

Srećko M. Džaja: “The Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats: A Historical-Cultural Profile”

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Abstract

This article provides synthetic account of history and culture of the Croats in modern-day Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main aim of the study is the historical reconstruction of the genesis of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its starting point can be found in the Early Middle Ages, to which the history of the majority of modern European nations stands in continuity. The paper further follows history and culture of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Ottoman period, their positioning towards modern national movements in the nineteenth century and the ideologies of the twentieth century.

Key words: Croats, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Franciscans, ethnicity

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Bosnia and Herzegovina in national narratives

Three ethnic groups reside in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina (further abbreviated to *B&H* or simply *Bosnia*) – the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs – which are defined in the Constitution of B&H as *constitutive nations*, and not as national majorities and minorities. Their contemporary standard languages rest on a common linguistic foundation and are mutually very close. In spite of their linguistic closeness, they are mutually differentiated by separate cultural and political identities and have different national narratives. Each one of those narratives emphasizes the originality of one's own ethnic group on the territory of B&H and projects it into the distant past, while the presence of the remaining two ethnic groups is more or less marginalized and interpreted as an import from outside, in other words, as the product of centuries-old foreign influences in B&H.

The first national narrative to arise was the Serbian. Already during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Serbian patriarchs in their titles, and Serbian monks on their travels in Russia and other lands, proclaimed the entire South Slavic area as 'Slaveno-Serbian', and spoke of individual regions as 'Serbian lands' and of their non-Serbian population as 'Serbs of the Roman rite' (Catholics) and 'Islamicized Orthodox Christians.'¹ At the turn of the nineteenth century, the enlighteners and national ideologists Dositej Obradović (1742-1811) and particularly Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787-1864) in his work *Srbi svi i svuda* (*The Serbs: All and Everywhere*), provided this Pan-Serbian idea with a linguistic basis, proclaiming the majority of the South Slavic linguistic idioms as the Serbian language and their speakers as Serbs.² After the establishment of the Principality of Serbia in 1830, Serbian politics, through its project of Great Serbia, views the western Balkans as Serbian. The Greater Serbian project received its clearest expression in the *Načertanije* (*Outline*) of Ilija Garašanin in 1844,³ and in the brochure *Aneksija Bosne i Hercegovine i srpski problem* (*The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serbian Problem*), published 1908 in Belgrade. The author of this brochure, Jovan Cvijić (1865-1927), the leading name of Serbian science in that period, defined B&H as "*the core soil and heart of the Serbian people*" in a similar manner as the "*Moscow region is for Russia.*"⁴ During the twentieth century,

¹ For more on this see Džaja (1999): 115-47.

² See the text of this Karadžić's work in Čović *et al.* (1991): 81-98.

³ Šimunić (1992).

⁴ Džaja (2002): 196-97.

the Greater Serbian national narrative – according to which B&H is the central province of the Serbian people – experienced, for sure, ‘Yugoslavist accommodations’, but Serbian Yugoslavism in its core retained a Greater Serbian character. This especially came to expression on the occasion of the collapse of Tito’s Yugoslavia in the late twentieth century. At that time the Serbian side imposed upon particular parts of the Yugoslav federation the option of war and the bloody breakdown of the Yugoslav state instead of a civilized separation.

The argumentation of the Serbian national narrative rests on the great linguistic closeness and similar elements in folk culture of particular ethnic groups of the South Slavic world. This great linguistic similarity has been transformed into the thesis of a uniform linguistic identity, so that the Serbian side worked on the Serbianization of linguistic culture in Croatia and, in particular, in B&H from the time of Karadžić’s work *Srbi svi i svuda* to the breakdown of Yugoslavia. This project under the appellation of *Serbo-croatism* also found a responsive chord in international linguistics, which even today, in considerable part, persists with its Serbo-Croatist attitudes, in the most recent time under the unitarist tinged acronym BCS, by which the Bosnian/Bosniak, Croatian and Serbian standard languages are being joined into one language.⁵ Efforts were made to neutralize the remaining cultural and political differences by stressing the importance of folk culture and proclaiming as foreign all cultural and political traditions which were not able to fit into the Greater Serbian project.

The remaining two B&H constitutive peoples, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks, opposed the Serbian reading of the cultural and political identity of B&H with their own national narratives as antipodal projects. The Croatian national narrative on B&H as an exclusively Croatian land developed on the heels of the Greater Serbian narrative and received its final formulation at the turn of the twentieth century. The Croatian narrative did not build its argumentation upon the thesis of the sameness of the language and folk culture but rather on historic right, according to which medieval Bosnia and its population belonged, not to the Serbian, but to the Croatian cultural and political model. Owing to the Ottoman conquests, a large portion of the medieval Bosnians were Islamicized, while a numerous Serbian-Orthodox population settled in B&H at the same time. While, according to the Croatian narrative, the Islamicized Bosnians or Ottoman

⁵ On the history of Serbo-croatism, see Auburger (2009), and Auburger (2011) further details his periodization of the Croatian language and Serbo-croatism.

Bosnians preserved the consciousness of their own supposedly Croatian affiliation, the immigrant Serbs as members of the Serbian Orthodox Church retained Serbian political and cultural traditions. After the retreat of the Ottoman Empire, the four hundred year old Ottoman rule in B&H left in its wake Catholic Croats, Muslim Croats and the settled Serbs.⁶ In 1992 the Croatian side renounced the ‘Croats of the Islamic faith in B&H’, proclaimed the Croatian constitutive people in B&H as the diaspora of the Republic of Croatia, and toyed with the idea of political division of B&H.⁷

The national narrative of the B&H Muslims, officially declared as Bosniaks in 1993, was born in the shadow of the Serbian and Croatian narratives. The Bosniak side resisted the tendencies of Serbianization and Croaticization by building against these clichés its own historical picture in which a continuity was postulated between the medieval Bosnians (*Bošnjani*) and Ottoman Bosniaks (*Bošnjaci*), between the so-called Bosnian Bogomils, as the members of the medieval Bosnian Church were known in the nineteenth century, and the Islamic community in B&H and, finally, between the medieval Bosnian Kingdom and the Ottoman Bosnian *eyalet* founded in 1580. In the search for deeper roots, the Bosnian side did not stop at the early Middle Ages as did the Serbian and Croatian national narratives, but projected the existence of its ethnos into the Roman and Illyrian period and by doing so equated the antiquity of the Bosniaks with that of the ancient Greeks and Albanians. The presence of Croats and Serbs in B&H was interpreted as a marginal phenomenon of Bosnian history; namely, the Serbs and Croats appear in the Bosniak narrative, according to A.S. Aličić: “*as small groups that dropped into Bosnia who knows under what conditions and with what aims*”.⁸

One can see from the preceding paragraphs that all three B&H national narratives have been established on postulations regarding the antiquity and continuous settlement on Bosnian soil of one’s own ethnic group. Arguments for such historical constructs were sought after by the Serbian side, as already mentioned, above all in a common linguistic basis and similarities in the area of folk culture, by the Croatian side in the postulated political and cultural connection of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian area with Croatian regions during the Middle Ages and later. The alleged consciousness of this

⁶ According to the main representative of the Greater Croatian historical narrative in historiography, Mandić (1967).

⁷ Džaja (1994).

⁸ On this see Džaja (2005a): 106-29, ref. 114-26.

community amongst the B&H Muslims survived the four hundred year Ottoman period because its rule was foreign. Their integration into the modern Croatian nation was expected as a logical consequence, because the B&H Muslims – according to this idea – through their conversion to Islam only changed their religious affiliation but not their alleged Croatian (in the Serbian reading: Serbian) cultural and political identity. The Bosnian Muslims opposed this Croatian and Serbian reading of the history of B&H through postulations about the continuity between medieval Bosnian and Ottoman political and religious institutions – between the Bosnian Kingdom and the Ottoman Bosnian *eyalet* and between the Bosnian Church and the Islamic community. With regard to the medieval Bosnian Church, the Bosniak side has speculated and speculates about its allegedly greater theological similarities with Islam than with the established Christian churches, in order to further separate that institution from its Christian text and context and so establish a direct continuity between medieval Bosnians (*Bošnjani*) and Ottoman Bosniaks (*Bošnjaci*).

Alongside the postulation of the continuity with the distant past it is noticeable that all three narratives have pushed to the margins the profound demographic changes – above all the numerous migrations and evictions from B&H during the Ottoman wars, while the complex process of Islamicization has been reduced to a question of conversions from Bogomilism to Islam.

All in all, B&H national narratives are a classic example of Benedict Anderson's (*1936) thesis on nations as 'imagined communities'⁹ and Eric Hobsbawm's (1917-2012) thesis on 'invented tradition',¹⁰ and they emerged as an ideological product of political projects that were tested in B&H at the time of its entry into modern history. Historiography stands before the task of deconstructing these constructs, i.e. to make clear their imaginary character, in other words to show, through an argumentative reconstruction of history, real historical hypotheses which must be taken into consideration before creating a common political and cultural life amongst the heterogeneous communities of B&H.

Medieval Bosnia and Hum

Departing from the preceding contextual problem the remaining part of this article is devoted to the historical reconstruction of the genesis of the

⁹ Anderson (1983).

¹⁰ Hobsbawm & Ranger (1983).

Bosnian Croats. Its starting point can be found in the Early Middle Ages, to which the history of the majority of today's European nations stands in continuity.

Only three narrative sources on the South Slavic lands in the Early Middle Ages have been preserved. The first of these, which is cited under the title *De Administrando Imperio*, was composed in the middle of the tenth century and ascribed to the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus (905-959), that is three hundred years after the beginning of the settlement of the South Slavs in their new homeland. With regard to these Slavic settlers, Porphyrogenitus speaks of the Croats and Serbs under their names which they brought from the proto-homeland, while the remaining Slavs are mentioned under tribal or regional names, e.g. Zachlumoi (*Zahumljani*), Terbuniotes (*Travunjani*), Kanalites (*Konavljani*), Diocletians (*Dukljani*), Arentanoi (*Neretljani* or *Pagani*) — the *Bošnjani* (Bosnians) are not mentioned.¹¹

The second narrative source is dedicated to the history of the Church of Salona (modern Solin) and later Split from Roman times to 1266. It was written by Thomas, the Archdeacon of Split (around 1200-1268) under the title *Historia Salonitanorum pontificum atque Spalatensium*, shortened to *Historia Salonitana*. Thomas calls the Croats Goths and speaks much of the relations between the autochthonous Roman and newly settled Slavic or Croatian element through six hundred years; he mentions Bosnia only in passing.

Historiography dates the emergence of the third narrative source, known under the name *Ljetopis popa Dukljanina* (*The Chronicle of the Priest of Dioclea*) or *Barski rodoslov* (*The Genealogy of Bar*) to the second half of the twelfth century. The text is very complex and a critical analysis of it points to a number of paradigms; the mediated information is frequently very nebulous and not one piece is dated. For this reason this source is ideal for speculation and desirable constructs of the distant past. The furthest to go in this direction on the Croatian side was Dominik Mandić (1889-1973),¹² Muhamed Hadžijahić (1918-1986) on the Bosniak side,¹³ and Relja Novaković (1911-2003) on the Serbian,¹⁴ as well as, of course, their publicistic epigones. Each of them made a particular effort to (re)construct a

¹¹ Katičić (1998): 214; also see Goldstein (1995): 103.

¹² Mandić (1963).

¹³ Hadžijahić (2004).

¹⁴ Novaković (1981).

still wider political space for their own ethnic groups (Croatian, Bosniak, Serbian) in the Early Middle Ages.

The remaining historians accepted the information from the three aforementioned narrative sources as starting points for further research, but they introduced less conjecture into them and preferred to leave them as informative *torsos*; they filled those gaps which could be confirmed or corrected with meagre facts mediated through other sources – archaeological remains and marginal records. In recent times this approach has been applied with the scientific precision and persuasiveness craved for by the Croatian philologist, Indo-Europeanist and literary historian Radoslav Katičić (*1930). In his classical work, *Litterarum studia*, on which he worked for nearly twenty years,¹⁵ Katičić succeeded in reconstructing the developmental lines of early medieval Croatian cultural history. To be sure, due to the scarcity of preserved historical sources, Katičić's synthesis also has not ceased being a torso, but the main lines have acquired clear contours.

Katičić systematically follows the centuries-old cultural coalescing between, what he calls, the indigenous Roman element and the settled Slavic or Croatian element on the eastern Adriatic coast. This cultural process lasted until Humanism and the Renaissance in the fifteenth century. Even in the fifteenth century debate in the political bodies of the Republic of Dubrovnik was conducted in *Ragusian*, a Romanic language, while the last original speaker of the *Vegliot*, i.e. the Romanic idiom on the island of Krk died in 1898.¹⁶

The baptizing of the Croats began immediately after their settlement in the seventh century, issuing from the Romanic Dalmatian towns which were under the supreme political rule of Byzantium, but belonged to the Roman Church in an ecclesiastical and cultural sense. At the beginning of the ninth century, Carolingian missionaries, most probably originating from Aquileia participated in the baptizing of the Croats; they made use of popular Slavic elements in their catechisms and in doing so prepared the soil for Cyrilo-Methodian Christianization and culture, which will receive completely clear outlines from the second half of the ninth to the eleventh century.¹⁷ In that way the Croatian bilingual (Latin and Slavic) culture employing three alphabets (Latin, Glagolitic and Cyrillic) was born and further developed – a unique example in European relations. For:

¹⁵ Katičić (1998).

¹⁶ Katičić (1998): 592.

¹⁷ Katičić (1998): 220-21, 334, 365.

“... it is not a question of the parallel existence of an erudite Latin education and the popular language of the illiterate, which is otherwise characteristic for the European West, but rather of two equally erudite and schooled literary traditions.”¹⁸

How did things stand in that respect with neighbouring Bosnia? When Bosnia is in question, in this context it should be emphasized that Bosnia was less exposed to the permanent influences of the Dalmatian Roman towns, because it was situated in the hinterland. Nevertheless, the meagre records on the influence of the Salonitan metropolitan on the ecclesiastical organization in Bosnia are confirmed by the archaeological remains of churches on the territory of today's B&H, which derive from the period before and after the Ostrogothic rule between 490 and 535 AD¹⁹ and the Slavic-Avar political alliance during the seventh and eighth centuries. The western half of today's Bosnia stretching to the Vrbas river was, until the Ottoman conquests in the fifteenth century, a region of Croatian ecclesiastical and political processes, while it came under the political rule of medieval Bosnian rulers only during the fourteenth century. Porphyrogenitus' account very convincingly legitimates the situation in the tenth century. Here it is said:

“From the Croats who came to Dalmatia, a part split off and possessed themselves of Illyricum and Pannonia; they too had an independent prince, who used to maintain friendly contact, though through envoys only, with the prince of Croatia.”²⁰

Bosnia was certainly located in this Illyricum as one of Porphyrogenitus' 'Sclavinias', so named because the:

“... language, faith, legal order and (oral) literature were Slavic. The mythological, ceremonial and legal texts were delivered orally according to the Slavic tradition from generation to generation.”²¹

¹⁸ Katičić (1998): 658.

¹⁹ On this see Vasilj (1993): 14-28.

²⁰ *De Administrando Imperio* 30.75-78, ed. Moravcsik, transl. Jenkins. For more see Katičić (1998): 300.

²¹ Katičić (1998): 317.

By the eleventh century the Cyrillo-Methodian Slavicization of Christianity on the territory of today's Bosnia was conducted in its entirety and extended to the most western parts of today's Republic of Croatia (to Istria). The scriptorial influence of (Croatian) Glagolitic on the tablet of Humac in today's western Herzegovina from the tenth or eleventh century,²² written in Cyrillic, is identifiable, while in the Bosnian diocese, which is first mentioned under that name in preserved sources on 8th of January 1089, the Slavic language was used exclusively at that time. Alongside the Western Cyrillic or *bosančica* (mentioned under that name for the first time in 1861), which will flourish in Bosnia and Hum and in the neighbouring Croatian-Dalmatian regions until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the parallel use of the Glagolitic script will continue to the beginning of the fifteenth century. Changes in the political influences on Bosnia will also lead to a change in the suffragan position of the Bosnian diocese between the metropolitans in Split, Bar and Dubrovnik. During the reign of *Ban*²³ Kulin (ca. 1170-1204), the Bosnian diocese was a suffragan to the Archbishopric of Dubrovnik. In that period (1199/1200) the first reports of the appearance of heresy in Kulin's Bosnia were also recorded.

With that there began a new period in the political, ecclesiastical and cultural history of medieval Bosnia. With the support of the Hungarian King Emeric (Imre) I (1196-1204) and with the consent of the Bosnian Ban Kulin, the Papal Legate John de Casamaris arrived in Bosnia. On 8th of April 1203 in Bilino Polje (a locality near Zenica or Visoko?), Casamaris obliged the suspected Bosnian Christians (*krstjani*) to a confession of orthodoxy. The text of this *abjuration* has been preserved in the Latin language. The *krstjani* in Bilino polje accepted the *abjuration* without objection. After that there reigns a lull until the beginning of the second decade of the thirteenth century. At that time, inquisitorial, military and missionary actions are organized for Bosnia from Hungary with the support of Rome. The result of these actions was the proclamation of the Bosnian Church as heretical in 1233 and the simultaneous establishment of a new diocese with a Latin ritual. The Dominicans were engaged as inquisitors, missionaries and the first bishops at the time of the installation of the new Latin diocese under the political patronage of Hungary. From that time until the collapse of the Bosnian Kingdom we have two Christian churches and two alphabets in

²² Vego (1980).

²³ *Ban* was the title of local medieval rulers in Croatia and Bosnia, equivalent to English terms lord or master.

medieval Bosnia: the Bosnian Church, with the Slavic language, suspected of heresy and separated from Rome, and the newly established Latin diocese with the Latin language and, from 1247, the position of a suffragan in relation to the metropolitan in Hungarian Kalosca. The seat of the newly established Latin diocese was transferred from Bosnia to Đakovo in the middle of the thirteenth century, while the historical sources regarding the activity of the Dominicans after that are quiet, all the way to the arrival of the Franciscans, who will push the Dominicans out of Bosnia in the second decade of the fourteenth century.

The Franciscan mission in Bosnia had a different political and social framework and achieved different results. The first recorded account on the appearance of a Franciscan monk in Bosnia originates from 1248, but the decisive step in setting up the Franciscan mission began with the arrival in Bosnia of the general of the Franciscan order, Gerard Odonis (general of the Order 1329-1342), and the establishment of the Bosnian Vicary in 1339/1340, established in agreement and cooperation with the Bosnian Ban Stephen (Stjepan) II Kotromanić (1322-1353).

The administrative seat of the Bosnian Vicary was erected in central Bosnia, and due to its extension into to non-Bosnian regions, the Vicary was divided and organized into custodies (*kustodije*). According to the registry of Franciscan Bartolo from Pisa, composed between 1385 and 1390, in the second half of the fourteenth century the Bosnian Vicary had 7 custodies with 35 monasteries. The custodies bore the following names: *Duvanjska* (Dalmae/Duvno, modern Tomislavgrad), *Grebenska* (Geben, modern Krupa on the Vrbas), *Bosanska* (Bosnian, with its seat in Visoko), *Usorska* and *Mačvanska* (Usora and Mačva) in northern and north-eastern Bosnia, *Bugarska* (Belgrade/Alba Bulgarica) and *Kovinska* (Chevin/Covinum/Kovin, facing Smederevo in modern Serbia). According to the aforementioned registry, which did not encompass all the monasteries of the Vicary of that time, the following four monasteries were located in central Bosnia: Visoko, Kraljeva Sutjeska, Olovo and Lašva. The eighth custody of St. Catherine in Apulia was added to the Bosnian Vicaria in 1393. Changes will occur in the demarcation between individual custodies, in other words their separation, renaming and annexation to the Bosnian Vicary, but by the Ottoman conquest their number will come to eight.

Historians who for whatever reason, diminished the accounts of Franciscan missionary successes in medieval Bosnia, stressed the great spatiality of the Bosnian Vicary and emphasized that the reports of

Franciscan successes related to the whole area of the Vicary, so that they therefore concluded that their success in Bosnia itself was small. In contrast to such reasoning there stands the fact that the number of Franciscan monasteries and residences on the territory of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina reached over forty during the fifteenth century, which is not a small number.²⁴ From a social and economic perspective, the Franciscan entry into medieval Bosnia is closely tied to the development of medieval urbanization in Bosnia during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; the opening of mines and the emergence of trading and artisan settlements²⁵ followed the erection of Franciscan monasteries and churches.

The Franciscans were not only politically and socially anchored in medieval Bosnia, but they also cultivated two types of literacy in that period, i.e. the domestic literature written in Western Cyrillic and the Latin which was introduced in Bosnia before the Franciscans by the Dominicans. A similar condition existed at the court of the Bosnian kings. Alongside Cyrillic charters, on which the influence of the Serbian chancellery is recognizable – for the Bosnian kings established dynastic ties with Serbia, extended their rule over Serbian regions and brought Serbian scribes to their court – there also existed in the chancellery of the Bosnian kings a Latin section, in which charters were copied in the Latin language. In its contacts with the Balkan hinterland, the Republic of Dubrovnik had a separate Serbian chancellery and employed Western Cyrillic in its communication with Bosnia.

There is no direct confirmation concerning the relation of the Franciscans toward the medieval sepulchral culture of *stećci* tombstones (sing. *stećak* or *bilig*) and their Cyrillic epitaphs. The century-old research of these monuments, of which there are 100,000 examples throughout medieval Bosnia and Hum, as well as neighbouring regions, brought to light that these tombstones were erected by members of all three Christian churches – Bosnian Church, Catholic Church and Orthodox Church – and that they do not reflect any separate heretical (Bogomil) theology or symbolism, but a general Christian medieval understanding of death expressed in the vocabulary and ritual of the individual Churches blended with folk conceptions.²⁶ In the second half of the twentieth century, historical science

²⁴ See Sorić (1988): 20 - the map *Bosanska vikarija 1375*.

²⁵ See Vasilj et al. (1993): 49 - the map *Gradska naselja u srednjovjekovnoj Bosni (14. i 15. st.)*.

²⁶ For a significant review and commentary of past research on the medieval sepulchral culture in B&H see D. Lovrenović (2009). On the inter-confessional character of the tombstones see in particular 235-48.

freed itself from the attempt to ‘Bogomilize’ the Bosnian Church, observing that in question was not a sect driven to rebellion by its contemporary enemies, but an ecclesiastical institution with a classic Christian dogma and integrated in the Bosnian medieval feudal society. Good evidence for this statement is the testament of Radin Butković, *gost* (high official) of the Bosnian Church dated in 1466, which is published in nearly all monographs on the Bosnian Church.²⁷ Exposed to the pressures of the Roman Curia and Hungarian politics and the missionary activity of the Franciscans from the West, as well as the competitive behaviour of the Serbian Orthodox Church from the East, the Bosnian Church fell into a centuries-old defensive position and, in face of the Ottoman conquest, disappeared from the historical stage.

B&H Catholics in the Ottoman-Islamic confessional paradigm

The Bosnian medieval three-confessional palette contained the Bosnian Church in central Bosnia and the eastern parts of Hum, the Catholic Church in western Hum, western and central Bosnia and the Serbian Orthodox Church on the eastern rim of today’s B&H. During the long Ottoman period it ceded a place to a new three-member and even four-member confessional paradigm, if we add to this palette the Sephardic Jewish minority which settled in Bosnia after its expulsion from Spain in 1492. As Ottoman auxiliary military units participating in the penetration toward the north and west, members of the Serbian Orthodox Church settled in large numbers not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in Slavonia, Lika and Dalmatia, while the Serbian Orthodox Church installed itself in the new regions by erecting monasteries.²⁸ At the same time, through the process of Oriental urbanization and Islamicization, especially in the sixteenth century, Islam becomes deep-rooted in B&H as a new and ever stronger cultural and confessional reality. Reducing the intensive Islamicization in B&H to a question of the so-called Bogomil *past* does not have a foothold in the historical sources, since Islamicization is the result of complex political and social factors.²⁹

According to contemporary Ottoman and Western sources, the Bosnian Catholics entered the Ottoman period as the numerically strongest confessional group in B&H.³⁰ Their cultural profile was very similar to the

²⁷ See the review in Džaja (2006).

²⁸ On this see Džaja (1999): 101-47.

²⁹ Džaja (1999): 43-99.

³⁰ On the low level of Islamicization until the end of the fifteenth century, see Džaja (1999): 68-76, 102-03.

one in Dubrovnik and the neighbouring parts of Dalmatia i.e. two alphabets – Latin and Western Cyrillic and two literatures – in Latin and in the domestic linguistic idiom, which will, during the following centuries, continuously participate under different names (Slavic, Bosnian, Illyrian etc.),³¹ in the development of Croatian literature and the modern Croatian linguistic standard. At the same time, under the pressure of numerous Austro-Turkish and Venetian-Turkish wars, restrictive Islamic-Ottoman regulations for non-Muslims and Islamicization, the number of Catholics and the number of Catholic churches and monasteries decreases. During the sixteenth century, the Catholics are pushed from first to second place by Muslims, while during the seventeenth century from second to third place by the Serbian-Orthodox. The Great Turkish War of 1683-1699 brought Bosnian Catholicism a numerical, social and urban catastrophe. At that time the number of Catholics in Bosnia and western Herzegovina dropped to around 30,000 and in eastern Herzegovina, i.e. the region of the diocese of Trebinje, to just 2,200. Catholic merchants disappeared almost in their entirety, while their place was taken by Orthodox merchants during the eighteenth century. Out of the numerous Franciscan monasteries founded in the Middle Ages only three in central Bosnia (Fojnica, Kraljeva Sutjeska and Kreševo) succeeded in surviving during the eighteenth century and until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Owing to natural growth, and, to a lesser extent, the immigration or return of Catholics who moved to neighbouring Dalmatia and Slavonia from Bosnia during wartime, the numerical position of Catholics began to steadily improve and, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, reached the number of 100,000. Until the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878 the number doubled, so that the Austro-Hungarian census conducted in 1879 registered 209,391 Catholics or 18.08% out of the total population of B&H.³²

The political and cultural history of confessions in B&H in the Ottoman period unfolded according to different political, cultural and social patterns. The Muslims or the Islamicized part of the population sooner or later completely integrated into the Ottoman-Islamic system and, in close correlation with this process, more rapidly abandoned and forgot the medieval Bosnian Christian political and cultural traditions. The quickest political breach occurred in regard to the institution of the medieval Bosnian Kingdom. The Ottomans conquered Bosnia and did not adopt one of its

³¹ See Bošnjanić (1940): 36.

³² For more on this see Džaja (1993): 67-74.

political institutions into its system, so that talk of an alleged continuity between the medieval Bosnian Kingdom and the Ottoman Bosnian *eyalet* does not have a historical or legal-political basis.³³

In the cultural field the Islamicized part of the population was quickest to dispense with the culture of the *stećci*. Amongst the first Islamic tombstones from the first century of Ottoman rule in B&H, i.e. until the middle of the sixteenth century, archaeologists have discovered, alongside 20 Islamic tombstones *nišans* of non-Bosnian origin with epitaphs in the Arabic language, 29 syncretic tombstones, which according to their form, alphabet and language stand in direct connection with medieval *stećci*. By the middle of the sixteenth century this sepulchral culture amongst the Bosnian Muslims is extinguished.³⁴

The Muslims had already begun the transcription of Slavic or Bosnian texts in the Arabic alphabet by the end of the fifteenth century (the so-called *aljamiado* literature), but they continued to employ the Western Cyrillic or *bosančica*; for how long? The customary reference to the Cyrillic letters of the commanders of Ottoman frontier stations sent to neighbours under Venetian and Austrian rule in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is uncertain because the Ottoman commanders in these cases also employed their Christian subjects as scribes. The question remains whether they always use them. Other examples of Cyrillic literacy amongst Muslims have not been preserved or have not been discovered, while the Muslims of B&H fought for the further use of the Arabic, and not Cyrillic, script in the Bosnian provincial parliament in 1911.³⁵ Last but not least, one should mention that the historical writing of Bosnian Muslims began to be interested in medieval Bosnia only after the Austro-Hungarian occupation.³⁶

The influx of members of the Serbian Orthodox Church in B&H began before the Ottoman conquest of the Bosnian Kingdom and flowed continuously until the nineteenth century. Statistics note the relative numerical predominance of the Serbs in B&H over the Bosnian Muslims or Bosniaks from the eighteenth century to the final disintegration of the Yugoslav state at the end of the twentieth century. In today's B&H the Muslims or Bosniaks have a relative numerical majority (around 44%). The cultural pattern of the members of the Serbian Orthodox Church in B&H was

³³ Džaja (2010): 432-25.

³⁴ See Džaja (1999): 60-61; D. Lovrenović (2009): 124-27.

³⁵ Džaja (1999): 144.

³⁶ Džaja (2005a): 114-15.

brought from Serbia and is not identical with the cultural pattern of the Bosnian Catholics or the extinguished Bosnian Church. On their paths toward the north and west the Serbian Church brought the political traditions of exclusively Serbian medieval rulers and cultivated the ecclesiastical Old Slavic literacy distant from the popular language. Nevertheless, the contacts with the cultural patterns found in B&H also left their traces on the practice of the Serbian Orthodox Church and its members. Thus, the Serbian Orthodox Church used the liturgical codices of the extinguished Bosnian Church, furnishing them with their own glosses,³⁷ while the culture of the *stećci* was developed among the Orthodox Vlachs in eastern Herzegovina, intensively in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,³⁸ and sporadically in the eighteenth century. The examples of Western Cyrillic on Orthodox tombstones or in the letters of Orthodox clergy sent to Western recipients place us before the same problem as in the case of the Bosnian Muslims, namely, as it is not clear who were the scribes of such texts. They were probably Catholics, as stone-cutters of epitaphs or scribes of letters, which were written in the climate of political collaboration between Western interested parties and Balkan Christians under Ottoman rule.³⁹

In contrast to the Serbian Orthodox Church and its members in B&H, who did not cultivate any political or cultural tradition of medieval Bosnia, and the Bosnian Muslims who quickly abandoned reminiscences of medieval Bosnia, the Bosnian Catholics cultivated, within the framework and possibilities of the Bosnian Franciscan Province, Bosnian medieval political and cultural traditions throughout the entire Ottoman period. They maintained the culture of the *stećci* in artistically reduced forms until the beginning of the twentieth century,⁴⁰ and the medieval political traditions through the further use of medieval political terminology and preserving the memory of medieval Bosnian rulers until the modern national projects and after.⁴¹ In the same period, through their bilingual literacy (*bosančica* and Latin), which had already emerged in the Middle Ages, the Catholics intensified their cultural ties with Croats in Dalmatia, Dubrovnik and Slavonia, in other words, they actively participate in the development of Croatian linguistic and literary culture according to Western cultural patterns from the sixteenth century onward.

³⁷ Šidak (1975): 120-21.

³⁸ D. Lovrenović (2009): 164-67.

³⁹ Džaja (1999): 139-45.

⁴⁰ I. Lovrenović (2010).

⁴¹ Džaja (1999): 213-15.

They were indirectly aided in this direction by the political changes brought about by the Ottoman conquests. For, after the conquest of B&H, the Ottoman conquests stretched to the neighbouring northern and western Croatian regions. In 1463, the year of the conquest of the Bosnian Kingdom, the Bosnian Franciscans found a *modus vivendi* and legitimation for their spiritual activity in the Ottoman Empire through the *ahd-name* (charter) of the sultan Mehmed (Mehmet) II El-Fatih.⁴² This enabled them to install in the occupied regions their province *Bosna Srebrena (Bosna Argentina)*, so named after the administrative centre in Srebrenica during the sixteenth century. The province was installed in the region where the former ecclesiastical organization was almost destroyed in order to once again organize spiritual activity amongst the Catholic population. In return, not only did the Catholics of Bosnia and Herzegovina enter the ranks of *Bosna Srebrena*, but so too did their counterparts of Dalmatia, Lika, Slavonia and the Danube basin and thus they became *Bosnian Franciscans*.⁴³

Since the architectural activity of non-Islamic communities was essentially restricted by strict Islamic regulations, there was no development of Renaissance and Baroque architecture in the regions of *Bosna Srebrena*, as in Dubrovnik and other Dalmatian communes, but the Bosnian Franciscans intensified the bilingual literature with two alphabets. The examples of their literacy in the Latin language were preserved in continuity from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century. These are expert texts from philosophy, theology, law, history and medicine, and individuals tried their hand at poetry in the Latin language.⁴⁴

Far more important for the Croatian cultural profile of the Bosnian Catholics is the literature of *Bosna Srebrena* written in Western Cyrillic or *bosančica*. In spite of various appellations during the centuries, the *lingua patria* and Cyrillic script of the Bosnian Franciscans carries in itself the developmental dynamic of the Croatian language. In it the Franciscans shaped their pious literary texts. The *lingua patria* of the Bosnian Franciscans has two sources: the living oral speech, which did not recognise confessional boundaries and literary models that originated from Croatian cultural areas and Western Latin literacy. The research of Franciscan literature in the period of *Serbocroatism*, under the strong influence of Vuk Stefanović Karadžić's conception of language, placed emphasis on

⁴² Džaja (2009).

⁴³ See Sorić (1988): 26 - the map *Provincija Bosna Srebrena 1697.g.*

⁴⁴ See Pranjković (2005).

dialectal characteristics, so that the textual models employed by the Franciscans were left to the side. After the collapse of the Yugoslav state and *Serbocroatism*, Croatian scholarship on language and literature starts to increasingly turn toward textual models and on that level discovers the mutual communication between Ragusian and the remaining Croatian and Franciscan literature.⁴⁵

The beginnings of Franciscan religious literature are usually tied with the Reforme in the Catholic Church after the Council of Trent (1545-1563) and with the name of Franciscan Matija Divković (1563-1631) as its head and the most widely-read writer of that literature. However, there is reason to link the beginnings of this literature with the so-called *Šibenik Prayer* (*Šibenska molitva*) from the fourteenth century. Palaeographic and linguistic analyses of the *Šibenik Prayer*, the oldest preserved example of Croatian medieval religious lyric poetry suggests an origin from a Franciscan milieu and Western Cyrillic literacy, which flourished in Bosnia, Hum and littoral Croatia.⁴⁶ From Divković onward the authors of Franciscan religious literature are no longer anonymous nor did they originate only from Bosnia, but also from the Croatian regions over which the Franciscan province of Bosna Srebrena extended. They built their literature on common bookish models and mutual textual influences, in which Muslim and Serbian-Orthodox literacy, which developed according to different political and cultural models and sources, was left to the side.

In that way a Croatian *koine* language was formed which created a network of regional dialects and culturally connected the Catholic populace between the Adriatic Sea and Danube basin until the Illyrian movement in the 1830s and 1840s, at which time there appeared new political and cultural trends in the South Slavic areas. This literature defined the separate cultural identity of the Catholics, distinct from the identity of the Orthodox and Muslims, and merged it through the medium of language and literature into a common Croatian cultural identity. The Catholic populace wholeheartedly accepted and recognized this literature as its own. Divković's *Nauk krstjanski* (*Christian Doctrine*) underwent over 25(!) editions, while believers knew his texts by heart, so that they would protest when an individual preacher would slightly deviate from Divković's version.

The Croatian-Catholic confessional culture, controlled and actively supported by the Church as a cultural institution, imbued all spheres of life of

⁴⁵ Grčević (2011) with citations of further literature.

⁴⁶ Džaja (1979).

the populace: popular literature and customs, family life, the manner of nourishment, residential spaces⁴⁷ and, of course, traditional clothing.⁴⁸

The Great Turkish War (1683-1699) ended with the ousting of the Ottomans from Slavonia, the Danube basin, Lika and the continental part of Dalmatia. New Franciscan provinces are established in the former Ottoman regions under Venetian and Habsburg rule, while Bosna Srebrena retreats within the borders of B&H – which further remains an Ottoman province – and struggles for the survival of its three monasteries in central Bosnia: Kraljeva Sutjeska, Fojnica and Kreševo. Nevertheless, in spite of the firm political and sanitary borders between the Ottoman Empire and its Christian neighbours, the Croatian cultural model, in other words the achieved cultural community of Bosnian Catholics with Croatian Catholics outside of B&H, does not weaken, but rather is further developed.⁴⁹

In the eighteenth century, alongside the further cultivation of religious literature, the Bosnian Franciscans devote themselves to the writing of chronicles (*ljetopisi*). The Franciscans Nikola Lašvanin, Bono Benić and Marijan Bogdanović write these chronicles – exceptionally important for the history of the society, language, literature and culture not only of the Bosnian Croats, but also their neighbours the Bosnian Muslims and Orthodox Serbs – either in the spoken language of their milieu and their time or in Latin and Italian, and as a product not only of their education but also their political caution in unsecure Bosnia and Herzegovina. These Franciscans are joined by Filip Lastrić (1700-1783), as the first historian of Bosnia in the modern sense of the word, because he wrote his *Survey of the Antiquities of the Bosnian Province (Epitome vetustatum provinciae Bosnensis)* published 1776 in Ancona. It was not written as a chronicle but as a methodical work in Latin and partly in Italian in order to defend the ecclesiastical-political individuality and precedence of his province before the new established provinces that emerged after the division of Bosna Srebrena during the eighteenth century. It is significant that in his discussion Lastrić dedicated two chapters to the medieval Bosnian Kingdom – in order to additionally strengthen his defence of Bosna Srebrena. In this type of literacy the Franciscan chroniclers and the *historian* Lastrić had recourse to Western models, above all Croatian literacy – as was established by another Franciscan, Ignacije Gavran (1914-2009) at the time of the preparation of the

⁴⁷ For more on this see Džaja (1971): 164-89.

⁴⁸ See above all Martić (2006); Martić & Bagur (2010).

⁴⁹ Džaja (2008).

critical editions of Franciscan chronicles and the *Bosnian Antiquities* of Lastrić in the 1970s⁵⁰ – but not to models from the Muslim-Bosniak or Serbian circles, amongst other reasons, because such texts emerged in these circles somewhat later.

B&H Croats and modern national movements

In many publicistic texts, particularly Bosniak, it can be read that *Croatdom* and *Serbdom* were introduced into B&H only in the nineteenth century by the national and nationalist propaganda from neighbouring Croatia and Serbia. However, this article has shown that such assertions are incorrect. It is more likely to state that the neighbouring national movements of Croats and Serbs provided a new momentum and a new secularist tone to the already existing Croatian-Catholic and Serbian Orthodox cultural structures.

This process endeavoured to stop the Ottoman reformist politics of the nineteenth century, as well as the Austro-Hungarian modernizing policies, which succeeded the Ottoman, and which prohibited the Croatian and Serbian names in B&H and introduced *bošnjaštvo* (Bosniak-ness) as the national appellation for all the inhabitants of B&H, but which in the final analysis did not succeed.⁵¹

Until the Austro-Hungarian occupation the cultural and political leadership of the Bosnian Croats remained in the hands of the Franciscans. Their schooling in Slavonia and Hungary under Austrian rule from the end of the eighteenth century awoke an interest for national, cultural and political movements amongst individuals. These movements – which sought not only cultural and political emancipation from foreign rule (the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires), but also to politically overcome confessionalism and to construct a modern secular culture – attracted the participation of a considerable part of the Croatian clergy, particularly the lower clergy. It included the Franciscan Illyrians in B&H such as Martin Nedić (1810-1895),

⁵⁰ The second edition of Gavran's editing and commentaries on Franciscan chronicles of the eighteenth century and Lastrić's works was published in 2003 in four volumes by the publishing house *Synopsis* (Zagreb & Sarajevo), while from the perspective of modern literary understandings of texts, the narrative manner of the chronicles was elaborated on by Iva Beljan in her dissertation, published as Beljan (2011).

⁵¹ The negative relation of Ottoman reformist politics in B&H in the second half of the nineteenth century toward national movements is most clearly reflected in the tragic fate of Franciscan Ivan Frano Jukić (1818-1857), the first modern enlightener of Bosnia, political writer and sufferer because of his modern political opinions and activities. For more on Austro-Hungarian policies toward the national movements of the Serbs and Croats in B&H see Džaja (2002): 52-5, 102-08. Today the most complete monograph above the Austro-Hungarian policies in B&H is Okey (2007).

Grga Martić (1822-1905), Ivan Frano Jukić (1818-1857) and others.

Individual Franciscans, such as Martić and Jukić, attempted to cooperate with the Serbian national movement, by publishing their texts in Serbian journals, the editors of which Serbianized their texts. This was, nevertheless, just one episode. In the 1860s Martić recognised the Greater Serbian character of Serbian propaganda in B&H and ahead of the Congress of Berlin in 1878 accepts the Austro-Hungarian, and not Serbian and Montenegrin, occupation of B&H, which some Croatian Yugoslavists and other representatives of the Croatian cultural and political public resented due to their ignorance, more or less, of the real state of affairs in B&H or their own opportunism.⁵² Until the Austro-Hungarian occupation of B&H the cultural and political activity of the Bosnian Franciscans unfolded within the framework of Illyrianism and Yugoslavism in the manner of a Croatian federalist and not Serbian unitarist interpretation of these national movements and ideologies.

Naturally, the opening of the Franciscans toward secular political and cultural movements was reflected in their mutual relations, especially in the so-called Barišić affair in the 1830s and 1840s. This affair caused a deep division amongst the Bosnian Franciscans and resulted in the administrative detachment of Herzegovina from Bosna Srebrena in 1846 and the establishment of a separate Apostolic Vicariate for Herzegovina. The mutually bitter polemics led the Apostolic Vicar Rafo Barišić (1797-1863) and his supporters, who mainly studied in Italy and were imbued with the contemporary ecclesiastical conservatism, to reproach their opponents, educated in Slavonia and Hungary, for being imbued with an anti-Roman secularist spirit, that they had absorbed revolutionary ideas and that, with the help of Ljudevit Gaj, they were intending to raise a rebellion and establish the Illyrian Kingdom.⁵³

With the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878 there begins a new period for both Bosnian Franciscans and for the Bosnian Croats as a whole. From a legal perspective, Christians were granted equality with Muslims. But the situation in a cultural and political sense for all three Bosnian confessions – Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox – became more complex. Namely, the migration of 100,000 qualified workers, technicians, civil servants and teachers from the Habsburg Monarchy to B&H did not only bring cultural and technical modernization, but also competition, which led

⁵² On this see Džaja (1996).

⁵³ Jelenić (1990): II.47.

to dissatisfaction, particularly amongst the Bosnian Muslims.⁵⁴

With the migration of new muscle from the Monarchy, especially after the disbandment of the Military Frontier in Croatia in 1881, the B&H Croats were numerically strengthened, so that their percentage rose from 18.08% to 22.87% from 1879 to 1910, but there also developed a unfavourable competition between the autochthonous and newly-settled Croats, particularly after the introduction of an established Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy in 1881, which decided to gradually displace the Franciscans from the Church and public life; this introduced a conflict between the secular clergy and the Franciscans that has not been resolved to the present day.⁵⁵

B&H Croats and the ideologies of the twentieth century

After the Austro-Hungarian occupation in 1878 the cultural and political development of the Bosnian Croats flows in a reinforced communication with the cultural and political processes in Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia in spite of the efforts of Benjamin von Kállay (Béni Kállay de Nagy-Kálló) (1839-1939), Austro-Hungarian minister of finances in charge for Bosnia and Herzegovina and his associates to isolate B&H from the national movements of Serbs and Croats. With the growth of Greater Serbianism in the 1880s and under the influence of Croatian settlers, the Franciscans convert from Yugoslavism to the Greater Croatian ideology, according to which B&H is an exclusively Croatian territory. On the other hand, a significant number of Franciscans nevertheless showed an interest in political cooperation with other confessions-nationalities in B&H and thus retained some openness toward Yugoslavism.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Franciscans find political allies in the first generation of Croatian higher-education graduates from B&H who completed their education at European universities and returned to their homeland. Together with their compatriots from Dalmatia, Croatia and Slavonia they brought liberal understandings on culture and politics from the universities at which they studied. This will introduce a new dynamic in the organization of cultural and political life in B&H and provoke ideological and political divisions amongst the Bosnian Croats. In the first decade of the twentieth century, at the time when the modern political life of the Bosnian Croats begins with the formation of cultural and social organizations and then political parties, the ideological-political spectrum included: on one side, the Archbishop of Sarajevo Josip Stadler (1843-1918) and his supporters with 'a clerical program for the 20th century' and an

⁵⁴ Džaja (2002): 189-94.

⁵⁵ Gavran (2012).

uncompromising Greater Croatdom, and, on the other side, the Croatian liberal secular intelligentsia, more open to political and ideological compromises, which are supported by the Franciscans, not because of liberalism, but due to their conflict with Archbishop Stadler. Stadler strove to displace both the Franciscans and liberals from public life, but he was unsuccessful, especially when it was a question of political parties.⁵⁶

The Bosnian Croats entered the First World War with this ideological-political paradigm – on the one hand, the liberals and Franciscans with a readiness for political compromises and a soft Greater Croatian conception of B&H, and on the other, Stadler and his supporters with a rigid clericalism and Croatdom. After the military defeat of the Habsburg Monarchy and the resuscitation of political activities in the spring of 1917, Stadler's clericalism and rigid Croatdom in B&H caves in. Not only do the liberal intelligentsia and Franciscans in Bosnia, and then in Herzegovina, declare themselves in favour of Yugoslavism, but so too do a part of Stadler's supporters. Archbishop Stadler, as the last Mohican of clerical Greater Croatdom, signs a circular of the Catholic episcopate from 29th of November 1918, which welcomed the establishment of the Yugoslav state under Serbian aegis, and dies on 8th of December 1918.⁵⁷

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941) B&H lost the status it had as a *corpus separatum*, or to use a modern term, a third entity or condominium of the dualist Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The legal continuity with the former state of affairs was abolished and from 1929 B&H was administratively blended with neighbouring non-Bosnian territories. The political life in the first Yugoslavia unfolded above all in the struggles between the unitarists and federalists, who also did not intercede on behalf of the separate status of B&H. The unitarist concept of state was implemented as a political practice until 1939. From the *Croatian-Serbian Agreement* of 26th August 1939 until the collapse of the First Yugoslavia in 1941, the concept of the three-member federation, founded on the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes as nations on defined territories (the Croatian *Banovina*, the Drava *Banovina*, i.e. Slovenia, and the so-called Serbian lands) was briefly implemented. B&H was divided between Serbs and Croats, while the Bosnian Muslims remained unrecognized as a separate ethnic group.⁵⁸

The political life of the Bosnian Croats in the First Yugoslavia flowed in an intensive communication with Croats in Dalmatia and Slavonia chiefly through the Croatian Peasant Party as the dominant Croatian political organization. The main bearer of cultural development was The Croatian Cultural Society Napredak, which was founded in Sarajevo in 1904 and

⁵⁶ For more on this see Džaja (2002): 200-09, 220-26.

⁵⁷ Džaja (2002): 226-28.

⁵⁸ Džaja (2004): 182-88; cf. Džaja (2005b): 143-46.

became the society of all Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats in 1907. In the first Yugoslavia, Napredak extended its educational and social activities amongst Croats outside of B&H and represented the main force in the cultural life of the Croats in the same way that the Croatian Peasant Party was the main force in political life.⁵⁹

After the fall of the First Yugoslavia and the establishment of the puppet *Independent State of Croatia* (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska - NDH, 1941-1945), in which B&H found itself as a component part, the leading role in the creation of the political and cultural reality during the Second World War fell into the hands of collaborator (Serb royalist Chetniks and Croat Ustasha) and communist organizations. The communists emerged as the victors out of this bloody war, which left hundreds of thousands of victims and deep traumas. They succeeded in displacing the former civic culture (political parties and cultural associations) and establishing the Second Yugoslavia (1945-1991) as a communist one-party federal state, in which B&H received the status of one of the six federal republics.

Contemporary historiography is only at its beginnings in its efforts to reconstruct a more or less objective picture of this very complex period, because both sides – fascist and communist – committed crimes which are very difficult to face openly. The communists and their descendants have great difficulty recognizing that the communists committed mass crimes against their enemies and ideological opponents during and immediately after the final military operations. They probably committed more crimes numerically speaking than the fascists against members of the Croatian nation, albeit with different motives and consequences. For that reason, the undertaking of measures that intend not to juxtapose *Bleiburg*, as a metaphor of communist crimes, and *Jasenovac*, as a metaphor of Ustasha crimes, can only be counterproductive for historical science. It is true, to be sure, that “*Jasenovac and Bleiburg are not the same*”, as Goldstein and Goldstein⁶⁰ point out, but their comparison is unavoidable if historical memory is to obtain its actual context and anchorage in truth – in place of tempting and untruthful slogans according to which only the fascists fought ‘on the side of Evil’ while their opponents, the communists, exclusively ‘on the side of Good.’

Bearing in mind this observation on the crimes that were built into the foundations, not only of the NDH, but also Tito’s Yugoslavia – for at the time of establishing their rule the Communists squared accounts with their enemies and ideological opponents in a bloody and brutal manner and on a mass scale. Only after this had occurred did their state employ milder forms

⁵⁹ Džaja (2004): 222-35.

⁶⁰ Goldstein & Goldstein (2011).

of oppression and never developed into a democratic state. I will finish this text with some notations on the political and cultural conditions of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats in the communist Socialist Republic of B&H and, after the collapse of Yugoslavia, in so-called Dayton B&H.

Three facts influenced, in various ways, the cultural development of the ethnic groups in B&H – Muslims or today's Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs – under Communist rule:

1. The status of B&H as a federal republic.
2. Tito's break with Stalin in 1948 and the political link-up with the so-called Third World, to which the majority of Islamic countries belonged.
3. The linguistic policy of *Serbocroatism* with its explicit predominance of the Serbian language over the Croatian.

These three facts taken together influenced the favourable development of the Bosnian Muslims into a modern nation at the end of the twentieth century: namely, the republican status of B&H removed the potential Croatian and real Serbian pressure to which the Muslims had been exposed to in the First Yugoslavia. Tito's political association with the Islamic world opened the possibility of the cultivation of the Islamic cultural identity; and the *Serbocroatism* that was consistently implemented was wholeheartedly accepted by the Islamic religious press. Therefore, it is not surprising that the Bosniaks (Muslims) in today's B&H are constructing their modern linguistic standard on a Serbo-Croatian basis, while one can observe a reinforced Serbianization among the Bosnian Serbs and a return to Croatian linguistic traditions among the Croats.⁶¹

Though the *Croatian-Serbian Agreement* from 1939 brought the Greater Serbian project into question and was nominally kept at bay in the Second Yugoslavia, a latent Serbianization of the linguistic culture in the educational system and public life was nevertheless implemented. The cultural contacts between Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats with the Socialist Republic of Croatia were admittedly not rendered impossible but they were made ever more difficult. The Croatist linguistic policies of the Fascist NDH was used as an excuse to declare all Croatisms as an Ustasha language and therefore their use was prevented. The practical consequence of such a situation was that the language of the Bosnian Croats who were schooled in B&H and published their texts in Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns was considerably Serbianized. Only the organizations of the Catholic Church successfully resisted Serbianization in their professional work and press and tacitly followed the linguistic processes in the Republic of Croatia.

⁶¹ For more on the Muslims during the Second World War and in the Second Yugoslavia see Džaja (2004): 243-71.

The establishment of Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina in the autumn of 1995, with its division of B&H into the so-called two entities – Republika Srpska (The Republic of Srpska) and the Bosniak-Croat Federation of B&H – reminds one of the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Croatian-Serbian Agreement of 1939; in that period it was the Bosnian Muslims who found themselves in a sandwich between the Croats and Serbs. This time, i.e. in Dayton B&H that fate fell upon the Bosnian Croats. The Croats in both entities have been exposed to majority rule, on the one side from the Serbs, and from the Bosniaks (Muslims) from the other.⁶²

The very complicated Dayton constitution has so far proved itself damaging for the economy of B&H and its culture in general. It has divided the Croats into a Croatocentric group with its centre in western Herzegovina, which builds its politics on the accentuation of the Croatian component of the identity of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Croats and opportunism toward Republika Srpska, and a pro-Bosniak group, dispersed in central Bosnia, which stresses the Bosnian specificity of the identity of the Bosnian Croats and *volens-nolens* inclines toward the Bosniak majority in the Bosniak-Croat Federation. At the time of the establishment of the Dayton constitution in B&H a key role was played by international politics. After this politics has shown itself to be damaging, a new initiative of international factors is necessary in order to open an effective path to the construction of B&H as a modern democratic state with equal individual and collective (ethnic) rights for all its citizens.

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⁶² The political problems of Dayton Bosnia have until now been most systematically elaborated on by Kasapović (2005), while the Mostar journal *Status: Magazin za političku kulturu i društvena pitanja* offers the most complete insight into the entire discourse on the arrangement of B&H as a contemporary state.

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Sažetak

Ova studija sintetizira povijest i kulturu Hrvata u Bosni i Hercegovini. Njezin glavni cilj je povijesna rekonstrukcija geneze Hrvata u BiH. Polazišna točka geneze Hrvata u BiH se može locirati u rani srednji vijek, otkuda se i povijest većine europskih nacija može pratiti u kontinuitetu. Rad dalje slijedi povijest i kulturu Hrvata u BiH kroz Otomansko doba, te njihovo pozicioniranje prema modernism nacionalnim pokretima devetnaestog stoljeća i ideologijama dvadesetog stoljeća.