

## **Transformation of Memorial Culture: The Case of Husein Bey Gradašević in Contemporary Bosniak Perspective**

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### **Abstract:**

This paper discusses the circumstances and ways in which the transformation and interpretation of certain issues from the Bosnian past took place in the historiography of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author focuses especially on the place and role of Husein bey Gradašević in the anti-Ottoman uprising in 1831/32, which, according to interpretations elaborated here, went from “Anti-reform” to “Movement for the autonomy of Bosnia” or “Both of them” depending on time of writing and authors’ approaches. The author paid special attention to books published in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which served as a basis for his assertions about the role of context on the text. At the end of the paper, author also shows and partly discusses reflections created in public space, especially in documentaries available online. Finally, author elaborates on role of historians in public space(s) and challenges between “Academic history writing” and “Public history approaches”.

**Keywords:** Bosnia and Herzegovina, History, Historiography, Husein bey Gradašević, Memorial Culture, Transformation.

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While writing *History of Bosniaks* during 1990s, well known Bosnian law historian Mustafa Imamović claimed in his bibliographical reference that Husein bey Gradašćević, prominent Bosnian 19<sup>th</sup> century nobleman, belongs to the top Bosnian historical figures with couple of hundreds of bibliographical units written about him by that time.<sup>1</sup> M. Imamović especially emphasizes the importance of the work of the bibliographer Mustafa Ćeman, who completed a Bibliography on Gradašćević with more than 300 titles, which was just then published as an appendix to book written by Sadik Šehić.<sup>2</sup> Regardless of this impressive number of 300 titles, even after Imamović's book *History of Bosniaks*, Gradašćević continued to be written about in the following period as he remained in focus of historians and other authors thus making him one of the most described personalities in modern Bosnian history. Abovementioned *History of Bosniaks*, as the only book of that kind written in Bosnian language so far, eventually became important reference point of contemporary Bosniak self-reflection and milestone of contemporary Bosniak identity arguments. The book itself was published by leading Bosniak Cultural Association "Preporod" in dozens of thousands of copies and was distributed across public, cultural and private spaces in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad. The scope of distribution and the importance of Publisher made the book accessible to a large part of the Bosnian public. Simply said, the book became a "must have" in almost all public institutions and many Bosniak households.

Even though that book received dozens of positive critiques and reviews, there were other authors, such as Ahmed S. Aličić, who claimed in his critique that Imamović's book does not reflect authentic Bosniak historiographical reference point thus arguing vastly about shortcomings of Imamović's approach, methodological tools and main conclusions about "How to write history of an ethnic group".<sup>3</sup> As Aličić completed and published his PhD thesis about Husein bey Gradašćević and his role in "Autonomous movement" against central Ottoman authority during 1830s in the same time framework as did Imamović, namely during 1990s, those

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<sup>1</sup> Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka* (Sarajevo: Preporod, 1998): 582.

<sup>2</sup> Sadik Šehić, *Zmaj od Bosne – Husein kapetan Gradašćević između legende i povijesti* (Wuppertal, 1994).

<sup>3</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, "Historiografska literatura koja se odnosi na historiju Bosne i Hercegovine u 19. stoljeću," *Prilozi*, 29, (2000): 111-116.

two authors probably remained so far the most prominent figures in interpreting the role of Husein bey Gradašćević from partly different points of view. Although the two named authors do not differ in the interpretation and characterization of the movement itself - for them it is an "Autonomous movement" [*Movement for Autonomy of Bosnia within Ottoman Empire*, i.e.],<sup>4</sup> - Aličić's critique refers to Imamović's approach to the history of Bosniaks in general, and 19<sup>th</sup> century history in particular.<sup>5</sup>

When discussing character of the Husein bey Gradašćević's movement in 1830s, Imamović claims that "The political program of the Bosnian *ayans* was not clearly and completely formulated, but it can be said that in addition to the already mentioned *rejection of reforms*, which, according to them, were contrary to Islamic tradition, they [Bosnian *ayans*, i.e.] especially insisted that *their property rights not be affected*, and that in the future the Bosnian governor (*vezir*) is appointed exclusively among local people".<sup>6</sup> It is very much clear that Imamović at this point has an open view of both possible perspectives for the interpretation of Gradašćević's movement, since he takes into account all the factors that could have shaped the motives for the uprising in 1830s. Of course, the fact that Imamović's book is a *synthesis* unencumbered by details, should also be taken into account.

On the other hand, Ahmed S. Aličić claims that "Movement for the autonomy of Bosnia in 1831/32 led by Husein captain Gradašćević, emerged as the event that most strongly marked that era of Bosnia's history",<sup>7</sup> and then further claims that "The movement was *an inevitability*, arising as a consequence of Bosnia's overall relations with the central government and socio-political and economic or social conditions in Bosnia caused by the general collapse of the global system, which, formally at least, was the framework in which Bosnian society developed and existed".<sup>8</sup> When discussing causes of the "Gradašćević's movement", Aličić clearly states *political* and *social* causes naming "Political situation on Bosnian borders" on one hand, and "Higher levies and greater exploitation, without distinction of class and religious affiliation, and this caused the general

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<sup>4</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju Bosne od 1831. do 1832. godine* (Sarajevo: Orijentalni institut u Sarajevu, Posebna izdanja XIX, 1996).

<sup>5</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, "Historiografska literatura koja se odnosi na historiju Bosne i Hercegovine u 19. stoljeću", 111-116.

<sup>6</sup> Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, 335.

<sup>7</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju Bosne od 1831. do 1832. godine*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 20.

dissatisfaction of the people in Bosnia”,<sup>9</sup> on the other hand. Bearing in mind the aforementioned theses, it might be useful to refer to Aličić’s critique of Imamović’s book in this context. Namely, Aličić claims that “Imamović portrayed the 19<sup>th</sup> century more than faintly, which, on the other hand, has a special significance for the contemporary history of Bosnia and its people. I think that Imamović did not fully, or at least not sufficiently, understand this period, or that he presented it in a haphazard manner according to what *was already known* [!] in the historiography of the former Yugoslavia. Hence a whole series of material errors, along with inconsistent interpretations [...]”.<sup>10</sup> Highlighting the problem of the “Political situation on the Bosnian border” in Aličić’s interpretation should be understood both in the context of *the time Aličić is writing about*, but also *in the context of the time when Aličić speaks and writes*. In the context of the time Aličić writes about, it is the question of Hatt-ı Şerif issued by Ottoman sultan to the Principality of Serbia in 1829/30 as a “Last step towards establishing the autonomy of the Principality of Serbia in relations to the Ottoman Empire”. In the context of the time when Aličić writes, these kinds of Ottoman concession to Serbia were interpreted in very simplified manner.<sup>11</sup>

Now, it is possible to understand that Mustafa Imamović draws conclusions from older historiography and does not fully take over Ahmed Aličić’s detailed elaboration of the Gradašćević’s movement, which might be one of the reasons for such an evaluation of Aličić written a year or two after the publication of the book *History of Bosniaks*. Ultimately, this is a book that summarizes most of the earlier historiographical knowledge on the subject it deals with. However, it should be noted and understood that these two books were written almost in parallel time framework and published almost simultaneously. Additionally, it is the context of the 1990s that has strongly influenced general scene of historiography in Bosnia and

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 178.

<sup>10</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, “Historiografska literatura koja se odnosi na historiju Bosne i Hercegovine u 19. stoljeću,” 111–116.

<sup>11</sup> Public discourse of the 1990s was not immune to interpretations in which those acts were seen as support to Serbia, and not giving concessions or support to Bosnia, thus very similar to lack of support for Bosnian independence war in 1990s as in the case of United Nations Security Council resolution 713, adopted unanimously on 25 September 1991, in which Security council decides to “Immediately implement a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia”. In following years it lead to a massive and aggressive war between heavily equipped former Yugoslav Army against emerging Bosnian army under embargo. Resolution 713 (1991) of 25 September 1991. Available here: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/596/49/PDF/NR059649.pdf?OpenElement> (Accessed on 20 December 2023).

Herzegovina, and the country itself was just healing its major historical destruction it went through during 1992-1995 war.

This historiographical debate, however, gained more ground in wider professional discussions about contemporary Bosniak identity, policies and reflections about history. Among those debates, now at the beginning of new millennium, it was Husnija Kamberović, historian and so far the only one among the contemporary authors who wrote a *biography* of Husein bey Gradašćević on the occasion of 200 years of Gradašćević's birth.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the three of the abovementioned authors remained among top authors who established a kind of a new approach to understanding Husein bey Gradašćević and its movement during 1830s. It goes without saying that the three mentioned are not the only authors who wrote about Gradašćević, but they were and remain influential authors in Bosnian historiography. In addition, I believe that their books were and will remain very influential on scholar and public discourse, so despite some other authors and books, one cannot compare someone's later lesser research work on these topics with the influential reach of the mentioned authors.

Their interpretations and narratives have influenced other disciplines as well, and the development of such an approach stretched across disciplines and different media in last two decades to an extent that recently screened and played documentary movie (Sarajevo, 2022) focuses on Gradašćević's personality of a leading figure in "Bosniak history".<sup>13</sup> The influence on other disciplines is reflected in the perpetuation of the historiographical narrative, which is now taken over by historians who are not necessarily experts in Ottoman history, then sociologists, philosophers, political scientists and others. So, for example, in one of the documentary films, professors of classical history, professors of contemporary sociology, philosophy, then members and descendants of Gradašćević's family appear as interlocutors about Gradašćević. Knowing the circumstances and their academic profile, it can be concluded that none of the aforementioned have special scholar research experience on Ottoman history, they have modest knowledge of Ottoman archival documentation, which is why they practically base their conclusions exclusively on secondary literature. And the fundamental note to the documentary is given by an older interview of

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<sup>12</sup> Husnija Kamberović, *Husein-kapetan Gradašćević (1802-1834): Biografija: uz dvjestotu godišnjicu rođenja* (Gradačac: Preporod, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoxcZmz04YI&t=12s> (Accessed on 10 November 2023)

Ahmed Aličić, despite everything, still the only expert in this field – among interlocutors, who was already dead when documentary was made.<sup>14</sup>

Needless to say, other authors, historians among them as well such as Galib Šljivo,<sup>15</sup> continued to write about Husein bey Gradašćević, but at the level of key interpretations, they remained more or less at the same point of view very much characteristic of the period from the 1990s to the present day. Galib Šljivo is a well-known historian whose research was focused on the Bosnian history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, about which he wrote a very significant number of research papers and books. Likewise, Šljivo is known for the fact that his research work is dominated by historical sources that are not of Ottoman provenance, so his insights into the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bosnian past are based on other historical sources. Husein bey Gradašćević, in those kinds of interpretations, now transmitted through new media, especially video materials available online, is “A leader” who is “Leading Movement for the autonomy of Bosnia”, he is “Brave”, “Wise”, “Fair”, and has always “Bosnia in his mind”.<sup>16</sup> Such interpretations, of course, always need to be understood in the context in which they arise, but also in accordance with the goals of creating a “Bosniak perspective” in view of the past. Therefore, in this example as well, one can see how “the context of one time” dominates over “the topic of the past”.

In order to understand this major shift in interpretation of Bosnian past, one should be given basic information about major changes historiography in Bosnia and Herzegovina went through during the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia and post-war recovery and re-establishment of historiographical institutions in independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose society was heavily divided along ethnic lines. This might be, at the same time, new milestone not only in history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in the history of historiography of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. As main goal of this paper is to record ground works and leading historiographical narratives about Husein bey Gradašćević and juxtapose them in comparative perspective – especially, the narratives of the three abovementioned authors, it needs to be done in a way to

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<sup>14</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoxcZmz04YI&t=12s> (Accessed on 20 December 2023)

<sup>15</sup> Galib Šljivo, *Bosna i Hercegovina: 1827-1849* (Tešanj: Planjax komerc, 2016).

<sup>16</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OqEawnUQq4> (Accessed on 11 November 2023.) In the context of “narrative creation”, it is very important to emphasize the names of the channels that published the aforementioned documentaries. The first one is called “Justice Bosnia”, and the second one is “Forgotten Times”, which is, in my view, an indication of the choice of terminology adequate for creating a desirable narrative without critical approaching to the subject of the past.

analyse obvious transformation of memorial culture among Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. In order to do so, one should get basic overview of the historiographical debates and trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 1990s and early 2000s. As claimed in recent reflections about historiography in Bosnia and Herzegovina “the issue of formation, development, current state, and perspectives of Bosnian historiography is also the issue of the contemporary history of Bosnia and Herzegovina”,<sup>17</sup> as their relationship is intertwined and their range and achievements are mutually conditioned.

However, the socio-economic and political collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia, the war against Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) and the post-war socio-economic and political situation had a strong impact on the Bosnian society, but also on the historiography. It seems, though, that research topics “Have become ethnically defined”, which is a clear reflection of the overall social and political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In such a context, several conferences and public debates on historiography in Bosnia and Herzegovina were held in an attempt to evaluate contemporary historiographical trends.<sup>18</sup> Among many authors, it was academician Dževad Juzbašić who claimed that re-establishing of research in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina took place under very difficult conditions, both political and logistic in nature. He further contended that this was not only due to the pinching financial context in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also due to “Nationalist-chauvinist actors among governmental structures” whose main goal was to further divide Bosnian society by creating “Separated and exclusive systems” where science, institutions, art, and education would be separated based on the ethnic principle. Juzbašić sadly concluded that research in historiography was focused “Exclusively on ethno-national history, political history and/or regional or local aspects of history” thus leaving “social and economic history in occasional coincidences”.<sup>19</sup>

As could be seen from the previous paragraphs, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there were serious transformations in the historiography

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<sup>17</sup> Amir Duranović, “Savremena bosanskohercegovačka historiografija: na margini povijesti”, *Na margini povijest. Zbornik radova*. Sarajevo: UMHS, 2018, 11–29.

<sup>18</sup> *Istorijska nauka o Bosni i Hercegovini u razdoblju 1990–2000 godine* (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 2003). Also note the following volumes: *Naučni skup: Historiografija u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1990. do 2003. godine* (Sarajevo: Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, 2003); Ulf Brunnbauer (ed.), *(Re)Writing History. Historiography in Southeast Europe after Socialism*, Bd. 4, (2004).

<sup>19</sup> Dževad Juzbašić, “Die Geschichtsschreibung in Bosnien-Hercegowina im letzten Jahrzent des 20. Jahrhunderts”, *Prilozi*, 31, (2002): 17–31.

of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The transformation was organizational, financial, institutional, and this change as a result, some 20 years later, has influenced scopes of topics and new interpretations of Bosnian past or some of its parts. It is, therefore, very important to notice the fact that all of the abovementioned authors (Mustafa Imamović, Ahmed S. Aličić and Husnija Kamberović) completed and published their books in this time framework. Unlike Imamović and Aličić, who wrote about “History of Bosniaks” and “The movement for autonomy of Bosnia”, respectively, as mentioned before, Husnija Kamberović wrote a biography of Husein Gradašević and therefore should be given additional interpretation here in comparison to other authors.

Kamberović’s “Bicentenary biography” of Husein bey Gradašević, published on the occasion of Gradašević’s 200<sup>th</sup> birthday is therefore a book written and published to memorialize. The author himself claims that “While several notable works were written about the *movement for autonomy* in 1831/32, headed by Husein-bey, there is not enough literature on Husein-bey’s life”. After establishing this kind of “Research niche” Kamberović offers a biography of a person who became “The most significant historical phenomenon in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 19<sup>th</sup> century”,<sup>20</sup> by explaining his origins, youth, family life, service in Gradačac captaincy, his construction activities, service as vezir of Eyalet of Bosnia etc. Regarding Bosnian “Autonomous movement”, Kamberović offers picture of Gradašević as commander-in-chief of local Bosnian units in two military endeavours and confrontations with Ottoman troops, as well as his political and military defeat and exile, death and the fate of his property and assets. Within this kind of biographical structure, the essential characterization of Gradašević’s movement is not significantly questioned in this book as author mainly relies on previous literatures’ achievements and viewpoints. Rather than that, H. Kamberović offers different views, but in his own interpretation remains alongside “Autonomous movement” characterization, as stated in the Foreword of the book.<sup>21</sup>

In certain occasions, Kamberović draws lines of difference between arguments of other authors about particular issues, such as, for instance, total number of military personnel who accompanied Gradašević on his move to Travnik in central Bosnia in 1831 and/or accuracy of certain contemporary historical sources used by different authors.<sup>22</sup> Kamberović is

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<sup>20</sup> Husnija Kamberović, *Husein-kapetan Gradašević*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 47, 41.



also well aware of the viewpoints of historiography about Husein bey Gradašćević and characterization of the movement in papers written by Hamdija Kreševljaković, for instance, who back in 1931/1932 claimed that the movement was “Antireform movement of Bosnian nobility”.<sup>23</sup> This claim, obviously, corresponds to other authors’ claims of that time such as Slavko Kaluđerčić, who also in 1932 wrote a study about Gradašćević characterizing 1831/32 rebellion as “Antireform movement, especially against new order (*nizam-i cedid*)” and Kamberović clearly explains evolution of different narratives created among generations of scholars in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, Ahmed S. Aličić, when discussing older authors, quite freely claims that Hamdija Kreševljaković “Is not relevant in the [historiographical] evaluation of this Movement, nor can he be classified among those who advanced the [scholarly] processing of this Movement”.<sup>25</sup> A few lines later, Aličić takes milder version of approach by stating that he does not “Ignore any of the aforementioned historians who wrote about this Movement. For them, we say that they did not have enough authentic archival material about that Movement and that they did not know enough about the global Ottoman socio-economic order or the political system, or the socio-political system in Bosnia”.<sup>26</sup>

In given context, Kamberović’s characterization of the movement follows the views of more recent historiography, i.e, the authors who were writing and publishing at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even though Kamberović is also aware of critique elaborated by American historian Robert J. Donia, whose critical thinking and review of Aličić’s book is part of historiographical debates in Bosnia at the beginning of the new millennium. Namely, in his review Donia claims that “The irony is that this scholarly and detailed study [Aličić’s book, i.e] ends with doubts about the value of the author’s interpretation due to *careless enthusiasm* for Gradašćević’s movement”.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, Kamberović concludes that Donia’s view nearly corresponds to characterization of the movement given by D. Pavlović who back in 1913 claimed that the movement was “Antireform movement” as the demands of the insurgents were such that they characterized the entire movement as a movement for the autonomy of

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<sup>23</sup> Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Husein kapetan Gradašćević: Zmaj od Bosne*. Sarajevo: Hrvatsko kulturno društvo Napredak, (1931). Reprint in: Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Izabrana djela*, knj. IV (*Prilozi za političku istoriju Bosne i Hercegovine u XVIII i XIX stoljeću*). Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1991.

<sup>24</sup> Husnija Kamberović, *Husein kapetan Gradašćević*, 79-80.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju*, 30.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

<sup>27</sup> *Prilozi*, 30, (2001): 254.

Bosnia, but Pavlović says that the “Anti-reform motives of the insurgents were hidden behind those demands”. In words of Pavlović himself by “Rising against the reforms of sultan Mahmud II, the insurgents gave the movement a more general character, concealing personal and class motives. Defending their personal privileges, they held to protect them best - demanding guarantees for the land (territory of Bosnia, i.e.)”.<sup>28</sup> It is worth emphasizing here that R. J. Donia well recognized and evaluated Aličić’s book very well. Donia believes that the book is well-founded and significant in research, but also that the author has a certain emotional attitude towards the topic which he calls a kind of a “Careless enthusiasm”, which I also consider very correct. Moreover, Kamberović’s insight into all the different interpretations shows his serious dealing with the topic. Nevertheless, to understand the history of a narrative, it must be emphasized that the layering of narratives is very noticeable in such discussions. Even when the authors go back several decades in their final assessments of a phenomenon. Thus, with his review of Aličić’s book, Donia rightly points out some views about the phenomenon characteristic for the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, one can conclude that the big narratives created during the 1990s still need to be viewed in a wider time span in order to better understand them.

The issue of the territory of the Bosnian Eyalet is one of the most common arguments for the claim that it was an “Autonomous movement”. Kamberović himself, in concluding remarks of his book states that “After the Ottoman-Russian war [1828-1829, i.e.], the Ottoman Empire was compelled to make many concessions, including ceding to Serbia some of the *nahiyas* that had until then belonged to the Bosnian Eyalet” thus leading to “Bosnian Autonomy Movement”. Ceding the territories of Bosnian Eyalet to Serbia, “Along with other measures that undermined the position of the Bosnian elite, led to the Autonomy Movement”, he claims.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, after claiming that the “Autonomous movement” was “Inevitability”, Ahmed S. Aličić stressed the importance of political situation outside of Bosnia. He further claims that “The main goal of the Movement was the determination to protect the *borders of Bosnia*, that is, the country of Bosnia from being dismembered, regardless of who wanted it and for what reasons. Bosniaks saw this as a danger for the Bosniak people,

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<sup>28</sup> Husnija Kamberović, *Husein kapetan Gradašćević*, 76-77.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

and it is *less important what phrases* and thoughts they used to express them [the goals, i.e.].<sup>30</sup>

By reading such statements more carefully, it is difficult to escape the impression that some of the given statements were not influenced by the context in which the authors wrote. Once again, it is necessary to emphasize that the complex circumstances of the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia and the declaration of independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992, which, at least partially, had their own reflection on everyday life, but also on the authors' discourse about the past. Of course, it was not only the Declaration of independence that was at stake, but also its defence against aggression and the fight for the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the preservation of the basic fabric of Bosnian society. In such circumstances, the discourse *on Bosnia in the past* could hardly exclude the terminology that vividly showed the layered historical processes whose most complex and negative forms the authors analysed here were exposed to. Perhaps this was expressed most vividly by Mustafa Imamović in the Preface of his book when he said that he "Began writing the book in the *most tragic moments* for the Bosniak people, feeling that in those moments it was my duty towards my own people and the magical country of Bosnia".<sup>31</sup> And yet, despite such complex circumstances as there were in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 1990s, Mustafa Imamović emphasizes to his readers that the book "Should not be viewed as *forever given, told and written* history of Bosniaks, but as a concrete research effort that *leaves room* and hope, and that it will be an incentive for younger historians and other scholars".<sup>32</sup>

Despite the clearly visible influence of the context on the authors and even on their certain interpretations of the Bosnian past, it is still important to note their own self-reflection and critical understanding of their own work. This can best be seen in the clearly defined attitude of Mustafa Imamović when he says that he does not consider his book "Forever given history of Bosniaks" while such a thing is a bit more difficult to grasp with Ahmed S. Aličić and his book. However, both of them shall remain important figures in re-establishing and stabilizing narrative of "Autonomous movement". As clearly shown, as he follows the development of the different narratives in detail, Kamberović favors the characterization of the movement as an "Autonomous movement".

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<sup>30</sup> Ahmed S. Aličić, *Pokret za autonomiju*, 20.

<sup>31</sup> Mustafa Imamović, *Historija Bošnjaka*, 5.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

Outside of the historiographical discourse, in the Bosnian and Bosniak public spaces, these nuances in the interpretation of history are almost not taken into account whatsoever. Previously mentioned “Ethnic separation” within Bosnian society in late 1990s influenced the communities of historians in a way that mainly Bosniak authors focus on such questions, others less so. Or at least, less so when it comes to certain aspects of Bosnian past for which they do not show particular interest.

Nevertheless, in the Bosniak public space - although it is difficult to precisely determine the boundaries between the exclusively Bosniak and Bosnian public spaces - as they are partially congruent, there is a certain belief about Gradašćević’s movement as exclusively “A movement for the autonomy of Bosnia”. The idea about “Anti-reform character of the Movement”, still relevant in Turkish historiography,<sup>33</sup> for instance, loses ground in Bosnia as time goes on. However, it is a matter of public space, dominated in last two decades by new media and new contents, in which the space for critical questioning of the past has been significantly narrowed. Thus, it is possible that more historiographical irrelevant than relevant interlocutors participated in the creation of the aforementioned video materials about Husein bey Gradašćević, as elaborated previously.<sup>34</sup> This also raises the question of historians’ responsibility for their (non)presence in public space. Non-participation in the creation of new content, avoiding new media necessarily leads to important historians remaining outside of contemporary trends. This could further mean that relevant historical knowledge will exist, but it will be harder to reach the audience. On the other hand, non-participation in the public space can also have some positive consequences, since in this way historiography can be saved from unnecessary devaluation. In any case, the circumstances presented here surrounding an important issue of Bosnian history inevitably show the dynamics of changes that historians are a part of.

In such a context, one should raise the question of those two parallel trajectories, one among academic historians or “University style history”, and the other – public history, usually seen by academic historians as “Untheorized and uncritical”. In such an approach “History becomes heritage, nostalgic and conservative, packaged in such a way that celebrates the past by dressing it up to encourage social consensus, an antiquarian

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<sup>33</sup> Fatma Sel Turhan, *Eski düzen adına: Osmanlı Bosna’sında İsyân, 1826-1836* (Istanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2013).

<sup>34</sup> See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoxcZmz04YI> (Accessed on 12 November 2023) or see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5OqEawnUQq4&t=73s> (Accessed on 12 November 2023)

ruse to make us believe that consent and conformity is a natural feature of the present".<sup>35</sup> As concluded by Peter Claus and John Marriot, "By collecting evidence of past societies, however, public historians have allowed those scholars working in the academy to rewrite histories in ways that would have remained quite impossible. In doing so, the basis of historical knowledge has been challenged".<sup>36</sup> The short presentation of several very important books of Bosnian historiography presented here in the context of the very complex changes that Bosnia and Herzegovina went through in recent decades shows the justification of the theses about the challenges that historiography is facing.

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<sup>35</sup> Peter Claus & John Marriot, *History: An Introduction to Theory, Method and Practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London: Routledge, 2017), 268-269.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 268.

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