

# A Few Remarks on the History of Bosnia

## Bosna Tarihine İlişkin Birkaç Değerlendirme

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### **Özet**

Serhat toprağı olan Bosna, 15. yüzyılda Osmanlı Devleti'ne katılmış olup, 1878 tarihine kadar, hatta 1908'de Avusturya tarafından ilhak edilene kadar, muhtelif kültür paylaşımlarıyla ve halen bu değerleri günümüze aktarmasıyla, tarihi bir öneme sahiptir. Ayrıca, Cermen-Slav-Latin topraklarının keşişim noktasında olması itibariyle, Balkan tarihinde de jeo-stratejik bir öneme sahiptir. Bu bildiri, Osmanlıdan Cumhuriyete Bosna tarihine ilişkin birkaç hususu değişik açılardan yorumlamayı ve yeni bakış açılarına olanak sağlamayı hedeflemektedir. Bu suretle çok yönlü Türk-Boşnak kültür etkileşimlerine bir kez daha değinmek mümkün olacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bosna, Osmanlı Devleti, tarih, Bogomil, Yugoslavya.

### **Abstract**

From the perspective of *the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the place of the Turks and the values shared with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian population in Turkish history have been substantially significant for many centuries. This mutual interaction occurred during the Ottoman Era between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Proof of such a relationship during the era in question can be easily found in many forms of literature ranging from archives to libraries, from folk-stories to novels, poems, memoirs, expressions/idioms and folk-songs. However, as there has yet to be further detailed study regarding the possible connection (distant or otherwise) of Bosnian and Turkish factors in pre-Ottoman times, and considering the general historical data and some cultural aspects, one can state that the existence of such a relationship seems worth investigating.

**Key Words:** Bosnia, Otoman State, history, Bogomil, Yugoslavia.

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The limited amount of issues dealt with in this paper aims to create an interest for possible studies to be conducted in the future; for this reason, only a few remarks on the history of Bosnia will be discussed. Therefore, instead of discussing a selected range of assessments within the limits of this article, I have decided not to use an excessive number of references, nor to put across a great number of contradictory hypotheses or views. I prefer instead to introduce only a few assessments in order to encourage further scholarly curiosity. As I will also refrain from reaching concrete conclusions regarding such delicate issues, I should note here that I have used the words “probable, perhaps, possible” even more than necessary within the study, in order to emphasize my preference for the brain-storming aspect, and hopefully thus to generate further discussion of the issues involved.

Generally speaking, Bosnia and southern Herzegovina were conquered during the time of Sultan Mehmet II (the Conqueror), starting from 1463, in a time span of almost 20 years. During the Turkish rule, the Bosnian territories had been, at first, bound to the Province of Rumelia. In the last quarter of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, however, Bosnia was made a ‘province (*eyalet*)’, its boundaries consisting of such a broad territorial area that its borders would reach almost equivalent to those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century former Yugoslavia, roughly covering modern Bosnia and some surrounding parts of Croatia, Dalmatia, Slovenia and Serbia.

*Pax-Ottomana* and the *Millet System* supported tolerance and thus contributed to the development of these regions’ multi-functional works and multi-cultural values as well as to that of the legal and administrative links between the Ottoman State and the religious communities. In other words, Turkish rule in Bosnia during Ottoman times was not intended to ‘create’ a state, nor was it a project of ‘social engineering’, ‘ethnic alienation’ or a ‘religious conversion’. Such a deliberate approach would probably not have distinguished the Turks from those policies of the neighboring Slavic/Cermen/Latin states of Europe, whether small or large, which had exerted pressure on Bosnia until that time.<sup>1</sup>

During the Austro-Hungarian administrative rule (1878-1918) which followed the Turkish Era, however, Bosnia was increasingly engaged in a struggle to survive as a political entity under its existing name. Various

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, as exemplified in Mustafa Imamovic’s analysis, although Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror ended the Bosnian Kingdom, Bosnia “as a geo-political notion” still remained. If the Bosnian territories of the Middle Ages are compared to the territories of Ottoman Bosnia, then territorial and political continuity was preserved. This continuity may be easily traced from the early Middle Ages right through to modern Bosnia and Herzegovina. M. Imamović, *Bosnjaci (Bosniaks)*, Sarajevo 2000, pp.26-27.

organizations/parties were formed to protect the country's interests.<sup>2</sup> In the first 30 years of the Austro-Hungarian Era (1878-1908), whilst Bosnia remained an Ottoman territory it also came under Austrian administration. As the newly adopted administration progressed, Bosnian-Muslim predominance in the state mechanism began to be reduced.

After Austro-Hungary was defeated in World War I and as the last two multi-national empires of Europe (the Austria-Hungarian and the Ottoman) began to disintegrate, the newly established *Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes-SHS*, which was established in 1918 and renamed Yugoslavia in 1929, filled in the void in the Bosnian region. However, as can be gathered from its name, the new formation (SHS) covered the name of 'Bosnia' with ashes. The Serbs, Slovenes and Croats acted as the founding nations of the state, whereas the Bosnian Muslims—who had actually been the ruling class of Bosnia until 1878—entered a complex period which was to last until 1992-1995. Their appeal to federal or confederal alternatives had initial short-term success, but resulted in long-term disturbances and a complex state set-up.<sup>3</sup>

It is also important to note here that after World War I, with the end of Austrian annexation, two factions—one Serb, one Croat—were now competing with each other over territory, above all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the end of the day, the 1908 Austrian annexation gave impetus to a vague future for Bosnia, but had little impact on everyday life in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself, as Glenny indicates.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> But according to Malcolm, the main effect of the 1908 Austria-Hungarian annexation, on Bosnia's internal life was "actually beneficial"; since the authorities of Vienna and Budapest felt that they now held Bosnia more securely, and became more willing to allow political life within it. Various organizations were set up by local communities; e.g. the Muslim National Organization (1906), the Serbian National Organization (1907), the Croatian National Society (1908), and also associations such as Gajret (1903) in Sarajevo. N. Malcolm, "Bosnia and Herzegovina under Austro-Hungarian Rule 1878-1914" in *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost*, by O.Ibrahimagic, Sarajevo 2003, p.453.

<sup>3</sup> Concerning the issues of territorial, political and state continuity of Bosnia, see O.Ibrahimagic, *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost*, Sarajevo 2003, pp.264-290,357-364. For a concise survey of events of Bosnia 1993-1995, see N.Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, London 2002, pp.256-269. Bosnia and Herzegovina was not a complex state in a doctrinarian sense: "...it is not Federacy, Confederacy, nor Union, since its entities are not states. Yet, Bosnia is a complex society of different ethnic and religious communities". In the author's opinion, although in an ethnic and cultural sense there are Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, and others in Bosnia; in a political and civic sense there are only Bosnians in Bosnia. So, ethnic background should be tied to culture, whilst the political aspect belongs to the name of the state of Bosnia (and Herzegovina). O.Ibrahimagic, *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost*, Sarajevo 2003, pp.390-391.

<sup>4</sup> M.Glenny, *Balkans (1804-1999): Nationalism, War and the Great Powers*, London 2000, pp.256,266.

During the interwar years, after the establishment of the SHS, the Serbian community of Bosnia-Herzegovina became predominant<sup>5</sup> but was resisted by Croats and Muslims. The predominant Muslim party of the period - the Yugoslav Muslim Organization (JMO)<sup>6</sup>—fought for the autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1921, the JMO departed from its program and entered into an agreement with the ruling coalition of N. Pašić's People's Radical Party (Serbian Nationalists) and L. Davidović's Democratic Party (Yugoslavist Unitarists) at the price of the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina's historical borders. However, the Pašić government delayed the implementation of promises to the JMO. After the assassination of the first SHS King Alexander in 1934, Mehmet Spaho (1883-1939), the leftist leader of the younger group of JMO, joined V. Maček, the President of the Croatian Peasant Party (HSS), in forming a united opposition to the government. However, neither the 1935 elections nor Maček satisfied Spaho. After his death, his successor Džafer-beg Kulenovic, a Muslim of pronounced Croat sentiment, also failed in having Bosnia-Herzegovina recognized as Yugoslavia's 'fourth unit', together with Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. During World War II, Bosnia-Herzegovina became an integral part of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC).<sup>7</sup>

During the civil war in former Yugoslavia between 1941 and 1945, as Imamović put it, the Bosniaks were, on one side, the victims of the Ustasha (insurgent) Regime in the ISC; and on the other side, the victims of the Serbian Chetniks led by D. Mihaljlović.<sup>8</sup> Bosnian Muslims were between a rock and a hard place.

From 1945 to 1991 there was still a predominance primarily in the judiciary, teaching and the police/armed forces; but also in the Communist party, of people with Serbian nationality whose aim seemed to create a Greater Serbia, perhaps as described years ago in the "Načertanije" of 1844, by Serbian Ilija Garašanin.<sup>9</sup> In other words, Greater Serbia did not wish to settle for the

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<sup>5</sup> For the Serbs' strengthening their prevalent position at local and administrative level, see S.Brkljača's article in *Prilozi:Contribution*, Vol.33, Institute za Istoriju u Sarajevu, Sarajevo 2004, pp.233-250.

<sup>6</sup> For the JMO's early political affairs, see A.Purivatra, *Jugoslavenska, Muslimanska Organizacija u Političkom Životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*, Sarajevo 1999, pp.58-104.

<sup>7</sup> For the information in the paragraph, see I.Banac, "Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Postcommunist Statehood, 1918-1992" in *the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, edited by M.Pinson, Harvard 1996, pp.134-141.

<sup>8</sup> M.Imamović, *Bošnjaci (Bosniaks)*, Sarajevo 2000, p.32.

<sup>9</sup> M.D.Abazović, *Ethnic Structure of Management Personnel in Bosnia and Herzegovina Between 1945 and 1991*, Sarajevo 2000, pp.67,75-77,80-90. The idea of the Yugoslav state's break-up into separate national units held an appeal for many of the country's non-

reasonable minimum limits of territories attached to Serbia historically, but was rather aiming for neighbouring lands which would have grave difficulties in resisting any kind of intervention, and were therefore open to any kind of pressure, including that of Serbia. The noticeable point here is that the political design for a Greater Serbia was not to establish a Serbian future in the true sense; on the contrary it was a part of international imperialist plans for filling the vacuum created by the dissolution of both the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Empires in the first quarter of the 20th century.

In the socialist federal republic, Bosnia became one of the federative units of Yugoslavia. At the beginning of the Cold War era, beginning in 1945, the region witnessed the transformation from royalist Yugoslavia to socialist Yugoslavia. Josip Broz Tito's administration was in power for the first 35 years of the Jugo-Slavian Era that constituted South Slavia.<sup>10</sup> Following Tito (PM 1945-53, President 1953-80)<sup>11</sup>, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia that occurred between 1986-1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence in 1992.

Although its territorial grounds are not as large as those of the Bosnia Province during the Ottoman Era, today's BIH has succeeded in its determination to again exist under the name *Bosnia* within the world arena. Between 1992 and 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina not only fought for independence against a long-term policy which constituted an act of aggression,<sup>12</sup> but also for a unified Bosnian identity (both in the sense of labeling and that of context). In the words of Alija Izetbegovic, a member of the Presidency of BIH serving until 2000, during his address to the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) at their inaugural meeting held in Sarajevo on 26th May 1990: "There are those who say that Bosnia is Serbian, as well as those who say that Bosnia is Croatian. But there are also those –why not say it - who, with equal aggression, maintain that Bosnia is only Muslim. With equal determination we reject all three of these beliefs".<sup>13</sup> What remains, therefore, is the reality that "Bosnia is equally Muslim, Serbian and Croatian" in a human sense and needs to equally benefit from their cultural wealth.

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Serbs, who saw the Yugoslav kingdom—with its Serbian King Alexander and Serbian-dominated army and civil services—as Greater Serbia by another name. C.Cviic, *Remaking the Balkans*, London 1991, pp.13,19.

<sup>10</sup> For Tito's national policy and Yugoslavism, see E.Zgodic, *Titova Nacionalna Politika*, Sarajevo 2000, pp.45-75,311-321.

<sup>11</sup> See B.Jones-M.V.Dixon, *The Macmillan Dictionary of Biography*, London 1985, p.828.

<sup>12</sup> For an account of the revival and escalation of *Greater Serbia* project and also the *Croatian Nationalist* ideology, see S.Čekic, *The Aggression Against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Vols.1-2, Sarajevo 2005, pp.197-203, 1045-1054.

<sup>13</sup> P.Tvrtković, *Bosnia Herzegovina: Back to the Future*, London 1993, p.41.

From the perspective of *the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the place of the Turks and the values shared with the Bosnian and Herzegovinian population in Turkish history have been substantially significant for many centuries. This mutual interaction occurred during the Ottoman Era between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Proof of such a relationship during the era in question can be easily found in many forms of literature ranging from archives to libraries, from folk-stories to novels, poems, memoirs, expressions/idioms and folk-songs. However, as there has yet to be further detailed study regarding the possible connection (distant or otherwise) of Bosnian and Turkish factors in pre-Ottoman times, and considering the general historical data and some cultural aspects, one can state that the existence of such a relationship seems worth investigating.

The Ottoman policy on conquest speeded up the development of living conditions for the population, along with its inclusion within the administrative mechanism of the state, socio-cultural organization and guild economic system. In this regard, just to list words that entered the Bosnian language from Turkish/Ottoman Turkish is an effective, if crude, method of demonstrating the great variety of the mutual interaction<sup>14</sup> between the Bosnians and the Turks. One can easily establish that the vocabulary that entered Bosnian concerned a wide spectrum of daily and work life —as well as military and state administration. Supporting examples are: *emanet* (a trust, for safekeeping), *beg* (beg, bei), *bunar* (fountain, spring), *hajde bujrum* (please join in, welcome), *çarşıja* (trade centre), *çarapa* (sock), *cesma/sebil* (fountain/fountain house), *çuprija* (most), *gurabije* (cake), *kapija* (door), *kaşika* (spoon), *međdan* (public square), *spahi* (cavalryman, fief holder) etc.

The Turco-Bosnian interaction can also be seen in the official speeches of the Turkish Republican era after 1923 as well as the memories of members of distinguished families<sup>15</sup> of the late-Ottoman era. For example, following the harsh Allied armistice and peace treaty terms imposed on the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, and following the subsequent Allied occupation of Turkey, a national war was conducted between 1919-1922 under the leadership

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<sup>14</sup> For instance, for Turkish-Bosnian comparison (linguistically) see A.Siljak-Jesenkovic, *Nad turskim i bosanskim frazičkonom*, Sarajevo 2003, pp.189-217. About literature, social sciences, music, architecture during Ottoman era, see M.Bojic, *Historija Bosne i Bosnjaka*, pp.103-114. For Turkish cultural remarks on Bosnia, see Ş.Alparslan, *Bosna'da Türk Kültürünün İzleri*, Ankara 2006, pp.54-107; for the Turkish and Islamic culture in the Balkans, Y.Hamzaoğlu, *Balkan Türklüğü*, Ankara 2000, pp.426-475.

<sup>15</sup> In this framework, when considering such private papers and records, it is possible to mention about the families of Bosnia and Herzegovina as Fehim Curčić (Sarajevo), Safvet Bašagić (Sarajevo), Şerif Arnautović (Mostar), Mahmut Ziga (Sarajevo), Hamdija Kreševljaković (Sarajevo), Munir Ekremov Şahinović (Sarajevo), Fran Ilesić (Ljubljana), Şemsudin Sarajlić (Sarajevo).

of Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk). During this National War, which was centred in Anatolia, the Grand National Assembly (GNA) of the Nationalist Turks (Kemalists) was opened on April 23, 1920. During the first two weeks, the President of the GNA, M.Kemal, outlined for the information of fraternal countries such as Bosnia the severe conditions and injustice prevalent in Turkey due to foreign invasion and to Turkey's determination for full independence and national unity.<sup>16</sup>

In the period after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, on the occasion of the Second Balkan Conference, summoned in Ankara in October 1931, Mustafa Kemal again personally addressed the representatives of the Balkan countries, such as Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria, due to their having difficulties both externally and internally. He drew attention to the vitality of the concept of brotherhood among the Balkan countries and the importance of remembering their common values and heritage in order to constitute a united Balkan front which respected each other's political independence and cooperated in economic, cultural and social matters in the interests of peace, prosperity and humanity.<sup>17</sup>

Relations between Turkey and Yugoslavia further improved as a result of, for example, the visits of King Alexander in 1933, PM Mika Špiljak in 1968, President Tito in 1976, the signing of a number of mutual assistance and friendship treaties between the two countries starting in 1925, and also the holding of negotiations during the 1930s Balkan Conferences between Turkey, Yugoslavia, Greece and Romania.

In other words, Bosnian history intersects with Turkish history in one way or another. That is, the connection of Bosnia with Turkish history is not only based on the present BIH, but, in all probability, has a deeper relationships – possibly extending way back to a time of historical and cultural interactions. It is possible in Bosnia's case to take into consideration 'external factors' to the movement, change and migration of many tribes (including Turco-Hunnic-Tartar tribes from Central Asia into Europe) –for instance that which occurred from the north of the Black Sea – from the Balkans towards Europe that has continued for many centuries, *e.g.* under the influence of the Migration of Nations that occurred as two major movements during the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD; or the Eurasian Avar migration which partly influenced the southward migrations (and settlement) of the Serbs, Croats and Slavs to the Balkans and Central Europe in the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries.

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<sup>16</sup> *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri* (Circulars, Telegraphs, and Public Announcements Made by Atatürk), Vol.4, Ankara 2006, pp.320-322, 338-341.

<sup>17</sup> Atatürk's speech dated 25th October 1931 in *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (Atatürk's Speeches and Sayings), Vol.2, Ankara 1981, pp.272-273.

I also consider that more in-depth research of this kind will be justified as questions are resolved relative to how the Ogurs in Bulgaria and the Pecheneks spread into the Balkans (along with the effects of this movement in many aspects, and the spread and influence of Bogomilism in Europe). Perhaps, in order to strengthen my view, the works of Şemsudin Sarajliç (1887-1960), a man of letters, can be taken as an inspiring possibility or example. His private collection contains a great deal of information and documents on a variety of subjects such as Turkish tribes, grand viziers, governors and the Janissary corps. In particular, the account '*the Mystique of Bogomil and the Turkish Tribes*', which comes under the headings 'the Khazars-Ishmaelis-Tatars, Cumans, the Bogomils, the Turks-Seljuks-Ottomans, the Muslims-Arabs, the Pecheneks, the Scythian (Saka)-Vardar Turks-Pomaks-Bulgarians' in the work entitled '*The Enigma of Bogomil and the Balkans Before the Ottomans*', seems quite remarkable.<sup>18</sup>

When reflecting on the interpretation of Islam in Bosnia and the influence of the Turks regarding this issue, one arrives at the conclusion that there is a need for further research on matters not only involving Islam but also the historical significance of the Bogomils of Bulgaria<sup>19</sup> and Bosnia and the possible joint contribution at this juncture of the Ogur<sup>20</sup>, Cuman and Pechenek factors and the Bogomilism-related Bosnians. Yet again, a similarity possibly extending to gnostic practice and related beliefs would need to be examined. As a possible example in this sense, in justification of the Bogomil sect there was a socio-religious reaction against *the triumvirate* (the ruling/rich/religious)– the prevailing centres of authority within the circles of the state (Eastern Roman) and the clergy.

With the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman conquest of Bosnia, the Bosnian Bogomils<sup>21</sup> took part in a new phase of interaction with the conquering

<sup>18</sup> In Sarajevo's Historical Archives, the extensive Sarajliç private collection dating from 1908-1944 consists of novels, poems, a diary and various papers. It also encompasses various collated information on subjects such as mystical orders and their interpretations (e.g. *Abmediye, Batniye, Kalenderiye, Celaliye, Şemsîye*) in the Islamic world.

<sup>19</sup> Whilst recognising that literature on the Church of Bosnia is frequently contradictory, Banac states that from the 13th century Bosnia was host to the dualist sect- the church of Bosnia, "*probably a blend of Catholic church organization and neo-Manichean doctrine, but not identical, even in name, to the Bulgarian Bogomils, as is frequently and erroneously asserted*". I.Banac, "Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Postcommunist Statehood, 1918-1992" in *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, edited by M.Pinson, Harvard 1996, p.130.

<sup>20</sup> See for example, O.Karatay, "Ogur Connection in the Migration of Croats and Serbs", *The Turks*, I, Ankara 2002, pp.553-561.

<sup>21</sup> Today, the usual term for the followers of the Bosnian Church is Bogomils. They used to call themselves 'Christians', 'Good Bosnians', 'Good people', or simply, 'people'. However, their opponents both in the East and the West called them

scholars, who believed in Sufism; thus perceptual similarities in terms of dualism and mysticism had possibly an effect on the Bosnian Bogomils' conversion to Islam—as generally assumed. Moreover, in many aspects of social life and departments of state, Islam was utilized to promote the development of Bosnians in the state and army duties.<sup>22</sup> During the period when Bosnia was under Ottoman administration –from the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century until 1878– many *Bosniaks*<sup>23</sup> occupied the highest positions of command and government.<sup>24</sup>

Perhaps the last phases of Bosnian Bogomilism in the post-conquest era should be assessed not only from a socio-religious point of view but also from the aspect of the very important mobilizing role of small town 'urbanization' in the European experience. The Bogomil sect's criticism of the order encircled by the Roman Church and against certain dogmatic Christian rituals should be considered together with Bogomilism's influence against 'anti-feudalism' (not

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Bogomils, Babouns, Patarenes or Heretics. The Bosnian Church included a synthesis of dualistic heresy with elements of early Christianity. M. Imamović, *Bošnjaci (Bosniaks)*, Sarajevo 2000, pp.28-29. Nonetheless, Sedlar is of the opinion that no real proof exists that the Church in Bosnia ever accepted Bogomilism. J.W.Sedlar, *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages, 1000-1500*, III, Seattle 1994, p.175.

<sup>22</sup> Bosnians were awarded with significant privileges that ensured Bosnia and its people (*i.e.* its ex-Bogomils, now Muslims) a specific status within the Empire. E. Imamović, "Medieval Ages" in *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost* by O.Ibrahimagić, Sarajevo 2003, p.431 -quoted from M.Handzić, *Islamižacija Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo 1940, pp.20-21.

<sup>23</sup> In Ottoman days, Bosnian Muslims called themselves either Turci, as opposed to Turkuše (Anatolian Turks), or Bošnjaci (Bosnians). They referred to their language as Bošnjački (Bosnian) and wrote it both in Arabic script or in Bosančica, the Bosnian or Croatian version of Cyrillic script. I.Banac, "Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Postcommunist Statehood, 1918-1992" in *the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia*, edited by M.Pinson, Harvard 1996, p.133 –quoted from M.Hadzijahic, *Od tradicije do identiteta*, Sarajevo 1974, pp.15-31.

<sup>24</sup> Bosnia and Herzegovina had lost its statehood and independence only formally, since during the entire Ottoman rule it functioned as a kind of state within a state. Bosnia enjoyed an exclusive legal position within the Ottoman Empire. In total, over 20 Grand Viziers of the entire Ottoman Empire were Bosniaks. Not to mention the Bosniaks' role in the cultural and scientific development of the Empire in Oriental languages, as described by Dr.Safvet Bei Bašagić and Mehmed Handzić, who listed hundreds of famous Bosniaks-poets and scholars of that period of history till the 20th century. M.Hadzijahic, "Particularity of Bosnia" in *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost* by O.Ibrahimagić, Sarajevo 2003, p.411. An example of the impressive numbers of works, as well as the prevailing political atmosphere in the second half of the 19th century can be seen in periodicals such as "*Vatan, Bosnjak, Maarif (Kalendar Mearif), Bayraktar, Behar, Bosansko-Hercegovacki glasnik, Kalendar Gajreta, Ogledalo* etc.", see A.Popovic, *Balkanlarda İslam*, İstanbul 1995, pp.205-208.

only from a religious point of view). In my opinion, this anti-feudalistic influence should also be analysed in terms of the positive role of ‘urbanization’ in enforcing the transfer of socio-economic mobility from “feudalism’s rural-oriented areas” to “socio-economically-active small urban areas” and the development of Balkanic life (especially, trade/craft and guild organizations) around the regional towns with population growth. In addition, this influence should be valued as a cultural dynamism and intellectual stimulation which flourished in the newly established cities, including the towns<sup>25</sup> of Bosnia which had increased in number after the Turkish conquest.

Thus, the Bosnian development could possibly be referred to as one of the early examples in the modern history of the Balkan region of an alienation from European feudalistic and scholastic practises, for a variety of reasons or parameters.

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<sup>25</sup> At the time of the arrival of the Ottomans (mid 15th century), the towns of Visoko, Fojnica, Kreşevo and Srebrenica had no more than 2,000 residents each, whilst Gorazde, Vişegrad, Praća, Olovo, and Foća had less than 1,000 residents each. The rise of the population occurred post-conquest after a certain progress had been made in all important segments of social life in Bosnia. E.Imamovic, “Medieval Ages” in *Bosanska Državnost i Nacionalnost*, by O.Ibrahimagić, Sarajevo 2003, p.430. Note too that in addition the capital city of Sarajevo, Mostar, Počitelj, Blagaj, Tuzla, Zenica and Travnik all still retain valuable reminders of Turkish-Bosnian interaction.