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# BOSNIAN DISCOGRAPHY BEFORE WORLD WAR I

## Recording artists, repertoire, and politics

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The introduction of machines playing recorded sound during the late nineteenth century signified the very beginning of the history of the recording industry, contributing to the rise of popular music as we know it today. The origins of the recording industry in the Balkans therefore overlap with the last decades of Habsburg and Ottoman rule in much of the region. Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter ‘Bosnia’), the example in this chapter, had belonged to the Ottoman Empire in 1463–1878, but became a protectorate of the Habsburg Monarchy at the 1878 Congress of Berlin and was annexed by it on 5 October 1908, remaining an Austro-Hungarian crownland until the end of World War I. Its main ethno-confessional components of Muslims, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats constituted the area’s indigenous Slavic population, while Sephardic Jews and Roma formed the ethnic minority groups. After the Habsburg occupation, a considerable number of Muslims left the country; for example, military men, administrators, entrepreneurs, and craftspeople from Austria-Hungary migrated to Bosnia. In this situation, Austria-Hungary’s colonial policies included aims at growing legitimacy in the eyes of the ‘natives’, gratifying the Muslim population under the new Christian ruler, and preventing the influence of propaganda for greater Serbia.

Talking machines (phonographs and gramophones) spread rather rapidly throughout Habsburg Bosnia. The Edison phonograph was officially demonstrated in Sarajevo in July 1890, and the talking machine’s actual advent began around 1898 with itinerant entertainers from elsewhere in the empire (southern Hungary, Austria, Bohemia) playing recordings for a fee. Most demonstrated the talking machine as a novelty at fairs, while some organized private gramophone concerts using the day’s most advanced technology. Urban cafés, inns, and restaurants gradually obtained gramophones for entertaining their customers, sometimes partially replacing live musicians. In Austria-Hungary, such business activities required talking-machine licences, which were archived and thus available to scholars. However, the number of surviving licences varies across former Habsburg lands, and in Bosnian archives such licences are relatively few – unlike the licences for full-time musicians.

Major US and European record companies in the early 1900s manufactured sound carriers (cylinders or discs) as well as playback equipment, unlike most companies today. Their international expansion strategies were based on marketing equipment in each region by offering an extensive recorded repertoire of local music (Gronow 1981: 252–3; Gronow 2014: 39). They thus took a keen interest in the Balkans as a marketing area, building networks of local distributors and sending

recording expeditions there (Pennanen 2016: 162). Like other Balkan areas, Bosnia was a marginal marketing area relative to Central Europe, with a population of 1,898,044 according to the 1910 Habsburg census, but it still attracted record company interest. The most relevant companies for Bosnia's pre-1914 discography were German: the Deutsche Grammophon-Aktiengesellschaft (DGAG) in Hanover and Berlin, a subsidiary of the British-based multinational Gramophone Company Ltd (which issued 242 sides on the Zonophone label in 1907–8<sup>1</sup>); the International Talking Machine Company (ITMC; an unknown number of sides on the Odeon, Jumbo, and Jumbola labels in 1907–11/12); and Lyrophonwerke (an unknown number of sides on the label Lyrophon in 1908). ITMC and Lyrophonwerke were both based in Berlin, and both were bought by the German Carl Lindström Group in 1911 and 1913, respectively. Vienna's ABC record company also released records in Bosnia, but these were rare – at the time of writing, only four sides were known – and were probably reissues of ITMC matrices (see Pennanen 2016: 180–1).

Phonograph and gramophone products in the early 1900s were marketed through mail order and local agents, who often also sold sewing machines, bicycles, and electrical goods. In Sarajevo, Bosnia's largest city and the centre of communications, economy, civil and military administration, tourism, and arts and entertainment, Stjepan P. Zelenika and Muhamed Tosunović were DGAG's earliest agents. Their shops sold many Central European and other recordings, and they were first to sell DGAG's Bosnian recordings in late 1907. Therefore, either or both very probably became the local middlemen who helped select bands and musicians for DGAG's Sarajevo recording sessions in 1907–8. Most record companies' standard procedure was to send recording experts with relatively compact transportable equipment to distant places rather than inviting far-away musicians into proper studios. These experts usually did not know anything about their destinations' musical life and circumstances or speak local languages, so they needed local assistance to organize recording sessions (Gronow 1981: 253, 273–4). Expeditions tended to be carefully scheduled, so Bosnia was only one stage in a string of recording sessions in several countries.

Besides Zelenika and Tosunović, the early Bosnian gramophone business's third central figure was Osman Prcić, or Hadži Osmanaga Nuri Efendi Prcić (1848–1919), from a prosperous Tuzla Muslim family. Besides working as a merchant, he also owned a large estate, served as a municipal councillor, and, from 1910, represented the Muslim National Organization (*Muslimanska narodna organizacija*) in the Bosnian Diet. In autumn 1906, his shop became an ITMC agent, undertaking a long-term press advertising campaign for Odeon gramophones and records with 'songs, instrumental tunes and speech in all languages, and particularly brilliant songs in Turkish' (*Bošnjak* 1906). Its emphasis on Turkish recordings, probably Ottoman popular music, by German companies, eased immediately after the first Bosnian Odeon recordings in the local language were released in mid-April 1908.<sup>2</sup> In 1909, Prcić expanded his range into ITMC's new Jumbo and Jumbola labels, plus Gramophone and Zonophone (Pennanen 2007: 112).

In March 1911, Prcić began advertising his idea of Bosnianizing the gramophone by renaming it as Razbibriga (Pastime). He launched it in Sarajevo that December with a temporary showroom on the city's main shopping street, a press advertising campaign, and promotional postcards of the showroom: the main target market of the 'Bosnian' gramophone was apparently the local urban population. The Razbibriga gramophone models were mostly standard German ones, with a few novelties as a sales gimmick.

Prcić's Tuzla competitor, sewing-machine dealer Avram M. Altarac, became a Lyrophonwerke agent in 1909 and advertised the newly recorded Bosnian Lyrophon discs, while several other merchants worked in the gramophone business in Sarajevo and smaller towns before World War I, offering Central European and other foreign – if not local – recordings. Firms elsewhere in Austria-Hungary (including several in Zagreb and Vienna; Stöhr & Co in Luby/Schönbach, Bohemia;

Milan Obuljen in Hainburg an der Donau, Lower Austria; Mita Đ. Palić in Pančevo/Pancsova, then in southern Hungary and now Vojvodina) also advertised records in Bosnia via mail order, with Palić and Obuljen specializing in Serbian recordings. Newspaper advertisements suggest local shops also offered mail order, though lamentably no sales catalogues have surfaced, although they could yield fascinating facts about the availability and classification of records, target groups, and marketing techniques. However, several surviving forms of data are useful for research.

### Early Bosnian recordings and recording artists

Sources for early discographic history in Bosnia include ledgers, index cards for matrices, recording sheets, matrix numbers, and catalogues. Ledgers give the details of recordings reported by recording engineers. Index cards for each matrix show titles and composers of recorded works. Some companies also used artists' recording sheets, containing only the matrix numbers and recording dates. Matrix numbers on record labels or in the shellac will yield recording dates if they can be compared with discographies, other previously dated contemporaneous recordings by the same company, or, ideally, the company's archive files. Catalogue numbers, meanwhile, help to estimate records' release dates if company files, newspaper advertisements, trade journals, and companies' annual record catalogues plus monthly supplements are available. Sometimes dating may have to be based on a recording's contents (Pennanen 2005: 83, 86).

Unfortunately, no relevant record company archives except the Gramophone Company's have survived from this period, and worse, Bosnian gramophone records are extremely rare. Other sources, namely newspaper advertisements, trade journals, and mail-order catalogues, must suffice instead. The archives of the Gramophone Company, its subsidiaries, and its successor Electric and Musical Industries Ltd (EMI, founded 1931) contain recording ledgers and sheets, business documents, and even many archive copies of discs have survived at the EMI Archives in Hayes (London), including all DGAG Sarajevo recordings, some of which were available for this study. The archival inventory is not complete. The Gramophone Company's recording data are, however, almost completely documented and available online, thanks to the monumental work of discographer Alan Kelly (see Kelly 2021), whose online database was used for this chapter.

Although not all gaps in sources will ever be filled, research can sometimes advance though, among others, surfacing gramophone records. For example, the band of the Imperial and Royal Hungarian Infantry Regiment Margrave von Baden No. 23 (German: k.u.k. ungarisches Infanterie-Regiment Markgraf von Baden Nr. 23; Hungarian: Cs. és királyi 23. gyalogezred) made sixteen sides while it was stationed in Sarajevo, as the Odeon record labels indicate. The city name in the label would suggest an ITMC recording expedition to Sarajevo between early April 1908 and late May 1909, but since we now know the matrix numbers of *Bosansko kolo* (Agx 217 K) and *Turska pjesma* (Agx 218 K), the overall view has changed. Consequently, contrary to previous research (Pennanen 2016: 164–5), we can now compare the new data with similar records which were certainly recorded in Zagreb, and conclude the Margrave von Baden titles were recorded there as well. Furthermore, the letter K refers to ITMC recording expert John Daniel Smoot (1873–1964).<sup>3</sup> The probable reasons for recording the military band were the overlapping visits of Smoot and the band to Zagreb, the band's high musical quality, and the possibility for cross-marketing the recordings to Bosnia, Croatia-Slavonia and Hungary.

Commercial recording expeditions to Bosnia took place between 1907 and 1911/12. The first were organized by DGAG in May 1907 and April 1908 in Sarajevo. The sessions at the Clubhouse (later Sarajevo's National Theatre) or Hotel Europa yielded recordings for the Zonophone label's X series, though the Gramophone Company discontinued this label in May 1911 (Kelly 1990: xvi).

The best-selling Bosnian records were consequently transferred to the cheap Gramophone green label with catalogue numbers prefixed. In the sunset of the marketing of acoustic recordings in 1927, the Gramophone green label still offered 110 sides from the early Sarajevo sessions (see Pennanen 2007: 139–42).

Evidence about recording artists comes from the surviving licences for full-time musicians. These echoed traditional values and structures in Bosnia. Most full-time Muslim male musicians in Bosnia were certainly local Roma, and a few Muslim Roma women also had licences. Some local Sephardic Jewish men and women worked as musicians, whereas local Croats and Serbs often preferred other professions. The authorities also granted a significant number of music licences to touring musicians from other parts of Austria-Hungary and Serbia. Roma musicians from the Mačva district in north-western Serbia received many of these licences, and some remarkable families of musicians from Mačva settled in Bosnia soon after the Habsburg 1878 occupation of the area. While the authorities controlled the good conduct and moral and political reliability of other musicians through the licencing system, Western classical musicians performing at formal concerts did not need a music licence, and neither did military bands playing on duty or giving concerts off duty in restaurants or parks (see Pennanen 2017: 160–7).

In traditional Bosnian Muslim culture during the Ottoman and Habsburg eras, professional musicianship was not regarded as suitable for pious people or the gentry, and there was strict disapproval of any public performances by Muslim Slav women for male or mixed audiences. The amateur choirs and theatre groups of the Bosnian Muslim Society for Cultural Enlightenment, Gajret (established in 1903), consequently consisted exclusively of men. Characteristically, during Gajret's first large-scale music and drama evening in April 1905, the local Catholic (Croat) teacher Zlata Haraminčić sang two songs to the saz (long-necked lute) accompaniment of Nuraga Džabija, an early and relatively rare example of a female vocalist singing publicly with saz (see Imamović, this volume), and was the only female actor in the historical drama set during the 1735–9 Russo-Turkish War, *Boj pod Ozijom (Battle of Ochakiv)* by Safvet-beg Bašagić (*Sarajevski list* 1905).

One of the relatively few full-time male Muslim Slav musicians was the self-taught clarinetist Mustafa Sudžuka (1873–1963), from a long-established Sarajevo family of tailors, whose father had wanted him to enter the family business.<sup>4</sup> Instead, Sudžuka became a doorman who worked at the Great Exhibitions in Budapest, Vienna, and Paris, then as a police officer for the Brčko municipality in northern Bosnia (1899–1904), afterwards returning to Sarajevo. During these times he also worked as a musician, and he held a solo music licence in 1898–9, belonged to Nazif Ramić's band in Sarajevo in early 1900, then moved to play in Bećir Sulejmanović's band in Brčko (Pennanen 2007: 119). Back in Sarajevo, he began a weaver's workshop to support his family and formed a part-time trio to perform at wedding parties for the Bosnian Muslim nobility, private parties, and popular 'teferić' fairs (from the Turkish 'referrüc' ('pleasure trip, excursion')) in Sarajevo and other Bosnian towns. Since these were private engagements, he did not need a music licence. The line-up of Sudžuka's trio, which recorded thirty sides for DGAG in 1907, remained very likely the same in 1908 when it recorded at least ten sides for Lyrophonwerke. The other members were a Sephardic Jewish singer and accordionist called Merkuš and a Muslim Slav singer named Ćerimbegović, who played the 'def' frame drum (for the trio's Ladino-language recordings, see Seroussi 2020: 75–8).<sup>5</sup> Surviving music licences, however, mention no musicians who could be identified as Merkuš or Ćerimbegović.

Another Bosnian Muslim among the recording artists was singer Sirri Efendi, whose real name was Sulejman Abdagić (b. 1887). Reportedly the only child of a poor Sarajevo Muslim widow, he attended a gymnasium in Sarajevo and was awarded a scholarship to study in Belgrade but had poor success there. Later he studied jurisprudence in Vienna and Zagreb but never graduated.

Despite his failure, he claimed to be a lawyer and was often taken as such in pre-1914 Sarajevo; the claimed knowledge of twelve languages supported his social status, as did the Turkish designation 'efendi' (gentleman, literate man) (Pennanen 2016: 168). Newspaper sources reported that the Austro-Hungarian authorities in Sarajevo suspected Abdagić was spying for Serbia, and he was well known to Vienna's vice squad and Criminal Police. He remained in Sarajevo after Yugoslav unification, but in 1922, the police exposed his licentious lifestyle, and he was expelled to Zagreb. In 1923, Abdagić was arrested there for spying for Italy during a large espionage scandal, but was later released when the spy organization proved considerably less significant than police claimed (Pennanen 2016: 168).

According to surviving music licences and the Sarajevo press, Abdagić did not work as a full-time musician or perform publicly as a singer. Nevertheless, his recordings were issued on Zonophone (eight sides as Sirri Effendija Abdagić, with violin accompaniment probably by famous Serbian Roma bandleader Stanoje Todorović), Odeon (twelve sides as Sirri, with Todorović's band), and Lyrophon (an unknown number of sides as Sirri). This may have been down to his good networks, his high social status in pro-Serb circles, and his ability to act and speak convincingly. In addition, he sang in a fine natural voice and usually in tune. On the other hand, his pronunciation was often far from clear. His amateurism is reflected in the heavy overlap between his repertoires on the three labels' recordings. Thus, he recorded five songs for both Zonophone and Odeon, and another which appeared on all the three labels. The overlap may be even greater because Abdagić's Lyrophon titles are only partially known.

The female singers Dikija Ferhatović and Dilfa Bečić, also on the DGAG Sarajevo sessions, may – judging from their names – have been Muslim Slavs or Roma.<sup>6</sup> Almost nothing is known of them, and they do not appear in the music licences, while their saz accompanist also remains unknown (Pennanen 2007: 127). Two Sarajevo Serb women, Jelena and Anka Tumac, recorded Bosnian and Serbian songs unaccompanied (one side) and to Stanoje Todorović's violin accompaniment (seven sides), and very probably never had music licences. No Bosnian Serb men and no Bosnian Croats at all seem to have participated in the DGAG sessions, whereas ITMC's late 1911 or early 1912 Tuzla sessions included the local theatre manager, actor, and singer Mihajlo Crnogorčević (1865–1918), a choir of Tuzla Serbs, and a male-female touring musical duo from Serbia. Interestingly, although the prefixes of matrix numbers of the sessions refer to Serbia and the records were released in the Odeon Serbian series, the available sources suggest the sessions took place in Tuzla (Pennanen 2016: 170–2). The sessions may have been initiated by Osmanaga Precić, who wanted to expand the recorded repertoire in Bosnia.

The probable line-ups of bands in the DGAG Sarajevo sessions are traceable through surviving music licences, since these sessions' dates are known (unlike other companies'). Licences listed the bandleader and band members for a given period, so we can conclude that among Sephardic Jews in Bosnia, professional musicianship was rather common regardless of gender. Thus, the Sarajevo Muslim Roma bandleader Nazif Memišević seems to have had the Atijas brothers, Avram and Rafael, in his DGAG recording line-up in 1907, plus Rafael again in 1908. The professional singer and 'tamburica' (lute) player Sida Musafija recorded twelve sides in Ladino and the local language, probably accompanied by Stanoje Todorović on violin, for DGAG in 1908 (see Seroussi 2020: 64–6). The female choir of the young women's charity Jevrejsko tamburaško i potporno društvo La Gloria (Jewish Tamburica and Support Society La Gloria) was not professional, but recorded twelve sides of unaccompanied songs in Ladino and the local language in 1907, when it became active, and operated until the late 1920s (see Seroussi 2020: 67–74).

Recording artists at the DGAG Sarajevo sessions included many locally well-known Muslim Roma musicians and bands, such as Nazif Memišević's band from Sarajevo (recorded in 1907 and

1908), the band of Nazif Ramić (b. 1863) from Tuzla (1908), and the Mostar Quartet, including violinist Avdo Mehić (1908). These recordings are extremely valuable because, being obsessed with authentic national folk traditions found in villages, folk music researchers in the first half of the twentieth century had little interest in full-time urban folk musicians, many of whom were Roma (see Pennanen 2007: 108–9). Hence, collectors' and folklorists' field transcriptions and recordings of such performances by the Roma are exceptional. The most important exceptions were Roma performances of epic singing and, more rarely, *sevdalinka* songs. In addition, the Habsburg colonial authorities in Sarajevo tended to restrict the number of licences for Serbian Roma musicians after 1907, when political tension between Serbia and Austria-Hungary began heightening; according to officials' reports, such musicians corrupted youth with low-quality music and performed irredentist propaganda songs for Greater Serbia (Pennanen 2017: 174–5).

Some musical instruments were particularly associated with Muslim Roma, including the 'zurna' or 'zurla' (folk oboe) and the accompanying 'bubanj' (large cylindrical double-skin drum). In the DGAG 1907 sessions, zurna players Juso and Zajko Besić and the unknown drummer were very probably Muslim Roma from Sarajevo's Gorica mahala (quarter). Their names do not appear in the surviving licences, which seems common among players of such instruments. They recorded four 25.5-cm (ten-inch) and sixteen 17.5-cm (seven-inch) sides; the latter cheap two-minute format was already fading from the market, and these sides were the only such matrices recorded in Bosnia. The zurna recordings are the first audio documents of a tradition which would be marginalized by both the recording industry and folk music scholars after World War I in Yugoslavia. Zurna music, as a non-Western and archaic genre, was apparently not easily marketed – though since the 1990s it has experienced considerable success in the world music scene (see Jakovljević 2019: 177–82). Pre-World War II Balkan folk music scholars, on the other hand, ignored most styles of zurna music because they were characteristically a domain of Roma musicians and thus 'Turkish' and not national.<sup>7</sup> Many of the 1907 zurna tunes are instrumental versions of the wide repertoire of songs for weddings, horse-races, Ramadan, and other Islamic holidays (Pennanen 2007: 124–5). Ten sides (5716L–5725L) of epic singing by Rizvan Kadrović are exceptional in at least two respects: firstly, commercial recordings of Balkan archaic epic songs were very rare, and these may be the earliest of their kind; secondly, Kadrović, who recorded the songs to his own 'gusle' (bowed lute) accompaniment, was a Muslim Roma porter ('hamal') rather than a local Slav (Pennanen 2007: 121).

DGAG's recording artists also included two non-Bosnian groups, namely those of the famous Serbian Roma bandleaders Stanoje Todorović and Andolija. Stanoje Todorović (d. c. January 1914) had moved with his family of musicians from Mačva to Sarajevo in 1881. He was a well-known violinist and singer in Bosnia, and with his band recorded as a vocalist and violinist for several DGAG/ITMC singers, possibly also as an accompanist for Lyrophonwerke in Sarajevo (Pennanen 2016: 173). Moreover, his band recorded ten sides for DGAG in Zagreb in October 1912. The illustrious Serbian Roma folk violinist and singer Andolija (c. 1852–1934), born Vaso (or Vasa) Stanković, was celebrated in Serbia, Bosnia, and elsewhere. Also born in Mačva, he seems to have lived mostly in its largest city, Šabac, but reportedly toured widely with his band; according to surviving music licences, he often performed in Bosnia from December 1899 onwards (Pennanen 2019: 140–3). In May 1907, he and his twelve-piece Roma ensemble, mostly comprised of his relatives, were performing at the Dariva Inn by Sarajevo's Miljacka River, some kilometres away from the historic centre. Because of his fame and commercial potential in several Slavic-speaking marketing areas, Andolija was a logical choice for the DGAG sessions. The twenty-seven sides he recorded are, oddly enough, the only aural documents of his music, and one may wonder why other companies failed to record him in Serbia or Bosnia.

## Repertoire selection

Musicians and groups in Bosnia tended to record for several companies at once, which was then also common elsewhere: in the early decades of the recording industry, recording artists were able to choose what they recorded considerably freely, at least in Scandinavia (Gronow and Englund 2007: 285), and perhaps in the Balkans as well. Sirri's recorded items, for instance, seem to be completely his own peculiar choices. These included one Russian romance, 'Kozak' ('Kto pri zvezdah i pri lune'), from the narrative poem 'Poltava' (1828) by Alexander Pushkin (1799–1837).<sup>8</sup> Perhaps Abdagić wanted to imply his Serbo-Russian sympathies – or simply demonstrate his language skills; he did record the Turkish song 'Gel beyim gel' ('Kerem eyle'), from Vranje in Southern Serbia, twice. At the same time, the permissive recording policy could easily have enticed artists to record their core repertoire for several rival recording companies, an evident tendency in early Bosnian discography.

Recorded repertoires did also, however, take the record business's commercial requirements into account. Artists recorded several songs which were then popular and have entered the modern *sevdalinka* canon (see Imamović, this volume), such as 'Čikti ferman iz Stambula'/'Dva Morića' ('An edict has been uttered from Istanbul'/'The Morić brothers'); 'Đaurko lepa'/'Đaurko mila' ('The beautiful/charming non-Muslim girl', set to a poem by Osman Đikić (1879–1912)); 'Sinoć mi draga dolazi' ('Last night my love came to me'); 'Telal viče' ('The crier shouts'); 'Vino piju age Sarajlije' ('Sarajevo landowners drink wine'); and 'Zapjevala bulbul ptica' ('A nightingale sang'). Many of the accompanied vocal recordings end with a short, fast, instrumental 'kolo' dance tune, which may have been standard practice in professional live performances. The unrehearsed impression of many DGAG recordings and sessions, meanwhile, suggests the sessions may have taken place soon after artist selection, making one wonder whether such unpolished performances would diminish the records' market potential. That said, DGAG may have hurried the sessions to beat other companies as being the first in the market of Bosnian recordings.

Although the press ignored recording expeditions to Bosnia, recordings did still leave their imprint on printed sources via the Bohemian-born Sarajevo music pedagogue, cellist, and composer Bogomir Kačerovski (Bohumír Kačerovský, 1873–1945). He seems to have transcribed, reworked, and stylized around twenty pieces from the DGAG/ITMC discs recorded in Sarajevo for his collection for voice and piano *U kolo!: bosanske narodne pjesme (Into a Circle! Bosnian Folk Songs)* (Kačerovski 1910[?]).<sup>9</sup> Notwithstanding the title, not all pieces in the anthology of arrangements were Bosnian or strictly traditional folk songs. Take, for example, the Belgrade urban folk songs ('starogradske pesme') 'Dodirni rukom žice' (5737L) and 'Tišina vlada nema svud' (5769L) from Andolija's recordings in 1907. The former was set to a poem by the Serbian poet, philosopher, and politician Milan Kujundžić Aberdar (1842–93).

### 'Kâtibim': the widest-spread melody in the *sevdalinka* canon

The *sevdalinka* canon's widest-spread melody is the nineteenth-century urban folk song 'Kâtibim' ('Üsküdar'a gider iken') in the melodic modal system makam Nihâvend, which has been adopted into local traditions as a native melody in practically all Balkan countries and elsewhere. In Turkey, the piece is regarded as an Istanbul folk song ('türkü') since the lyrics are set on the way to the nearby town of Üsküdar (see Buchanan 2007). Most Balkan lyrics for the melody are about the courtship between a young man and woman, but the themes of early Bosnian and Serbian commercial recordings are very different, while in Albania and Bosnia the melody has also been used for an 'ilahi'/'ilahija', a Muslim devotional song or hymn. In the DGAG sessions, the Sudžuka

and Merkuš Trio recorded the song as ‘Dva goluba’ (‘Two doves’) (5695L), whereas Sirri Efendi Abdagić used the title ‘Poletjela dva goluba’ (‘Two doves flew’) (4483r) for his bilingual (local-language and Turkish) rendition. Sirri also recorded this for ITMC, but unfortunately no copies have surfaced.

### *The 1907 recording by Sudžuka’s trio*

While working for the Bosnian pavilion at the Paris Exposition in 1900, Sudžuka had already recorded clarinet renditions of ‘Dva goluba’ under the French title ‘L’oiseau s’envol’ (‘The bird flew away’), preceded by ‘Vieille marche turque’ (‘Old Turkish march’), which was actually a variant of the sevdalinka melody ‘Alija se do jezera krade’ (‘Ali goes secretly to the lake’) and ‘Telal viče od jutra do mraka’ (‘The crier shouts from morning till dusk’) (CREM 2013a), plus ‘Cezayir Marşı’ (‘Algiers march’) (CREM 2013b), which he would also later record. The solo clarinet recordings were made for the Phonographic Museum of the Society of Anthropology collection and initiated by the French linguist and anthropologist Léon Azoulay (see Pasler 2014). According to this collection’s register, a ‘c. 25-year-old craftsman (*artisan*) born in Sarajevo’ recorded two phonographic cylinders of folk clarinet solos on 2 July.<sup>10</sup> The age, profession, place of birth, and playing style all refer to Sudžuka. In addition to Sudžuka’s ‘Kâtibim’ recording, an unknown Istanbul Jewish man sang the song in Turkish under the title ‘Chant populaire gai’ for Azoulay (CREM 2013c).

Although the idea of the original title has been lost in translation, the French title of Sudžuka’s 1900 recording of ‘L’oiseau s’envol’ suggests lyrics about doves set to the ‘Kâtibim’ melody were already known in Sarajevo. The song’s instrumental section is the standard one for this melody. In Sudžuka and Merkuš’s 1907 rendition, the execution of the vocal sections features a special effect in the repeat of each end half of the strophe; the last half-phrase moves to the high registry. Such temporary transposition of an octave refers to late nineteenth-century Ottoman music café and nightclub style, which was also common in Greek urban ‘rebetiko’ music (see Pennanen 1999: 111–2).

The three-strophe text describes two doves descending from the sky towards Ali Osman’s mau-soleum, carrying the golden crown of Sultan Hamid and sabre of Sultan Murad. The identity of Ali Osman is unclear, whereas ‘Sultan Hamid’ may refer to Abdülhamid I (1774–89) or the then-reigning Abdülhamid II (1876–1909). Sultans, however, did not symbolize their position with a crown; the sultanic enthronement ceremony included girding the sword of the Ottoman dynasty’s founder, Osman I. ‘Sultan Murad’ on the 1907 recording could refer to any of five sultans, but Murad II, who conquered considerable areas in the Balkans, seems a likely candidate. In the last strophe, the doves pass the gifts from heaven to the esteemed master of Istanbul, the regnant Sultan Abdülhamid II. Despite some changes in details (the objects the doves carry and the lack of the ‘esteemed master’), the lyrics are basically similar to those recorded by Serbian musician Rada Stojadinović with a Roma band for Favorite (cat. 1–105077) in Belgrade in June 1910.<sup>11</sup> In late October 1913, Stojadinović recorded the same song for DGAG in Belgrade.

The motif of two doves (sometimes angels) carrying a crown and sabre or a love message was already known in 1890s Bosnia, as evident from Ludvík (Ljudevit) Kuba’s large 1893 song collection (Kuba 1906: 505, 507). However, poems were not yet being sung to the melody of ‘Kâtibim’. By the late 1930s, this had changed; Smajl Bradarić’s collection contains several variants of the dove motif. One variant by Hajra, from Derventa, is of particular interest here, as its text closely follows that of Sudžuka and Merkuš’s recording, though its melody is unknown (Bradarić 2018: 76–7). Furthermore, the version of ‘Poletjela dva goluba’, which folk music researcher Cvjetko

Rihtman collected from saz player Halil Šestan in Visoko in 1949, is quite similar to the Sudžuka recording (see Šestan 1949).

Sudžuka and Merkuš's recording was transcribed and arranged very soon after its release when, using only two strophes, Kačerovski (1910[?]: 16) modelled 'Poletjela dva goluba' after it for his Bosnian anthology. His text is similar to the recording, but musically the cadence ends on V in both endings of the latter half of the strophe. Correspondingly, the melody ends on the second scale degree. Through these changes, Kačerovski probably wanted to imitate a very common sev-dalinka cadence and thus modify the melody to suit the Bosnian style. The arrangement for voice and piano omits the instrumental section of the recording.

Remarkably, this arrangement experienced a revival during World War II, when the music periodical of Croatian fascist Ustaše youth movement *Proljeće* published it as a representative example of Bosnian Muslim music in autumn 1941. The choice of a song referring to Bosnia's Ottoman past was ideological. Ante Pavelić, the Ustaše leader established as head of the Nazi puppet state *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (Independent State of Croatia) in occupied Croatia and Bosnia in April 1941, claimed that Bosnian Muslims were actually Islamic Croats. He denied the legitimacy of other nations than Croats on Bosnian territory (Hoare 2007: 200–1). Apart from the key (a whole tone lower), line-up (two unaccompanied voices), omission of the short instrumental introduction, and the changed structure, the arrangement by Lujza Kosinović (1897–1975), a composer, choir-mistress, and nun with the Daughters of Charity, is identical to Kačerovski's. Strangely enough, Kosinović (1941) has ignored all repeat signs of Kačerovski's version, thus producing a strophe of ten bars (4+6) and further emphasizing the cadence on V.

### *Sirri's 1908 version of 'Kâtibim'*

Sirri's 1908 rendition of 'Poletjela dva goluba' (actually 'Poletila dva goluba'), with violin accompaniment very probably by Stanoje Todorović, consists of seven strophes: two in the local language, one in Turkish, then four more in the local language. Interestingly, the song mixes words in the Bosnian ijekavian and Serbian ekavian language forms. Since Sirri has much to say in three minutes, the tempo is brisk, and the violin begins and ends the recording with a shortened version of the standard introduction. The combination of the tempo and Sirri's indistinct articulation – he had a slight speech impairment – often obstruct the comprehension of the lyrics at normal speed, so the recording must be slowed down for analysis.

The lyrics begin with the same dove motif as Sudžuka and Merkuš's recording. This time, however, the sultans of the variant are historically connected because Osman I Gazi the Victorious (c.1299–1323/4) founded the Ottoman Empire and Orhan (1323/4–1362) was his son and successor. 'Sultan Hamid's' golden calligraphic monogram ('tuğra'), which the dove carries, could logically belong to Abdülhamid II, to whom the doves pass their presents after a strophe in Turkish. The Turkish lyrics begin with the opening line of 'Kâtibim' ('Üsküdar'a gider iken bir mendil buldum' ('On my way to Üsküdar, I found a handkerchief')), but the following lines are extremely unclear, and Sirri's pronunciation is far from perfect. It is, however, safe to assume that the lines hardly contain any hidden topical political issues.

The fifth and sixth strophes' meaning is ambiguous. Here, Sultan Abdülhamid uttered the following words so angrily that all mountains echoed and boomed faraway: 'Arnautka bajrak digla da nas posječe/srešćemo se baš na Pljevlju, mestu osvete' ('An Albanian woman raised the flag to cut us down/we will meet in Pljevlja, the place of revenge'). These lines may refer to the Great Eastern Crisis of 1875–8 and its aftermath in the Balkans, and the June 1878 Congress of Berlin where the Great Powers decided that Austria-Hungary was free to occupy and administer Bosnia and the

Sandžak of Novi Pazar (now divided between Montenegro and Serbia) where Pljevlja is situated. The reference to Albanians could logically refer to one of the several Albanian revolts, and possibly Sirri was hinting at the possibility of Ottoman reconquest of the Sandžak. The last strophe's 'three clans' ('svim tri roda mog') in the last strophe, which comment on the preceding strophes, certainly refer to the three South Slavic groups comprising the Bosnians (Muslims, Orthodox Serbs, and Catholic Croats). This was not, incidentally, the sole political recording among Sirri's known works; his recording for Lyrophon, 'Već i Turska ustav ima' ('Turkey too has a constitution already'), referred to the Young Turk constitutionalist revolution of summer 1908 and was certainly explicitly political.

Another variant of 'Poletila dva goluba', by Safija Cerić from Derventa, in Bradarić's collection (Bradarić 2018: 517–18), has similarities to Sirri's version, setting the doves and Ali Osman's mausoleum in Maglaj in northern Bosnia, and ending with the line 'Arnautka bajrak digla, da ih susretne', which is almost identical to Sirri's ending. One may thus wonder whether Sirri's recording had an impact on Bosnian folk poetry. Nowadays, however, the title 'Poletjela dva goluba' refers to a totally different text and very different tune (see Žero 1995: 280). Furthermore, the modern sevdalinka canon knows the 'Kâtibim' tune, with romantic lyrics, as 'Oj, djevojko Anadolko' ('O, Anatolian girl'), or 'Ruse kose, curo, imaš' ('Girl, you have red hair'). The modern text's earliest collected variant in Bosnian folklore seems to be from 1936, by an informant called Nuraga in Novi Šeher near Žepče (Bradarić 2018: 64). The dates of early broadcast live radio performances and commercial recordings of 'Oj, djevojko Anadolko' are unknown. The 1960 recording of 'Pogledaj me, Anadolko' (Jugoton epy-3051) by Serbian-born Sarajevo singer Nada Mamula seems noticeably late. For unknown reasons, Sirri's explicitly political recordings seem to have escaped censorship. This was an uncommon situation, as we shall see in the next section.

### Censorship of recordings

Censorship, among the Austro-Hungarian political establishment's most important tools of power in ruling its multinational empire, was integral to music licencing. When applying for licences, selected cabaret artists, theatre groups, choirs, and singers were obliged to have their lyrics previewed because the authorities were looking for morally or politically suspicious texts. Surviving Bosnian archival documents suggest that before World War I, the authorities asked for lyrics rather rarely – apparently due to self-censorship by performers, who did not want to jeopardize their careers when their recordings or performances were inspected. Political censorship in Habsburg Bosnia was far more common than moral censorship, so the authorities usually tolerated Ottoman music and even the sultanic hymn 'Hamidiye Marşı' ('March of Abdülhamid II') to calm the Muslim anti-Habsburg opposition. They took meticulous interest, however, in Serbian nationalist and irredentist propaganda in certain Serbian or Montenegrin songs, instrumental marches, and even religious hymns of the Serbian Orthodox Church (see Pennanen 2013: 36–46).

Residual censorship of commercial recordings in Austria-Hungary seems to have originated in Vienna in September 1908, when the Imperial Police Headquarters established a special room for investigating morally questionable musical and spoken-word recordings, in response to recently discovered recordings which had provoked disapproval but had misleadingly innocent titles (Galoppi 1987: 182). In Bosnia, however, police sometimes discovered gramophone records of forbidden Serbian songs. For example, in August 1913, local authorities confiscated such gramophone records from Dušan Đukić, a Bosnian Serb living in Bosanska Kostajnica, northern Bosnia. Đukić was fined 100 Kronen and jailed for ten days, and authorities dismissed his appeal (ZVS 1914/21/11). After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by Gavrilo Princip on 28

June 1914 and the outbreak of the Great War, however, musical censorship became all-embracing, and included songs of the pan-Slavic movement which could weaken the integrity of the Habsburg Empire.

One probable source for the forbidden Serbian recordings in Bosnia was the merchant Mita Đ. Palić of Pančevo/Pancsova, who advertised his 1913 catalogue in the Bosnian Serb newspaper *Srpska riječ* (*Serbian Word*). Fortunately, a copy of this '[i]llustrated price list of gramophones (talking machines) and the latest Serbian records' (Palić 1913) has survived. The inside cover text instructs Serb customers, in a highly moralizing tone, to exclusively buy from Serb merchants. The catalogue contains strikingly many examples of Greater Serbian propaganda and anti-Ottoman songs recorded in Belgrade, southern Hungary, and Zagreb, including the rebel songs 'Orle krilato' ('Winged eagle', 14442L) and 'Jel ti žalba za tvojata majka[?]' ('Do you feel sorry for your mother?', 14443L). The two pieces, recorded by Stanoje Todorović's band for DGAG in Zagreb in early October 1912, are 'komitske pesme' (songs of the Balkan anti-Ottoman rebel bands, from Turkish 'komitaci', 'committee members') describing rebel bands operating in Ottoman Macedonia with the support of the neighbouring countries, in this case Serbia.

Printed after the First Balkan War of 1912–13, the Palić catalogue contains numerous records praising King Petar I of Serbia and Serbia's victories. Central to the war theme are the 'sensational' three double-sided audio dramas representing, respectively, the course of the war, the Battle of Kumanovo (23–4 October 1912), and the siege of Scutari/Shkodër (October 1912–April 1913). These dramas comprised epic singing by a guslar (gusle player); speeches representing various Balkan kings, a Serbian general, and the Ottoman-Albanian army officer Essad Pasha Toptani; national anthems; Orthodox chanting; patriotic songs; folk instruments; dancing; wind instruments; and sound effects. Owing to the unevenly strong censorship in different parts of Austria-Hungary, the propaganda records were released by the Budapest company Diadal in March 1913 during the First Balkan War and in October 1913 after the Second (Bajnai et al. 2010: 148, 169). The Viennese firm Metafon also bought some of the matrices and released the records under its own label slightly later. Such pro-Serbian/Montenegrin records were forbidden everywhere in Austria-Hungary after the outbreak of World War I (*Jutarnji list* 1914). In Bosnia, they seem to have been forbidden on release. In the wake of the outbreak of the war, the recording industry and the politics of recorded music experienced changes that lasted longer than the conflict itself.

### **Early recordings and the modern sevdalinka canon**

The construction of the Bosnian sevdalinka canon was especially active in Titoist Yugoslavia after the early 1950s, and again after the 1992–5 Bosnian War. Influential journalists, producers, arrangers, singers, and musicians working for Radio Sarajevo, Radiotelevizija Sarajevo and their successors, scholars of literature and music, music festivals such as 'Sevdalinko, u srcu te nosim' ('Sevdalinka, I bear you in my heart') in Tuzla, museums, and popular books all contributed to forming and fostering this canon (for decanonizing sevdalinka, see Imamović 2017). The canonized sevdalinka repertoire is found in collections of lyrics and musical notations (e.g. Žero 1995; Gunić 2012) and anthologies of recordings (Karača Beljak 2004; Milić n.d.). Furthermore, what was initially a project of the Sarajevo canton's Ministry of Culture and Sport in 2008, the Sevdah Art House ('Art kuća sevdaha') in Sarajevo's traditional market area Baščaršija, cherishes the canon of sevdalinka musicians, mainly famous socialist-era singers. These guardians protect sevdalinka against 'distortion and desecration' (see, e.g. Bajtal 2012: 321–45). However, folklorists have also published pre-World War II folk variants of poems which differ from the canonized repertoire. One of the most important such collections is by the teacher and amateur folklorist Smajl

Bradarić (1914–93), who collected texts in and around Derventa in 1937–45 (Bradarić 2018) – immediately before and during World War II in Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, he transcribed the lyrics without melodies, hampering the study of commercial recordings’ impact on folklore.

Several well-known late Ottoman pieces in the early recorded repertoire have become part of the canonised *sevdalinka* repertoire. For instance, ‘Vijala se vina loza vinova’ (‘The grapevines were winding’) (5662L), recorded by Nazif Memišević’s band, is among the local-, Ladino- and Hebrew-language secular and religious songs with melodies based on the Ottoman light classical song ‘Vatan Şarkısı’/‘Ey vatan ey ümm-i müşfik’ (‘Motherland song’/‘Oh, my homeland, oh, beloved’) – also known as the march arrangement ‘Vatan Marşı’ – in makam Nihâvend by an unknown poet and Rıfat Bey (1820–88). The original Turkish lyrics celebrate the first proclamation of the Ottoman constitution in 1876. Although various claims exist in Bosnian popular writings about the melody’s origins (e.g. Gunić 2012: 224–5), no speculated sources can be dated earlier than Rıfat Bey’s composition (see Seroussi and Stern 2020: 94). The vine-leaf motif was extremely widespread in the Central South Slavic language area (see Eschker 1971: 240–2; Bradarić 2018: 94–5). Interestingly, Stanoje Todorović recorded ‘Savila se bela loza vinova (nova arija)’ (14445L) for DGAG while visiting Zagreb in October 1912; possibly the bracketed addition ‘new melody’ means the lyrics were sung to the tune of ‘Vatan Marşı’.

Nowadays the ‘Vatan Marşı’ melody is known in Bosnia as the very popular *sevdalinka* ‘Kad ja pođoh na Bembašu’ (‘When I went to Bembaša to the river’) but, during the early recording sessions, the variant of the song text was sung to a totally different local tune. In 1907, the Mustafa Sudžuka and Merkuš Trio recorded that older tune ‘Kad ja podjem na Bendbašu’ (5689L; see Kesgin and Schroen 2007: 12), as did Juso and Zajko Besić as an instrumental version (2898k). Utilizing Ottoman poetic ‘words of embellishment’ ‘aman’ (‘oh!’) and ‘canım’ (‘my soul’) (see Tanrıkorur 1991: 4), the song begins: ‘Kad ja pođem, aman, kad ja pođem, džanum, na Bendbašu na vodu’ (see Žero 1995: 126).<sup>12</sup> It is unknown when the lyrics of ‘Kad ja pođoh na Bembašu’ were combined with the tune of ‘Vatan Marşı’, since potentially relevant interwar discs (e.g. Odeon A 192703 by Sofka Nikolić (see Ceribašić, this volume)) have not surfaced. The c. 1950 version of ‘Kad ja podjoh na Bendbašu’ (331–A/Jugoton J–6105–A) by civil engineer Hamdija Samardžić (1919–80) thus seems to be the song’s earliest recording.

Another Rıfat Bey piece in the *sevdalinka* repertoire is ‘Sivastopol Marşı’ (‘Sevastopol march’) in makam Rast. The march, dedicated to the allied victory in the Siege of Sevastopol during the Crimean War (1853–6), was commonplace at music and drama evenings of Bosnian Muslim cultural and other societies in Habsburg Bosnia before World War I. The Mustafa Sudžuka and Merkuš Trio recorded an instrumental version of the march, with introductory ‘*taksim*’ improvisations in the piece’s makam mode in flowing rhythm, for DGAG (5698L) in 1907 and Lyrphonwerke in 1908. The march melody is used for the *sevdalinka* ‘S one strane Jajca’ (also known as ‘S one strane Plive’ (‘From the other side of Jajce/the Pliva’)). Incidentally, from November 1992 to February 1998, the tune, with lyrics by Edin Dervišhalidović (Dino Merlin), served as the national anthem of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, ‘Jedna si jedina’ (‘You are the one and only’) (see Hamer, this volume).

## Conclusion

Before World War I, Bosnia was a tempting marketing area for the central European recording industry, which sold gramophones and records through mail order and local agents. Three companies also organized recording sessions in Sarajevo and Tuzla with the help of local middlemen. The selection of recording artists included male and female part- and full-timers from Bosnia and

Serbia, and as was then customary, artists recording for several companies tended to rerecord their favourite pieces several times. In some cases, Bosnian recordings could be cross marketed in the Central South Slavic language area and, correspondingly, recordings from the neighbouring area and central Europe were marketed in Bosnia. Contrary to some other parts of the Habsburg Empire, the preventive censorship of politically dubious recorded music seems to have been effective in Bosnia. At the same time, recordings of forbidden Serbian and Montenegrin pieces were recorded in, for example, Zagreb and Budapest – and, naturally, Belgrade – and marketed also in Bosnia, where the authorities usually blacklisted such records and confiscated them when found.

Commercial gramophone records have long been neglected as cultural products; public libraries and archives did not collect them and, until the 1960s, scholarly interest in the recording industry was rare. For scrutinizing the history of the recording industry in Bosnia and the rest of the Balkans, one needs to combine data from public and private archives, discographies, and the press. With few exceptions, the available sources are unfortunately sparse and fragmentary, which emphasizes the importance of historical source criticism. By combining data in music licences, record catalogues, company and private archives, and press sources, one can achieve an outline of the recording industry's early history in Bosnia, including recording sessions, artists, repertoire, production, and marketing. Research on the reception of the recordings, however, would need further sources; for unknown reasons, the Bosnian press neglected reviewing gramophone records, including local ones.

The pre-World War I Bosnian recording sessions and their releases offer us a view to a world that was slowly but inevitably vanishing. Subsequently, companies no longer organized recording sessions in Bosnia, and the number of Bosnian musicians, especially Muslim Slavs and Muslim Roma, as recording artists diminished considerably in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The situation changed only after World War II. To sum up, the early recordings are crucial for the study of *sevdalinka*'s repertoire, musical and performance style, development, and the construction of its canon, for Jewish musical history in the Balkans, and for the history of the recording business in Bosnia.

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### Notes

- 1 The earliest records were single-sided with only one title on each record, but around 1908 double-sided records, with two titles on a record, became the standard.
- 2 This chapter uses the term 'local language' ('zemałjski'/'Landessprache') instead of 'Bosnian' or 'Serbo-Croatian'.
- 3 Christian Zwarg, personal communication, 12 October 2022.
- 4 I have received biographical data on Mustafa Sudžuka from his great-grandson Mustafa E. Sudžuka and Mustafa Mulalić's (1898–1983) manuscript on Bosnian folk musicians (Mulalić 1960[?]).
- 5 Merkuš's identity remains unknown. One possibility is the Sarajevo Sephardic grocer Salamon S. Altarac (d. 1929), nicknamed Merkuš (*Jevrejski glas* 1929).
- 6 Compare Ceribašić, this volume.
- 7 On folk music scholarship and nation-building, see Progonati, this volume.
- 8 Pushkin's poem was his interpretation of the role of the Ukrainian hetman leader Ivan Mazepa during the Great Northern War (1700–21), which wanted to present Peter I of Russia as a hero and Mazepa as a traitor – contrary to how Mazepa had been internationally romanticized by figures like Byron (see Prymak 2022).

- 9 Date according to a list of new books in the Zagreb journal *Dom i svijet* (1910).  
 10 Alice Lemaire (Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, Paris), personal communication, 6 February 2018.  
 11 Dating via Hugo Strötrbaum (personal communication, 24 November 2022).  
 12 'Canım' in Turkish is pronounced 'džanam' in Bosnia.

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