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## ART, POLITICS AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY – COATS OF ARMS OF THE PAKRAC SLAVONIAN BISHOPRIC IN THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

### *Abstract*

*This paper presents the few preserved painted and graphic examples of the heraldic compilations of the Orthodox Church in Slavonia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and shows the basic political engagement of their formulation and use. Active participation of Orthodox Church leaders in the political life of the Habsburg Monarchy, their permanent struggle for the preservation of the Corpus separatum concept for Orthodoxy within the state structure and protection of religious and political rights guaranteed by the Privilegiae, but also aspirations towards climbing the social ladder and acquiring aristocratic titles – all of these conditions determined the acceptance of forms of western heraldry. The ideological frame of Habsburg dynastic patriotism represented an ideal platform for the prolific development of these tendencies. They can be traced in Slavonia, but also supplemented with local particularities emerging from the more pronounced pressure of the Church Union in this area, and the subsequent engagement of the Pakrac-Slavonian bishops against its deeper penetration and the truncation of their jurisdiction.*

**Keywords:** heraldry, Pakrac-Slavonian Bishopric, 18<sup>th</sup>-century Orthodox visual culture

The development of the visual culture of the Orthodox Church in Slavonia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was marked by transformations that were a part of broader adaptations experienced during that period by the entire cultural and political idiom of Orthodoxy in the Habsburg Monarchy. The leading political role in the rapid process of accepting the Mid-European cultural model and overcoming the increasingly dysfunctional post-Byzantine legacy was played by Orthodox Church leaders. Their political position on Hungarian soil was determined by special *Privilegiae* or privileges acquired from the imperial power in Vienna, and by the constant struggle to maintain the status of imperially protected *Corpus separatum* within the state.

Since the time of the renewal of the Patriarchate of Peć under Ottoman rule in 1557, the leaders of Serbian Orthodox Church progressively incorporated the prerogatives of secular power into their jurisdiction, emerging as principal guardians and promoters of the myth about the glory of the medieval Serbian Christian empire.<sup>1</sup> After coming to Hungary during the Great Migration of 1690, the patriarch of Peć, Arsenije Černojević, managed to incorporate elements of previously acquired political rights into status negotiations with the court in Vienna and to ensure an ethnarchic position for Orthodox Church leaders in the Habsburg Monarchy. The defense of religious particularity as the only firm guarantee for the preservation of Orthodox political power necessitated a firm reform of the entirety of religious and political life, aimed towards incorporation of the Serbian Orthodox elite into the social and political fabric of the Monarchy.<sup>2</sup> An important aspect of this process was

<sup>1</sup> For basic outlines of the historical and political circumstances connected with the forming and strengthening of the Orthodox Church organisation in Slavonia and Croatia in the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, see Jovan Radonić and Mita Kostić, *Srpske privilegije od 1690 do 1792* [Serbian privileges from 1690 to 1792] (Zagreb: Srpsko kulturno društvo "Prosvjeta", 2011), 271–354; Radoslav Grujić, *Spomenica o srpskom pravoslavnom vladicianstvu pakračkom* [The Memorial to the Serbian Orthodox Bishopric of Pakrac] (Belgrade: Muzej Srpske pravoslavne crkve, 1996), 85–94, 132–197; Rajko Veselinović, "Narodno crkvena i privilegijiska pitanja Srba u Habsburškoj Monarhiji 1699–1716" [Serbian National, Church and Privileged Issues in the Habsburg Monarchy 1699–1716], in: Rajko Veselinović et al., *Istorija srpskog naroda*, vol. 4 (Belgrade: Srpska književna zadruga, 1994), 39–54.

<sup>2</sup> Aleksandra Kučeković, *Umetnost Pakračko-slavonske eparhije u XVIII veku* [The Art of the Pakrac-Slavonian Bishopric in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century] (Beograd: Akademija Srpske pravoslavne crkve za umetnost i konservaciju, 2014), 33–43. The concept of coming under the rule of a Christian emperor who was expected to act as the liberator of the Orthodox fleeing the Ottoman enslavement formed the ideological base for the relationship between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Habsburg state. The Orthodox hierarchy played a pivotal role in promoting this agenda, which in reality functioned far from the determined ideal. The main tool in creating