

PATTERNS OF SEDIMENTATION AND EROSION OF SACRAL ARCHITECTURE AND SECULAR MEMORIALS IN MOSTAR, BANJA LUKA AND ZENICA

OBRASCI SEDIMENTACIJE I EROZIJE SAKRALNE ARHITEKTURE I SVJETOVNIH SPOMENIKA U MOSTARU, BANJOJ LUCI I ZENICI

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This article analyses evolving patterns of sedimentation and erosion of sacral and memorial structures in three cities that were first urbanized in the early 16th century by the Ottoman conquerors of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since that time, society has been grounded on interactions between Muslims (mainly Sunni), Christians of varying denominations and Jews, and from 1945 until 1990, state-empowered secularists. We first analyse the formation of the towns during Ottoman rule, to enable understanding developments after the Ottomans lost power, and Islam was no longer the dominant religion. Further, the relative isolation of Bosnia and Herzegovina compared to other locations in Ottoman Empire enable us to analyse an ideal structure of Ottoman urban development. We then address the ways in which non-Muslim religious or atheist structures were manifested in new processes of sedimentation and erosion. Historical maps of the cities served as the basis for the analysis of patterns of sedimentation and erosion of sacral architecture and secular memorials. After selecting reference years, data acquisition on 'erosion' and 'sedimentation' of religious buildings were collected through field research, interviews, literature analysis and internet sources. In all three cities, development of the religioscapes has reflected changing patterns of dominance by Muslims, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians. When state secularism was dominant under socialism, the religioscapes of all communities were eroded and new religious sedimentations were impeded. Post-socialism, political and social actors have fostered re-sedimentations of eroded religioscapes, and new sedimentations. The post-socialist polities within Bosnia and Herzegovina (Entities and the cantons within the FBH), while officially secular, have favored the religion of the locally dominant community.

KEYWORDS: religioscapes; secularscapes; diachronic landscapes; Ottoman urbanism; Bosnia and Herzegovina; antagonistic tolerance

Ovaj članak analizira promjenjive obrasce sedimentacije i erozije sakralnih i memorijalnih struktura u tri grada koje su osmanski osvajači Bosne i Hercegovine prvi put urbanizirali početkom 16. stoljeća. Od tada je društvo bilo utemeljeno na interakcijama između muslimana (uglavnom sunita), kršćana različitih denominacija i Židova, a od 1945. do 1990. godine i državnih sekularista. Prvo je analizirano formiranje gradova tijekom osmanske vladavine radi razumijevanja razvoja nakon što su Osmanlije izgubile vlast, a islam više nije bio dominantna religija. Nadalje, relativna izoliranost Bosne i Hercegovine u usporedbi s drugim područjima osmanskog urbanog razvoja omogućuje analizu idealne strukture osmanskog urbanog razvoja. Zatim se ispituje kako su se neislamske religijske ili ateističke strukture manifestirale u novim procesima sedimentacije i erozije. Georeferencirane povijesne karte gradova poslužile su kao osnova za analizu obrazaca sedimentacije i erozije sakralne arhitekture i svjetovnik memorijala. Nakon odabira referentnih godina, podaci o "eroziji" i "sedimentaciji" religijskih objekata prikupljeni su terenskim istraživanjima, intervjuima, analizom literature i internetskim izvorima. U sva tri grada razvoj religijskih krajolika odražavao je promjenjive obrasce dominacije muslimana, rimokatolika i pravoslavaca. Kada je državna sekularnost bila dominantna u socijalizmu, religijski krajolici svih zajednica bili su podložni eroziji, a nove religijske sedimentacije bile su spriječene. U postsocijalističkom razdoblju politički i društveni akteri poticali su ponovnu sedimentaciju erodiranih religijskih pejzaža i nove sedimentacije. Postsocijalističke političke strukture u Bosni i Hercegovini (entiteti i kantoni u Federaciji BiH), iako službeno sekularne, favorizirale su religiju lokalno dominantne zajednice.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI religijski krajolik; svjetovni krajolik; diakronijski krajolici; osmanski urbanizam; Bosna i Hercegovina; antagonistička tolerancija

THE STRUCTURE OF OTTOMAN CITIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

As explained in the Theoretical Introduction to this thematic issue, the articles that follow have applied the Antagonistic Tolerance '(AT)' model to cultural geographic data to map manifestations of changing local dominance through the sedimentation and erosion of sacral sites, from the start of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina until the present. The AT model recognizes that the anti-religiosity of socialist secularism makes the sedimentations of state secularism a secularscape, comparable to other religioscapes. In this first article, we outline the development of religioscapes in three of the major cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, chosen in part because their urban development started with the arrival of the Ottomans and their establishment of Muslim dominance in what had been places sparsely populated, by Christians. This common feature allows us to start by addressing the question of how the Ottoman administrations planned towns when given a sparsely populated location in which to build them. We also present a comparative analysis of the patterns of sedimentation and erosion of sacral structures in three cities, to provide context for the subsequent articles, each of which focuses primarily on one of them. Our analysis of the development of three Ottoman towns in places where there had been few residents until then addresses an important issue, because the literature on patterns in the development of Ottoman cities in Anatolia and Europe (mainly Greece and Bulgaria) is largely focused on places that were already urban when the Ottoman forces took them and started to add their own sedimentations to them (Boykov, 2010). Since the Ottomans were taking over what had been Roman and then Byzantine imperial territories, it is hardly surprising that their focus was on imposing their own supremacy on pre-existing settlements (Hayden, 2023). Thus one author states that generally, 'Ottoman cities were established over the city structure of already present structures; administrative, military, and religious public structures were redesigned to answer to the Ottoman society and management needs, and city centers and nearby areas

were opened to new residents' (Demirkaya, 2017, p. 213). Other authors have noted that Ottoman city development was based on incorporating the pre-existing structures, modifying them to their own purposes (Acun, 2002; Kotzageorgis, 2018).

The mountainous terrain of Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, led to much of these territories being largely non-urbanized until the arrival of the Ottomans. The main Roman roads ran north along the Sava and south along the Adriatic and not through Bosnia or Herzegovina (Petrović, 2019), and while there were other roads leading into places that offered mineral and other resources, there were few major Roman settlements. The town structures of the medieval period were mainly centered on hill-top fortresses, which the Ottomans took over and managed. But some Ottoman towns were developed in locations that, while not uninhabited, had few people or urban structures (Mrgić, 2006). Further, since they were built during periods when the Ottoman frontier was moving constantly farther to the north and east, they did not build defensive fortifications; and it was fortifications that showed a territory to be a borderland in Ottoman cartography (Korić, 2019). Such was the case with Mostar, Banja Luka and Zenica, the development of which did not focus on fortifications, since they were not borderlands. This circumstance means that studying the original Ottoman development of these towns provides case studies of how Ottoman town planners built when they were not much constrained, as they had been in so many other places, by pre-existing streets, churches and cemeteries, or the needs of defensive structures.

The process has been studied most clearly in Mostar, which presents a well-documented case of the development of a major Ottoman town on what was nearly virgin terrain, albeit in a narrow river valley (Puljić, 2020a). A requirement of Ottoman towns was that they have a mosque for Friday prayers (Johansen, 1981), and additional mosques could be built, including additional mosques where Friday prayers were held (Hartmuth, 2016). The basic pattern was to build roads and mosques; indeed, one study argues that the spatial distribution of mosques is a key indicator of urban development (Ayhan & Cubukcu, 2010).

Puljić's study of Mostar indicates strongly that the city developed for its first two centuries as a constantly expanding collection of mahalas, or living quarters, spread out along the river, each with a mosque and a cemetery. It began in 1466 or 67, when the Ottomans took control over a chain bridge on the river Neretva at what is now Mostar, the settlement gaining its name from the bridge keepers, *mostari*. Puljić (2020a, p. 40) states that there was a Franciscan monastery and a church near the west bank of the river at that time, but they were destroyed in a fire in 1531. The Ottoman town spread out along the east bank from the bridge, then also crossed into the west bank. An urban road system also expanded to match the increasing settlements (see maps in Puljić, 2020a, pp. 194–197). Each mahala had a mosque, most had a cemetery. The mosques were nearly evenly spaced, 150-200 meters apart, so that their residents lived within earshot of the call to prayer; thus whether or not minarets were originally developed to enhance the call to prayer's reach (Bloom, 1991), they served that purpose by 1466. It was also only a short walk to the mosque in each mahala (see maps in Puljić 2020a, pp. 124–125). This development of the Ottoman city remained fairly stable from the end of the 17th century until the Austro-Hungarian

Empire took control of the city in 1878.

When mapped, Ottoman Mostar as it developed from the 15th-17th centuries looks like an urban planner's ideal: regularly spaced neighborhoods (mahalas), with supporting infrastructures, mostly on a mosque. The fact that the city developed in a fairly narrow river valley may in part account for this regularity. Yet only in part: a similar regularity in spacing of mahalas and their mosques can be seen at nearly the opposite end of Bosnia and Herzegovina from Mostar, in Banja Luka, from its Ottoman conquest ca. 1528 through the 17th century:

The similarities of the Ottoman urban plans of these two cities, with mosques spaced along the rivers, which formed the core of the Ottoman towns are shown in Figure 1. Churches are on the outskirts of the Ottoman towns, not in their centers.

There are, of course, differences. The first Ottoman development of Banja Luka was in a narrow part of the valley of Vrbas, now Srpske Toplice (lower left corner of map), where there had been a Christian settlement and a fortress on the hills above (Korić, 2007). The Ottomans developed the town down river, where the narrow valley opened up into flatter terrain, towards the junction with the much smaller river Crkvena, from the west. As in Mostar, however, the devel-

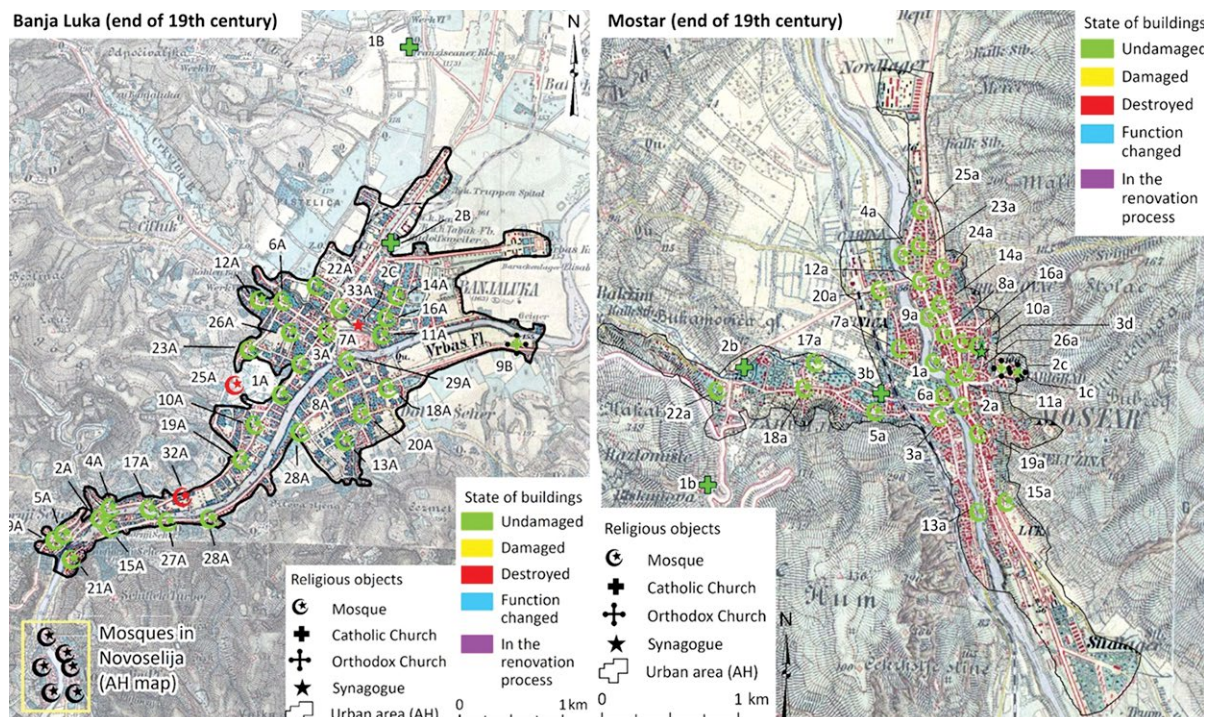


FIGURE 1 Mostar and Banja Luka, mosque and churches, end of 19th century

opment was of mahalas, with mosques central to them and roughly evenly spaced along newly constructed roads.

Zenica, the third focus of this special issue, presents a different case, as it was a much smaller town in the Ottoman period, developing into a city only under the Austro-Hungarian and later rulers. However, like Mostar and Banja Luka, the Ottoman town was focused on several mosques and their surrounding mahalas, four of them built in the 16th century (Džananović, 2021).

Christian and Jewish Structures in the Ottoman Towns

The Ottoman basic designs described above of the three towns as Muslim settlements sets the stage for consideration of interactions with the non-Muslims in them, which increased through time. We have argued elsewhere that tracing the Ottoman legacy in South East Europe must be

grounded on the presumption that in most territories ruled by the Ottomans, Turks and Muslims were not the majority populations. Thus tracing the Ottoman legacy inherently involves considering how the Turkic and Muslim communities interacted with non-Turkic and non-Muslim local populations, and how these interactions have left traces on the land (Katić & Hayden, 2023). In this section we analyse these interactions during the Ottoman period, thus that of the visible dominance of Islam within them. The Antagonistic Tolerance model that we employ leads us to expect that non-Muslim religious structures will generally be found outside of the centres of settlements, and also not to be very perceptible compared with nearby Muslim religious edifices. That is, the non-Muslim structures will generally be smaller, lower in height and not to project much sound compared to the Muslim ones.

The spatial distribution of churches and mosques in Mostar is illustrated in Figure 2,

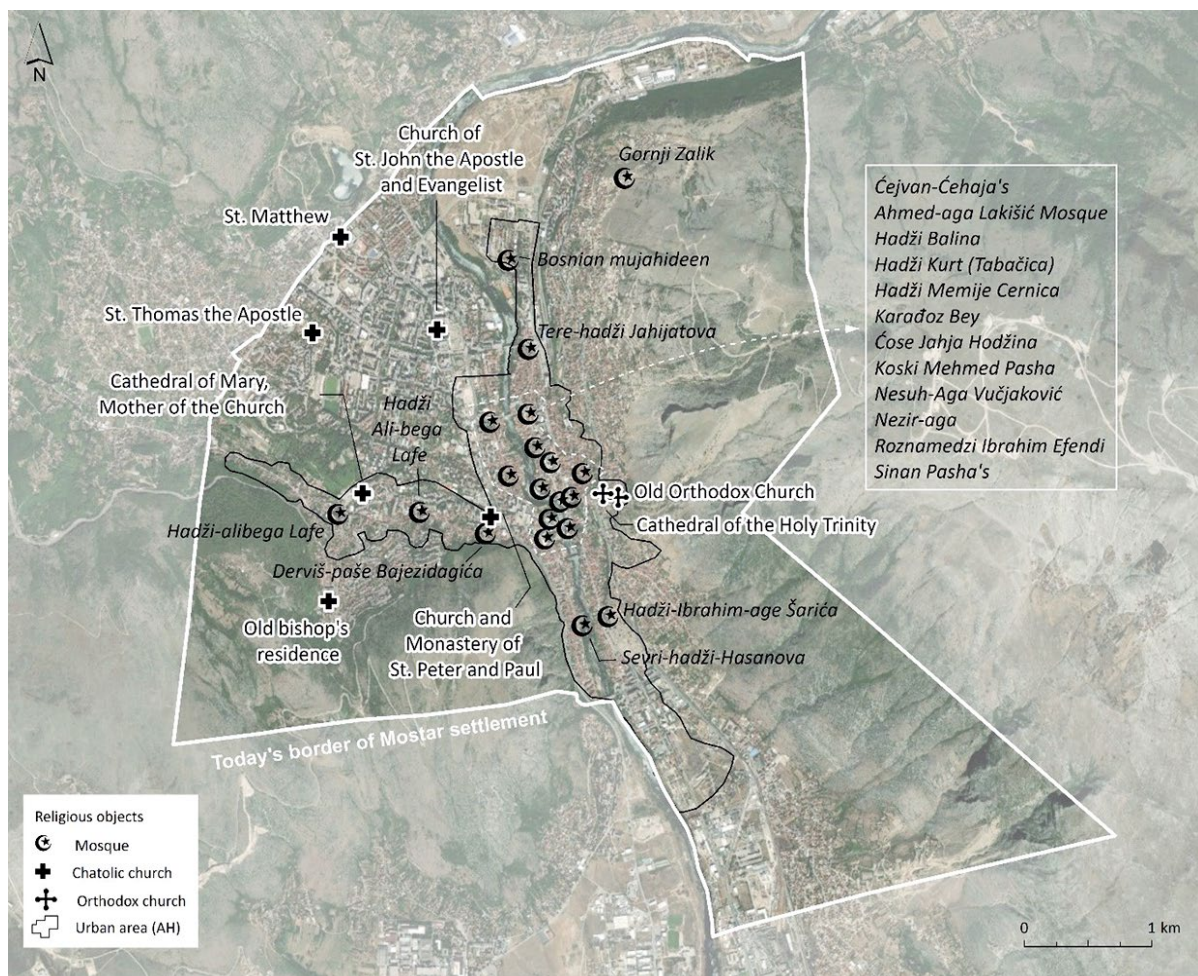


FIGURE 2 *Christian churches in Mostar*

highlighting how the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia facilitated church construction in areas previously restricted by Ottoman rulers.

Mostar

There are traces of Christian presence in what became Mostar several centuries before the Ottomans arrived (Ribarević-Nikolic, 2019). Most notable is the Basilica in Crkvine, Cim which is now claimed as evidence of both long-standing Roman Catholic and thus Croat presence, neither claim necessarily completely in agreement among historians on various grounds – first that the Roman Catholic church was a later development than the 6th century, which still knew a single Christianity; and second, because extrapolating current political national identities through multiple centuries is dubious, especially since recent ancient DNA analysis shows that ‘Present-day Serbs, Croats, Bulgarians, and Romanians yielded a similar ancestral composition as ancient individuals after 900 AD’ (Olalde, 2023, p. 5480). The adoption of the ancient basilica by the present-day Roman Catholic church is, however, an example of a common action of religious organizations that wishes to claim deep historical presence in a location.

There was, however, a Roman Catholic presence on the west bank of the river Neretva near the bridge in Mostar when the Ottomans arrived. Puljić (2020a, pp. 40, 43) locates a Franciscan monastery and church there in the period 1440-1563, though destroyed in a fire and rebuilt but destroyed again in 1539/40, rebuilt again but destroyed in 1563. He has also shown that early Ottoman censuses showed an exclusively Christian population in 1468 and majority Christian populations through 1530, but Christians a minority by 1585 (Puljić, 2020b, pp. 57–60). As he notes, the most concrete evidence of Christian presence in the Ottoman period are their cemeteries (Puljić, 2020b, p. 72). Orthodox cemeteries were and are on the east side of the river, dating back to the 16th century (Stanić, 2021); Catholic cemeteries on the west side of the river. In both cases, they were and

are near the oldest churches of these denominations.

As the Antagonistic Tolerance model would predict, Christian structures were not prominent in the Ottoman town. The first Orthodox church was probably built in the early 18th century (Mujić, 1976), while the oldest Orthodox church of record was built in 1833 supposedly on the ruins of an earlier Orthodox church. However, as pressure rose on the Ottoman Empire to mollify the Christian populations, the Tanzimat was enacted, which permitted building churches. Thus the old Serbian church was rebuilt, enlarged, in 1863 (Krulj, 2020; Mujić, 1976; Puljić, 2020a, p. 46). There are indications that the local Muslim residents opposed the (re)building of the church, but it was permitted by the authorities (Komisija za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika, 2003, Mujić, 1976). Possibly for this reason, the church is relatively low, and the floor is approximately 1.5 meters below ground level. Also in 1863, Sultan Abdul Aziz gave permission to build the Cathedral Church (Saborna Crkva) and provided some funds for that purpose (Krulj, 2020, p. 173), as he did in many other cases in the European part of the empire, including in Čajniče and Foča in Bosnia, and the Serbian Cathedral Church in Sarajevo.

These Serbian churches were on the eastern edge of the town, near the Orthodox cemeteries and also near what legend holds to have been an Orthodox church in a cave above the town. A Roman Catholic Bishop’s residence was built in 1847, near the location of the older church mentioned earlier. The Roman Catholic church of Sts. Peter and Paul, built from 1866-72 (Puljić, 2020a, p. 46), was the first church to be built closer to the river, thus closer to the mosques built alongside it, but not within the line of the mosques. The church had a bell tower, though judging from old photographs, not one of great height.

As for the Jewish community, The B&H Commission to Preserve National Monuments, in discussing its decision in 2003 to proclaim the building of the synagogue in Mostar as a national monument (Komisije za očuvanje nacionalnih spomenika, 2003) noted that Sephardic Jews were recorded in Mostar in 1570. There is no

record of a synagogue before 1889, when Austro-Hungarian rule had replaced that of the Ottomans, and the Sephardic Jews in Mostar had been joined by Ashkenazi. An earlier synagogue may have existed, the Sephardic Jews probably being aware of the small synagogues that their community had kept hidden in houses in Portugal and Spain through the 15th century (Hayden et al., 2016, pp. 165–166).

Banja Luka

The Christian settlement when the Ottomans took what is now Banja Luka was focussed on a fortress above the river Vrbas at what is now Toplice (Korić, 2007), but there are no records of churches there at that time. If there were stone churches, Ottoman practice in Bosnia was to convert them into mosques (as can still be seen in Bihać and Jajce), destroy them, or reuse them for other purposes. Ottoman censuses show rapid increases in the Muslim population compared to Christians: in 1565, 223 Muslim households and 31 non-Muslim ones, to 1604, when the Muslim population was 82.65% of the total, with 1113 Muslim households and 236 non-Muslims ones, and there were 15 mosques (Korić, 2011, pp. 131–132). The Ottomans did permit the construction of an Orthodox church on the outskirts of the settlement, at Rebrovac, in 1596, which was rebuilt in 1798 (Teinović, 2022, p. 352), but destroyed by local Muslims in 1877 (Teinović, 2022, p. 353). A wooden church was built in 1840, destroyed in 1850, rebuilt in the 1860s without a bell tower (Teinović, 2021, p. 135), and destroyed by local Muslims in 1875 (Teinović, 2022, p. 352). This church was probably a primitive wooden church, such as the one photographed in 1928 in Imljani (Drljača et al., 2023, p. 191), since a French visitor described it as ‘poor, more like a storage shed than a church’ (Teinović, 2022, p. 352). There may have been other wooden churches, such as the mid-18th century Church of St. Nicholas at Basići, 24 km from Banja Luka, near where there had also been a wooden mosque from the 18th century; or the one at Krupa na Vrbasu photographed in 1928 (Drljača et al., 2023, p. 194). These are more fit-

ting for the various legends surrounding wooden churches as having been moved, even overnight, in order to escape destruction by the Ottomans (Ademović & Kurtović, 2017, p. 72). In any event, by the time that the Austro-Hungarian Empire took over the administration of Bosnia in 1878, there were no Serbian churches still standing in Banja Luka.

However, in the last years of their rule, the Ottomans did permit a Roman Catholic monastery to be built on a hill north of the town, in 1873, and without a bell tower (Bosna Srebrena, 2025). This building was destroyed in fighting when the Austro-Hungarian army took the city in 1878, but was replaced in 1882 with a new monastery and the Church of St. Anthony of Padua, this time with a bell tower. Though not within the city, the church was and is highly visible as one approaches Banja Luka from the north. Thus the churches at the end of the 19th century (Fig. 1, no. 1B, 2B, 9B) were on the outskirts of the town.

Finally, though Jews had been in Banja Luka for centuries, the first reference to a synagogue is to a wooden one built in 1870 on what is still called ul. Jevrejska (Jewish St), and said by the Jewish community in Banja Luka to have been Sephardic (MRV BiH, 2025). The structure was relatively large and had two low towers, so its perceptibility would have been high.

Zenica

As with the other Ottoman towns, Christian structures were not present in the urban area until the mid-19th century, although Christians lived within them or near them. A Serbian Orthodox church was built on a private holding in 1836, along with a school and a residence for the priest, and used until 1907 (Sarić, 2006, p. 29). The church was located on the edge of the town, not in the urban area focused on the mosques, and its being on a private holding may have been factors that facilitated its construction even before the Tanzimat. While the main Roman Catholic parish was outside of Zenica in Crkvice, from 1836–1875. A wooden Roman Catholic church stood on the location of the present church Crkva Bezgrešnog začeca Blažene Djevice Marije, until the

current church was built in 1914. Similarly, a small wooden synagogue predated the later one in the town (Džananović, 2016, p. 248).

Interactions between Muslims, Jews and Christian populations 1878–1914

We now turn to the period in which Muslim political dominance in Bosnia and Herzegovina was lost, with concomitant changes in the sedimentations and erosions of the religioscapes. In the three towns studied here, the Ottoman Empire had maintained the dominance of Islam over other religions. However, as Ottoman rule in the Balkans was being successfully challenged by Christian uprisings – Serbia, 1804–13 and 1815–30; Greece 1821–29 – the European powers supported the rebellious Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians. In 1878, the Congress of Berlin empowered Austria-Hungary to govern Bosnia and Herzegovina under a residual nominal Ottoman sovereignty. The European powers were avowedly modern but also favoured Christianity in varying denominations, which set the stage for the changing relationships of Muslim and Christian populations after Muslims lost sovereign power (Greble, 2021). These interactions play out in different ways in the three cities studied in this volume. The weakening of Ottoman authority let the Christians establish larger presences in each city while not disturbing overly much the Ottoman infrastructures of mahalas and mosques, but still demonstrating challenges to the domination of Islam, thus of Muslims.

Under the Austro-Hungarian administration, over 150 Roman Catholic churches were built in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 1893, and over 200 Orthodox churches between 1878 and 1914 (Ševo, 2016, p. 148). The Antagonistic Tolerance model would lead us to expect potential competition to Muslim domination of the centres of settlements by the construction of churches in them, or to increased perceptibility of Christian structures, by increased height or size. In Mostar, even though the new rulers were Roman Catholic, efforts to build a new cathedral were not successful during Austro-Hungarian rule (Mikulić, 2015). It may be that the continued predomi-

nance of Muslims in the population of Mostar made it unwise to extend on the concessions that the Ottomans had made in the 1860s and 1870s in permitting the Croats and Serbs to enlarge older churches and build new ones. This is particularly likely since the Muslims remained on the east side of the river while the Roman Catholic neighborhoods expanded on the west side of the city (Puljić, 2021). In a sense, the counters of power had changed: while the Ottomans had tried to mollify a restive Christian population, the Austro-Hungarian administrators had to mollify a disgruntled Muslim population, many of whom felt disadvantaged by the change in rulers (Greble, 2021). Still, it is noteworthy that the minarets of mosques in the Austro-Hungarian newly modernized parts of the city are less tall than those on the other side of the river.

Under Austro-Hungarian rule, Mostar's Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews formed a single Jewish Community and by 1889 had built a synagogue, but it became too small and so a new synagogue was constructed nearby, in 1904. This building was damaged in World War II, and in 1952 the Jewish Community gifted it to the City of Mostar, and the Puppet Theatre was given the use of the building. The building was damaged during the 1992–95 war when the nearby Serbian cathedral was blown up. In 1996, however, the European Union provided funds to reconstruct it, though the Jewish population of Mostar is about 30 people (Top Portal, 2025). The synagogue seems always to have been low, without a structure that would rival a minaret or a bell tower; thus its perceptibility would always have been low.

In Banja Luka, however, the situation of the mosques was different. While the narrow confines of Neretva valley had constrained the development of Mostar, Banja Luka under Austro-Hungarian rule expanded out of Vrbas valley. The Austro-Hungarian Empire essentially set up a new town downstream (north) of the fortress, leaving the Gornji Šeher and Donji Šeher as being marked by mosques, while building churches in the new section; some mosques remained for at least some time in what became the Christian part of the city (map from Bejtić, 1953, p. 91).

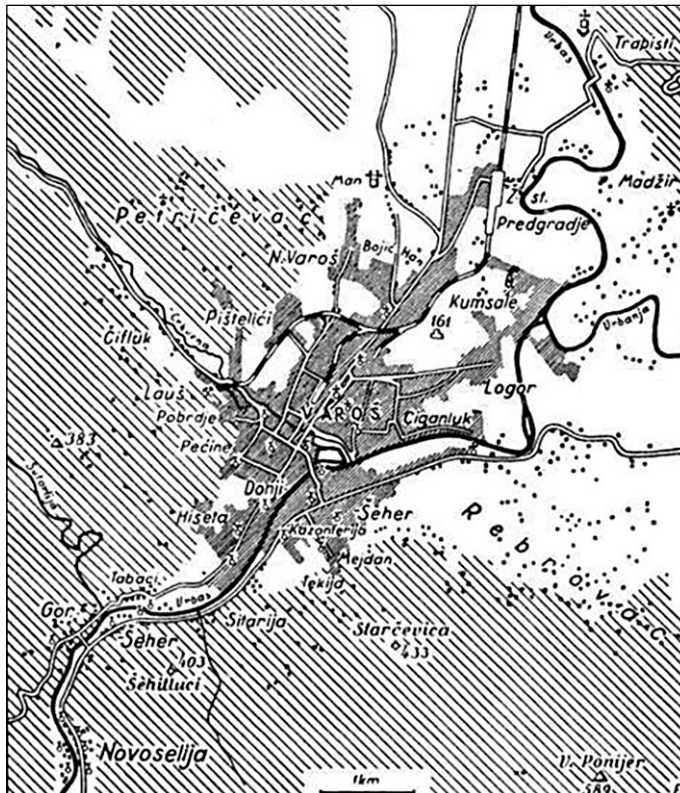


FIGURE 3 *Banja Luka post-Ottoman expansion*
Source: Bejtović, (1953)

This pattern in Banja Luka is similar to the development of Sarajevo. It differs from that of Mostar, probably in part because the narrowness of Neretva valley, which would have required levelling much of the Ottoman town to build a European extension, and after their conquest of the Ottomans the Austro-Hungarian Empire tried to placate the Muslim populations of Bosna and Herzegovina.

The new rulers of Banja Luka did not destroy mosques – an Ottoman listing counted 37 mosques in 1851, while the Austro-Hungarian rulers enumerated 38 (Husedžinović, 1999, p. 105). They did, however, facilitate building churches. As noted above, the new Church of St Anthony in Banja Luka had a bell tower and was highly visible, while a Roman Catholic cathedral was built in 1887. This was within the city, in the areas that the new rulers were expanding for their administration and for Christian newcomers to the place. As noted earlier, the junction of the river Crkvena with the river Vrbas had marked the boundary between the Ottoman town and the Christian settlement, or varoš. Putting the cathedral just north of that border marked Roman Catholic dominance in the city, especially since the Serbian church was a wooden structure with-

out a bell tower. A new Serbian Crkva Rođenja Presvete Bogorodice was built in 1885 in Rebrovac, to replace the one destroyed in 1877.

As in Mostar, the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Banja Luka permitted a new synagogue to be built in 1880, for the Sephardic population, while the Ashkenazi built their own synagogue in 1900-1902 (MRV BiH, 2025).

Zenica in the period of Austro-Hungarian rule had an influx of non-Muslim religious buildings. In 1885 the old Orthodox church was replaced with a new one, while a new church Crkva Rođenja Presvete Bogorodice was built in the town. The Catholic church of St. Ilija was moved from Crkvica into the town in 1908-10, and a Catholic school was also constructed near it. Neither of these churches was in the čarsja, which had been the center of the Ottoman town, but rather were in areas that the Austro-Hungarian administration had expanded away from the Ottoman center, as they did in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. A synagogue was built in the čarsja, thus near the Ottoman mosques, in 1885, and replaced with a new one in 1903 (Džananović, 2016).

In all three towns, the pattern was thus one in which existing Muslim structures remained, but new Christian and Jewish ones were constructed

that demonstrated that the Ottoman rules limiting no longer held.

Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1919–1941

Just as Austro-Hungarian rulers favored Roman Catholicism in the development of religioscapes, the new South Slav state, under a Serbian king, favored Serbian Orthodox Christianity, though with actions in regard to Muslim structures that varied in different locations. In the three cities studied here, there were neither new mosques nor new churches built in Zenica during the period of the first Yugoslavia, 1919–1941. Neither was there much change in Mostar, although one mosque burned down, another was damaged by lightning, and a third was torn down to make way for a bridge.

In Banja Luka, however, at least nine mosques were destroyed during the first Yugoslavia (Husedžinović, 2005, p. 559). The mosque Herića, destroyed in 1918, was above the river Crkvina that marked the border of the Chris-

tian varoš, as were the mosque Pašić, destroyed in 1924 and Šehova, destroyed in 1930. Three of the oldest mosques, in the original Ottoman town, were destroyed between 1919 and 1930. This is a radically different development than took place in Mostar or Zenica, but the population dynamics were also very different. The emigration of Muslims from the newly independent Christian polities that had begun in the early 19th century (Mat Ehn et al., 2022) continued after World War I, as did the migration of Croats and other Roman Catholics into northern Bosnia that had begun in the 1890s. The mosques that were destroyed in the northern part of the town, and in the area of Toplica, were in places where many Muslims had left.

The patterns of mosque destruction during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1919–1941), Socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1992) and in the Republika Srpska in 1993 are shown in Figure 4. There is clear clustering: in the Kingdom: mosques were mainly destroyed in the oldest Muslim settlements, in Gornji Šeher in the south, and north of

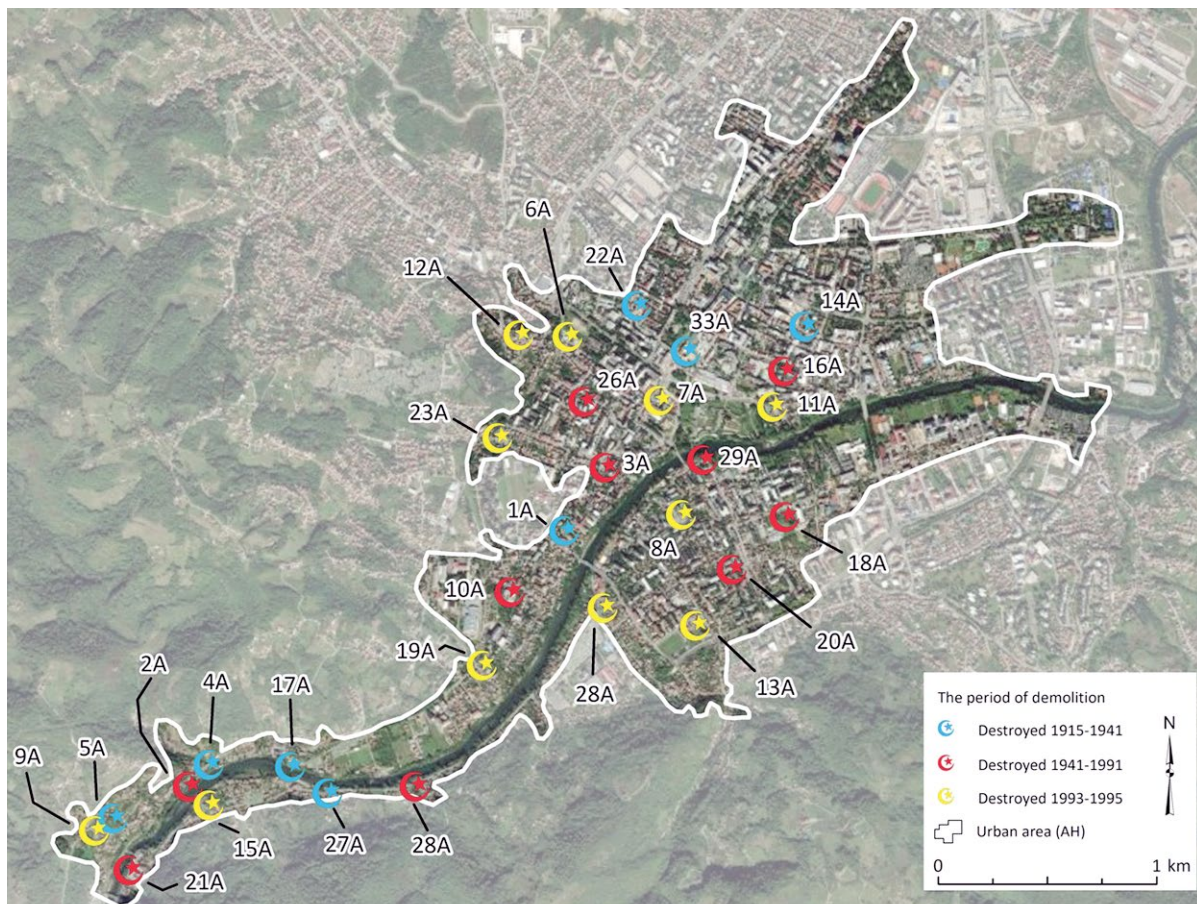


FIGURE 4 Mosque destruction in Banja Luka, 1915–1993

the river Crkvena, which marked the border between the Ottoman Donji Šeher and the mainly Christian-inhabited Varoš. Much of the Muslim population had left those parts of the city during the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Kingdom periods. The clusters in the socialist period are of most of the remaining mosques in Gornji Šeher and of mosques nearer to the centers of the town. This left only four mosques remaining near the center of the town as it had been expanded by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Kingdom and socialist rule, effectively forming a line along the river Crkvena. The remaining mosques were destroyed in the first years of Republika Srpska in 1993.

In addition to destroying mosques, the new state also confiscated much vakuf property (Mehmedović, 2017), a practice common in all of the post-Ottoman Christian-majority states (Greble, 2021). At the same time, new Kingdom fostered the building of churches. The Roman Catholic Church of the Blessed Virgin was built in 1929 near the center of the town as that had been extended by the Austro-Hungarians, but in that same area the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral of Christ the Savior was started, squarely in the middle of the new centre, and with a much higher bell tower. Three other Serbian Orthodox churches were also built near the center, thus demonstrating the dominance of Orthodox Christians over Catholics as well as Muslims.

These construction of these new churches coincided with the establishment of Banja Luka as the center of Vrbaska Banovina, one of the nine political-territorial divisions of Yugoslavia created in that year. The construction of the Orthodox churches and the centrality and visibility of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour marked the dominance of Serbs in the town.

Religious Structures during World War II and under State Socialism, 1941–1991

In Mostar and Banja Luka, events during World War II and in the decades of state socialism led to destruction of many religious buildings, mosques and churches. The transformations – sedimentations and erosions – in Banja Luka have been more extreme than in Mostar or Zenica, so we start there.

Banja Luka

With the defeat of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Banja Luka became part of the newly founded Independent State of Croatia, a state that targeted Serbs, as well as Jews and Roma (Dulić, 2005; Yeomans, 2013). The Serbian Orthodox cathedral in the center of Banja Luka was thus destroyed completely in May 1941. The socialist state did not permit the reconstruction of the church, instead placing a monument to the Partisans killed in the war.

At the same time, as shown in Fig. 4, nearly twice as many mosques were destroyed during the socialist period than had been removed in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, at least 15 (Husedžinović, 2005, p. 560). In the 1950s these were mainly in the oldest settlements in the Ottoman town, including the first mosque built there, Careva džamija. Mosques closer to the newer parts of the city were destroyed in the 1960s. Some of the mosques were said to have been old and falling apart and torn down for that reason, though the Islamic Community was not given the opportunity to repair them. The stones from some of them were moved to Kozarac. However, the political atmosphere changed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, because mosques seriously damaged in the strong earthquake of 1969 were replaced with new ones (Husedžinović, 2005, p. 569). Similar replacements of damaged mosques took place after the strong earthquake of 1981 (Husedžinović, 2005, p. 571).

These replacements of damaged mosques may have reflected changing political situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Yugoslavia. Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslims in Yugoslavia were recognized as a nation (*narod*) in 1971, with the same status as Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs and Slovenes (see Rusinow, 1982), while the Republics each became strengthened politically, turning the federation into a confederation under the 1974 Constitution, with the League of Communists binding them and President Tito (Rusinow, 1977); but with Tito's death, the confederal system prevented the emergence of any strong central leader (Jović, 2023). The increased political capacity of what was then called

the the Muslim nation in Bosnia (*Muslimanski narod* then; since 1993, called Bosniaks [*Bošnjaci*]) may have enabled them to rebuild mosques that might have been torn down earlier.

Mostar

As noted above, the development of Banja Luka and Mostar as Ottoman towns in places where there had not been many Christians had many similarities. Further, the Austro-Hungarian administration in Mostar created a new administrative center on the edge of the Ottoman town that expanded the city (Puljić, 2021), similar in effect to their re-defining and re-centering of Banja Luka. In both cities the Austro-Hungarian rulers did not disturb the Ottoman city and its mosques to any great extent. The two cities differed, however, in the development of their intersecting Christian and Muslim religioscapes. In Mostar, the Roman Catholic structures came in from the south and west, and the Serbian Orthodox ones from the north and east, but the central core of the city, along the river, remained Muslim, and there were not many mosques destroyed during Austro-Hungarian rule. The change to Austro-Hungarian rule did permit building Catholic structures closer to the river than had been true under the Ottomans.

However, the trajectories of Mostar and Banja Luka during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were quite different. The destruction of mosques that took place in Banja Luka during this period did not happen as much in Mostar, though the Islamic Community in Mostar says that during this period six mosques ceased to function (Hasić, 2025). The difference may well have been that, as argued above, the mosques destroyed in Banja Luka were in parts of the city where the Muslim populations had left, and this did not happen in Mostar.

Furthermore, Mostar's mosques were as targeted under state socialism as were the ones in Banja Luka. In both cities, old mosques were torn down as 'old and falling apart,' with the Islamic community not being given the opportunity to repair them. In Mostar, several mosques were torn down in the course of raising public buildings. Thus Tere Hadži Jahja džamija was used as

a warehouse from 1950 until it burned down in 1954; Memi (Mehmed) Hodžina Džamija was torn down in 1951 and a grocery store built in its place; Husein Hodžina Džamija was torn down in 1947 and a park created in its place; the oldest mosque, Sinan Paša džamija, was torn down by the Yugoslav Army in 1949, supposedly because it was old and decayed, and in its place was a parking lot and garbage (Puce, 2025). Other elements of the Muslim religioscape were also destroyed, especially cemeteries (harem) which were located near each mosque. According to the Islamic Community of Mostar, socialist urban planners removed such cemeteries to build rail and bus stations, the main post office, a school, and other public buildings (Hasić, 2025).

Erosions and Sedimentations during and after the 1992–1995 War

As stated in the general introduction to this thematic issue, among our reasons for focusing on these three cities was the configuratinos of ethno-religious dominance after the 1992–1995 war. Thus Zenica is now populated overwhelmingly by Bosniaks and Banja Luka is the capital city of Republika Srpska and has a largely Serb population. Mostar is divided spatially between areas populated and dominated by either Bosniaks or Croats.

Banja Luka

Between 1992 and 1995, all of the mosques that still stood in Banja Luka were destroyed (see Fig. 4), as well as two Roman Catholic churches. On the other hand, rebuilding of the Serbian Orthodox church in the centre of the city that had been destroyed by the Ustaše in 1941, Saborni Hram Hrista Spasitelja, was started in 1993, completed after the war ended.

After the war the Catholic churches were rebuilt; the mosques were more problematic. Even the stones of some of them had been removed. International focus fell on Ferhad Paša mosque, popularly known as Ferhadija, which was closest to the fortress and on the main street in Banja Luka, Kralja Petra I Karađorđevića. Ferhadija,

originally built in the late 16th century and one of the most ornate mosques in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But Ferhadija was only the first of the mosques to be rebuilt. The Islamic Community of Banja Luka lists 18 rebuilt mosques on its web site (Islamska zajednica Banja Luka, 2025). However, none of them are outside of the borders of the town as it was developed by the Ottomans, šeher. As of 2023, there is a clear distinction between the Dolni Šeher of the Ottoman town, where mosques have been rebuilt, and the parts of the city north of the fortress and essentially of a boundary marked by four džamije west of the river: Dolačka, Ferhadija, Arnaudija and Talih. The church Bogojavljenka crkva and the church of St. Basil of Ostrog were built south of this line in 2009, as well as the Cathedral of the Dor-

mition of the Holy Mother of God in 2021, as demonstrations of the prominence of the Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC).

The spatial distribution of the reconstructed mosques, relative to churches are shown in Figure 5. What is noteworthy is that the Islamic community has rebuilt mosques only in the old Ottoman parts of the city, the former Gornji and Donji Šeher areas, including mosques that had been destroyed not in 1993, but in the 1920s. Effectively, four mosques mark the division between the mainly Muslim Šeher and the mainly Christian Varoš that had been established during the Kingdom and socialist periods. However, the placement of three new churches in the Donji Šeher area (Temple of the Ascension, Church of the Annunciation and Church of the Assumption of

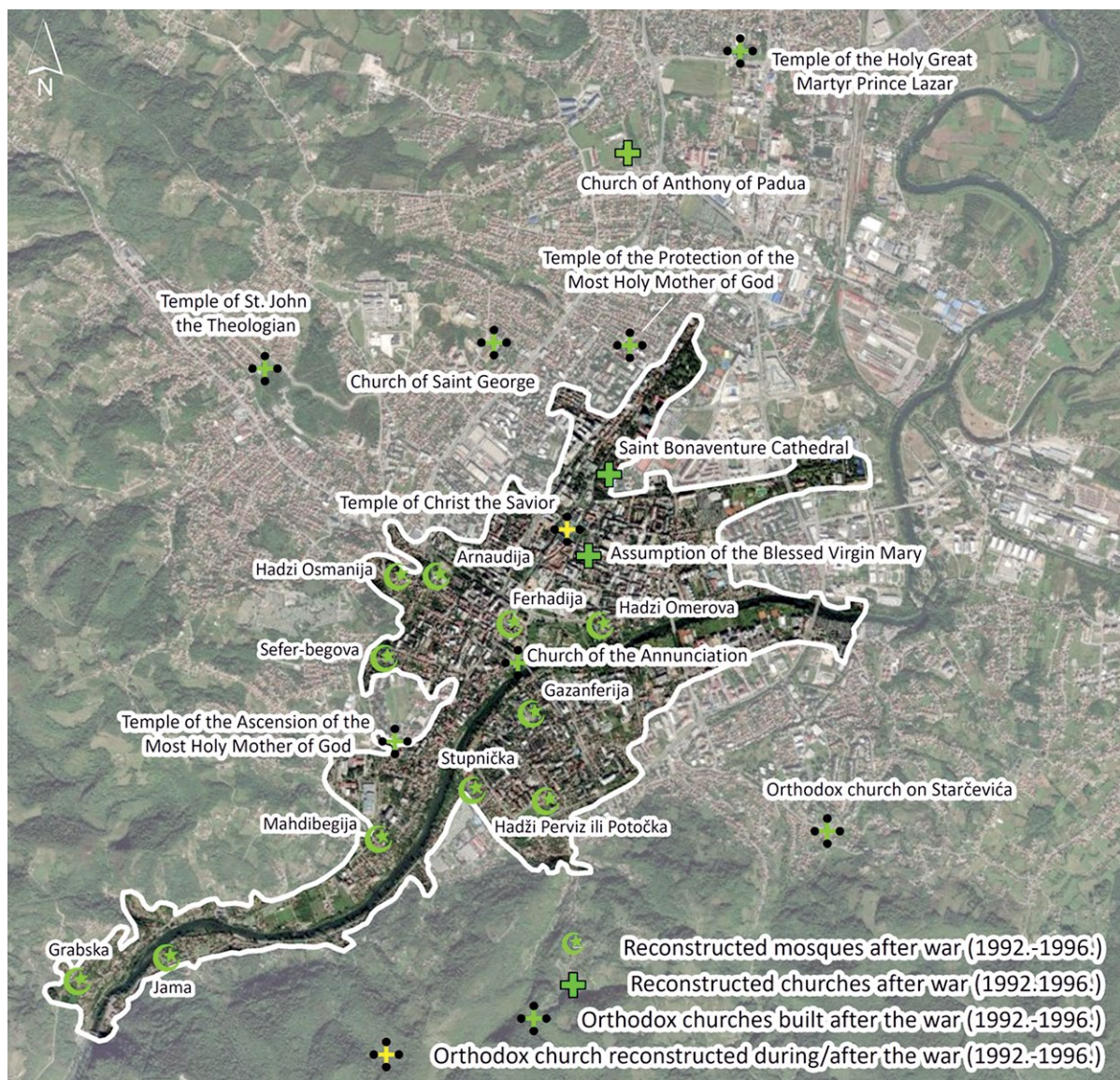


FIGURE 5 Reconstructed Mosques and Churches in Banja Luke 2024

the Blessed Virgin Mary) with bell towers higher than the minarets nearby, effectively marks Christian dominance.

Most of the rebuilt mosques are in Gornji šehar, the place of the first Ottoman settlement, now called Srpske Toplice, after the hot springs (toplice) found there, or further south/ upstream on the river Vrbas, thus away from the city of Banja Luka. The centre of the city is clearly dominated by Christian religious edifices, the most central and perceptible of them being Serbian Orthodox churches.

Banja Luka also presents the unique case of a new synagogue being built in a town in Bosnia and Herzegovina after World War II. The synagogue is not free-standing but is a room within the Jewish Cultural Center which was inaugurated in 2014, within a building constructed after the end of the war, and housing other offices. While the Jewish community is small, there have been a number of weddings held in the synagogue.

Mostar

In the 1992–95 war, most of the mosques of Mostar were damaged or destroyed. Most of those have been rebuilt or repaired; mosques de-

stroyed in earlier periods were less likely to have been repaired. A striking exception is Sinan Paša džamija, the first mosque built in Mostar, which had been torn down to its foundations in 1949, but was rebuilt in 2021.

The trajectory of the Christian religioscapes vis-à-vis the Muslim ones in Mostar also varied. As noted above, the Christian religioscapes did not extend to the river, thus were not much intertwined with the Muslim religioscapes of the Ottoman town. What they lacked in centrality, however, they made up for with perceptibility. The Serbian Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, completed in the last years of Ottoman rule (1873), is on a hill top overlooking the city and highly visible from almost everywhere. The Catholic Franciscan Monastery and Church of Sts. Peter and Paul on the west side of the river, also built in the last years of Ottoman rule, had at that time a bell tower, thus was as perceptible as the mosques near it. Both were destroyed in the 1992–95 war and rebuilt, but with even greater visibility. The rebuilt bell tower on the Franciscan monastery and church is the tallest such tower in Bosnia and Herzegovina at 107 meters, and towers over the city. In addition, the 33 meters tall Millennium cross on Mount Hum overlooking the city also



FIGURE 6 *Mostar, Sinan Paša džamija 1557/1949; 2021 (note: Catholic bell tower in background)*

Photo by Robert M. Hayden, 2022.

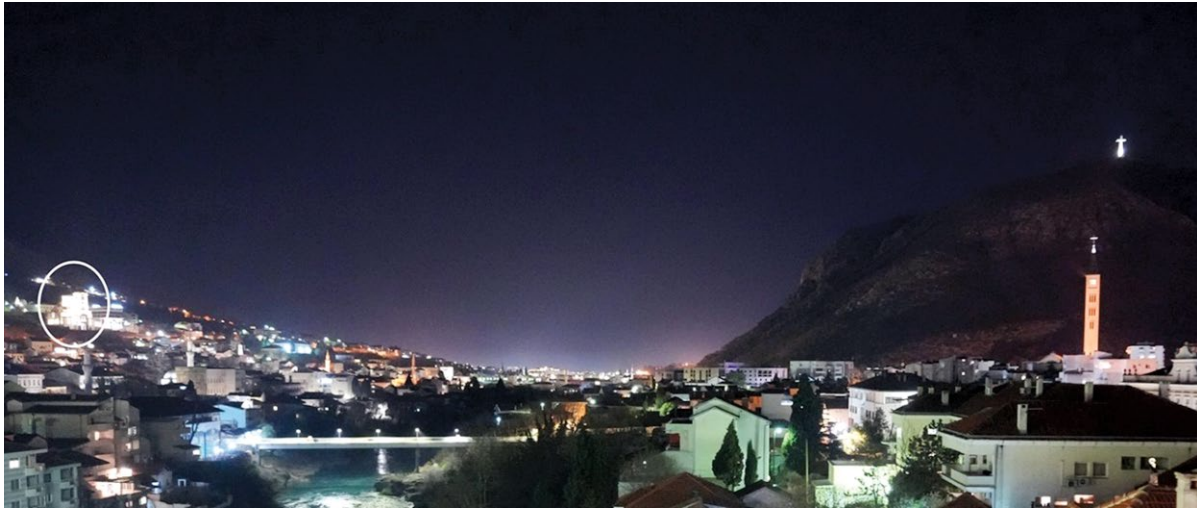


FIGURE 7 *Mostar at night, from north: the Serbian cathedral (circled on left) bell tower on Franciscan Monastery and Millenium Cross on Mount Hum (right) are brightly illuminated, thus more perceptible than the multiple minarets in the valley*

Source: Photo by Robert M. Hayden, 2024.

marks Christian presence. These Christian structures are brightly illuminated at night, much more than the minarets of the mosques.

Zenica

Zenica saw the least damage to religious structures of any of these three cities. The socialist infrastructure, on the other hand, underwent significant changes; but these are the subject of Mirza Džananović's article in this special issue, so it will not be discussed here.

SUMMARIES OF THE THREE TOWNS

Mostar is the clearest example of an Ottoman town that developed in a place that was sparsely populated when the Ottomans arrived, and it has also maintained, or rebuilt, much of the original town structure. Furthermore, the extensions of the city that were built by the Austro-Hungarian and Yugoslav rulers are reflected in the division of the city into predominantly Bosniak and predominantly Croat sections during the 1992-95 war, and since.

Banja Luka also presents a case of the development of an Ottoman town in space sparsely populated when the Ottomans arrived there, which let them develop their city without need-

ing to accommodate non-Muslims. This condition changed when the Austro-Hungarian Empire took over the administration of Bosnia, but the major changes to the physical distribution of religious buildings was to leave the mosques as they were, but expanding the town and creating a new administrative center for it. This new center was dominated by Christian buildings, primarily Roman Catholic. With the expulsion of the Austro-Hungarian administration and the creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the Muslim sediment of buildings eroded, especially where the Muslim population had left neighborhoods, and the Orthodox Christian sediment increased, especially in the center of the city. World War II and the period of socialist Yugoslavia led to erosion of the Orthodox Christian sediment at the center, and even more so the layer of Muslim structures. The 1992–95 war produced the near-total erosion of the Muslim sediment, some erosion of the Roman Catholic layers, and the re-sedimentation of Serbian Orthodox Christian structures. In the decades since the end of the war, the Roman Catholic layer has been rebuilt, as has also been part of the Muslim layer. But the Muslim rebuildings have been peripheral to the center of the city that the Austrians had begun and Republika Srpska has expanded. At the same time, the Serbian sediment has been extended into parts of the former Ottoman town, Donji Šeher, where there had not been Christian struc-

tures earlier, and a new church with a tall bell tower is in the center of the group of mosques closest to the part of the city dominated by Christian structures.

These trajectories of Banja Luka religioscapes changing through time are in accordance with the predictions of the Antagonistic Tolerance model, even to the point of the re-sedimentation of the mosques no intruding into the physical domination of the center of the city by Christian structures.

Zenica is different, in a number of ways. First the original town was located mainly on only one side of the river, not on both as in Mostar and Banja Luka. Second, it was a smaller settlement, until industrialization with Austro-Hungarian Empire. Churches were located outside of the Ottoman town but move towards center of town under Austro-Hungarian Empire and SHS/Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as also does the synagogue. In terms of Ottoman town development it is mainly interesting as an example of a smaller place. The developments during Austro-Hungarian Empire and Kingdom of Yugoslavia can be used to demonstrate the ways in which the construction of Christian buildings after Ottoman rule was ended embodied the end of overall dominance of Islam as well, and also of competing elements of the Christian communities.

Zenica is especially interesting because of the heavy symbolic presence of labour/workers/ proletariat from late 19th century through state socialism and even into the post-Yugoslavia transformations. In that regard, the monument to men killed in the 1990s wars as workers (miners) rather than martyrs of Islam (šehidi) is interesting, though the latter (šehidi) are recognized in the monument in the center of the town. Though it is from the edge of Maglaj rather than Zenica, this photo of the intersection of the streets Radnička and Šehidska seems symbolic.

CONCLUSION: RE-SEDIMENTATIONS OF ERODED PASTS AND CLAIMS TO NEW FUTURES

The intertemporal developments of the religioscapes of these three towns provides phys-

ical evidence of William Faulkner's famous comment that 'The past is never dead. It's not even past,' but also leads to a commentary on it. In these three cities, the development of the religioscapes has been competitive, reflecting changing patterns of dominance by Muslims, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, with Jews, though never dominant, given some central locations until their near-elimination from Bosnia and Herzegovina in World War II. When state secularism was dominant under socialism, the religioscapes of all communities were eroded or at least new sedimentations were impeded.

Post-socialism, political and social actors throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina have fostered re-sedimentations of eroded religioscapes from the past, and the creation of new sedimentations as well, in the religiously nationalized landscape (Hayden & Katić, 2021). The post-socialist politics within Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Entities and within the FBH, the cantons), while officially secular, have favoured the religion of the dominant community. Not surprisingly, the leaders of the Bosniak, Croat and Serb communities have turned in part to the periods in which their religious communities were dominant: Bosniaks to the Ottoman past, Croats to the pre-Ottoman kingdom under (in at least their view) Croatian royalty and the post-Ottoman rule by Austria-Hungary, and Serbs to images of medieval Serbian resistance to Islam and later to Ottoman rule, and to the successes of Serbia and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in establishing Serb-dominated states.

But these invocations of past empires are not just a matter of imperial nostalgia, despite Turkish PM Davutoğlu's explicit references at the dedication of the Ferhadija in Banja Luka, to a continued presence of Turkey to develop Ottoman heritage in Bosnia. Bosniaks have turned to many other Muslim countries and built new sacral structures that have no connection with Ottoman heritage. One such structure is the 2022 mosque at Gornji Zalik in Mostar, near the Džemal Bjedić University campus, financed primarily by Saudi Arabia. This two-minaret mosque is in a very modern

style that has nothing in common with Ottoman heritage, and is located in a place where there was no mosque before; in fact, the location was part of an old Austro-Hungarian military base. For their part, the renovations of the Roman Catholic sacral structures in Mostar are much more visible than their Austro-Hungarian originals were, as discussed above. Similarly, in Banja Luka the rebuilt Ottoman-heritage mosques in the formerly Donji Šeher are now accompanied by a new Serbian Orthodox Church, Bogojavlenski Hram (Temple of the Theophany, a name that itself challenges the tenets of Islam), on a location where there was not a church during any earlier period. These new manifestations are not invocations of the past so much as new sedimentations manifesting or contesting present and future dominance in these locations.

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R. M. Hayden: conceptualization, writing – original draft preparation, investigation, funding acquisition, validation

A. Šiljeg: investigation, methodology, software, visualization

I. Marić: investigation, methodology, software, visualization

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