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UNDERSTANDING OTTOMAN HERITAGE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: CONVERSIONS TO ISLAM IN THE RECORDS OF THE SARAJEVO SHARIA COURT, 1800-1851

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Bosnia and Herzegovina's Ottoman historical heritage has greatly contributed to shaping of the country's contemporary image. With respect to this, we could mention several issues which, to a larger or lesser extent, have roots in the Ottoman period, from the question of the territory and borders of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the shape and organisation of settlements and architectural monuments, old crafts, nutrition, to mentality, customs, lexical heritage, music and folklore, and various other cultural facets of the identity of a large segment of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina – both its Muslim and non-Muslim communities. However, we believe that the immaterial and intangible heritage from the Ottoman era is particularly interesting, seeing as it has been passed down through generations, and is very much “alive” and present to this day. This issue is complex and multifaceted, and we have thus chosen to discuss in this paper only one specific question within this field: changes in religious identity in the first half of the 19th century, as witnessed in examples of conversions to Islam.

The question of converting is one of the fundamental questions that influence an individual's change of identity. Such a change entails accepting new perceptions of the world, of life, death, moral, spiritual values and other concepts – all of which belong to the area of the inward – as well as adopting the new, recognisable models of behaviour and the new way of life that Islam, as both a religion and a culture, entailed. In Bosnia, the conversion implied the entrance into a new cultural circle, while any ties with the earlier religious community were usually severed. In addition, the new religious identity and integration into the Muslim community also played a significant role in shaping an individual's self-image in the process of establishing national identities. With respect to all of the above, a study of conversions to Islam is, in our esteem, very useful in the understanding of historical, but also of contemporary identities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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The phenomenon of the expansion of Islam on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been studied for over a century, with contributions by several authors and researchers. It needs to be stressed that significant scientific progress in this area has been made since the times of the earliest works that studied or touched upon these issues (S. Bašagić, H. Kreševljaković, V. Skarić, M. Handžić, A. Solovjev, V. Čubrilović etc.).² The discovery and subsequent systematic examination of survey registers (*tapu tahrir defter*) has provided a new dimension to the study of Islam's expansion. The biggest contributions have been the works of N. Filipović, A. Handžić and A. S. Aličić, as well as the works of the participants of a conference entitled *Širenje islama i islamska kultura u bosanskom ejaletu* [The Spread of Islam and Islamic culture in the Bosnian eyalet], which took place in Sarajevo in 1991. (A. S. Aličić, A. Handžić, F. Spaho, B. Zlatar, H. Č. Drnda, F. Hafizović, A. Kupusović, N. Močanin, S. Buzov, N. Filipović, R. Ibrahimović etc.).³

A great majority of researchers have to this day remained focused on the initial phases of this process, as well as on the period of mass adoption of the Islamic faith, which took place between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. The period that followed this span has remained only partially examined, with merely a couple of attempts at shedding light at this era. In his posthumously published work, "*Islamizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini*" [Islamisation in Bosnia and Herzegovina], academician Nedim Filipović generally touched upon the character of the process of converting after it

² Safvet Beg, Bašagić-Redžepašić, *Kratka uputa u prošlost Bosne i Hercegovine (Od g. 1463.–1850.)*, vlastita naklada, Sarajevo 1900, pp. 1-215; Hamdija Kreševljaković, "Odakle su i šta su bili bosansko-hercegovački muslimani?", in: *Danica: Koledar društva svetogjeronimskoga za prijestupnu godinu 1916.*, Zagreb 1915, pp. 326-334; Vasa Čubrilović, "Poreklo muslimanskog plemstva u Bosni i Hercegovini", *Jugoslavenski istorijski časopis*, I/1-4 (Belgrade 1935), pp. 368-403; Vladislav Skarić, "Širenje islama u Bosni i Hercegovini", in: *Gajret-Kalendar za god. 1940.*, Sarajevo 1939, pp. 29-33; Mehmed Handžić, *Islamizacija Bosne i Hercegovine i porijeklo bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana*, Islamska dionička štamparija, Sarajevo 1940, pp. 1-34; Aleksandar Solovjev, "Nestanak bogomilstva i islamizacija Bosne", *Godišnjak Istorijskog društva Bosne i Hercegovine*, I (Sarajevo 1949), pp. 42-79.

³ Nedim Filipović, "Specifičnosti islamizacije u Bosni", *Pregled*, special edition (Sarajevo 1968), pp. 27-34; Nedim Filipović, "Napomene o islamizaciji u Bosni u XV vijeku", *Godišnjak*, VII/5 (Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 1970), pp. 141-165; Nedim Filipović, "O jednom aspektu korelacije između islamizacije i čišćenja", *Prilozi*, XVII/18 (Institut za istoriju, Sarajevo 1981), pp. 25-43; Nedim Filipović, "Islamizacija vlahu u Bosni i Hercegovini u XV i XVI vijeku", *Radovi*, LXXIII/22 (Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 1983), pp. 139-148; Adem Handžić, "Islamizacija u sjeveroistočnoj Bosni u XV i XVI vijeku", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, XVI-XVII/1966-1967 (Sarajevo 1970), pp. 5-48; Ahmed S. Aličić, "Privredna i konfesionalna struktura stanovništva u Hercegovini krajem XVI stoljeća", *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 40/1990 (Sarajevo 1991), pp. 125-192; Nametak, Fehim (ed.), *Naučni skup "Širenje islama i islamska kultura u bosanskom ejaletu"*, in: *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 41/1991 (Sarajevo 1991), pp. 1-450.

had stopped being a massive phenomenon⁴. In addition to Filipović, we also have a recent study by Philippe Gelez, “*Vjerska preobraćenja u Bosni i Hercegovini, c. 1800-1918* [Religious conversions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, c. 1800-1918]. In this study, the Ottoman and Austria-Hungarian period were examined as one era, whereas the sources of the first half of the 19th century were poorly represented, in relation to the length of the subject period. In the said literature, the Sharia sijils, which are a significant source of historical data, were not put to use. Gelez claimed that the only sources for the study of religious conversions in this era are Franciscan sources and consular reports, and that “similar data cannot be found in the *kâdî* (sharia court judge) protocols”⁵. However, cases of conversions to Islam were in fact entered into Sharia sijils, and do offer information that may deepen our understanding of the expansion of Islam as a long-term process with numerous phases, which continued to evolve in the 18th and 19th centuries, albeit not intensively, and not nearly to the extent it was in during the 16th centuries.

In addition to the above considerations, it should be pointed out that in Turkish historiography Sharia court protocols were researched much more thoroughly as a source for understanding the spread of Islam than it has been the case in the historiography of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶ The very act of converting to Islam in Turkish historiography is usually labelled as *ihtidâ*, which is a term that could be considered as a continuation of the classical Islamic ideas regarding the adoption of the Islamic religion. Certainly, the majority of researchers focussed their attention on the areas which are today parts of the Republic of Turkey, while the insight that is provided about the *eyalet* of Bosnia is scarce and insufficient, similarly as it has been the case

⁴ Nedim Filipović, *Islamizacija u Bosni i Hercegovini*, Centar za obrazovanje i kulturu Tešanj, Tešanj 2005., pp. 53-57.

⁵ Philippe Gelez, “Vjerska preobraćenja u Bosni i Hercegovini c. 1800-1918” *Historijska traganja*, 2 (Sarajevo 2008), p. 19.

⁶ There are a great number of studies on this subject and the space limitations for this paper do not allow us to present them all. The following studies could be useful in providing further insight to the question of conversion to Islam: Ali Açıklı, “Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Tokat’ta İhtida Hareketleri (1772-1897)”, *A.Ü. Tükiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 23 (Erzurum 2004), pp. 171-193; Ahmet Yiğit, “İzmir Şer’iyye Sicillerine Yansıyan İhtida Vakaları”, *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 3/11 (spring 2010), pp. 633-648; Osman Çetin, *Sicillere göre Bursa’da İhtida Hareketleri ve Sosyal Sonuçları (1472-1909)*, Ankara 1999; Alaaddin Aköz, “Konya’da İhtida Hareketleri ve Osmanlı Mahkemesi (1640-1705)”, *Uluslararası Kuruluşunun 700. Yıldönümünde Bütün Yönleriyle Osmanlı Devleti Kongresi*, Konya 2000, pp. 547-559; Esra Karadağ, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında (1800-1850) Anadoluda İhtida*, Unpublished MA thesis, Cümhuriyet Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Sivas 2005; Kamil Çolak, “XVI. Yüzyılda İstanbul’da İhtida Hareketleri”, *Osmanlı*, IV Ankara 1999, pp. 495-505; Hava Selcuk, “Şer’iyye Sicillerine göre Vidin, Silistre ve Sofya’da İhtida Hareketleri”, *JAASS*, 25-I (summer 2014), pp. 51-61; Halide Aslan, *Tanzimat Döneminde İhtidâ (1839-1876)*, Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Ankara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Ankara 2008.

⁷ The word *ihtidâ* indicates that a new Muslim has been divinely guided to the Right Path of Islam.

with the rest of the western Balkans. However, the studies in question were very useful for our work as they provided us with a starting point in finding out ways to improve our understanding of the conversion to Islam, as well as with the possibility to compare our findings with the results achieved in the historiography. On the other hand, it should be noted that the numbers could be compared, but statistical data by itself, without the comparison and the interpretation of the historical context, cannot provide us with an answer to the questions which are of interest to us. In respect to this, we consider the historical context of the *eyalet* of Bosnia to be different in a number of ways than the situation of Anatolia, as we speak here of a borderland province which was predominantly inhabited by South Slavic peoples (Christians and Muslims). Also, one should have in mind that the 19th century in the Balkans represents the age of national movements and upheavals which attracted the attention of the great European forces. So, it was not the golden age for the spread of Islam, but still year-by-year new conversions were mentioned in the primary sources.

The purpose of this paper is to present in particular the characteristics of conversions to Islam that took place in the first half of the 19th century, based precisely on the study of the *sijils* of the Sarajevo Sharia court, which are kept in Sarajevo's Gazi Husrev Bey's Library. For the purposes of this paper, we analysed a total of 48 *sijils*, compiled in the period between 1800 and 1851⁸. The basic reason behind our decision to analyse exactly those cases of converting to Islam that took place before the Sarajevo court, is because the only *sijils* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, that provide information for the entire period are the Sarajevo court *sijils*, which are thus extremely significant in determining the intensity of conversions to Islam. The number of preserved *sijils* for other *kazas* and *nahiyes* of the *eyalet* of Bosnia is, for the most part, quite miniscule. In our study of the *sijils*, we will focus on a couple of significant questions: 1) the act of converting to Islam and how this act is noted in the judicial records; 2) the number of conversions, and 3) the former identities of the converts. Naturally, we do not pretend to offer finite answers to these questions, nor do we believe that this is possible, given the extent to which the sources that offer this data have been preserved, but we do entertain the hope that, with this work, we will at

⁸ Gazi Husrev-begova biblioteka (The Gazi Husrev Bey Library Collections. Hereafter cited in text: GHB), *Sijils* no. 39-87 (with the exception of no. 86, which speaks about Fojnica). It should be pointed out that texts in the *sijils* dating from the Ottoman times have been transcribed in this paper following the usual practice of the research publications that focus on Ottoman studies. In doing this, we tried to pay attention to the particular features of the Ottoman language in the first half of the 19th century. Ottoman texts taken directly from published and already transcribed sources were transferred without any changes, while the expressions in Arabic that appear in the Ottoman texts were transcribed according to the rules of the Ottoman transcription. Works written entirely in Arabic (such as the *Multaqa al-abhur*) were transcribed according to the ZDMG system.

least partially fill certain information loops that are obvious in current literature on this subject.

The very procedure of converting to Islam took place at the Sharia court, and consisted of a few simple steps. The individual wishing to convert would state in front of witnesses that he or she was willingly renouncing the “vain/void religion” or “all of the vain/void religions”, and then declared that there is no god but Allah, and that Muhammed is His servant and messenger. This declaration is also known as “*keli-me-i şehâdet*”⁹. Also a part of the procedure was the choosing of a Muslim name by the newly-converted Muslim. At the end of the proceedings, the Sharia court judge would decide that the convert is to be considered as a Muslim¹⁰. The official proceedings were most probably followed by congratulations and other customs expected in such occasions, for which there is no record in the sijils themselves, seeing as the only relevant segment of the procedure, for the court, was the legal act of conversion itself. There is also no record of any festivities that followed these acts. On the other hand, the legal procedure of converting was based on the works on Islamic law of the Hanafi *mezheb*. For example, the statement that the individual was converting “of his own will” followed the principle stated in the Qur’an that “there is no compulsion in religion”¹¹, while the renouncing of the earlier religion or religions was in compliance with a fatwa issued by Ebu’s-Su’ud Efendi, the Sheikh al-Islam during the era of Ottoman sultan Kanunî Süleyman (Süleyman the Lawgiver), which stipulates that one

⁹ *Aşhadu an lâ ilâha illâ ‘llâh wa-aşhadu anna Muhammadan ‘abduhü wa-rasûlühü.*

¹⁰ To illustrate this procedure, we cite two examples: “Petar, son of Mato, a dweller of the *kasaba* (town) of Fojnica, came to the Sharia court, willingly renounced vain/void religions and accepted the religion of Islam. He said the good words of the *şehâdet*, [chose to/decided to] act according to the requirements of the *şehâdet* and chose the name of Mehmed. Herein that has been registered on the 11th day of Safar 1231.” (*Föyniçe Kaşabası mütemekkinlerinden Petre veled-i Mâto meclis-i şer’a gelüp bâ-hüsn-i ruzâ edyân-ı bâfileden rucû’ ve dîn-i islâmî kabûl birle kelime-i tayyibe-i şehâdetini kırâ’at ve mu’ceb ve muhtezâsıyla ‘amel ve hareket ve Mehmed ismini ihtiyâr eyledigi bu mahalle kayd şüid fî 11 Ş sene 31*) (GHB, Sijil no. 56, final cover); “Person by the name of Petar, son of Yefto Vuković, originally from the town of Stolac in the Herzegovina sanjak, came to the city of Sarajevo two years ago. While in the service of a Christian woman named Mariya, came to the [Sharia] court of the mentioned city, renounced all vain/void religions, spoke the words of the *şehâdet*, and accepted Muhammed’s Islam – may the best blessings be upon him. He chose the name of Adem, and was so named. Herein that has been explicated on the 1st day of Muharram 1266. Witnessed by the town mufti Mehmed Şakir Efendi, hajji Ahmed Aga Tahmisi, Huseyin Aga Maşiç, hajji Derviş Bey Hancıç, Jiga Salih Aga and others present.” (*Fî’l-aşl Hersek sancağında tâbi’ Istolçe Kaşabası mütevattinlarından olup Petre veled-i Yefto Vuković nâm kimesne iki sene muqaddem medine-i Sarâya gelüp Mariya nâm naşrâniyyenin hîdmetinde oldığı hâldde medine-i mezbûre meclisine gelüp cemî’-i edyân-ı bâfileden rucû’ ve kelimeteyn-i şehâdeteyni telaffuz birle islâm-i Muhammedî ‘aleyhi eşdalü’ş-şalavâtü kabûl ve Âdem ismini ihtiyâr ile tesmiye olındığı bu mahallede şerh virildi. Hurrirre fî gurre-i M sene 66. Şühûdu’l-hâl: müftî-i belde Mehmed Şakir Efendi, el-hâcc Ahmed Aga Tahmîsî, Huseyin Aga Mâşo-zâde, el-hâcc Dervîş Bek Hancıç, Jîga-zâde Sâlih Aga ve gayrihim*). GHB, Sijil no. 85, p. 2.

¹¹ *Lâ ikrahâ fî d-dînî*, The Holy Qur’an, II:256.

could not be legally considered as a Muslim if he or she had not given up their earlier religion, even if this person had pronounced the “*kelime-i şehâdet*”¹².

Upon the completion of the formal proceedings, the court scribes would use a schematised way to register the proceedings on the first or last pages of the sijils. They would always note the basic personal information about the convert, and whereas some entries would be very short and limited, others would include more detail¹³. All the entries were followed by the above formal utterances, which had to be made in order for the conversion to Islam to take place. The text entry itself was also sometimes adorned with additional expressions and epithets. For instance, some entries would state that a convert was “honoured by the honour of Islam”¹⁴, that he or she had “entered the community of believers”¹⁵, that they had “accepted the true/pure religion of Islam”¹⁶, that they had “entered among those who believe in one God”¹⁷, had “renounced the vain/void religion with the help and guidance of the Eternal One”¹⁸, that they are “persons in whom the Divine guidance is manifested”¹⁹, that they had “acquired the obvious mercy of the Eternal One”²⁰, that they had

¹² “QUESTION: If Zejd, a *zimmi*, speaks the words of the *kelime-i şehâdet*, but does not renounce [his earlier religion], can he be judged a Muslim? ANSWER: He can not”. Ertuğrul M. Düzdağ., *Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları Işığında 16. Asır Türk Hayatı*. Enderun Kitabevi, İstanbul 1983, p. 89.

¹³ In Sijil no. 38 in the GHB Collection, there is also a note that briefly states that one Yefan, son of Yovan, from the Butmir *cemâat*, came to the Sharia court, that he was honoured by the honour of Islam, and that he selected the name of Mustafa as his new name. No witnesses are mentioned in the sijil, which does not mean there weren't any – their names were most probably left out to save space in the sijil (GHB, Sijil no. 38, final cover). The note is very scant, and gives only the basic information about the individual converting to Islam. On the other hand, some sijils also provide more detailed notes. For example, for a *zimmi* Mihaylo it was recorded that he had first lived in Sarajevo, had moved as a child to German land, with his father Todor Bogdanoviç, and had lived for some time in the *kasaba* of Zemun. From there he moved to the settlement situated near the river port at Dobra. Together with his wife, a Christian by the name of Mariya, the daughter of Francelko (Frandelko ?), who also lived at the said settlement, Mihaylo came before the Sharia court of Sarajevo, where they both willingly renounced their earlier religion, accepted Islam and spoke the words of the *şehâdet*. Thus Mihaylo chose the name of Selim, while Mariya became Fatima. This was noted in the sijil on 29 Rabi' al-awwal 1243 (20 October 1827) (GHB, Sijil no. 66, p. 3). As we can see, these and other similar notes give us the opportunity to get as much information on the actual converts to Islam.

¹⁴ “...şeref-i islâm ile müşerref olup...”, GHB, Sijil no. 39, p. 2.

¹⁵ “...zümre-i mü'minâta duhul ile...”, GHB, Sijil no. 61, p. 147.

¹⁶ “...hakık dîn-i islâmî kabûl idüp...”, (GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 117.); “...pâk münevver dîn-i islâmî kabûl...”, GHB, Sijil no. 63, p. 2.

¹⁷ “...zümre-i muvâhhidîne duhûl...”, GHB, Sijil no. 61, p. 147.

¹⁸ “...bâ-'avn ve tevfîk-i Ezzelî edyân-ı bâ'îleden teberrâ...”, GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 36.

¹⁹ “...Andrî zimmiye hidâyet-i rabbânî irişüp...”, (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1.); “...hidâyet-i ilâhiyyeye mazhar...”, GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136.

²⁰ “...nâ'il-i lütf-i celî-i hazret-i lem-yezelî olup...”, GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136.

“reached the light of faith’s guidance”²¹, and many such descriptions.²² The entries sometimes made no mention of any witnesses, but this was not because there were none – the presence of witnesses was a condition of conversion under the Sharia law, but the sijil notaries may have wanted to use writing space in the sijils more efficiently. The most common witnesses were, in fact, the officers of the court present, such as notaries, court ushers and service staff, while the number of witnesses was often much bigger than the minimum of two male witnesses specified by Sharia law. In all the registered cases we analysed, the witnesses were always Muslim men.²³

The question of how many people converted to Islam in the 19th century is a special issue in its own right, which in scientific research is analysed in the form of rough and quite arbitrary judgments. Only P. Gelez has attempted to provide an answer to this question, in a couple of sentences, looking at the period between 1840 and 1878. He claims to have consulted consular reports and Franciscan chronicles, and that, in the above period, “the number of converts reached, *grosso modo*, a hundred or so people”. Furthermore, he also estimates that “there were, in the worst case, a thousand conversions in these 40 years”. He believes that it is very likely that many cases were left out, because the chronicles were local, and the consuls did not have intelligence networks which would be able to cover the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzego-

²¹ “...nūr-i hidāyet-i imāna iriṣūp...”, (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1.); “...nūr-i hidāyet-i imān ile mūnevvere olup...”, GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136.

²² Similar expressions could be found in court protocols throughout the Ottoman Empire. See: Ronald C. Jennings, “Zimmis (Non-Muslims) in Early 17th Century Ottoman Judicial Records: The Sharia Court of Anatolian Kayseri”, *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 21/33 (Oct. 1978), pp. 240-241.

²³ In his work “*Multaqa al-abhur*”, Hanafi jurist Ibrahim Al-Halabī specified the Sharia conditions for witnesses in matters of fornication, retaliation and Sharia punishments, as well as situations where the testimonies of only one woman are acceptable (i.e. in determining virginity and the birth of a child). Furthermore, he stated that for „other issues“ (excluding fornication and other Sharia penalties classified as “*hudūd*”, retaliation, issues of virginity and childbirth), either two men or one man and two women are required as witnesses, regardless of whether the case was related to material property or not - such as marriage, breastfeeding, divorce, procreation and wills (*wa-li-ḡairi dālike raḡulāni aw raḡulun wa-imra’atāni mālan kāna aw ḡaira mālin ka-n-nikāhi wa-r-riḡā’i wa-ḡ-ḡalāqi wa-l-wakālati wa-l-waṣṣiyati*). The issue of converting to Islam was not specifically mentioned. However, from Al-Halabī’s definition, we can judge that conversions to Islam also fall into the category of „other issues“ (i.e. material and immaterial), and thus that the rule of one man and two women as witnesses can be applied in this matter too. This issue was, in a similar way, also explained by the Sheikh al-Islam Molla Hüsrev (Ibrahim Al-Halabī, *Multaqa al-abhur*, commentary: Drameli Havāce-zāde Ismā’īl Efendi., Mahmūd Beg Maḡba’asi, Istanbul 1303 h., p. 299); (Molla Hüsrev, *Düverü’l-hükkām fī şerhi ḡuveri’l-aḡkām*, Ottoman translation, Tab’-hāne-i ‘āmiri, Istanbul 1258 h., p. 827). Regardless of the legal possibilities of women testifying in these cases, the Sarajevo Sharia court in the first half of the 19th century preferred male witnesses, and thus there is no record of any woman testifying to a conversion to Islam in this period. Moreover, many of the witnesses were often characterised in the sijils as court notaries (*kātib*) or summoners (*muḡḡur*). Similarly to this, men were also the preferred witnesses to other legal acts, such as marriages. GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2.

vina.²⁴ Gelez's estimates were given for the whole area that was once the province of Bosnia, and do not refer specifically to conversions to Islam, but give information as to the general number of all kinds of religious conversions in this period. Apart from Gelez's account, existing literature does not provide any other insights.

We believe that it is currently not possible to give a precise account of how many conversions to Islam there were throughout the eyalet of Bosnia in the 19th century, primarily because many areas do not have preserved sijils to provide such data, while the Franciscan sources and consular reports only offer unorganized and scattered information. As far as research goes, the *temettuât defters* (registers) for the eyalet of Bosnia have yet to be found, while the other Ottoman registers from the 19th century, which could possibly help complete existing information gaps, are still insufficiently analyzed and not very familiar to researchers in this field. With all this in mind, we will not pretend to give any arbitrary estimates for the entire area of the eyalet, nor will we discuss all the kinds of the changes of religious identity that may have taken place – instead, we will focus on precise data on the number of conversions to Islam, as recorded in the Sarajevo Sharia court sijils, during the period between 1800 and 1851, for which the sijils provide uninterrupted evidence.

All individuals who converted to Islam at the Sarajevo Sharia court can be classified into two categories. The first group consists of people who followed the conversion procedure described earlier in this paper – i. e. who willingly recited the *kelime-i şehâdet* and accepted Islam. The second were the underage children of newly-converted Muslims, who, after one of their parents would convert to Islam, would be judicially converted with no particular expression of willingness.²⁵ Between 1800

²⁴ P. Gelez, *Vjerska preobraćenja u Bosni i Hercegovini*, p. 24.

²⁵ According to Ebu's-Su'ud Efendi, the minor children of a person converting to Islam were to be legally converted also. This procedure excluded children who had turned 12, and had stated that they had become mature (*bâliğ*). We conclude this from the following fatwas issued by Ebu's-Su'ud Efendi: "QUESTION: When *zimmî* Zeyd becomes a Muslim, and his twelve-year-old daughter Zeyneb, who is mature, states that she has not become a Muslim, are the *zimmîs* who are witnessing that she is [indeed] twelve years old given a hearing? ANSWER: Yes, they are."; "QUESTION: When *zimmî* Zeyd converts to Islam, with the mercy of Almighty Allah, until what age of his children it can be adjudicated that they are to become Muslim [too]? ANSWER: After excluding all children who have turned twelve years old, and have said "I have become of age/mature", it shall be decided that all the remaining children are to become Muslim" (E. Düzdağ., *Ebussu'ud Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 90). The legal conversion of children to Islam, after one of their parents became Muslim, was a practice that was also applied at the Sarajevo Sharia court. For parents, the sijils generally stated that they appeared before the court and willingly converted to Islam, while for children, it was recorded that they were following "the better parent" (better with regard to religion) and it was decided for them to become Muslim by the decision of the court, which would mean that they were not consulted in the matter (*...ve şağır oğlu Lâzo veled-i Mârko dahi hayr-ı ebeveyne tâbi'iyet ile islâmına hüküm ve Ahmed tesmiye olındığı işbu mahalde şerh virildi*). GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233.

and 1851, the Sarajevo Sharia court registered 123 people who willingly accepted Islam, two of which – it should be pointed out were *mürtedd* – apostates²⁶ who returned to Islam.²⁷ The reason we are pointing this out is because the *mürtedd* received special treatment under Sharia law, and by virtue of that, also by the Sarajevo Sharia court. The works of the Hanafî *mezheb* authors usually mention that the regulation was to give an apostate man (*mürtedd*) three days to repent, and if he did not, he would be faced with the death penalty. In the case of women apostates, the death penalty was not applied, but she was supposed to be imprisoned until she was ready to repent²⁸. Furthermore, a fatwa by Ebu's-Su'ud says that the person who, after the conversion to Islam, again reverted to being an “infidel”, was supposed, under Sharia rules, to be persuaded by force (*cebren*) to return to Islam, and if the refused, that the should be

²⁶ For a recent study about apostasy in the Ottoman Empire see: Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 1-275.

²⁷ “A girl (*bâkire* i.e. a virgin) by the name of Hatice, daughter of *sîpahi* Salih, from the village of Podpeçye in the *kaza* of Taşlıca (Pljevlja), who had since childhood lived in the house of Hasan Efendi, had committed apostasy (had become a *mürtedde*), God forbid. She also lived for some time with *zimmi* Vasil, and then for a while also with *zimmi* Yoksim, a carpenter. After that, she moved to molla Ibrahim Şehoviç, and while she lived there, her uncle came to visit her from the Pljevlje region, after which she renounced the vain religion, accepted Islam as her religion, spoke the words of the *şehâdet*, and took on the name of Hatice. Herein it was so recorded on the 18th of B 1228 [i.e. 17 July 1813]” (GHB, Sijil no. 53, p. 144). Furthermore, a girl of age (*bükrü'l-bâliğa*), by the name of Stana, daughter of Petar Çviiyetić, originally from the village of Şuyiça (?), in the *kaza* of Livno, had previously been honoured with the honour of Islam, which was registered at the court in Travnik. After the said person had, God forbid, become an apostate (*mürtedde*), she was, captured during the time of the earlier governor Abdurrahim Pasha, brought to Sarajevo before hafiz Şerif Efendi, the imam of the Old Mosque *maħalle*, and put into custody (*ħabs*). This Christian woman then willingly renounced all the „vain/void“ religions, spoke the words of the *şehâdet* and chose for herself the name of Fatıma, as is described in the sijil on 6 *Ca* 1246. Witnessing to this event were Abdullah Hasan Bey, hajji Mehmed Hilmi Efendi, hafiz Salih Efendi and Suleyman Aga Pliska. GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 2.

²⁸ “QUESTION: If a *zimmiyye* (non-Muslim, female ward of the state) Hind, after having converted to Islam, commits apostasy, and after that, if she continues on this path, can she be executed? ANSWER: No, she cannot. But she must never be released from prison, and can never see the world again, as long as she lives.” (E. Düzdağ, *Ebussuûd Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 90); “He who commits apostasy – God Almighty forbid – is offered Islam, and his doubts, if there are any, are revealed to him. If he asks for a delay, he will be imprisoned for three days, and if he repents [he will be pardoned], and if he does not, he will be killed. His repentance is by renouncing all religion except Islam, or renouncing the religion that he has inherited [from his ancestors]. To kill him before he is offered to accept [Islam] goes against the recommended, and for that there are no amends.” The note above this entry states: “There shall be neither retaliation nor compensation [to the family of the apostate]”. Further on, the text then specifies the treatment of women who commit apostasy from Islam: “... whereas women are not killed, but are imprisoned and beaten every day until they repent...” (Al-Halabî, *Mullaqa*, pp. 220-221). The issue of *mürteds* is illustrated by Molla Hüsvrev in a similar way (Molla Hüsvrev, *Düerü'l-ħükkâm*, pp. 216-218). In the sijils of the Sarajevo court we haven't found any apostate men, so there is no proof that the death penalty for apostasy was executed in Sarajevo. However, one woman who had committed apostasy was imprisoned (*ħabs*), as is described earlier. GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 2.

executed²⁹. In addition to the already mentioned number of conversions, there were also ten children who were legally converted to Islam, after one of their parents became a Muslim, which made the total number of people who either chose to convert or were converted to Islam during this period 133³⁰. What is interesting is that there were conversions happening almost every year. Of the 52 years studied³¹, there is no record of a conversion taking place for only five years³². Moreover, the pace of the conversions remained more or less stable, with the number of conversions per year ranging from one to a maximum of seven conversions³³. Court records show that changes of religious affiliation were registered in all of the months of the Islamic lunar calendar. There were only eight conversions overall that occurred during the

²⁹ “QUESTION: What treatment, under Sharia law, is required for *zimmî* Zeyd, who, after converting to Islam, reverted to being an infidel? ANSWER: He shall be forced to follow Islam (*cebr olunur*), and if he does not, he shall be killed.” E. Düzdağ, *Ebussüid Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 90.

³⁰ The names of underage children who were, according to Sharia legislation, converted to Islam after one of their parents became a Muslim, were recorded and can be found in the following sources: GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233 (one child); GHB, Sijil no. 47, p. 217 (one child); GHB, Sijil no. 60, p. 2 (one child); GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 134 (two children); GHB, Sijil no. 79, p. 485 (two children); GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2 (three children).

³¹ Conversions to Islam took place throughout the Ottoman Empire during the whole of the 19th century. We consider it useful to mention some of the findings of other researchers, for the sake of comparison. Of course, one should be aware that this is just statistical data, which gives us only a limited insight on the problem of the acceptance of Islam, while a deeper analysis is required for a more complete comprehension. Between 1772 and 1897 there were 68 conversions in Tokat overall, which is a pretty low figure, compared to 685 cases which were registered in the court protocols of Izmir between 1884/1885 (1302 AH) and 1908/1909 (1326 AH) [A. Açıkl, “Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Tokat’ta İhtida Hareketleri (1772-1897)”, p. 175; A. Yiğit, “İzmir Şer’iyye Sicillerine Yansıyan İhtida Vakaları”, p. 637]. Results of our work could best be compared with the results of authors who researched conversions that happened at just one Sharia court, similarly to the method we employed. However, comparison is also possible with the data of the studies in which conversions that took place on different Sharia courts were brought together and computed, whereas the same could be said for the studies based on the documents of the Ottoman central administration. Though, in the latter studies the emphasis lies on the main problems of the conversion, not on the total number of conversions that is registered in one *nahiye* or *kaza* [See: E. Karadağ, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yansında (1800-1850) Anadolu İhtida*; H. Aslan, *Tanzimat Döneminde İhtida (1839-1876)*]. On the other hand, the number of converts in a particular area, i. e. *kaza* of Sarajevo, is important for this research, while at the same time we still tend to keep focus on crucial problems of the conversion as a phenomenon.

³² These are: 1819, 1832, 1833, 1839 and 1841.

³³ For example: In 1828, only one person converted to Islam at the Sharia Court in Sarajevo. His name was Dimo, son of Dimo, originally from the Vidin *nahiye*, who became a Muslim on 17 Rajab 1243 (i.e. on 3 February 1828). This case was recorded in Sijil no. 66. Alongside this case, the sijil also mentions a couple of other conversions to Islam, but according to the Gregorian calendar, which we based our statistics on, these took place in 1827 (GHB, Sijil no. 66, p. 271). Furthermore, according to the Gregorian calendar, the maximum number of conversions to Islam within one year was seven. This was the case in 1817, when the following people were recorded to have converted: Luçiya, daughter of Yakov, Simo, son of Petar, Yovan, son of Anton, Anto, Stoyan, son of Kosta, Petar, son of ? (illegible), and Iliya, son of Anton. GHB, Sijil no. 57, pp. 1, 2, 3, 145; GHB, Sijil no. 58, pp. 165, 166.

month of Ramadan, which is not much, if we take into the account the total number of the registered conversions.³⁴ Therefore, on the basis of the sijils of Sarajevo one cannot speak about the increasing of conversion activity during the Islamic holy months, nor is there evidence that the religious “atmosphere” in these months made a significant difference as to the number of converts.³⁵

In addition to this group of people who converted to Islam before the Sarajevo Sharia Court, it should also be mentioned that the Sarajevo sijils also make note of other individuals who had accepted Islam earlier, at another Sharia court, or at some anonymous location. This was usually done when a person from another town wanted, for whatever reason, to be judicially registered as a Muslim. Furthermore, when resolving various legal matters concerning some of the converts, a Sharia court judge would sometimes make a note in the sijil that the said individual had earlier converted to Islam. We have classified all of these in a special category, with eight cases for which we have confirmed with certainty that they do not coincide with any of the cases already included in the figure earlier mentioned. If we were to include these cases in the total number, we would have 141 individuals recorded in the Sarajevo sijils to have converted to Islam, with 133 of them having converted before the court in Sarajevo. In addition, there were also other people, who are not recorded as having converted to Islam by means of the procedure outlined earlier, but are just described as persons “who embraced Islam by Divine guidance” (*mühtedī/ye*). We have not included these cases in the above count, since, due to scarce and generalised information, we could not determine with certainty that they are not among the cases we already included in this group³⁶.

³⁴ GHB, Sijil no. 57, inner cover; GHB, Sijil no. 60, pp. 1, 2 (two cases); GHB, Sijil no. 60, p. 3; GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1; GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 2; GHB, Sijil no. 75, p. 256 (two cases).

³⁵ A. Açıkel suggests, on the contrary, that the number of conversions in Tokat was somehow connected with the spiritual atmosphere of the Islamic holy months. A. Açıkel, “Şer‘iyye Sicillerine Göre Tokat’ta İhtida Hareketleri (1772-1897)”, p. 176.

³⁶ Miliçe, wife of *zimmi* Rade, from the village of Kuliş, divorced her husband seven months before she converted to Islam and took the name of Fatima. It is not recorded where she converted, but the court was able to confirm that she did, on the basis of testimonies by Osman, son of Omer, and Ahmed, son of Abdullah. (GHB, Sijil no. 44, p. 236). A Christian woman by the name of Todora, from the village of Budojelye in the *Visoko nahije*, converted to Islam earlier. Her husband Risto was then brought before the court in Visoko and was offered to convert. He declined, and they were divorced by the court. The divorce was, further, ascertained by the Sarajevo Sharia court, on the basis of the testimonies of Hasan, son of Ahmed, and Derviş, son of Ramadan (GHB, Sijil no. 46, p. 2). Furthermore, above the entry of the wedding of Halil, son of Ismail, and Fatima, daughter of Abdullah, it was recorded that the bride had converted to Islam a year and a half earlier, and that her former husband Petar had declined the offer to convert to Islam. It is not mentioned where the conversion took place (GHB, Sijil no. 46, pp. 203, 226). Similarly, during the wedding of Salih, son of Mustafa, and Umihana, daughter of Abdullah, it was recorded that her former husband, *zimmi* Risto, was offered eight months before to convert to Islam at the court in İbzençe (Zenica),

In order to reach some conclusions on the geographical and gender distribution of the conversions to Islam that took place before the Sarajevo *kâdî*, a statistic analysis has been conducted in this paper at the Sarajevo court for the above-mentioned 133 converts, while the remaining eight cases have more or less similar characteristics, and will not be subject to a separate study in this paper. We will begin by determining the places of origin of the converts, so as to determine their local and regional identity. The greatest number of people who converted to Islam originated from the town of Sarajevo and the villages that belonged to the Sarajevo *nahiye* (53 people), while 16 converts were from the other *nahiyes* in the *kaza* of Sarajevo, 44 of them were from other *kazas* and *nahiyes* in the eyalet of Bosnia, 6 were from other areas in the Ottoman Empire³⁷, 11 cases were from outside the Empire (mainly from the Habsburg Monarchy)³⁸, while 3 people could not be defined with regard to their pla-

but that he refused. It is also recorded that Umihana is a *mühtediye*, which designates a woman who embraced Islam by the guidance of God (GHB, Sijil no. 46, p. 205). Halil, from the *cemaat* of Lediçi, who was just about to become of age (*mürâhik*), stated before the court that he had become a Muslim earlier, that he was in the service of Osman *sipahi*, and that his father Curo (Đuro) had died six years prior in the Zagorye *nahiye*, within the *kaza* of Foča (GHB, Sijil no. 55, p. 9). For one Ibrahim, son of Abdullah, a resident of a *Beytül-Yahūd* ("the house of Jews", most probably a place known as Çifut-hane or the Siyavuş Pasha's inn (*hân*), which was inhabited by Jews), Sijil no. 56 states that he had accepted Islam earlier, and that the document (*temessük*) confirming his residence in the Çifut-hâne was kept by Isak, son of Avram. Isak had submitted the *temessük* to the executor of the will of the convert (*vaşî*), which was recorded in the judicial protocol (GHB, Sijil no. 56, final cover). Furthermore, Yeke, daughter of Mihaylo Koroman, from the village of Lyubogosta in the Pale *cemaat*, had converted to Islam one month before, taking the name of Habiba. She later made this statement before the Sharia court in person, and this was registered in the sijil (GHB, Sijil no. 80, p. 178). Pavo, son of Stipe, from Split, had, 15 days before arriving in Sarajevo, converted free-willingly to Islam in Mostar, in front of the mufti, and had taken the name of Mustafa. This conversion was probably originally registered in a sijil in Mostar, but was, when he arrived in Sarajevo, also registered in the Sarajevo sjijs, possibly at the convert's request (GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2).

³⁷ These cases were: Miyat (?), son of Yovan, from the Kruščica (Kruščica) village in the Ujiçe (Užice) *nahiye*, converted to Islam and took the name of Hasan (GHB, Sijil no. 46, p. 226); Nikola, from the village of Dračevo in the *kaza* of Üsküp (Skopje) (GHB, Sijil no. 75, p. 256); Dimo, son of Dimo, from the Vidin *nahiye*, the village of Košava (GHB, Sijil no. 66, p. 271); Yefto, from Priština, became Omer (GHB, Sijil no. 76, p. 5); Yovo, son of Rade, from Podgoriča (GHB, Sijil no. 80, p. 1); 22-year-old Yovanče, son of Yovan, from the village of Ališniča (Ališnica), one of the "Serb villages" (*Şırp kuruşlarından*), located six hours from Niş, converted to Islam before the court in Sarajevo, and in the presence of the orthodox mitropolit, chose the name of Ali. He was in the service of Emin Ağa, who was the *binbaşı* (major) of the first battalion (*tabur*) of the 4th regiment/*alay*. GHB, Sijil no. 87, p. 169.

³⁸ Jovan, son of Anton/Antun, from the town of Karlovaç, in "German land" (*Nemçe diyârında vâkı' olup*) had come to Gradiška one month before, converted to Islam in Sarajevo and took the name of Derviş Hasan. (GHB, Sijil no. 57, p. 2); Ilija, son of Petar, a German by origin (*fî'l-aşl Nemçelü olup*), residing at Gülzade Mustafa Ağa's inn in Sarajevo, accepted Islam before the Sarajevo Sharia Court, and took the name of Ali (GHB, Sijil no. 60, p. 2); *ẓimmî* Yovan, son of Yovan, Hungarian by origin (*fî'l-aşl Macâriyyü'l-aşl olup*), who had spent a year in Glasinaç in the service of the *müezzîn*, and then worked for the *alaybey*, accepted Islam and took the name of Mehmed (GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 2); Zimmi Andri, from the town of Goriče (Gorica) in Italian land (*İtalyân memleketinde Goriče kaşabası mütemekkinlerinden*), had come to Islamic

ce of origin.³⁹ These cases demonstrate that conversions to Islam did not have to be carried out in the convert's place or residence – in fact, all the courts in the Ottoman Empire had equal jurisdiction in these matters. We should also point out that some of the converts noted as being from outside the Sarajevo *nahiye* had relocated there permanently, while there were also cases where a visitor/traveller (*müsafir*) decided to

land two years before (...*dāru'l-islāma*..., literal translation: to the House of Islam), where he worked in the service of a *sipahi* in Glasinaç. He converted to Islam before the Sarajevo Sharia Court and took the name of Omer (GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 2); Mato, originally from the village of... (?), in German country (*Nemçe vilāyetinde*), had left his homeland 12 years before. He had stayed in many places while in the German army, and finally ended up in the Dobra settlement. He had left Dobra 20 days before his conversion, and had come to Sarajevo, where he accepted Islam before the Sharia Court in Sarajevo, and took the name of Mustafa (GHB, Sijil no., 66, p. 2); Stjepan/Stipan (*Istipān*), son of Todor, originally from the village of Paoča, near the town of Debreçen in Hungarian country (*Macār vilāyetinde*), came to the Dobra settlement two years before his conversion, and moved into Islamic country. He spent two years there, in the service of many families around Sarajevo, the last being with Salih Efendi. He then converted to Islam and took the name of Huseyin. (GHB Sijil no. 66, p. 4); Yozo, son of Andriya, originally from the town of Makarska in German land, came to Islamic land a month prior to his conversion, and went into the service of Salih Bey Babiç. He accepted Islam before the Sarajevo Sharia Court (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 133). The *hekimbaşı*/head physician of the Bosnian governor (*vālī*) Davud Pasha, called ? (illegible), who had been one of the distinguished Englishmen (*İngilīz mütehayyızāndan iken*), converted to Islam and took the name of Ahmed Nuri Efendi (GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136); Aleksandar, son of Mihaylo, from the *kaza* of Budim, who spent some time with Friar Styepan Mikić (*prātor Istipān Mīkik zimmī yanında*) in the Dubrave village in the *kaza* of Tuzla, came to Sarajevo on a visit and converted to Islam there (GHB, Sijil no. 83, p. 156); Andriya, a *zimmī* from the Srem sanjak, in the Temišvar (Timissoara) *nahiye*, born in the village of Kikinda, came to Muslim lands two years before he became a Muslim. He lived in the village of Ostoyiç, and worked in the service of Adem *sipahi*. He accepted Islam in 1829. Regardless of the fact that the sijil cites the sanjak and *nahiye* where the village of Kikinda was situated as his place of residence, it is clear that this area was not under Ottoman rule at this time (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1); lastly, Mariya, who lived in the settlement near the river port at Dobra, also converted to Islam (GHB, Sijil no. 66, p. 3). In addition to these eleven conversions that took place at the court in Sarajevo, we can also mention a man named Pavo, who was originally a subject of Austrian rulers, and a citizen of the town of Split (*Avusturya deoleti teba'asından İsplit kaşabası mütemekkinlerinden*). He had accepted Islam earlier in Mostar, before a *mufti*, and taken the name of Mustafa (GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2).

³⁹ Thirteen-year-old Petar Yureç from the village of ? (illegible), one of the “Croatian villages” (*Hırvāt kırālarından*), converted to Islam in Sarajevo and took the name of Omer. Not one of the cases cited in the sijils that we analysed makes mention of any village in Bosnia being Croatian – all villages are defined by the *nahiye* or *cemāat* or *kaza* they belonged to. We believe that the village mentioned was in fact in Croatia, and not in Bosnia. The name of the village is illegible, and so, in our statistics, we included it as unlocalised village. Further on in the sijil, we can see that individuals from villages now on the territory of Serbia who converted were registered as having been from “Serb villages” (see footnote 29), while this attribute is never given to any village in Bosnia (GHB, Sijil no. 87, p. 169); A man named Yovan, son of Mitar, who, upon converting, took the name of Omer, is registered as being from a village that appears to have been called Husika (the name is largely illegible). We could not localize this village as belonging to any greater geographical area (GHB, Sijil no. 43, p. 3); Yana, daughter of Mitar, converted to Islam and took the name of Nefisa. The village she came from can be read as either Kozareviç or Kozaroviç, and is described as belonging to the “said *nahiye*”, but the name of the *nahiye* is not given, nor is it mentioned earlier. The entry could possibly be referring to the village of Kozariç in the Sarajevo *nahiye* (GHB, Sijil no. 62, p. 140).

accept Islam while they were in Sarajevo⁴⁰. The number of men who adopted Islam before the *molla* in Sarajevo was greater than the number of women (80 vs. 43 cases), but when you take into account the children who were converted to Islam after one of the parents became Muslim, then the ratio becomes 85:48 in favour of men.⁴¹

These notes on conversion to Islam are especially valuable because they offer an entire range of personal information on the new Muslims, and will present the basis of an attempt to contribute to understanding the actual identities of the converts. What is interesting is that the converts were members of other monotheistic communities that coexisted in this region. Catholics and Orthodox Christians were not specifically distinguished, but were instead identified under the common term *zimmî* (or wards of the state), which was used to denote non-Muslim subjects, or were simply called “Christians” (*naşranî/yye*)⁴². In some cases, we can distinguish the different religions by the convert’s name, but as this method does not guarantee a foolproof religious identification for all of the converts, we did not go any further into this analysis. However, we should point out that very frequently, the names of the converts in the *sijils* were characteristic of Orthodox Christians⁴³. Furthermore, in all cases of Jews

⁴⁰ A man named Nikola, from the village of Dračevo in the *kaza* of Skopje, also accepted Islam before the Sharia Court in Sarajevo. He was registered in the *sijil* as having been staying in Sarajevo as a *müsaafir/*visitor (*müsâfereten bulunan*) (GHB *Sijil* no. 75, p. 256).

⁴¹ Other researchers also tried to determine the gender distribution of the converts. A. Açıkel detected that between 1772 and 1897 precisely 38 men and 30 women converted to Islam in Tokat, or, at least, that is the number of cases which could be found in the court protocols for the mentioned area [A. Açıkel, “Şer’iyye Sicillerine Göre Tokat’ta İhtida Hareketleri (1772-1897)”, p. 176]. E. Karadağ used court protocols from different parts of Anatolia between 1800 and 1850. Given the total number of non-Muslim population in Anatolia and the number of preserved *sijils* as well, she analysed a very limited sample of 150 cases of conversion and identified 106 men and 44 women, what eventually led her to the conclusion that men were converting more than women in Anatolia in the aforesaid period [E. Karadağ, *XIX. Yüzyılın İlk Yarısında (1800-1850) Anadolu İhtida*, pp. 73-74]. H. Aslan focused mainly on the materials produced by the central administration, although she also used a limited number of court protocols. At the end, the author managed to bring together 553 cases of conversion, obviously a much larger sample than E. Karadağ used; 551 of the cases related to male converts, whereas 159 of the converts were females. However, Aslan had no intention to focus solely on statistics, so she hadn’t arrived to most of her conclusions only by counting, but by analyzing various Ottoman texts. The converts she was speaking about hailed from various parts of the Ottoman Empire, mainly from the Balkans and Anatolia. Among others, in her Ph.D. thesis the author even mentions some converts who came from the *eyalet* of Bosnia [H. Aslan, *Tanzimat Döneminde İhtida (1839-1876)*, pp. 185, 188, 189].

⁴² For example, for a Nikola, son of İliya, from the village of Ravna in the *kaza* of Teşne (Tešanj), the *sijils* recorded that he was a *zimmî*, or a protected ward (GHB, *Sijil* no. 60, p. 1); a woman named Angeli (Anđelija), daughter of Stjepan/Súpan, was simply described as a Christian/*naşrânîyye*. GHB, *Sijil* no. 61, p. 147.

⁴³ For example, Boško, son of Risto (GHB, *Sijil* no. 47, p. 218); Simo, son of Petar (GHB, *Sijil* no. 57, p. 1); Stoyan, son of Kosta (GHB, *Sijil* no. 57, p. 145); Yovan, son of Staniša Raşoviç (GHB, *Sijil* no. 79, p. 486); Aleksandar, son of Mihaylo, Curo (Đuro), son of Savo (GHB, *Sijil* no. 83, p. 156), Petar, son of Yefito Vukoviç, Staka daughter of Spasoye (GHB, *Sijil* no. 85, p. 2); and Yovançe, son of Yovan, GHB, *Sijil* no. 87, p. 169.

converting to Islam – there were a total of three recorded adult converts, and four underage children who were legally converted – the sijils specifically mentioned that the convert was a “*yahūdī*” (In addition to these cases, we also came across another Jewish convert for whom we do not know where and when he accepted Islam)⁴⁴. In the case of some of the foreigners who had come to the eyalet of Bosnia and adopted Islam as their religion, the sijils usually make no specific mention of their ethnic background, but one of the converts is recorded as being English (a *hekimbaşı*, or head physician to the Bosnian *vâlî*)⁴⁵. It was noted for some of the converts that they were of German or Hungarian origin, but we have reason to doubt this, as they bore Slavic names (e.g. Yovan, son of Yovan)⁴⁶.

The age distribution of converts to Islam can only be determined with reference to a minor number of cases. For converts who were of age (*bālīg*), and had, according to Sharia regulations, legal capacity to have rights and obligations, the court notaries only recorded their ages on rare occasions, whereas the great majority of cases do not specify the exact age of the convert. On the other hand, the notaries used specific and established terms to record any underage converts⁴⁷ (such as *şağīr* and *mümeyyiz*), as well as those that were on the verge of maturity (*mürāhik*), since it was important to establish their legal status⁴⁸. Sometimes, for these cases, the exact age of

⁴⁴ S...(?), son of Baro, a resident of the *beytü'l-yeħūd* (also known as Siyavuş Pasha's inn/*han*, or *Velika Avlija, Kortij*, and *Çifut-hane*) willingly renounced all “vain religions” before the Sharia Court, accepted Islam, spoke the words of the *şehâdet*, and took the name of Hüseyin. (GHB, Sijil no. 56, final cover); Rafo, a Jewish man (*Yehūdī*), son of ? (illegible), born in Travnik, had come to Sarajevo 12 years before and settled in the Ayas Pasha quarter (*maħalle*). He renounced all vain religions before the Sharia Court, accepted Islam and took the name of Mustafa. Together with him, also converted to Islam were his six-year-old son Solomon, for whom Mustafa chose the name of Abdullah, as well as his nine-year-old daughter ? (name illegible), who was given the name of Fatima. (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 134); A Jewish man (*Yehūdī*) named ? (illegible), son of Yakov, came before the Sharia Court, accepted Islam and took the name of Selim. With his wife Blanka, daughter of Solomon, he had a one-year-old son, Yakov, and five-year-old daughter Ana. The children were converted by the court to Islam (...*islāmna hüküm olundıkdan soñra...*), the boy was given the name of Islam, and the girl Hayrunisa. Blanka was offered the chance to also convert, which she declined (GHB, Sijil no. 79, p. 485). Alongside these individuals, who accepted Islam before the Sharia Court in Sarajevo, there were also other Jews for which we do not know where and when they converted. Such was the case of Ibrahim, son of Abdullah, a resident of the “Jewish House”, whom the sijils briefly describe as having converted to Islam earlier (GHB, Sijil no. 56, final cover).

⁴⁵ GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136.

⁴⁶ These people were probably considered to have originally been from Hungarian or German lands. GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 2.; GHB, Sijil no. 60, p. 2.

⁴⁷ An interesting study of children's conversion to Islam was written by H. Aslan. See: Halide Aslan, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Son Dönemlerinde Muhtedi Çocuk Manzaraları”, *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 14:1 (Elazığ 2009), pp. 119-142.

⁴⁸ In Sharia legal terms, “*şağīr*” is used to refer to a minor. The term “*mümeyyiz*” literally refers to “one who can understand the difference”, “one who understands” – a somewhat older minor who is able to

the individual was given, and we can thus come across cases where the children who converted were 12, 13, or 14 years old, and even two cases where the converts were 9 and 10 years of age (one of each)⁴⁹. Here we need to mention that maturity, according to Islamic tenets, is associated with one's reproductive maturity, and can thus vary from case to case – for example, Hanafī jurists specify that the minimum age a boy can be considered mature is 12 years old, while it was 9 years old for girls. On the other hand, the maximum age by which a child reaches adulthood was, according to Abu Hanifa, 18 for boys and 17 for girls, while his pupils, imam Yusuf and imam Muhammed, are of the opinion that it was 15 years old for both sexes⁵⁰. According

judge between “right” and “wrong”, that is, usually one who is older than seven. Ottoman scribes registered certain individuals as “having a mind capable of making a distinction” (*mümeyyiz ‘aqlı olan*), but also one that “can judge right from wrong” (*hayr şerrinden tenyîz eden*). Those who could differentiate good from evil, although they were minors, were considered to be able to express an independent willingness to convert to Islam. Mariya, daughter of Ostoya, from the Yabuka *cemaat* (near Foča), was thirteen when she willingly (*bi't-tav' ve'r-r-zā*) converted to Islam. She was recorded as being able to distinguish between right and wrong (*hayr şerrinden mümeyyize oldığı hâlde*). Upon converting, she chose to go by the name of Zlatka (GHB, Sijil 87, p. 168). The word “*mürâhik*” derives from the Arabic verb “*râhaka*”, which means “to be nearly mature (of age), to grow up, to get close”. In Sharia law, the term signifies a minor who had come to an age where certain features of male or female maturity may appear, and who is thus approaching maturity, but is not of age yet.

⁴⁹ Ivan, son of Luka Yajić, from Vareš, was 12 years old when he converted to Islam. He is described in the records as having a mind that is capable of differentiating (*mümeyyiz ‘aqlı olan*). He took on the name Abdulmu'min (GHB, Sijil 83, p. 156). *Ẓimmî* Ivan, from Vareš, was about 12 years old when he converted to Islam. He was recorded as being a minor (*şagîr*), as well as possessing “a mind capable of distinguishing” (*mümeyyizü'l- 'aql*). He took the name of Mustafa (GHB, Sijil 83, p. 156). Similarly, Roza, daughter of Anton, from the village of Lugovi in the Fojnica *nahiye*, was in the service of Şaban-zade Salih Aga and Mustafa Aga. She willingly converted to Islam and changed her name to Nuriye (Nuriya). She was about 13 years old, and was described as “*mürâhika*” (i.e. as having approached maturity) (GHB, Sijil no. 78, p. 237). Pavo, son of Martin, was in the service of Mehmed Begović in the village of Rakoviç (Rakovica) in the Sarajevo *nahiye*. He converted to Islam and took the name of Mustafa. When he converted to Islam, he was already ten years old. The court judged the said minor (*şagîr*) as being “*mümeyyiz*” (GHB, Sijil no. 78, p. 237). 13-year-old Aniç (Anica), daughter of Yovan, from the village of Tarçin, was in the service of Mehmed Bey Rabić. The court considered her as being *bâkire-i bâliğa*, i.e. a girl of age, and she changed her name to Emina upon converting (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1). Yovan, son of Petar, from the Çekrekçi Muslihudin neighbourhood in Sarajevo, was nine when he converted, and chose the name of Salih (GHB, Sijil no. 64, p. 1). Boro, son of Andon Blajević, from the *kaza* of Mostar, who was about 14 or 15 years old, appeared before the Sharia court as a beardless boy (*şâb-i emred*), accepted Islam and took the name of Ibrahim (GHB, Sijil no. 85, p. 2). These are just some of the cases where the age of the converts was recorded. All of the converts mentioned chose Islam by their own free will. These cases should be distinguished from those of minors who were converted to Islam by the court after their parents converted.

⁵⁰ “A boy is judged to be of age or mature with the appearance of pollution, or a discharge of semen, or impregnation, and girl with the appearance of menstruation, pollution or pregnancy. If none of these conditions occurs, then a boy is seen to be mature when he turns 18, and a girl when she turns 17, while according to the two imams[“*indehumā*” i.e. the two imams, Imam Yusuf and Imam Muhammed] when each turns 15 years of age. It is reported so by the Imam [i.e. of Abu Hanifa], and is the basis of fatwas. The minimum age [i.e. the youngest age at which, on the basis of the appearance of the above symptoms,

to a fatwa by Ebu's-Su'ud Efendi, minors could convert to Islam if they were able to understand religion⁵¹. This issue led to dispute from time to time, seeing as different communities harboured different ideas as to maturity and being of age, as well as to being able to "understand religion"⁵².

Among the women who converted, some were unmarried⁵³, while others were married. When a married woman would accept Islam, the regulation was to offer her husband the chance to convert too. If he declined, they would automatically be divorced by the court, seeing as a Muslim woman could not be married to a non-Muslim man. This practice is evident in the sijils, and has its judicial basis in the works of Ibrahim Al-Halabī and Sheikh al-Islam Molla Hüsrev, as well as in the fatwas of Ebu's-Su'ud⁵⁴. What is interesting is that, in the cases where only one pa-

we consider someone to be mature] was 12 years old for boys, and 9 years old for girls, and so, if they entered this age and stated that they were mature, this will be accepted, and they will be given the same legal considerations as those who are mature" (Al-Halabī, *Multaqa.*, pp. 387-388). Molla Hüsrev treats this issue with somewhat more detail. He too says that, according to Abu Hanifa, the age of maturity is 17 and 18 years old for those who show no signs of maturity, while, according to the "two imams" (*imāmeyn*), age limit is 15 years for both girls and boys, as was also reported by Abu Hanifa. He also specifies that, in matters of determining one's maturity, 12 years of age was the minimum legal age for boys, while it was 9 years old for girls. Molla Hüsrev also mentions certain hadiths to further explain these rules. (Molla Hüsrev, *Düerü'l-hükkām*, p. 703).

⁵¹ "QUESTION: Zimmi Zeyd entrusted his children, who were between the ages of five and six, to the care and household of a Muslim man named Amr. If Amr instructs the children in Islam (that is, if he inspires them to accept Islam as their religion), can it be adjudicated that they have become Muslim? ANSWER: Yes, if they have understood the religion (*din ta'akkul ederler idi ise*)" (E. Düzdağ., *Ebussuüd Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 89).

⁵² According to the Austrian laws, the legal age was 24. For information on the disagreements which occurred between the Ottoman and Austrian authorities when an 18-year-old girl, whose father was a subject of Austria-Hungary, converted to Islam, see Gelez (Gelez, "Vjerska probraćenja u Bosni i Hercegovini", p. 43).

⁵³ Girls who had converted to Islam in sijils were generally referred to as "*bākire*" or "*bākire-i bālīga*". "*Bākire*" means "virgin", while "*bākire-i bālīga*" is "a virgin of age" (GHB, Sijil no. 85, p. 2.; GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1.).

⁵⁴ "When the wife of an infidel, or the husband of a worshipper of fire, converts to Islam, Islam is offered [as a religion] to the other [i.e. the non-Muslim spouse], and if husband converts to Islam, then the wife belongs to him, and if he does not, they will be divorced. If the husband refused, then the divorce is considered *talāq*". This is contrary to the opinion of Abu Yusuf [in whose opinion this case cannot be considered *talāq* – a form of a one-sided divorce in which a husband "lets go" of his wife – but an annulment (*fāsḥ*) of the marriage, that has to be mediated by the court]. (Al-Halabī, *Multaqa.*, p. 120.); "PROBLEM: The conversion to Islam of a female ward, or *zimmiye*, cannot [automatically] decide the divorce. If her husband is absent, the decision is put off until he arrives. Upon his arrival, he is offered to convert to Islam. If he accepts, their marriage is confirmed. On the other hand, if he rejects, the judge shall divorce them (*tefrük eder*). After the post-marriage delay period (*üddet*) expires, the wife is free to go to whomever she wants. The judge shall severely punish the man [i.e. the former husband] who takes her afterwards." (E. Düzdağ., *Ebussuüd Efendi Fetvaları*, p. 90.). In cases where the husband refuses to convert,

rent would accept Islam, custody of all minor children would always be granted to this parent, and they would also be automatically converted⁵⁵. If the child was of age according to Islamic regulations, he or she would be considered “*fā’il-i muhtār*” i.e. as a person who can judge for themselves⁵⁶. A total of twelve cases were registered where the woman would convert to Islam and her husband would refuse to, as well as one case of a husband refusing, and agreeing to accept Islam later, and one case of a husband converting to Islam, but his wife refusing to⁵⁷. These refusals perhaps paint

the Ottoman judges would treat the divorce as a legal annulment, as was recorded in the Sarajevo sijils: “... after he [i.e. the husband] refused, the Sharia Court decision which separated her, under the Sharia law, from the mentioned husband has been attached...” (“...*ibā’ ve imtinā’* *ütmekle zevce-i mesfurdan şer’an tefrikinde hükm-i şer’î lâhik oldıgı...*”) (GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233.); “...given the fact that the husband has refused, the marriage heretofore existing between them is annulled by the pen of the rightful Sharia law...” (“...*kabıldan imtinā’ına binā’ en beynlerinde kâ’im nikâh kalem-i şer’-i kavim ile fesh olındıgı...*”) (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 133.).

⁵⁵ “A child is considered Muslim if one of his parents is Muslim, and will be considered a *kitâbî* (a member of the People of the Book i.e. a Jew or Christian) if one of his parents is a *kitâbî*, and the other a worshipper or fire” (“*wa-t-tijlu muslimun in kâna ahadu abawaihi musliman wa-kitâbiyyun in kâna baina kitâbiyyin wa-mağûsiyyin*”). The clarification to this is: “A child follows the parent whose religion is better” (“*li-anna t-tijla yattabi’u hayra l-abawaini dînan*”) (Al-Halabî, *Multaqa*, p. 120.). The sijils also show that there were such cases happening at different Sharia Courts in Bosnia. When one of the parents would convert to Islam, their children would automatically convert if they were minors, even if the other parent kept his/her religion. The judges would explain this by writing in the sijils that the child was following the better parent (*şagîr oğlı hayr-i ebeveyne tâbi’ olmağla*) (GHB, Sijil no. 47, p. 217.).

⁵⁶ Such was the case of Ostoyan, son of Mihaylo, who was 15 at the time his mother converted to Islam. He was considered to be of age and was given the right to decide his destiny (i.e. he was considered “*fā’il-i muhtār*”), while his underage brothers and sisters were converted to Islam after their mother converted (GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2.).

⁵⁷ There are 12 cases where a wife would convert to Islam, and her husband would, after being offered to convert, decline the offer. 9 of these cases were registered at the Sarajevo court: Sava (?), daughter of Milka, became Emine (Emina). Her husband Panto refused to convert, after which they were legally divorced (*ol daği ibā’ ve imtinā’ ütmekle tefrik ile hükm birle*) (GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233.); Savkana, daughter of Savo, became Meryem, and her husband Nikola, son of Stanko, declined (GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233.); Pava, daughter of Nikola, became Dervişa, and her husband, *zimmi* Şahin was offered the same possibility, which he declined (GHB, Sijil no. 53, p. 1); Gürğiya (Đurdija), daughter of Gavriilo, converted and took the name Fatima, while her husband Tomo, son of Andriya, refused to convert (GHB, Sijil no. 55, p. 9.); Anca (Anda), daughter of Miço, became Nefisa, while husband Todor declined to convert (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 2.); Yovanka, daughter of Todor, became Fatima, while her husband Todor, son of Curo (Đuro), declined to convert (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 133.); Mara (?), daughter of Curo (Đuro), became Fatima. She lived in the house of Imam Osman Efendi until the time her husband was offered the option to convert, which he declined, and they were later legally divorced (GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136.); Jana, daughter of Novak, became Meryem, while her husband Miço refused to convert (GHB, Sijil no. 76, p. 3.); Ana, daughter of Risto, became Fatima, while her husband Vasil (Vasilije) refused to convert (GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2.). Moreover, there were also three cases in which the act of converting happened earlier and was recorded at another court, or where the fact that the wife converted and the husband refused was only recorded later, during the wedding proceedings. For some of the women, records only make mention of their new, Muslim name, while their previous non-Muslim name was not recorded. Their fathers were recorded under the name of Abdullah (servant of God), concealing their real names, as was the usual practice. These cases

a clearer picture of the freedom of choice that was offered to individuals when it came to accepting Islam, than even the formulations in the sijils, which also stipulate that one had become a Muslim with their own “free will”.

In addition to the above considerations, in understanding the identity of the individuals converting to Islam, it is also necessary to establish their social background. Their occupations, as well as their parents’ occupations, can serve as indicators of the converts’ social status. The sijils themselves only in some cases state the occupation of the converts or their parents, but we consider these notes important in determining the social strata that the converts were from. According to the notes in the sijils, we know that the following individuals converted to Islam: one glassmaker, two people whose fathers are identified as bakers, one land tenant (*müstecir*), a daughter of a land tenant, 16 people identified as servants/*hidmet-kār*, or in the service/*hidmet* of certain wealthier individuals, as well as a head physician to a Bosnian *vâlî*, and a *sipahi*’s daughter who had committed “apostasy” (*irtidād*), and had then repented and returned to Islam⁵⁸. The converts came from towns, as from villages. Seeing as those

are as follows: Todora had converted earlier at the court in Visoko, while her husband Risto refused (GHB, Sijil no. 46, p. 2.); Fatima, another woman, had converted a year before it was recorded - it is not known where she converted - while her husband Petar refused to. This was confirmed by the testimony of two witnesses, and was recorded in the sijil as a note above the entry confirming their marriage (GHB, Sijil no. 46, p. 3.); Umihana, daughter of Abdullah, converted to Islam in Zenica, while her husband Risto refused to (GHB, Sijil no. 47, p. 217.). There was also one case registered at the Sarajevo court of a husband who first refused to convert, only to accept Islam later on. The husband’s name was Jivko (Živko), who, after his wife Čvijeta (Cvijeta), daughter of Mihaylo, converted to Islam, refused to convert. Their three-year-old son was put in the custody of his mother, and was converted to Islam in accordance with Sharia rules. Very soon afterward, Jivko also converted to Islam (GHB, Sijil no. 47, p. 217.). There is only one case where the husband converted to Islam, while his wife refused. He was a Jew, who converted to Islam and took the name of Selim, while his wife Blanka, daughter of Solomon, refused (GHB, Sijil no. 79, p. 485.). The cases we mention here have also been included in the statistical analysis conducted for the purposes of this paper. However, there were also cases where it could not be determined whether the husband or wife were even alive when their spouse converted, and whether they had declined to convert, but it was clear that these converts had had children. These cases were as follows: a woman named Goša converted to Islam and took the name of Nefise (Nefisa). Also converting with her was her son Marko, a minor, who became Ahmed. There is no mention of a husband in the records (GHB, Sijil no. 40, p. 233.); Angeli (Anđelija), daughter of Boro, converted to Islam, and her daughter Ana, who was in her custody, was also converted. Again, the husband is not mentioned (GHB, Sijil no. 60, p. 2.); Rafo became Mustafa, and his two children converted with him. There is no mention of his wife. (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 134.); Mariya, daughter of Pavo, became Fatima. It is recorded only that she had had children with her first husband Mihaylo, whose names are not mentioned. There is no, further, record of the husband (GHB, Sijil no. 82, p. 2.).

⁵⁸ Mariyan, son of Lazo, from the Husrev Bey neighbourhood in Sarajevo, was a glassmaker/*cāmea* (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 2); Pava, from the Duracak neighbourhood in Sarajevo, was the daughter of Nikola, a baker/*habbāz* (GHB, Sijil no. 53, p. 1); Yovan, from the Peltek Husamudin neighbourhood in Sarajevo, was the son of Nikola, a baker/*elmekeçi* (GHB, Sijil no. 53, last cover); Boško, son of Risto, was a *müstacir* (a land tenant) of Osman Bey Cenneti (Dženetić) (GHB, Sijil no. 47, p. 218); Mariya, from the village of Pohvalići,

who lived in cities were mostly tradesmen and craftsmen, we believe that converts from towns were also mostly involved in trade and craft, or originated from families in this line of business. Similarly, the non-Muslim population in villages worked mostly in agriculture and livestock raising, and we can therefore assume with some certainty that those were the occupations of the majority of converts who lived in villages. As we mentioned earlier, some converts were also recorded in the sources as having been land tenants or *müstacirs*. Also, the number of village inhabitants who converted was greater than the number of city-dwelling converts. Among the 123 people (including two apostate women) who converted to Islam of their own will before the Sharia Court in Sarajevo, 33 originated from cities, 81 from villages, and for 9 of them, the sijils only mention the administrative unit they were from, or the country or place of origin (in cases of foreigners converting), and we thus cannot tell whether they came from towns or villages. If we add to our count the children who were legally converted after one of their parents accepted Islam, then the town to village ratio becomes 39:85 (plus 9 cases where only an administrative unit or country of origin of the convert is mentioned). An interesting observation is that difference in the num-

in the Butmir *cemâat*, was the daughter of Barutiya, a tenant of the Hacı Durakoğlu (Hadžiduraković) family (GHB, Sijil no. 50, p. 2); Trivun, son of Nikola, from the village of Čapla (Čaplja) in the *kaza* of Kamengrad, was in the service/*hidmet* of Derviş Bey in the *cemaat* of Radovle (Radovlje) near the town of Visoko (GHB, Sijil no. 41, front cover); For Halil, son of Curo (Đuro), who had converted to Islam earlier, it was recorded that he was in the service of the Osman *sipahi*, a landowner, in the Ledići *cemaat* (GHB, Sijil no. 55, p. 9); Lučiya (Lucija), a minor, daughter of Yakov, from the Visoko *nahiye*, lived in Sarajevo with hajji Meryem, a Muslim woman. While it is not directly stated that she was in hajji Meryem's service, we take this as a given, because it was the custom that children from poorer families served in wealthier households. (GHB, Sijil no. 57, p. 1); Bojo (Božo), son of Vidoye, was in service with the Čirnčalo (Crnčalo) family in the *kaza* of Čelebi Pazar (Rogatica) (GHB, Sijil no. 61, p. 147.); Yovan, son of Yovan, "of Hungarian descent", lived in Glasinač in the service of a *muezzin*, and then worked for an *alaybey* (GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 2.); Andriya, from the town of Goriča in "Italian land", was in the service/*hidmet* of Bando *sipahi* (GHB, Sijil no. 65, p. 2.); *ẓimmî* Andriya, originally from the village of Kikinda, was in the service/*hidmet* of Adem *sipahi* (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1); Aniča (Anica), daughter of Šinik Yovan from Tarčin, a 13-year-old girl of age, was in the service of Mehmed Bey Rabić (GHB, Sijil no. 67, p. 1.); Dimo, son of Dimo, from the Vidin *nahiye*, was a servant/*hidmet-kâr* of *bayrak-dâr* Mehmed (GHB, Sijil no. 66, p. 271.); Yozo, son of Andriya, from Makarska, was in the service of Salih Bey Babić (GHB, Sijil no. 69, p. 133); Pero, son of Martin, was in the service of Mehmed Begović in the village of Rakoviča (GHB, Sijil no. 78, p. 237.); thirteen-year-old Roza, daughter of Martin, from the village of Lugovi in the Foyniča *nahiye*, was in the service/*hidmet* of Salih Aga and Mustafa Aga Šabanović (Sijil no. 78, p. 237.); Luka, son of Matan, was in the service of Ali Efendi Šerifović (GHB, Sijil no. 79, p. 477.); 15-year-old Curo/Đuro, son of Sava, from Mostar, was in the service of *muftî* Mehmed Šakir Efendi in Sarajevo (GHB, Sijil no. 83, p. 156.); Petar, son of Yefto Vuković, from Istolče (Stolac), was in the service of Mariya, a Christian woman, in Sarajevo (GHB, Sijil no. 85, p. 2); Jovance, son of Jovan, from the village of Ališniča near Niš, was in the service of Emin Aga, the *binbaşı* of the first battalion (*tabur*) of the 4th regiment/*alay* (GHB, Sijil no. 87, p. 169.); Ahmed Nuri Efendi was the *hekimbaşı* (head physician) of the Bosnian *vâlî* Davud Pasha. He was in fact an Englishman (GHB, Sijil no. 74, p. 136); Hatice (Hatidža), daughter of Salih *sipahi*, deflected from Islam, only to return to it later (GHB, Sijil no. 53, p. 144.).

bers of town and village inhabitants who converted is significantly diminished if we only consider cases in the Sarajevo *nahiye*, and becomes 20:27 in favour of villages. If we then count the children who were legally converted, the number of town folk who converted is only slightly smaller (25:28).

In the end, we can conclude that the conversions to Islam that took place in the first half of the nineteenth century before the Sharia Court in Sarajevo are an excellent indicator of the fact that the process of the expansion of Islam continued to survive in this period, albeit to a much more humble extent. There were new cases of conversion to Islam almost every year, and the new Muslims included Orthodox Christian, Catholic and Jewish locals, together with individuals from other areas in the Ottoman Empire, as well as those from the Habsburg Monarchy. The analysis we conducted of conversions to Islam during the first half of the 19th century, on the basis of the study of the Sarajevo sijils, could also be conducted, with some continuity, for the second half of the 18th century, while similar information can also be found in sijils found for other areas in the eyalet of Bosnia, but these can only be used to account for a few years, as they are not that well preserved. Also, a very significant question, which requires detailed analysis and research, is what motivated these individuals to convert to Islam. The sijils, and all other available sources, only offer limited information on the actual reasons for converting, and we, in making assumptions with regard to this issue, must therefore take into consideration a range of various intertwined religious, cultural, social, economic, psychological, and other individual factors which could have influenced an individual to accept Islam as their religion, as well as how these factors played out in the context of the historical milieu of the 19th century.⁵⁹ It seems like after many studies⁶⁰ that have been conducted about the motives of the conversions, we still have more questions than answers; so, it has become obvious that further talks about issues as complex as these should focus on possibilities, rather than on seeking the so-called “true and objective” solutions. Providing a

⁵⁹ It should be pointed out that the factors mentioned here are not listed according to significance – from case to case certain influences can be considered more significant than others, while in different situations, some completely different factors can play a more important role in one’s conversion to Islam. We believe that, in conversion to Islam of every individual, we need to consider the intertwined nature and simultaneous and mutual effects of various factors, but especially when considering entire groups of converts.

⁶⁰ For example, see: Anton Minkov, *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans: Kısve Bahası Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730*, Brill, Leiden-Boston 2004, pp. 64-110; H. Aslan, *Tanzimat Döneminde İhtidâ (1839-1876)*, pp. 1-261; A. S. Aličić, “Privredna i konfesionalna struktura stanovništva u Hercegovini krajem XVI stoljeća”, pp. 125-192; K. Çolak, “XVI. Yüzyılda İstanbul’da İhtida Hareketleri”, pp. 495-497; A. Açıkel, “Şer‘iyye Sicillerine Göre Tokat’ta İhtida Hareketleri (1772-1897)”, pp. 182-183; Hava Selçuk, “Tapu Tahrir ve Maliyeden Müdevver Defterlerine göre Rumeli’de İhtida Hareketleri (1432-1482)”, *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 12 (2002), pp. 89-104.

definite answer to the above-mentioned question of motives exceeds the aims which were originally put forward in this paper, so we will satisfy ourselves by drawing attention to the problems that could be of interest to future researchers. Even though the world of people who converted to Islam in the *eyalet* of Bosnia during the first half of the 19th century is only briefly touched upon in this paper, we would like to express our hope that future studies and analyses would contribute to its better understanding, as well as to the more complete comprehension of the historical heritage that remained in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Ottoman Empire left the stage.

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APPENDIX

Table no. 1: Conversion types according to the statement of willingness and the position of the Sharia court

Type	Number	%
Conversion by the “free will” statement in front of the <i>kâdî</i> ¹	123	92,48
Converted by the decision of the court (for underage children) ²	10	7,52
Total	133	100

Table no. 2: Time-line of the conversions by decades*

CE (Gregorian year)	AH (Hijri year)	Number	%
1800-1809	1214-1224	25	18,80
1810-1819	1225-1234	24	18,05
1820-1829	1235-1244	34	25,56
1830-1839	1245-1255	17	12,78
1840-1849	1256-1266	28	21,05
1850-1851	1266-1268	5	3,76
Total		133	100

Table no. 3: Frequency of conversions in the months of the Islamic lunar calendar

Month	Number	%
Muharram	10	7,52
Safar	22	16,54
Rabî‘ al-awwal	15	11,28
Rabî‘ al-âkhir	12	9,02
Jumâda al-ûlâ	15	11,28
Jumâda al-âkhirâ	7	5,26
Rajab	12	9,02
Sha‘bân	3	2,26
Ramadân	8	6,02
Shawwâl	13	9,77
Ḍhu al-qa‘da	8	6,01
Ḍhu al-hijja	4	3,01
Unreadable	4	3,01
Total	133	100

* Years without conversions are: 1819, 1832, 1833, 1839 and 1841.

Table no. 4: Regional background of the converts

Region	Number	%
<i>Nahiye</i> of Sarajevo	53	39,85
Other <i>nahiyes</i> of the <i>kaza</i> of Sarajevo	16	12,03
Other <i>kazas</i> of the <i>eyalet</i> of Bosnia	44	33,08
Other <i>eyalets</i> of the Ottoman Empire	6	4,51
Foreign states	11	8,27
Unknown/undetermined	3	2,26
Total	133	100

Table no. 5: Gender distribution of the converts

Type of the conversion	Men (A)	Women (B)	A+B
Conversion by the free will statement	80	43	123
Conversion by the decision of the court (underage children)	5	5	10
Total	85	48	133
%	63,90	36,10	100

Table no. 6: Urban/rural identity of the converts (if mentioned)*

	Cities CFW ³	Cities CCD ⁴	Villages CFW	Villages CCD	Total
<i>Nahiye</i> of Sarajevo	20	5	27	1	53
Other regions	13	1	54	3	71
Total:	33	6	81	4	124
%	26,61	4,84	65,32	3,23	100

Table no. 7: *Zimmis*, apostates and former religious identity of the converts (if mentioned)**

Christians (<i>Nasârâ</i>)	Jews (<i>Yahûdî</i>)	<i>Zimmîs</i> ⁵	Wives, daughters and sons of <i>zimmîs</i> ⁶			Apostates ⁷
Women ⁸	Men	Men	W ⁹ .	D.	S.	Women
19	3	17	6	11	9	2
Total: 67						

* The above-mentioned analysis includes 124 cases for which the *kâdî* or court scribes recorded the name of the city *mahalle* or the name of the village from where the converts were coming. Beside this, the *siyils* of Sarajevo contain information about additional nine cases where the converts were identified just by the administrative unite, or by their ethnicity. So, in these cases the type of the settlement they came from cannot be determined.

** Refers only to the people who converted by the free will statement in front of the Sharia *kâdî*.

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