H-Net Reviews
in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Michael Robert Hickok. *Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia.* Leiden and New York: Brill, 1997. xxiii + 190 pp. $82.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-90-04-10689-5.

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Published on HABSBURG (February, 1998)

Bosnian Militias and Ottoman Governors

In his own words, Michael Hickok's study of eighteenth-century Ottoman military administration in Bosnia "walks a line between laying out a provincial administrative history and telling a handful of stories about interesting men" (p. xii). These "interesting men" are the Ottoman governors of Bosnia, from whose perspective Hickok approaches his topic. It was the governor who held the primary responsibility for border defense and public order. To ensure both, the governor needed the active support of local troops, what Hickok refers to as the "militia," and the passive support of the Bosnian population.

Drawing on a wide variety of sources, Hickok discusses the relationships between the Ottoman government in Istanbul, its governors in Bosnia, the local militia, and the Bosnian population. He presents an "administrative history" in the first two chapters of the book, which concern frontier defenses and the structure of the militia, and "a handful of stories" in the third and final chapter, which recounts three governors' attempts to preserve public order in the province. Throughout his study, Hickok tries to counter the biases of the Balkan nationalist historiographies that tend to view the period of Ottoman rule as one of foreign oppression.

The forces Hickok calls the Bosnian militia were locally-raised troops that were expected to act as part of the Ottoman imperial army on campaign. By the eighteenth century, however, these troops were primarily used to garrison fortifications guarding the borders of Bosnia. They had become in effect a provincial army. Service in this militia provided Bosnians with the means to advance in both the provincial and imperial governments. Yugoslav scholarship has tended to portray the militia as a tool of local elites in their efforts to preserve their own position and power. This view of the Bosnian militia has been embraced by both Bosnian nationalist historians and Yugoslav Marxists. For the former, a self-identifying elite acts as the precursor to a modern Bosnian Muslim society. For the latter, this elite fills the feudal role in an historical dialectic. Hickok's first chapter, which focuses on the 1737 siege of Banaluka (Banja Luka), makes an argument to disprove this contention, and shows the extent to which the Ottoman governor, Hekimoglu Ali Pasha, controlled the militia and the defense of the frontier.

One of the great strengths of this book is the wide variety of sources that Hickok uses. This breadth is in evidence in the first chapter, where Hickok exhaustively surveys the Ottoman sources for the siege and defense of Banaluka. This is the result of his research in Ottoman archives and manuscript libraries in Istanbul and Paris. He brings together information from narrative accounts of the siege, archival documents from a variety of collections, a diary written by a Bosnian soldier, and, very effectively, poetry that praises the actions of governor Hekimoglu Ali Pasha during the war. With this material Hickok is able to present a detailed description of the Austrian attack that shows how well-prepared the Ottoman defenses were, thanks to the preparation and leadership of the governor. Hickok's sources make it very clear that the governor controlled the allocation of supplies, war material, and troops to the frontier defenses. His decisions were based on the very good intelligence he had about Austrian troop movements.

Hickok's second chapter further demonstrates how closely the Ottoman government supervised the Bosnian militia. By describing the central government's extensive oversight of appointments and promotions, Hickok refutes the nationalist historiography that portrays the militia officers as a land-holding hereditary military class that cooperated with the Ottoman government only as long as it was in their interest to do so. Hickok draws on a variety of sources to prove that soldiers were recruited from all social classes and advanced under the direct supervision of the Ottoman governor at Travnik. The governor's decisions then had to be approved by the central

authorities in Istanbul. Promotions of even junior officers had to be fully justified in a way acceptable to both the provincial and imperial governments. Hickok skillfully brings together disparate sources to follow several cases through the entire decision-making process. By looking at the care taken in these cases, he shows that control of the militia personnel was clearly in the hands of the Ottoman government.

Hickok also discusses how the Ottomans controlled the militia through finance, not force. A key component in providing the salaries of the militia was the Ottoman practice known as *ocaklik*. This was a method of assigning the revenues from specific sources of income to specific military units as pay. These revenues could derive from agricultural production, like the *timar* land grants, but more usually came from other taxes. The *cizye* head-tax collected from non-Muslims was often designated as *ocaklik*. Militia units given *ocaklik* were responsible for collecting the revenues themselves. They chose agents from the unit to travel to the source of the revenues and bring the proceeds back to their comrades. Any problems that arose with collection were referred to the Ottoman governor at Travnik, who acted as arbiter. Hickok draws on a number of *ocaklik* grants that show the importance of this payment method in funding the Bosnian militia. He analyzes the sources of the income and their assignment to militia units for several decades of the eighteenth century, and presents his data in several useful tables.

How did this method of financing help the Ottoman government control the Bosnian militia? Hickok points out that during the eighteenth century this system functioned smoothly, with revenues assigned by the central government and collected by agents from the militia units, and disputes settled by the governor. This process reinforced the ties between the central and provincial governments and the governor's authority over the militia. Hickok then shows how nineteenth-century changes in Ottoman taxation policy led to a breakdown in the government's control of the militia. Ariel Salzmann has shown how the development of the *malikane*, which assigned a tax farm at a set rate for the life of the tax farmer, transformed the basis of Ottoman taxation.[1] This was a major change, as prior to this tax farms were assigned for a set term, usually three years, after which the rate was adjusted. Hickok draws on this work to show that the introduction of the *malikane* in Bosnia in the nineteenth century led to a breakdown in the central authorities' control of the militia.

Wealthy individuals were able to purchase the *malikane* tax farms from the revenue sources assigned to the militia units as *ocaklik*. These "middle men" gained influence over the militia by controlling the sources of their pay. Because the *malikane* tax farms were lifetime grants, the governor had little influence over how the revenues were allocated, and lost the power to solve problems with *ocaklik* collection. The militia began to forge links with the *malikane* holders in order to assure their own income, and became less responsive to the Ottoman government. Hickok concludes that this nineteenth-century situation, when wealthy locals had influence over the militia, has been pushed back into the eighteenth century by nationalist historians searching for a hereditary elite who opposed Ottoman control. He supports this by surveying a wide array of Yugoslav studies that seek to portray *ocaklik* grants as hereditary land holdings of a military elite.[2]

The final chapter of the book is titled "Three Stories," and presents episodes from the tenure of three different Ottoman governors in Bosnia. Hickok elegantly weaves together archival and narrative sources to relate these stories, which all demonstrate how Ottoman governors acted to protect the province and ensure social order. The stories also show how the population of Bosnia looked to the Ottoman governors to deal with peasant unrest, bandits, and corrupt officials. The stories each deal with one of these dangers. The first discusses how Kukavica El-hac Mehmed Pasha stopped disturbances by unruly peasants in the 1750s. These disturbances were not termed an uprising, but were referred to by all parties as the actions of "naughty" (*yaramaz*) young men, who were upset by the heavy taxes imposed by El-hac Mehmed's predecessor. As a Bosnian loyal to the Ottoman state, El-hac Mehmed was trusted by both the population and the imperial authorities, and his solutions to problems were accepted by all.

The second episode describes Silahdar Mehmed's successful defense against Montenegrin bandits under the leadership of the charismatic Little Stephen. In the 1760s Stephen unified the Montenegrin bandits, and their raids became a greater threat than before. Hickok uses Ottoman records to show that the Imperial Council recognized this threat and, in 1767, dispatched Silahdar Mehmed to Bosnia to organize efforts to counter the bandits. This was two full years before the Russians sent a mission to aid Little Stephen in an attempt to open a second front against the Ottomans. Hickok points out that at every turn the Ottomans had superior intelligence about the situation in Montenegro, and used that information to protect Bosnia.

The third story demonstrates Ottoman concerns

about official corruption, and the ultimate failure of the central administration to deal with the problem successfully. It focuses on the Podgorice crisis of 1780-1785, in which the governor, Defterdarzade Abdullah Pasha, came into conflict with Mahmud Bushati, a local official who tried to expand his personal power by annexing Podgorice to his district. Although Bushati is portrayed in Albanian historiography as a nationalist who always fought the Ottomans, this episode shows that he was an Ottoman official, who continued to hold office after his supposed nationalist activities began. Hickok describes Defterdarzade Abdullah's attempts to curb Bushati's ambitions, re-establish order in the province, and ensure the ability of the militia to defend Bosnia. Abdullah died in office, and the Imperial Council made a pragmatic decision to cut a deal with Bushati without addressing the underlying problems in the province. Hickok suggests this contributed to the disorganization of the militia and its weakness in the face of the Austrian invasion three years later.

The book does have some weaknesses. The most obvious is one of form. The apparent lack of copy editing leaves the text filled with an array of extra spaces and typographical errors. This is especially true of the footnotes and bibliography. These typographical errors are, for the most part, minor annoyances. They cause major problems, however, where they alter the spelling of specific Ottoman Turkish words, rendering them meaningless.[3] One should expect a better product for the high price Brill charges for the volume.

Turning to questions of substance, although Hickok uses a wide variety of primary sources in his account of the 1737 campaign against Banaluka they are all Ottoman sources. The only Habsburg source presented is a quote from a captured Austrian report as it appears in an Ottoman narrative (p. 35). Some reference to Habsburg materials, even standard secondary sources, would complement Hickok's exhaustive use of the Ottoman sources. Another, more technical, question has to do with his discussion of militia payrolls. In his tables, Hickok presents a pay year of 238 days. Being familiar with seventeenth-century pay records, where soldiers are paid by quarter for full lunar years of 354 days, I wonder why the Bosnian militia's pay year was shorter.

These criticisms aside, I think that Hickok is quite successful in his attempts to bring to light the realities of Ottoman military administration in eighteenth-century Bosnia. Nationalist historians have portrayed Bosnian history in a series of dichotomies: landholder and peasant, Turks and Slavs, Muslims and Christians, oppressors and oppressed. Hickok makes a well-supported argument that the situation was much more complex, and that the Bosnian populace and the Ottoman government often shared a common interest in preserving social order in the province.

Notes

[1]. Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Regime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire", *Politics and Society* 21, 4 (December 1993), 393-423.

[2]. He gives particular attention to Nedim Filipovic, "Ocaklik Timars in Bosnia and Hercegovina," *Prilozi za orientalnu filologiju i istoriju Jugoslovenskih naroda pod Turkskom vladavinom*, XXX (Sarajevo, 1986); Hamdija Kresevljakovic, *Kapetanije u Bosni i Hercegovini*, (Sarajevo: Narodna Stamparija, 1954; second edition: Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980); and Ahmed S. Alicic, "Uredinje Bosanskog ejaleta od 1789, do 1878," *Orijentalni institut Posebna izdanja*, IX (Sarajevo, 1983).

[3]. For example, in note 69, p. 19 the term *cebeci* is rendered *cepeci*, with the second "c" having a cedilla.

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Citation: Mark L. Stein. Review of Hickok, Michael Robert, *Ottoman Military Administration in Eighteenth-Century Bosnia*. HABSBURG, H-Net Reviews. February, 1998.
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