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From a "Yugoslav Siberia". The Difficulties of the Patriarchal Monastery of Peć 1919–1929*

ABSTRACT: The author has tried to outline the problems that the Patriarchal Monastery of Peć faced in the period 1919–1929. The heuristic background of the paper is primarily based on the documents stored in the Yugoslav Archives. It is mainly about the correspondence between the church and the relevant state authorities, which testifies to the fact that the central authorities had little understanding about the importance of this monastery for the survival of the Serbian people in Southern Serbia. That is why, the results of its policy toward the monastery were only partially achieved, similarly to other cases of this insufficiently integrated Yugoslav (Serbian) territory.

KEY WORDS: Southern Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, Yugoslav Kingdom, Patriarchal Monastery of Peć, Monastery Difficulties and Problems

Introduction

The Patriarchal Monastery of Peć went through various stages of good and bad times during its centuries-long existence, but despite all odds it managed to survive on the historical scene as clear proof of the staying power of the Serbian people in Metohija. Art historian Pavle Mijović has given an accurate description of this continuity of the Patriarchate of Peć:

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“Ever since its creation, to this day, it has survived the fall of the old Serbian state and stood up to the Turkish invasions and ravages, wars and migrations, insurrections and uprisings, and in spite of everything it remains preserved as one of Serbia’s most interesting and valuable shrines.”¹¹

The monastery was the center of the Patriarchate until its closure in 1766, which caused grave consequences for the Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija exposed to Islamization, Albanization, and the negative Greek (Phanaorite) influence. The city of Peć was annexed to Montenegro in 1912, thus changing the jurisdiction of the Serbian Church in Montenegro. In addition to the Metropolitanate of Cetinje and the Zahumsko-Raška eparchy in Nikšić, the Eparchy of Peć, with its seat in the Patriarchal Monastery, was established for the newly acquired area of Raška and Metohija. Its first bishop, Gavriilo Dožić, was enthroned in Peć in 1913.² The state of the newly created eparchy was still in the early stage of organization when Montenegro declared war on Austro-Hungary in 1914 after the Dual Monarchy attacked Serbia, which was perceived as a declaration of war against all Serbs.³

This was heartening news to the bishop of Peć and he blessed the Montenegrin weapons. When war was declared he formed the regional committee of the Montenegrin Red Cross Society for Metohija in Peć and during the war he was a Montenegrin volunteer, benefactor, active mediator in the retreat of the Serbian refugees and clergy across the territory under his ecclesiastical jurisdiction in 1915. He also testified to the crimes committed throughout Bosnia- Herzegovina, which was carried by the Russian and domestic press, which resulted in him being interned in the Monastery of Peć on 24 November 1915. He was arrested on 4 December and sent to a camp in Hungary. At the beginning of 1918 he was sent to Cetinje, in mid-January to Bar, and during the spring in Ulcinj, where he

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- 1 Pavle Mijović, *Pećka patrijaršija*, (Beograd: Turistička štampa, 1974), 4.
 - 2 Novica Rakočević, *Odnosi Crne Gore i Srbije u periodu 1912–1914. godine*, (Beograd, 1976), 581; Pavle Kondić, „Srpska pravoslavna crkva u Crnoj Gori u Prvom svetskom ratu“, *Srbi i Prvi svetski rat 1914–1918: zbornik radova sa međunarodnog naučnog skupa održanog 13–15. juna 2014, 2015*, 309; Milka Čanak-Medić, Branislav Todić, *The Monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć*, (Novi Sad: Platoenum, Beseda, 2017), 23. More on the unification of the SOC, its internal organization, life and relationship with the state in the interwar period: Đoko Slijepčević, *Istorija Srpske pravoslavne crkve*, knj. 3, (Beograd: Catena mundi, 2018), 545–589.
 - 3 Novica Rakočević, *Crna Gora u Prvom svjetskom ratu: 1914–1918*, (Cetinje: Istorijski institut u Titogradu, 1969), 7.

was liberated. He was also a strong supporter of the unification of Montenegro and Serbia during the Podgorica Assembly in 1918.⁴

After the formation of the Kingdom of SHS, the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) was restored, the Patriarchate was renewed (1920) and the Monastery of Peć was reactivated as the place where the enthroning of patriarchs were organized (first time 1924).⁵

The position of the monastery cannot be viewed apart from the social circumstances in Kosovo and Metohija during this period. Since 1918 this region had become part of a centralized state. As a consequence of the heavy historical heritage and insufficient state involvement, this southern region remained an extremely undeveloped area, with agriculture as the dominant occupation and industry in the initial phase. The local society was developing amid two major problems – Albanian secessionism and a semi-implemented agrarian reform. A very striking picture of the area and all the complexities of this society was to be given by interwar writer Dragiša Vasić in one of his works.⁶

About War Reparations

In the post-war period, the monastery enters a heavy period. The reasons for the absence of any major research into the ordeal of the SOC in the war were primarily political in nature. Today it is undoubtedly an important issue in Serbian historiography.⁷

The Serbs started living in the new state under the impression of their previous suffering. The local Serbs from Kosovo and Metohija also experienced renewed atrocities by the invaders and their Albanian accomplices. Therefore, the imperative for the Serbian people was the need to heal old wounds but also to record, at least approximately, the war damage wherever possible. The Monastery of Peć played an important role

4 Kondić, „Srpska pravoslavna crkva u Crnoj Gori“, 311–315, 322–323, 326. For more information see: Radmila Radić, *Život u vremenima: patrijarh Gavrilo Dožić: 1881–1950*, (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet Univerziteta, Institut za teološka istraživanja, 2011²), 135–143.

5 Čanak-Medić, Todić, *The Monastery of the Patriarchate of Peć*, 23.

6 Dragiša Vasić, *Dva meseca u jugoslovenskom Sibiru*, (Beograd: Skver, 2005); Radovan Samardžić i dr., *Kosovo i Metohija u srpskoj istoriji*, (Beograd: Srpska književna zadruga, 1989), 302; Božica Ž. Slavković, „Političke, ekonomske i kulturne prilike na Kosovu i Metohiji 1929–1941“, (doktorska disertacija, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu, 2014), 21–34.

7 Radmila Radić, Momčilo Isić, *Srpska crkva u Velikom ratu: 1914–1918*, (Beograd: Filip Višnjić, Gacko: SPKD Prosvjeta, 2014), 5–9.

in Kosovo and Metohija. Although not a year had passed since the liberation, the monastery administration started recording its own damage. What we mostly know about it is written, first of all, in the report of Kosta Lješević, a member of the Consistory of Peć on September 1919. In that file, the damage to the monastery is listed, and what is surprising is the meticulousness of the author in noting even the smallest damaged or stolen things. Significant damage was also caused to the 1,400 kg bell and, particularly, by removing the 24,400 kg lead roof. According to this source, the total damage to the monastery amounted up to the huge sum of 1,041,630.00 dinars. However, this was by no means the final figure, since the author, as he notes, could not determine the damage to the stolen and destroyed church artefacts of inestimable spiritual and national value (old books, icons, candles, the Bishop's staff, golden crosses, etc.).⁸ It was also not possible to determine the destruction to the local clergy interned by the occupier in Hungary and, moreover, to the damage caused by the unrestricted disposal of the monastery property by the occupier.⁹

8 Arhiv Jugoslavije (Archives of Yugoslavia - AJ), Fond Ministarstva vera Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca (69), 140-213, Šteta nanesena patrijaršijskom manastiru od strane neprijateljske austro-ugarske vojske tokom okupacije, 3. septembar 1919. - Throughout history, the peculiar manuscript fund of the Monastery of Peć has been exposed to damage. Gordana Stokić Simončić, Zoran Č. Vukadinović, „Srpska knjiga i biblioteke na Kosovu i Metohiji“, *Pančevačko čitalište* 15/2009, 53. Dušan Vuksan, a historian who was able to study the monastery more thoroughly, notes that there was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries serious work in researching its manuscript cultural treasure. He also states that in 1912 some stranger had found a lot of books in a hidden place and stole them (according to Iguman Maksim Pavičević). Until then, the monastery books were laid open, so anyone could take them as they wanted and many manuscripts were found in private homes. Since Vuksan was formally deployed to Peć before the war, he insisted on having the books transferred to a safer place, but, unfortunately, the occupier found them. The occupier destroyed some books or stole some and sold them in Skopje, Thessaloniki, and other markets. Dušan Vuksan, *Rukopisi manastira Pečke patrijaršije i Cetinjske Mitropolije*, (Skoplje: Skopsko naučno društvo, 1935), 133–134.

9 AJ, 69-140-213, Mitropolit Gavriilo Dožić Državnom savetu, 29. april 1920. - Despite the great material damage, the monastery property was not negligible at the beginning of this period. The testimony of Iguman Dionisije Rabrenović in 1919 cites three houses, four shops, two taverns, one bakery, three watermills, but the monastery was unable to collect rent. In addition, the monastery did not even collect the expected income from its fields due to the agrarian reform. At the same place it is stated that the monastery owns some money in banks (Peć and Cetinje) and in the fund of some other monastery. Also, the monastery had some annual income from candles, funerals, weddings, etc. AJ, 69-140-213, Iskaz igumana Dionisija Rabrenovića o imovini crkvenih opština i manastira, 19. avgust 1919. In the later period, one of the sources of the monastery's revenue was the sale of wood. An auction for selling an obsolete monastery forest was organized. The monastery administration sought approval from the ministry of religion, which approved the sale, so the wood was auctioned off in 1924 and sold to

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the exact damage done to the monastery during the war, we consulted with another source in the handwritten legacy of Metropolitan Gavriilo Dozić. When he returned to Peć from Montenegro in January of 1919 he found "devastation, disorder, and ruins" estimating the total personal damage at around 149,750.00 dinars.¹⁰ In his own statement dated January 12, 1921, he described the brutal behavior of the occupier toward him in the monastery and in internment, but also the confiscation of property without any compensation or receipt, so he lived on his own, as he recorded, on what he was able to borrow. According to his notes the damage looks like this:

- two horses, one cow with calf, groceries for him and his servants, loss due to inflation, fines (a total of 19,500.00 dinars);
- furniture, library, suit, laundry, footwear, expensive items (70,250.00 dinars);
- material losses and expenses during his internment (60,000.00 dinars) "and as far as [...] mental and physical suffering is concerned, this has been compensated throughout our nation".¹¹

The enumeration of war damages was of primary importance to the entity conducting it, as it exercised the right to adequate financial compensation in the name of reparations. The monastery applied for war compensation in 1923 in the amount of 2,109,090.00 dinars.¹² According to available data, by the end of May of 1929, a total of 4,858,000.00 dinars had been paid to the monastery in the name of war reparations in bonds of 2,5% of the state rent.¹³ In addition, in 1927 the monastery adminis-

a certain Čeda Janković. Some bidders complained about the auction process saying the whole thing was illegal and rigged. AJ, 69-140-213, Odluka Ministarstva vera o odobranju licitacije drva pečkog manastira, 1. septembar 1924.

10 Radić, Isić, *Srpska crkva u Velikom ratu*, 26, 59, 237. - Archival records also indicate that the Serbs themselves did damage to the monastery during the occupation period. This is stated in the petition of a group of poor peasants from Peć to the ministry of religion in 1919. According to a priest, Spaso Popović managed to acquire large capital by misuse of the monastery funds. Further, however, we do not have any numerical data on the damage that he may have caused. AJ, 69-140-215, Molba pečke sirotinje Ministarstvu vera da ispita imovinu okupacionog upravnika Pečke patrijaršije, 15. jun 1919.

11 Gavriilo, srpski patrijarh, *Živimo u svetinji i slobodi: izabrani spisi, poslanice, besede, akta, pisma i zapisi: povodom šezdesetgodišnjice upokojenja*, (Beograd: Pravoslavni bogoslovski fakultet Univerziteta, Institut za teološka istraživanja, Cetinje: Svetigora, 2010), 640–643.

12 AJ, 69-140-213, Molba igumana Irineja Vujanovića Ministarstvu vera u vezi ratne odštete za Pečku patrijaršiju, 12. septembar 1923.

13 AJ, 69-140-213, Odluka Ministarstva vera po predmetu „Društvo Jelica“, 28. maj 1929.

tration acquired the right to a reparation certificate with the approval of the ministry of religion. Namely, the monastery's administration was allowed to obtain the necessary material for reparations for a voucher received in the name of war damage worth 950,000.00 dinars.¹⁴ The reparation voucher represented unused capital, so the solution was found in cooperation with company "Jelica" from Čačak which offered the monastery 950 pieces of bonds 2,5% of the state annuity worth 950,000.00 The responsible minister approved the transaction with certain guarantees from the buyer.¹⁵ Therefore, the total figure paid to the monastery in the name of war damages amounted up to 5,808,000.00 including data available as of 1929.

We note, therefore, that the issue of war reparations, albeit with some delay, ended favorably for the monastery, as it exceeded the claims in the highest amount. The state, for its part, secured the right for the monastery to enjoy all its rights and carried out the transfer of funds. The major issue of contention between the monastery administration and the state authorities was actually the construction works on the monastery.

Construction Works – Endangered Physical Survival of the Monastery

Since the end of the construction of this complex (late 14th century), the Monastery of Peć had been subject to various works and repairs according to the state of the churches and the need for further protection. Previously, the works were mostly done without the necessary material resources and the necessary expertise, but with the forming of the Kingdom of SHS, the state paid greater attention to preserving the religious objects, giving priority to the profession, and the work was transferred to the competence of various architects-conservators, which in itself entailed certain expertise and organization. Thus, as the first conservator working here in 1926 to repair the churches was the architect Pera Popović and his renowned colleague Đurđe Bošković (1931–1932). At that time, extensive research and remediation work was carried out on the churches here.¹⁶

14 AJ, 69-140-213, Ministarstvo vera Upravi za ratnu štetu u vezi manastira Pečke patrijaršije, 16. februar 1928.

15 AJ, 69-140-213, Rešenje Ministarstva vera o prodaji reparacionog bona Pečke patrijaršije društvu „Jelica“, 10. decembar 1927.

16 Marija Jovin, *Pečka patrijaršija: istraživanja i rezultati 2006*, (Beograd: Republički zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture, 2006), 7. More about the mission of Đurđe Boško-

During this period the state endeavored to examine the condition of the monastery and find an adequate solution. Between 1919 and 1921 we recorded several reports on the condition of the monastery and concrete proposals for its repair. In 1919, Serbian Metropolitan Dimitrije Pavlović reported that reconstruction was necessary. This reconstruction was urgent because the monastery was threatening to collapse, as evidenced in a letter to the ministry of religion by local teacher and "Serbian art lover" Mirko Vlahović. According to the decree issued by the ministry of religion, the minister in charge of reconstruction wrote a report that same year on the condition of the monastery, but from the same source we only learn about the poor condition of the roof, which leads us to the possible assumption that the reports were deliberately embellished.¹⁷ That same year, the minister of religion appointed a special commission for a full and expert examination of Gračanica, Visoki Dečani, the Patriarchal Monastery of Peć, Studenica, and Ziča, which is the monasteries that suffered the most during the occupation. Its members were professionals – well-known architect Kosta Jovanović, Pera Jovanović, chief of the ministry of construction, and university professor Miloje Vasić, which in itself indicates that the state almost always hired the most expert staff when it came to the Monastery of Peć.¹⁸

The professional public was not unanimous on the restoration of the monastery. Dr. Vladimir R. Petković, the director of the National Museum, shared with many colleagues his opinion on the poor condition of the monastery.¹⁹ However, he did not agree with the initiative to start the repairs immediately, but considered it necessary to study the monastery, first, expertly and in detail, and then start the reconstruction work.²⁰ Apart from professional disagreements, sometimes there was a lack of personal courage. Perhaps this is best confirmed by the situation when university professor Andra Stevanović gave up his intended trip to Peć in 1920 be-

vić during 1930s in monastery: Đurđe Bošković, *Osiguravanje i restoracija crkve Manastira Sv. Patrijaršije u Peći*, (Beograd, 1934).

17 AJ, 69-140-215, Izveštaj Ministarstva građevina Ministarstvu vera o stanju u Visokim Dečanima i Pečkoj patrijaršiji, 26. jul 1919.

18 AJ, 69-140-215, Ministarstvo vera Ministarstvu prosvete o formiranju stručne komisije.

19 AJ, 69-140-215, Vladimir R. Petković Ministarstvu vera o nužnosti popravke Pečke patrijaršije, 2. april 1920.

20 AJ, 69-140-215, Vladimir R. Petković Ministarstvu vera o formiranju nove stručne komisije, 17. novembar 1919.

cause of insecurity and business obligations and demanded that the trip be delayed “for next spring.”²¹

The relevant authorities also hesitated to begin the anticipated work on repairing the monastery. Assistance was delayed until 1921 when the monastery was granted a loan for the most urgent repairs in the amount of 10,166.00 dinars.²² The problem of reconstructing the monastery was not successfully solved, so the state brought in the commission for the preservation and maintenance of historic architectural monuments. The Commission decided to send an expert group to Peć with chairman Miloje Vasić and members Radivoje Josić, Vladimir R. Petković, Aleksandar Deroko, and others.²³ Religion Minister Vojislav Janjić visited Prince Pavle Karađorđević in April of 1924, asking him to be honorary chairman of the commission, and on May 7 he introduced the prince to its members in a new visit.²⁴ The minister further specified that the commission members would be paid adequately for their involvement²⁵ and the monastery was instructed to give them its full cooperation.²⁶ The commission estimated that it was necessary to allocate at least 1,980,000.00 dinars for the works, with strict adherence to the monastery’s previous architectural condition.²⁷

It was no coincidence that this sudden increased interest of the state authorities in the monastery occurred in 1924, with the announced arrival of Patriarch Dimitrije Pavlović to Peć, planned for August, which

21 AJ, 69-140-215, Profesor Anda Stevanović Ministarstvu vera o odbijanju da putuje u Peć, 4. septembar 1920.

22 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka Ministarstva vera o kreditu Pećkoj patrijaršiji za najnužnije opravke, 17. januar 1921.

23 AJ, 69-140-215, Komisija za očuvanje i održavanje istorijskih arhitektonskih spomenika Ministarstvu vera o slanju članova u Peć, 19. april 1924.

24 Radmila Radić, *Vojislav Janjić (1890–1944): sveštenik i političar: pogled kroz analitički prozor*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2018), 199. - Interestingly enough, in the early 1930s a similar suggestion was made in which Janjić was involved. At that time, the Society for the protection of historic monuments (Viktor Novak, Stanoje Stanojević, Jovan Radonić, Aleksandar Deroko, Vladimir Ćorović, Miloje Vasić, Milan Kašanin, Stanislav Krakov...) was formed on the premises of the *Vreme* newspaper in the wake of the justified anger of a part of the public due to the destruction of valuable cultural treasures. According to its founders, the society was not supposed to be an alternative to the state or church in the business of preserving cultural treasures, but merely an instigator of new ideas. There were disagreements between the society and the SOC that Janjić was trying to mollify. *Ibid.*, 411–413.

25 AJ, 69-40-213, Odluka Ministarstva vera o slanju stručne komisije, 19. april 1924.

26 AJ, 69-40-213, Državni telegram Konzistoriji u Peći sa naredbom o ophođenju prema stručnoj komisiji.

27 AJ, 69-40-213, Komisija za očuvanje i održavanje istorijskih arhitektonskih spomenika Ministarstvu vera o restauraciji Pećke patrijaršije, maj 1924.

meant that the whole monastery complex had to look better and brighter than before.²⁸ Certain works had started several years earlier.²⁹ In addition, in 1924 the monastery had previously applied for a loan for the cost of erecting the buildings and purchasing furniture,³⁰ and the ministry of religion allocated a special loan of 500,000.00 dinars by its decision of August 12 1924 – which was only 15 days before the arrival of the important guests from all over the country or the ceremony of the patriarch's enthronement.³¹

Misunderstanding Between the Monastery and the Army

The post-war period in the monastery was also characterized by conflicts with the military authorities of the new state. Namely, the monastery was confronted with the presence of the army on its property, even within the complex itself. In the first case, it was the Pridvorica estate that was usurped by the army. According to Metropolitan Gavriilo Dožić, neither the Ottoman Empire, Montenegro, nor the Austro-Hungarian occupiers ever disputed its ownership. In their time, this place often served as a military training ground. After the war the new army usurped this property without any compensation.³² The Metropolitan interpreted this arbitrary behavior as the "right of the stronger." As a concrete solution he proposed an arbitration by the appropriate courts.

As this was not accepted, the Metropolitan further urged that the army and its property be removed from the monastery grounds, arguing that the monastery had become a barracks for soldiers and a warehouse of goods, and that the soldiers were behaving very badly toward the local priests. He criticized the agrarian reform claiming that the government's attitude was not equally harsh on Muslims and Catholics. The local Serbs

28 More about the enthronement of Patriarch Dimitrije: Uroš D. Miketić, „Dolazak kralja Aleksandra I i kraljice Marije na Kosovo i Metohiju“, *Kosovo i Metohija u kontekstu balkanskih naroda i država*, knj. 2, ur. Srđan Slović, (Leposavić: Institut za srpsku kulturu Priština, 1924), 219–226.

29 AJ, 69-140-213, Uprava Pečke patrijaršije Ministarstvu vera o radu Građevinske sekcije, 12. septembar 1923.

30 AJ, 69-140-213, Uprava Pečke patrijaršije Konzistoriji u Peći u vezi državnog kredita za podizanje manastira, 6. maj 1924.

31 AJ, 69-140-213, Odluka Ministarstva finansija o kreditu Pečkoj patrijaršiji, 12. avgust 1924.

32 AJ, 69-140-213, Mitropolit Gavriilo Dožić Državnom savetu, 29. april 1920.

acted in defense of the Monastery of Peć and wrote to the authorities that the property belonged to the monastery.³³

Metropolitan Kosta Lješević also proposed concrete solutions. His plan was to form a committee in charge of measuring and restricting all immovable property, land and forest in that eparchy, so that no further conflicts and litigation would arise.³⁴ The response of those in charge was negative this time too and the ministry of religion suggested to the eparchy, since it was in its prime interest, to implement the plan itself through its organs, because there were no budgetary possibilities.³⁵

The material available to us does not shed light on the further course of the dispute between the monastery and the military, but what we do know is that the situation persisted. Thus, in 1923, Iguman (prior) Irinej Vujanović demanded that the monastery remove the ugly barracks from the time of the occupation that “stir up feelings of disgust in an intelligent and aesthetically educated man,” he wrote. In his address to the ministry of religion he added bitterly that the monastery could not be run by two ministries (military and religion) with a grave complaint: “Are we not in some kind of Yugoslav Siberia!! ??!”³⁶

The Problem of the Financial Status of the Clergy and the Albanian Dukes

The monastery also had to solve the problem of the financial status of the clergy and the Albanian dukes. The situation was further complicated by the fact that this area was formerly governed by Montenegro, which no longer existed as a state. The new state had shown interest in the issue, although it was not being resolved without much discomfort.

The example of two monastery igumans – Dionisije Rabrenović and Irinej Vujanović – illustrate the double standards of the state toward the clergy. The former, in 1914–1919, received a salary from Serbia as did the other priests in the areas of former Montenegro.³⁷ He retired in 1922 with a monthly pension of 1,000.00 dinars, but in a petition to the spiritual court in 1929 he complained that it was too little to live on because of the economic crisis and was unworthy of his merits and, in gen-

33 AJ, 69-140-213, Mitropolit Gavriilo Dožić Ministarstvu vera, 18. jun 1920.

34 AJ, 69-140-213, Protojerej Kosta Lješević Ministarstvu vera, 19. mart 1921.

35 AJ, 69-140-213, Ministarstvo vera Konzistoriji u Peći, 6. april 1921.

36 AJ, 69-140-213, Iguman Irinej Vujanović Ministarstvu vera, 12. septembar 1923.

37 AJ, 69-140-213, Dopis mitropolita Gavriila Dožića Ministarstvu vera.

eral, his reputation.³⁸ As a solution he suggested that he should reactivate himself in spiritual service or receive a fee so that he “could dress properly and live decently.”³⁹ He received a negative response due to a “lack of budget funding” with the recommendation that he be housed in one of the monasteries in the “old borders of Serbia,” otherwise scarce in monasticism, and “spend the rest of his life there.”⁴⁰ On the other hand, the ministry of religion responded favorably to the petition of Iguman Irinej Vujanović for a salary increase beginning on February 22, 1929 when he reached 30 years of civil service, all under the law.⁴¹

Unequal criteria can also be seen in the example of the government’s attitude toward the monastery’s Albanian guardians. Namely, during this period the monastery had also had a problem of physical security in the majority Albanian surroundings, as it had been guarded for hundreds of years by the clan leaders from the ranks of this people.⁴² The monastery alone could not pay off the Albanian guardians from a family that had guarded the monastery for decades and which for that reason had come into perilous conflict with the people from their own Albanian and Turkish (Muslim) environment.

The state needed to provide assistance to finance the Albanian monastery guardians. Metropolitan Gavriilo Dožić showed a particular interest in helping the local clansmen adequately, which, he argued, would also be useful for the government in these volatile areas. In 1920 he asked the ministry of religion to give financial assistance to Daut, a kocal Albanian voyvoda, and some other Albanian families who guarded the monas-

38 AJ, 69-140-213, Molba igumana Dionisija Rabrenovića Duhovnom sudu u Beogradu, 19. maj 1929.

39 AJ, 69-140-213, Molba igumana Dionisija Rabrenovića srpskom patrijarhu Dimitriju Pavloviću, 25. maj 1929.

40 AJ, 69-140-213, Odgovor Ministarstva pravde na slučaj igumana Dionisija Rabrenovića.

41 AJ, 69-140-213, Rešenje Ministarstva vera o povećanju plate igumana Irineja Vujanovića, 12. mart 1929.

42 During the Ottoman period and even during the Yugoslav Kingdom, some Serbian shrines (Patriarchate of Peć, Visoki Dečani, Devič, Sokolica) were guarded by Albanian voyvode. The title of voyvoda became hereditary over time. Thus, the monastery of Peć were guarded by the Gashi tribe, Visoki Dečani by the Clementi and Devič by the Krasniqi clan. This provoked frequent clashes with intolerant Albanians. The voyvode guarded the monasteries even from their fellow Albanians. Petrit Imami, *Srbi i Albanaci kroz vekove*, (Beograd: Radio B92, 1998), 128–132. More on history of the Albanian voyvode in the Monastery of Peć: AJ, 69-140-215, Konzistorija u Peći mitropolitu Gavrilu Dožiću o zaslugama pojedinih Albanaca za srpsku crkvu, 21. oktobar 1920.

teries of Peć and Visoki Dečani.⁴³ The Metropolitan wrote to the ministry of religion the same year saying that the local vojvoda in Peć had suffered greatly in the Albanian rebellion a year earlier when his property was set on fire. He referred to former Serbian consuls in Priština, especially Miroslav Spalajković as witnesses to the claim about this family's merit.⁴⁴ The ministry of religion responded to the Metropolitan's request with a one-time payment of 500 dinars.⁴⁵ The Peć vojvoda's financial situation improved once again in 1924 when he also became guardian of the monastery estate with a monthly fee of 900 dinars.⁴⁶

The Albanians took their revenge on vojvoda Daut, who was killed in the Rugova Mountains in 1926.⁴⁷ On August 5 the ministry of religion decided that his son should inherit the status of vojvoda and guardian of the monastery lands. The new vojvoda took office on September 12.⁴⁸

While the Daut family felt some benefit from the government, this was not the case for a long time with the family of Bilal Rusta even though their examples are almost identical. The matter was publicly exposed by politician Blažo Lalević in a letter to the ministry of religion. Namely, he was aware of the situation in Peć, so, logically, he demanded the same treatment for the Rusta family in Dečani.⁴⁹ The minister of religion explained that he had no money and asked Prime Minister Velja Vukičević to provide permanent monthly assistance to this deserving Albanian family.⁵⁰ How this injustice was resolved is not known to us on the basis of documents, although it symbolically indicates that the government's policy in these parts was unsystematic.⁵¹

43 AJ, 69-140-213, Molba mitropolita Gavrila Dožića Ministarstvu vera o odlikovanju manastirskog vojvode, 1. novembar 1920.

44 AJ, 69-140-215, Mitropolit Gavriilo Dožić Ministarstvu vera o zaslugama patrijaršijskih vojvoda, 1. novembar 1920.

45 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka Ministarstva vera o jednokratnoj pomoći porodici manastirskih vojvoda, 17. februar 1921. For more information see: Radić, *Život u vremenima*, 176.

46 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka Ministarstva vera o postavljanju Žuja Veselinovića za čuvara patrijaršijske gore, 14. septembar 1924.

47 AJ, 69-140-215, Predlog Pečke eparhije da sin Žuja Veselinovića nasledi očev status, 16. jul 1926.

48 AJ, 69-140-215, Konzistorija u Peći Ministarstvu vera o stupanju na dužnost novog vojvode, 31. avgust 1926.

49 AJ, 69-140-215, Pismo poslanika Blaža Lalevića ministru vera Milanu Simonoviću o pomoći porodici Bilal Ruste, 8. mart 1928.

50 AJ, 69-140-215, Ministarstvo vera predsedniku Ministarskog saveta Velji Vukičeviću o nagradi za porodicu Bilal Ruste, 10. mart 1928.

51 More on Southern Serbia during this period: Vladan Jovanović, *Jugoslovenska država i Južna Srbija 1918-1929: Makedonija, Sandžak, Kosovo i Metohija u Kraljevini SHS*, (Beograd: Institut za noviju istoriju Srbije, 2002).

*Problems Translating Ottoman Material
from Monastery Archives*

The government did not recognize the value of the cultural treasure in the monastery, which was also a major problem. It was imperative to translate it into Serbian to save the manuscripts. The campaign was initiated by Stevan Dimitrijević, a zealous professor at the Faculty of Theology in Belgrade, who recommended that this work should fall to Mehmedbeg Sulejmanpašić, the scribe of the Prizren district, because he had done the same work at Visoki Dečani.

As was often the case, such a noble undertaking created financial problems. Although Dimitrijević asked the minister to reward the translator because he had started the job at his own expense, everything took an entirely different course.⁵² Specifically, the ministry of religion earmarked the amount of 1,500.00 dinars as a one-off compensation from special funds to cover the translator's personal expenses and work.⁵³ Mehmedbeg Sulejmanpašić considered this an offensively small figure and demanded 8,870.00 dinars.⁵⁴

The translator decided not to receive the offered fee because, as he wrote, it was not adequate compensation for his "historical and literary work." Furthermore, he complained that before him these cultural treasures had been hidden in Peć and Dečani and that earlier attempts by Ivan Jastrebov and Sava Stojanović to do the translation had been unsuccessful. That is why he proudly emphasized that he "contributed to the history" of the Serbian nation and all Orthodox churches, noting that his job was of the highest dignity.⁵⁵

After the scribe had refused to receive the offered figure, the ministry of religion evaluated the case as completed.⁵⁶ The result, however, was not insignificant, as a total of 145 different documents had been translated from Turkish into Serbian and handed over to the administration of

52 AJ, 69-140-215, Dopis profesora Stevana Dimitrijevića Ministarstvu vera o honoraru prevodioca, 30. jun 1920.

53 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka Ministarstva vera o jednokratnoj nadoknadi prevodiocu, 25. maj 1921.

54 AJ, 69-140-215, Račun prevodioca na ime usluga Pečkoj patrijaršiji i Visokim Dečanima, 24. februar 1921.

55 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka prevodioca o odbijanju honorara, 18. jun 1921.

56 AJ, 69-140-215, Odluka Ministarstva vera o svršetku slučaja, 20. septembar 1921.

the monastery in Peć, and translations of 220 documents had been handed over to the Visoki Dečani.⁵⁷

Summary

The Peć Monastery had gone through a difficult period of occupation in 1915–1918. Post-war inventories of the damage showed that the monastery had been damaged during the war and that the government's intervention was necessary. The government, mostly declaratively, acknowledged the importance of the monastery, but in practice its help was much harder to achieve. The regime showed the highest level of interest in the period before the enthronement of Patriarch Dimitrij Pavlović in 1924. The reason was special, because, above all, the power and presence of the government in these parts had to be demonstrated, although in reality it was quite different. Some other government measures also benefited the monastery. In other cases, we see that the state's policy was not based on continuity, consistency, meaningfulness or, sometimes, not even a simple desire to help the monastery overcome difficulties and thus strengthen its presence in poor and unstable Southern Serbia. That is why the post-war development of the monastery was halved by the end of 1929, and this area was justifiably considered a "Yugoslav Siberia."

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Резиме

Урош Микетић

Из „југословенског Сибира“. Тешкоће Пећког патријаршијског манастира 1919–1929. године

АПСТРАКТ: Аутор настоји да у основним цртама укаже на проблеме са којима се Пећки патријаршијски манастир суочавао у периоду 1919–1929. Хеуристичка подлога рада заснива се, пре свега, на документима похрањеним у Архиву Југославије. Реч је, углавном, о кореспонденцији између цркве и надлежних државних органа, која сведочи да је државна власт са недовољно разумевања схватала значај манастира за опстанак српског народа у Јужној Србији. Зато су и резултати њене политике на примеру манастира били половични, као уосталом и широм ове недовољно интегрисане југословенске (српске) територије.

Кључне речи: Јужна Србија, Косово и Метохија, југословенска краљевина, Пећки патријаршијски манастир, манастирске тешкоће и проблеми

Пећки манастир прошао је кроз тежак период окупације 1915–1918. Послератни пописи штете сведоче о томе да је манастир пострадао током рата, па је била неопходна интервенција државе. Она је, махом декларативно, признавала значај манастира, али у пракси је њену помоћ било знатно теже добити. Режим је највеће интересовање показао пред крунисање патријарха Димитрија Павловића 1924. године. Разлог је био посебан, јер се пре свега морала демонстрирати моћ и присуство државе у овим крајевима, мада је стварност била прилично другачија. И поједине друге државне мере биле су од користи манастиру. У осталим случајевима примећујемо да се државна политика није базирала на континуитету, доследности, смислености и, понекад, простој жељи да се манастиру помогне у сузбијању тешкоћа и тиме ојача њено присуство у сиромашној и нестабилној Јужној Србији. Зато је послератни развој манастира до краја 1929. био половичан, а ово подручје оправдано сматрано „југословенским Сибором“.