

THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF RUDOLF  
BRUNER-DVOŘÁK: *UNCORRUPTED*  
*LITTLE TURKEY* AND VISITOR  
IMPRESSIONS FROM THE EXHIBITION  
“BOSNIA IN 1905 AS DEPICTED IN  
THE PHOTOGRAPHS OF RUDOLF  
BRUNER-DVOŘÁK” (*Translation*)

DOI: 10.17234/SEC.31.3  
Original scientific paper  
Received:  
25th February 2019  
Accepted:  
19th June 2019

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Until 2007 it was not widely known that the historian Pavel Scheufler in the Czech Republic had in his possession a photographic archive containing over 300 photographs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, a large number of which were taken in Cazin. The photos were taken by Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák at the beginning of the 20th century. These photos have brought a whole new dimension to our understanding of life in Cazin in the early years of the last century, showing vivid depictions of life in the town streets and overflowing with constant contrasts and symbols which contribute to the processes of identification and delineation. In 2008, an exhibition of his photos was organised in Cazin by the Czech Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Visitor impressions differed, but all of them expressed gratitude for the effort put in organising the exhibition, which was deemed to be an indication of the continuity of the Cazin area.

Key words: *Bosnia, Cazin, Other, Muslims, contrast, symbol, identity, impressions*

*“The photographs taken by our photographer do not require detailed explanations. During his rambles through a small Bosnian town, he decided to stop at places where he noticed something new, something different from medieval life. At the market, at the old cemetery, in typical oriental streetside coffeehouses – he even attended a study session of the Muhammadans! An interesting little country!”*

*Český svět, 12. October 1907.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 2007. Promotional flyer for the exhibition “Bosnia in 1905 as Depicted in the Photographs of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák”.

## INSTEAD OF AN INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

The text which you have before you now is the result of the need and the interest for reconstructing the meaning of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák's photographs taken in Bosnia in the early years of the previous century, with the intention of interpreting the relations within the observed community and presenting the impressions the photographs have left upon the visitors to the exhibition in Cazin. In this text, the author is concerned with photographs taken in the Cazin region, with specific selections made following *the intuition of a researcher in the social sciences* (Supek 1982:1–24). The methodological approach was based on an analysis of photographic records, with special attention given to the photographer's gaze and the way he chooses to speak through his work, along with an interpretation of the impressions the photos have left upon the visitors attending the exhibition which was co-ordinated by the author of this paper.

At this point, the position of the author as a member of the observed community (Muslims from the Cazin region) should be emphasised, as it was this position which allowed her to focus specifically on the interpretation of Bruner-Dvořák's photographs, and to attempt, using her own insight and affinities, to provide an interpretation of another person's perspective on what is, in essence, a part of herself and her cultural heritage, both at a personal and at a communal level.

This paper is intended for a wider audience, both scientific and non-scientific, as well as for members of the observed community, and for those outside of it, but who nonetheless have an interest in studying this or similar topics.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: THE CAZIN FRONTIER AND THE ARRIVAL OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY IN BOSNIA AND

Cazin is a settlement in northwestern Bosnia: it spans an area of 365 km<sup>2</sup> and is among the more densely populated places in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The region between the rivers Korana, Una and Glina has been referred to as the Turkish or Cazin Frontier since the 16th century due to the fact that it was flanked by the Military Frontier of the Habsburg Monarchy on the other side of the border (Kržišnik-Bukić 1991:15–16).

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<sup>2</sup>The titular syntagm, "uncorrupted little Turkey", as used by historians Hladký and Štěpánek from the Masaryk University of Brno, refers to the Cazin area photographed by Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák. The syntagm was used in the promotional flyer for the exhibition "Bosnia in 1905 as Depicted in the Photographs of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák" ("Bosna 1905 na fotografijama Rudolfa Brunera-Dvořáka"), in a text by the two aforementioned historians titled "Bosnia in the Time of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák's Photographs".

Pozderac writes that even though the town of Bihać was the seat of the sanjak-bey, the majority of the populace lived in the Cazin area (the remains of about 10 different fortified settlements can be found near modern Cazin and its surroundings). As he goes on to point out, this is why the historical region was named after Cazin and is now known as the Cazin Frontier (Pozderac 2012:53). Radoslav Lopašić, on the other hand, claims that the Frontier encompasses the region northeast from Bihać, at the bend of the river Una (Lopašić 1890:14). However, in the contemporary context, the people of the region consider the Cazin Frontier to include everything that is on the left side of the river Una, except for the settlement of Brekovica, which belongs to Bihać. When one is referring to the settlements of the Cazin Frontier, this is usually considered by the people of Cazin to include the towns of Cazin, Velika Kladuša and Bužim, i.e. areas which, for the most part, border the Republic of Croatia.

The area of the Cazin Frontier has historically been marked by wars and rebellions, and this farthest outpost of the Ottoman Empire also resisted the arrival of Austria-Hungary after it was awarded rights over Bosnia and Herzegovina at the 1878 Congress of Berlin. In 1878, as noted in historical records, about 9000 people under the leadership of hadji Hasan Salkić from Peć, hadji Ibrahim Medinelija and hadji Ahmet-aga Pozderac began advancing towards Kordun, Bihać and Prosičeni Kamen. When they found themselves surrounded and when Bihać fell, a large number of the insurgents surrendered, with even Ahmet-aga Pozderac giving up on the insurrection. Hadji Hasan Salkić and hadji Ibrahim Medinelija were the only ones to lead their troops into the woods around Peć (Pećigrad) and keep fighting until the end. At the foot of the Debeljača hill and near Žegar in Bihać there are still graves which testify to the struggles of the frontiersmen (ibid.:118).

The battles in the Cazin area lasted for a longer time so it was only after the resistance in the Cazin Frontier was crushed that Austria-Hungary was finally able to claim Bosnia. The repressive policies of the new administrators were harsh and amounted to death penalties or banishment to camps in Moravia. What followed were mass migrations of people from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the Cazin area, to Sandžak and other places closer to the centre of the Ottoman Empire. Ravlić writes that in the year 1883, the largest number of applications for resettlement was filed by Muslims from the Banja Luka and Bihać counties, while in the same year, about 300 people from the Cazin Srez and the Bosanska Krupa Srez requested free passage to Sandžak. The reason they gave was the state administration. At the time of their resettlement, the frontiersmen would sell their land for next to nothing, after which they would be relocated to sparsely populated places in Turkey. The process of adaptation was not easy so many of them died soon after. At the same time, the new administration was managing the internal migration of people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This policy also affected the population of the Cazin Frontier (Ravlić 1984:100–104).

At the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th century, Austria-Hungary conducted censuses of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Up until 1910, Muslims were referred to as Muhammadans, meaning that they belonged to the religion which follows the teachings of the prophet Muhammad. In the 1879 census, 448 613 people identified Muhammadans. In the same census, 24 902 people out of a total population of 27 772 in Cazin also chose to identify as such.<sup>3</sup> Because the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not agree with the term "Muhammadan", they requested that it be abolished. The Government of the Land agreed to their request and announced on 15 June 1901 that the terms "Muhammadan" and "Mohammedan" would no longer be used. Furthermore, it declared that the term "Muslim" should now be used to refer to followers of the Islamic faith (Hadžijahić 1974:245). In line with the aforementioned decision of the Government of the Land in Sarajevo, followers of the Islamic faith, up until then referred to as Muhammadans (on which the Austro-Hungarian government had insisted on), were now given the opportunity to identify as Muslims.

The arrival of Austria-Hungary brought about major changes in culture, architecture and infrastructure in general. This was also the time when Benjamin Kállay, a government deputy, called for the establishment of a Bosnian nation. Aware of the ethnic divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in an attempt to create one nation, Kállay supported the concept of a multiconfessional Bosnian nation which would reduce ethnic divisions and pretensions among the peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bringa 2009:39). Believing that this idea could be used to resist the growing national movements of the Serbs and Croats, the Bosnian Franciscans embraced this concept, along with the majority of the Muslim nobility (Banac 1984:360–361, according to Bringa 2009:39). However, this project did not have a future without a democratic basis (Purivatra et al. 1991:27), and was declared a failure in 1908 (Malcolm 1995:201–202).

With the confessional structure of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mind, along with the fact that religious differences affected its national composition, the new government was able to exert a certain amount of influence by taking over the financing of the education system. The government gained further and even stronger influence over the individual religious communities by, for example, making arrangements with both the Orthodox patriarch and the pope allowing the government to appoint Orthodox and Catholic bishops. As for Muslims, the Emperor was given the right to appoint the head of the Islamic Community, the reis-ul-ulema, in 1882, but only with the prior consent of Constantinople (Malcolm 1995:196). This was also a time when the Muslim population began to show signs of resistance to the new government, but also when their movement for religious and waqf-maarif autonomy started to emerge. Through this movement, the

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<sup>3</sup> 1879 Census.

Muslims attempted to emancipate themselves from the influence of the new government in different segments of life, but at the same time maintain a relationship with Constantinople (more information available in Šehić 1980; Jahić 2010; Kamberović 1999).

The arrival of Austria-Hungary changed the social circumstances, but also the outward appearance of settlements in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Infrastructural projects completed at that time are seen as symbols of the period even today. In the Cazin area specifically, this meant the construction of schools, water supply systems, major roads and the bridge over the river Una in Sribljani, a village between Cazin and Bihać.<sup>4</sup> The centre of Cazin still owes its specific and recognisable appearance to the arrival of Austria-Hungary, with three key buildings constructed during that period. However, despite the overall surge in development, habits of everyday life changed at a slower pace. In the area of the Cazin Frontier, a place characterised by constant conflict and changing border demarcations, the Muslim population had built its identity on the foundation of a strong relation to the territory itself, and to Islam as a religion which was firmly embedded in their daily lives and also used as a mark of differentiation separating them from the Christians. Their mentality and adherence to tradition slowed down the process of adoption and acceptance of the new norms propagated by the Austro-Hungarian administration.

It will be precisely the image of a little Muslim town, Cazin, almost 30 years after the arrival of Austria-Hungary in Bosnia and Herzegovina that will attract the attention of one of the greatest photographers of the previous century, Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák. The exoticism of Cazin proved appealing to Bruner-Dvořák during a visit to his sister Marija, then married to Gustav Rijáčka, a judge of Czech origin residing in Bihać.<sup>4</sup> Along with using symbols to represent the Other, he also stayed true to the familiar ethnological pattern of the early 20th century, whereby one would not go searching for the Other if it had not already been found (Augé 2002:28), meaning that he would also eventually end up discovering himself through various processes of identification and differentiation.

## RUDOLF BRUNER-DVOŘÁK IN CAZIN

Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák (1864 – 1921) is officially considered to be one of the best photographers to ever work in the Czech lands. In the words of Pavel Scheuffler, historian and owner of the photographs, Dvořák was a “moment photographer” and also bore the title of “Photographer of Moments of His Imperial and Royal Highness Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Este”.<sup>5</sup> He published the photos from Bosnia in the magazine *Český svět*,

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<sup>4</sup> Scheuffler [s. a.], “Životní osudy Rudolfa Brunera-Dvořáka”.

<sup>5</sup> Scheuffler [s. a.], “Title for Bruner-Dvořák from Ferdinand d'Este”.

in a feature titled *Bosnia Types*.<sup>6</sup> This set of photos (shot mostly in the Cazin area) is an important record of life in Bosnia at the beginning of the 20th century, and especially of life in the Cazin Frontier. Along with Bosnia, Bruner-Dvořák also made photographic excursions to Croatia and Serbia. The photos used in this paper are published with the consent of the owner, and the descriptions provided below are either the author's and/or Scheuffler's.



*Photograph 1: The bustle of the Cazin market. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.  
(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheuffler, owner of the collection)*

Bruner-Dvořák was fascinated by the distinctive atmosphere of the Balkans, the street scenes, of which the *pijaca* (local word for “market”) proved most appealing to him. The fact that the market in Cazin was known far and wide is also confirmed in Lockwood's text, where it is stated that it is an important social event and that it is held every Friday (Lockwood 1975:215). The market was not the only thing Bruner-Dvořák was fascinated by; he would wander through the side streets and take photos of women under veils or men praying (women did not practice group prayer and did not go to the mosque). He had an intense interest in taking photos of the clothes people wore, both Muslims and Christians, as well as of moments of prayer, sales agreements being made, and situations which were indicative of the position of women in society. Upon returning from Cazin, he published his photos in *Český svět*, presenting the unusual qualities of the land which he had just visited.

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<sup>6</sup> Scheuffler [s. a.], “Bosnia types in a magazine”.

## “UNCORRUPTED LITTLE TURKEY”

Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, then at the height of his international popularity, captured the social life of the Cazin area through his lens. From a clearly defined distance, both physical (behind the camera) and social (scenes of spontaneous events, movement and occurrences from a world to which he does not belong), Bruner-Dvořák documents the life of Muslims in the Cazin Frontier, but also the relations between different segments of society, between men and women, and between different ethnic groups. Although he does so from a distance, Bruner-Dvořák uses his photos to emphasise an interest for street life, the religious life of the “Muhammadans”, and interpersonal relations. He does not venture into the intimate space of the home, or rather, if he does, he chooses not to show it in his photographs. For him, the most dynamic life is that of the street – one where clouds of tobacco smoke and the fragrance of dried figs permeate the air, and where it can all be taken in with a cup of hot coffee, allowing him to blend with his surroundings and also become a part of this dynamic mass of people.

His photos are dominated by “Muhammadans” in various situations. For Bruner-Dvořák, they are the Other – the Other which he has travelled for days to see and which is interesting precisely due to its quality of being different; the Other which, even though the Ottoman Empire has been gone for nearly 30 years, still chooses to persevere with its “uncorrupt, Turkish” way of living and thinking. Bruner-Dvořák sees the Balkans as a stereotypical reflection of their Ottoman heritage (Todorova 1995, as per Todorova



*Photograph 2: There was often not enough room in the mosque so the villagers who would come to town to trade would have to pray outside.*

*Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.*

*(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

1996:29) and chooses to refer to Cazin using the syntagm “uncorrupt little Turkey”, through which he presents the “Muhammadans” of Cazin to his Austro-Hungarian audience.

In the time of Bruner-Dvořák, but also today, the Cazin Frontier was an area with a Muslim majority. Centuries of life as frontiersmen and the fact that they were surrounded by Christians helped create feelings of caution and distrust towards strangers among the Muslim population, and this is even felt today in the villages of the Cazin area. These are closed groups which are very reluctant to let unfamiliar people into their community (and, of course, Bruner-Dvořák was one such unfamiliar person!). However, if they chose to extend their trust to someone, these social boundaries disappear. The fact that Bruner-Dvořák was able to produce such extensive photographic records of the community in Cazin can be explained by his extraordinary communication skills, as Pavel Scheufler, the owner of the collection, pointed out during the preparation of the exhibition “Bosnia in 1905 as Depicted in the Photographs of Bruner-Dvořák”. We can also assume that, along with his exceptional communicative talents, the photographer also had a *gatekeeper*<sup>7</sup> who initially helped introduce him to the life of the town of Cazin.



*Photograph 3: The Cazin market. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.  
(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

Impressed by the area and the sights which were so alien to his own culture, the photographer captured the scene of the Cazin market, i.e. the day on which people gathered to trade. On Fridays, before the Jumu'ah (the Muslim Friday prayer), all sorts

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<sup>7</sup> Wittel 2000.



of goods are put up for sale at the “Žitarnica” in Cazin: coffee, figs, *opanci* (traditional shoes), bread, etc.; in the nearby “Govedarnica” and “Gečeti”, one can buy animals: cattle, horses, whole herds of Balkan long wool sheep – now all but extinct – and goats with unusually curved horns. The shops are scattered along a non-linear line which extends above the “Žitarnica”, on the way to the “Govedarnica” and “Gečeti”: the wooden *ćepenci*<sup>8</sup> are open wide and all manner of goods are on display. Coffeeshops are improvised and primitive – the brew is prepared right in the middle of the market, in groups of people; alternatively, servers carry containers full of the drink “salep” on their backs and serve them to people in the street. Photos taken in these moments show the hustle and bustle of the market, a dynamic mass of people brought together to trade. The photographer’s lens has also captured the situations which occur on the margins of business dealings and the processes of buying and selling: the photos depict an older man cleaning his muddy *opanci* on a dusty road, a scene of public flogging, and ritual ablutions at a little creek. He is aware that he is witnessing unusual situations which are not part of his usual experience, let alone of the compatriots to whom he will later present his work.



*Photograph 4: The kahvedžija (coffee seller) was always able to attract customers at the market. The men with hats and shirts hanging over their trousers are Christians from the surrounding area. In the background of the photograph, one can clearly see the network of trails created by cattle – the so-called prtine.*

*Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.*

*(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

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<sup>8</sup> The doors of a shop, designed so that the upper part can be opened and the lower part can be transformed into a table.

The distinctive traditional costumes serve the processes of identification and differentiation, and this notion was also emphasised by the photographer through his decision to use wider frames in order to show the totality of scenes and relations. Therefore, clothes are used to set Muslims apart from Christians: while Muslims are wearing turbans or fezzes, the Christians wear hats. Their clothes also set them apart in their interactions, with little close contact between Christian men and the Muslim population: they prefer to stand a few steps apart, even though they have all come to visit the same market. Likewise, costumes can create differences within the observed community of the “Muhammadans” itself: different strata of the community are represented by different types of headwear, but also by other elements of their costume. The costume is a powerful symbol of differentiation and the ruling Muslim class avoids mixing with the commoners: they usually stand at least a pace or so apart from ordinary people. Even though they have lost their formal power, Muslim clerics are still trying to hold on to their position in the context of the new social situation. This is seen in the photo of the three Muslim clerics standing outside the building of the Kotar Office (the regional administration) constructed in the style of Viennese romanticist classicism. With jackets and vests under long capes, their clothes are different from those of other people. Even though none of them have any sort of power, the social distance between people of a different status and education is clear.



*Photograph 5: When published in “Český svět” on 12 October 1907, the joint title “The Civilisation of Bosnia” was listed below this photo, with the photo itself titled “Military Automobile”. The taller man standing to the right is a Muslim official of one of the Austrian Bosnian regiments, next to him is a town police officer, and the man standing furthest to the left is a postman. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.*

*(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheuffer, owner of the collection)*

Men dominate Bruner-Dvořák's photos of Cazin, which is an unequivocal indication of the dominance of men in social life. They are depicted in different situations: selling and buying livestock, relaxing, talking, getting ready for prayer, praying, trading and participating in educational activities. The social interaction between men is presented in an almost perfect composition and with clearly expressed symbols: we can easily differentiate between livestock farmers, merchants, officials, clerics, all shown in their own environment and engaged in interaction with other people. The prayer outside of the town mosque in Cazin is represented in several photographs, and none of them feature women: it is assumed that they tended to their religious obligations at home.



*Photograph 6: Bosnian peasant with his children. One of the children is very light-skinned. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.  
(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

The Muslim women in Bruner-Dvořák's photos are wearing *zars* or *feredžas*,<sup>9</sup> the only ones who are not doing so are young women and girls. Muslim women were not allowed to attend school, but this began to change in the years before the First World War (Begović 1938:16–18). With this in mind, it is not surprising that the Muslim women in Bruner-Dvořák's photos are either depicted working in the fields or surrounded by children. Only one photograph shows a group of girls on their way to attend their religious education session, which can be inferred from their clothes and the special bag used to

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<sup>9</sup> A *zar* is a cape women would wear over their clothes when heading outside. A *feredža* is a black veil worn over the face, similar to a niqab.

carry the Quran. A small number of photos depict women at the market, but these are not Muslim women. One of the photographs shows three non-Muslim women as they are knitting socks with five needles, with men attending the market in the background. Not a single Muslim woman is present at the market, especially not at the place where livestock is traded.



*Photograph 7: The wife of a Muslim peasant with her children; in the photograph, she is wearing a feredža. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.  
(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

## “UNCORRUPTED LITTLE TURKEY” AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR MULTIPLE PROCESSES OF IDENTIFICATION

Bruner-Dvořák plays the game of contrasts, thus creating space for self-identification, but also the identification of his audience in relation to the Other, and specifically in relation to the “Bosnian types”, as he dubbed them. It is stated in the very introduction of the magazine in which he published his works that what the photographer found was something “new, different from medieval life”. This characterisation of being “new” did not imply modernity or civility, but was rather explained through the use of the word “different” immediately after. “Different” scenes and their bare nature support the idea that all things foreign and incomprehensible are found far away from Europe, which, in this case, takes on the role of the “central observer” (Said 2008:157).

This “uncorrupted little Turkey” is the framework within which multiple processes of

identification are taking place: the photographer undergoes self-identification and self-differentiation, and his surroundings are identified and differentiated in relation to him and his entourage (several photographs also show these contrasting symbols). When the photographer is shooting “Muhammadans” involved in their daily activities, their prayers and conversations, the women wearing veils almost seem to flee from the gaze of the camera lens; however, when these scenes are juxtaposed with symbols of European civilisation, from which the photographer originates, he consciously frees up the necessary space for various processes of identification. Through his skillful application of symbols and by playing with their composition within a stereotypical format (17.8 x 9 cm), the photographer is trying to define himself and also position himself in relation to others (for more on the use of symbols for identification and differentiation, see: Grbić Jakopović 2014; Hornstein Tomić 2014; Geertz 1998).



*Photograph 8: A poor peasant family from the Cazin area depicted in the process of harrowing the field. Logs are attached to the harrows to improve performance. The photograph was published in the magazine “Český svět” on 13 December 1907 under the title “Agricultural Work in Bosnia”. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906. (Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

The Pufendorfian division of society into “there” and “here” (Barnard 2000:17) is reflected in photographs of the streets of Cazin, shabby and muddy, with children playing with wooden toys and an umbrella (!), while the photographer himself comes from an urban and orderly environment. The dilapidated houses are adorned with a large sign in the shape of the letter “S”, indicating that this was a shop selling Singer sewing machines, which had arrived to Cazin together with the new administration. An

advertising slogan, at that time an unfamiliar concept to the residents of Cazin, is clearly visible under the shingles, hanging from the cracked walls of the old houses.<sup>10</sup> The shabby street and the sewing machine advertisement are images of two different worlds: one is the world which the photographer has stumbled upon, a world that is slowly changing despite the overall progress of civilisation, and the other is the world from which both he and the advertisement come from. The photographs are generally ripe with contrasts. One of the images shows Bruner-Dvořák's sister sitting in a horse-drawn carriage, dressed in a lavish garment; her appearance overshadows the figure of the coachman, who is wearing a coarse woolen vest and wide trousers, so-called *čakšire*. One similar photograph depicts a father flimsily holding the hand of the youngest female child, while the son tightly grips the arm of his other sister. The clothing worn by the girls is Muslim. In the very corner of the photograph one can see Bruner-Dvořák's sister in a long skirt, sporting a hat and holding a parasol. However, the photo of his sister and her entourage on a walk through the muddy street is one of the strongest images of contrast against the reality of their immediate environment.

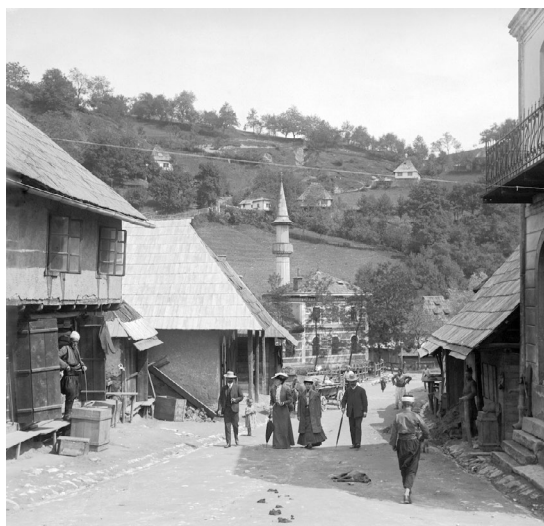


*Photograph 9: A haberdashery selling tailor-made traditional costumes in the Cazin commercial district; an advertisement for Singer sewing machines adorns the shopfront. The photograph was published in the magazine "Český svět" on 13 December 1907 under the title "Haberdashery". Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906. (Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

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<sup>10</sup> Roof tiles made from fir or oak planks

The photographer finds the “Orient” in the Balkans, meaning that for him, as a European at the turn of the century, Cazin was “oriental” in terms of its overall identifying traits. Female faces are seen as symbols of the two worlds: the civilised and open European one, as compared to the closed and oriental world hidden behind dark veils. This intercultural plane on which the photographer operates represents a photographic discussion of “our” and “their” culture. “Our” culture is European and superior, i.e. it is *superior to oriental backwardness* (Said 2008:17). *Their* culture is oriental, and it is introduced as such in the opening paragraphs of the magazine which published the photos, thereby relying on a system of meaning (theory and practice) which has been *invested into over a longer period of time* (ibid.:16).



*Photograph 10: The local elites from the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian administration are walking down a cobblestone street in the centre of the town.*

*Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.*

*(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

His photograph is not a text made out of sentences; instead, it is a text which is read based on the captured frame. Bruner-Dvořák’s subjectivity is reflected in the rich description (Geertz 1998), seeing that he is the one immersed into the culture being described, the one who chooses and creates the composition of the scene as he gazes through the lens of his camera. He is able to achieve a balance between subjectivity and objectivity through participant observation, although Bruner-Dvořák’s experience is still limited by norms of social conduct (Clifford 1992:110). Even though it is highly likely that there were other people in his entourage (e.g. his sister and her husband) who knew how to use a camera, the photographer is not present in any of the photos.

## WHAT DID THE RESIDENTS OF CAZIN SEE IN THE PHOTOGRAPHS?

The exhibition “Bosnia in 1905 as Depicted in the Photographs of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák” was organised by the youth association “Cazin.net” in co-operation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The exhibition opened in late January of 2008 and sparked a large deal of interest, seeing that the majority of the photographs in the exhibition showed parts of Cazin which could be easily recognised by visitors due to the characteristic areas and buildings depicted in them. Several hundred residents of Cazin attended the opening, where they anxiously awaited this unique opportunity to see a part of their history as recorded through the photographic medium. The exhibition stayed open for a month, during which time the visitors could record their thoughts in a “Book of Impressions”. The Book of Impressions contained but a few entries made by women, all of whom praised the feat of organising the event. Male visitors showed greater interest for recording their specific impressions of the exhibition. For purposes of this study, the Book of Impressions was made available by its owner and the head of the youth association “Cazin.net”, Ibrahim Ajdinović.

The thoughts written down in the Book of Impressions reveal that the residents of Cazin also underwent the processes of identification and differentiation when they



*Photograph 11: Inspection of livestock at the market. The peasants from the surrounding area are wearing coarse woolen trousers, but also short summer trousers made from canvas or hemp which reached to the mid-calf.*



attended the exhibition and analysed the photographs, accompanied by attempts at positioning themselves within time and space. Visitors found links between the past and the present by looking at the images which were presented, i.e. they affirmed the continuity of their existence in the Cazin area. To quote a visitor called Said: "Looking at the photos confirms the fact that we, as a people, have had a rich history. We will also have our future." Praises directed at the people who organised the exhibition are found in all the recorded impressions, and the importance of emphasising the links between the past and the present are evident from Alaga's entry: "Knowing the roots and the traditions of one's ancestors and land are reliable guidelines for the future of a people. In that regard, this exhibition is worthy of praise." Hasan expressed the pleasure in knowing that the organisers "recognised a part of themselves", while Kasim pointed out that the exhibition is more than just photography: "This is a vision of who and what we are, and where are we headed". Advan admits that it was "an indescribable feeling to see that Cazin was already a very lively town one hundred years ago.

Even today, the relation of Muslims/Bosniaks<sup>11</sup> to their origins and past is a point of contention in the daily life of Bosnia and Herzegovina – it is often stated that they are not aware of their own history and heritage, thereby casting doubt on the continuity of Bosniaks/Muslims as a people. One visitor left a lengthy comment in which he expressed his thoughts about the exhibition and its specific meaning in the context of identification and preservation of self-identity. The underlying message behind his words can also be understood as a reprimand directed at those who are not knowledgeable about their own history.

"I have come to notice that looking back at our recent and more distant past is very important for our present and future. This permanent reflection guarantees the revival of our 'SELF' – our culture, civilisation, our life and existence in this rapidly changing and deceptive world. The exhibition presents a period that is only one century away, and yet I would like to urge everyone to think about how much we have changed because we have forgotten our roots. Of course, a new time, a clash of civilisations, ideologies and technological progress have all left their mark, but these

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<sup>11</sup> I use both terms due to the ongoing disputes concerning the ethnonym "Bosniak". I consider the term "Muslim" to refer to followers of Islam in general (in past times, such people chose different terms to refer to their own national group); the term "Bosniak", on the other hand, is the official ethnonym introduced in 1993, when it replaced the previously used term "Muslim". The ethnonym "Bosniak" is disputed because a certain segment of the Muslim population refuses to use it, preferring to express their identity with the term "Muslim" (used in the religious sense or as a reference to the old official ethnonym). With this in mind, I chose to include both terms in order to avoid generalisations and to draw attention to this phenomenon.

changes have, sadly, made a large number of our compatriots forget or develop an inferiority complex. The photographs are wonderful, but how great would it be if they had been taken by one of our own people. We owe our gratitude to this hardworking Czech man, because how else could we be able to recognise our *čaršija*, our *divhane*, *čardaci*, *badže*, *šilma* (*šindra*),<sup>12</sup> and see the simplicity of life roughly one hundred years ago. Because of all this, Bosniaks, take up books, and start studying and working for the good of all of us.”

A large number of comments and messages recorded in the Book of Impressions spoke of connecting with the Muslim history of the region, which is indicative of the strong links the Muslims of the Cazin area have to their region, and to Islam as a force that shaped their way of thinking and living. One visitor pointed out that “examples such as this one should be used to imbue the history of the Cazin area and of the Muslim people with profound European roots and tradition”, while another one said that the exhibition reminded him “of a beautiful period in our Muslim history, of our tradition and past times”. A visitor whose signature was illegible exclusively saw the exhibition as evidence of his own version of Muslim history, going on to compare the old times with the present:

“I am pleased to see that Cazin was once full of Islam, seeing that we all now live like Christians. I would gladly return to 1905 so that I could live the life of our ancestors, i.e. life in an environment of nice and clean Islam. May Allah Jalla Shanuhu<sup>13</sup> reward them with the highest of all honours, and that is Jannah.<sup>14</sup> May peace and deliverance be with you.”

Messages expressing a religious interpretation of the photographs are evident in the entries made by two visitors. One voices his hope that “many from this generation of our people shall, if God permits, enter Jannah by virtue of their garment and prayer, by virtue of their work and their life”, while another sends out his prayers to all Muslims: “I pray to Allah that our people are united and pray to one God”.

Residents of Cazin emphasised that the scenes recorded in Bruner-Dvořák’s

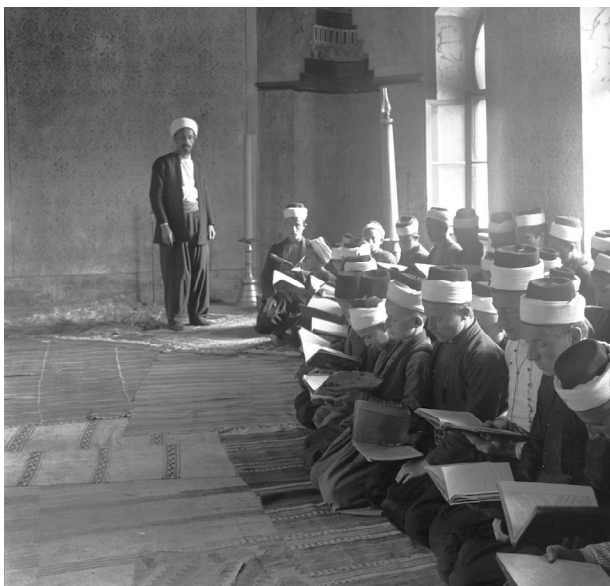
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<sup>12</sup> *Čaršija* refers to the historic city centre of some towns in the Balkans; these districts were developed during the Ottoman period and were (and still are) hubs of social and commercial activity. *Divhana* and *čardak* are architectural elements of the upper floor of an Ottoman-style house. *Badža* is an opening used as a smoke flue. *Šilma* (or *šindra*) are thin, tapered pieces of wood used to cover the roof of a building.

<sup>13</sup> “Allah the Sublime”.

<sup>14</sup> “Heaven”.

photographs are vital for the understanding of history, but also for advancing towards the future. One visitor wrote: “Thank you for taking us back to our past so that we can see how our grandfathers and ancestors lived”; Kićo and Almira made the following entry: “We tread on these roads not knowing that we are following in the footsteps of those who came before us, of those who walked the same beaten path. Let us look back and stop this moment for eternity”.



*Photograph 12: The students of a madrasa reading the Quran under supervision of the khawaja. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906. (Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

A grasp of the future, i.e. a perception of historical continuity from the past and present to the future is found in Hamdija's entry:

“It is a wonderful event and experience, and a special feeling to be here in this moment. Something new is created in the heart, in the emotions and the soul of a man in this moment, going back 100 years and lasting into eternity, reaching new generations”.

The photographs left a similar impression on Mesud, who said that he liked the landscapes, the market, the children, etc., and that he is grateful to the “Czech man who recorded all of this in a professional manner and left as a gift to many generations, especially those to come”. Based on these entries with messages for the future, it can be concluded that the residents of Cazin were able to gaze backwards, but also forwards.



*Photograph 13: A rich landowner talking to his hired farmhands as they are hoeing the corn. Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.  
(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

Pleased with the fact that there is now visible proof of past life in an area which they deem their own, and happy to recognise some of their ancestors, familiar locations and buildings, the residents of Cazin did not spare words of praise and gratitude in their assessments of the exhibition and its importance. One visitor wrote: “If it had not been for Dvořák, we would only be able to remember Cazin through the words of our elders, and now we have material proof of our history and times past”. Emin was appreciative of the exhibition to the point of stating that it was “the most valuable treasure reminding us of our *čaršija*, our Cazin”.

## INSTEAD OF A CONCLUSION

Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, with his choice to assume the position of an insider, to observe through participation and interact with the object of study, demonstrates his potential as an ethnographer. Considering the time in which he worked, the methodology he employed was both advanced and modern. Bruner-Dvořák's fieldwork is made legitimate precisely through his experience of staying in the Cazin area, seeing that it involved different resources (more information available in Čapo Žmegač et al. 2006:19–24).

Dvořák's medium of choice – photography – is both his voice and his contribution to ethnography in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also Cazin. His photographs do not

represent the final truth, nor is the photographer trying to impose his position on others – instead, they open up a whole spectrum of symbols and contrasts where identification can occur at different levels. The value of his work is found in the professional stance he has towards the object of study, as well as in his attempts to make notes about his fieldwork to go along with the photographic records.

His work situates him among the ranks of ethnographers and cultural anthropologists, the reason for this being the fact that he gained insight through fieldwork, allowing him to reach the level of the emic perspective,<sup>15</sup> i.e. the level of concepts written about by Malinowski, namely “*the perspective of the studied*”, “*entering the minds*” of the subjects, as well as Geertz’s concept of “*what the studied believe themselves to be doing*” (Čapo Žmegač et al. 2006:24).

His ethnography is both autoethnography and alloethnography. The processes of identification play out at the individual level, but also at the group level. The photographer is aware of this, and his attempts to grasp this distant culture are also indicative of the permanent process of identification and differentiation which he himself was going through. Bruner-Dvořák sets up these boundaries and is more and more akin to an ethnologist who, according to Marrou, *puts aside existential preoccupations, goes*



*Photograph 14: Bosnian Muslim girls wearing Turkish-style trousers and headscarves. The photograph was published in the magazine “Český svět” on 12 December 1907 under the title “Schoolgirls”.*

*Photo: Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák, 1906.*

*(Photograph made available by Pavel Scheufler, owner of the collection)*

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<sup>15</sup> Previously, it was pointed out that the photographer maintained an interactive relationship which allowed him to take photographs and move within a specific community which was not a part of his own culture.

*beyond himself, becomes alienated, discovers the other and meets with them* (Marrou, according to Althabe et al. 2002:76).

Bruner-Dvořák's approach to the creation of his own text is both emic and etic; the markers are now recognisable to the members of the photographed culture, and are so to an extent greater than what Bruner-Dvořák himself would have been able to realise, while the focus on the audience in his own country also makes his work etic. Bruner-Dvořák chooses to focus on the strange in the familiar, but also on the familiar in the strange. The exhibition "Bosnia in 1905 as Depicted in the Photographs of Rudolf Bruner-Dvořák" proved that these markers are indeed recognisable to the present-day residents of the Cazin area. The visitors who recorded their thoughts in the Book of Impressions underwent the processes of identification and differentiation through the symbolism of Bruner-Dvořák's work. Pleased to see that there is now easily procurable evidence of the existence of the Muslim population in Cazin, some visitors emphasised the religious aspects of the photographs. Some chose to relate the past to the present, pointing out the continuity of the area; others recognised a part of themselves in the photographs – namely, a part which they deemed had been repressed for various reasons. The impressions recorded by the visitors can be seen as a manifestation of the need for a more stable anchor in time and space, as well as for the confirmation of continuity, but also as a foundation for the future and their ongoing presence in the Cazin area.

Through his work, Bruner-Dvořák not only interpreted the Other, but also reflected upon himself (Clifford 1992:116), i.e. his own culture. His photographs show scenes that have both a broader and a narrower context, in a way which allows the viewer to grasp the wider reality of Cazin, but also to use these scenes to familiarise themselves with the tiny details of life in "uncorrupted little Turkey". The Cazin market is photographed from different angles, with multiple foci of documentation allowing the photographer's compatriots to become better acquainted with this exotic and isolated culture within Austria-Hungary. Preferring this mode of representation of the main social event of the Cazin area, he chooses the approach of objective documentation, even though the subjective affinity of the photographer is present in each shot. He acknowledges the studied culture by placing himself at a distance and choosing objects of study which are remote to him, both culturally and socially (Althabe et al. 2002:72).

In what we have seen, the photographer constantly toys with boundaries within the group, as well as between groups, with the object of the photographs always situated within a relation of contrast and comparison. The markers preferred by Bruner-Dvořák have a strong effect on understanding and interpretation. The symbolism of the group on which he chooses to focus is presented through a range of emblematic markers which the members of the group are aware of, but also through stereotypes as value judgements within the group and outside of it. All this symbolism is reflected through a system of

markers which the group has designated as its key aspects of identification and which, as such, serve as highly visible elements through which the group presents itself towards others (Bromberger et al. 2002:185).

The photographs are highly valuable for their depiction of a culture which was exotic within the context of the Austro-Hungarian territories, but also because they can be seen as a reminder harking back to things which are no longer present in this area, primarily referring to the market, the clothes and this specific type of human interaction. With the fact that no two people in the world will have the same perspective in mind, the photographs of Bruner-Dvořák, as a work of immense value for the interpretation of the culture of the Cazin area, give every person the opportunity to arrive at their own understanding of hidden meanings, but also to, at least where more general questions are concerned, arrive at some level of consensus. Rich descriptions as a method of presentation appear as their own understanding of the object of study, while the right of interpretation remains the autonomous right of the *reader*.

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