

SERBIAN TOPONYMS IN UKRAINE – ONE VIEW ON INTERCULTURAL INTERTWINING

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Vršac, Pančevo, Subotica, Sentomaš, Mešorin, Slankamen, Senta, Kanjiža, Kovin, Bečej and many others are known to every inhabitant of Serbia as cities in Vojvodina, however, few of our contemporaries in Serbia know that the same names had small cities located in Ukraine, more than 250 years ago. In the 18th century, at the invitation of the Russian Empress Elizabeth I Petrovna, two migrations of the Serbian people took place. Two Serbian areas were established on the territory of today's Ukraine: Nevoserbia (the territory of the part of today's Kirovograd region) and Slaveno-Serbia. (in smaller parts of today's Donetsk and Luhansk regions). Serbs began to raise their settlements in significant numbers, and gave them names of their birthplaces, so even today there are small towns in the heart of Ukraine called by Serbian cities like Pančevo, Smederevo, Zemun, Varaždin, Vukovar, Bečej, Čongrad, Sombor, Turija, Beška and others. This scientific paper will offer an overview of selected events concerning the Serbian-Ukrainian intercultural intertwining with special reference to the period from the migration of Serbs in 1753, to life in the areas of Novoserbia and Slaveno-Serbia until the end of their existence.

Serbs have been present on the territory of today's Ukraine for several centuries. According to one of the theories about the origin of the Slavic peoples, it is believed that the ancestral home of the Serbs was the area beyond the Carpathians in Boykovshchina. Covered by the migration of other peoples, a part of the Serbian population moved from the Boykovshchina to the Balkans, while a large part remained living in the Carpathians. In the early middle ages, Boykovshchina was called White Serbia. "White Serbs" gradually became part of the Ukrainian eastern Slavs. At the time of the rise of the Russian Empire, at the invitation of Peter the Great, in the first decades of the 18th century, numerous Serbian volunteers came to the territory of today's Ukraine, from which the Serbian Hussar Regiment was formed.

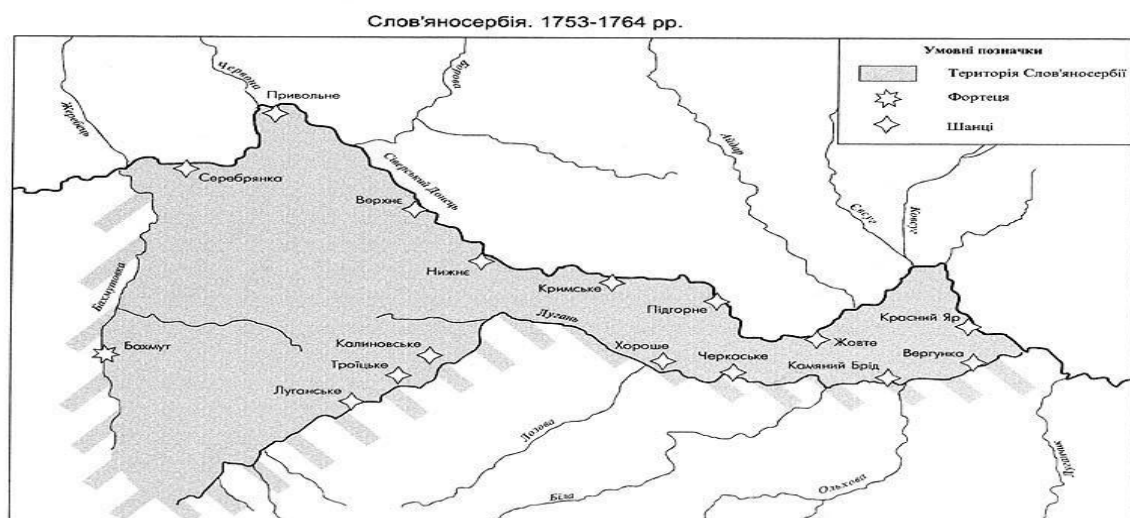
In the first half of the 18th century, Serbia was going through hard times: under the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, which seized the country, the Serbs were forced to leave their native lands and move across the Danube (the territory of the Military Border (Vojna Krajina)). They began to lose confidence in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Constant exile, religious issue, were some of the reasons to refuge in Orthodox Russia.

Jovan Horvat made an official request to the Russian ambassador in Vienna in 1751 to allow him and other Serbs to resettle in Russia and be accepted into the service at the Russian court. Elizabeth I Petrovna did not wait long for a positive answer.

Migrations began already in 1751. Greatest trace in history was left by the serbian lieutenant colonel Ivan Yegorovich Shevich, who founded the settlement of Slavo-Serbia on the territory of the modern Luhansk and Donetsk region, and colonel Ivan Samoilovich Horvat, who became the founder of Nevoserbia, located on the territory of the modern Kirovograd region, Ukraine.



Historical maps: Novoserbia (1752-1764)



Historical maps: Slaveno-Serbia (1753-1764)

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This is considered to be the biggest migration movement of Serbs after the Great Migrations in 1969 and 1739. One of the most important Serbian writers Miloš Crnjanski wrote about this period in his famous book “Migrations”.

The life of the first settlers was very difficult. They had to build houses and to establish life in the open steppe. Also, it was necessary to carry out military service -

the Crimeans were very close. The Serbian settlers, in spite of everything, managed to settle down in a new place. They gave a powerful impetus to the economic development of the entire region. Serbs were actively engaged in agriculture, handicrafts, raised cattle, and they were the first to conduct exploration and organize the extraction of coal and iron ore along the river Lugan. The surplus of their labor they were selling mainly to the Don Cossacks.

In the early 1760s, Nevoserbia and the surrounding lands were violently raided by the Crimean Tatars. The fight against the Tatars seriously weakened the internal organization of the Novoserbia and Slaveno-Serbia regions. In this regard, and also considering the need to put an end to the excesses of the Crimeans, the new empress, Catherine II, decided to radically transform organization of these lands. By the manifesto of the Empress Catherine in 1762 and the Decree of the Russian government in 1764, due to the expansion of the territory of Russia to the Azov and Black Seas, they became a part of newly formed gubernias (provinces). At the time of its founding, about 2.200 Serbs lived in Nevoserbia, and more than 3.000 in Slaveno-Serbia. By 1760, more than 26.000 people lived in these regions, 122 settlements were founded and 31 churches were built. When Novoserbia and Slaveno-Serbia ceased to exist and in less than a century, Serbs ceased to be Serbs and, mixing in the Orthodox Sea, became Russians and Ukrainians. According to the statistics of 1862, only about a thousand people declared their Serbian origin and according to the 1900 census, no one in those parts was called a Serb. (Kostić, 2001) At present, according to the 2001 census, 623 citizens of Serbian nationality are registered in Ukraine (All-Ukrainian population census December 5th, 2001).

In the 18th century, Ukraine had a special place in the development of the Russian Empire's foreign policy and cultural ties with the South Slavic peoples, in which Russia saw an ally in the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. Kyiv Theological Academy, Kharkiv, Chernigov and Pereyaslavl collegiums made a great contribution to building relations between Serbs and Ukraine.

Further, during the 19th and early 20th century, Odessa was a significant gathering place for Serbs on the territory of today's Ukraine. The Serbian presence in the modern history of Ukraine has not been neglected as well, especially during First and Second World War.

Nowadays, relations between our two countries are actively developing, but there are also prospects for their improvement, given the geographical and cultural proximity. The official structures of both countries are now faced with the task of strengthening trade, economic, scientific, technical, cultural and educational relations, and one of the main reasons is because past obliges us to develop it. In addition to that, and what is in our power, is university cooperation and exchange of knowledge economy, as important aspect in the relations between Ukraine and Serbia in the future, because universities create cultural standards and should act as strategic resources that every country has to develop.

References:

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