

ISLAM AS A EUROPEAN RELIGION: SOME VIEWS ON ISLAM IN THE TERRITORY OF THE EX-YUGOSLAVIA - THE CASES OF SLOVENIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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ABSTRACT

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The paper wishes to present the example of two republics from the ex-Yugoslavia: Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina that claimed independence in 1991, and to draw attention to some of the stereotypes about Islam and Muslims, national mythologies and racism that have served as tools in the hands of politicians and culminated in the form of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stereotypical conceptions about Islam and Muslims still mark the attitude of Slovenia's inhabitants towards the Muslims who live in Slovenia as Slovenian citizens. In the article I will expose some consequences of this stereotypical perception of the "other" and "different".

Key Words: Stereotype, Racism, Islam. Bosnia Herzegovina

Islam as a European Religion

Islam is, and always was a European religion. Historically, the area we now regard as Europe has virtually always been home to Muslims.

The presence of Muslims in one or other part of Continental Europe is almost as old as the history of Islam itself. Jorgen S. Nielsen identifies three

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distinct phases of large scale Muslim communities. The first one of these has passed into history, namely the period of Islamic Spain and Muslim rule in Sicily. The two following phases have, on the other hand, left permanent communities. The first was the result of the spread of the Mongol armies during the thirteenth century. The successor states became Muslim, and one of these, the Khanate of the Golden Horde, centred in the Volga basin north of the Caspian Sea, left a permanent Muslim population of various Tatar groups stretching from the Volga down to the Caucasus and the Crimea. As itinerant traders and soldiers, many of these later travelled around the Russian empire and established colonies in places like Finland and the area which today straddles the border between Poland and the Ukraine (Nielsen, 1999: 1).

The third phase is the period of Ottoman expansion into the Balkans and central Europe. This was the context for the settlement of Turkish populations which still survive today in parts of Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Greece. Numbers of the Ottoman subject populations also became Muslim, to the extent that Albania became a country with Muslim majority, and Slav groups in Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia, and parts of Bulgaria also became Muslim.

The sad story of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina

For those who do not understand the historical presence of Islam in Europe, the presence of Islam in Europe was, and still is, perceived as something that belonged to the past, as something »back warded«, a foreign body on a European soil that had been (or should have been) eradicated with the defeat of the Ottomans. The European Muslims in the Balkans were associated with the Ottoman conquest of Europe and considered an anachronism. This is very much also the local prejudice that many Christians hold against Muslims in the former Yugoslavia.

Since their formation in the 15th century the Bosnian Muslims, who have self-constituted themselves as a political nation with some specific features in relation to their Islamic acculturation (with Bosnian language and Bosnian/Slavic ethnical basis), continuously have to fight for survival.

During the aggression in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina the Bosnians lost 8.1 % of their entire population, mainly civilians. Thousands of sacral buildings, the main part of premises and cultural property, their economy,

agriculture and infrastructure have all been ruined. More than half of the inhabitants were bound to leave their homes, among which 750 thousand were deported abroad.

All relevant specific features of Bosnians – national, cultural, traditional, religious and linguistic, and even those pertaining to their self-nomination and names, were disproved from the anti-Islamic inhabitants or by their Christian neighbours. We are certain that the reasons for such attitude towards Islam as the European “Other” could be found in the Western prejudice towards Islam, as well as in its fear of “Other” and “Different” which can be traced back for centuries.

Even during the periods of an increased interest for getting to know other cultures and languages (which resulted in foundation of orientalism as a branch of social science), Islam was regarded as an outmoded culture, which belongs to past, rather than seen from a pluralistic perspective of understanding cultures and religions as alive and creative, says Mustafa Spahić (Spahić, 1996, 6).

In the early years of the war in Bosnia, the conflict was sometimes portrayed by outside observers and commentators as being between Muslims and Christians along the fault lines of »Western« and »Eastern« civilizations as outlined by Samuel Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations*. But Bosnians were, and still are fully assimilated into the European mould!

In the Balkans a special negative estimation about Islam springs from the Osmanli- Turkish or rather oriental reign, not in accord with the new conditions. This has served as an excuse for standpoints and procedures against Islam and Muslims with the aim of their destruction.

According to Spahić, a typical example of this kind of attitude towards Islam and Bosnians in the South-Slavic area would be the Serbian and Montenegrin “recipe”, found in the poem by Peter Petrović Njegoš, *Gorski vjenac*. Until today this poem has been cyclically used in ways which are getting more and more radical. In 1703, Danilo Šćepčević, ruler and founder of the Petrović lineage, summoned a gathering of the family leaders, where a genocidal, ecclesiastic and legal platform has been formulized: “In the interest of preservation of the Orthodox State, all the Muslim should be baptized, banished or killed.” This decision has been unequivocally accepted, and boldly put in practice under the motto of searching “poturice”, which means that

anyone who dares to believe, think or live differently will be destroyed. This obscure and non-civilized ideology with the help of nationalism and chauvinism has ended up in Serbian and Montenegrin neo-Nazism and orthodox fundamentalism (Spahić, 1996, 7).

For centuries Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a meeting place of several religions. For many centuries, it served as an example of religious tolerance in Europe, as all religious practices there would constantly borrow or recapitulate elements from other religions, their compatibility being one of their main and most important traits.

The tolerance that had existed throughout Bosnia's history probably owed chiefly to the indifference of most Bosnians to formal religion. Since religion was worn loosely, Bosnians freely and frequently changed faiths to make alliances with more religiously zealous neighbouring nobles, but the basic geographical division prior to the Ottoman conquer was: Orthodox were to be found in Hum/Herzegovina to the south and along the Drina river; Catholics were to be found in the north and west, with the Franciscan mission and the Bosnian Church in the centre.

In the summer of 1463, the Kingdom of Bosnia was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The members of the national Church as well as other inhabitants of the Kingdom of Bosnia never held much prejudice against the Muslim faith as they held against the Catholic faith that was imposed on them from the side of Hungary or against the Orthodox Church.

In the beginning, the islamisation was strictly formal as it only meant to accept Muslim names. Some authors believe that the main reason for it was the economic benefits, enjoyed by farmers, merchants and others who had converted into Islam. Still others (for example Harry Norris) think that the most important factor for converting into Islam was the syncretism, the similarity between popular Christianity that had existed here before, and the new popular Islam, both different from the religious orthodoxy (Norris, 1993). The Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina namely maintained old, pre-Christian and Christian practices and rituals: cult of the protector, Christmas rituals, practices regarding weddings, faith in demons and witches, worship of family saints, superstition, faith in miracles... The Christians and the Muslims acted as Godfathers and Godmothers to one another and were also exchanging visits on the occasion of Christmas and *bayram*. In his book on religions in Bosnia Mitja Velikonja

presents a heterogeneity of Bosnian beliefs and practices. For example, the Franciscans used to consecrate amulets of the Muslims, which would include the consecration of the cross, the most important symbol in Christianity. The Muslims would regularly pray in Catholic churches, attend masses, kiss the icons, glorify Virgin Mary or colour the Easter eggs. The dervishes used recitations from Koran to heal Christians in need. The Christians would often seek help with *hojas* or Muslim priests, while the Muslims would go to the Roman Catholic churches or to Orthodox monasteries (Velikonja, 1998, 88-90).

The elements of Christianity and Islam have constantly been interweaving and the popular Islam as well as Christianity remained syncretic and full of superstition. According to Fine, most Bosnians, particularly the peasants, who represented majority of the society, religion (of all three faiths) stood at considerable distance from formal religious institutions; religion remained centred in villages, where ritual acts constituted one's religion (Fine, 2002, 8). The so-called religious concerns of the Bosnian peasants mostly centred on practices rather than doctrine. "The interaction between religious communities on the village level during the Ottoman period, supported by the local priests, most of whom were locals, including the village *hodjas* and the Franciscans, allowed the development of what Bosnian culture truly is, shared by Bosnians of all faiths and distinct from that of the neighbouring regions (now states)"(Fine, 2002, 8).

This specific religious eclecticism remained prominent until the last decade of the 19th century, when Pan-Serbian and Pan-Croatian ideas flooded Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The adherents of the Orthodox and the Catholic Church from Bosnia and Herzegovina started to seek their national identity outside the borders of their homeland, considering the neighbouring nations, namely Croatians and Serbians. It is important to notice, that in the Middle Ages the local population saw itself as Bosnians; people called Serbians and Croatians did not live on Bosnian property. Under the Ottomans, ethnicity played no role, until this concept gradually began penetrating Bosnia in the nineteenth century. Closely connected to the Ottoman Empire and attached to Muslim faith, Slavic Muslims were the only ones in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain their above all religious identity up to the 20th century. But it is important to stress

that throughout the Ottoman period and to the present, members of the three religious communities and of the present ethnic ones, spoke the same language.

As mentioned above, in the last decade of the 19th century, Pan-Serbian and Pan-Croatian ideas flooded Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together with religious mythology they acted beyond self-conscious beliefs and affected the atheists as much as the believers. Michael Sells first founded the term Christo-Slavicism to describe the national religious mythology of the south Slavic nations (Sells, 1996). This interrelated system of myths shows Slavic Muslims as betrayers of Christian faith (even murderers of Christ) and their own nation. Christo-Slavic mythology is based on three closely connected myths, formed in the 19th century. First one speaks about the conversion into Muslim faith because of fear and greed (the character of a person turned Turk), the second one explains how national religious groups existed through centuries, while the last one strives to present the absolute corruption of the Ottoman authority (the character of the mean Turk). Such thinking is based on the conclusions that the Slavs are Christian by nature and that conversion to Islam equals the betrayal of the idea of being Slavic. This mythic logic naturally leads to conclusion that a change of faith automatically means a change of nationality.

An interesting research conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the "Institute for national relations research" in 1988 (data published by Ibrahim Bakić in his book *Nation and religion*,) points to a relation between attachment to one's nation and relationship between a nation and its religion. The stronger the national attachment, the more recurring is the identification of a nation with its religion. Same research has also shown that among people who were visiting churches and mosques there was only 39% of young Muslims, while 65% were young Croats and only 26% young Serbs from Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bakić 1994).

Despite the low percentage displaying religious participation, this was to be a generation who later fought a religious war.

Harry Norris presents some myths about native and foreign Muslim conspiracy. The following elements of the "Serbian" attack on Islam and Yugoslavian Muslims proved to be effective:

- Tito was to blame for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in Yugoslavia, for he wanted to draw near to Arabic and Muslim countries
- Arabic Muslims wanted to take over the world and establish one united Muslim country
- essentially, Muslim faith displays a tendency to destroy others and the Yugoslavian Muslims are therefore dangerous
- Slavic Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina have voluntarily betrayed their nation and religion (Norris, 1993, 295-297).

Despite the efforts to impugn such mythologies, the consequences of similar ways of stereotypic thinking or attitude towards Muslims and Islam can also be seen in Slovenia, a former Yugoslavian republic. It is to be said that most of the Muslims living in Slovenia come from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Slovenia and Muslims

The very perception of Muslims as Muslim, as a distinct religious group, is a perception associated with certain stereotypes and attitudes held by the majority of community.

Slovenia, a full member of the European Union since May, 2004, despite its 2.4% share of Muslim population is one of the rare European countries which still does not have a mosque.

As early as 1969, the Muslims living in Slovenia made a request for a mosque to be built in Ljubljana and they have been waiting for permission to build it since then. What fears of Islam torment Slovenian public to induce them to infringe on a basic constitutional right of their fellow citizens of Muslim faith? How well do Slovenians really know Islam, so that they feel comfortable making judgments and taking up positions that bear a consequence on the interrelationship between the Muslim and non-Muslim populations, to the point of fomenting intolerance? And what are the members of the Islamic Religious Community in Slovenia able and willing to do to establish a better dialogue with the wider public?

There has been little written about Muslims in Slovenia; and few scientific papers on this topic have been able to introduce in a reliable manner the subject of the history of Islam in our country, the attitude of the wider public towards the Muslim population of Slovenia, and the attempts and desire of the Muslims to find their place in the Slovenian environment in a religious as well as a wider cultural sense.

Two (relatively) isolated studies of the position of the Slovene media and public opinion towards Islam are the works of Ahmed Pašić (Pašić, 2002) and Srečo Dragoš (Dragoš, 2003). Pašić establishes that despite the opinion of the Ljubljana Mayor's Office spokesperson, who in 2001 stated that having a mosque was one of the constitutional rights of the Muslim population in Slovenia, there are problems with public opinion, as Slovene Islamophobia is intense, even though most Slovene citizens do not know much about Islam or the Koran (Pašić, 2002, 112). Pašić further claims that the authorities hold double standards. In 2001, the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Paul visited Slovenia and was received by Slovene authorities with full honours, although according to Pašić he had "sanctioned" the Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 male Muslims in 1995. In the same year, the supreme leader of the Islamic Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dr Mustafa Cerić, also visited Ljubljana, but could not obtain an audience with the Ljubljana Mayor nor Archbishop, due to their other engagements (Pašić, 2002, 112). Pašić also mentions two articles from the daily newspapers about the construction of a mosque: on January 6, 1994, the *Delo* daily published an article titled "NSAS Orders a Demolition of the Mosques," about the demand of the National-Social Association of Slovenia to have all the mosques in Slovenia torn down. The absurdity of the article was blatant--there are no mosques anywhere in Slovenia. The second example mentioned is an article from the *Slovenske novice* daily, published on May 5, 1997, in which the author in his article titled "No Room for a Mosque" warns about Nostradamus' prophecy that there will come a time when Christianity in Europe will be overwhelmed by a wave of Islam and the 'Muhammadan' call to prayer will be heard everywhere (Pašić 2002, 113).

More examples are given by Srečo Dragoš, who as a member of the Intolerance Monitoring group at the Peace Institute also analyses the political attitude towards Muslims in Slovenia. One of the characteristics of Slovene policy (domestic as well as foreign), says Dragoš, is that when it comes to

sensitive matters it usually hedges; Slovene politicians speak out on delicate issues – which the attitude towards Muslims in Slovenia undoubtedly is – only if they absolutely have to (Dragoš, 2003, 47). According to Dragoš, the intolerance towards Islam did not originate with the September 11 events, but was present in Slovenia even before; in fact, the first efforts to build a mosque in Slovenia reach back 30 years and all attempts to determine its location so far have failed. This, says Dragoš, is clear evidence that the construction of a mosque in Slovenia has been systematically obstructed. The only question here is whether the obstruction is spatial, social or mental. The results of the 2002 public opinion poll on the building of a mosque showed that 42.3% of the people polled were in favour of the construction of the mosque, 42.3% against it, and 5.3% in favour on condition that “the mosque be not in my immediate environment” (Dragoš, 2003, 53).

According to Marko Kerševan the lengthy decision making process regarding the Ljubljana mosque, or better, the postponement of such a decision, is itself evidence enough that the discussion on the mosque is extraordinarily burdened with contradictory views and principles on one side as well as very material and symbolic interests, prejudice and ignorance on the other side... (Kerševan, 2005, 184).

In Kerševan's opinion we can take as a starting point the “exonerating” cognizance that we are neither the first nor the last to decide on a mosque: “if there is a mosque in Rome, the centre of (Catholic) Christianity and ancient European history, and another one in the centre of London, the metropolis of a former colonial dominator of a large part of the Muslim world, if there are mosques in Andalusia, a land of such a troubled and disputed Christian reconquista, and a mosque in Zagreb, the capital of the country that used to be threatened though never was conquered by the Islamic State, if there is a mosque in Dublin, in ultra-Catholic Ireland, which never in its history had come in contact with the Islamic world, not to mention the French, German and Scandinavian mosques - what harm could a mosque in Ljubljana possibly cause?” (Kerševan, 2005, 184-185)

Still, if we relate the case of the attitude of the Slovenian public and media towards the Muslim issue we can see that Slovenian intolerance of Muslims is not an isolated example in Europe. The recent events in Bosnia-Herzegovina are the clearest indication of the dilemma of Muslim communities

in Europe and in western societies in general. In their confrontation with the west Muslim communities – native (for instance in the Balkans) or immigrant (such as those of western Europe, North America and Australia) – are faced with the cruelty of racism as well as religious and ethnic intolerance. In what way should Muslim communities endeavour to preserve their identities? Should they integrate, assimilate, isolate or even emigrate?

Conclusion

The stereotypical Slovenian idea of Islam is, however, not only conditioned by the historical presence of the Turks in the Balkans. In her dissertation entitled “The Image of Islam in the Delo Newspaper” (“Podoba islama v časniku Delo”), Polona Urh presented several interrelated and interdependent factors on the basis of which the western European (among them the Slovenian) and the US media, despite the illusion of religious tolerance, encourage intolerance towards Islam. These are:

- the history of Europe from the Middle Ages onwards, which we have already mentioned (Muslim incursions in Europe – the Turks in Vienna, the Moors in Spain)
- the modern history of the second half of the 20th century: from the problems beginning with proclamation of the State of Israel to the crises caused by dramatic oil price increases, the Iranian Islamic revolution, etc.
- terrorist attacks in the US on September 11, 2001
- ignorance on the part of journalists
- journalism as a business; the marketing orientation of a journalism that sells sensations is not interested in Islam as a religion nor in its culture, art, history, society etc., rather only focuses on news clichés that are popular with readers and which only serve to further strengthen people's stereotypical notions.

In addition to the issues regarding the construction of the mosque, Urh also tackled articles about terrorism, Islamic extremists, Islamic fundamentalists, war in Iraq, the position of women in Islam and the fear of the

spread of Islam in Europe.¹ Especially the latter, the fear of Muslims, who are gaining increasingly greater political power in Europe due to increasing migrations of the Muslim population to the west, and the related, concomitant economic problems - unemployment, inability to assimilate, social immobility, disruptions, terrorism, etc. - creates the anxiety and intolerance of Muslim immigration reflected in Slovenia. But it should be mentioned here that the main waves of Muslim immigration took place many years ago.

Slovenian notions of Islam are more or less the same as the general "western" ones. Conspicuously absent in discussions about Islam in the western world is the knowledge about this religion and tradition. Bashay Quarishy (2003) finds that the west invented an 'Islam' that suits it best and most satisfactorily fulfils western political and psychological needs. Instead of stressing the diversity of the Islamic countries, an east-west antithesis is emphasised. In this way, the west forms and protects the European identity. Tomaž Mastnak (1998, 16-32) maintains that the hatred towards Muslims was of the greatest significance in the formation of Europe as one of the historical structures of western unity; the history of Europe cannot be understood properly if we do not take into account its relationship towards the Muslim world, as it is precisely the antagonism between Europe and the Muslims that contributed to the formation of the European identity and the constructions of the Muslim world as an antithesis of western Christianity. The hostility towards "the Turk" was of key importance in the formation of Europe as a political community, while anti-Muslim ideas and sentiments play a most important role in the generation of a collective identity.

The positive presentation of Slovenian society as democratic, developed, free, and even tolerant, together with the negative presentation of Islamic society as the opposite (i.e., undemocratic, discriminatory against women, undeveloped, violent and intolerant) was distinctly evident in the Slovenian public debate on the question of the construction of a mosque.

According to Kerševan the attitude towards Muslims and Islam in contemporary Europe – and consequently also in our country – is one of the

¹ A great majority of the articles described Islam in a negative way, and even those whose titles showed promise of a neutral report of events sooner or later turned negative. What is also important is the fact that the texts with positive titles were usually very short – brief news items published somewhere off to the side of the page. (Urh, 2003, 18).

decisive tests of the life ability of the principles of western civilisation and a test of how strong its fundamental principles regarding the arrangement of everyday life really are. Moreover, the construction of a mosque is a right derived from our most fundamental constitutional and legal principles, those which are also the direct expression of internationally declared human rights, according to which "everyone has the right to...either alone or in community with others and in public or private...manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance." (Kerševan, 2005, 185-187).

Conclusion

The survey that we conducted at the Science and Research Centre of the University of Primorska in Koper among the Islamic communities in Slovenia calls attention to the difficulties encountered by Slovenian Muslims, while at the same time demonstrating their openness and willingness to engage in a dialogue with a wider Slovenian public. The complete outcome of the research has been published in an article "Muslims in Slovenia" (Zalta 2005).

Many issues involving the attitude of the Slovenian public towards the Muslims living in Slovenia remain open. We should be aware of the fact that the Muslims in Slovenia are Slovenian citizens with all related rights and duties. The projections of doubts, stereotypes and the general "western" view, as well as the consequent generalizing of the Muslim problems being a result of too scarce knowledge of Islam in general— are nevertheless unacceptable. The Muslims in Slovenia need a mosque as a sign of equality and of being acknowledged by the wider public. Only in this way can they enter unburdened a dialogue with the Slovenian society and contribute to the spreading of cultural and social horizons, including their own.

In what way should Slovenian Muslims preserve their own cultural and religious identities without ghettoising themselves, while at the same time maintaining a productive contact with the wider Slovenian society and contributing to its formation and progress? First of all, the results of the survey stress the importance of education, both secular education and religious (which the Slovenian Muslims, in their opinion, currently cannot share in, due to the lack of suitable cadre). But just as important is the knowledge of a broader European tradition, including Judaism and Christianity, European values, and the establishment of a dialogue that may present, compare and connect these

different values. This means more public debates, cultural meetings, TV shows, literary translations, cultural evenings, and pleasure in exposure to diversity.

Let us mention one more question from the survey for the sake of curiosity. It read: How well do you know Islamic philosophy and theology? Most of the respondents answered positively and listed numerous and different representatives, from Avicenna to Ibn Arabi, from Rumi to Dr. Enes Karić. Only two of the participants in the survey answered that philosophy in Islam did not exist. The knowledge of the brilliant Muslim heritage, of the times when the studies of mathematics, optics, geography, historiography, astronomy and navigation prospered, when Rumi's poetry, al-Hallaj's philosophy and Avicenna's science co-formed the European and broader cultural history, is to me of key importance for the formation of a progressive Muslim identity. The stereotypical Slovenian notions of Islam are slowly being penetrated by a ray of deeper truth, which is being emanated by the recent translations of Rumi and Hafis into Slovene.

ÖZET

BİR AVRUPA DİNİ OLARAK İSLAM: ESKİ YUGOSLAVYA BÖLGESİNDE İSLAM HAKKINDA BAZI GÖRÜŞLER - SLOVENYA VE BOSNA HERSEK ÖRNEKLERİ

Bu çalışma eski Yugoslavya'da iki cumhuriyeti; 1991'de bağımsızlıklarını ilan eden Slovenya ve Bosna Hersek örneklerini sunmayı amaçlamakta ve İslamiyet ve Müslümanlar hakkındaki önyargıların bazılarını, siyasetçilerin elinde araç olarak kullandıkları ve Bosna Hersek'teki savaşın yapısında doruğa çıkan ulusal mitolojiler ve ırkçılığa dikkat çekmektedir. İslamiyet ve Müslümanlar hakkındaki önyargılı düşünceler Sloven vatandaşı olarak Slovenya'da yaşayan Müslümanlara karşı Slovenlerin tutumlarını göstermektedir. Bu makalede "öteki" ve "farklı"ya dair bu önyargısal anlayışın sonuçlarını ortaya koymayı hedeflemekteyim.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Önyargı, Irkçılık, İslamiyet, Bosna Hersek

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ABSTRACT

THE CHURCHES AND EARLY DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS OF ISLAM IN BOSNIA
THE REALITY AND HISTORICAL PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS IN THE 19TH CENTURY

Local approaches to Islamic history and its perception in the 19th century are examined and critically interpreted in a comparative context. The paper discusses a number of discrepancies between actual and public perception of Islam in the religious sphere. The purpose of the paper is to shed light on the public knowledge of the early Ottoman period and its perception in the 19th century. It aims to contribute to the study of the encounter between different religious communities and their representations. In the first two sections of the paper, the author discusses the historical context, regional structure of the Ottoman Empire and its public perception in the 19th century. The third section discusses the public perception of Islam in the 19th century, focusing on the encounter between different religious communities in the Ottoman Empire.

Key Words: Bosnia, Ottoman period, religious perception

I will not say anything new if I say that the history of the Ottoman Empire demands a critical re-interpretation, a delimitation of the pseudo-scientific and pseudo-historical webs in which it is entangled. The author must ask for the rational reconstructions, exercises and asymptotic analysis of the past, and they

