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The Attitude of Bosnian Muslims Toward the Ottoman Empire in the Years 1850–1914*

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Abstract

The article describes how the attitude of Bosnian Muslims toward the Ottoman Empire changed between 1850 and 1914. This was a very important period, as Turkish rule in Bosnia ended and Austro-Hungarian rule began. For some Bosnian elites, anti-Ottomanism was one of the elements of their national identity. The article is based on literature, as well as on archival materials found by the author in the archives in Sarajevo.

Keywords

Bosnia and Herzegovina, anti-Ottomanism, Muslims in the Balkans

Although, as a rule, the periodization of the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 19th century clearly separates the so-called Ottoman period (until 1878) from the Austro-Hungarian period (from 1878 onward), when it comes to social history – and the attitude of the Muslim population toward the Ottoman Empire should be considered as such – this division somewhat loses its meaning, for the turning point here are the events of 1850–1851. It was then that the centuries-old ties between Bosnian-Herzegovinian Muslims and Istanbul finally broke, which had consequences for the subsequent history of Bosnian-Turkish relations.

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In this article, I will try to outline how Bosnia and Herzegovina's relationship with the Ottoman Empire changed from the mid-19th century until the outbreak of World War I. This period covers both the end of the Ottoman rule over the *vilayet* of Bosnia and most of the so-called Austro-Hungarian "occupation" – excluding the First World War. I will focus mainly on the Muslim intelligentsia because it was the main carrier of new ideas. In addition, due to the prevailing illiteracy, it was also the only group that left behind a literary legacy.

The article shows only the perspective of the Bosniaks since it is impossible to present here the entire issue of the difficult relations between the Ottoman Empire and the *vilayet* of Bosnia or in Habsburg Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are few English-language publications about Ottoman and Bosniak relations in the 19th century, so in order to gain insight on the Turkish perspective, one would have to refer to Turkish literature or conduct a search in Turkish archives. For this reason, I decided to limit the scope of my article only to the perspective of Bosnian Muslims.

In the first place, I used sources, both manuscripts and printed documents, kept in Bosnian archives: the Archives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Arhiv Bosne and Hercegovine) and the Sarajevo Historical Archives (Historijski arhiv Sarajevo). In addition, I browsed through selected press titles and scientific literature. I would hereby like to reflect on several points concerning the correlation between political changes and the attitude of the Muslim elite toward the Ottoman Empire, as well as the impact of generational changes on this issue.

Bosnian Muslims Facing Ottoman Attempts at Reform

The period from the 1830s to the 1850s was very difficult for the Bosnian *vilayet*. During that time, the westernmost province of the Ottoman Empire was once again shaken by various kinds of internal unrest, the main cause of which was local resistance to the Tanzimat[1] reforms. As a result of growing pressure from Istanbul, Bosnian Muslims such as Ali Pasha Rizvanbegović, who had hitherto been loyal to the sultan and his officials, began to be hostile to Istanbul's policy toward Bosnia in the late 1840s.[2]

[1] In an attempt to reform the Ottoman Empire, successive sultans decided to carry out reforms in all the provinces. This was often met with resistance from the local population. Such was the case, for example, in the Bosnia *vilayet*, where new revolts broke out almost every year from the 1830s to 1850, among which the act of disobedience of Husein-kapetan Gradaščević, who managed to seize control of part of Bosnia in 1831, is particularly noteworthy. Sadik Šehić, *Zmaj od Bosne. Husein-kapetan Gradaščević*, Tuzla: Front slobode, 1991; Senad Hasanagić, *Drugo lice bune Husein-Kapetana Gradaščevića*, Brčko: Knjigolubac, 2018; Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History*, New York: New York University Press, 1994, 120–4.

[2] During Gradaščević's revolt, Rizvanbegović sided with the Turkish vizier against Husein-kapetan. Tomasz J. Lis, "Bośniacy przeciwko Imperium Osmańskiemu. Bunty ludności muzułmańskiej w Bośni

This hostility between the local provincial elite and the sultan's regents was caused by several factors. While in the 16th, 17th, and even 18th centuries, the goals of the provinces and the center had been converging, the beginning of the 19th century brought a complete rift between the aspirations of Bosnian Muslims and Istanbul. Without dwelling too much on the analysis of this phenomenon, let me just outline the main bone of contention. At one point in the earlier centuries, Bosnia was the gateway to the Ottoman Empire, which not only opened the Porte to the world but also protected it from the temptations of the Western, Christian world. As a result, Bosnian Muslims defending the Empire's borders were held in special esteem.[3] In short, by defending the territories of the Porte, they defended their land. For this reason, they developed a much stronger attachment to their homeland, in which they themselves were masters because, for example, the function of *kapetans* (border defenders) became at some point hereditary. That is why the authorities in Istanbul, who wanted to liquidate the Janissary troops as part of their reforms in the early 19th century, met with great resistance from the local population, which not only sympathized with the Janissaries (against whom the blade of the sultan's sword was aimed) but above all feared that it would lose its privileges.

It was then, at the beginning of the 19th century, that the Bosnian Muslim elites began to view Istanbul with hostility for the first time. Attachment to the value of their own privileges proved stronger than Islam, which for centuries had been a strong ideological pillar connecting the center with the provinces. Such dilemmas, however, concerned not only Bosnian Muslims but the Islamic world in general, which had to redefine its role in a changing reality.[4] The Tanzimat reforms and the manner in which they were carried out in Bosnia made the local Beys and Aghas feel that the sultan was not pursuing their goals but his own, which were contrary to the Bosnian interest. Although during Husein-kapetan Gradaščević's uprising in 1831, the Turkish army could count on the support of a part of the local population,[5] in 1850, there was no chance of an important representative of the local elite supporting the sultan. The most important people from both Bosnia and Herzegovina voted together against directives from Istanbul. Some took up arms against the sultan's regents, while others, like the vizier of Herzegovina, Rizvanbegović, simply disregarded the orders from the capital.[6]

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w pierwszej połowie XIX wieku," *Balcanica Posnanensia* 28 (2) (2021), 89–91; Hamdija Kapidžić, *Ali-paša Rizvanbegović i njegovo doba*, Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2001.

[3] For more information on the Ottoman Empire's border guards called *kapetans*, see Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Kapetanije u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980.

[4] Fikret Karčić, *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity. Late Ottoman and Habsburg Times*, Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1999, 31–2; Ivo Andrić, *Razvoj duhovnog života u Bosni pod uticajem turske vladavine*, Banja Luka–Beograd: Zadužbina Petar Kočić, 2012, 43.

[5] Hannes Grandits, *Multikonfesionalna Hercegovina. Vlast i lojalnost u kasnoosmanskom društvu*, Sarajevo: Institut za Istoriju, 2014, 40–4; Hasanagić, *Drugo lice*, 19–22; Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju Bosne od 1831. do 1832. godine*, Sarajevo: Orijentalni Institut u Sarajevu, 1996, 296.

[6] Kapidžić, *Ali-paša Rizvanbegović*, 107–8.

The insubordination of the local Beys and Aghas forced the sultan to take radical steps, and he finally decided to send an armed expedition to Bosnia to pacify the Muslim elites there. To this end, in 1850, he dispatched Omer-Pasha Latas, who specialized in pacifying rebellious Ottoman provinces. For Bosnian Muslims, this was the ultimate proof that the Porte had turned its back on them. They felt all the more humiliated because both Latas and his closest associates were converts who had accepted Islam for specific benefits. This was the case, among others, of Antoni Iliński (Mehmed Iskander Pasha), a spy for the Hôtel Lambert, who, fearing that he would be handed over to the Russians, decided to accept Islam and then serve in the Ottoman army.[7] However, according to the Bosnian Beys themselves, he ignored the principles of Islam by getting drunk with alcohol and destroying mosques during the fighting in the years 1850–1851.[8] It was no coincidence that the sultan used such people to pacify disobedient Bosnia because, as he rightly assumed, mercenaries-converts would be more ruthless than those who had been raised in Islamic culture. Omer-Pasha Latas became for Bosnian Muslims a symbol of the sultan's treachery. His bloody crackdown on disobedient Beys raised doubts even among the Ottoman administration.[9] Ivo Andrić described him in his novel thus,

> His task was to discipline and bring to heel not the rebellious populace nor an external enemy but those who had ruled Bosnia for centuries and who had until the previous day been called the sultan's sons: the beys, the leaders and members of the most prominent families "who are from the Turkish bones."[10]

The period from 1851 to the 1860s presents a slightly different picture if we take into account the situation in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian parts of the Empire. Although the Beys were pacified throughout the entire *eyalet*, unrest on the Herzegovinian-Montenegrin border continued to cause concern. Vladika Danilo, seeking to take advantage of the internal difficulties of the neighboring country, tried to expand his territory.[11] Herzegovinian Muslims not only accused the Montenegrins of stirring up trouble but also blamed Pasha Latas's policy of distributing weapons to Christians living on the border because those weapons were then used to terrorize local Muslims.[12] It was not until 1863–1864 that an armistice was achieved on the Herzegovinian-Montenegrin border.[13] Nevertheless, the Ottoman authorities continued to be distrusted in Mostar.

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[7] Jerzy S. Łątka, *Lew nasz, lew polski. Pasza Iskender (Antoni Iliński)*, Kraków: Społeczny Instytut Historii i Kultury Turcji, 1996.

[8] Aleksander Jabłonowski, *Pisma Aleksandra Jabłonowskiego*, Vol. 5: *Słowiańszczyzna południowa oraz Wołosza i Albania*, Warszawa: E. Wende i s-ka, 1911, 68–71.

[9] Kerima Filan, *Bosna i Hercegovina u spisima Ahmeda Dževdet-paše*, Sarajevo: Connectum, 2017, 36.

[10] Ivo Andrić, *Omer Pasha Latas. Marshal to the Sultan*, trans. Celia Hawkesworth, New York: New York Review Books, 2018.

[11] Edin Radušić, *Bosna i Herzegovina u britanskoj politici od 1857 do 1878 godine. Od branitelja i zaštitnika do tužioca i sudije*, Sarajevo: Institut za Istoriju, 2013, 117–8.

[12] Filan, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 47.

[13] Hannes Grandits, *The End of Ottoman Rule in Bosnia. Conflicting Agencies and Imperial Appropriations*, London–New York: Routledge, 2022, 3–4.

The situation was completely different in Bosnia, which began to stabilize shortly after Pasha Latas left the area. The relocation of the country's capital from Travnik to Sarajevo gave new impetus to the development of this part of the *eyalet*. Although the majority of Muslims were hostile to the Tanzimat reforms, viewing them as harmful to their interests, the liberalization of the economy and, above all, the opening to foreigners gave impetus to reforms that contributed to the province's economic uplift. Great credit was due to the two governors, Hurshid Mehmed Pasha (1852–1856) and, above all, Topal Sherif Osman Pasha (1861–1869). It was during their rule that the greatest progress was made in Bosnia, the symbol of which was the nearly 80-kilometer railway line connecting Banja Luka with Dobrljin.[14] The railway line, as well as significant investments in road infrastructure, led to the development of trade in Bosnia, which was possible thanks to the new Muslim elite, whose main occupation was the selling of goods. As a result of the activities of the Ottoman authorities, which were concentrated on the development of Sarajevo as a capital, it was in this city that the strongest group of local merchants emerged. Previously, trade was mainly carried out by Orthodox Serbs and Sephardic Jews, whereas the reforms of the 1850s and 1860s allowed a new stratum of Muslim entrepreneurs to develop.[15]

Not only the economic situation had changed in favor of the local Muslim elite, but also the policy of the authorities in Istanbul, which saw the need for greater integration of provincial Bosnia into the center. One of its elements was the inclusion of representatives of the local elite in the newly created army command. Therefore, it is not surprising that when the Ottoman authorities decided to conduct conscription in the *vilayet* in 1864, it turned out that, contrary to the fears of mutiny,[16] many young Bosnian Muslims willingly joined the Ottoman army. The Ottoman authorities, having understood the mistakes they had made earlier, rightly invoked the patriotic feelings of young Muslims toward Bosnia. As noted by Ahmed Dževet Pasha, from the very beginning, efforts were made to emphasize that these troops were first and foremost a Bosnian army, which was supposed to defend the country first and only then the sultan.[17] The sultan's reconciliation with the Bosnian Beys and Aghas was also facilitated by the international situation. In 1862, an incident occurred in neighboring Serbia, as a result of which the majority of Muslims, some of whom had sought refuge

[14] Ibidem, 11–2; Michael Palairet, *The Balkan Economies c. 1800–1914. Evolution Without Development*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, 135–9; Grga Martić, *Zapamćenja (1829–1878)*, Zagreb: Knjiz, Knjižara Jugoslavenske Akademije, 1906, 41–2.

[15] Hana Younis, *Od dućana do pozorišta. Sarajevo trgovačka elita 1851–1878*, Sarajevo: Institut za Historiju, 2016, 31–4. It is worth mentioning the changes that took place in the activities of *esnafs* – Ottoman guilds, which also engaged in trade; Iljas Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914*, Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980, 25–6; Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Esnafi i obrti u Bosni i Hercegovini (1463–1878)*, Sarajevo: Naučno društvo NR Bosne i Hercegovine, 1961.

[16] It is worth remembering that in 1831, one of the reasons for the Bey rebellion was the general mobilization and the desire to introduce identical, modern uniforms for the military.

[17] Filan, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 182–92.

in Bosnia,[18] were removed from Belgrade as well as from a large part of the autonomous unit. Their compatriots thus decided that it was better to establish relations with the sultan in the face of the growing threat from Christian Europe rather than to have to flee their homes, as was the case in Serbia.

That the love of the Muslims from the *vilayet* of Bosnia for the sultan was only a need of the moment is best evidenced by the events that took place in 1878 when, after three years of unrest, the great powers finally sat down for talks. First in San Stefano and then, when the arrangements there turned out to be unsatisfactory, in Berlin. The fact that the voices of the inhabitants of the *vilayet* were not taken into account did not surprise anyone, while the disregard for the sultan and his will was a clear sign of Istanbul's weakness against the Bosnian elites. As a result, there was no longer any point in supporting someone whose opinion was not being considered at all. Therefore, in August 1878, when rumors confirmed that the *vilayet* of Bosnia had been handed over to the Austrian rule in Sarajevo, a revolt broke out, which was directed first against the sultan's regent and then against the Austro-Hungarians. After the governor and part of the Turkish troops had fled, the National Authority (Narodna Vlada) was proclaimed, which soon proceeded to crack down on the Ottoman supporters, throwing them in prison.[19]

On the one hand, the Muslim elites of Bosnia and Herzegovina rejected the Ottoman Empire as an uncertain guarantor of their interests, while on the other, they did not want to accept the idea of a Christian ruler. That is why they instigated a rebellion which resulted in fierce resistance to the troops under the yellow and black banner. Once again, in the 19th century, the thought of their own autonomous state began to emerge among the Bosnian-Herzegovinian elites professing Islam. And once again, it was brutally suppressed.

The Attitudes of the Muslim Intelligentsia Toward the Ottoman Heritage During the Austro-Hungarian "Occupation" Period

A certain analogy can be found between the pacification of the Beys by Latas Pasha and the occupation of Bosnia in 1878. In both cases, the Bosnian-Herzegovinian Beys were suppressed with extreme violence. And just like in 1851, at the end of the 1880s, they felt that their defeat was caused by the sultan himself. He was the one who had failed to stand up to the Western powers. But while the bitter military defeat could be accepted, the knowledge that the sultan had agreed, both in Berlin and less than a year

[18] Hifzija Suljkić, "Iseljavanje Muslimana iz Užica u Bosnu 1862," *Glasnik Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u SFRJ* 2 (1991), 161–79; Safet Bandžović, "Iseljevanje muslimanskog stanovništva iz kneževine Srbije u Bosanski vilajet (1862–1867)," *Znakovi vremena. Časopis za filozofiju, religiju, znanost i društvenu praksu* 12 (2001), 149–71.

[19] Mihovil Mandić, *Povijest okupacije Bosne i Hercegovine 1878*, Zagreb: Matica Hrvatska, 1910, 61–4; Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Sarajevo u doba okupacije Bosne 1878*, Sarajevo: Rekultura, 2021, 52.

later in Novi Pazar, to hand over the *vilayet* to the Catholic emperor from the Habsburg dynasty was much worse.[20]

The Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina thus faced a very difficult task, as they had to find a completely new point of reference, which would no longer be the sultan and Istanbul. The result was the disintegration of the Muslim community, which looked for different ways to find its identity. This search was all the more difficult since it was the period when nations began to form throughout the Balkan Peninsula. The phenomenon of nationalism that appeared among the Porte's subjects was something new in that region.[21]

Until then, religion had been the most important determinant of group membership in the Ottoman Empire. Alternatively, as in the case of the Bosnian Muslims, it was the attachment to a place. By contrast, the 19th century saw the emergence of a completely new category called "nation," which in no way fit into the existing identification categories. Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were not adequately prepared for such new ideas. This was especially true of the older generation, whose members did not understand what phenomenon they were dealing with. This group consisted mostly of landowners whose innate caution and conservatism made them go back to their rural settlements and not take an active part in politics.[22] As a result, the urban space, which until then had been dominated by Muslims, began to change. It became a field of activity for the new elite, including foreigners arriving in large numbers in Bosnia and Herzegovina,[23] e.g., Austrians, Poles, Czechs, etc. The Muslims who remained in the major urban centers were mainly officials, entrepreneurs, and members of the local administration. They were therefore much more open-minded than the Beys living in the provinces. They began to impose a certain way of thinking by means of the press, which was actively developing at the time.

But let us return for a moment to Islam itself, for, as we know, the sultan was not only a secular leader but also a caliph, i.e., the most important religious leader. His advantage in this respect was thus greater than that of any other ruler. Therefore, in order to deal with this situation, the Austrians decided to create a new religious function of *reis-ulema*, which was to be the highest religious authority for Bosnian Muslims. To this end, they communicated with the sultan, who more or less willingly agreed

[20] The Novi Pazar convention protected the interests of Muslims and ensured their safety, freedom of religion, etc. The Austrian emperor was supposed to be the guarantor of those rights. "Carigradska (Novopazarska) konvencija," in Ljubomir Zovko, *Studije iz pravne povijesti Bosne i Hercegovine 1878.–1914.*, Mostar: Pravni fakultet Sveučilista u Mostaru, 2007, 124–6.

[21] Victor Roudometof argues that the anti-Ottoman uprisings that took place before the 19th century were essentially socially and religiously motivated rebellions and that the national element did not emerge until later. Victor Roudometof, *Nationalism, Globalization, and Orthodoxy. The Social Origins of Ethnic Conflict in the Balkans*, London: Greenwood Press, 2001, 68.

[22] Husnija Kamberović, *Begovski zemljišni posjedi u Bosni i Hercegovini 1878. do 1918. godine*, Sarajevo: Ibin Sin, 2005, 94–5.

[23] Iljas Hadžibegović, *Bosanskohercegovački gradovi na razmeđu 19. i 20. stoljeća*, Sarajevo: Institut za Istoriju, 2004, 19–22.

to such a solution, as a result of which the supreme authority in the Islamic world, as well as the members of the *ulem-medželisa*, were dependent on the will of the Austrian emperor.[24] This turned out to be extremely helpful, as exemplified by the organization of Bosnian regiments in which Bosnian Muslims served. The *reis-ulema* subordinate to the emperor agreed to issue a *fatwa*, thanks to which a Muslim soldier who died in a war waged on behalf of the Catholic emperor was to be treated as a *shaheed*, a martyr.[25] In return, he was guaranteed a lifetime pension by the Joint Minister of Finance.[26]

It became apparent fairly quickly that favoring the new government could bring some benefits. Even though at the state level, the Austrian authorities decided to rely mainly on their officials and the military, when it came to local positions, such as city mayors, members of the city council, as well as the staff of Sharia courts, loyal Muslims were readily available at that time.[27] As a consequence, the number of people who saw a certain historical opportunity arising from the Austrian presence, not only for themselves but also for the entire Muslim community of Bosnia and Herzegovina, began to grow. Simultaneously, the same people who declared support for the emperor categorically rejected the possibility of returning to the Ottoman Empire. One of the first to declare this was Mehmed-bey Kapetanović Ljubušak, who said in 1886 that there was no possibility of Bosnia becoming part of the empire again.[28] He also drew attention to several important issues, the first of which was history. Kapetanović Ljubušak brought up the suppression of Gradaščević's revolts and the pacifications of Omer-Pasha Latas, which in his opinion were to be worse than how the Austrian generals had treated Bosnian Muslims defeated in 1878. In addition, he pointed out that historically, even when a Bosnian Muslim attained a prominent position at the Turkish court, they still felt more connected to their country of origin than to the sultan, the prime example of which had been Mehmed Pasha Sokolović. The last but no less important argument he invoked was the issue of the language used by Bosnian Muslims, who in this respect were closer to Croats and Serbs than to Turks.[29]

Kapetanović Ljubušak was a representative of the oldest, conciliatory generation, which willingly cooperated with the Austrian authorities. This cooperation was so advanced that he agreed to personally endorse the idea of Bosnianness, i.e., a separate Muslim national identity, which was to function as something separate from Croatian and Serbian nationality.[30] However, this did not suit all Bosnian Muslims, especially since there were very strong national currents that encouraged them to adopt Croatian

[24] Mustafa Imamović, *Historija države i prava Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo: PIKOK, 1999, 296–7.

[25] Enver Imamović, *Historija bosanske vojske*, Sarajevo: Edicija Bosanski korijeni, 1999, 290–1.

[26] Document no. 14, in *Persönliche Vormerkungen von General Oskar Potiorek über die innerpolitische Lage in Bosnien und der Herzegowina*, ed. Dževad Juzbašić, Zijad Šehić, Sarajevo: ANUBiH, 2015, 167.

[27] Hana Younis, *Biti kadija u kršćanskom carstvu*, Sarajevo: Institut za Historiju, 2021, 247–8.

[28] Mehmed beg Kapetanović-Ljubušak, *Što misle muhamedanci u Bosni*, Sarajevo: Spindler i Löschner, 1886, 7–8.

[29] Ibidem.

[30] Muhsin Rizvić, *Bosansko muslimanska književnost u doba preporoda (1887–1918)*, Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1990, 76.

and even Serbian identity. Such actions were indirectly supported by the Austrian "occupier," who turned a blind eye to Croatian national propaganda. Croats were not only present in the civil administration, where they held high-ranking positions, but also established cultural and scientific societies, etc. As a result, many young Muslims adopted the Croatian identity, like Ademaga Mešić, probably the most famous Bosnian Muslim and promoter of the "Croatian-Muslim" idea.[31]

Thus, while the older generation of the Muslim intelligentsia sought primarily national distinctiveness (cultural, linguistic, etc.), the younger generation, brought up already during the "occupation" period, believed that their Bosnianness could be achieved both by drawing on Serbian and, above all, Croatian culture. Both groups, however, strongly rejected the ties with the Ottoman Empire. *Bošnjak*, the first journal addressed to a Muslim reader founded in 1891, was written entirely in South Slavic, a language understood by most Bosnian Muslims, whereas *Behar*, which appeared nine years later, emphasized the need to separate even further from the Ottoman heritage, suggesting turning to the source of Islam, which was to be found in Arab culture.[32] The paper was the press organ of young Muslims who wanted to reform Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[33] Safer Bey-Bašagić was the face of the magazine, as well as of the entire movement to modernize Muslim institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (especially *madrasas* and *waqfs*). He was born in 1870 and became known as one of the greatest Muslim scholars, being at the same time a great devotee of Islam and the heritage of Bosnian followers of this religion. At the beginning of the 20th century, he defended his doctorate in Vienna, specializing in Middle Eastern languages: Persian, Arabic, and Turkish.[34]

In his writings, in addition to the topics of the renewal of Islam, its reform, etc., he also referred to the history and attitudes toward the Ottoman Empire. We can observe this on the example of his lecture on the history of Bosnia, *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine (od g. 1463.–1850.)*, in which, like Kapetanović Ljubušak, he pointed out that the year 1850 was a clear turning point in terms of relations between Bosnia and the sultan.

> In our humble opinion, as will be seen later, Bosnia and Herzegovina did not lose its independence and freedom in the 15th century but in the middle of the 19th century; namely, when Omer-Pasha Latas with Byzantine cunning broke in, beat, and destroyed all rights and sovereignty. Before him, Bosnia-Herzegovina had always been a state within a state ruled only by the Bosniaks on behalf of the sultan, benevolent governors, or sons of the land.[35]

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[31] Nada Kisić Kolanović, "Ademaga Mešić i hrvatska nacionalna ideja 1895.–1918. godine," *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* 40 (3) (2008), 1119–40.

[32] Rizvić, *Bosansko muslimanska književnost*, 185.

[33] Todor Kruševac, *Bosansko-Hercegovački listovi u XIX veku*, Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1978, 380–4; Salih Jalimam, "Historijsko-edukativna uloga časopisa 'Behar' u jačanju identiteta Bošnjaka," *Znakovi vremena. Časopis za filozofiju, religiju, znanost i društvenu praksu* 21 (2003), 19–27.

[34] Historijski arhiv Sarajevo, Safet beg Bašagić, kut. 3, ref. no. 279.

[35] Safvet beg Bašagić, *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine (od g. 1463.–1850.)*, Sarajevo: Vlastita Naklada, 1900, 18.

Describing the fall of the Kingdom of Bosnia to the Ottoman Empire in the Middle Ages, he called this event a *disaster*.[36]

Osman Nuri Hadžić, a close associate of Bašagić and his elder by one year, went even further in his criticism of the Ottoman Empire. In his pamphlet, which was intended as a response to the accusations against Islam made by Serbian scholar Milan Nedeljaković, he stated that Islam as a religion and the Ottoman Empire as a state should be separated.[37] As a result, Islam could not be blamed for the Porte's mistakes as a state. Moreover, the true heirs of Islam were not the Ottomans but the Arabs, under whose rule all states flourished.[38]

In 1903, Mulabdić Edhem collected what he considered to be the most important articles from *Behar* and published a kind of program declaration of the "Gajret" association. It showed clearly the attitude of young Muslim intellectuals toward the past. By declaring their willingness to act "for God and the nation," they tried to push through their vision of Islam, which was to be, as Nuri Hadžić proclaimed, primarily an Arab legacy that had been appropriated in some way by the Ottoman Empire. It was the Arabs who, for many centuries, "enlightened the Western world" and led a kind of intellectual conquest, while the Ottomans abandoned these practices in favor of the sword, which was used to achieve their military goals.[39] The Bosniaks had to recover from the fact that the sultan had turned his back on them in the mid-19th century and focus on science, for it was "science that was needed like a piece of bread."

The above discussion shows that both the older and younger generations of the Bosniak intelligentsia during the Austro-Hungarian "occupation" rejected the Ottoman heritage. This was especially true of that part of the society which was open to cooperation with the new authorities – mainly those, who, like Kapetanović Ljubušak or the younger generation gathered around Gajret, tried to modernize the Muslim community in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the spirit of Western liberalism.

The supporters of Bosnia and Herzegovina's reunion with the Ottoman Empire were thus decidedly a minority. Even the anti-Habsburg and pro-Serbian Muslims critical of Bašagić were more likely to want Bosnia and Herzegovina to become part of Serbia than fall under the sultan's rule again.[40]

The greatest support for the Ottoman Empire, however, existed in the provinces. For conservative Beys, proposals of any reforms, whether agrarian or concerning the functioning of religious institutions (schools, courts, mosques), were perceived as a threat. Therefore, it was believed that, despite many historical events, Istanbul was closer to the heart of a Bosnian Muslim than Vienna. What is more, in the countryside, in addition to big landowners, a large percentage of people were migrants who, for

[36] Ibidem, 16.

[37] Osman Nuri Hadžić, *Islam i kultura*, Zagreb: Tisak dioničke tiskare, 1894, 63–4.

[38] Ibidem, 38.

[39] Edhem Mulabdić, *Gajret*, Sarajevo: Risto J. Savić, 1903, 9–10.

[40] *Proganjanje islamskog naroda u Herceg-Bosni*, Novi Sad: Srpska štamparija Svet. Miletića, 1900, 12.

various (usually economic) reasons, decided to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina after having failed to succeed within the borders of the Porte.[41]

However, there were Bosnian Muslims who were doing quite well after moving to the Ottoman Empire. Especially if they had a stable job, e.g., as a military man, as was the case with Nazif-beg, whose wife Esma née Bakarević corresponded with her brother who had stayed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A part of the well-known Sarajevo merchant family called Bakarević had moved to Istanbul in the 1890s but still maintained letter contact with their relatives.[42] Thanks to their surviving correspondence, we can see how the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina fared in the Ottoman Empire, as well as how they felt about it. Although Bosnian Muslims in Istanbul were slowly assimilating – just like Esma, who over time began to forget the language of her fathers and weave more and more Turkish words into her letters[43] – we do not find in the correspondence any apotheosis of life in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which would be contrasted with the hardships of life under the Catholic emperor. On the contrary, we rather get a picture of a country torn by various political unrests,[44] where life was not that easy, especially if one did not have a sufficiently high income.[45]

While we do not find any instances of pro-Ottoman agitation on the part of migrants in the legacy of the Bakarević family, Robert J. Donia, in his work on the Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina living under Habsburg rule, gives several examples of permanent residents of the Ottoman Empire who engaged in anti-Austrian activities.[46] This was especially true of military personnel such as Seiffullah efendi (actually Seifo Vidimli), who escaped from a Bosnian regiment and enlisted in the sultan's army. It was he who, in 1898, sent a memorandum to the sultan pointing out Austria's failure to honor the agreements concluded in both Berlin and Novi Pazar, and also listing offenses allegedly committed by Austrian authorities against Bosnian Muslims.[47]

Such voices were strengthened at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries during the struggle for the so-called religious autonomy of Bosnian Muslims, which they finally managed to obtain in 1909. Since the struggle for religious autonomy was also being waged by Orthodox Christians at the same time, cooperation between Bosnian

[41] Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, Zemaljska vlada Sarajevo, 1899, ref. no. 10/663.

[42] Hana Younis, "'Brez nikoga u dijaru gurbetu.' Svakodnevni život porodice Bakarević u Istanbulu krajem 19. i početkom 20. stoljeća," *Prilozi* 45 (2016), 53–4.

[43] Ibidem, 67–8.

[44] After a series of letters in which Esma expressed concern about the political perturbations in the Ottoman Empire over the overthrow of Abdul Hamid II, she reassured her brother in a letter dated May 16, 1909, that the situation had normalized somewhat. Historijski arhiv Sarajevo, Porodica Bakarević, kut. 3, Letter by Esma dated May 16, 1909.

[45] Historijski arhiv Sarajevo, Porodica Bakarević, kut. 3, Letter by Esma dated February 12, 1909.

[46] Robert J. Donia, *Islam pod dvoglavim orlom. Muslimani Bosne i Hercegovine 1878–1914*, 2nd rev. ed., Sarajevo: University Press, 2020, 90–1.

[47] Document no. 6, in *Borba muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine za vjersku i vakufsko-mearifsku autonomiju*, ed. F. Hauptmann, Sarajevo: Arhiv Socijalisticke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 1967, 78–80.

emigrants in the Ottoman Empire and Serbia intensified. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that this was only an ad hoc cooperation, for although at that time, the Serbs considered the Porte to be the lesser evil than Austria-Hungary, they viewed Bosnia and Herzegovina as an area that should fall to Belgrade, not Istanbul.[48]

In any case, good relations between Serbs and Turks did not last long – only until 1912, when the so-called Balkan Wars began, in which the Ottoman Empire and the Kingdom of Serbia fought each other.[49] For Bosnian Muslims, it was a real test of how much loyalty to the Porte they had left. Therefore, it may come as a surprise that, according to the official estimates, 135 Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina enlisted in the Ottoman army.[50] However, these figures are definitely underestimated because most of the people who emigrated to fight on the Turkish side were not registered. Nor should we forget about the Bosnian Muslims who had already left for the Ottoman Empire. They served in a separate, specially dedicated regiment. Nevertheless, this does not change the fact that the Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina were not particularly interested in fighting for the sultan. The small involvement of Bosnian Muslims in the Balkan Wars was also mentioned by Oskar Potiorek in his correspondence with Leon Biliński.[51]

Conclusion

The attitude of Bosnian Muslims toward the Porte from the mid-19th century to 1914 was constantly changing. If presented on a graph, it would resemble a sinusoid since the attachment to the sultan was strengthened at some points and completely loosened at others. Nevertheless, the pushing through of the Tanzimat reforms and, above all, the pacification of the Bosnian Beys in 1850 caused the Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who had once been the sultan's "shield," to lose confidence in him. Although, as I mentioned, there were later times when they were closer to Istanbul, the resentment remained. The sultan, as the highest religious authority, lost his prestige. This was especially evident in the Austro-Hungarian period when the Catholic

[48] In the late 1890s, some Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina became closer to the Serbian elite. Sonja Dujmović, "O privrednoj saradnji gradskih elita u Bosni i Hercegovini u vrijeme Austro-Ugarske monarhije," *Prilozi* 45 (2016), 91–2. Also, many young Muslims who went to study in Austria began, under the influence of Serbian friends, to identify with the Serbian national idea, which in turn did not gain approval at home. "Izjava muslimanske i pravoslavne omladine," *Behar* 7 (1906), 73–4.

[49] The Balkan Wars is the name of the two armed conflicts that took place in the years 1912–1913 when the armies of the united Balkan states, such as Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria, fought against the Ottoman Empire.

[50] Milorad Ekmećić, "Uticaj balkanskih ratova 1912./1913. na društvo u Bosni i Hercegovini," *Marksistička misao* 4 (1985), 416–7.

[51] Document no. 20, in *Persönliche Vormerkungen*, 227.

emperor took over some of his "functions," e.g., death in the name of the emperor was supposed to give Muslim soldiers the same profits in the afterlife as death for the sultan.

In addition, changing times meant that the factor integrating Bosnian Muslims with Istanbul – Islam – began to lose its importance in favor of national movements, especially among the younger generation. At the beginning of the 19th century, Muslims in the *vilayet* of Bosnia felt that they were subjects of the sultan, united by one faith – Islam. This was a key factor in their identity, distinguishing them from Catholics or Orthodox Christians. Later, territorial affiliation gained importance, as reflected in the slogans of autonomy articulated during the rebellion of Husein-kapetan Gradaščević. By the end of the century, the situation had changed and identity was no longer determined solely by religion or place of origin but also by other factors, such as language or a sense of cultural proximity to the Serbian or Croatian people. There was also a sense of national separateness (Bosnianness), which, however, did not manage to develop on a par with the Croatian or Serbian national movement until the outbreak of World War I. Besides, many Muslims rejected Bosnianness as a project that harmed rather than helped Muslims.[52] Therefore, only the uneducated strata, as well as some members of the military and conservative landowners, remained oriented toward Istanbul.

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[52] Danuta Gibas-Krzak, *Bośnia i Hercegowina. Determinanty dziejów. Pomiędzy Serbami, Chorwatami a supremacją muzułmanów*, Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Jana Długosza, 2016, 93.

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