

A Short Review on Bosnian Self-Conscience during the Ottoman Period

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Summary

During the 415-year long Ottoman rule in now Bosnia and Herzegovina and a part of adjacent countries that were a part of the Bosnian Eyalet until 1580, there was self-conscience of local people about Bosnia as their homeland. But, in many recent studies and papers on Ottoman Bosnia this fact was not stressed enough. On the contrary, some older generation historians wrote about the fast demise of Bosnian Kingdom under Sultan's rule, indirectly stressing a lack of consciousness of people of that time about the country they lived in.

However, newer archival research fully negate the earlier thesis that Bosnia "quietly" fell. It was exactly in numerous examples that one can see that Bosnian Medieval State, even before the arrival of Sultan Mehmed Fatih II in May 1463, offered resistance to the Ottoman army for 77 years. It continued even after the loss of the Medieval sovereignty. The Ottoman army needed 129 more years that with the fall of Bihać they establish Sultan's rule in entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this period, the Ottoman authorities established seven sanjaks which were included in the Bosnian Eyalet on September 5th, 1580. The very name of the province kept the Medieval name of the country, as it was done by giving the name to the Bosnian and Herzegovinian sanjak.

How much was consciousness of people of Bosnia as their country was present in the period to come we can see by name of many benefactors who, by erecting sacral and profane objects in their birth places, were founders of a large number of urban environments. In the same sense, many distinguished Bosnians and Herzegovinians of the Ottoman Empire kept their surname Bošnjak and Bosanac. Parallel with this, local people expressed connection with Bosnia as their homeland on all occasions. It was particularly vivid during numerous wars. In many battles they expressed their patriotism, mostly in the XVIII century (the Battle of Banja Luka in 1737 and the War of Dubica 1788-1791).

In the XIX century, it was most vivid during the Movement for autonomy of Bosnia (1831-1832) under Husein-captain Gradaščević, in the resistance to Omer-pasha Latas (1850-1852), as well as offering resistance to establishing Austro-Hungarian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina (the end of July – October 20, 1878). This paper offers more detailed information on all this.

THE RECENT HISTORIOGRAPHY of the Ottoman period Bosnia & Herzegovina shows us that many authors have often studied some issues with a non-critical approach. It resulted in many prejudices in which the 415 year-long rule was glorified by some as the period of total darkness and regress, whereas other go into the opposite extreme and beautify even those things which serious scientific criticism negate. Contingent on accepting individual interpretations, such one-sidedness was present for a long time. Truth be told, based on original archival materials, in their, predominantly oriental-based, papers certain Ottomanism experts and historians gave rather critical opinions on many places, events and persons. It mostly relates to scientific papers that were published in post-1945 journals. However, such papers appeared in earlier periods as well, but in considerably smaller numbers. Some particular studies broke down the black-white stereotype. But, the prejudices remain even nowadays. It is my desire to use concrete examples to point out that in the last days of the Medieval Bosnian Kingdom local people felt Bosnia, not the Ottoman state, as their own, although they fought for the Ottoman state and acknowledged their loyalty to it on many occasions. With that in mind I entitled this paper “**A short review on bosnian self-conscience during the Ottoman period**”. Unfortunately, this segment of the past of modern Bosnia and

Herzegovina, as well as parts of neighboring countries, which were a part of the Ottoman Empire for centuries, has been given almost any attention by scientists. Hamdija Kreševljaković, Nedim Filipović, Avdo Sućeska, Hazim Šabanović, Adem Handžić, Ešref Kovačević, Ahmed S. Aličić and other drew attention to some particular aspects in their papers. That particular aspect is usually family-owned land. But, to the best of my knowledge, something similar was present in other provinces of the Ottoman Empire. So, what was it that set Bosnia aside?

Above all things, it was **self-conscience** throughout the entire rule of the Sultan. The state of orientation towards the homeland that local people felt and expressed in all occasions provide us with an answer that Bosnia was all that time present in all social environments and its entire territory. That is also confirmed by many events, some of which in complete contradiction even with contemporary theses discarded a long time ago by serious scientific critics.

Negating Bosnian self-conscience started in 1463, upon arrival of Sultan Mehmed Fatih II with the bulk of his troops. His swift military victory over defenders, execution of the last Bosnian king Stjepana Tomaševića (1461–1463), conquering a part of the Kingdom and disappearance of their Medieval State forced certain figures to justify their ineptitude and hastiness in deciding, and thusly blame someone else. For many it seemed that Bosnia fell under the Ottoman's whisper in "silence". That's not true. It took the Ottoman Army many decades after 1463 to establish Sultan's rule in areas of the last years of Bosnia's medieval state. In terms of the territory of contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ottomans needed 13 decades, up to the fall of Bihać in 1592, which proves that some then contemporary critics also used misinformation. So, the Prince of Trogir wrote on June 25th, 1463, that Bosnia fell not only "*without a single gunshot, but also without drawing a single sword*". Similar ideas can be found with the then King of Hungary Matija Korvin (1358–1390). In his letter to Pope Urban V (1362-1370), in the beginning of 1464, the Hungarian King says, among other things, that Sultan was victorious in Bosnia even "before he drew his sword".

The fall was blamed on local people as well, particularly more distinguished people. Bishop Nikola Modruški, who as a Papal legate (1361-1361) contributed that King Stjepan Tomašević stopped maneuvering with Sultan Mehmed Fatih II by promising him a full support of Hungarian Kingdom, as well as other European countries, all in intent

that alleviate a part of his responsibility in disappearing of a legitimate Kingdom. He accused for treason the commander of the royal town of Bobovac, a catholicized Bosnian Church Christian by the name of Radak, who was blamed for surrendering the fort without resistance. All these and similar non-historical theses aimed to show that there was no self-conscience with local people and ruling nobility about Bosnian Kingdom as their state. Generations of students were taught as such. However, the aforementioned examples are completely historically false. Best papers about that were written by Academician Marko Šunjić who disproves one by one of the aforementioned theses.¹

Those who wrote about the fast demise of Bosnia overlooked that the Ottoman Army started attacking this Kingdom as early as 1386. In the following 77 years, using their reliable tactics of weakening their victim politically, militarily and economically on all occasions before striking the final blow, the Ottoman Army, sometimes harder, sometimes slower, attacked and tore down Bosnia. That was the same tactics they used with other medieval countries in South-Eastern Europe. Local people fought bitter battles to preserve the Kingdom both diplomatically and militarily.²

Medieval Bosnian State was kept alive for 77 years in different ways by all layers of the society. It speaks about consciousness they had about their country.

Historical sources also refute other said theses about the 1463 fall of Bosnia. A contemporary of Fatih's campaign on Bosnia, a well-known Ottoman historian Dursun-bey speaks about Sultan's conquering of Bosnia in his work *Tarihi Ali Osmani*. As a direct participant of the military campaign on Bosnia he speaks about the resistance to Sultan's army. Among other things, he says: "*Some other infidels, inhabitants of Hell, relying on their strength and firmness of their posts continued to resist and fight back. They retreated to inaccessible places and refuges.*" And then he continues: "*Rebels of some regions summoned up in such inaccessible and hard places up in the hills, and, as demons, chose their leaders. From them*

¹ Dr Marko Šunjić, *Uništenje srednjovjekovne bosanske države*, Bosna i Hercegovina od najstarijih vremena do kraja Drugog svjetskog rata, Sarajevo 1998, 92, 93 (further read: M. Šunjić, *Uništenje srednjovjekovne bosanske države*).

² More on the matter in the paper by Hazim Šabanović, *Bosansko krajište*, Godišnjak Istorijškog društva Bosne i Hercegovine, IX, Sarajevo 1957, 177–220.

*they fought back and were stubborn in it, determined to fight the victorious army...Whenever the victory was of the Muslims, before the pillaging and enslaving began, many young infidel men and women and children, fearing from Turkish capture, dove voluntarily into the abyss.”*³

Another participant of this campaign from Sultan’s army Konstantin Mihailović of Ostrovica wrote the following: “Having heard about affairs in Bosnia, Emperor Muhamed (Mehmed II) went back there after a year, taking towns, and not having guns of his own, he ordered to have them cast on the spot and started firing them and tore down all the walls of Jajce fort, and then started charging. And the flag was already up, but one foot soldier started fighting a janissary for the flag. And they fought so hard that they fell off the wall into their death”⁴ Even at first glance, minor details tell us that Bosnia did not surrender as easily.

At that time no distinguished person from Bosnian nobility joined the Ottomans, apart from Vladislav, the son of Hercoga Stjepan Vukčić–Kosača who brought them into the Kingdom in the first place.⁵ “The Medieval State of Bosnia thus did not collapse on its own, nor was tore down by a single kick as a worm-ridden building, as our own Vladimir Ćorović mocked, but it, as Venice wrote to Florence on June 14th, 1463, a respectable kingdom bured down before our very eyes – *aredet ante oculos opulentimum regnum!*”⁶

Attachment of the locals to Bosnia as their only country during 415 year-long Ottoman rule was confirmed in numerous situations. At the time, in the XVI century, when the Ottoman Empire became a world empire, many people from Bosnia were posted in state and military positions. Amongst them, there were many individuals, even entire families that left a part of their gained wealth in Bosnia, either as a waqf or otherwise. So, as early as the first century, in the territory of Bosnia, Herzegovina, Zvornik, Klis and Požega sanjak many sacral and profane building were erected, and many of them represented an embryo of a later urban environment. A particular place is deserved for Gazi

³ Istorija naroda Jugoslavije (do početka XVI veka), Beograd 1953, 561.

⁴ Konstantin Mihailović iz Ostrovice, *Janičarove uspomene ili turska hronika*, Foreword, translation and comments by dr. Đorđe Živanović, Beograd 1966, 156.

⁵ M. Šunjić, *Uništenje srednjovjekovne bosanske države*.

⁶ *Ibidem*, 94.

Husrev-beg who, with shorter intermissions between 1521 and 1541, was a sanjak-bey of Bosnian sanjak. Even though he was not born in Bosnia, being a son of a local-born Ferhad-bey, he directed his entire wealth and potentials towards well-being of the sanjak that he ran in his past two decades of his tragically-ended life. The result of that activity are numerous foundations in various places. Undoubtedly he is the most prolific person whose waqf objects contributed that Sarajevo became one of the largest and most prominent towns in the European part of the Ottoman Empire as early as the first half of the XVI century.⁷

Other important figures from the XVI century who gained respect and wealth both in Bosnia and abroad also remembered their homeland and friends and family. It particularly became noticeable in the second half of the XVI century. The brothers Sinan-bey and Husein-pasha used their foundations to turn Čajniče and Pljevlja into smaller towns.⁸ The same thing happened with Mustafa-pasha Sokolović, who as a waqf donor founded the small town of Rudo.⁹

Numerous XVI century waqfs tell us about a relatively large number of individuals financed many objects and gave away money. Among others, there were: Isa-bey Ishaković, Gazi Husrev-bey, Sofi Mehmed-pasha, Bosnian sanjakbey Mustafa-pasha, Ferhad-bey, Musa Čelebi, Nesuh-aga Vučjaković, nazir of Foča and zaim hajji Mehmed-bey, zaim hajji Muhamed-bey (Karađoz-bey), Turali-bey, Sinan-bey Boljanić, Derviš-aga, tzar kizlar aga Mustafa, son of Mehmed-bey, and many other.

Their foundations are a proof that whether they lived in Bosnia permanently or abroad, they selflessly donated foundations from their private material and financial means for the citizens of Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, Rudo, Rogatice, Tešanj, Foča, Tuzla, Čajniče, Varcar Vakuf (since 1923. Mrkonjić Grad) and many other Bosnian towns from then Bosnian eyelet as well as towns that are now a part of other countries.¹⁰ Gazi Husrev-bey left his entire wealth in Bosnia and according to his own

⁷ Behija Zlatar, *Zlatno doba Sarajeva (XVI stoljeće)*, Sarajevo 1996, 7–247.

⁸ Enes Pelidija – Behija Zlatar, *Pljevlja i okolina u prvim stoljećima osmansko – turske vlasti*, Pljevlja 1988, 5–49.

⁹ Alija Bejtić, *Rudo i rudarski kraj, doba turske vladavine*, Rudo, spomenica povodom 30-godišnjice Prve proleterske brigade, Rudo 1971, 197–209.

¹⁰ *Vakufname iz Bosne i Hercegovine (XV i XVI vijek)*, Sarajevo, 1985, 9–259.

will he was buried in Sarajevo alongside his wife, Princess Šahdidar, a daughter of Sultan Bajazit II.

As much care and means was invested into sacral and profane objects by Gazi Husrev-bey in Sarajevo in the first half of the XV century, the same credit went to Ferhad-pasha Sokolović for inventing into Banja Luka. During his stay in this town from 1574 until 1580 as the Bosnian sanjakbey, and from 1580 until 1588 as the first Bosnian beylerbey, apart from building Ferhadija mosque, destroyed by chetniks on May 7th, 1993, he also built 200 stores, a caravansara, a Turkish bath, three mills, a residence, a madrasa, an imaret and other valuable facilities. That is what gave that place a status of a town, as Sarajevo had since the time of Gazi Husrev-bey. Even when the Grand Government appointed him for the Governor of Buda in 1588 he still dedicated lots of attention to Banja Luka. He was killed in Buda in 1590 by a slave. As he desired, he was buried in Banja Luka, the town he loved the most, and to which he dedicated all his love and riches.¹¹ In example as well, we can see that people originally from Bosnia stayed attached to their homeland, regardless to their position.

It was manifested in various manners. The Ottomans named the first and second sanjak, Bosnian (1463) and Herzegovinian (1471). **Those names were kept throughout the entire Ottoman rule.**¹² It wasn't until the Zvornik sanjak was formed in 1481, as well as in the period to come: Klis (1537), Požega (1538), Čazma-Pakrac (1538) and Krka-Lika (around 1580), sanjaks were given names after sanjak-bey's residence. It particularly became important in 1580. Of the aforementioned sanjaks, on Rajab 24th, 988, that is, September 5th, 1580, by a decree, Ferhad-bey was appointed the first Bosnian governor with the title of Pasha and was awarded the income of 800.000 pieces of silver.¹³

¹¹ Alija Bejtić, *Banja Luka pod turskom vladavinom, arhitektura i teritorijalni razvitak grada u XVI i XVII vijeku*, Naše starine, I, Sarajevo 1953, 97–104; Enes Pelidija, *Život i djelo Ferhad paše Sokolovića*, Glasnik Rijaseta Islamske zajednice u SFRJ, god. LIV, br. 6, Sarajevo 1991, 699–712.

¹² Hazim Šabanović, *Bosanski pašaluk, postanak i upravna podjela*, Sarajevo 1982, 15–234 (further: H. Šabanović, *Bosanski pašaluk*).

¹³ Topkapi Sarayı Arşivi, KK 262, s. 2. I collected this information from a published doctoral thesis of Hatice Oruç, *Društveno – ekonomske prilike u Bosanskom sandžaku od 1463. godine do početka 17. stoljeća*, Sarajevo 2003. godine, 37. This firmly sets the date of forming of *Bosnian ayalet*, which was previously set between April 25th and September

A new Ottoman province that was formed in almost the entire area of modern Bosnia and Herzegovina and a significant part of adjacent countries, and 12 years later the entire area of Bosnia and Herzegovina was officially entitled *Bosnian ayalet*. That name was kept up to the first decades of the XIX century, when the tzar's decree changed it into *Bosnian vilayet* on 17th of Dhu al-Hijjah 1281, that is, May 13th, 1865.¹⁴

All that tells us that the name *Bosnia*, first for the sanjak, and then for the province, remained in continuity for 415 years of Sultan's reign in this area. *If we consider administrative-governing names of other countries, we can see that conscience of Bosnia was also present in official title and in people of Bosnian origin.*

A similar thing happened in the XVII century. Numerous authors in all fields of science and art often added *Bošnjak* (eng. Bosniak) to their names. Among others, I would mention: Derviš Jakup-pasha *Bošnjak*, Ali Deda *Bošnjak*, Šani Salih *Bošnjak*, Muhamed Musić – Al-lamek *Bošnjak*, Hasan *Bošnjak*, Šinasi Mehmed Čelebi *Bošnjak*, Kodža Muerrih – Husein *Bošnjak*, Sijahi Mustafa *Bošnjak*, and dozens of other famous names who greatly contributed in literature, history, sociology, philosophy, theology, law and other scientific disciplines. Some of them added their birth place to their name. Among others, there were Hasan Kafi *Pruščak*, Ahmed Šemsudin *Sarajlija*, Zijai, Hasan el *Mostari*, Ahmed *Mostarac* Šehdi Osman Kadić *Bjelopoljak*, Hadž Hilmi *Taslidžak*, Muslihudin *Bošnjak Travničanin*, Hasan *Livnjak*, Aga dede of *Dobor*, Ebu Bekir *Visočak*, Hasan *Duvnjak*, and many others.¹⁵ They all knew, in their own way, where and to whom they belong.

People from now Bosnia and Herzegovina have appreciated their language. That is best illustrated by *Maqbuli' arif*, a paper better known as *Potur Šahidi(ja)*, by Muhamed Hevaji Uskufi of Tuzla. He wrote this paper as early as 1631, which, in fact, is a Bosnian-Turkish dictionary.¹⁶

23rd, 1580 by Hazim Šabanović, Ph.D in his study "Bosanski pašaluk", 78.

¹⁴ Ahmed S. Aličić, *Uređenje Bosanskog ejaleta od 1789. do 1878. godine*, Sarajevo 1983. godine 82.

¹⁵ Dr. Hazim Šabanović, *Književnost muslimana BiH na orijentalnim jezicima (biobibliografija)*, Sarajevo 1973., godine, 39–716; Dr. Savfet-beg Bašagić, *Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u islamskoj književnosti, prilog kulturnoj historiji Bosne i Hercegovine*, Sarajevo 1986. godine, 13–452.

¹⁶ Dr. Muhamed Huković, Dr. Ahmed Kasumović, Dr. Ismet Smailović, with the introduction by Academician Nedim Filipović, *Muhamed Hevai Uskufi*, Tuzla 1990., 7–202.

In many places, while describing many Bosnian-Herzegovinian places, the most famous Ottoman travel writer Evli Celebi, in this “Travel book” stresses many examples of connection of local people to their birthplaces and Bosnia in general. He points out that local people *Bosniaks*, who introduce themselves to him, thus making a difference in relation to other peoples from the Ottoman state. For example, he writes for Srebrenica that Bosniaks live there.¹⁷ In another place, while describing Sarajevo in 1660, he writes: “*Colloquially speaking the local people call themselves Bosniaks. The only thing they like better when they call themselves Bosnians (“Bosnevi”). As pure their language is, that is what themselves are, bright people that reason clearly all the time.*” The name *Bošnjak* is mentioned in “Travel book” in many places, thus distinguishing it clearly from the names of other peoples.¹⁸ Similar writings can be found with numerous French travel writers that passed through Bosnia during the XVI and XVII century. They too notice that the local people did not identify themselves with Ottoman Turks and other peoples under Sultan’s rule. They especially pointed out that in many places they passed through the bulk of the locals converted to Islam.¹⁹ That is confirmed by other travel writers from different periods when they travelled in Bosnian ayalet.

That local people were more oriented towards themselves and their Bosnia, and less to the Ottoman state and Sultan in Istanbul we can see in Bosniaks’ rebellions from the XVII and XVIII century. Up to the modern times, the historiography of former Yugoslavia was non-critical towards Muslims in the confessional sense. That is most vivid in papers of many historians of older generations. In their papers, they always rightfully pointed out to all faults of the local and central government, and named numerous rebellions of non-Muslim peoples. However, in relation to local Muslims, especially Bosniaks, they never pointed out that they rebelled as much as other Sultan subjects in particular time periods. There were many reasons to that. One of them was a stereotypical portrayal of the state of affairs in the Ottoman period in socialist

¹⁷ Evlija Čelebi, *Putopis, odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama*, Preveo, uvod i komentar napisao Hazim Šabanović, Sarajevo 1996, 100.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 160, 179, 201, up to page 548.

¹⁹ Radovan Samardžić, *Beograd i Srbija u spisima francuskih savremenika XVI - XVII vek*, Beograd 1961, 19–596 in many places.

realistic style. It was not until papers of Academician Avdo Sućeska, then Muhamed Hadžijahić, PhD, and others from the second half of the XX century, that the matter was more seriously treated. Professor Sućeska started pointing out to this matter even in his early papers, that Bosniaks from Bosnian ayalet, turned more and more to their closer country Bosnia, and not to Sultan in Istanbul. They showed so in their first rebellion in 1636 in Sarajevo. Peasants from Sarajevo judicial area rebelled against *bedel-i shayk* taxes. On that occasion they demolished and robbed Sarajevo courthouse and killed a court officer.²⁰ The next rebellion of people from the vicinity of Sarajevo took place in 1650. The reason for it was then minister of finance Mehmed-pasha. He tried to forcefully collect taxes which was the job of military organs.²¹ A particularly large rebellion took place on May 26th, 1682 in this town. In decades to come until the end of the XVII century there were no rebellion of such magnitude. That was probably the result of the Vienna War (1683-1699).²² *In my opinion, it was just further deepening of the self-conscience of local people towards the Ottoman rule, which would particularly be evident in the period to come.*

One type of dedication of local people towards Bosnia came during the time of establishing new borders alongside Bosnian ayalet in accord with Karlovac peace agreement. At the time, a member of the Ottoman demarcation committee at this part of Ottoman-Venetian-Habsburg border and serving as a representative and a Sharia expert (*muvela-i-halifa*), that is, a representative of Sarajevo judge – *mulla*, was Abdulah effendi Drnišlija. In his work he showed not only all expertize and seriousness in work, but also awareness that he was a local man, and not some Ottoman from a province of the Empire.²³

²⁰ Avdo Sućeska, *Seljačke bune u Bosni u XVII i XVIII stoljeću*, Godišnjak Društva istoričara Bosne i Hercegovine, god. XVII 1966–1967., Sarajevo 1969, 166 (dalje: A. Sućeska, *Seljačke bune*).

²¹ Ibidem , 172.

²² Avdo Sućeska, *Bošnjaci u osmanskoj državi*, Sarajevo 1995. godine, 16, 17.

²³ Alija Bejtić, *Sarajlija Abdulah Drnišlija i njegov Zbornik bosanskih memorijala 1672–1719.*, Radovi ANUBiH, knj. LX, Odeljenje društvenih nauka, knj. 19, Sarajevo 1977, 201–240; Ešref Kovačević, *Granice Bosanskog pašaluka prema Austriji i Mletačkoj republici po odredbama Karlovačkog mira*, Sarajevo 1973, 5–299.

Bosnian self-conscience was particularly stressed with XVIII century people. It was best seen in peace, but also during the three wars (1714–1718; 1737–1739; 1788–1791.) that were fought at that period in Bosnian ayalet. Immediately after the completion of the peace accord at Srijemski Mitrovci on January 26th with the Habsburg Empire and on February 7th 1699 with the Venetian Republic in Bosnia, which, in its greatest part, becomes the most upfront province of the European part of the Ottoman Empire the authorities and local people started the most intense interest for more fortified objects and better military coordination. Thanks to that, Bosnia did not have such great losses in the first war fought between December 1714 until July 1718, unlike other provinces.²⁴ However, the true self-conscience was shown by Bosniaks in the Austrian-Ottoman War fought between 1737 until 1739. They knew if the Austrians won they would face the faith of Muslims who in previous wars were banished from territories they lived on for generations or at best convert to Christianity. Without any help, Bosniaks defeated the superior enemy, all with maximum engagement and self-deprivation. With this victory they defended themselves, their identity, places of birth and Bosnia they recognized as their only homeland. *“That is why one can state that the battle of Banja Luka on August 4th, 1737 represented one of the first pages of Bosniak self-conscience, bravery and patriotism... Especially this victory had great importance for Bosniaks of Islamic religion who, up that moment, also lived alongside their neighbours of Roman Catholic, Christian Orthodox and Jewish religion. In that battle they preserved their physical and spiritual existence in this area”*.²⁵

After the Treaty of Belgrade (September 1st, 1739), there was no war against their neighbours for nearly five decades there. But, it is during that peace period that the self-conscience of local people is even more strengthened. In decades to come, the influence of local people who were at more distinguished civilian and military positions was of outmost respect. That especially emphasized captains and many spahi families that enjoyed in inherited land.²⁶

²⁴ Enes Pelidija, *Bosanski ejalet od Karlovačkog do Požarevačkog mira (1699 –1718)*, Sarajevo 1989, 5–301.

²⁵ Enes Pelidija, *Banjalučki boj iz 1737 - uzroci i posljedice*, Sarajevo 2003. godine, 409, 410; Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, Sarajevo 1997, 300–303.

²⁶ Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Kapetanije u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Izabrana djela, knj. I, Sa-

True, in major issues, their decisions were never in opposition with the viewpoint of the Government in Istanbul. But, all basic decisions regarding maintaining peace, inner peace, economy and especially military capabilities for the defense of Bosnian Eyalet were in jurisdiction of a representative of the Ottoman authorities, apprehended usually by a person of local origin. That does not mean that there was some sort of autonomy in Bosnia. However, judging by practice, it was not exactly too far away from the truth. It was exactly in that sort of a situation that local people protested against the local authorities, which abused their jurisdiction. As in the XVII and XVIII century, on numerous occasions, there were rebellions of the local people, most usually of Muslims. A serious rebellion took place in 1735. It started in Mostar and then other judicial kadiluks of Herzegovina Sanjak. It was not until after the breaking of the Austrian-Ottoman war on 1737 that the rebellion stopped because of the imminent danger.²⁷ But, resident displeasure erupted again in a new rebellion in the larger part of this Ottoman province, that lasted from 1747 until 1757.²⁸ *In these examples of rebellions we can see Bosnian self-conscience. People from the XVIII century did not blindly follow Sultan or his representatives in Bosnia whenever injustice and abuse was evident. They primarily protected themselves and their legal rights.*

When the Government in 1784, upon Austrian request, accepted to surrender some border places and forts that were questionable since the Treaty of Belgrade (1739), Bosnian people rebelled against it. Then Bosnian governor Abdullah Pasha-Defterdarević joined them as well. Being a native Sarajevo man he reacted as a patriot. He was against giving away some border places to then neighboring Austria. That was used by his opponents, so they managed to have him accused for treason with the Government. As the story goes, when the emissary brought a vile of poison in February 1785, upon drinking it Abdullah-Pasha said:

rajevo 1991; Avdo Sućeska, *Ajani, prilog izučavanju lokalne vlasti u našim zemljama za vrijeme Turaka*, Sarajevo 1965. godine.

²⁷ Enes Pelidija, *Bosanski ejalet od 1593. godine do Svištovskog mira 1791. godine*, Bosna i Hercegovina od najstarijih vremena do kraja Drugog svjetskog rata, Sarajevo 1998, 165 (dalje: E. Pelidija, *Bosanski ejalet od 1593. godine*).

²⁸ A. Sućeska, *Seljačke bune*, 182–202.

“Bas vererum bir tas vermem”- I offer my head, but not a single stone.²⁹ Regardless how much this favored historical facts or not, this surrender too speaks of Bosnian self-conscience that was present a long time before Sultan’s power disappeared from this area.

Patriotism will particularly be stressed in the Ottoman-Austrian war from 1788 until 1791. At this war, better known as, the war at Dubica, Bosnian fought so bravely and fiercely in all points of the front. They did not fight for Sultan and his state as much as for themselves and Bosnia. Then Austrian Tsar Joseph II (1780-1790) knew about the lack of interest of official Istanbul for Bosnia. That is why he wrote to Field Marshall Ernest Laudon, the head commander on the Bosnian front *“that Bosnia is left to Bosnians alone and that we should use that and attack Berbir”*.³⁰ But, as military activities of Austrian army did not go as planned, Field Marshall Laudon presented Tsar the reasons why military victories do not happen. He said: *“that it is absolutely unbelievable how firmly little Bosnian towns are built and how Turks (Bosnians, author’s commentary) fight stubbornly and how easily they dig in, whenever they lose a front line”*.³¹

In the XIX century, ever since the Treaty of Svishtov (August 4th, 1791) people of Krajina and some of their captains did not accept the loss of Cetingrad. It was particular in the case of Hasan-aga of Pećigrad, in folk tradition better known as Hasan-aga Pećki. He fought a sort of his private war for Cetingrad against the Austrians for almost 30 years.³² *Hasan-aga’s struggle with the Austrians was an expression of conscience of this person and people of Krajina to fight for their own, not Sultan’s land.* It will all be even more stressed in the movement for autonomy of Bosnia under Husein-captain Gradašćević.

A reformation attempt of the Ottoman empire, mostly modeled after then European countries, had a direct influence on many events in many Ottoman provinces. The same thing happened to the Bosnian eyelet. During his many decades long rule Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839) executed many measures which did not meet any support from

²⁹ Safvet-beg Bašagić (Mirza Safvet), *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine (od 1463–1850)*, reprint izdanje, Sarajevo, 1989, 110, 111.

* *Bosanska Gradiška*.

³⁰ Galib Šljivo, *Bosna i Hercegovina 1788–1812*, Banjaluka 1992, 119.

³¹ *Historija naroda Jugoslavije II*, Zagreb MCMLIX, 1331.

³² M. Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, 326.

Sultans supporters' in Bosnia. Reasons to that were of both subjective and objective nature. It was particularly vivid after the cancellation of the concept of a janissary estate in 1826. Bosnian captains, noblemen and other important persons felt their right were endangered. They would constitute the leadership of the Movement.³³

Among them was Hasan-aga Pečki who fought his own particular war for Bosnia. Alongside other captains and then noblemen he attended the Tuzla meeting which lasted from January 20th until February 5th 1831. Important decisions were made amongst which the most important was that a) Bosnia gets its autonomy, and that in future pays 4000 bags of money to the central government in Istanbul and b) and to have a local person appointed as the head of this province. They elected Husein-captain Gradašević the head of the movement. Although young by age (29), he was undoubtedly among the most influential, capable and wealthy persons of the Bosnian eyelet. That is was he received most support.³⁴

In the period to come, during 1831 and 1832, most people of this province, alongside Husein-captain fought both political and armed struggle against the central authorities for their proclaimed goals.³⁵ It was also stressed by Husein-captain himself, who was already known in public as "*The Dragon of Bosnia*". He also stressed this in his correspondence with Austrian Tsar Franz II (1792-1835). In a letter he stressed that he had been elected "*as wished by the whole Bosnian nation*".³⁶ *The whole direction of the struggle for the autonomy was an expression of self-conscience of the people of that time that rightfully considered Bosnia but not the Ottoman Empire their homeland.*

That Bosnian self-conscience was a familiar thing to the central government in Istanbul. In earlier periods, they used the patriotism of the people of the Bosnian eyelet

³³ Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju Bosne od 1831. do 1832. godine*, Sarajevo, 1996. godine, 241–249 (dalje: A. S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju*).

³⁴ Ibrahim Tepić, *Bosna i Hercegovina od kraja XVIII stoljeća do austrougarske okupacije 1878. godine*, Bosna i Hercegovina od najstarijih vremena do kraja Drugog svjetskog rata, Sarajevo 1998, 186 (dalje: I. Tepić, *Bosna i Hercegovina*).

³⁵ A. S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju*, 250–337.

³⁶ Ibidem, 187.

In the best possible way in order to preserve this particularly important border province. But, the conditions were different. Bosnian self-conscience did not favor Sultan and major persons of the Empire any more. That is why they waited a favorable moment to square off with the bearers of Bosnian thought, that did not eliminate after the military defeat over the Movement for autonomy. They used the opportunity during the rebellion in Krajina. In the beginning of September 1849, at the battle of Bihać, the rebels defeated Tahir-pasha, the Bosnian governor and the Government used that opportunity and in 1850 sent Omer-pasha Latas, one of the most apt military commanders, who was well known by successful military interventions against rebels in many provinces of the Empire.³⁷ In the period to come, Omer-pasha used all means available and managed not only to brutally crush the rebellion in Krajina, but also to physically kill and banish most influential and respected persons, bearers of Bosnian self-conscience. Among them was Ivan Franjo Jukić, who, even having showed a welcome and a poem he dedicated to Omer-pasha, was banished from Bosnia because of his loyalty to it.³⁸

In the period to come, apart from individual rebellions, there was no such organized struggle for the inner autonomy, as it was before Omer-pasha's arrival. But, that was only superficial. Bosnian eyelet having been given away to Austro-Hungary in the Berlin Congress (June 13- July 13, 1878) people's displeasure erupted against Sultan. Abdul Hamid and his government. Then, one could hear clearly that "*Bosnia is their homeland and that Sultan can give away Istanbul, but not Bosnia*".³⁹

With same determination with which people of Medieval Bosnian Kingdom defended their country, their successors after 415 years of Ottoman rule took a stand against the Ottoman Empire and European countries who tried decide about their country on their behalf. That was best shown by offering a very strong and suprisingly military resistance against the Austrian Army in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁰ *At the end of*

³⁷ I. Tepić, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 198, 199.

³⁸ G. Šljivo, *Omer-paša Latas u Bosni i Hercegovini 1850–1852.*, Sarajevo 1977, 5–181.

³⁹ I. Tepić, *Bosna i Hercegovina*, 211.

⁴⁰ Mehmedalija Bojić, *Svrgavanje turske vlasti i odbrambeni rat Bosne i Hercegovine protiv austro - ugarske invazije 1878. godine*, Naučni skup "Otpor austro-ugarskoj okupaciji 1878. godine u Bosni i Hercegovini", Sarajevo 1979, 73–88.

the Ottoman rule, self-consciousness of the local people was as clear and vivid as in it was in 1463 and in all 415 years of Sultan's rule. This piece of history of Bosnia and Herzegovina explains why on November 25th 1943 it was possible that representatives of all now constitutive peoples, political options and social affiliation unanimously accept the ZAVNOBiH resolution and that they restore the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina after 480 years. It was exactly consciousness and self-consciousness of their ancestors that Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been their true homeland that give us the answer why our country restored their sovereignty and international recognition.

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