessional structures, since they were mainly Eastern Orthodox. It should be stressed that here the ethnical term *Vlach* referred rather to a particular social structure and way of life (*gens pastorum*) than having particular ethnic connotations, as was the case in the eastern areas of the Danube-Carpathian basin. In these new climate conditions and the new ecosystems, and also considering the cultural contact with the indigenous population, they had to face diverse and complex adaptation and adjustment processes which consisted of 3 different stages: 1.) confrontation, 2.) partial adoption; 3.) permeation. History has shown that the most successful adaptations usually take place in the realm of economic structures. The most difficult to adopt was the other culture's value system, and especially the mindset and the customs, and in the case of the Eastern Orthodox Vlachs, also the religion. As Cvetan Todorov puts it, living with another culture does not always mean giving up one's own.³

At the end of the 15th century, these Dinaric Vlachs settled in the northern Bosnian areas (Usora and Posavina in Bosnian Sancak, Lower Podrinje in Zvornik Sancak), reaching the River of Sava in 1516.⁴ After the fall of Jajce Banovina, the Vlach groups crossed the River of Vrbas and settled at the northwestern ends of Bosnian Sancak. After the fall of Požega in 1537, they crossed the Sava and settled in the deserted areas of the Ottoman border in the Slavonian interfluvium.⁵ The exact course of the settlement is impossible to reconstruct, but there seem to have been two larger waves of colonisation: earlier Vlach colonisation dating back to the middle of the 16th century (about 1540-1560), and the other, "newer" Vlach colonisation in the initial decades of the 17th century (particularly in the 1620s).⁶

The Ottoman conquest of Srijem and Slavonia began by occupying Beograd Zemun and Mitrovica in 1521, and its peak was the fall of Virovitica, Ustilonja, Čazma, and Dubrava in 1552. During the conquest, new military administrative units were formed – *sancaks* – which served the Ottoman authorities to consolidate the starting points for further conquests and the expansion of the Empire to the West and the Northwest. After the establishment of Budim Beylerbeylik, Požega Sancak was founded in 1540/41, then Srijem Sancak in 1541, and Začasna Sancak (later Pakrac Sancak or Cernik Sancak) followed after 1552.⁷ After that, the border did recede to the River of Ilova, Middle Podravina between Kloštar and Virovitica, and Moslavina Outwork in Posavina, and it was consolidated there. Immediately

¹ It should be noted that Vlach communities were not a completely unknown phenomenon in Pannonian area before the 16th century. Even back in the Middle Ages, Posavina and Podravina were situated within the so-called »Vrhovina-Peripannonian« zone of the seasonal movement of livestock (transhumance). Unlike the coastal zone of the Dinaric livestock movement, which is well documented in different notarial offices, chancelleries, and archives of Dalmatian towns, there is little knowledge of the continental directions of movement of transhumant farmers in the Middle Ages. The tradition of Bosnian farmers from Vlašić, Vrhovina and Manjača to bring their livestock down to Posavina and Podravina for the winter grazing was preserved until the second half of the 20th century. (Marković, 2003: 69-75)

² Hafizović, 2016: 101.

³ Todorov, 1994 : 380.

⁴ Adem Handžić followed a few different Herzegovian Vlach groups (*Banjani, Rudinjani*) in the wider area of Bosnia in his research, and established the basic directions of their migrations, from Herzegovina, across Pavlović land *vilayet* (1485), Maglaj Fortress *Nahiye* (1489) to Vrbanja and Brod *nahijjes* (1516). Handžić, 1990: 57-66.

⁵ Based on the demographic trends and the state of agriculture criteria, Nenad Moačanin defines four zones in the Slavonia-Srijem interfluvium: 1.) Western Slavonian-Požega-Upper Podravina, 2.) Posavina-Đakovo, 3.) Lower Podravina, 4.) Western Srijem, and 5.) Eastern Srijem. (Moačanin, 2001: 2)

⁶ cf. Holjevac-Moačanin, 2007.: 150-155

⁷ "Pakrac Sancak was developed thanks to the necessity that some kind of border be set up at the northwestern end of Bosnian Sancak which would serve as an outpost and a stronghold for further conquests. The foundation of the captaincy in Gradiška may be regarded as the first step in this direction, even though the town itself – fortress on the right Sava bank will permanently remain a part of Bosnian Sancak." (Holjevac-Moačanin, 2007: 151)

after the sancaks of Požega and Pakrac were established, the Ottoman border was to be formed to the north of the Sava River, the so-called *serhat*, as a new border area with Croatia and Hungary. The Ottoman *serhat* was not an isolated area with a specific organisation, as was the case with Military Border which was about to be formed on the Habsburg side. According to Nenad Moačanin, it was an area with “some more army, some more livestock farming, and some more everyday violence than deeper in the interior. Apart from that, there were no essential differences”.⁸ It was the area between the Ilova River in the west and the approximate line Podravska Moslavina – Gradiška na Savi in the east, i.e., it spread over the entire Pakrac/Cernik Sancak (the so-called *Mala Vlaška*)⁹ and the northwestern part of Požega Sancak (the so-called *Brđanska*).¹⁰ The traditional way of life and organisation was not to remain unaffected by Vlach colonisation of these areas. The forms and the intensity of the colonisation can partly be inferred from the Ottoman tax registers (*defters*). The constant growth of Vlach population at the Slavonian “*serhat*” was the result of continuous immigration and stabilisation of the conditions at the border. In 1545, 82 Vlach houses were registered in Požega Sancak, in 1561, there were already 486, and in 1579 there were 808 houses.¹¹ Unlike Pakrac Sancak, where most of the population was made up of immigrant Eastern Orthodox Vlachs, in Požega Sancak, Vlachs inhabited only the border in the mountainous northwestern part of the province.

The scenery of this part of Slavonia is characterised by mountains, hills and foothills, valleys and plains. Slavonian (Lower) Podravina consists of different “cascading” relief units: 1.) alluvial plain of the Drava River and its right-bank tributaries (Brežnica, Čađavica, Voćinska rijeka, Vučica, Karašica); 2.) newer and older terrace of the Drava River; 3.) Slatina and Voćin foothills; 4.) foothills and mountain massif of Papuk and Krndija.¹² This diversity is also reflected in the lack of homogeneity of the border area in administrative and ethno-religious terms; as Nenad Moačanin put it, there was a certain kind of “multiplex subconfinium.”¹³ It was divided into two separate units, the area of the indigenous agricultural population in the southeast, and the area of the Vlach pastoral colonisation closer to the border, in the northwest.¹⁴ The Vlachs pertaining to the part of the “*serhat*” in Požega inhabited the following *nahiyes* (/ *tn* administrative territorial units): Brezovica, Čađavica, Voćin, Slatinić, Sveti Mikloš, and Orahovica (in 1545 there was also Drenovac Nahiye near Voćin), mainly the mountainous and hilly hinterland of the Podravina plains. The dispersed population of this mountainous area was not just a result of the relief features, but also of the Vlach pastoral culture and a particular social structure called *katun* (a group of families or households). Vlachs also settled along the river valleys of Voćinska Rijeka, Brežnica, Krivaja, Čađavica, i.e., the Brzaja Stream, and the banks of the upper Orjava River. They avoided bottoms of river and stream valleys, and settled on slopes, in deserted villages. Between them, there was the spacious woodland of Psunj, Papuk, and Krndija. The question remains: How is it that the medieval demographic structure breakdown in this area did not affect the toponymy, which was preserved for the most part and remained the same throughout the 16th century?¹⁵ It was partially changed only in the 17th century, when the modern toponymic nomenclature of this area was introduced. For example, toponyms such as Cjepidlake, Bokane, Macute which have clear Dinaric (tribal) onomastic

⁸ *ibid.*: 151.

⁹ Mala Vlaška, the name given to the former Pakrac Sancak (the areas of Pakrac and Daruvar), except for the part in Posavina, by the Habsburg authorities at the end of the 17th century, was based on the great number of Vlach settlements. (cf. Petrić, 2022: 31-48)

¹⁰ Traditional common name for the area under Papuk on Voćin, Slatina and Orahovica territories.

¹¹ Moačanin, 1984: 193-198

¹² Njegač, 2002: 258

¹³ Moačanin, 2005: 139

¹⁴ The ravages of war and the settlement of Vlach Neo-Shtokavians most definitely separated the old, Slavonian Kajkavian population from Old-Shtokavian speakers of Slavonian Lower Podravina. Old-Shtokavian Ekavian dialect stretching from the area to the east of Vaška all the way to the surroundings of Osijek (Valpovian in particular), preserved some common features with the Kajkavian dialect (Pavičić, 1953: 168-178; Lisac, 2003: 31-44)

¹⁵ The same phenomenon can also be found in other parts of the Ottoman border area in the 16th century.

features, and which were introduced only in the 17th century.¹⁶ No less significance is to be attributed to military and security matters related to the border area colonisation policy. Due to the exposure and the vulnerability of Podravina “corridor” concerning enemy attacks (from Koprivnica and Sziget), Ottomans had started bringing Vlachs to lowland areas quite early.¹⁷ Vlach lowland village belt in Podravina stretched between Virovitica and Sopje fortresses. In 1579, there were already nine of those Vlach settlements in Brezovica Nahiye, which was situated to the east of Virovitica,¹⁸ there were seven in Slatinić Nahiye, with some of them, like Vaška, extending to the Drava River,¹⁹ and four in Sveti Mikloš Nahiye.²⁰ Bringing Vlachs to the area of Virovitica is a typical example of such colonisation policy. According to the register of 1561, there were no Vlachs in Virovitica Nahiye yet. In the spring of 1562, Croatian and Slavonian Ban Petar Erdödy invaded the Ottoman Podravina in collaboration with the Captain of Sziget to prevent Arslan-bey Jahjapić, the Sancakbey of Požega, from building Moslavina Fortress. On this occasion, many villages around Slatina, Mikleuš, and Voćin were also devastated. The Ottoman authorities then brought Vlach immigrants to the area east of Virovitica, and Brezovica Nahiye was founded. The register of 1579 listed 9 villages in this nahiye organised as three Vlach *knežina* (*t/n* an organisational unit consisting of a few villages governed by *knez*) organisations, with a total of 120 houses.²¹ Unlike Podravina, there were no lowland Vlach villages in the part of Pakrac/Cenik Sancak situated in Posavina.

There is no doubt that immediately after the Vlach colonisation there was an increase in livestock farming in the Slavonian interfluvium (the so-called pastoralisation). However, the old dense woods of Slavonian highlands were not suitable for the development of long-term extensive seasonal livestock farming, which requires spacious pasture areas and going over to another climate zone (above the forest area). The woodland cover in Slavonia in the 16th century is estimated at 70%.²² In Požega Sancak tax register of 1579, “the forest” (*orman*) is mentioned 17 times as a tax item, since revenue was collected from acorns and logging. The lack of mountain pastures (and especially the lack of young “meadow” grass rich in vitamin), had a particularly damaging impact on sheep farming, which had traditionally been the main activity of Vlach communities (especially domestic *pramenka* sheep, i.e. “the Vlach horned breed”).²³ Lowland and valley pastures along with woodland were suitable for cattle and pig farming.²⁴ It should also be noted that wetland is the habitat of dangerous parasites which cause animal diseases (fluke louse, lungworm). The sheep tick also seems to have been more infectious in the Pannonian region than the one in the Dinaric region. Sheep breeding thus gradually started to decline. This was a rather contradictory trend, since the general social and political conditions were quite suitable for

¹⁶ This phenomenon is also to be found in Pakrac Sancak, where new toponymy emerges in the 17th century, with recognisable Dinaric cultural features, as in the following settlements: Bastaji, Bobare, Cikote, Kraguj, Kričke, Prgomelje, Rogulje, Šeovica, Zajile, and others. Some of these toponyms are found in Bosanska Krajina and Dalmatia, which could be an indication of their origins and of the direction of the second wave of Vlach colonisation in Western Slavonia in the first half of the 17th century.

¹⁷ The 1561 register mentions in Sopje Nahiye a Vlach *cemat* of Milat Son of Radovan (21 houses, 3, widows, 4 *mezre*). This shows that a Vlach group which still displayed elements of the mobile *katun* organisation settled in a *nahiye* situated in lowland and wetland region.

¹⁸ Orešac, Gačićšte, Nova Vas, Dobunova, Obrež, Ivanci, Novak, Petrovci, varoš Stara Brezovica (*Sandžak Požega 1579*, 2001: 373-377)

¹⁹ Velika and Mala Bukovica, Boričevci, Lunić., Vaška, Miholjci, Kapinci. (Also)

²⁰ Bazje, Zadrhova, popova Vas, Ivanovci (Also: 363-364)

²¹ Also: 373-377

²² Vlašić, 2016: 79

²³ In livestock economics there is a vertical production stratification. In highland regions with pastures, mainly sheep are kept (in karst regions both goats and sheep), in hilly and lowland regions with meadows and pastures, cattle is kept, lowland regions rich in forests are suitable for pig farming. (Šarić, 2010: 70; Uremović and others, 2002: 38-40; 362-367)

²⁴ Underwater soils affect the low quality of lowland pastures and meadows. The valley meadows and pastures scattered on the slopes and hollows of Papuk and Bilogora had the best quality for grazing, precisely due to the moderate soil moisture and the favourable proportions of legumes and grass. However, vegetation cover of such pastures (large leaves) was more suitable for cattle than for sheep. (Mitić, 1987: 33)

Pastures	1565	1584
Istup (Stupčanica) and Zabelin / Eastern Bilogora	363	500
Dobrograd (Dobra Kuća) and Petrov vrh / Papuk	90	180

Table 1: tax revenue from summer pasture tax (*yaylak*) in Pakrac Sancak*
* *Popisi Pakračkog sandžaka 1565. i 1584.* 2021: 131, 134, 310, 313.

sheep farming (Ottoman incentives for the requirements of the army and the towns; bleak war conditions at border areas where only farming was profitable, Vlach pastoral tradition). It seems that the natural determinants were relentless in effecting a gradual decline in sheep farming.

By abandoning transhumance, farmer and livestock movements decreased drastically and barely went across the borders of the village *atar* (*t/n* district). Livestock farming was generally turning into either rotational grazing (*rotating* livestock from one pasture to another on pastures surrounding the village) or stable (“barn”) farming. The sources also specify *mer`e*, smaller pastures belonging to a certain settlement with borders determined by the court which were not to be crossed.²⁵ Stubbs and unsown fields were also used as temporary pastures, which was known as *otlak adeti*. In such conditions, meadows and hay fields were becoming more and more important for gathering livestock forage. The Ottoman tax registers mention only a few summer pastures (*yaylak*) which belonged to the sancakbey’s estate (sometimes also to the Captain of Gradiška), mostly within Pakrac Sancak territory. However, there were only a few, with little capacity, and they brought little revenue, even though a certain growth had been recorded (see Table). Regarding these high-altitude pastures, the Ottoman registers recorded an interesting, yet rare phenomenon, where a Vlach *cemat* (*katun*) stretches over two different nahiyes, one in high-altitude, mountain zone, and the other in lowland zone. How can this phenomenon be explained? Was it a relic of the Dinaric farming culture based on the high-altitude settlement features and bisessile habitats? Be that as it may, such was the *cemat* belonging to Vujica Radoje (Drenovac – Sveti Mikloš) in Požega Sancak in 1561, and the *cemat* belonging to *knez* Hran son of Vukman (Čaklovac – Podborje) in Pakrac Sancak in 1565.

The decline in sheep farming can only be traced roughly. Some data on the Vlach livestock fund can be found in Habsburg sources during the Long War (1593-1606), when they were massively moving with their herds onto the territory of Varaždin Generalate. However, these data are to be taken with a pinch of salt since a certain part of the livestock was lost when moving onto the Habsburg territory. Vlachs from Stupčanica brought 4,2 small and large livestock units per person, Vlachs from Slatina 2,3, and Vlachs of Bijela Stijena and Pakrac 2,6.²⁶ The ratio of large livestock to small livestock was approximately 1 (cattle) : 4 (sheep). Applying the coefficient with 1 cattle – 2 pigs – 5 sheep, it seems that cattle farming had overtaken sheep farming.²⁷ Also, assuming that an average Vlach family consisted of 9 to 10 members at the time, and that the ratios of large livestock to small livestock were the same both for the Vlachs from Slatina and the Vlachs from Stupčanica, then each family moving from Pakrac Sancak had an average of 33-34 sheep, while each household arriving from Požega Sancak brought only 19 sheep. That means that the decline in sheep farming was more pronounced in Slatina Nahije, with only a few Vlach lowland villages, than in the highlands of Pakrac Sancak. Anyhow, the Slavonian sheep farming average fell behind that in the Dinaric Mountain regions.²⁸

The increase in cattle farming also indicates an increase in agricultural activities. The question to be asked here is: Which were the modes of acceptance of the Pannonian agrarian lifestyle patterns found here? The detailed Požega Sancak register from 1545 forbids *reaya* to settle among Vlachs (“... *If apart from those from the outside reaya should come, they shall not be admitted into the Vlach order: they shall be sent back to their places and shall not be sent to places like these. Sancakbeys shall be blamed*

²⁵ *Popisi Pakračkog sandžaka 1561. i 1584.* 2021: 407

²⁶ Lopašić, 1887: 68-69, 71

²⁷ For coefficients and ratios of cattle population to human population see: Stojanović, 1997: 395

²⁸ At around the same time, only in the migration of Krmpot Vlachs of Bunjevac from the Ottoman Bukovica to the Habsburg territory in the hinterland of Senj in 1605, 400 livestock units were brought along per family, mostly sheep. (Šarić, 2010: 78)

...”).²⁹ The following was noted by the registrar concerning the same nahiye, Drenovac kod Voćina: “the above mentioned Vlachs live in border vilayet in deserted villages which have been registered by name, and they cultivate the land. Some engage in agriculture, and some graze their cattle and sheep.”³⁰ It is clear that even the first Vlach settlers in Slavonia in 1540 engaged in agriculture as a supplementary activity (the so-called agropastoralism), which presupposes some agricultural skills. Such division of labour was possible due to the cooperative character of Vlach families (shepherding duties were usually passed on to younger family members). A number of valuable data derived from the Ottoman taxes in Požega Sancak in 1579 serve as clear evidence of agriculture becoming an important part of the Vlach economic activities. In the nahiyes of Orahovica, Sveti Mikloš, Voćin, Slatinić, Brezovica, and Moslavina, 799 Vlach houses paid *filori* tax off their hereditary land holdings (*baština*), and not off the household (tax unit called “revenue from exchange for one tenth” was just another name for *filori* tax).³¹ The data referring to mill tax also indicate agricultural growth. In 1579, 11 mills were registered in nine Vlach villages from four “border” nahiyes (Brezovica, Voćin, Slatinić, Sveti Mikloš). Some had even two or three millstones.³² However, yields in agriculture could not be substantial. The areas where Vlachs settled were characterized by podzolic soil, along with similar acidic and washed down soils, which were relatively infertile, while the fertile alluvial plains along the riverbanks were exposed to regular flooding. Furthermore, the agricultural techniques of soil cultivation were still rather primitive. The soil was not fertilised, fields were cultivated using fallow techniques, there were no sufficient acres or draft cattle (bullocks). There were to be no significant changes to this extensive agricultural practice until the 18th century.³³ The same register indicates that Vlachs were also obliged to pay wine barrel tax and fruit tenth, which means that they started engaging in winegrowing.³⁴

The agrarianisation of the Vlach societies in the Ottoman Slavonia may have been brought about by two parallel processes: efforts by the Ottoman authorities to cut their privileges and treat them as common agrarian reaya, so that they would pay the regular taxes, and the necessity to adjust to the ecosystem and the resulting reorientation of production.³⁵ The main indicator in this case may be the institution of the *cemat* or the *katun* (once, a movable settlement of Vlach half-nomadic pastorals, the basic social, economic, and legal unit in the Vlach society type). Historiography has established that the disappearance of the *cemat* in the Ottoman sources is a clear indicator of the sedentarisation, and thus also the agrarianisation of the Vlach groups.³⁶

It seems that in Pakrac/Cernik Sancak, the Vlach traditional social structures were preserved somewhat longer than in the neighbouring Vlach society of Požega Sancak. They were mainly not registered under that name (*eflak*) since the register of Požega Sancak of 1579 (although they are temporarily mentioned again in 1581),³⁷ and neither *cemats* nor *primićur* (*t/n* head of the *cemat*) are mentioned any longer. Only the *knežina* organisation was preserved. It has already been mentioned that the tax unit called “revenue from exchange for one tenth” was just another name for *filori* tax, a traditional Vlach tax, and that some minor levies are a clear indication of the agrarian character of the production processes carried out by the local Vlach population. When it comes to Pakrac Sancak, according to the register of 1584, everything was still “purely Vlach” in socio-fiscal terms: Vlachs are clearly mentioned as fiscal category (*Vlachs in liva Pakrac*),³⁸ their basic organisational unit is still the *cemat*, governed by *primićur* and *knez*. They only pay *filori* tax amounting to 120 *akce*. Which were the reasons thereof? A

²⁹ Moačanin, 1984: 197; Roksandić, 1991: 41

³⁰ Also

³¹ Dabić, 2020: 34-35

³² *Sandžak Požega 1579. godine*, 2001: 360-385,

³³ cf. Engel, 2001., 55.-56.

³⁴ Wine production also met the requirements of orthodox monasteries (Orahovica or Remeta and Pakra).

³⁵ Hafizović, 2016: 176.

³⁶ Đurđev, 1984: 85-110.

³⁷ Hafizović, 2016: 120, 123.

³⁸ *Popisi Pakračkog sandžaka 1561. i 1584.* 2021: 135, 155.

greater exposure of Pakrac Sancak to enemy attacks?³⁹ One thing is certain though; it was not the beginning of the end of the Vlach social order. More recent research shows that there were no dramatic modifications made to their legal status, but that the old, widely accepted norms appeared in new shapes. The gradual disappearance of the *cemat*, and the parallel development of territorial units – villages (*karye*), may also be explained as an outcome of the adaptation processes in the new ecosystem, and not as a result of state or legal interventions. The disappearance of the term “Eflak” in *defters* since the 1570s, and its replacement by the term “*filoriciyan*” were merely formal because their legal status was *de facto* the same, since it is explicitly stated that they were taxed in accordance with the Vlach practice (“*adet-i eflakiye*”). The *defter* referring to Požega Sancak in 1579 clearly shows that the population formerly registered as Vlach, and now merely as *filoriciyans*, had the same duties towards the state and were obliged to pay the same taxes – *filori* per house, and not the *reayan cyzie*; they paid the fee for the *reayan* tenth (“*bedel-i öşür*”), and *starješine* (*t/n* heads, governors) were still exempt from paying fees (“*muafiyet*”), and they acted as intermediaries between the Ottoman authorities and the common Vlach population.⁴⁰ This analysis of the terminology referring to Ottoman fiscal administration leads to the assumption that the term “*defter de jure* Vlachs” referred to the population that still displayed certain features of mobile pastoral organisation, whilst “*filoriciyan reaya*”, *de facto* Vlachs, referred to the already sedentary Vlachs with a slightly altered social structure but the same duties and the same status. However, there was still a significant change that had taken place. The territorialisation and the agrarianisation were constantly diminishing the Vlach military usefulness, which had been the key factor in determining their social status and the reason they had been brought to the border area in the first place. By settling permanently in one place, they were losing their main attribute – mobility – and the agriculture prevented them to be absent for longer periods, i.e., prevented them from intense military actions, like the ones they used to engage in before as *martolos* (*t/n* soldiers commissioned by the Ottomans and given special privileges for their military services).

It would soon turn out, however, that Vlach communities were not happy with these hybrid solutions offered by the Ottoman province elite. Their dissatisfaction would soon turn to an advantage for the Habsburg authorities, who started offering them “imperial soldier” status, provided that they moved to Varaždin Generalate. Cross-border migrations of individuals and smaller Vlach groups from the Ottoman to the Habsburg sides had begun in the middle of the 16th century (the case of Ivan Margetić from 1551, individual crossings by Eastern Orthodox monks etc.). Massive migration had also begun before the Long War, in 1587, when a greater number of Vlachs were brought from the surroundings of Sirač to the area around Koprivnica by Knez Ivan Peašinović, who had arranged that with the border military authorities.⁴¹ The massif of Bilogora Mountain (formerly known as: *Međurečka gora*) served Vlachs as a migration corridor towards the captaincies of Koprivnica and of Križevci. The immigration area belonged to the same ecosystem of the Drava basin, so that the new Vlach habitats in the Generalate were basically the same as those deserted ones at the *serhat*.⁴² In other words, Papuk had been replaced by Kalničko gorje. When it comes to the area, the Vlach deserters followed the same logic of colonisation. By the year 1600, 204 Vlach families had settled in Koprivnica Captaincy, in around ten villages which they rebuilt or founded. The settlements on the northwestern slopes of Bilogora were Glogov Zdenac (Glogovec), Grdak, Vlislav (Vladislav), Mali Jeduševac, Plavšinc, and Srdinac.⁴³ Along the narrow valley of Koprivnička Rijeka there were the following villages: Kukavica (nowadays Sokolovac) and Mučna, Veliki and Mali Poganac, Prkos on the southeastern slopes of Kalnička gora and the valleys of the Gliboki Stream. The military authorities at the border area seem to have exerted their influence on such settling arrangements, given that the deserters were stationed in such a manner as to be able to

³⁹ Podravina was safer and more peaceful after the siege of Sziget in 1566. (Moačanin, 2005: 145)

⁴⁰ Holjevac-Moačanin, 2007: 150-155; Hafizović, 2016: 88-89.

⁴¹ Petrić, 2012: 173; Dabić, 2020: 50.

⁴² cf. Petrić, 2006: 35-53.

⁴³ Petrić, 2005: 208.

defend both the southern and the western accesses to the fortress in Koprivnica (the forests and wetland to the east were obviously considered somewhat safer).

Military commanders in Koprivnica, who by 1600 had enough Vlach deserters, stopped accepting new immigrants for tactical reasons but started sending them to feudal estates governed by nobility between Gliboki and Bednja (Rasinja, Ludbreg, and Bukovec estates). They thus became the so-called *Privatni Vlasi* (t/n Private Vlachs). The ratio of the border (“free”) Vlachs to private Vlachs was around 10:1, but the number of the latter was constantly dropping for they fled to the border area.⁴⁴ Since they were not offered any land by the nobility, it seems that the nobility did not count on them very much either.⁴⁵

Vlach migrations at the turn of the 16th and the 17th centuries did not only give shape to a new, emerging society in the border area, but also in a way rounded up the agrarianisation process. The Habsburg sources clearly state that the Vlach colonists engaged in agriculture, that they were searching for land, and that they started working hard in an attempt to cultivate the deserted land around the border fortresses and guard towers.⁴⁶ Even though they had brought along a great number of livestock, there was practically no trace of any kind of mobile farming which would go over the borders of the village atar, which was further affirmed by dividing Varaždin Generalate into territories and demarcating the village atars. The Vlach agrarianisation process finally reached its high point when Vlach Statutes (*Statuta Valachorum*) were adopted in 1630, where Vlachs were granted the full ownership of their land in Chapter 3 “de rerum dominium”, (“*And those who may want to sell, pledge or on any other basis or for any other reason give their houses, along with the fields and other land, to another party, shall do that in the presence of the knez and two or three witnesses.*”).⁴⁷

Some of the traditional social structures, such as extended family (cooperative) and the knežina organisation have proved to be exceptionally stable. The reasons for the persistence of an autarkic institution like extended family are not difficult to discover; it was a unit based on collective life and work, rights and ownership, defence, and upbringing. War and subsistence insecurity at the border had caused close relatives to come and live together, which also made it easier for them to defend themselves and overcome their problems. At the beginning of the 17th century, an average family in Varaždin Generalate had 8,8 members.⁴⁸ That was approximately a unit consisting of two or three brothers and their families. This “Western Balkans patriarchy” model (the term was introduced by Karl Kaser)⁴⁹ was particularly useful to the border military authorities because each Vlach family could give away more adult men capable of carrying weapons. The knežina organisation, on the other hand, represented the basis of Vlach autonomy and reflected their desire to be able to be independent and autonomously make decisions on matters which directly concerned them. It was also a certain kind of institutional defence against being turned into peasants. By Vlach Statutes of 1630, the knežina institution was acknowledged as a form of local government at village and captaincy levels (knez, judge, and great judge).

Instead of a conclusion, let us have a look at the epilogue in the 17th century. Due to the general crisis of *timar-spahian* system in the Ottoman Empire of the 17th century, along with the riots and chaos which also spread onto the state administration, tax registers were not kept as before. This is why the dynamics of the recolonisation of the depopulated Ottoman serhat in Slavonia is very hard to follow. It can only be assumed that an extensive recolonisation took place in the 1620s due to a considerable migration flow from the South (from the sancaks in Bosnia, Herzegovina, Klis, and Krka) towards the northern Ottoman territories within the Pannonian-Carpathian zone (to Srijem, Bačka, Banat, and Baranja).⁵⁰ Many questions yet remain unanswered: Which was the number of people, and which area did the

⁴⁴ Adamček, 1980: 701-703; Kaser, 1997 I: 89-98.

⁴⁵ For private Vlachs at Koprivnica area in Podravina see: Petrić, 2012: 149-154.

⁴⁶ Kaser, 1997 I: 94-95.

⁴⁷ *Statuta Valachorum. Prilozi za kritičko izdanje*. 1999: 36

⁴⁸ Petrić, 2012: 256.

⁴⁹ Kaser, 2002.: 65.-172.

⁵⁰ These migrations coincide with the decision of Bosnian Sancakbey from 1623 to ease the conditions for Vlachs in Cernik Sancak, (Moačanin, 2001: 136)

newer or the second colonisation of the Ottoman border in Slavonia come from? Had the population already been agrarianized or did the newcomers experience the same processes as their predecessors? The only source providing at least indirect data on social relationships and the state of agricultural production in the last period of the Ottoman rule in the 17th century are the Habsburg Chamber Registers of Slavonia from 1698 and 1702 (the so-called. Mileković Memorandum).⁵¹ According to these data, the Vlach population (now also referred to as “Rascians”) at former Požega Sancak area had been completely agrarianized. The Vlach livestock production structure in former Ottoman Podravina practically no longer differed from that of the surrounding Slavonian (Catholic) population. In some lowland villages inhabited by Vlachs (e.g. Donje Bazje, Predrijevo, Obradovci, Rajino Polje, Miljevci, Brezovljani) sheep were no longer kept, but each house had one or two bullocks, which was a clear sign of predominantly agricultural population, who, apart from agriculture, also engaged in cattle and pig farming.⁵² It was similar with the Catholic neighbours, for example, in the village of Mali Marijančeci at Valpovo area 2 bullocks would be brought per household, 1,3 steers, 1,8 cows, 2,6 calves, and 4,2 pigs.⁵³ Mileković Memorandum also shows that “house” meant 10 people, i.e., that the extended family structure had been kept,⁵⁴ as was the case with the “old Vlachs” who emigrated to Varaždin Generalate one hundred years before.

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⁵² In 16 settlements inhabited by Vlachs, i.e., in 158 households, 468 cattle units were registered (bullocks, cows, calves), 331 pigs and only 275 sheep and goats – which means, only 1 to 2 sheep per household. Lowland Vlach villages like Rajino polje, Donje Predrijevo, Obradovac, Donje Bazje, Miljevac an Brezovljani no longer kept any sheep, while a very modest form of sheep farming still persisted in Vlach villages on the slopes of Papuk: (Gazije, 8 houses – 29 sheep; Gornja and Donja Pištana; 12 houses – 34 sheep; Kokočak, 8 houses – 38 sheep; Smrdić and Pušina, 10 houses – 24 sheep). More favourable sheep farming conditions may be found around Stupčanica, i.e. in the northern part of the so-called Mala Vlaška, directly neighbouring on Podravina. Leaving out Vlach newcomers from Bosnia, in 1698, 2.429 sheep (8 to 9 per household), 1.085 cattle units, and 748 pigs were registered there in 20 settlements. (*Dvjestogodišnjica oslobodjenja Slavonije, Dio 2.* 1891.; 270.-288., 239.-270.)

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SAŽETAK

U radu se analiziraju migracije vlaških zajednica iz dinarskih prostora na područje imperijalnog pograničja u slavonskom međurječju 17. stoljeća, te interaktivni utjecaj ovih stočarskih kolonista na ekosustav dravskog porječja i obrnuto. Propitujuse promjene u okolišu izazvane pastoralizacijom i krčenjem šuma s jedne te dinamika prilagodbi i postojanosti vlaških socioekonomskih struktura s druge strane. Sagledava se koliko su promjene bile odraz sposobnosti prilagodbe u novom podneblju, a koliko posljedica konjuktornih ciklusa i usmjeravajućih procesa imperijalnih struktura. Osim ekoloških i ekonomskih faktora, to je bila velikim dijelom i posljedica imperijalnih konfliktnih vojno-političkih strategija na granici. Povijesno iskustvo nam govori da su se uspješnije adaptacije najčešće događale u sferi ekonomskih struktura. Tako je kod Vlaha ovčarstvo bilo u postupnom opadanju, a ekstenzivno stočarstvo je gubilo na značaju. Najteže i najsporije se usvajao vrijednosni sustav druge kulture, naročito kad su u pitanju mentaliteti i običaji, a u slučaju pravoslavnih Vlaha i vjeroispovijest. Može se zaključiti da su vlaške zajednice do kraja 17. stoljeća, kako u osmanskome serhatu tako i u Varaždinskom generalatu, bile sasvim agrarizirane, ali su pritom sačuvala svoju organizaciju knežina i strukture proširene obitelji.