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Mark Pinson, ed. *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993. xiii + 187 pp. $14.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-932885-09-8.

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* Introduction, by Mark Pinson, pp. ix-xiii

* *The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society*, by John V.A. Fine, pp. 1-21

**Bosnia under Ottoman Rule*, 1463-1800, by Colin Heywood, pp. 22-53

**Ottoman Bosnia*, 1800-1878, by Justin McCarthy, pp. 54-83

**The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina under Austro-Hungarian Rule*, 1878-1918, by Mark Pinson, pp. 84-128

**Bosnian Muslims: From Religious Community to Socialist Nationhood and Post-Communist Statehood*, 1918-1992, by Ivo Banac, pp. 129-153

* Appendix: Information Resources and List of Maps of Bosnia, by Mark Pinson, pp. 155-170 ––

In the final essay of this collection of papers presented at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard in the spring of 1993, Ivo Banac offers a comic Bosnian proverb: "They understood one another like Nasruddin Hoca and the Frenchman," which is to say, not at all, or they thought they understood one another but they did not (pp. 129-130). The expressed goal of this conference and of these essays, both individually and collectively, is to remedy more tragic misunderstandings and misperceptions of the history and identity of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The organizers of the conference sought not to address the situation in the former Yugoslavia directly, but rather to offer "the intelligent lay reader a continuous history of the Muslims of this region by highly qualified specialists" (p. viii). They therefore asked the participants to provide syntheses of successive periods of Bosnian history and, dispensing with the usual scholarly apparatus, to write "for a general public of non-specialists, non-historians" (p. xiii). By making such authoritative accounts accessible, they hoped to counter the ignorance and willful distortions of the history of the Muslim communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina, who have so often been perceived as "spiritual and 'ethnic' outsiders" in Europe (p. viii).

The resulting collection of essays makes a case for the territorial integrity of Bosnia and for the integral place of the Muslims in Bosnian society. Moreover, because most other histories of Yugoslavia tend to emphasize the Serb-Croat conflict or the role that various great powers have had in the region, this collection offers a much-needed change of perspective by placing the Bosnian Muslims at the center of the story. For readers who wish to follow up on certain topics, most of the essays include at least some footnotes (despite the organizers' injunction to dispense with scholarly apparatus) and a longer or shorter bibliography. The editor, Mark Pinson, has also included a useful appendix of bibliographical resources for Yugoslavia, the Balkans, and Eastern Europe more generally, as well as two listings of maps of the region (older maps from the Harvard Library, and more recent maps from the RLIN on-line database).

The format of stand-alone essays for each chronological period makes this collection an attractive choice for a variety of courses, since individual essays could be assigned as complements to other texts. But the book is better read as a whole because each essay provides a different context for its history: reading them together not only fills in otherwise missing information but also

highlights the significance of certain themes. Justin McCarthy, for example, provides the only maps in the volume and a valuable geographic overview of the territory and economy of Bosnia. Mark Pinson is able to compare Bosnia with other provinces of the Ottoman Empire, other countries of the Balkans, and the territories of other regional powers. Together these essays trace the origins of the Muslim community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, its persistence and survival, and the development of its complex national identity .

John Fine and Colin Heywood focus on the religious history of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the origins of the Muslim community. Fine recounts his argument (familiar from his book, *The Bosnian Church: A New Interpretation* (Boulder, Colo., 1975)) that the medieval Bosnian church was not in fact heretical, but merely physically and intellectually isolated from the Catholic mainstream, and hence schismatic in its eccesiastical organization. Using the Ottoman tax registers, he shows that after the conquest there was no sudden, mass conversion of the Bosnian church to Islam, but rather a multiple process of population movements and conversions in the 15th and 16th centuries, in which all the confessions made gains against the Bosnian Church, and Islam and Orthodoxy in particular gained at the expense of Catholicism. Ivo Banac's sketch of the same period in the final essay (pp. 130-131), however, shows that Fine's arguments have only modified, and not displaced, older formulations.

Fine's account evenhandedly deflates the nationalist mythologies of all parties to the Bosnian conflict: It refutes Muslim claims to be the "original" Bosnians, the sole descendants of the Bosnian church [a view encouraged by the Austrians at the turn of the century, v. Heywood, p. 39], and it debunks the notion that the 19th-century nationalist definitions of Serb and Croat can be projected back into the middle ages. Yet when Fine asserts that the Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats all ultimately derive from a common "Slavic base" (pp. 3, 19), he seems inadvertently to yield the nationalist point–that the proper basis for a state is ethnic homogeneity. Surely there are other arguments that the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina (or the Jews or Gypsies or any ethnic minority) are, as Mark Pinson says, "at home where they are" (p. x).

In his account of the Ottoman 15th and 16th centuries, Colin Heywood asks to what extent the Muslim community of Bosnia was "what has often been claimed for it–a special case" (p. 28). His tentative, and surprising, answer is: "Not much" (p. 39). In contrast to Fine, who argues that Bosnians converted to Islam because they were not strongly attached to any organized church, Heywood links conversion rather to the growth of towns in the Ottoman period, a Balkan-wide phenomenon. Using primarily Ottoman sources and modern Turkish and Western scholarship, he offers suggestive bits of evidence for similar processes of conversion in other parts of the Balkans, and also for a Slavic lingua franca used in the Ottoman army and administration across the Balkans. Bosnian uniqueness, then, may lie less in extensive conversion to Islam among the native, Slavic-speaking peoples, than in its survival as a Muslim tidepool left by the receding Ottoman empire. In this regard, though Heywood has some harsh words about Mehmed the Conqueror ("a singleminded despot furnished with an ideology fit for his purpose," p. 25), he also implicitly contrasts the early Ottoman empire, which freely incorporated the native Christian nobility into the Ottoman army and administrative structure (pp. 32-33), with its 19th-century successor states which established themselves by driving out their Muslim population.

Nor did the Bosnian Muslim community survive unscathed into the 20th century, as the last three essays in the collection show. Justin McCarthy documents a loss of one third of the Muslim population of Bosnia by death or emigration between the insurrection of 1875 and the Austrian occupation in 1878, and Mark Pinson records subsequent waves of Muslim emigration after Austria instituted compulsory conscription in 1881, cracked down on the local Muslim political movement in 1900, and then annexed the province in 1908. Ivo Banac (pp. 132-34) finally draws the explicit conclusion that the relatively tolerant Austrian administration allowed the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina to survive and to adjust to life under Western political institutions and a Christian majority. But in a grim foreshadowing of recent events, Banac also records the claims of both Serbs and Croats to parts or the whole of Bosnia and the attempts to break up its regional unity under the Yugoslav government, until Tito restored its historic boundaries.

There is not room here even to sketch the winding path by which the Bosnian Muslims developed their modern sense of identity. The last three essays include such seeming contradictions as the Bosnian Muslims' vigorous resistance to centralizing reforms of the Ottoman government (McCarthy, pp. 74-78), the foundation of the "Kiraethane", the Muslim cultural and philanthropic society which began using, but then abandoned, Ottoman Turkish because few of its members could read or speak it (Pinson, pp. 105-106), and a Muslim intel-

ligentsia pressured until very recently to declare themselves as either Serb or Croat (Banac, pp. 134, 141,145). Even these contradictions, however, reveal significant aspects of the community: Muslim, Slavic-speaking, and strongly rooted in the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

There is much more of interest between the covers of this slim volume, yet several factors might limit its usefulness as a history of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina "for a general public of non-specialists." There is no map showing physical features and regions and place names to orient readers unfamiliar with Balkan geography. English-speakers will have difficulty, too, consulting the 40 Serbo-Croatian references (out of a total of 44) in Ivo Banac's bibliography. Finally, to appreciate these essays properly, the reader must already possess a basic knowledge of the general history of the Balkans. But within these limits, this collection accomplishes what it sets out to do–to offer a brief history of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is a story which has not been told before, and one to which specialists and non-specialists alike may now be willing to lend a sympathetic ear.

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