„Religion is one thing, nationality another“ –
The Islamic-European discourse of the 19th century on the example of Bosnia-Hercegovina

Abstract

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The Islam is often blamed for not differentiating between a spiritual and a public sphere and therefore is prone to mingle religion and politics: especially in post-colonial societies like Northern Africa, the Caucasus und the Balkans, the Islam served as the key point for creating a national identity. The „Islamic discourse of the 19th century“ proves the opposite: Muslim societies in the Russian or Austro-Hungarian empire (e.g. Tatars and Bosniaks) distinguished clearly between language and religion as the basis for their cultural and political identity. On the example of Bosnia-Hercegovina, I will show that during the time of the Austro-Hungarian rule, pan-Islamic „brotherhood“ was strictly limited to a non-political, spiritual level, whereas national concepts were always based on sharing the same language. Mostly unknown, this was an idea imported from Turkey, developed from a modernisation movement in the Islamic world. On the example of Bosnia-Hercegovina, I will analyse the two most influential Islamic political newspapers of the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century (Bošnjak/Bosniac and Behar/Blossom), in order to show how concepts of political togetherness were clearly separated from religious identity.

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I.

Introduction

„Where God commands ... I am a Muslim first, a Muslim second and a Muslim last and nothing but a Muslim ... But where India is concerned, where the welfare of India is concerned, I am an Indian first, an Indian second, and an Indian last and nothing but an Indian. ... I belong to two circles of equal size but which are not concentric. One is India and the other is the Muslim world ... we belong to these circles ... and we can leave neither“ (Muhammed Ali in a speech in London, 1930. Quoted Freitag, in Burke 1988, 115).

In the first number of the second year of Bošnjak – list za politiku, pouku i zabavu (Bosniac – Paper for Politics, Education, and Entertainment, Sarajevo: 1891-1910), Safvet-beg Bašagić, famous historian, editor of Bošnjak and later president of the Bosnian parliament, published the poem Šta je Bošnjak? (What is a Bosniac?):

What is a Bosniac?

What is a Bosniac? A little branch
Of the big trunk of the Slavs,
Whose name has been written
On the front page of each heroic battle.

What is a Bosniac? It's a holy name
That the world has known for long
That was shaking Vienna and Budapest
As well as Carigrad and the Kosovo.

What is a Bosniac? A people of knights,
Whose fairies spread their wings
From Durmitor to the hills of the Carpathian mountains
From the Balkans to the deep blue sea.

What is a Bosniac? It's a small people,
Standing between two worlds,
Vanquishing the European powers
Shattering Christian warriors.

What is a Bosniac? It's Davor's godchild,
A holy child – but with a bloody heart;
Ten times – and not died once,
Being Bosnian cannot be renounced.

(Bošnjak, No. 1, 1892)

In this poem, Bašagić places the Bosnian people in time and space – two important factors for the definition of a nation. The Bosnian/Bosniac\(^1\) is therefore a „small branch of the big slavic trunk“. As far as territory is concerned, Bosnia-Hercegovina extends from the borders with

\(^1\) „Bosnian“ (Bosanac) is the general term for the inhabitants of Bosnia-Hercegovina, while „Bosniac“ (Bošnjak) refers mainly to the Bosnian Muslims. However, both terms are even today indistinct in their use, even more soduring the Habsburg reign. For further discussion, see: Hösch, Edgar; Nehring, Karl; Sundhaussen, Holm (ed.) (2004): Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas. Wien. In this paper, „Bosnian“ will be used for the Bosnian people, no matter which confession, except for the original quotes. The Bosnian Muslims will be called „Bosnian Muslims“. 
Montenegro and the Carpathians in the south, from the Balkan mountains to the sea in East-West direction – all of it protected by Davor, southslavonic god of war. Davor’s protection also corresponds perfectly to the Bosnian people of „knights“ and draws a direct connection line to the Bosnian medieval past – the old, pre-islamic Bosnian kingdom.

Bašagić places the Bosnian populace furthermore „inbetween“, a phrase often used for all of the Balkan’s (self-)reception: Vienna and Budapest as the western powers on one side, Istanbul (Carigrad) representing the Ottoman Empire on the other. They have all influenced the Bosnian culture, but never defeated it. However, and this will be the main point of this paper. Bašagić, a believing Muslim and Bosnian patriot, does not define the Bosnian identity by religion. God or Allah are not mentioned in this poem and even in this designated Muslim newspaper no reference to a possible Bosnian (-Muslim) state religion is made. Instead, a simple equation will be set up in Bošnjak:

1) The Bosnian language is named after the river Bosna².
2) And the Bosnians are named after the Bosnian language.

But what caused this lack of religion in the national self-definition of Bašagić? Considering the current political discourse in Bosnia-Hercegovina that is almost disabled due to religious animosities – and compared to other national movements in the Balkans, where confession has always taken an important role for defining the people and connecting it to its historical heritage – the absence of religion is even more surprising. How did Bašagić come to this conviction?

II.
The Bosnian Muslim intellectuals at the end of the 19th century

Safvet-beg Bašagić belonged to a small group of intellectuals, calling themselves napredni Muslimani (progressive Muslims, Kemura 1986). They were participating in the tanzimat (as it was called in Turkey), a modernisation movement in the Islamic world. This modernisation movement went „far beyond a separation of state and church“, meaning that it was a „concept of values, of society, of the nation, and of the public, based on the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the idea of progress, and finally advocacy of an ethics not rooted in religion but proclaimed as rationalist“ (Roy 2007, 16). As a consequence, the Bosnian Muslims as well as

² This form of toponymy, the hydronym, can be traced back to Leibniz. Leibniz uses the names of rivers to prove in his Dissertatio de Origine Germanorum (1696) that Skandinavia is not the urheimat of the Germanic languages (see: Totok, Wilhelm; Haase (Hrsg.) (1966): Leibniz: Sein Leben, sein Wirken, seine Welt. Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen. Hannover).
Muslims all around the globe tried to establish *laïcité* at the end of the 19th century and base their nation-building only on language and cultural history.

Notwithstanding, if we assume that *laïcité* “defines national cohesion by asserting a purely political identity that confines to the private sphere any specific religious or cultural identity“ (Roy 2007, xiii), the total absence of religion in the Bosnian-Hercegovinian Muslim self-description at the end of the 19th century is surprising for two reasons:

On the one hand, there is the usual criticism that the Islam does not separate between a private and a public sphere (*al-Islam din wa dawla* = Islam is religion and state), and that the Muslim believer “can identify with only the community of believers (*umma*) and hence has no knowledge of the political society of citizens“ (Roy 2007, 42).

On the other hand, there is the traditional overlapping of ethnical and religious identity3 in the Balkan societies, deriving from centuries of organising the Ottoman subjects in confessional communities (*millet*). Strong symbols of identity, such as the sacred languages (Old Church-Slavonic in the Orthodox countries such as Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia; Latin in Catholic Croatian liturgy, Arabic within the Islamic community) with the according alphabets served as written proofs not only for this concept of ethno-confessional belonging, but also for the historical continuity within the individual group4.

Nevertheless, a unique historical situation had created this small group of young Bosnian intellectuals within the Balkan territories who were trying to revolutionise the political thought of the region: Bosnia-Hercegovina had always been situated on the very outer periphery of the vast Ottoman Empire and the impact of the confrontation of the traditional Islamic societies with western modernity through trade contacts (Ansary 2009, 217f.) didn’t reach the country in its full extend until the end of the 19th century. However, when the Austro-Hungarian government took over control after the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, the Bosnian Muslim society, as conservative as fringe regions usually are, was facing a great challenge for its traditional Islam5. The vagueness of the political circumstances after the Treaty of Berlin complicated the situation even further. Between 1878 and 1908, Bosnia was officially part of the monarchy, but *de jure* the Ottoman Sultan kept its sovereignty. The *mufti* of Istanbul was

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3 Robert D. Greenberg describes in *Language and identity in the Balkans* (Oxford: 2004) that „a Slav of the Muslim faith born in the Serbian Sandžak around 1930 would have almost certainly switched his ethnic identity three times in the course of his life. In his youth, he probably would have self-identified as a Serb, in Tito’s Yugoslavia as a Muslim, and after 1992 as a Bosniac“ (Greenberg 2004, 7).

4 Further complicating the definition of *nation*, *umma*, and *millet* was the same lack of clarity in the concepts as in the West: In the 19th century, „nation“ (*watan*) and „community“ (*umma*) was convertible for the Muslim intellectuals; „nation“ and „millet“ even the same word in Turkish (see: Wieland 2000, 90f.).

5 A conflict all the Islamic societies under western rule, like Pakistan and Egypt, as well as those countries under strong western influences like Afghanistan, Tunisia and the Caucasus countries had to deal with (see: Ansary 2009).
still to be named in the friday prayers and Emperor Franz Josef I. promised on the day of the occupation in his memorandum to the Bosnian people:

Your laws and institutions should not be arbitrarily overthrown, your customs and habits should be preserved. Nothing should be changed with violence, without a thorough consideration, whether it is needed or not“ (in: Sammlung 1 (1880), 3-4, Wiener Zeitung No. 172, 28th July 1878, also Džaja 1994, 58)⁶.

This well-meaning intention lead to a paradox overlapping of two cultural areas: the Muslim society would not let go of its traditional organisation and the Habsburg government was too precautious to provoke a revolt to adapt all administration to their own standards at once. In practice, this created two almost contradictory educational systems, existing at the same time. One Islamic, where the Muslim pupils would first learn to recite the Koran and later study Arabic and Turkish as well as Islamic law and Eastern history and literatures. The other one consisted of state-run „western“ schools, where German, Hungarian and French was taught as well as the Bosnian language, western history, and, of course, science (Džaja 1998). As in the other Islamic countries, where the new western influences opened the chances for studying in Europe, the dual system created a small group of Bosnian Muslim intellectuals who were brought up in both thinking traditions. They visited the madrasa, the Islamic primary school, in their home towns. Later, they continued at the public Gymnasium in Sarajevo, followed either by Islamic law in Sarajevo and Istanbul, in combination with western law in Zagreb or Vienna; or eastern and western languages and literatures in the same cities.

Both cultural areas influenced their thought:

1) Education was seen as the basis for every progress.
2) The Islamic faith was congealing regressive dogmatism and needed modernisation, to not dissociate itself from the society and end in atheism, like in the West.
3) Language, especially the mother tongue, was seen as the foundation of every community – and, in the next step, every nation.

The aim was to form a homo islamicus novus (Kemper 1999, 164), a modern, educated, and therefore better Muslim.

The reception of German philosophers such as Johann Gottfried Herder (e.g. Fragmente zur Deutschen Literatur, 1. part, Stuttgart, Tübingen 1827) was intensifying the elemental meaning of language:

Every nation has its own accumulator of thoughts turned into signs, this is the national language; a stock of centuries of collections, in- and decrease, like the moon, which has seen more revolutions and changes than a king’s treasure under uneven successors, a supply, often enhanced with robbery and prey of one’s

⁶ This and all of the following translations are my own.
neighbour, but, as it is, in the end belonging to one nation, which can own and use it alone – the treasure of thought of all people/the whole people. Authors of a nation! How can you use it? And a philologue of the nation, what could he show and explain through it? (Herder 1827, 38).

Neither „climate“, as Herder calls it, meaning the territory as a common heritage, nor military or political power could create the same sense of belonging as the mothertongue (Sundhaussen 1973, 27). This idea was popular among many cultures at that time and also Vuk Stefanović Karadžić, one of the most popular and influential Serbian linguists (and nationalists), was basing the unity of the Southslavic people on language in *Srbi svi i svuda* (1849) (Behschnitt 1980, 74).

But what is more, the Islamic reformers, especially the popular literary moderniser Namık Kemal, wrote that national unity is only „born from language“. Young-Ottoman and publisher of the most important Turkish political newspaper of the late 19th century, Ali Suavi, said: „Only who speaks Turkish, is a Turk“ (Kürşat 2003, 176).

So the Bosnian Muslim intellectuals were influenced from both sides, the West and East, about the meaning of the „national mothertongue“, which was ideally based on a widely spread local dialect (Herder 1827). Not only social unity between the urban nobility and the rural people would be stimulated by a common idiom; to reclaim the Bosnian-hercegovinian mothertongue would also bring unity to the different ethnical/religious groups – and would locate, at the same time, these groups in the Bosnian territory. A national concept based on religion, on the other hand, was not only „unmodern“, it would also split the Bosnian populace into three ethnical groups, all claiming the same ground.

Safvet-beg Bašagić (1870-1934), author of the poem from the first page of this paper, wanted to promote this Bosnian unity. But he was a believing Muslim. Secularisation, meaning that religion „ceases to be at the center of human life, even though people still consider themselves believers“ (Roy 2007, 7) was not aspired – an abolition of religion, as far as atheism, even less of an option. Not the faith *per se* was to be questioned, but how to combine Islam and western Enlightenment with all its implications (scientification, rationalisation, and most importantly

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7 „This principal, that a „people“ („narod“) needs its own language and literature is underscored in the very opening of the Literary Agreement signed by Serb and Croat intellectuals in 1850 that established a joint literary language: „We the undersigned – well aware that one people must have one literature, and seeing with sadness how our literature is splintered, not only in its writing system, but also in its spelling, have met to discuss how it might be possible to understand each other and to unite in our literature“. The signatories of this Agreement shared the conviction that the Central Southern Slavs of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Islamic faiths were at that time „one people“ worthy of a single language“ (Greenberg 2004, 9). The whole text of the Agreement in the original language, see Greenberg’s appendix. Although the Literary Agreement of Vienna promoted one Southslavic language for all the people, the same general thought can be transferred to „one Bosnian language“ for all ethnic or religious groups.
nationalism), in order to make the Muslim societies fit for the challenges of the 20th century. Roy (2007) describes two ways applied throughout Islamic history to consider the problem:

You may adopt the classical techniques of apologetics: dissect the arguments of adversaries by pointing out their internal contradictions and their hidden preconceptions. You then take a series of examples from history, dogma, or contemporary writers to demonstrate that, of course, Islam is compatible with modernity and laïcité. But this looking-glass polemic, on whichever side of it you are located, has the paradoxical disadvantage of agreeing on a shared assumption, which is thus strengthened by the debate – that there is, in fact, a truth as to what Islam does or does not say and that that truth defines the Muslim. The actor is replaced by a text.

Alternatively, you can go outside the confines of the debate by raising a fundamental question: How does a religion function within the social and political realm? How can a religion determine the conduct of its believers, particularly if it lacks a clergy to establish and disseminate the standards? How do believers reconstruct their religion, with or without the help of theologians? (Roy 2007, 8f.)

The Bosnian Muslims chose the first way. The aim was to find a way to define their own cultural identity, even more, their own Muslim culture within a now Christian empire. Apart from founding newspapers to discuss this idea publically, they wrote novels, plays and tracts all dealing with the same issue: to find „proofs“ for a concept of separating religious and national-political identity, based in the religion respectively on the Koran.

Bašagić's *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovina* (Short introduction to the past of Bosnia and Herzegovina, published 1900), for example, was the first historical chronic in Bosnian language and Latin alphabet. It is a truly patriotic work, explaining how the Bosnians kept their genuine Southslavic identity through the Ottoman period. The Sultan merely „led“ the country according to the Bosnian wish, while the Bosnian people had remained as a unit, which was formed during the times of the ancient Bosnian bogomil kingdom. In *A short introduction*, Bašagić instrumentalises the fivehundred years of Ottoman rule to promote the ever-existing Bosnian-Hercegovinian identity.

In his drama *Abdullah Paşa*, on the other hand, Bašagić expressed his modern and Bosnian-nationalist spirit (Gelez 2010, 345). Here, the historic Vizier Abdullah Paşa (1722-1785) chooses suicide over the abundance of his home provinces. „I give my head, but I don’t give one stone“ became the central phrase of that play, meaning: the homeland is more precious than any political or spiritual alliance.

But also his colleagues, most importantly Hercegovinian Osman Nuri Hadžić, were dealing almost exclusively with this topic: In Hadžić's two books *Islam i kultura* (Islam and culture, 1894) and *Islam i prosvjeta* (Islam and Enlightenment, 1903), he presents single *sura* in order to prove that the *Koran* itself promoted western education and laical political concepts: the western Enlightenment was not only compatible with the Islam, but actually just a further development from the old Islamic high culture.
And Osman Dikić, fellow Hercegovinian, combined in his poetry surprising elements: All printed in the Cyrillic alphabet used mainly in Serbia, he expresses in his South-Bosnian idiom a deep Islamic religiousness in accordance to Serbian patriotism.

So, the Bosnian Muslim intellectuals had a clear concept of religion. But how could they explain to their readers the detachment of faith from culture?

On the one hand, there is culture – that is, in the anthropological sense – the entirety of the ways of thinking and acting characteristic to a society. Religion exists only through a culture, which may be perceived as ethnic (Arab culture). In this case, religion has to do with ethnicity, customs, traditions. But how does this culture manifest itself in the conduct of an individual, particularly in a context involving the loss of cultural identity (...)? (Roy 2007, 9).

How to define the Bosnian (Muslim) culture in the Christian Habsburg Monarchy without religion? Two reform movements which started in different parts of the Ottoman empire were helping the Bosnian Muslim intellectuals to solve this problem: Indian Syed Ahmed Khan and his laical modernism, and Afghan Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani’s modern islamism.

Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) tried to find a solution to completely adapt to western modernity, without losing his own religions and cultural identity. To solve this problem, he declared the Islam a religion of reason. „The Islam is the last one of the religions of revelation, the time of reason began with the Islam“ (Ansary 2009, 254). Therefore, Muhammed was the last prophet, giving the people the „tools (...) they needed to search for a moral community, without inexplicable trials by ordeal“. Rational people „can act in a moral way, because they have understandable ethical principles as the basis for their actions. The Islam provided these understandable ethical principles.“ (Ansary 2009, 254). According to this,

a good Muslim is not the one reading day after day and for hours the Koran in Arabic language, wearing certain clothes or praying in a certain way. But the good Muslim does not lie, does not cheat, steal or kill. He would improve his skills to the maximum, be fair to others, strive for social equality, act socially responsible and show mercy, compassion and generosity“ (Ansary 2009, 254).

Here, the „good Muslim“ is defined by personal behavior like his moral and devotion. But being Muslim does not imply any concept of political or national belonging to e.g. the Ottoman or Arabic world. You are, in the sense of the Enlightenment, „privately“ Muslim. Politically – that is another story. Syed Ahmed Khan’s movement can be seen as the first movement of

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laical modernism, that later found its way into the new Turkish constitution under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, on the other hand, promoted a modern islamism and was probably one of the most important reformers of the 19th century Islamic world. He claimed to modernise education but at the same time to revive the „original Islam“ from Muhammed’s time. He wanted good Muslims with a broad education, fit to face the challenges from the West. Coming from Afghanistan or Persia, he spend his youth in India and Afghanistan, before he travelled to Istanbul, Kairo, and Paris. He declared that

Muslims have to study modern sciences, but at the same time they have to provide their children with a better basis of Islamic values, traditions, and history. Modernisation does not equal Westernisation, (…) but the Muslims have to find the elements of an Islamic modernisation within the Islam (and) (…) every Muslim should hold the right to interpret the Koran, without the „repressive“ leading of the ulama (Ansary 2009, 256),

who al-Afghani blamed to hinder the scientific development within the Muslim world 10. This idea is interesting, because in contrast to Syed Ahmed Khan, who limited Islam to the private space, Jamal ad-Din found a way to argue for a stronger, better Islam via western education. It was the perfect solution for both types of religious modernists: for those who saw the need to change society – but not the traditional Islam per se, and for the others who considered the Islam stagnated and dogmatised and wanted a complete modernisation of faith and followers. In any case, the Islam was combinable with western education and studying western science did, on the other hand, not mean losing the Islamic identity. Children could be well educated in western science and at the same time be good Muslims – for the Islam was holding the need for education and modernisation in itself. One „revolutionary“ aspect in Jamal ad-Din’s quote can be found, though: he pleads for self-reliant believers, who make use of their right „to interpret the Koran“, to use their own reason and conviction and to free themselves from the surpressive ulama, the Islamic spiritual leaders. Jamal ad-Din was promoting a modern faith free from institutional bondage, which he also underlined in another speech:

*Ijtihad*, the free thinking, is the central principle of the Islam. But this free thinking has to be based on the Koran and the hadiths 11. Every Muslim should hold the right to interpret the law, the writing and the revelation on his own, but the Muslim community has to be trained in these basic principles.

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10 One of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani’s students, Muhammad Abduh, came to be the „most important religious scholar of Egypt“ (Ansary 2009, 260). Another one, Saad Zaghlul, „founded the political party Wafq, which was later the strongest power in the liberation movement of Egypt“ (ibid.). Jamal ad-Din is also known to have inspired the Afghan intellectual Tarzi, private teacher of the Afghan heir to the throne Prince Amanullah, a modern monarch, who reached Afghanistan’s independency after decades of political struggle (ibid.). Last but not least Hassan al-Banna, spiritual follower of Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, founded the Muslim Brotherhood (ibid., 260f.).

11 A hadith is a saying or an act traced back to the prophet Muhammed.
The last phrase underlines once again the importance of a good (Islamic) education, which Jamal ad-Din took in his own hands. After a short period in France, Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani lived until his death in 1896 at the court of Sultan Hamid II. in Istanbul, where he held lectures in front of the whole Islamic intellectual elite. One of his main statements was the following:

The biggest mistake and the reason for the weakness of the Muslims is that they turned their backs on western science but adapted to the western educational system and western way of living. The other way around would have been right: They should have studied western science and rejected the western education and the western way of living (Ansary 2009, 259f.).

An Islamic life in harmony with western education, including the ideas of the Enlightenment, would provide a strong Islam – and a modern, autochthonous culture. And during these years, when Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani was lecturing in Turkey, some Bosnian Muslims were going to that very same university, bringing his ideas back to Bosnia-Hercegovina.

III.
The Islamic-European discourse of the 19th century and the emerging of magazines

When the Bosnian students returned to their home country after their stays in Istanbul, Belgrade, Zagreb or Vienna, they tried to adjust the new ideas to the Bosnian case. Discussions about the future of Bosnia and the Bosnian Islam emerged, which Michael Kemper called the „Islamic-European discourse“ for the same situation of the Muslims under Russian rule in the Wolga-Ural-region. The „Islamic-European discourse“, says Kemper, was based on a „corpus of traditional formes and doctrines, picked up and developed further or criticised and refused/condemned by the (...) elite, in order to define their historical and current situation in the Russian Empire and to represent own ideas“12 (Kemper 1998, 1f.).

The focus was shifted away from the (pan-)Islamic community, spread over the whole remainings of the Ottoman Empire, in order to analyse the inner structures of the particular society. Discussions about the practical aspects of religious everyday life, interpretations of the Koran, rituals such as praying times, dates of religious activities and so on were discussed and revaluated (ibid.). But, most importantly, the history of the people of the region was (more or less accurately) traced back and written down in order to find a connection of the past and the

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12 For the Islamic discourse in the Russian Empire and Queen Catharine II.’s role, see Kemper 1998, and Noack 2000.
In short, the intellectuals of each Islamic society, as well as other societies and peoples all around the globe, tried to find a way to „phrase their own cultural identity“ (ibid.). And, in contrast to western Europe, where the culture of books had been cultivated early due to the early advancement of printing, the Muslim communities discovered magazines as their medium (Kürşat 2003). This was especially the case since in the beginning of the 19th century French „hommes des lettres“ (men of letters) came to the Ottoman Empire and brought international and foreign newspapers with them, leading to the magazine being considered the perfect mass medium for spreading thoughts among the people (Kürşat 2003, 290). Soon every publishing Muslim intellectual became a journalist, a „teacher of the people“, and his „mission was to carry knowledge, a certain way of thinking and Western progress“ to the masses (ibid.).

At the end of the 19th, beginning of the 20th century, about one hundred papers were printed and published in Bosnia-Hercegovina (Džaja 1994, 85). But the

Bosnian-hercegovinian press (was) for decades under licensing and preventive censorship, where especially papers with nationalistic tendencies were opposed/frowned upon. As a consequence, the so-called literary and entertainment papers dealt with political and social topics and overstrained the (Austro-Hungarian, author’s note) bureaucracy (Džaja 1994, 86).

The average circulation was low: Bošnjak (Bosniac, 1891-1910) was published weekly with a print run of 900 copies, Behar (Blossom, 1900-1911) fortnightly with a print run of 800-1000. Bosanska vilba (Bosnian fairy, 1885-1914) two or three times a month with 2500-3200 copies (Džaja 1994, 101). Illiteracy was high and a literary culture not yet established outside of the small academic circle. Finally, the range of newspapers in the mothertongue was only slowly emerging (ibid.).

However, journalism was particularly encouraged under the Habsburg rule. Benjámin von Kállay, minister of finance in the monarchy and person in charge for Bosnian politics, wanted to unite the people of Bosnia-Hercegovina under a genuine Bosnian-hercegovinian nationalism in order to prevent the country from the Serbian and Croatian national movements. Kállay as well wanted the „name 'Bosnian' or 'Bosniac' (...) to be used by all inhabitants, regardless of their confession“ (Malcolm 1994, 175). The Austro-Hungarian government and

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13 The discourse can be well tracked due to the writings of that time (books, magazines, flyer, circular letters) (Kemper 1998).
14 The press and printing houses have been undeveloped in the Ottoman world until the 19th century: „1756, almost three decades after introducing the first printing press, there were only 18 books in print (...). Printing of the Koran was only allowed after 1874“ (Kürşat 2003, 341f.). Additionally, there were no Ottoman translations of European classics until 1860. If books were printed and reproduced, they were only Islamic books of interest for the madrasa education, no literary works (ibid., 344).
15 Benjámin von Kállay was the Habsburg finance minister and responsible for the Bosnian case from 1882 to 1903. By Serbian and Croatian nationalists he is seen as the „creator of a Bosniac national ideology“ (see: Džaja 1994, 208).
the *napredni Muslimani*, pursuing the same objective, were carrying this idea out with the foundation of the newspaper *Bošnjak*.

**IV.**

**Bošnjak – Paper for Politics, Education and Entertainment**

(The) nationalists taught that if one is a Catholic, one is a Croat; if one is Orthodox, one is Serb. But in terms of the origins of these Bosnian Catholics and Orthodox, this was nonsense. (...) The terms *Serb* and *Croat* had no earlier relevance to the area’s population (Pinson 1996, 19f.).

*Bošnjak* was founded by Mehmed-beg Kapetanović16 (1839-1902), mayor of Sarajevo and well-known expert for Oriental languages and literatures. It was published every Thursday, containing four pages, in the format 48x32cm (Krušivac 1978, 242). Every edition started with one or two leading articles dealing with social topics, at least one of which was dealing with a current problem. They were usually published without the author’s name. On the second page followed the „Politički pregled“ (Political Review) with news from the monarchy, Germany, Russia and so on. „Letters to the editors“ (Naši dopisi) and a *feuilleton* filled the remaining pages, usually containing poems, literary reviews, sometimes train timetables and astronomical calendars, as well as advertisement.

Kapetanović wanted to create a Muslim paper that was dealing with profane Bosnian themes only, mainly news and politics. It should be written in the local idiom, so that it would be easier to understand and easier to identify with than e.g. the by then only Muslim magazine *Vatan* (Fatherland), published entirely in Turkish17:

![Image]

The time has arrived, that we, the Muslims, launch a paper in our mother tongue, which is defending our rights and encouraging us to do good work, and which we, most importantly, can easily understand. So it can be the voice of us and our Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Bošnjak*, No. 1, 1891: „Resquest to the Subscribers“).

To make the newspaper easier to understand, *Bošnjak*’s articles were printed with Latin letters because the majority of the Bosnian Muslims used the Latin alphabet when writing their native language. But articles or mail could be sent in any spoken language or alphabet, the editors emphasised, in „Turkish, Cyrillic, Latin or in our old Bosančica“ (Krušivac 1978, 241f.), which were the alphabets used by the religious groups in the country. Emphasising this, the editors

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16 For Kaptenović’s life, see Krušivac 1978.
17 *Bošnjak* was the only Muslim literary forum at the end of the 19th century. Due to its good organisation and famous editors, almost every young Bosnian Muslim author published at least a couple of pieces or letters in the newspaper (Babuna 1996, 237.). Therefore, it can be considered a genuine organ of a whole generation.
clarified their aim to create an organ for all Bosnians, where a supraconfessional Bosnian-Hercegovinian identity based on the Bosnian language should be discussed and promoted. This was a highly controversial concept, criticised in- and outside of Bosnia. The Serbian and Croatian press blamed the Bosnian publishers to „simply create“ a Bosnian people and to name its language „Bosnian“ afterwards (e.g. in the Srpski štampa (Serbian Press), Bošnjak No. 5, 1891 or Bošnjak No. 32, 1892).

And indeed, in the 4th editions of Bošnjak from the 23rd of July, 1891, the author of „We respect everyone, but we pride ourselves“ writes, that he was well aware that there would be controversies about the editors and the print, and especially about the name Bošnjak:

Our neighbours are upset that we praise our old name, our language and our customs and that we do not want to accept their names for our people and our language. (…) „But“, he asks himself:

Why are you arguing with us if you know well that the Bosniac has been taking pride in his name since ancient times, that he is true to his traditions and the memory of his grandfathers? (...) Let's consider the many documents of native writers, calling our people for centuries with the true name, Bosniac. These are the examples, why we call ourselves to be true descendants of the holy name Bosniac. (...) And concerning the language, we are not afraid to tell the whole world, that the name of our language is closely connected to the name of our people – and the name of the language is Bosnian (Bošnjak, No. 4, 23rd july 1891).

The contents of the „Islamic-European discourse“, namely to define the historical and current situation in the superior context, is taking place here in Bošnjak. The connection between people and territory is once again articulated: „Since ancient times“ is the Bosnian taking pride in his language and, to honour the memento of the ancestors, he is calling himself „with the true name – Bosniac“. And „many documents“ prove this, although he remains vague what these „documents“ are. In later articles they will be named and the „native writers“ will be exchanged for „foreign sources“, thus giving more legacy.

On the next page the author adresses the Serbs directly:

We don't despise your nationality, but we also don't look at you with guilt in our eyes, we will never deny that we are part of the Southslavic people, but we want to prove very clearly that the Bosnians stand on the first step of the Southslavic people. And we will always be Bosnians, as our forefathers – and nothing else!

As we can see, the tone is already getting a little bit more aggressive. The concept of belonging to the „Southslavic people“ is emphasised again and again in Bošnjak, as well as the aspect that the Bosnians stand on the same cultural level as their neighbours. They do not consider themselves as „derived from the Croats or Serbs“, but as a genuine, autochthonous and equal nation. This equality of all Southslavic people is the vital request of the authors of Bošnjak and
while there are passionate discussions, including long and detailed explanations, during the first two years of Bošnjak, the answers are slowly getting impatient – or even bored. It seems as if the authors of Bošnjak don't understand all of the fuss about their identity.

At the same time, the arguments start to repeat themselves:

In Bošnjak No. 32, 1892, there is a comment on an article from the Croatian Crvena Hrvatska (Red Croatia) called: Kuda će ovo naši muhamedove? (Where are our Muslims going?). In that article it says:

Do they feel closer to Erger and Berger (the Austrians, note of translator) than to their one-blooded brothers, who speak the same language and who have the same – Slavic – blood running through their veins? (...) The Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina are our closest brothers. We live in the same monarchy, we even have a strong element in Bosnia and Hercegovina which recognizes us. These are the Bosnian and Hercegovinian Catholics. And if this is, as it is, then isn't it only clear that we are on the same side as the Bosnians and Hercegovinians of Muslim faith, and that we support each other as much as we can?

And the author of Bošnjak answers:

Leave us alone, good people! Give us peace, to each his own, but peace for Bosnia! We can stay friends and stay Bosnians, as our ancestors did. We will never forget our past, our language, our songs, our stories, our folk traditions. (...) The people from „Crvena“ believe that they have now supporters they can count on in Bosnia and Hercegovina, and these are our neighbours, the Bosnian-Hercegovinian Catholics. We are not opposing this, but we fear that they were calculating badly. They should remember what Brother Antun Knežević once said: „In Bosnia, there are the Bosniacs, and who is a Croat should be Croat and the Serb should go to Serbia“. But until very recently, there were no discussions about this topic like our young poet said: „From Trebinje to the Gates of Brod, there were not Serbs and no Croats“. But a fashion has spread among the Christians (meaning: Orthodox, note of translator): we are Serbs, and among the Catholics: We are Croats! Does nationalism want us to divide by faith, as our governments do? Is that useful or natural? Definitely not, but what to do with these heated heads who have fallen for great fanaticism?

The belonging to the Southslavic family is, once again, clearly formulated. But what is remarkable about this extract is the inversion of the classical roles of modernisation: the Christians are considered to be the „religious fanatics“ who cannot differentiate between religion and nationalism. In Bašagić’s letters there are references that he found the Catholic religion to be a „fanatic faith“ (vjerska gorljivost), which was not compatible with his understanding of Voltaire and reason (Gelez 2010, 322). The Bosnian Muslim intellectuals did not only see themselves as the continuance of the old Islamic civilisation which only had to be revived; but they considered themselves to be the more „enlightened“ ones, as the followers of the more modern religion.

The nationalisation of religion through Christians in- and outside of Bosnia is formulated in a very provocative form in the poem Pozdrav Bošnjaku (Greetings to the Bosniac) that is named
in the article. Here, Safvet-beg Bašagić is, again, dealing with the Bosnian identity. The controversial part that was followed by a long, heated discussion goes like this:

> You know, «Bosniac», it was not long ago. 
> Not even fifteen summers, 
> when in our glorious Bosnia and the heroic Hercegovina, 
> from Trebinje to the gates of Brod, 
> there were no Serbs and no Croats.

Aydın Babuna thinks this is Bašagić's programmatically formulated view on nationalism (Babuna 1996, 235). Bašagić wanted to show that „until the 60’s of the 19th century, the people in Bosnia and Hercegovina did not know nationalism which only developed through influence from outside, namely the Croatian and Serbian influence“ (ibid.). Even though Bašagić's choice of words is highly problematic, numerous statements in Bošnjak express the same:

In the series „We don’t give ourselves away“ (Bošnjak, No. 20, 1891), the phrase „there were not Serbs and no Croats“ is pulled up again. The author exclaims that

> our Bosnians and Hercegovinians (...) have always taken up a large space, and if we'd asked them how they call their language, they would say: We called it Bosnian and nothing else. Without any differences in belief, we all called it like that.

And, since the people defined themselves through language, all the religious groups in Bosnia-Hercegovina named themselves also „Bosnians“. Not the existence of Croats or Serbs in their home countries is being questioned, but the author wanted to emphasise that the inhabitants of Bosnia did not call themselves „Bosnian Serb“ or „Bosnian Croat“ – a labelling that only appeared in the 20th century anyways.

Three editions later, the discussion is picked up again: In a sequel to „We don’t give ourselves away“ (Bošnjak, No. 23, 1891), the author writes:

> We speak the Bosnian language, and this is the Bosnian people that we honour and praise, as did our forefathers. They might say that the Serbianhood and the Croatianhood is closely connected with religion – but that is not true. (...) We have to come back to the people and their consciousness and we are convinced that not only we Muslims but until very recently also the Catholics and Christians (meaning Orthodox, translator's note) did not know another nationality in Bosnia and Hercegovina than the Bosnian one. And if the Catholics and Christians now alienate themselves from this name, then it is because of the religious propaganda. That is why I am surprised that the Christians (the Orthodox, translator's note) stick to the Serbianhood and the Catholics to the Croatianhood because these concepts are related to faith. But we believe that what once was can be contained: Catholics can stay Catholics, the Christians can remain Christians, even if they accept their true and old Bosnian name.

Answering to the accusations that Bošnjak is trying to isolate the Bosnian Muslims from the rest of the population, the authors writes:
No, this is not the truth. Bošnjak is trying to unite this three elements, separated by confession, under their true national name.

As complicated as this formulation might be, since exactly the same words were used by Serbian and Croatian nationalists to express their claim on the Bosnian territory (see: Behschnitt 1980), this paper will only focus on the lack of (Islamic) religion in the definition of an Bosnian identity. Only the language stood in the scientific – and emotional – focus.

Following this concept, the second year of Bošnjak is dedicated to connecting language and territory. A nameless „prestigious professor of history“ is introduced. He writes the series „Some about the Bosniac-hood“, where he declares that every people needs its national name and a literary language. Ideas have been proposed: „Ours, Slovenian, Illyric, Yugoslavian, Serbocroatian and so on“. But it cannot be done without the name „Bosnian“ because:

The name „Bosnia“ (in Bosnian: „Bosna“, translator’s note) derives from the homonymous river „Bosna“, ancient Bosona and the people have been called Bessâ even in pre-roman times. Bosnia developed its own individuality and there is not only a Bosnian kingdom and a Bosnian state, but also a Bosnian language, a Bosnian populace (narod = Volk, translator’s note) and a Bosnian alphabet, the bosančica (Bošnjak, No. 1, 1892).

The Bosnian language is not only connected to the territory, namely „the one the river Bosna is running through“, but also to a time („since ancient times/forever“) and legitimised from outside („even before the Roman, people would call us ...“).

The often repeated „we have always been speaking Bosnian“-argument is amplified with a new „proof“: the hydronym Bosna. Bosnia is called „Bosna“ because of the river Bosna. The perpetuum mobile is fully generated. The language is named after the river, the people after the language. As Anderson (1983) describes with the „immagined communities“, the constant repetition of a time-and-space-concept is meant to anchor the definition of the Bosnian people in the reader’s mind.

In the same number on page three, there is a comment to an announcement in Sarajevski list (Sarajevo's Paper), another newspaper of that time, that someone would translate from „Serbocroatian, German, Hungarian, and Italian language“. The indignant author requests not to accept the name „Serbocroatian“, even less since with the introduction of the Bosnian grammar18 (Gramatika bosanskog jezika, in Latin and Cyrillic: 1890) there is now an official Bosnian language.

The certainty that there was a „Bosnian language“, as emphasised in all the articles, was now shifted from airy „lore“ (see e.g.: Bošnjak Bo. 23, 1891) and „inscriptions“ (Bošnjak No. 5,

18 This Bosnian Grammar was the effort of the Austro-Hungarian government to institutionalise and officialise the Bosnian language. Although published anonymously, the author was known to be Croatian Frane Vuletić (Tošović 2008)
1892, or No. 15, 1892) to a definite written proof: With the *Grammar* and the Bosnian alphabet (*bosančica*) placed in front, all arguments about the existence of a Bosnian-Hercegovinian idiom were supposed to be ended.

V.

**Behar – list za zabavu i pouku**

Allah’s first word was „read“:
„Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth, Createth man from a clot.
Read: And thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,
Who teacheth by the pen,
Teacheth man that which he knew not“
(Sure 96)\(^{19}\).

*Behar – list za zabavu i pouku* (Blossom – Paper for entertainment and education, Sarajevo: 1900-1910) was a different case. It was founded in 1898 by Edhem Mulabdić who wanted to launch a specifically Muslim literary magazine. He asked Osman Nuri Hadžić, *kadi* (Islamic jurist) and religious scholar, to join him because he already had publishing experience. Both agreed to give the editorial department to Safvet-beg Bašagić, who was the most popular Bosnian Muslim writer of that time. Mulabdić and Hadžić trusted his political conviction and at the same time they hoped that his poetical talent would lead the paper to success\(^{20}\) (Gelez 2010, 337). *Behar* was supposed to be dedicated to the education and advancement of the Bosnian Muslims (education was to be seen more in a moral and spiritual way, in short: education and faith). At the same time, all three wanted the newspaper to be patriotic: *Behar*, the Turkish word for blossom, should represent the renaissance of the Bosnian-Muslim identity. The paper soon became immensely popular. Benjámin von Kállay, Austro-Hungarian minister in charge of Bosnia-Hercegovina, put *Behar* and its three founders in the Habsburg/Bosnian catalogue for the world exhibition in the year 1900 in Paris (Gelez 2010, 337).

The first edition came out on the 1st of May, 1900. On the cover was a drawing of the Gazi Husrev-Beg džamija in Sarajevo, Bosnia’s oldest and biggest mosque. It placed the paper in Bosnia and at the same time clearly in the Muslim milieu. The name *Behar* was written in Latin and Arabic letters, with a half moon over the Arabic version. The fact that both alphabets

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\(^{19}\) For an English online version of the Koran, see e.g. [http://www.superbook.org/KORAN/ENG/96.htm](http://www.superbook.org/KORAN/ENG/96.htm) (9th June 2012).

\(^{20}\) During the first years, the three authors composed most articles themselves, using different synonyms: In *Novi Behar* (No. 14, 1927) Bašagić writes: „The people were receiving the paper well but it was hard to find co-authors in the beginning. Mainly the three of us were doing the work but we hardly ever used our real names, but different pseudonyms“. In one edition, April 1901, Bašagić wrote almost the whole paper alone. „If I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes“, Bašagić was heard to say afterwards, „I would have never imagined that one single edition of *Behar* could swallow so many of my manuscripts“ (Gelez 2010, 344).
were used – the Latin being bigger and much more dominant – is linking Bosnia-Hercegovina once again between East and West, putting the West in the foreground. At the same time, the Arabic word was written in a beautiful calligraphy with ornamental drawings around it while the Latin one was straight and rational as if to say: beauty and art comes from the East, the reason and print from the West! Blossoms in full bloom as well as half-closed buds of course symbolise the spring, the awakening of the literary and cultural Bosnian-Muslim society. In the background Bosnian mountains as well as Hercegovinian cypresses rise into the air, connecting both regions to one unit. And on the bottom of the page a parchment role is wrapped around a small branch, with blossoms sticking out. Also here the message could hardly be clearer: literature and the blossoming of the culture are closely interwoven and causing each other. The date was written both in Christian (1st of May 1900) and Islamic (1st muharema 1318). Coincidentally, the first of May 1900 was at the same time the Islamic new year. A new year and a new century were beginning – it could not have been more symbolic.

The table of context was further addressing an islamophile readership. The Bosnian reis-ul ulema, head of the Bosnian Muslims, contributed an article; and according to the editor’s plan all literary genres could be published: short stories, not-fictional works, mostly religious nature, poetry, plays (translations from Turkish writers or Bosnian), quotes from famous Islamic people, book reviews and also crosswords puzzles. The language was, as already said, Bosnian; Arabic or Turkish words were mostly translated.

As much as Behar was meant to be a „literary newspaper“ to promote the Muslim art, it was actually an instrument for the napredni Muslimani to promote their modernisation ideas.

21 The idea to have another paper printed in the Bosnian language first caused another great controversy, this time not in Serbia or Croatia, but in the Habsburg government itself. Only after implying the right to „preventive censorship“, the permission for another Bosnian Muslim newspaper was given (Gelez 2010, 338).
The first edition from the 1st of May 1900 begins with a quote from the prophet Muhammed: „Elilimu faridatun ala kulli muslimin ve muslimetin“, meaning „education is a binding/mandatory duty for all Muslims and the Islam“. This hadith can be seen as the programmatic headline for all of Behar’s articles. Education – as in the Bosnian word nauka – can mean both education and science. Nauka is the basis of the Islamic faith (see also Gelez 2010, 339). Using these direct lines from the Prophet, the authors tried to make their readers believe that Islam and western education are combinable. This gave the highest possible legitimation for the homo islamicus novus, the good modern Muslim.

It is only through education that the Bosnian Muslims can achieve the cultural level they aim for and deserve – and stand their ground as equals with the other people of „the Southslavic trunk“. Two elements are central to the progress of the Bosnian society: schools and family.

First comes the religious education; in order to gain knowledge, to internalise it, we have to learn, so that we can keep our moral and material standard and stand at eye-level with other people. Second, the secular education, education in general. Science is the foundation of mekteb27 schools, hand in hand with the moral education in the mektebs and at home. Because without science we cannot have a house, a family capable of raising offspring. Education and again education; only with education both mekteb and home have a true impact on people, cultivate and refine him. (...) Humans need science, education and every person has to dedicate himself to education as much as he can, not only in school and at home, but also in the society and through reading beautiful and noble books (Behar, No. 1, 1900).

But in contrast to the western Enlightenment, education should not be differentiated from religion. In accordance with Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, a new attachment to the Islam in its original version was promoted. During the „Golden Age“ of Muhammed’s life and the following four „rightly guided“ caliphs’s reign (Ansary 2009), the Islam was lived in its purest form, diluted neither by foreign (meaning: western) influences nor by changes and adjustments made over the centuries. First the Bosnian Muslim children should become educated Muslims by visiting the Islamic primary school. But in addition to – not instead of – the religious education, the Bosnian pupils should study sciences. The authors of Behar transmitted Jamal ad-Din’s concept one-to-one to Bosnia: The Islam was not against education, au contraire, the Bosnian Muslims were being bad believers, because they had detached themselves that much from the original Islam that they did not care enough about education anymore.

Behar should become the literary and intellectual centre where „we meet and offer our knowledge and our experience“ (Behar No. 1, 1900), where „not the young teach the old, or the old teach the young“ but where „everyone smart and experienced can serve his brothers with his knowledge“ (ibid.). Because „imagine the greatest scientist and the whole country could profit from his knowledge“ but if he „lived locked up in his house, or even worse, if he had not

27 Mekteb is the Islamic primary school.
written down his thoughts, then his knowledge would only be useful for him, and no one else“ (ibid.). So Behar’s aim should be the „anchorage of our holy faith – the Islam, and the complete education of our Islamic people in Bosnia and Hercegovina“ (ibid.).

Now, parallel to Bošnjak, the program of the newspaper is made clear on the first page of the first edition. And while in Bošnjak the identity of the Bosnian Muslims is defined – without naming the Islamic (or any other, for that matter) religion – in Behar the identity of Bosnian Islam is clearly defined – without any political intention. The paper should dedicate itself to the „clean Islamic interests without any political element“ (Behar, No. 1, 1900). The Islam was strictly limited to the cultural field: education, school, family, and art.

Most revealing for the topic of this paper are probably the discussions around „brotherhood“, be it Islamic or Slavic, in Behar. In No. 21, 1901, there is the hymn of Gajret. Gajret was a newly founded trust, organised again by Safvet-beg Bašagić and Osman Nuri Hadžić. It should provide scholarships for Muslim students in order to proceed to a university after finishing school in Bosnia. Gajret, meaning sedulity or fervour, soon became one of the most influential organisations for the Bosnian Muslims (Gelez 2010, 368f.).

Bašagić wrote the official hymn. It says:

Sons, scream like the thunder,
When it is a matter of your brother.
(...) Let the lively pride be among us
And among our strong youth.
So we trust in our nation – our glorious nation!

Numerous hadiths about brotherhood among the Muslims are published in Behar, for example in Behar No. 18, 1905:

You won't go to paradise if you don't believe; and you don't believe unless there is brotherhood among you.

or

As far as love and brotherhood among the Muslims are concerned, these are the first commandments.

Also in Behar No. 1, 1907, „The panislamic idea“:

The Islam is founded on the principles of community and the Muslims do always feel a constant love for their „brothers-in-faith“, no matter in which corner of the world or in which time they might live.

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23 Interestingly enough, Bašagić quotes in the opening speech of Gajret Goethe's Faust: „Wer mag auf Nationen trauen, Man habe noch so viel für sie getan! Denn bei dem Volk, wie bei den Frauen, Steht immerfort die Jugend oben an“ (Behar 5, 1904).

24 In Behar No. 3 (1902), Bašagić writes an open letter to all „patriots“ (rodoljubi) to invite them to engage themselves in Gajret or the kitaethana, the newly founded reading clubs.
But these are only spiritual concepts. A brotherhood as in „one people“ is only expressed in Bašagić's poem *Gajret*. And here it has a clear reference to the Bosnian people: „the brotherhood of our glorious nation“.

Osman Nuri Hadžić implies the same concept in his sequel *Papirnati kržari* (*Paper crusades, Behar* No. 18, 1905 and *Behar* No. 1, 1907). Here, the author asks himself if he is living in a time of crusades because he is observing insults on his Islamic faith from the „right and left side“, in a geographical meaning. „Books as well as newspaper are published“, he finds, „just to affront the Islam“, a process he calls „literary vandalism by the brothers (?!?) (sic) along the Drina and the Sava“. And he goes on:

One and the other calles us „brother“, dear and precious, but they insult us all the time. „Come here, brothers!“ from both sides, so that our ears are deaf from all this empty „brother“ clamour. But then they beat us and our faith until we can stand it no more. They even beat each other until they bleed in their political fight about our „brotherhood“, but when attacks on our holy faith are made, then they agree like monovular twins. They try to prove from both sides that we are „brothers“, that they respect our religious and societal customs, that we and our religion would suffer no harm in their company and so on, but on the other side they compete in who can insult us the most, search through all the literature in order to find and translate one book that is against the Islam; to rub it in the name of „brotherly love“ under our „brotherly noses“. But beware if we raise to defend our holy faith. (...) Then they tell us that we are unbearable and intolerant, that we „fight with the united brothers (?!?) (sic)“ – in one word, they expect us to remain silent, to not react to their mean attacks. Is this the basis for brotherhood? Impossible!

As amusing as this article in its exasperation sounds, Hadžić's point is obvious: the Southslavic people are brothers, connected to each other through the culture and language they share, separated „only“ by faith. This was made clear by Hadžić and his fellow *napredni Muslimani* in many literary forms. The polemics of this extract discussing a Croatian and Serbian „mission“ against the Bosnian Islam should not distract from the fact that also here a possible political unification in the sense of the later Yugoslavia is only ever considered with the Southlavic neighbours, never with a Turkish or Arabic community or state. The reason for this is that they, the Turks and Arabs, form their own nations based on their languages:

Today we have Muslims in all parts of the world who belong to different nations because of their heritage. Among those Muslims the Arabs take the first place because among them the Islam came into existence, the Prophet (r.i.p.) was from their nation and they are, numerically, the most. (...) All Arabs speak the same language which has the most words of all languages in the world. (...) The biggest Islamic nation after the Arabs are the Turks. (...) The Turks are divided by dialects which they speak into more people, but they can be sorted into three branches. (*Behar, No. 2, 1906 „The panislamic idea“*)

Following Syed Ahmed Khan’s example, Bašagić, Hadžić and their fellow writers pleaded for a new „rationality“ in religion, without losing faith or the cultural identity. And like Khan, they

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25 Hadžić was and still is sharply criticised for his *croatophilsim*. During his studies in Zagreb, he published numerous short novels with his co-author Ivan Aziz Milčević which try to convince the readers, quite bluntly, that the Bosnian Muslims are actually Croats. But even here Hadžić bases all his „proofs“ on sharing the same (in his case: Croatian) language, underlining my thesis.
declared the Islam to be a „religion of reason“: „Muhammed was the last prophet, giving the people the „tools (...) they needed to search for a moral community without inexplicable trials by ordeal“. Rational people „can act in a moral way, because they have understandable ethical principles as the basis for their actings. The Islam provided these understandable ethical principles“ (Ansary 2009, 254). According to this,

the Islam does not expect from its people to break up the connections with those of his clan, of his people, even if they are of other faith. We are bound to treat them well, to fully complete our duties towards them (...) The Islam is a worldly religion, and surely God did not bring Revelation in order to separate clans, people, fellow citizens or mankind at all. A Muslim can live in a family, even if all family members are of different faith (Behar, No. 21, 1905, „The Islam as a basis of culture“)

And this was because

Muhammed (r.i.p.) and the first Muslims set us the most beautiful example how we should live among people of other faith. He went with them to amusements, walked with them, accompanied their dead men, expressed his compassion when they were unlucky and generally lived with them in the way people should live together in one place and under the circumstances. It is also written that he borrowed money from them and that he gave them his precious goods as a pledge. And it is not as if he could not have borrowed money from Muslims. (...) We understand that a Muslim can live in a non-Islamic country, he can get married there and so on. No other philosophy gives this much worth and this much respect to the human kind like the Islam (ibid.).

By recollecting the „Golden Age“ of the „rightly guided caliphs“, the napredni Muslimani have the strongest possible argument for the modernisation of the Bosnian Muslim faith on their side: Following the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially laïcité, was non only halal, meaning „in accordance with the Koran“, as they prove in many literary works; it was what the Prophet himself and his successors lived as an example during the best and most successful times of the Islam. The homo islamicus novus (Kemper 1999, 164), the modern, educated, and enlightened Muslim would consequently be the better Muslim, for he lived up as closely as he could to the original faith.

VI.
Conclusion

In the Serbian newspaper Bačvanin (No. 10, 1892), some questions are asked to the editors of Bošnjak. The first question is: „How do you call your country? After the soil or the mothertongue?“ The Bosnian author thankfully accepts the question to make his point clear one more time: „Some people call their population refering to the ground, some refering to the language and third have other origins and other names.“ „From where did the „Bosnians“ migrate? And when?“, the Serb askes furthermore. Answer 2: „From the common Slavic urheimat, as well as the Serbian, the Croatian, and other Slavic people“. And he adds: „Following the words of the Bosons or Besons, the country was named Bosna, Bosona or
Bosina right away. You will find this name in wooden engraving since the 10th century, the name of the people and the language since the 12th\(^{*}\) (Bošnjak, No. 15, 1892). The written proof of the Bosnian language is once again formulated. In the next edition, no. 16 from the 21st April, 1892, there is another question: „Why do you Muslims in Bosnia (and only a few of you) recognise our Orthodox name, Serbian, but call yourself „Bosnians“, when apart from the religion (which has nothing to do with this) everything is the same: language, traditions and so on?“ „Excuse me, Mister Question-Asker“, the Bosnian replies: „You did not hit the truth because we call ourselves Bosnians only when we refer to the nationality, but you call yourself a Serb when you actually want to say that you are of Serbian religion, as you often call the Orthodox faith“.

The authors of Bošnjak, that is, a small group of Bosnian Muslim intellectuals, define concepts of national togetherness by two factors: heritage and language. No other belonging, especially no belonging to a religious group, can be more powerful than these two aspects. With this, the Bosnian Muslims were following a trend in other Islamic countries where nationalism – an idea taken from the West – was carried out with western concepts as well: All over the former Ottoman provinces, nationalism based on language was discussed.

In a letter to the editor, one reader is making fun of Bosnian Muslim Mehmed efendija Spahić, who had announced in the newspaper Dubrovnika that he was now a Serb. The reader mocks that you cannot simply declare that you’re a Serb. And even if he was, why was he not writing in Cyrillics? (Bošnjak No. 35, 1892). The political concept of national belonging, like „Serb“, „Croat“ or „Bosnian/Bosniak“, is determined by two factors which go hand in hand: heritage and mothertongue. Both are innate factors that cannot be put on or off haphazardly – or overlayed by other determinators, such as religion.

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