

Education of Jure (Fr. Petar) Kordic

Summary

After the Treaty of Belgrade, signed in 1739, the Habsburg foreign politics over the next nearly half a century turned mostly to Western and Central Europe, where in the wars against Prussia they defended the Habsburgs' right of succession to the throne. Meanwhile, the Catholic Church in the Ottoman Bosnia underwent two important processes. The first one was the establishment of the Apostolic Vicariate in Bosnia in 1735, which secured a permanent resident bishop at the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the other one referred to two divisions of the Franciscan province of Bosnia Argentaria which after 1757 reduced its scope to the area under Ottoman rule. Both of these processes confirmed and even further increased the importance of the Bosnian Franciscans as the main leaders of Catholicism in this area. Among many challenges that the Franciscans faced with, one of the most important was the the education of their own clerics. Difficult material circumstances turned Bosnia Argentaria to the help from abroad. Clerics were sent to the Franciscan province in Italy, which was only a partial solution. Joseph II of Habsburg once again turned the direction of foreign expansion to the Ottoman Empire, trying to include the Bosnian Franciscans into his plans. He secured the election of Augustin Botos Okic as the apostolic vicar and gained his support, creating a promising solution to the problem of education of future pastoral workers for the BH territory, the purpose of which was the establishing of financial fund. The original plan was to use its assets to create a secular clergy, independent of Bosnia Argentaria, on whose basis they would begin to build regular church hierarchy. With this intention in the eve of Dubica War (1788 to 1791) eleven Bosnian boys were sent to Zagreb (later joined by one more), among whom was Jure Kordic from Sretnice in the then vast parish of Brotnjo. The war that Joseph II led against the Ottomans did not result in territorial expansion, and the plans about sending secular clergy to Bosnia were not implemented. Consequently, the education of secular clerics turned into a sort of fiasco, because most of them neither became priests nor returned to Bosnia. Their stay in Zagreb was characterized by frequent disciplinary problems and constant dissipation of the group. Kordic was an exception for several reasons. Firstly, he was one of the two clerics who eventually returned to Bosnia where they entered the Franciscan order, and secondly, he was the first among them to complete the entire education. Finally, Kordic was the only one whose flow of education could be, at least to some extent, reconstructed concerning its content and time, especially the last phase when he attended the study of theology. Under missionary name of Peter, this cleric would later achieve a noteworthy career, during which he carried the duty of the provincial minister of Bosnia Argentaria on two occasions. However, in the entire history of the province he deserved his place for being among first Bosnian clerics who received the scholarship by the Habsburg authorities, which was a process that had a tremendous impact on the later history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Keywords: Jure (Fr. Peter) Kordic, bishop's lycee, Zagreb, Joseph II fund; study of theology.