

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, friends of the Archives of Vojvodina.

I'm honored, for several reasons, to be here with you today.

First and foremost, the Archives of Vojvodina, that existed since 1926, have all this time functioned as a protector of archival holdings, both for us (Serbian) and for other people that lived on the southern part of the Hungarian state, aka the territory of Serbian Vojvodina, whose unification, that was conducted on those cold November days 100 years ago, we today among other things that are dedicated to the event, decided to finally celebrate.

On the other hand, I'm glad that I was offered the opportunity, as President of the Steering Committee of the Archives of Vojvodina, to be in the position to directly cooperate with the devoted and hardworking archivists of this magnificent institution and, with wholehearted support and great leadership by the Director of the Archives Dr. Nebojša Kuzmanović, to contribute to the overall work of the Archives.

Archives are meant to represent, in today's modern information era, not only a place that protects, houses and prepares for usage the archival holdings, but also an institution that, among other things, publishes works and uses modern presentations that includes organizing exhibitions. This way, the most valuable documents by content are available to a wide range of researchers from all sorts of fields, as well as other users, whereby the notion of accessibility of archival holdings is fully accomplished. The Archives of Vojvodina took it a step further today by organizing in a new, multi – media, IT – digital way, two exhibitions on the topic of the hundred year anniversary since the unification of Vojvodina with the Kingdom of Serbia. They are likewise dedicated to the last days of the hated black – yellow Monarchy and the arrival of a new, young, Serbian state in the making. The first exhibition titled *One Hundred Documents in Honor of the One Hundred Year Anniversary of the First World War*, by senior archivist Dragana Katić and archivist Miroslav Jaćimović, uses the Petrovaradin Community fund, specifically the documents relating to the First World War, while the second multi – media exhibition by senior archivists Dejan Maoduš, Žužana Mezei, Ildiko Mergeš and archivist Šarlota Kartag titled *Unification of the Territories of Vojvodina with the Kingdom of Serbia 1918*. focuses on the very end of the Great War and the peaceful reintegration and coexistence in all the areas of Vojvodina in a single, for all people of all areas, previously unknown state – Kingdom of Serbia, or rather, not long after, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. For these exhibitions to be, apart from having the noted new multi – media platform, textually sound and have orthographic sense in modern Serbian, we owe a great deal to the Archives' archival consultant and long time editor – Vesna Bašić.

Now we must ask ourselves, what is Vojvodina and what role did it play for our people? Is it an area, a historical fact or perhaps oral tradition? Serbian historiography presented several ideas, some of whom were based on an ethnic principle, some on a historical one, and some on a geographic one. According to some "Vojvodina, or rather Serbian Vojvodina as our people used to call it, represented the centuries old idea and desire of the Serbian people to remain in its national individuality, as well as its ethnicity and religious and political view, in a land with foreign lords and name".

Some historians think that, with regards to terminology, Vojvodina today presents first and foremost a geographic term, or rather a term for a specific territory, an area, or more precisely a province that is a part of Serbia. It came about as a "political term that represented one unique national and political community by which Serbs aimed to preserve their ethnic, religious and national identity while being part of a foreign country".

Today's historiographers usually include historical rights and even spiritual rights that were granted to the Serbian people for certain territories based on the Priviledges, and so "Serbian Vojvodina in the Habsburg Monarchy was sought-after and demanded based on the historical rights of the Serbian people from the end of the 17th century... Institutions, establishments and parties that lead Serbs in their desire to, via the Emperor's Priviledges, achieve the promise of Vojvodina, changed through history, but for the most part credit is due to the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Monarchy, aka the Metropolitane of Karlovci".

As we can see from these short quotes, we can begin to notice that Vojvodina was no work of fiction, it didn't come into being in 1918, but rather it was a seed of years-long desires of the Serbian people in the Habsburg Monarchy that, finally after a tremendous number of Serbian casualties, was proclaimed on those November days at the very end of the Great War. These two exhibitions, that we opened today, testify, each in their own way, about those glorious unforgettable days.

Vladan Gavrilović, PhD.