

## Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija in the Second Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century According to an Ethnic Map of a Part of Old Serbia

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Received on <December 27, 2010>, revised on <March 5, 2011>, accepted on <April 29, 2011>

### Abstract

This article interprets the results of the author's cartographic work on the Ethnic map of a part of Old Serbia, 1:300,000. This map pertains to a part of the historical Old Serbia, especially Kosovo and Metohija, with the addition of the Kuršumlja nahiya. It was made on the basis of three volumes of travel notes made by Miloš S. Milojević, who travelled through this area towards the end of the 1860's and in the early 1870's. The map presents, in an accessible manner, through the make-up and distribution of the population in the settlements within the region, the ethnic situation at the time, relying on the ethnic-national and religious-confessional criteria; that is to say, it presents the demographic-statistical structure of the mutual relations between Serbs and Albanians immediately before the wars between Serbia and Turkey fought in 1876 and 1877/78, when Serbs were the majority and Albanians the minority population on the territory of the Kosovo and Metohija region.

**Keywords:** *Old Serbia, Kosovo and Metohija, Serbs, Albanians, ethnic map*

### Rezumat. Sârbii din Kosovo și Metohija în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea conform hărții etnice a unei părți a Vechii Serbii

Articolul interpretează rezultatele lucrării cartografice proprii, anume Harta Etnică a unei părți din Serbia Veche, scara 1: 300000. Această hartă face referire la o parte din Serbia istorică, mai ales la Kosovo și Metohija, la care se adaugă Kuršumlja nahiya. Aceasta a fost făcută pe baza a trei volume cu note de călătorie ale lui Miloš S. Milojević, care a studiat regiunea la finalul anilor 1860 și începutul anilor 1870. Harta redă într-o manieră accesibilă, prin design și distribuția populației în localitățile din regiune, situația etnică din perioada respectivă, pe baza criteriilor etnico-naționale și religio-confesionale; astfel spus, prezintă structura demografico-statistică a relațiilor mutuale dintre sârbi și albanezi înainte de războaiele purtate între Serbia și Turcia în 1876 și 1877/78, când sârbii erau majoritari și albanezii minoritari pe teritoriul regiunilor Kosovo și Metohija.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *Serbia Veche, Kosovo și Metohija, sârbi, albanezi, harta etnică*

### INTRODUCTION

Owing to the possibilities afforded by the profession of cartographer and the science of cartography, which can transform and present in visual terms, qualimetrically and precisely, literary and numerical contents, in early 2005, the author of this paper published 'An Ethnic Map of a Part of Old Serbia': Based on the Travel Notes of Miloš S. Milojević 1871–1877', using a 1:300,000 scale, printed by the Geographical Institute 'Jovan Cvijić' of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Vemić, 2005). The map was compiled on the basis of Miloš S. Milojević's three volumes of travel writings entitled 'A Travelogue of a Part of Real (Old) Serbia', published in 1871, 1872 and 1877 respectively (Milojević 1871, 1872, 1877). Miloš Milojević's travel notes resulted from reasons both general and scientific, with the support of the Serbian Learned Society and its then Chairman Mr.

Janko Šafarik, along with the funds provided by the Society for the publication of the first two volumes. Milojević was the first civilian travel writer who travelled through Old Serbia with a view to gathering data on the population and settlements of this region directly, in the field, and presenting them; through the methodological procedures of selection and systematisation, they served as a solid basis for mapping.

What was produced in this way was a map that presents an ethnic picture of the major part of Old Serbia even before the first census conducted in the Principality of Serbia, liberated from the Turks. This map, with the attendant brochure (consisting of 80 pages), which enhances it in terms of content, containing a parallel text in English, as well as a preface and an afterward by the Academician Vladimir Stojančević, offer a historical assessment of the value of Milojević's travel notes and an overview of the controversies surrounding it in the historiography of that time and the contemporary historiography. Since there are few historical

<sup>1</sup> Old Serbia – Serbia before 1455

sources and scientific works from that time, this map represents a solid, scientific work, firmly consistent with the task set before it, and is, as such, a welcome means of shedding new light on ethnic and demographic processes in Kosovo and Metohija and the neighbouring areas, thus enabling a more detailed and plastic overview of these processes. The advantage of this map is that it provides a direct, concrete and realistic picture of the situation encountered by Milojević, which even the author himself could not review in a literary and holistic manner in his work and present to the reader in a like manner. Made using a relatively large scale, 1:300,000, relying on the method of structural map-diagrams, this map is both more precise and more accurate than, as well as comparable to, foreign and domestic cartographic works created, for the most part, after the publication of Milojević's travel notes, that is to say, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, namely, the ethnographic maps by Carl Sax (1878), Spiridon Gopčević (1889), Alfred Stead (1909), Jovan Cvijić (1906, 1913) and others.

Even at first glance, the map shows the majority presence of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija around 150 years ago, when those regions of Old Serbia were part of the Ottoman Empire. At that time the local pashas, in order to create a military border and to stop the liberation impact from the Principality of Serbia in this area, started the process of Albanian colonization and persecution of Serbs from their ancestral homes, with the aim to usurp the country and to inhabit their population from Northern Albania. This process was continued later on.

## **DATA AND METHODS**

For the purpose of producing this map, from the mass of other data, we have selected only the data pertaining to the population distribution in settlements, based on the ethnic-national and the religious-confessional criteria that served to provide the themes of the map. Studying the text of the travel notes, we found a total of 1,140 settlements and for almost all of them the notes provided information about the ethnic composition of the population, and for the majority of them there was information on the number of houses in them. This information has been systematised and presented in the form of tables based on territorial-administrative divisions, printed as part of the booklet accompanying the map.

In territorial terms, relying on the information supplied in the travel notes, the map encompasses the Kosovo-Metohija region, parts of the Raška and Toplica regions, as well as parts of north Albania

and north-western Macedonia, that is to say, the area where four contemporary states – Serbia, Montenegro, the Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Albania intersect. Based on the number of houses, all the settlements have been grouped into 7 categories; for five categories of minor settlements, circular map-diagrams have been produced, and for the remaining two categories of major settlements, square-shaped map-diagrams have been produced. The settlements, for which there is only information about the ethnic affiliation of the population, and no data concerning the number of houses therein, have been placed in the lowest-ranking category.

The reconnoitring of the settlements was conducted on the basis of maps made at least half a century after the travelogue, and on the basis of contemporary maps that the author had at his disposal, so that some 123 settlements remained unsurveyed, which presupposes the possibility of supplementing this map if more detailed or older maps should appear, or if a chance for field research should present itself, thus making it possible to establish whether those settlements still exist or not, or whether they have been modified. When reconnoitring these settlements, the author had at his disposal some less dependable maps of the territory of north Albania, which is where most of the unsurveyed settlements remain. Apart from this, a total of 122 settlements are mentioned twice, and some three times, in the text of the travelogue, on account of the way in which the author's route through the area criss-crossed, overlapped or doubled in places, which was also registered in the data tables. These repetitions only increased the accuracy of the travelogue, for in the majority of the cases the same or more detailed data were presented, relevant for the themes of the map.

In the final analysis, the map contains a total of 895 settlements, quite sufficient in terms of their number and the density of its content, which faithfully reflect the given themes using the 1:300,000 scale and in view of the territorial scope of the map. Using the map-diagram methodology, seven ethnic-confessional groups were singled out for the purpose of a thematic representation of the settlements, as can be seen from the map's legend, (Fig. 1) namely: Serbs (Orthodox Christians), Islamicised (Turkified) Serbs, Arnauts (Islamicised Albanians), Osmanlis, Latins (Catholic Albanians), Circassians and Gypsies. These groups were designated in the same way as in Milojević's travelogue, and each one was marked using a different colour within the framework of the map-diagram. Ethnically and confessionally pure

settlements were represented using one colour, whereas in the case of mixed settlements, the colours used were proportionate to the data contained in the map-diagram.

## DISCUSSIONS

Miloš S. Milojević's travel notes made in the course of his travels through Old Serbia contain a wealth of information, and none of its contents has been presented in map form until this map. In addition to the ethnic affiliation and the distribution of the population in settlements, the author provided brief notes on their origin, their religious and national affiliations, customs, tradition, national costumes, legends, poems, stories, anecdotes, their attitude towards the state authorities, other ethnic communities, etc. On top of everything else, his travel notes contain a wealth of information on the state of the spiritual culture of the population, including notes on the visible traces, written and painted alike, of churches, monasteries and the sites thereof, mosques, cemeteries, tombstones, various monuments, inscriptions, and also of remnants of secular buildings such as fortresses, towers, bridges, hot-water spas, wells, etc.

### The ethnic distribution of the population in settlements according to the ethnic-national and the religious-confessional criterion

The map quite faithfully and specifically presents the ethno-demographic situation in Kosovo and Metohija, and in the neighbouring regions, under the historical circumstances of the era, making it possible to see the majority presence of the Serbian population of two different religious affiliations, with visible traces of Albanian colonisation, which started in these parts as far back as the Austrian-Turkish war of 1788–1791 and the First Serbian Uprising of 1804. In the case of 77 settlements in the Kuršumlija nahiya, which were marked in the legend as 'either-or' settlements, a special cartographic sign was used – a split map-diagram with two colours. In the case of these settlements, Milojević was unable to establish precisely whether they belonged to Islamicised Serbs or Albanians, which was due to the ongoing process of Albanianisation of Islamicised Serbs. Among other things, he wrote the following about this phenomenon: 'In addition to this, they told us that they were not really Albanians but veritable Turks – that is, Turkified Serbs – but not Osmanli and Asians; that until 100 years before that time the entire nahiya was free from Albanians; it was the sultans who had started the process of settling

Latins there during the time of Koča's, German, Karađorđe's and Miloš's war...', and also this: 'At first, they forced them to take Albanian women – and Latins at that, who spoke no other language but Albanian – from as far as the Skadar and Đakovica nahiyas<sup>2</sup>. In addition to their wives, who spoke Serbian, they were forced to keep the others, too, and thus learned the Sqp language' (Milojević 1871:116).

## LEGENDA / LEGEND



Fig. 1. The map's legend

In the light of the data presented in the map, the structure of Serbian and Albanian settlements can also be expressed numerically. The map contains 483 Serbian, 92 Albanian and 230 mixed settlements; all the major urban settlements – Prizren, Priština, Peć, Đakovica and Kuršumlija, were over 90 per cent ethnically Serbian. As far as the minor ethnic groups are concerned, the map includes 5 large Circassian villages; Osmanlis were to be found only in the mixed village of Mamuša, in 80 households, and in Prizren, in 120 households; Gypsies were mixed in seven settlements: in four villages they were mixed with Serbs (Orthodox Christians), in one with Serbs (Orthodox Christians) and Arnauts, in Mamuša they were mixed with

<sup>2</sup> Nahiya –Ottoman territorial-administrative unit

Serbs (Orthodox Christians) and Osmanlis, and finally in Đakovica, they were mixed with Serbs

(Orthodox Christians) and Latins. More precise indicators can be found in the Table 1.

**Table 1 Distribution of ethnic groups on settlements**

Ethnic groups	Settlements
Serbs (Orthodox Christians)	244
Islamicised Serbs (converts)	130
Serbs – Islamicised Serbs	109
<b>Total:</b>	<b>483</b>
Major urban settlements – Serbs being the majority	5 settlements in all
Arnauts (Islamicised Albanians)	69
Latins (Catholic Albanians)	21
Arnauts – Latins	2
<b>Total:</b>	<b>92</b>
Serbs – Arnauts	18
Serbs – Latins	15
Islamicised Serbs – Arnauts	152
Islamicised Serbs – Latins	4
<b>Total:</b>	<b>189</b>
Serbs – Islamicised Serbs – Arnauts	22
Serbs – Arnauts – Latins	1
Islamicised Serbs – Arnauts – Latins	2
Serbs – Islamicised Serbs – Arnauts – Latins	5
<b>Total:</b>	<b>30</b>
Serbs – Gypsies	1
Islamicised Serbs – Gypsies	2
Serbs – Islamicised Serbs – Gypsies	1
Serbs – Arnauts – Gypsies	1
Islamicised Serbs – Osmanlis – Gypsies	1
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6</b>
Islamicised Serbs or Arnauts	77 “either-or” settlements in all
Circassians	5
Settlements without data on the ethnic situation	8
<b>Total of</b>	<b>895 settlements</b>

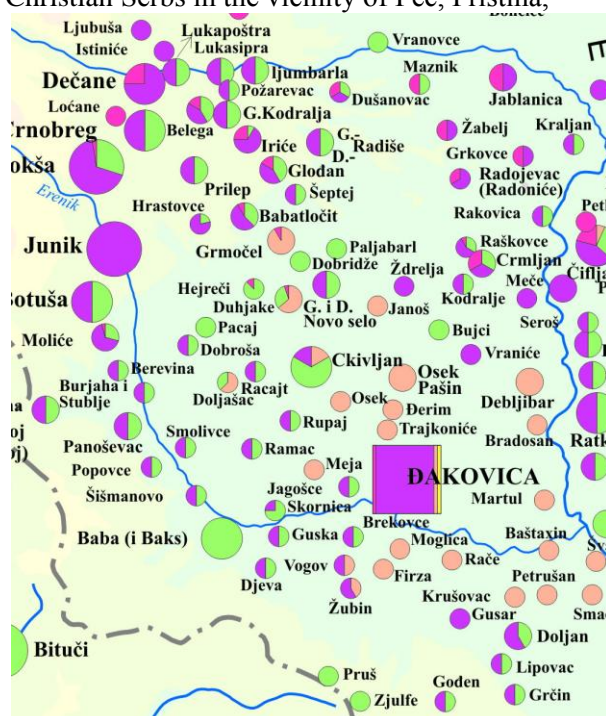
Source: *An Ethnic Map of a Part of Ancient Serbia... Vemić M., (2005)*

Taken individually, the figures presented above lead to the conclusion that at that time the settlements populated by Serbs (Orthodox Christians) outnumbered those populated by Arnauts (Islamicised Albanians) by three times (244:69), and also that the settlements populated by Islamicised Serbs twice outnumbered those populated by Arnauts (130:69); compared to only 21 settlements populated by Latins (Catholic Albanians), it makes 11 and 6 times more settlements populated by Serbs respectively. However, on account of religious-confessional similarity, Arnauts were mixed to a greater extent with Islamicised Serbs (in 152 settlements) than with Orthodox Christian Serbs (in 18 settlements), whereas Latins were mixed with Orthodox Christian Serbs (in 15 settlements) to a greater extent than with Islamicised Serbs (in 4 settlements). Serbs of both religious affiliations were mixed in 109 settlements.

**The ethnic distribution of the population according to the zones of gravity**

Apart from getting insight into the map as a whole, it can also be analysed part by part, focusing on individual nahiyas or the zones of gravitation of the major cities and settlements, which stand out

even at first glance. If we consider the concentration and the number of settlements, in all the nahiyas, with the exception of the Đakovica nahija (Fig. 2), the Serbian agglomerations of settlements constituted an evident majority, namely, Orthodox Christian Serbs in the vicinity of Peć, Priština,



**Fig. 2. A map segment: Đakovica and its environs**

Vučitrn, Mitrovica and Kuršumljia, whereas in the Prizren nahiya there were Serbs of both confessions. In the Đakovica nahiya, based on the number of settlements, Albanians had a slight majority owing to Latins (Catholic Albanians), grouped in twenty or so villages around the city, whereas in Đakovica itself, Serbs had the majority. Of a total of 2,835 houses, only 129 were inhabited by Latins and 120 by Gypsies, and not a single one was inhabited by Islamicised Albanians. The situation was similar in the other cities. Thus in Vučitrn and Mitrovica there was not a single Albanian house; in Peć, out of 1,850 houses a mere 100 were inhabited by Latins, in Priština, out of 3,280 houses only 70 were inhabited by Albanians, and in Kuršumljia, out of 2,000 houses 150 were inhabited by Arnauts. In Prizren, which then had 8,050 houses, only 200 hundred were inhabited by Islamicised Albanians and 100 by Catholic Albanians.

From the overall data supplied by the map, it is evident that the regions of Metohija, the Drim River basin and Pečki and Prizrenski Podgor were more densely populated and demographically fuller than Prekoruplje, Drenica and Kosovo. In addition to this, one can see that the major cities had, based on

the principle of the poles of development, a more developed and denser surrounding network of settlements, and that they exerted a strong influence on their development. Thus in the zone of gravitation of the city of Prizren there was the highest concentration of major settlements (Fig. 3), namely: in the south and the south-east, there were the Mt Šara župas (districts) Gora and Opolje, populated by Islamicised Serbs, whereas Sredska and Sirinić were populated by Christian Serbs; in the north, around Orahovac and Suva Reka, there was a large number of Serbian settlements populated by Serbs of both confessions. One gets the impression that, in a manner similar to the way in which Mt Šara towers over its surroundings, the numerous Serbian villages in the Mt Šara župas mentioned above overwhelmed the Albanian villages in the whole of Metohija in terms of the number of inhabitants, size and concentration of the population. The ethnic composition of the Mt Šara župas was certainly connected with the demographic supremacy of the population, due to the highly developed, cattle-raising economy that prospered under the very favourable circumstances afforded by the mountainous expanse of Šara.

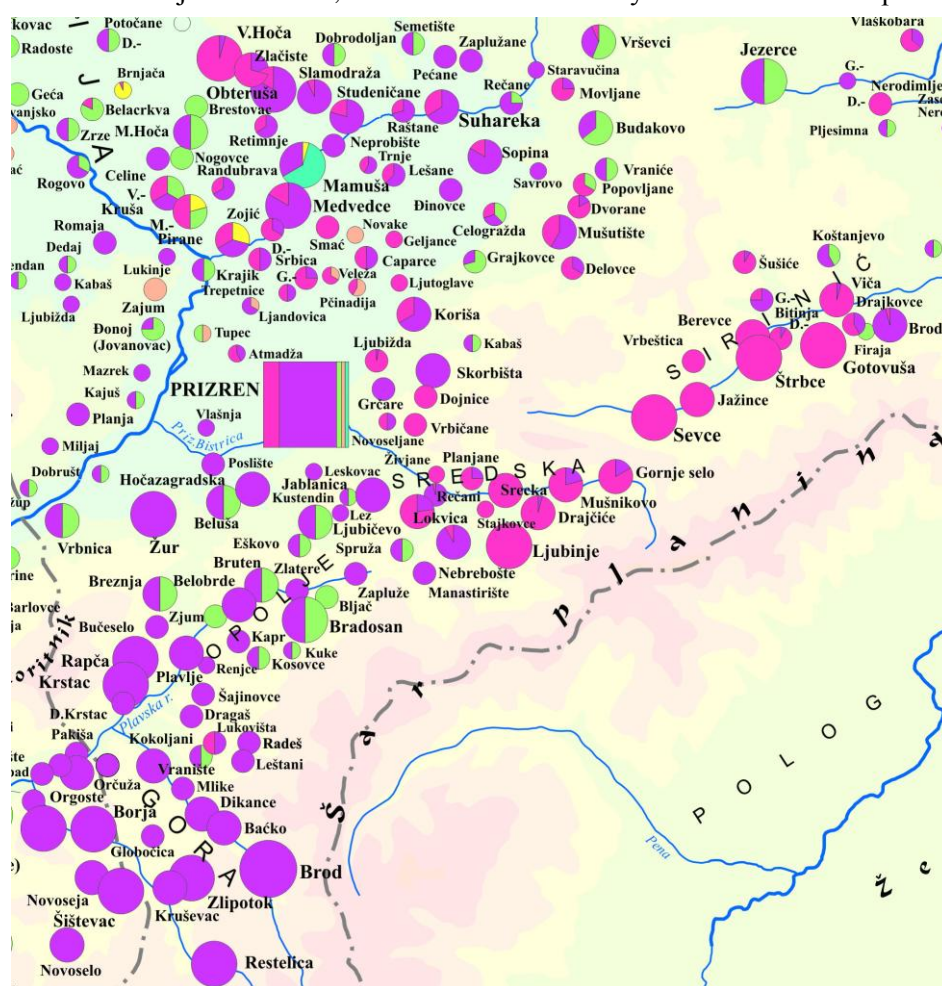


Fig. 3. A map segment: Prizren and its environs

Peć and its surroundings had a somewhat less dense network of settlements, situated around the source of the Beli (White) Drim river and in the valleys of Pećka Bistrica and Klina, homogeneously populated by Christian Serbs. Albanians were to be found only in several mixed villages, mainly Latins, and in a couple of fringe villages there were Gypsies as well. The

settlements around the source of the Beli Drim river and its tributaries Istočak and Kujavča belonged to Serbs only. The network of settlements around Peć and the entire area in the valleys of the above-mentioned rivers were the least affected by Albanian colonisation, which is why they preserved their former ethnic structure (Fig. 4).

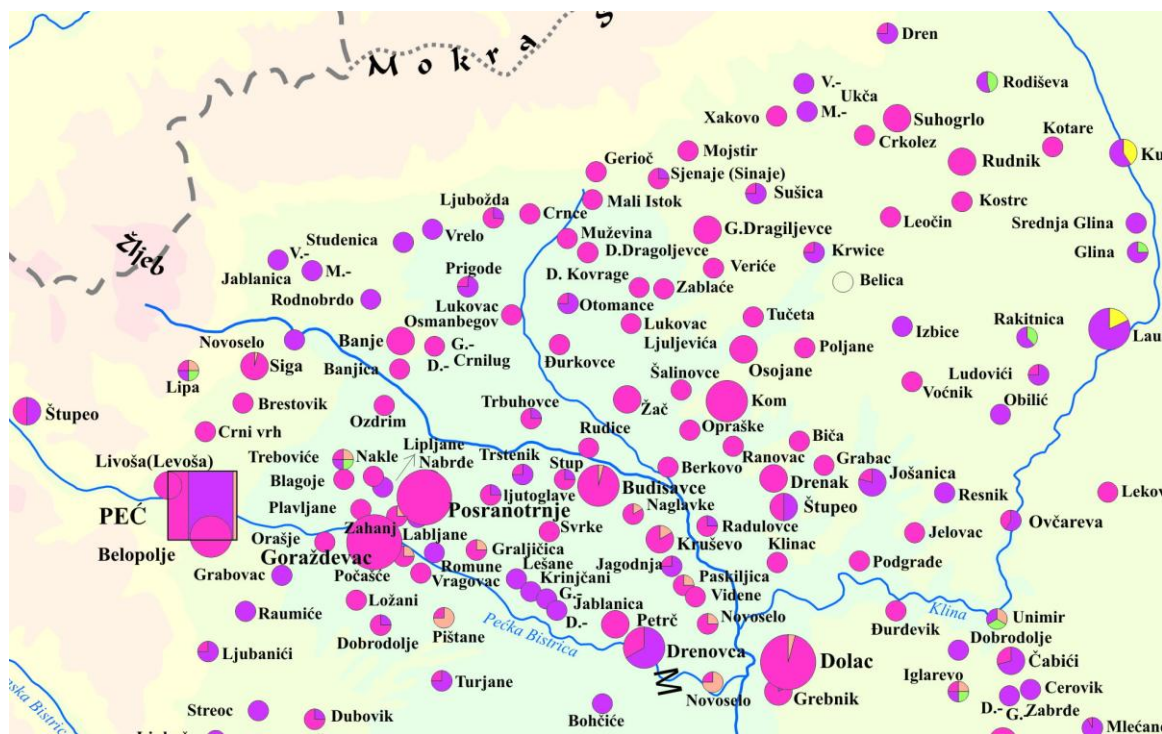


Fig. 4 about here. A map segment: Peć and its environs

It is the example of Peć and its surroundings that is representative of the typical ethnic situation of the majority, indigenous population, predominantly agricultural, Christian and Serbian, characterised by a patriarchal, commune-type family organisation, which had existed there before groups of Albanians and individual Albanians came down from the mountainous regions of northern and middle Albania, where they lived in *fis*-type organisations, migrating to the cultivable plains of Metohija and Kosovo and thus driving Serbs out or causing them to become Albanised.

The fact that the Serbian ethnic structure remained relatively compact, especially in the region around Prizren and Peć, during the course of a long period of Turkish rule and exposed to the constant pressure of Albanian settlers who forcibly drove Serbs out of the homes they had long inhabited, was certainly largely due to the Serbs' awareness, preserved despite everything, that Prizren was the capital of mediaeval Serbia (Fig. 5) and that Peć was the seat of the Patriarchate of the Serbian Orthodox Church (Fig. 6).



Fig. 5. Prizren. Photograph Mihailo Ristić, 1897

From the map, it can be seen that in the gravitational zone of Priština the Christian ethno-demographic structure of the Serbian settlements was also maintained to a large degree (Fig. 7); what changes did occur in this structure were more in evidence on the fringes of the area than in the immediate surroundings of the city. Even though this area was divided among various nahiyas, it was

still ethnically homogenised despite the visible traces of Albanian migrations and the presence of a few large Circassian villages.



Fig. 6. The Patriarchate of Peć (1346–1463 and 1557–1766). The postcard, 1890

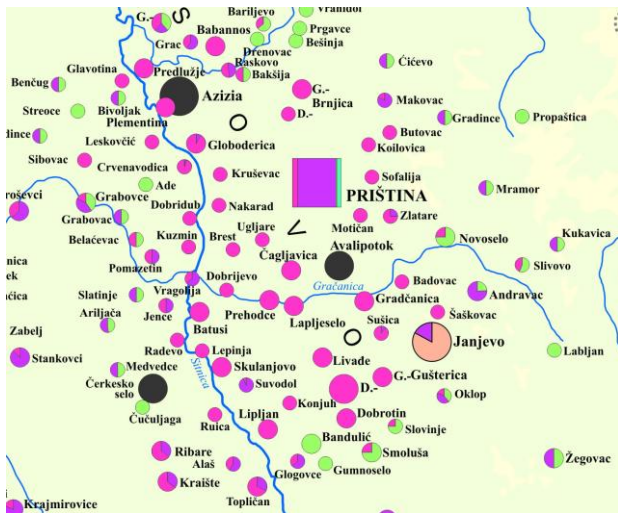


Fig. 7. A map segment: Priština and its environs

The example of the large village of Janjevo, near Priština, serves as proof that this area was populated by Serbs: there were 200 houses in it where Catholicised Serbs lived, and even though they had changed their faith for the sake of their safety, they never learned the Albanian language. In the map, this village is shown as

a Latin one based on the confessional principle, and in the accompanying booklet it is classified as Serbian in terms of the national affiliation of its inhabitants. It is well known that this village was preserved as such in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only to be proclaimed Croatian in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, where its inhabitants migrated towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

This map disposes of many dilemmas and shortcomings of other investigations, especially those conducted by the European travel writers of that time. Thus, for example, Johann Georg von Hahn did not provide a coherent overview of the confessional-ethnic situation in Prištinska kaza, the way he did for the majority of Kosovo villages, as it was quite pertinently observed by Vladimir Stojančević in the following manner: ‘Compared to the data he provided on Albanians, and bearing in mind the general information pertaining to the (old) Priština sanjak, it would appear that in Kosovo in the 1860’s Serbs outnumbered Albanians, even though they were mixed with them in a large degree on account of the influx of Albanians, which occasionally resulted in conflicts. In any case, the picture of the confessional, ethnic and population composition of Kosovo remained incomplete and insufficiently clear’ (Stojančević 1994:101). That is why this map provides a plastic illustration of the actual ethno-demographic situation, confirming that Stojančević’s assumption that Serbs were then the majority population in the area around Priština is correct.

As can also be clearly seen from the map, in Stari Kolašin and in the lower part of the Sitnica river basin, there was another large and compact group of settlements consisting of over 50 Serbian, mainly Christian villages, gravitating towards Mitrovia, which had 420 houses, and Vučitrn, which had 850 houses (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8 A map segment: Vučitrn and Mitrovia with their environs

These two towns and the villages in their surroundings most likely retained their old ethnic structure unchanged, with the exception of two mixed villages, on account of the fact that they were not exposed to the main thrust of Albanian migrations. It

is clearly visible that this group of settlements, in terms of their position, being interlinked, the outlook and the density of their network, is very similar to the structure of settlements preserved in the surroundings of Peć (Fig. 9).

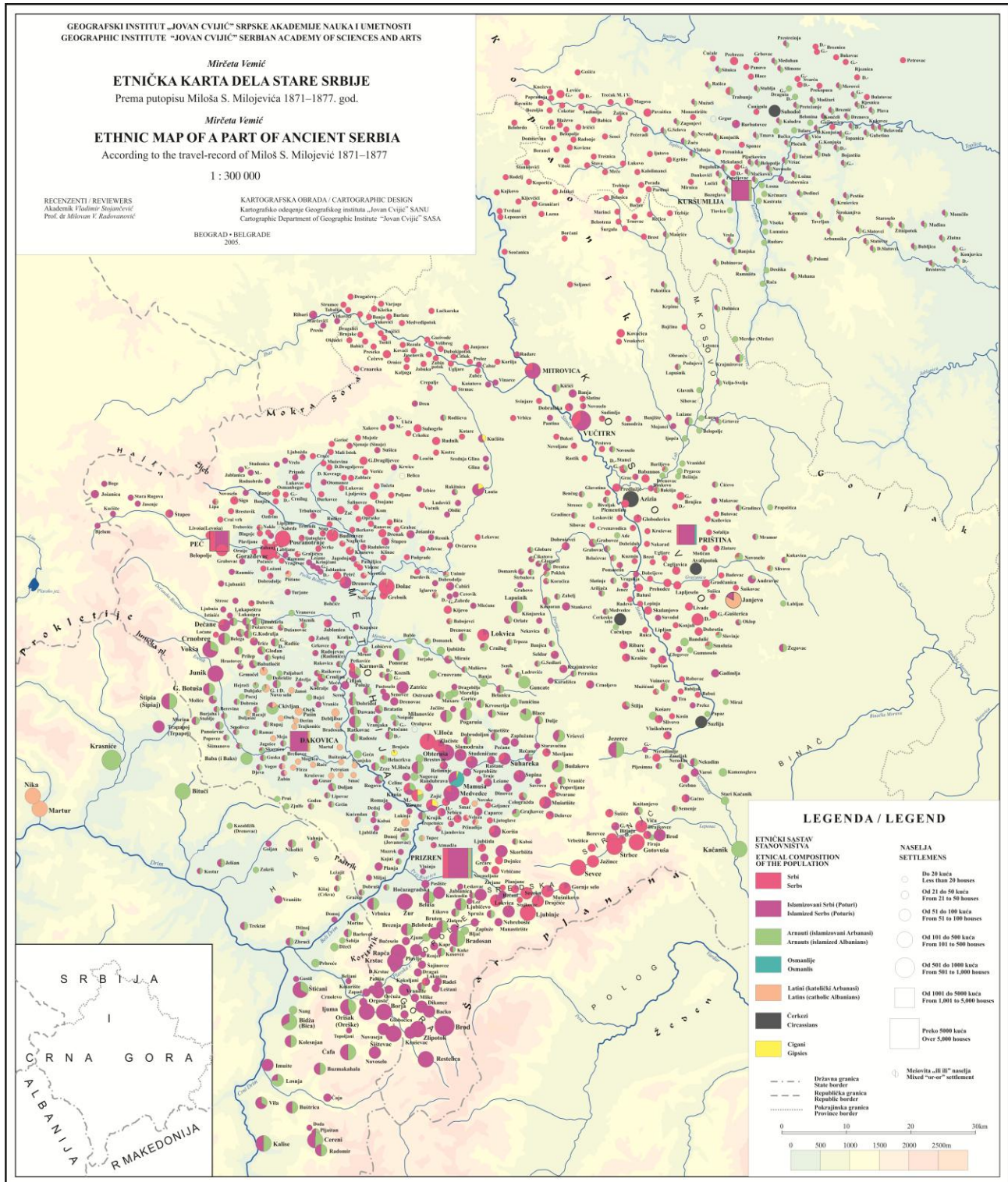


Fig. 9. An Ethnic map of a part of Old Serbia (Vemić, 2005) (reduced)

Since the map as a whole represents a cross-section of the situation at the time when the process of Albanian colonisation and forcible driving out of Serbs had begun but had not progressed very far, we can establish quite dependably the main direction that those migrations would take. Following the spatial and the mutual position of newly-established Albanian villages, and their partial presence in Serbian villages, the main direction of the Albanian colonisation of Old Serbia was from northern Albania towards the north-east, across the Đakovica nahiya, Prekoruplje and Drenica, and then further up the valley of the Lab river, across Malo Kosovo towards Kuršumljia, to the border with the free Principality of Serbia.

On this route, there are no large homogenised Albanian settlements, but such settlements do exist in the case of the indigenous population. There are almost two and a half times fewer purely Albanian settlements than there are mixed ones (92:219), and in the mixed settlements, viewed from the point of view of religious affiliation, their density of population was five times lower in Christian than in Islamicised Serbian villages, all of which testifies to their gradual infiltration into these territories.

## CONCLUSION

Overall, the map represents a cross-section of the situation at the time when the process of the Albanian colonisation of Old Serbia and the forcible suppression and Albanianisation of Serbs was already under way but had not progressed very much, so that the map shows agglomerations of settlements with a visibly preserved indigenous ethno-demographic structure: with the exception of Đakovica, it is to be found in the surroundings of the above mentioned major cities and towns. The map also makes it possible to perceive the main flow of Albanian migrations, which start from northern Albania, proceeding through the Đakovica nahiya, Prekoruplje and Drenica, and then further up the valley of the Lab river, across Malo Kosovo towards Kuršumljia and to the border with the free Principality of Serbia. All of the above shows that, towards the end of the 1860's and at the beginning of the 1870's Serbs were the majority and Albanians the minority population on the territory of Kosovo and Metohija.

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