

Grandits, Hannes. *The End of Ottoman Rule in Bosnia: Conflicting Agencies and Imperial Appropriations*

London: Routledge, 2021. Pp. 394.

Edin Hajdarpasic

Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

Email: ehajdarpasic@luc.edu

In the summer of 1875, an uprising in Herzegovina set off a series of conflicts that grew to grip the entire Balkan region and preoccupy the statesmen of the European Great Powers. Three years later, the settlement of the Eastern Crisis (as these events came to be known) resulted not only in the independence of Bulgaria and Serbia but also the end of four centuries of Ottoman rule over Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was subsequently occupied by Austria-Hungary. Ever since, historians have debated these events, often by focusing on either high-level diplomatic negotiations or on local developments in heavily affected regions like Bosnia-Herzegovina and Stara Zagora.

Hannes Grandits takes a refreshingly different approach in this book that recasts the “local and regional developments within the Bosnian” province as inseparable from the “larger political dynamics” across the Ottoman Balkans and Europe at large (xix). This holistic, region-focused approach has many benefits. It allows Grandits to reveal the extensive web of political and social interconnections that made even localized unrest in Bosnia-Herzegovina subject to constant monitoring by both neighboring states and representatives of the Great Powers. His methodical and step-by-step unpacking of that milieu focuses specifically on Bosnia and brings forth numerous new findings. After briefly presenting the Ottoman context in chapters 1 and 2, Grandits unfolds a lucid analysis of the political dynamics along the Montenegrin-Herzegovinian borders that help explain the outbreak of the 1875 uprising (chapter 3) and the refugee crises that followed as unrest spread unevenly and spilled over Bosnian borders into Austria-Hungary (chapter 4). Grandits here challenges received wisdom regarding the “stagnation” of late Ottoman society and its allegedly “inevitable” collapse, showing instead the relative stability of late Ottoman rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina before 1875. But he also goes further and explains the multiple relationships that bound Ottoman Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Austria-Hungary to one another. His sustained attention to cross-border refugee displacement and repatriation rightfully places this long-neglected subject as a central and enduring concern of the Eastern Crisis.

These events are reconstructed through a careful combination of sources. Some will be familiar to specialists (like the memoir of Josef Koetschet, which is heavily invoked throughout the book), but others blaze new research paths (like new findings drawn from Montenegrin and Austro-Hungarian archives, though original Ottoman sources are scarce). While earlier Bosnian historiography often delved into local particularities, Grandits’s account persuasively weaves the key regional events into a larger framework and thus presents the single most informative and concise account of the Eastern Crisis that began in 1875.

The book is augmented with useful visual materials, such as several maps of the Western Balkan region in the 1870s. Other illustrations depict either armed troops or various politicians (the one photograph of Bosnian inhabitants is from a studio stage in Istanbul).

While insightful in many ways, Grandits’s intertwined regional approach also has a few drawbacks. The book’s first half is strongly focused on the Bosnian-Herzegovinian context around the 1875 uprising. In the last three chapters, the focus shifts much more to the Balkan dynamics and Great Power diplomacy, leaving Bosnian perspectives as a bit of a sideshow (which reflects the conduct of the diplomatic negotiations of the time). The book ends somewhat abruptly, without a consideration of the larger significance of the end of Ottoman rule for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Generally, readers are treated to portraits of regional politicians, from the Montenegrin Prince Nikola to the Croatian General Gabriel von Rodich, but relatively few figures in the Ottoman

Bosnian society are given comparable attention. We get glimpses of several high-level governors in Sarajevo, but some leading Bosnian personages are absent (such as the head editors of the Ottoman Bosnian press, M. Šaćir Kurtćehajić and Mehmed Hulusi). Others are confusingly described; Sidki Kara Bey is cast as “Islamist” (275), using a problematic contemporary term that is even more misleading in the Tanzimat context. The author devotes considerable attention to Vaso Pelagić and his ideas for a “democratic and socialist society” but omits the fact that Pelagić also became a leading propagator of modern antisemitic screeds in the South Slavic context. Moreover, the significant impact of the 1878 Congress of Berlin on Balkan Jewish history is missing from the book’s otherwise thorough discussion.

The anti-Muslim views of West European statesmen and intellectuals are another blind spot waiting to be more fully explored. “The Turks,” wrote William Gladstone in 1876, “were upon the whole, from the black day when they first entered Europe, the one great anti-human specimen of humanity.” Voiced by some of the most powerful men of the nineteenth century, such views predated the Eastern Crisis, accompanied the mass expulsions of Balkan Muslims from the newly created nation-states like Serbia and Bulgaria, and arguably reached a high point in the 1870s. The book mentions Western anti-Muslim discourses in a passing manner, leaving the impression that they were relatively unimportant and unexpected (see 112 and 198). In truth, it remains a subject that requires serious explanation.

doi:10.1017/S006723782400016X

Isabella, Maurizio. *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions*

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023. Pp. 704.

Matthijs Lok

University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Email: m.m.lok@uva.nl

Maurizio Isabella’s *Southern Europe in the Age of Revolutions* is an impressive book—both in number of pages and in terms of the scope of the book. Whereas transnational studies on the age of revolution, following Robert Palmer’s two-volume classic work *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (Princeton, 1959 and 1964), usually take a transatlantic focus, Isabella has opted instead for the northern part of the Mediterranean. By comparing the revolutions in Portugal, Spain, Naples, Sicily, and Greece in the 1820s, he provides an entirely new interpretation of what is usually called the “age of revolution.” In this tour-de-force, France and Northern Europe are not the core but the revolutionary periphery. It was not the French or the American constitutions but the constitution of Cádiz of 1812 that proved to be the most influential model for the southern revolutionaries, who adapted it to local circumstances and needs.

In addition to its unusual geopolitical focus, the book stands out in terms of the enormous amount of research in archives and published sources in various languages (including Italian, Greek, Spanish, and Portuguese). A third merit of this book is that it discusses the counterrevolution jointly with the revolution, seeing these movements essentially as different sides of the same coin. Also commendable is that Isabella studies the various facets of the revolutions—personalities and institutions as well as ideas, ceremonies, and cultural factors such as singing—providing a much-needed panopticon of the era. In this sense, the book is exemplary of how revolutions and revolutionary culture should be studied.

The first part of the book discusses the close relationship between war, armies, and the revolutions of the 1820s. Many revolutionaries had fought in the armies of the Napoleonic Wars, and these experienced soldiers frequently comprised the members of the secret societies that played such an important role in revolutionary activities. Often the revolutions started with a *pronunciamento* or a public declaration of support for the revolution by a senior commander. The military was highly successful in mobilizing