

CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERCZEGOVINA AND THE SERBIAN CLAIMS

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Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian Claims by M. D. Krmpotic

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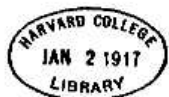
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The Author.

Croatia Bosnia and Hercegovina and the Serbian Claims.

Constantine the Great, in transferring the seat of Roman power from Rome to Byzantium, first recognized the tremendous importance of the control of the Hellespont. Constantinople, the center of Eastern civilization for generations, was the prize for which the Asiatic caliphs fought. It fell only after the Ottomans had conquered and established their capital in the lower part of the Balkan Peninsula. The days of its affluence marked the apex of Moslem power.

Napoleon's sentiment, expressed over a century ago, that Russia at Constantinople would rule the world, merely confirms the judgment of statesmen on the importance of Constantinople as the key to the East and the West, entertained for wellnigh two thousand years.

On or near the Balkan Peninsula, Greek and Persian, Latin and Greek, Moslem and Christian civilizations have battled for supremacy. The perspective of time gives us today a clear view of these great conflicts. However, few realize that in the world war of the present racial, civic and religious ideals are contending for supremacy, the pivot of the conflict being the old battle ground of the East and West that embraces the Balkan Peninsula.

We read the red books and the white books and the blue books that issue from the different chancelleries, justifying the entrance of each power in the present war, and are apt to forget in the maze of contentions when, where and how the great conflict began.

History has seen Eastern civilization supplanted by that of the West. First, we had Greek, then Roman ideas dominate the Western world. These were succeeded by the Gothic and Slavic incursions; and the blending of peoples and institutions following was denominated in history and literature the era of Latin power or civilization. For a long time many regard the Teutonic ideas as now controlling. These have reached flood-tide, and many see today the beginning of the ebb. The next great influence that will dominate the world will be Slavic. Russia represents the power of the northern Slav. Its religious ideals are Greek. The empire of the Habsburgs is the other great Slavic power. It follows dominantly the Latin rite. In the southern Habsburg domains the Slavic elements are the Croats and Slovenes. The kingdom of Croatia through centuries kept up its independence. The Croats, Slovenes and the Serbs are of one race, use a common language, but the Croats' civilization and culture are superior to that of Serbs.

After Serbia had won freedom, it looked to Russia as its protector. Its people treasured the belief that they might revive the ancient Serbian empire and become the dominant Slavic power of southern Europe. Animated by this idea, a propaganda was maintained at Belgrade, which kept the Slavs of the Balkans in a continual ferment. When Austria-Hungary incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina into the empire, a few years ago, the situation became acute. These provinces were rightly a part of the Triune kingdom. They were claimed, however, by Serbia. The murder of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serbian fanatic, under the influence of the Belgrade Junta, brought matters to a crisis. The situation as to Habsburg monarchy had become intolerable. When it declared its intention to punish Serbia, Russia intervened. These drew their respective allies. The final entrance of Turkey and Bulgaria again renewed the flames of war for world dominance, with its center in the Balkan peninsula.

The mythical and intangible thing called the balance of power came to a precarious and dangerous break. All Europe from the Arctic ocean to the Canal of Suez, from London to Constantinople, was a veritable powder magazine, which the pigmy prince of a petty state could explode at any moment by striking a single blow, be it a word. Martial fame is as strongly coveted today as when Absalon, of the beautiful hair, rode forth to battle, and when Richard of lion's heart fought to wrest the tomb of the Redeemer from the hands of the Saracen unbelievers. The generals, from Nimrod to Hindenburg, Joffree and Kitchener, occupy more space in the history of mankind than do all the statesmen, philosophers, poets, preachers, writers and artisans that ever lived. The balance of right instead of power will make people happy.

The importance of studying the underlying strata upon which this great conflict was builded is a most fascinating occupation for those who are the contemporaries of this war. A most interesting and erudite exposition of the claims of the Croat and the Serb, the Latin as against the Greek ideals, is set forth in the monograph by the Reverend M. D. Krmpotic, and is worth while reading, as no better beginning of the study of this momentous question could be made than a careful perusal of Father Krmpotic's article.

June 20, 1916.

EDWIN S. McANANY.

I.

EARLY DAYS AND GEOGRAPHY.

Bosnia and Herzegovina were unknown to the Roman rule until Croatian immigration had begun at the end of sixth century from White Croatia, now Eastern Galicia; there it remained a part of Roman Dalmatia and the Illyria or Illyricum. The earliest inhabitants of the territory covered now by Bosnia and Herzegovina were the Illyrians, a rapacious, pastoral people, divided into various tribes with Latin institutions. They were replaced in the seventh and eighth centuries of the Christian era by Croatian tribal divisions or Zupanates. The most famous Illyrian ruler, Teuta, flourished in 167 B. C., in Southern Dalmatia, the present Herzegovina and Montenegro. The Romans broke the Illyrian power in getting control of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 B. C.-A. D. 9). There is no part of Balkan peninsula containing as many traces of Roman civilization as Dalmatia and adjoining Bosnia, as you will see by a glance at the map.

The two provinces we are now considering were never united in the past. Their origin can be traced to a conglomeration of various political bodies, drifting together during centuries, the changes being influenced at times by fate, or again by administrative policies. The greatest number of these bodies were integral parts of the Croatian, rather than of the Serbian State. There were the same conditions and changes in Herzeg-Bosna as in Dalmatia, except that the kingdom or province of Dalmatia was restricted for a time to the cities lying along the Adriatic coast, as Zadar (Zara), Dubrovnik (Ragusa), Trogir (Trau), Split (Spalato), Kotor (Cattaro) and the islands adjacent thereto, Krk (Veglia), Cres (Cressa), Osor (Apsorus) and Rab (Arbe). The remainder of the territory belonged to the kingdom of Croatia. When these territories fell under Turkish sway, and later on were acquired by the Venetians under the treaty at Karlovci in 1699, and by that at Požarevac in 1718, Dalmatia broadened, and thenceforth included all the territory from the Velebit mountains to the river Neretva (Narenta).

The provinces now designated as Bosnia and Herzegovina were formed in much the same manner. But to appreciate this growth one must ascertain what territory was originally covered by the designation of Bosnia; then observe how the limits of this province widened, was then subdivided and transferred to different jurisdictions and sovereignties, and, after their vanishing entirely during the period of Turkish occupation, has now become a territorial division, designated geographically as Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The origin and meaning of the name of Bosna have not yet been made clear. It is probably a name of ancient origin, possibly derived from the Illyric-Arbanic words, "bas-ante,"

beyond the mountain; the Romans called the river Bosna "Bassante or Bassanius," and from it the name could have been derived. About the middle of the tenth century, Bosna is mentioned for the first time in history, as a small territory having two fortified cities, called by Emperor Constantine Porphyrogenete in his literary works about A. D. 950, Katera and Desnik. Katera of olden times is the Kotor of today, and its neighbor, Desnik of the tenth century is the Tešanj of the present time, or Teševo of upper Bosna, where the castles of the Kings Bobovac, Sutiska and Trstivnica, were erected.

The geographical position in later times of the political divisions skirting the territory known as Bosnia, and the location of the rivers and mountains which there divide provinces and nations, naturally indicate to the student of geography, that ancient Bosna covered the territory on either side of the stream of that name, from its source to the noble mountain of Vranduk.

Acting upon this idea, the boundaries of Bosna may be defined as follows: running along the mountains on the south to Jahorina, (1913 meters), thence to Treskavica, (2088), to Bjelasnica, (2067), to Ivan, (1744) and Bitovnja (1700); thence on the west to Pogorelica (1448), to Zec (1939), Vratnica (2070), Radovan (1446), Komar (1510), and Radalje (1366); thence on the north to Vlasie (1919), Tvrkovac (1304), Konjuh (1329) and Javornik (1062 meters); on the east the river Drina served as a boundary from Zvornik to Goražde. Within these lines are the cities and towns of Sarajevo, Kreševo, Fojnica, Vareš, Visoki, Travnik, Zenica, Vlasenica, Srebrenica, Rogatica and Goražde. The above boundaries are in accordance with the statement of Constantine Porphyrogenete, Byzantine emperor, in his work. "De administrando Imperio" and in the one entitled "Presbyteri Diocleatis, regnum Slavorum."

The state of Bosnia was at first known as a banatus, and later on, as a kingdom; and during the first several centuries of its existence, the petty authorities of the country were subject to, and their powers derived from the Bani,* and later on from the kings. While the Bani, Kulin (1180-1204), and Matthew Ninoslav (1232-1250) had the simple title "Great Ban of Bosnia" (Veliki bosanski ban), or simply "Ban of Bosna;" Stephen Kotromanich (1322-1353), held the title "master of the whole land of Bosnia, and of Soli (Salines) and Usora, and Dolnji kraji (Partes inferiores) and the Hum (Ilum) region," but the Ban Tvrtko added to this jurisdiction, over the land of the Podrinje, and he shortly rounded out his possessions

*The office of Ban is of great antiquity. That it already existed under native Croatian dynasty is proved by its mention in a diploma of King Kresimir in 1063. He was supreme in political and judicial affairs and in the command as well as in administration of the army. The Ban is head of executive in Croatia, Dalmatia, Slavonia, acting as viceroy. The word itself means a man with authority.

and instead of Ban of Bosnia, assumed the title of "king of Serbia, Bosnia, Primorje, (Coast land) Hum, Inferior parts or Dolnji kraji, western parts, Usora, Soli and Podrinje." This title was retained by his successors until the fall of the Bosnian State. Such a title practically demonstrates that all of these territorial subdivisions were united under the ruler of, and constituted the original Bosnia.

Examining these subdivisions in detail, we find that Soli or Salines and Usora are referred to as separate provinces or principalities, but in origin and history, except in minor details, they are one. Soli lay along northeastern Bosnia, between the rivers Save and Drina, in the region of the Majevica mountains and the source of the river Spreča, which empties into the river Bosna at the City of Dobož. Within the district are now located the towns of Tuzla (tuz means in Turkish salt) Bjelina and Zvornik. Within the confines of Usora are today the cities of Bosanski Brod, Drventa, Dobož, Tešanj, Maglaj, Zepče, Srebrenik, Gradačac and Brčka. Both these subdivisions were a part of the Roman province of Pannonia. Without doubt after the migration and settlement of the Croats, both formed the part of the Croatian province of the same name, located along the Save and designated as the Croatia along the Save, "Savia Croatia," an independent principality which existed from seven to nine centuries, amongst whose rulers were Louis Posavski, (814-823), and Braslav (880-896). This principality by union with White Croatia, (Croatia Alba) ceased to exercise independent authority. In the year 950, the whole region around Tuzla became united to the Serbian principality, but it did not remain long under its rule, for by the year 971, the Serbian principality ceased to exist. By the middle of the twelfth century history witnessed the incorporation of Soli as an integral part of the Banatus of Bosnia, whose ruler was a Croat, Ban Borich, born in the City Brod on the Save, and the first to be known as the Ban of Bosnia.

The western portion (Zapadne strane) which lay along the river Bosna, and the lower part running to the west, composed of the old Croatian counties of Glamoč, Livno and Duvno (županjac of today), at the end of the fourteenth century, became subject to the rule of the Bosnian sovereign.

The lower parts (Partes inferiores), comprising the present cities of Jajce, Ratkovo, Kotor on the Vrbanja, Ključ on the Sana river constituting, until the middle of the twelfth century, a part of the kingdom of Croatia, were united to Bosna under Ban Kulin.

The territory of Hum (Chulm) along the river Neretva (Narenta) and extended to the Adriatic Sea. Within its ancient confines are the cities of Konjice, Mostar, Blagaj, Nevesinje and Stolac, and also the Dalmatian frontier city of Ston with the peninsula of Pelješac (Punta Stagno). The Croats settled in Hum in very ancient times. It was a com-