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## HISTORIOGRAPHICAL WORK OF SIMEON PIŠČEVIĆ: BETWEEN CENTRAL EUROPE AND RUSSIA\*

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**Abstract:** The paper focuses on the historiographical work of Simeon Piščević (1731–1797) *History of Serbian People (Istorija srpskog naroda)* written in Russia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Simeon Piščević was a Serb who started serving military in the Austrian army during the War of the Austrian Succession and then went to the Russian army, where he got as far as to the rank of general. Miloš Crnjanski partly based the main character of his novel *Migrations (Seobe)* on this person. The first part of the paper focuses on the history of his manuscript, which remained unknown until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while the second part presents the structure of this work, the sources on which the author relied and the methods that Piščević applied as a historian.

**Keywords:** Simeon Piščević, History of Serbian People, History of Serbian Historiography, Migration of Serbs to the Russian Empire, Miloš Crnjanski, Habsburg military border.

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Simeon Piščević (1731–1797) is one of the most interesting people of the Serbian culture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. He first served as an officer in the Austrian army, fighting in the War of the Austrian Succession for the rights of Maria Theresa and then, after moving to Russia, he reached the highest military ranks in the army of this empire. He was a brigadier general and the bearer of the Ribbon of St. George. He had to opportunity to personally meet empresses Elizabeth Petrovna and Catherine the Great, as well as the very influential Prince Potemkin. Although he was completely unknown to the Serbian culture until the 1930s and to the wider public until 1961, when Matica srpska started publishing the translation of his memoirs into Serbian, his tumultuous life was the basis for the main character of the famous novel *Migrations* by Miloš Crnjanski, Vuk Isaković.<sup>1</sup>

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\* The paper is an extended version of one part of the research published in the preface of the book: Simeon Piščević, *Istorija srpskog naroda (History of the Serbian people)*, edited and prefaced by Đorđe Đurić, Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad 2018.

<sup>1</sup> The literary skill of Simeon Piščević, which was demonstrated in his memoirs, attracted the attention of Crnjanski. In a text published in the daily paper *Politika* on 15 May 1924 Crnjanski introduced the wider public to this forgotten personality of the Serbian 18<sup>th</sup> century. The famous writer at that time did not know of the existence of the manuscript of the *History of the Serbian people*.

Piščević was a characteristic representative of the Serbian military elite of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. His grandfather Gavril and father Stefan were officers in the Austrian army.<sup>2</sup> Simeon was born in Šid, a little town in Srem, where his father served in the military.<sup>3</sup> He chose the military calling, just like many other Serbs of his time who lived in the Habsburg Monarchy. In return for their faithful service on the military border of the Austrian empire Serbs enjoyed many privileges, i.e. they were not in the position of serfdom and did not depend on local feudal masters. However, in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, due to the geopolitical changes caused by pushing the Ottoman Empire towards the south, the Habsburg Monarchy started decreasing the importance of Serbian border units and the role of Hungarian noblemen increased. That is when the court in Vienna reduced the rights of Serbs in this region and started subjugating them to the Hungarian authorities. This caused great dissatisfaction among Serbian bordermen, so that in 1751 part of them decided to move to Russia: here, during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna, Serbian immigrants were granted special rights in the newly formed regions New Serbia and Slavenoserbia.

Among those who decided to move to Russia was Simeon Piščević, who started his journey in 1753. He belonged to the Serbian elite in the Habsburg Empire. His uncle Sekula Vitković was a regiment commander, his father-in-law Atanasije Rašković was one of the most respected officers and Patriarch Arsenije IV Jovanović Šakabenta was the uncle of his wife Dafina. Still, membership in the elite and prospects of a successful career were not enough for young Piščević, who as a real son of the 18<sup>th</sup> century fantasized about adventures and officers' glory. This was the main reason why he moved to Russia. As a regiment commander there he participated in wars with the Poles (1767) and the Ottoman Empire (1768–1774), he attained the rank of general and was awarded the Ribbon of St. George, the most prestigious in the Russian army, for his heroic deeds.<sup>4</sup> As a very well educated officer, during his short service at the Russian court he was sent on several diplomatic missions and with Prince Potemkin participated in planning and preparation of an action in the Balkans which was connected with the Greek project of Catherine the Great.<sup>5</sup> He described part of these events in his historiographical work.

Simeon Piščević wrote two books and both can be considered historiographical pieces. These are his *Memoirs* and the *History of Serbian People*. The public learnt about them only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, much later after his death. The author wrote these two books simultaneously and that is why some facts are repeated in both of them. After Simeon Piščević's death, the manuscripts shared the same destiny: for almost a century since they were kept in the family of his ancestors and were eventually presented to the public by Nil Popov, a Russian Slavist and archeographer.<sup>6</sup> The *Memoirs* were published in Serbian in

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<sup>2</sup> His family was originally from the Paštrović region on the Adriatic coast of present-day Montenegro.

<sup>3</sup> Pavić 1966: 251–255.

<sup>4</sup> Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy Istoricheskiy Arkhiv Moskva (RGIA) Fond 1343. Departament geroldii senata Op. 27. D. 3221 L.4

<sup>5</sup> Vinogradov 2003: 106–109.

<sup>6</sup> Nil Alexandrovich Popov (1833–1892) was a historian, archeographer and Slavist. He graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Moscow. His first papers were dedicated to the study of ancient Russian chronicles. His role model was Sergei Mikhailovich Solovyov. He taught Russian history and later the history of Slavs at the Moscow University. His PhD thesis was on the history of Russian-Serbian relations in the period 1806–

the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the *History of Serbian People* in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Piščević's *Memoirs* were first published in 1884 in Russian. The full title of the memoirs in the first edition in Russian was: *Известіе о походе Сімеона Степанового сына Пишчевича, генерала майора и кавалера ордена св. Георгія, о его рожденіи, жизни, воспитаніи, наукѣ, зачало службы, преселение въ дальнюю страну, происхождение дѣлъ военныхъ, и о случившихся съ нымъ по судьбамъ разныхъ счастій и несчастій, писалъ самъ собственною рукою собиралъ изъ разныхъ прежнихъ своихъ записокъ и продолжалъ до 1785. года.* For his *Memoirs* Simeon Piščević used the neutral term “zapiski” (records), which was later used in Russia for memoirs, diaries and autobiographies: this means that the author himself did not define the nature of his work.<sup>7</sup> As Piščević himself said in his work, he wrote his *Memoirs* using his diaries, which cover the events ranging from the time of the Alsace quest in 1744 until the end of his service in the Russian army. He shaped the final version in 1785. This work was written in the Slavenized Russian<sup>8</sup> language (with reflections of the Serbian pronunciation), in which he also wrote the *History of Serbian People* in that period. In the review of the Russian edition of the *Memoirs* published in 1885 in the journal *Журналъ Министерства народнаго просвѣщенія* (*Journal of the Ministry of National Education*), P. Chechulin says that Piščević's Russian language retained all the characteristics of the Serbian pronunciation. The first Russian edition was prepared by Nil Alexandrovich Popov, who had acquired the original manuscript from Alexander Platonovich Pishchevich, the great-grandson of Simeon's, in 1879.<sup>9</sup> Nil Popov also wrote a preface and published the book in installments in the archeographical periodical publication: *Чтенія въ Императорскомъ обществѣ исторіи и древностей россійскихъ при Московскомъ университетѣ*, vol 4. for 1881, vol. 2 for 1882 and vol. 2 for 1883. Popov again published the memoirs with an identical preface in Moscow in 1884 as a book entitled *Извѣстіе о походе Сімеона Степановича Пишчевича 1735–1785.* Only one copy of this book was in the possession of Matica srpska and it disappeared before the Second World War. The other one was in the National Library of Serbia and it burnt during the Nazi bombing in 1941.<sup>10</sup>

The memoirs were published several times in Serbian, but almost a century later than

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1856. The translation of this work caused many controversies in the Serbian professional public since some historians have considered that Nil Popov negatively portrayed the Obrenović dynasty and opposed him. He wrote many papers on the history of various Slavic nations and was active in Slavophilic circles. For a while he was a leading figure in the Moscow Slavic committee and participated in the organization of the Slavic congress in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1867. Two years later he was elected a member of the Serbian Learned Society (predecessor of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts). Vorabyova 1999: 24–31.

<sup>7</sup> In his time the genre of memoirs, which in Central Europe emerged in the period of Enlightenment, only started appearing in Russia.

<sup>8</sup> Piščević wrote the *Memoirs* in Russian which he has never completely mastered and as a consequence he kept some elements of Serbian in his writings - hence the term Slavenized Russian as the most appropriate for the language he has used.

<sup>9</sup> Rossiyska Gosudarstvennaya Biblioteka (RGB) Otdel rukoprisey: A. Pischevich pisma k Popovu Nilu Aleksandrovichu F239, NP ed. hr. 16

<sup>10</sup> The archive of the SASA in Belgrade keeps an interesting correspondence between Ilarion Ruvarac and Milan Đ. Milićević from 1897, which testifies that Serbian historians knew that the book had been published, yet they knew nothing about its content.

in Russian. At the initiative of Mladen Leskovac, the editor of the *Matica srpska journal for literature and language* of the time, the first Serbian edition was translated by Svetozar Matić and published in installments in this journal in the period 1961–1963, under the title *Извештај о доживљајима Симеона Степанова Пишчевића, генерал-мајора и кавалера ордена св. Ђорђа, о његовом рођењу, животу, васпитању, учењу, почетку службе, пресељењу у далеку земљу, о војничким делима и о разним доживљајима његовим које му је донела срећа и несрећа, писао својом руком, а сакупио из разних својих ранијих записа; довео до 1785. године* (књ. VIII–XI) (*Report on adventures of Simeon Stepanov Piščević, brigadier general and cavalier of the Ribbon of St. George, about his birth, life, upbringing, studies, beginning of service, moving to a distant country, on his army deeds and various events that luck and misfortune brought him, written by his own hand and collected from his previous writing; up to the year 1785* (vol. VIII–XI)).

The fate of the original manuscript of Simeon's *Memoirs* is not known to historical science today. On the basis of the material from the Manuscript department of the state library in Moscow (namely the correspondence between N. A. Popov and A. D. Pagodin) it can be presumed that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the manuscript belonged to a private collection; however, its further fate still has to be determined. From the correspondence between Alexander Platonovich Pishchevich and Nil Popov<sup>11</sup> we can see that the former claimed back the original manuscripts of his ancestor, but Popov did not comply to this request. From those documents we also learn that Popov provided Alexander Platonovich with 300 copies from each edition of the memoirs, which he partly sold in the bookstores of both Russian capitals.

The importance and value of Piščević's *Memoirs* are confirmed by the fact that they were not known only within Russian and Serbian culture, to which they directly belonged, but were also translated into two Central European languages – Hungarian and German. They were translated in Hungarian by Imre Huszár. Their quite abbreviated version was published for the first time in installments in the Budapest weekly *Vasárnapi Ujság* during 1902.<sup>12</sup> The same version of the translation was published as a book in Budapest by a renowned publisher, Franklin, in 1904. This means that Piščević's manuscript was published in Hungarian 55 years before it was published in Serbian.<sup>13</sup> Just before the beginning of the First World War Piščević's *Memoirs* attracted the attention of the Austrian-German historian and Slavist Hans Ibersberger.<sup>14</sup> As a professor of Eastern European history at the University of Vienna, he wrote several books on the history of Russia, among others about the territorial expansion of the Russian empire to the south, so Piščević's *Memoirs* could have been a useful source for him, especially with reference to the time of Catherine II and Potemkin.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> RGB Otdel rukoprisey: A. Pischevich pisma k Popovu Nilu Aleksandrovichu F239, NP ed. hr. 16.

<sup>12</sup> *Piscsevics orosz tábornok vándorlásai és kalandjai. Sajat elbeszélése. A szláv eredeti után közli Husár Imre.* Literally translated as: Migrations and adventures of the Russian general Piščević, his own story, translated by Imre Huszár after the Slavic original. It was richly illustrated and printed as a literary appendix of the illustrated weekly *Vasárnapi Ujság Regénytára* from issue 27 for 1902 until issue 47 of the same year.

<sup>13</sup> In a letter to Vasa Stajić from 1929 Miloš Crnjanski mentioned this translation into Hungarian, but he said that, while writing *Migrations*, he read the Russian edition.

<sup>14</sup> Stefanović 2013: 7–15.

<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Ibersberger with the aid of the Austro-Hungarian embassy in Russia got the

The Hungarian translation is richly illustrated and clearly intended as an exciting, entertaining read. However, the *Memoirs* enjoyed conspicuous attention within the cultural and political milieu of the German region, not only because of their literary value, but also because of Piščević's double loyalty. Indeed, as a servant of both the Austrian and the Russian army, he seemed to reflect the dilemma of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, not just of the Serbs, but of other Slavs in the Habsburg Monarchy, too.

Simeon Piščević started writing the *History* simultaneously with the *Memoirs*, probably around 1775; when he finished writing the *Memoirs*, he returned to the text of the *History* and worked on it for the next ten years, starting in 1785. Its subtitle says that it was finished in 1795, although in the text of the *History*, when the author speaks about the last division of Poland (which happened in 1795), he says "previous year 1795".<sup>16</sup>

At the time of the Ethnographic Exhibition in Moscow, probably moved by emotions of Slavic connection, Alexander Platonovich Pishchevich, the great-grandson of Simeon Piščević, gave the manuscript of the *History of Serbian People* to Nil Popov.<sup>17</sup> Popov studied this text and relied on its material to write two further articles. The first one, *Военныя посленія сербовъ въ Австрiи и Россiи (Military migrations of Serbs in Austria and Russia)*,<sup>18</sup> was published in 1870 in the historical-political journal *European Herald (Vestnik Evropy)*, which followed the liberal ideas of Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin. In this paper Popov merely relates the information and conclusions presented in the last third

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right to investigate the archives of Moscow and St. Petersburg. That is when he probably came into contact with Popov's edition of the memoirs.

<sup>16</sup> ASASA, 9238, l. 1–2.

<sup>17</sup> In Serbian literature this manuscript has several names. Svetozar Matić uses the title *The book about Serbian nation*, which is the beginning of the title listed by Nil Popov in the preface of his edition of Piščević's memoirs ("Книга о нацији Србској. о государяхъ, царяхъ, короляхъ, князяхъ и деспотахъ, такожь и о прочихъ вѣхъ бывшихъ дѣлахъ. кои съ народомъ Србскимъ случались"). Milorad Pavić calls it "The history of Slavic people" and "The history of Serbs" (in the *History of Serbian people*, vol. IV<sub>2</sub>), or just "Piščević's history". Actually, the original title, written by Piščević himself on the manuscript that is kept in the SASA Archive today, is: ИЗЪВѢСТІЕ Собраное изъ разныхъ авторовъ и введеное въ исторiи преводомъ на словенски языкъ, ѿ народъ словенскомъ ѿ илырiи, сербiи, и вѣхъ тои Србскои нации бывшихъ князѣи, королѣи, цареи и деспотовъ также нѣкоторые поясненiи ѿ Греции, Турции... (translated into modern Serbian: *Извештај сачињен од материјала који је прикупљен из разних књига и хроника, и преведен на словенски језик, који говори о словенском народу, о Илирији, Србији и о свим српским кнежевима, краљевима, царевима и деспотима, а такође и о Грчкој, Турској, давно прошлој угарској побуни и, на крају, о одласку српског народа у Русију. Ове редове сачинио лично и својеручно генерал-мајор Симеон Пишчевић, кавалир ордена. Рад на овом делу започет је пре неколико година, а завршен 1795. Године (A report comprising material collected from various books and chronicles and translated into the Slavic language, which speaks of the Slavic people, of Illyria, Serbia and of all Serbian princes, kings, emperors and despots, as well as of Montenegro, Turkey, long gone Hungarian rebellion, and finally the departure of Serbian people to Russia. These lines were written personally and with his own hand by major-general Simeon Piščević, cavalier of the Ribbon. Work on this book was started several years ago and finished in 1795)). Therefore, it can be presumed that Nil Popov had before him one or several pages that preceded the part of the manuscript that he later sent to Belgrade, and that from these pages he took the title of the *History* and mentioned it in the preface to the *Memoirs* in 1884. This is also supported by the fact that every page of the manuscript bears the inscription „Србскомъ народъ“ ('to Serbian people'), in the form of a handwritten running header. Since it is difficult to determine the title of the original, we decided to call it *History of Serbian people*, because in the present-day meaning this is what the text essentially is.*

<sup>18</sup> Popov 1870: 584.

of the *History*, adding a little commentary and basically sticking to what Piščević himself wrote. The second article entitled *From the manuscript "Serbian History" by Piščević from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century*<sup>19</sup> presents facts related to the church history of the Serbs in the Habsburg Monarchy and is also strongly based on Piščević's work. Later on, Nil Alexandrovich Popov used this information in his voluminous texts about the history of the church in Bosnia and Austria-Hungary.

In May 1871 Popov sent the manuscript of the *History of Serbian People* to Belgrade as a present to the Serbian Scholarly Society, of which he was a member. In the accompanying letter he notified the Society that he published the said article on the basis of the manuscript, pointed out what it related to and said that its other half could be useful for science. Even so, although Piščević's work arrived in Belgrade, it remained unknown to the Serbian public in its entirety for a long time. First, for unknown reasons, it was included in the documents which formed the legacy of Vuk Karadžić.<sup>20</sup> As a consequence, this important work was lost for another half century. The manuscript was recovered only between the two World Wars and it got a new code that is still used today – 9238. It can be presumed that one of the reasons why Piščević's *History* was not published in the decades to come was that the author claimed in his work that all South Slavs were Serbs. In Yugoslavia, especially socialist and federative, such an attitude would surely be condemned.

Piščević's *History* was first mentioned to the Serbian public in *Letopis Matice srpske* (*Matica srpska annual*) in 1879; notwithstanding, since the work was referred to only indirectly, it remained unnoticed in later Serbian literature.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, even Mita Kostić, the author of the well-known study *Srpska naselja u Rusiji* (*Serbian Settlements in Russia*, 1923),<sup>22</sup> did not know that the original manuscript of Piščević's *History* had been in Belgrade for half a century, lost in the vaults of the Serbian Royal Academy, that is the same institution that published his own book. While writing his book, he used Piščević's *Memoirs* (the edition from 1883), which he quoted in several places, while he took the information from the *History* indirectly, namely from Nil Popov's article *Военныя посленія сербовъ въ Австрiи и Россiи* (*Voennyja poslenija serbov v Avstrii i Rossii*), published in the *European Herald* in 1870. After the Second World War literary historians, primarily Milorad Pavić, wrote more about Piščević's *History* than historians. The manuscript was translated into contemporary Serbian language and published in its entirety only in 2018.<sup>23</sup>

The original of the manuscript of the *History of Serbian People* by Simeon Piščević is preserved in the Archive of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade and bears the code 9238. It is roughly sewn into a book of 106 pages, which is 22 cm wide and 34.5 cm high. The pages are paginated with Arabic numerals, with a graphite pencil and it

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<sup>19</sup> Popov 1869: 124–131.

<sup>20</sup> This can be said because on the first page of the manuscript there is a code no. 8552 box LXXXV.

<sup>21</sup> Petrović 1879: 175. In that text the author talks about the content of the lecture of V. I. Grigorovich, a professor at the University of Odessa, which was published in vol. XX of the periodical *Zapiski imperatorskago novorossijskago universiteta* (*Записки императорскаго новоросійскаго университетема*). The text analyzes the contribution of Serbs to the development of Russia, especially with reference to its southern regions. In the footnote of Petrović's text we can find a reference to Piščević's *History*.

<sup>22</sup> Kostić 1923: 9–11.

<sup>23</sup> Piščević 2018.

is obvious that it was done at a later date. The rough paper is grey-blue and the text is written with neat handwriting in black ink. The last pages of the book are empty and it seems that the first few pages after the title page have been cut out. This is also indicated by the fact that Piščević mentioned a *Preface* (*Предуведомленије*) three times in the text: this part originally stood before the text about Illyria and is missing from the book today. Whether these pages were cut out by the author himself or by some of his heirs, Nil Popov or someone else, is impossible to ascertain on the basis of known sources.

Piščević' *History of Serbian People* covers over ten centuries of Serbian history, going from the beginning of the migration of Slavs from their original homeland (which the author places in the last year before the Common Era relying on Friedrich Wilhelm Taube) until the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when the author himself was a witness to the events.

Guided much more by the sources that were available to him and the literature that he used than by a clearly outlined structure, Piščević divided his *History* into very uneven segments. The main sections bear the following titles: *On Illyria; On Serbian people and their arrival to Europe; On Bulgarians; On rulers: princes, kings, emperors and Serbian despots; Second dynasty of Serbian rulers; Third dynasty of Serbian rulers; Fourth dynasty and the beginning of the rule of Serbian rulers from the Nemanjić family; Last royal family or dynasty whose members bore the title of a Serbian despot or prince; On Turks – occurrence*. The last segment, entitled *Extension of the history of Serbian people*, covers almost half of Piščević's text and significantly differs from the previous parts of the book as regards the methodology. Although the author did not separate the single parts with subheadings, we can single out the uneven parts, which are covered in the basic text or in the footnotes: the history of the Paštrović family; of Montenegro; the rebellion started by Imre Thököly against the Habsburgs; the participation of Serbs in the Great Vienna War; the Great Migration of 1690; the Migration of 1739; the history of the Rašković family; the biography of Atanasije Rašković (Piščević's father-in-law); the descriptions of the Kelmendi and Trenck's pandurs; the military border and its division into regiments; the assemblies of Serbian people; the migration of Serbs to the Russian empire and its causes; Serbian military settlements in Russia; and finally a list of Serbian officers in the Russian service.

The first half of Piščević's *History of Serbian people*, which covers the period from the beginning of the migration of Slavs from their homeland until the end of the rule of Serbian despots, was written as a compilation of historical material that was available to the author. He was not able to conduct a more serious critical review of the sources in the present-day meaning of the procedure, because he did not have enough material or historiographical education. However, he did compare the data presented by earlier authors and usually listed the volume and page number of the source of his facts (less often interpretations), which was not usual at the time. Because of that today we can easily ascertain that these data and claims truly do exist in the listed sources. Piščević's interpretations and generalizations, on the other hand, are somehow problematic.<sup>24</sup> While reading the first half of his *History*, we should bear in mind that it was written in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and that many new sources have become available in the meantime, so that we now have completely different interpretations of the

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<sup>24</sup> One typical example is when Piščević relates on Essichs in writing that Charles the Great waged a war in Bohemia against the Serbs, but then, in all other places in the text, basically identifies Czechs and Serbs.

processes and the events that Piščević wrote about.

When he wrote about a certain topic only on the basis of one source, then he usually emphasized it. Even in the modern age, it is rare to find historians that know the region they write about as well as Piščević did. As an officer, he travelled on horseback several times through the region where the Serbian migration took place and which hosted the later events that he covered, too. While serving the army of two empires in several wars and diplomatic missions, he crossed vast areas from the Danube to the Rhine, from the Neva to the Black Sea. Curious and interested in history, he attentively observed material remains of the past and made notes, which he mentioned in several places both in the *History* and the *Memoirs*.

If we bear in mind that Piščević wrote the *History* sometime between 1785 and 1796 in the province, i.e. in the village of Skaleva, in the Russian empire (present-day Ukraine), without any possibility to use public libraries and acquire new books, then we have to respectfully view the number and representativity of the sources and literature he used.

On the pages of his *History* he referred to Mavro Orbini (or “Mavrourbini”, as he called him), obviously relying on Sava Vladislavić’s translation of *The Realm of the Slavs*, published in St. Petersburg in 1722.<sup>25</sup> This book introduced him to the contents of the *Bar family tree*, i.e. the *Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea*, whom he called Diocleas<sup>26</sup> and on whose unreliable data he relied quite a lot in writing about Serbian dynasties. However, the author whose works Piščević used the most in the first half of his *History* was Friedrich Wilhelm von Taube.<sup>27</sup> Although he only listed the author’s surname in his notes, it is clear that he referred to the *Historical and geographical description of the Kingdom of Slavonia and Duchy of Sirmia*.<sup>28</sup> In one of Piščević’s notes below the text we can also find a reference to the *History of Scythians*, whose authorship is falsely tied to Novikov, the most famous educator and founder of free masonry in Russia. Actually, the author of that work written in 1692 was Andrei Lizlov, a high official in the court of Empress Sophia and during the first years of the reign of Emperor Peter the Great, while Novikov was just the publisher.<sup>29</sup> Through this work the author learnt about the claims made by Giovanni Botero from

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<sup>25</sup> The original title in Russian runs as: *Книга историография початия имене, славы и разширения народа славянского, и их цареи и владетели под многими имянами, и со многими царствями, королевствами, и провинциами. Собрана из многих книг исторических, чрез господина Мавроурбина архимандрита Рагузского; В которой описуется початие, и дела всех народов, бывших языка славенского, и единого отечества, хотя ныне во многих царствях розсеялися чрез многие войны, которые имели в Европ Историография початия имене, славы и разширения народа славянского, и их цареи и владетели под многими имянами, и со многими царствями, королевствами, и провинциами, Санктпетербург, В Санктпитебургской типографии, 20 авг. 1722.*

<sup>26</sup> He referred to “Diocleas” also on the basis of Du Cange’s work *History of Byzantium*, edited by Ján Tomka-Sásky in Bratislava in 1746, which is the source of this latinized version of Diocleas’ name in Piščević’s manuscript.

<sup>27</sup> Taube (1728–1778), Piščević’s contemporary, was a lawyer, a politician, a historian and a writer. His historical-geographical description of Slavonia and Sirmia was commissioned by the court of Vienna, for which he served as an emissary during the Serbian assembly in Sremski Karlovci. He also travelled, as part of various diplomatic missions, to Erdély and later to Belgrade.

<sup>28</sup> Taube 1777: 5.

<sup>29</sup> Lizlov participated in the Crimea quests by Vasily Golitsyn (1687–1688) and in the preparations for Peter’s Azov campaigns, and travelled through the vast areas which he wrote about. The *History of Scythians* was written on the basis of Russian chronicles, chronographs, old lists of state officials, Polish-Lithuanian chronicles, as well as the works of Western authors, among others of Giovanni Botero.

Piedmont in his historical-geographical text *Universal relations*, that near the Caspian Sea there was a country named Seurina, which made Piščević deduce that this was the original homeland of Serbs.<sup>30</sup>

Another author that Piščević referred to was Johann Georg Essichs, whose work *Kurze Einleitung zu der allgemeinen und besonderen Welthistorie: aufs neue übersehen, und bis auf gegenwärtige Zeit fortgesetzt* was first published in Stuttgart in 1707 and counts as many as eleven editions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>31</sup> The work that the author most relied on while writing a section of Czechs and Samo's wars with Francs was the *Brief history of Czechs from the ancient times until today* by Franz Martin Pelzel.<sup>32</sup> Pelzel (1734–1801) was one of the founders of modern Czech historiography, an educator and one of the most important members of the revival of his people. He published his historiographical work in German, Latin and Czech. The *Brief history of Czechs* was written on the basis of old chronicles, charters and manuscripts. It is through this work that Piščević eventually learnt about the contents of the *Czech Chronicle* by Cosmas of Prague written at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>33</sup>

One of the most useful works in writing the *History of Serbian people* was the adaptation of Du Cange's *History of Byzantium*, published by Ján Tomka-Sásy in 1746 in Bratislava under the title *Illirycum vetus et novum*. It consisted of three books. The first one, which deals with Illyricum before Romans, the Roman period of history in this region and the migration of people, was written by Tomka-Sásy himself. The second one, which covers the medieval history of Serbs and Croats, was literally adapted by Tomka-Sásy from Du Cange's *History of Byzantium*;<sup>34</sup> Piščević refers several times to this work in his *History of Serbian People*, calling it "Byzantium history". The third book, which includes the history of "Illyricum" in the new age until the author's time was also written by Tomka-Sásy, but was finally signed by Du Cange. This work would greatly resonate in later Serbian and Croatian historiography: for instance, it would be used and quoted by Pavle Julinac and Jovan Rajić. Through this book Piščević drew the segments of Byzantine sources that he later quoted in his *History of Serbian people*, primarily the famous *De administrando imperio* by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, as well as the works of other Byzantine writers: Joannes Kinnamos, Niketas Choniates and Georgius Pachymeres.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> When referring to Botero, Lizlov literally says: ... у Ботера, описателя всего света, поискати нужно. Изъявляет бо той страну некую, названную Серуана или Сервана, недалеко Каспийскаго моря, во время его описания бывшу под областю перскаго царя... However, Piščević failed to say that this inscription referred to the time of Timur's rule, i.e. 14 centuries after the time about which he wrote. It is highly unlikely that a toponym would be kept for so long at a time of constant migrations and arrival of new nations.

<sup>31</sup> Besides that, a shorter version of his book, which featured similar contents and bore the title *Kurze Einleitung zu der allgemeinen weltlichen Historie*, was published several times. In the extended edition from 1764 (printed in Stuttgart with a preface written by Christian Wolf, who was very popular in Russia at the time), Essichs refers to Piščević on page 319. In mentioning this, though, Piščević cites page 367, which means that he used the extended version of Essichs' work, albeit in an edition that is not available to us.

<sup>32</sup> Pelzel 1774: 7.

<sup>33</sup> Piščević did not use Pelzel's more famous collection of sources entitled *New Czech Chronicle (Scriptores rerum bohemicarum)*, first published in three volumes 1783–1784. The second, supplemented edition also comprised three volumes and was released in 1791–1795, together with Dobrovsky.

<sup>34</sup> *Historia byzantina duplici commentario illustrata*, I–II, Paris 1680.

<sup>35</sup> Speaking, for example, about the marriages of King Milutin, Piščević says: "... what historian Georgius Pachymeres says about that, vol. 9, chapter 30", but he also presents the information from this version of Du

In several places in the *History of Serbian people* Pišćević mentioned “historian Windisch”, who was actually Karl Gottlieb von Windisch (1725–1793), whose *Short history of Hungary from the oldest times until today*<sup>36</sup> he used while writing his book. This work was a useful source for the history of late Serbian medieval state, the age of despots and early modern history. However, in the places where Pišćević referred to Windisch regarding earlier periods, he only indirectly relied on Byzantine writers whose work Windisch himself used and whose data Pišćević acquired via the works of other authors.

Among the works Pišćević used was also Anton Friedrich Büsching, one of his contemporaries, a geographer, historian and statistician, who, just like August Ludwig Schlözer, spent part of his life in Russia. His capital work, *Neue Erdbeschreibung*, comprised twelve books and was published several times in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was an astonishingly detailed geographical, historical and statistical description of entire Europe and Asia. Pišćević used the first volume of the 1764 edition.<sup>37</sup>

Among the other authors that Pišćević mentions in his notes, we also find the famous geographer, genealogist and historian Johann Hübner.<sup>38</sup> There is only one reference to his work, namely when Pišćević writes about Skanderbeg, but the analysis of the text reveals that this author, among others, was also a source for the section about the Paštrović family, the Ottoman conquests and the sultans, as well as the section about Thököly and Rákóczi’s uprising.<sup>39</sup>

Pišćević’s referring to the “testimony of historian Kéralio, a councilor of the Swedish Academy of Sciences” about prince “Lak or Lachus”, i.e. Lech, the legendary forefather of the Polish state, provides another interesting detail.<sup>40</sup> Louis-Felix Guinement, chevalier de Kéralio, was a French officer,<sup>41</sup> a professor of tactic at the Royal military school in Paris and a military historian; he was also a member of the Swedish Academy of Sciences, as

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Cange from page 58, where Du Cange’s reference to Pachymeres appears in a footnote.

<sup>36</sup> *Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Ungarn von den ältesten, bis auf die itzigen Zeiten...* Pressburg, 1778.

<sup>37</sup> *Erster Theil, welcher Dänemark, Norwegen, Schweden, das ganze russische Reich, Preussen, Polen, Ungarn, und die europäische Türkei, enthält.* Fünfte Auflage. 1764

<sup>38</sup> Although by education Hübner (1668–1731) was a protestant theologian, he published a series of extensive works on geography and history. He was married to the daughter of Johannes Olearius, a relative of the famous Adam Olearius, who left behind important, richly illustrated testimonials on Russia in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In his book *Dreyhundertdreyunddreyßig Genealogische Tabellen*, published in Leipzig in 1708, Hübner included parts of Johann Friedrich Chemnitz’s Mecklenburg manuscript (*Chronicon Megapolense*), which claims that the founder of the Russian state, Rurik, was the son of the Obotrites prince Gotlieb (Gottschalk). His work *Kurtze Fragen aus der neue mundalten Geographie biss aufgegenwartige Zeit*, first published in 1693, had as many as 36 editions and was translated into several languages, among others in Russian. The Russian translation was published under the patronage of Peter the Great in 1719 and for a long time it was the basis of how geography was seen in Russia. Among Serbian authors, Zaharija Orfelin and Simeon Pišćević both used this work.

<sup>39</sup> This is a huge, ten-volume work entitled *Kurtze Fragen aus der politischen Historie*, which was first published in Leipzig in 1697 and later had several editions. The parts about Skanderbeg that Pišćević mentions in the edition from 1702 available to us, are located on pages 647, 650 and 651.

<sup>40</sup> Without any evidence in the literature he refers to, Pišćević deduces that Lech was a leader of Serbs who migrated to Great Poland.

<sup>41</sup> Almost identical to Pišćević, Kéralio (1731–1793) started his military career at the age of 14 in the rank of lieutenant and, alongside his older brothers, he participated in the war for the Austrian Succession, albeit on the opposite, French side, on the Italian front. Later, during the Seven-year war, he acquired the rank of major.

Piščević says. However, in the part about the Russian-Turkish war and the First Polish confederacy,<sup>42</sup> de Kéralio did not talk about Lech, but rather about the events in which Piščević himself participated and partly described in his memoirs. Even more so, among several other Serbian officers in Russian service, de Kéralio also explicitly named Piščević, who was a lieutenant-colonel at the time.

Besides these sources, while writing his history, our author also used, as he himself said, “Cellarius’ land map”, which was called ‘Bospormeotic’.<sup>43</sup> “Cellarius” was actually the famous historian, geographer and Latinist Christoph Martin Keller, a professor of the University of Halle.<sup>44</sup> Piščević did not use Keller’s historiographical works, but rather the map from the collection of ancient Greek geography *Die Geographia antiqua* (table XXV BOSPORSMAEOTIS, IBERIA, ALBANIA ET SARMATIA ASIATICA).<sup>45</sup>

Besides these works on which he relies, Piščević also mentions charters, like the Golden Bull of Andrew II (“decree of the Hungarian king Andrew II”) and the Privileges that emperor Leopold issued to the Serbs. In several places in his *Memoirs* and the *History* he mentioned diplomas and patents which were first given to his ancestors and later passed onto the Geroldia (Герольдия) in Russia, so the Piščevićs’ hereditary nobility could be confirmed; these documents are still located in Russian archives. Finally, the notes he made while travelling by ancient Roman localities in Bačka and Srem also served as sources.

In the sections of the *History* which are closer to the time when Piščević lived we can find an increasing influence of folk literature in his text. When he talks about the battle of Kosovo, for instance, this becomes obvious. Without a doubt he accepted the folk legend

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<sup>42</sup> *Histoire de la guerre entre la Russie et la Turquie*, 1769, St. Petersburg 1773 (History of the Russian-Turkish war with special reference to the campaign of 1769). This book was published in French by Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn, without mentioning Kéralio as the author. D. A. Golitsyn was a Russian ambassador in Paris and later in the Hague and for a while he was an important link with the ideas of French Enlightenment in Russian high circles, including the empress Catherine the Great. He was the person who maintained contact with French thinkers and artists. Besides diplomacy, he was also involved in natural sciences. In the second part of *Histoire de la guerre entre la Russie et la Turquie* Golitsyn presents the genealogy of the Golitsyn family, while in the third part he includes a response to an article from the Paris *L’Encyclopedie Militaire*, reluctantly speaking of his relative Alexei Mikhailovich Golitsyn, a commander of the first Russian army in this war, under whose command Piščević served until 1769. Several editions later, with naming Kéralio as the author, the book was published in Paris and Amsterdam. After Crimea joined Russia in 1783, his document on the geography of this peninsula was published in Paris.

<sup>43</sup> On the fifth page of the original manuscript it reads “боспоръмеотическѣ означено” (ASASA 9238, 5).

<sup>44</sup> Keller (1638–1707) signed his works with the Latinized name Christophorus Cellarius. He greatly contributed to the development of historical methodology since he shaped and determined the precise chronological borders of historical periodization: old, middle and new age, i.e. ancient history, middle ages and modern history. This periodization, with many variations and supplementations, is still used today. He presented this classification in his most significant work, entitled *Universal history* (*Historia universalis breviter acperspicueexposita, inantiquam, etmediavaeviacnovamdivisa, cumnotisperpetuis*), which was first printed in Jena and had several editions during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to that, he was a Latinist and published several German-Latin dictionaries, as well as many edited works in Latin of Cicero, Pliny, Cesar etc.

<sup>45</sup> This work, published in Latin, had several editions all over Europe during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are also editions which, in Longman publication, only had maps in the form of an atlas. And really, in this map we can see the name “Serbi” written near the mouth of the Volga, in the Caspian Sea. However, Piščević later says is that Serbs are “the people who speak in a Slavic language”, yet this is not found either in this map, or in the book written by Keller.

according to which Vuk Branković was a traitor.<sup>46</sup> We can also find a great influence of folk legends in his descriptions of the times of the Serbian despotate and the Branković family from Sirmia.

The last segment, entitled *Extension of the history of Serbian people*, is the most reliable part of Pišćević's book from a historiographical point of view and has original value. The author here describes the processes and the events in which he personally participated, or rather was informed about by other participants. This part of the book was only partly known to our historiography through the paper written by Nil Popov.

Pišćević wrote the *History* believing in the importance of Slavic unity and saw Serbs primarily as a part of the Slavic family. From the perspective of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, he lightly identified all Slavs in the Balkans as Serbs. However, from the perspective of his 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were no pretensions here: these pretensions were added later, in the subsequent centuries, burdened with nationalism. He only felt that these people shared the same roots and origins, yet they were divided by various local names, religions and administrations of different countries. As an educated Herder's contemporary, he saw membership as determined by language, not by religion or region. At the time when this *History* was written, the formation process of modern political nations had only just began: consequently, Pišćević's text sooner describes the state of the moment, rather than its aspirations. He understood that using the name Illyrians for Balkans Slavs (a very widespread feature in the literature he used, especially by Taube) was a construct with no stronghold in reality, that it was imposed, and therefore he did not adopt it in his book.<sup>47</sup>

*The History of the Serbian people* should primarily be read as a testimony on how educated Serbs of that time saw themselves and their cultural space in the decade when Dositej Obradović stepped onto the stage of history and two decades before the appearance of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić. Understanding one's own past and historical awareness founded in accordance with the era, on scientific historiography, were necessary preconditions for the beginning of the process of the renewal of the state which occurred during the Serbian revolution.

Pišćević's migrations – which, as we learn from the *Memoirs* and from the *History of the Serbian people*, took him from the Danube and the Sava region to the Rhine and the Neva, and then back again to the Danube, near its mouth in the Black Sea – testify that among the educated Serbs of his generation there were enough men formed in accordance with the spirit of the age of Enlightenment, and that these men were fit to start the Serbian revolution in a way that was described with admiration even by Leopold Ranke.

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<sup>46</sup> In the description of the events before and during the battle of Kosovo, Pišćević's fully supports the traditional representation of Vuk's betrayal, which he rationalizes in accordance with his military and diplomatic experience: ... *Vuk Branković was a traitor and a cunning man, who may have sought a way to kill the king and take his place. I will later explain how his infidelity was designed and how that was revealed during the battle. Vuk Branković and Murat led a secret correspondence, where he notified the sultan on all his plans and everything discussed in king Lazar's council. This malicious traitor tirelessly slandered duke Miloš...*

<sup>47</sup> Except, of course, when he writes about the population that lived there before the arrival of Romans.

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**ИСТОРИОГРАФСКО ДЕЛО СИМЕОНА ПИШЧЕВИЋА,  
ИЗМЕЂУ СРЕДЊЕ ЕВРОПЕ И РУСИЈЕ**

**Резиме**

Симеон Пишчевић (1731–1797) једна је од најживописнијих личности српске културе XVIII века. Служио је прво као официр у аустријској војсци. Каријеру је започео као 13 годишњи дечак 1744. борећи се у Рату за аустријско наслеђе за права Марије Терезије. После сеобе у Русију 1753. доспео до највиших војних чинова у армији ове империје. Био је генерал-мајор и носилац георгијевског ордена. Имао је прилику да лично упозна царице Јелисавету Петровну и Катарину Велику, као и утицајног кнеза Потемкина. Иако је српској култури био потпуно непознат до треће деценије XX века, а широј јавности до 1961. када је Матица српска у наставцима почела да објављује превод његових мемоара на српски језик, његов бурни живот послужио је Милошу Црњанском при креирању лика Вука Исаковича, главног јунака знаменитог романа Сеобе.

Пишчевић је аутор два историографска дела, чувених мемоара и до скоро непознате Историје српског народа. Оба дела настала су последњих деценија XVIII века. Рукописе су чували наследници који су се асимиловали у руско друштво до пред крај XIX века када их је Симеонов праунук предао историчару Нилу Попову, који је мемоаре објавио а рукопис Историје српског народа послао на поклон Српском ученом друштву у Београд. Рукопис Историје српског народа је стицајем околности остао необјављен близу 150 година.

Вођен пре изворима и литературом који су му били доступни и које је користио неголи јасно осмишљеном структуром, Пишчевић је своју Историју поделио на целине врло неуједначеног обима. Прва половина Пишчевићеве Историје Срба, која обухвата период од почетка сеобе Словена из прапостојбине до краја владавине српских деспота, писана је као компилација аутору доступне историјске грађе. За озбиљнију критику извора, у данашњем значењу тог поступка, није имао довољно материјала, а ни историографске спреме. Он, истина, пореди податке које износе ранији аутори, при чему обично наводи том и број странице дела из кога је преузимао чињенице (ређе тумачења), што није било уобичајено у свим делима у време када је писао. Захваљујући томе, данас лако можемо утврдити да поменути подаци и тврдње заиста постоје у наведеним изворима. Спорна су, међутим, Пишчевићева тумачења и генерализације. Историју српског народа пре свега треба читати као сведочанство о томе како су образовани Срби у другој половини XVIII века видели себе и свој културни простор. Разумевање сопствене прошлости и историјска свест, заснована у складу са епохом, на научној историографији, биле су нужне претпоставке за почетак процеса обнове државе до кога је дошло током Српске револуције.

**Кључне речи:** Симеон Пишчевић, историја српског народа, историја српске историографије, сеобе Срба у Руско царство, Милош Црњански, војна граница.