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**A JOURNEY WITH EXPERIENCES OF A LIFETIME.
THE ADVENTURES OF GYULA GERMANUS
IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA IN 1902.**

Abstract: *Gyula Germanus or Hajji Julius Abdul-Karim Germanus, Hungarian Muslim Orientalist Professor (1884-1979) was a well-known scholar and popular figure in Hungary from the turn of the century until late seventies. He was an Arabist, teacher, professor, writer, traveller, literary historian as well MP in Hungary (1958-1966) and member of many academies abroad. He converted to Islam in Delhi in 1930, and he was the first Hungarian to make a pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajji) in 1935. In this paper, I would like to describe in more detail his first major trip abroad, which took him to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1902. The 17-year-old Germanus, a newly graduated, well-informed, educated, multilingual and already interested in Eastern culture, had a lifetime of experiences on his journey. Based partly on one of his memoirs and partly on a radio play he wrote and found in the Germanus bequest, I will outline in detail a chronicle of his days in Bosnia. First he travelled by train from Budapest to Banja Luka, where he visited the only Trappist monastery in the Balkans, and then he wrote a brief history of the Trappist order in his book. He then travelled with his companions by coach along a wild and scenic road carved into the valley of the Vrbas river towards Jajce. He noted that the Hungarian soldiers who invaded Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878 had named the province "the land of curved mountains" for a reason. It is in Jajce that he had his greatest and most astonishing adventure, when he walked into a café in the evening, where he was greeted with great affection by the regular Bosniaks, especially after it turns out that he speaks Turkish. So he spends the evening in good company and is amply entertained. This first impression of the kindness and hospitality of the Muslim people of the East will stayed with him for the rest of his life. Jajca was followed by a journey by narrow-gauge railway to Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. In addition to describing the city and its sights, Germanus also reported that he had made a new and very dear friend, the intelligent Ahmed Mustafa, a shariat law student. After meeting*

him, they talked about the Islamic religion, the Quran, shariat and visited the bazaar. Afterwards they had dinner and Germanus invited his new friend to visit Hungary, who accompanied him to Grazová and then to Raguzá. They also discovered Raguzá together and said goodbye to each other. From there Germanus travelled to Cattaro, then to Cetinje in Montenegro, where he had interesting and instructive adventures, and after a long and difficult ordeal, including two days of starvation, he arrived in Fiume, where he was helped by an acquaintance of his father's, and was able to travel home in peace. In the conclusion, I will explain that six years after Germanus' visit, the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Empire, and tensions between the peoples of the Balkans escalated, leading to the Sarajevo assassination attempt on 28 June 1914, which soon afterwards led to the outbreak of the First World War. Germanus never forgot his first trip and the positive experiences he had here. He had sympathy for the Bosniaks and helped them in Hungary when veteran soldiers and officers stranded in Hungary after the First World War founded an Islamic religious community in 1931 under the leadership of former Military Imam Husein Hilmi Durić¹. Germanus, who was already a Muslim, supported them, mobilised his network of contacts for them and took on the role of secretary-general of the so-called "Gül Baba Cultural Committee". I believe that the teenager Germanus' personality development was greatly influenced by his trip in 1902 and the friendly, welcoming atmosphere that surrounded him.

Key words: Gyula Germanus, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Banja Luka, Jajca, Sarajevo, bosniaks, Austro-Hungarian Empire, journey.

PUTOVANJE SA ŽIVOTNIM ISKUSTIVIMA. AVANTURE ĐULE GERMANA U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI 1902. GODINE

Apstrakt: Đula German ili Hajji Julius Abdul-Karim Germanus, mađarski muslimanski orijentalist, profesor (1884-1979), bio je poznati učenjak i popularna figura u Mađarskoj od početka stoljeća do kasnih sedamdesetih godina. Bio je arabist, učitelj, profesor, pisac, putnik, književni povjesničar, kao i član parlamenta u Mađarskoj (1958-1966), te član mnogih akademija u inozemstvu. Prešao je na islam u Delhiju 1930. godine, postavši prvi Mađar koji je obavio hodočašće u Meku (Hajji) 1935. godine. U ovom radu želim detaljnije opisati njegovo prvo značajno putovanje u inozemstvo, koje ga je odvelo u Bosnu i Hercegovinu tokom ljeta 1902. godine. Sedamnaestogodišnji Germanus, nedavno diplomirani, dobro obrazovan, višejezičan i već zainteresiran za istočnu kulturu, stekao je mnogo životnih iskustava tokom svog putovanja. Na temelju

¹ Husein Hilmi Durić (1887-1940) K. und K. military officer, Military Imam, Bosnian Muslim religious leader, Grand Mufti of Buda.

dijela njegovih memoara i dijela radijske igre koju je napisao, a koju je pronašao u njegovoj ostavštini, detaljno ću opisati kroniku njegovih dana u Bosni. Prvo je putovao vlakom iz Budimpešte do Banja Luke, gdje je posjetio jedini trapistički samostan na Balkanu, te je potom napisao kratak povijesni prikaz trapističkog reda u svojoj knjizi. Zatim je putovao s svojim suputnicima kočijom duž divlje i slikovite ceste urezane u dolinu rijeke Vrbas prema Jajcu. Napomenuo je da su mađarski vojnici koji su 1878. godine osvojili Bosnu i Hercegovinu nazvali provinciju “zemljom zakrivljenih planina” s razlogom. U Jajcu je doživio svoju najveću i najiznenađujuću avanturu kad je ušao u kafić navečer i dočekan s velikom naklonošću od strane redovnih Bošnjaka, posebno nakon što se ispostavilo da govori turski jezik. Tako je proveo večer u dobrom društvu i obilno se zabavio. Prvi dojam o ljubaznosti i gostoprimstvu muslimanskog stanovništva Istoka ostao mu je za cijeli život. Nakon Jajca slijedilo je putovanje uskom prugom do Sarajeva, glavnog grada Bosne. Osim opisa grada i njegovih znamenitosti, Germanus je također izvijestio da je stekao novog i vrlo dragog prijatelja, inteligentnog Ahmeda Mustafu, studenta šerijatskog prava. Nakon što su se upoznali, razgovarali su o islamskoj religiji, Kur'anu, šerijatu i posjetili bazare. Nakon toga su večerali, a Germanus je pozvao svog novog prijatelja da posjeti Mađarsku, te ga je pratio do Gračišća, a zatim do Dubrovnika. Tamo su zajedno istraživali Dubrovnik i pozdravili se. Odande je Germanus putovao do Kotora, zatim do Cetinja u Crnoj Gori, gdje je doživio zanimljive i poučne avanture, a nakon dugog i teškog iskušenja, uključujući dva dana gladi, stigao je do Rijeke, gdje mu je pomogao poznanik njegovog oca i mogao se mirno vratiti kući. Zaključit ću objašnjavajući da su šest godina nakon Germanusovog posjeta, Austro-Ugarska Monarhija anektirala Bosnu i Hercegovinu u svoje carstvo, što je dovelo do eskalacije napetosti između naroda Balkana, a to je kulminiralo atentatom u Sarajevu 28. lipnja 1914. godine, koji je ubrzo doveo do izbijanja Prvog svjetskog rata. Germanus nikada nije zaboravio svoje prvo putovanje i pozitivna iskustva koja je tu stekao. Suosjećao je s Bošnjacima i pomagao im je u Mađarskoj kad su se veterani vojnici i časnici našli u Mađarskoj nakon Prvog svjetskog rata i osnovali Islamsku vjersku zajednicu 1931. godine pod vodstvom bivšeg vojnog imama Huseina Hilmi Durića. Germanus, već musliman, podržavao ih je, mobilizirao svoju mrežu kontakata za njih i preuzeo ulogu tajnika tzv. “Gül Baba Kulturnog odbora”. Vjerujem da je razvoj ličnosti tinejdžera Germanusa snažno utjecao njegovo putovanje 1902. godine i prijateljska i gostoljubiva atmosfera koja ga je okruživala.

Ključne riječi: Đula German, Bosna i Hercegovina, Banja Luka, Jajce, Sarajevo, Bošnjaci, Austro-Ugarska Monarhija, putovanje.

Introduction

Gyula Germanus or Hajji Julius Abdul-Karim Germanus, Hungarian Muslim Orientalist Professor (1884-1979) was a well-known scholar and popular figure in Hungary from the turn of the century until late seventies. He was an Arabist, teacher, professor, writer, traveller, literary historian as well MP in Hungary (1958-1966) and member of many academies abroad. He converted to Islam in Delhi in 1930, and he was the first Hungarian to make a pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) in 1935. In this paper, I would like to outline his first major trip which derived to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1902 when he was just 17 years old. Already a fan of the Orient, the young Germanus, a multilingual and a freshly graduated from high school, was already deeply impressed by the country, which was occupied by the Austro-Hungarian Empire since 1878. He was captivated not only by the beauty of nature and the diversity of the landscape, but also by the cultural and religious diversity, the historic towns, the monuments, few of them Hungarian related, and above all the kindness and hospitality of the Bosnian Muslims.

Germanus was born in Budapest on November 6, 1884 into a Hungarian Jewish family. They were typical examples of the assimilating, aspiring, talented, hard-working family of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Gyula Germanus was not a good student in the early years of high school and sometimes got very low marks. In 1902, he passed his maturity exam at the VIII District General High School, and then passed his grammar school maturity exam with distinction in ancient Greek and Latin. One of his first trips after graduation, in the summer of 1902, was to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he first encountered Islam and experienced the hospitality of Bosnian Muslims. On his return home, although his parents had intended him to become an engineer, he enrolled at the Faculty of Humanities of the University of Budapest in the autumn of 1902, majoring in History and Latin. This is how he wrote about it: “On my return from a trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I enrolled at the university. I decided to become a teacher, because this was the best way to train myself for further studies. I chose Latin and History because my knowledge of Turkish, once perfected, will enable me to contribute to the Turkish period of Hungarian history from Turkish sources.”² In this paper, I will use Germanus’s memoirs and other sources to describe his 1902 trip in a little more detail.

² Gyula Germanus, *'A félhold fakó fényében'* [In the Pale Light of the Crescent Moon], Budapest, Táncsics, 1957. p. 6, accessed 16 June, 2023, <https://mek.oszk.hu/00600/00663/00663.pdf>.



Photo 1. *Portrait of Gyula Germanus, 1918.*
Source: *Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd, Germanus bequest.*

Adventures in Bosnia-Hercegovina

On 29 July 1878, the army of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy crossed the Sava River to take control of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the Novi Pazar Sanjak, in accordance with a resolution adopted at the Congress of Berlin. The occupation succeeded, and the “k. und k.” (Imperial and Royal, in German: “kaiserlich und königlich”) army, with the help of the first “monitors” (small warships), took possession of the territories assigned to the Monarchy within a few weeks. Whereas the Christians had risen up against Turkish rule before, the Muslim population of the province took up arms against the invaders, and following the defeat, masses of emigrants set off for the Ottoman Empire. Later, the establishment of a joint governorate in Sarajevo and decades of occupation brought relative calm, stability and economic growth to Bosnia and Herzegovina.³ The successful and active governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1882-1903 was the Hungarian Béni Kállay⁴, joint Minister of Finance, and Hungarian-Bosnian political, economic and cultural relations were also revived. Hungarian soldiers, officials, railwaymen, merchants and entrepreneurs travelled to the occupied territories, and in many cases lived there for many years,

³ Tamás Tarján M, ‘*Bosznia-Hercegovina okkupációja*’ [The occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina], *Rubicon Online*, accessed 15 June 2023, https://rubicon.hu/kalendarium/1878-julius-29-bosznia-hercegovina-okkupacioja?gc_id=14734383555&h_ad_id=547570060264&gclid=EAIaIQobChMItajinPfe_wIVFs53ChIUPQphEAAAYASAAEgJ6CvD_BwE.

⁴ Béni Kállay (1839-1903) was a Hungarian nobleman, politician, diplomat, historian, joint Minister of Finance of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Governor of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

as did an increasing number of Bosniaks (military officers, businessmen and students) who came to Hungary for longer or shorter periods. The interest of Hungarian researchers, scientists and artists in Bosnia and Herzegovina has also increased, and numerous travelogues, economic and historical studies have been written about the region. For example, Tivadar Kosztka Csontváry⁵, one of the most famous Hungarian painters, spent the spring of 1903 in Bosnia, where he painted his famous painting “Roman Bridge in Mostar”. The Balkans were also within the reach of Hungarian travellers, so it was not surprising that young Germanus chose Bosnia and Herzegovina as his destination.



Photo 2. *Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka: Roman bridge in Mostar.*

Source: Wikipedia. https://hu.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/F%C3%A1jl:Cskt-romai_hid_mosztarban_%281903%29.jpg.

Germanus wrote his life story several times and always paid great attention to mentioning this life-long journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina. In his bestselling book, *In the Pale Light of the Crescent Moon*, first published in 1957⁶ and later a bestseller that has gone through several editions, this is how he recalls his experiences in Bosnia and Herzegovina:

„Summer was approaching, and after passing my maturity exams, with little money in my pocket and my father’s words of encouragement in my heart, I set off on my first trip to Bosnia. At that time, in 1902, Bosnia and Herzegovina was enjoying the blessings of Western civilisation under Austro-Hungarian occupation. Hungarian soldiers made their way through the forests of Bosnia, and in the towns, which were still entirely eastern in character, military-run hotels

⁵ *Tivadar Csontváry Kosztka* (1853-1919) was a Hungarian painter.

⁶ Gyula Germanus, *‘A félhold fakó fényében’* [In the Pale Light of the Crescent Moon], Budapest, Táncsics, 1957, accessed 16 June 2023, <https://mek.oszk.hu/00600/00663/00663.pdf>.

offered travellers a rest. Banja Luka, a town in the hills, was my first stop in the east. The male population wore baggy trousers, which were held together by a wide waistband. All wore *fezs* on their heads, a remnant of Turkish rule. They spun the wheel of time in open street cafés. I hardly saw any women, they were at home working for their husbands. The few who ventured out into the street were covered from head to toe in a thick shroud, with only two narrow slits around their eyes through which they looked out. A few kilometres from Banja Luka, in the middle of the forest, lay the only Trappist monastery in the then monarchy. I was eager to visit this interesting monastic order, the only one in our country. I hired a car with a few acquaintances I had made during the journey and we made a trip into the forest. The Prior welcomed me warmly and showed me around the church, then showed me the cheese factory and the monks' residence outside. He then treated me to the delicious cheese, the only thing this monastic order is known for in the world. While we were in the church, the Prior was conspicuously taciturn and greeted his fellow monks with a silent nod of the head. But when he served us cheese in the dining room, he not only began to talk, but also laughed heartily when we asked him any inappropriate questions. At our request, he told us the story of the monastery.”⁷

Germanus then gives a brief history of the monastic order in his book: “It is not a very old order, it came out of the Cistercian order in the 17th century. At that time, a wealthy and dissolute nobleman named Dominique Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé⁸, tired of a life of worldly pleasures, retired to the monastery of La Trappe, imposing a strict abstinence. The Cistercian monastery at La Trappe was a rather secular place, and de Rancé had to use all his persuasive talents to persuade his fellow monks to adopt a godly lifestyle. Some, disillusioned by the world's call, joined him and established a new spirit in the monastery. They embraced total silence and drowned their carnal desires in hard work. They cleared the forests, cultivated the land and renounced all pleasure: they drank no wine, ate no meat, fish or eggs, and even added no spices to their meals of vegetables and bread. This austere lifestyle was a counterweight to the mischievous life of the 17th century, and more and more people sought solace and spiritual comfort in the monastery, which soon extended its work of conversion outside France. Trappist monasteries sprang up in England, Ireland, Germany, and even in far-off China. Over time, the overly strict rules were relaxed and the silent monks began to produce beer. They made furniture from the trees of the forest, established a textile weaving industry and taught the people

⁷ *Ibidem*, 4.

⁸ *Armand Jean le Bouthillier de Rancé* (1626-1700) was an abbot of La Trappe Abbey and the founder of the Trappists.

the blessings of a higher material civilisation, without abandoning their original principles.”⁹

The writer then describes in detail his journey through the mountains to Jajca: From Banja Luka he travelled on by coach with his new acquaintances. The coach (or: carriage) was a kind of old-fashioned one, with tiny mountain horses, nimbly picking their way down the Vrbas River valley. The road wound through wild forest-covered hills. Beside it, the Vrbas River flowed, sometimes in a smooth channel, sometimes among pebbles, then angrily paused and bumped up to smash through the rocks in its path, then with a fierce slash it slammed into the belly of the mountain and disappeared into the depths. They lost sight of the river, its powerful splashing replaced by silence, broken only occasionally by the cry of a bird. The thumping of horses’ hooves and the rattle of the coach were their only companions in the forest, through whose wispy trees a castle-rom was peeping out in the blue sky. But the river Vrbas was not entirely unfaithful to them. After a few hours, it burst out of its hollow in a bend in the side of the mountain, making its way with a triumphant roar. During the occupation of 1879, the Hungarian soldiers from Kecskemét rightly called Bosnia the “land of the curved mountains”.



Photo 3. *Valley of Vrbas river, 1903.*

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76309. <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

After a ten-hour travel, they arrived in Jajca, quite tired. In the twilight of the evening, the city appeared to him like some fairy-tale castle. It was

⁹ *Ibidem*, 4.

surrounded by a thick wall, and outside its gates stood a grumpy guard. Few strangers visited this town in those days, and the guards looked on with a scowl. He ate a hasty supper at the hotel, and while his companions went to bed, Germanus ventured out into the street. By then it was completely dark, and the streets were sparsely lit by a single kerosene lamp. Most of the houses were built of mud brick, but the latticed balconies lent them some ornament. There were hardly any people on the streets, and the sounds emanating from the houses suggested to him that it was now only fitting to be at home. The solitude and silence was mysterious, and he walked on, a little heartbroken and discouraged. In a small square, a stronger light shone from the ground floor of one of the houses. People were coming and going through its gates. It was a café. Two large kerosene lamps hung from the ceiling, and along the wall, people sat on stools, sipping coffee.¹⁰

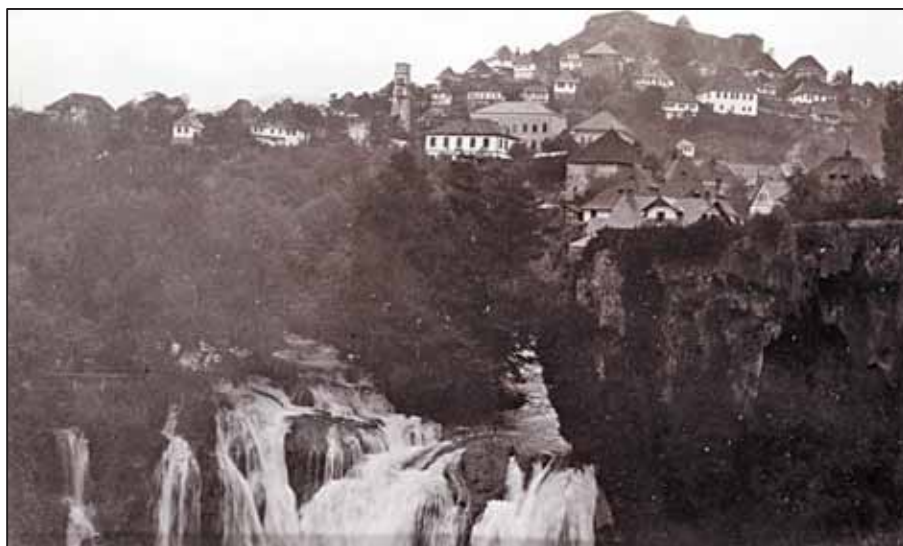


Photo 4. *Jajce, the waterfall, the castle in the background, 1903.*

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76307 <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

This is followed by describe of a lovely story that remained memorable and instructive for the professor, until rest of his life. Moreover, it further increased his interest in the Balkans and Oriental people and Islamic culture:

„They were all Bosniaks and men. They wore *fezes* or *turbans* on their heads, pistols and *hanjars* in their belts, and the way some of them squatted on their benches with their legs tucked under them, as was the Oriental custom, looked like beasts about to pounce. I entered the café

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 5.

trembling and sat down on a bench at a fair distance from the guests. The coffee man stood in front of me and spoke to me in Serbian. I could only understand that he was offering me coffee, and I replied with a nod of my head. The customers looked at me. I did not dare look at them, but I could feel one of them reaching for his belt and adjusting something. Others cleared their throats and whispered. The coffee man put the cup in front of me; I tried to lift it to my lips with trembling hands. It was too hot. In fact, the whole room, saturated with cigarette smoke, was pouring out its heat on me like a cauldron. I remembered the history: the Muslims called the Hungarians *Giaours* (*kafirs*), infidel dogs, and for centuries they had killed and murdered them in the name of Allah, for the salvation of the Prophet. Now I sit here as a lone *Giaour* in front of armed Muslims who, far away in the dark night in the alley of Jajca, are taking revenge on me for the wrong our politicians have done to them. My brow beaded with sweat: there is no escape from here! Where to? They shoot at me, they stab me with their *hanjars* - but if I stay here, there is no escape. An older, tall Bosnian with a downlink moustache got up and came towards me. He was walking slowly, as if he was going to sneak up on me. I bowed my head and waited for the end. Then he spoke to me in a gentle voice: - »*Salem aleykum!*« (»Peace be with you!«) - and I stuttered in fear of my death and repeated the familiar Muslim greeting. He sat down beside me and offered me his hand, which I shakily accepted. I was now somewhat emboldened, for I had realised that I had not yet been mowed down, and I said to him in stuttering Turkish: - »*Siz Türkçe bilirmisiniz?*« (»Do you know Turkish?«). This sentence, as if by magic, brightened my neighbour's face, and his companions gave vent to their astonishment and delight with loud cries of »*Mashallah*« (»God has willed it.«). They jumped up from their seats and settled around me. They all shook my hand, put sweets in front of me, rolled cigarettes for me and encouraged me to stick it with my saliva then followed by a loud conversation in Turkish. At first, I found it difficult to understand and my answers were stuttering, but the subject of the conversation was so narrow that my existing vocabulary helped me out. It was my first encounter with Muslims. They did not attack me, they did not kill me, they even treated me to a friendly handshake, and it was late at night when the whole party escorted me to the hotel, as if they had become my bodyguards to protect me with their lives against any attack. An unforgettable memory that left such a deep impression on me that it will stay with me for the rest of my life.”¹¹

As I mentioned earlier, Germanus returned home from his trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina and enrolled at the university. He decided to become a teacher, as this was the best way to train himself for further studies. He chose Latin and History because he wanted to use his knowledge of Turkish, when he had

¹¹ *Ibidem*, 5-6.

perfected it, as a historian to provide information from Turkish sources on the Ottoman occupation of Hungary.¹²

„In the land of the curved mountains”

I found the manuscript of a very interesting radio play entitled *From my memories...I. In the land of the curved mountains* in the Germanus bequest in the Hungarian Geographical Museum in Érd.¹³ The twisty and adventurous radio play was first broadcast by the Hungarian „Kossuth Radio” on 4 December 1964 between 14:30 and 15:00¹⁴, and was broadcast several times afterwards. The story is about young Germanus’ journey to Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will pick out the parts that are not in the previously mentioned book. Of course, knowing Germanus’s storytelling capacity and imagination, it cannot be ruled out that the following stories are fiction and that the other characters, apart from Germanus, are only figments of his imagination. Nevertheless, I think they are an excellent addition to the memoir, and perhaps add colour to the overall picture. Exactly 121 years ago, this is how an informed, educated, language-speaking, open-minded young Hungarian man saw Bosnia and Herzegovina and its peoples. Even at the start of the long train journey itself, the protagonist Germanus is engaged in conversation with a Hungarian veteran sergeant, Mihály Kerekes, who lives in Bosnia and married there:

“One morning in July 1902, sitting on the hard wooden bench of the 3rd class carriage at the Eastern Railway Station of Budapest, perhaps no one was happier than Germanus when a tall man with a big moustache climbed into the compartment, huffing and puffing, carrying a basket, demijohn and other luggage. Germanus jumped up and helped him put his luggage away, and they got to talking. Germanus told his companion that he wanted to see the world, he was going to Doberlin, on the banks of the Una. His companion introduced himself, his name was Mihály Kerekes, he was born in Kecskemét, the war took him away in 1877, he served as a sergeant in Bosnia, and he became friends with the »land of the curved mountains« and a Bosnian girl. He wanted to make a Hungarian wife of her, but her father-in-law would only marry his daughter to him if he stayed and ran his little shop with him. What could he do, Mihály Kerekes divided his heart in two, one half staying with his mother in Kecskemét, the other half with his new family in Banja Luka.”¹⁵

¹² *Ibidem*, 6.

¹³ Gyula Germanus, *‘From my memories...I. In the land of the curved mountains’*, Radio play. Manuscript. Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd, Germanus bequest, box nr. 21.

¹⁴ [N. A.], *‘A Magyar Nemzet rádió és televízió műsora’* [The radio and television program of the ‘Magyar Nemzet’ daily newspaper], *Magyar Nemzet*, 20/278 (1964) 112-133, 16.

¹⁵ Gyula Germanus, *‘From my memories...I. In the land of the curved mountains’*, Radio play. Manuscript. Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd, Germanus bequest, box nr. 21, 2-3.

Germanus then told his companion that Bosnia must be an interesting place and that he had always been interested and fascinated by its history, and at his partner's request he gave a short lecture on the history of the country on the train. Germanus went back to the 7th century AD, when the Byzantine emperors settled Slavs from northern Germany in the Balkans to serve as their bulwarks against the Huns and Avars who had settled in the Carpathian lowlands. Over time, these Slavs, Croats and Serbs converted to the Greek Orthodox religion. But the Bulgarians of Turk origin also became Slavicised and forgot their original Bulgarian language. Among the Orthodox Christian peoples of the Balkans, the inhabitants of Bosnia occupied a special place. In the 10th century, the Bogomil religion spread among the Bosniaks, based on the "Struggle of Good with Evil", similar to the Persian Zoroastrian religion. Kerekes then asked if Germanus was going to become a priest, he knew so much. In response, Germanus stated that the history of Bosnia cannot be explained without religious connections. The consequence of the many religious divisions was that many people converted to Islam in the wake of the Turkish conquests. These Muslims were naturally favoured by the Turks and gave rise to the landowning class. The landlords treated the *kmets* as serfs. The majority of the inhabitants of Bosnia are still Muslims today. Kerekes then asked the well-informed young man if he knew why Austria-Hungary had to invade this country. Germanus knew that, according to the Berlin resolution, it had been "allowed" to invade by the Congress of Berlin. In response, Kerekes said that it was not that simple and that he was among the marching soldiers in the "land of the curved mountains". He lived through it and it was terrible. They had gone into it without any preparation. Everywhere there was uncertainty, a lack of head space. Gyula Andrásy¹⁶, then Foreign Minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, declared: "We are marching in with a band of soldiers". And what was the reality? Failure, defeat, suffering everywhere. In the area of Banja Luka, Dolna-Tuzla, the population and the remaining Turkish army attacked the Kerekes Mihálys with stones in a mountain pass. In Maglaj, however, Bosnian riflemen hiding behind rocks inflicted a bloody defeat on the invading Hussars. Sarajevo was a bloody sacrifice for the birthday of Emperor Franz Joseph¹⁷. That was certainly the truth. Germanus shivered as he listened to Kerekes, who had witnessed the bloody chapters of the romantic, medieval country's history...¹⁸

Time and train raced past the forests of Bosnia, where Hungarian soldiers cut the path and military-run hotels offered rest to passengers. Arriving in Doberlin in the morning, they continued their journey on a narrow-gauge train to

¹⁶ Gyula Andrásy (1823-1890) was a Hungarian aristocrat, politician and statesman who served as Prime Minister of Hungary (1867-1871) and as Foreign Minister of Austria-Hungary (1871-1879).

¹⁷ Franz Joseph I Habsburg-Lorraine (1830-1916) was the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and other states of the Habsburg Monarchy (1848-1916).

¹⁸ Gyula Germanus, *'From my memories...I. In the land of the curved mountains'*, Radio play. Manuscript. Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd, Germanus bequest, box nr. 21, 3-6.

Banja Luka. They arrived in the afternoon and the picturesque hilltop town was Germanus' first stop in the east. The military hotel was their first accommodation. The merchant-sergeant Kerekes still stayed with him and was happy to guide him to his second home. Kerekes drew the young man's attention to the way Bosniaks dress, their distinctive national costume, the men's baggy trousers and the fez on their heads, which is one of their prides. Their women work at home for their husbands. The few who venture out into the streets are covered from head to toe in a thick shroud. Only around the eyes are two small slits through which he peers out into the world. Germanus stayed in Banja Luka for two wonderful days and then travelled by carriage to Jajce, where he arrived after a tiring 10-hour journey.¹⁹

The story of the café and the friendly Bosnians was also a big part of the radio play. He then stayed in Jajce for a few days before arriving in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, on a narrow-gauge train. It was a beautiful, never-before-seen eastern city. The city was bisected by the Miljacka River, with gentle hills rising on the opposite bank.

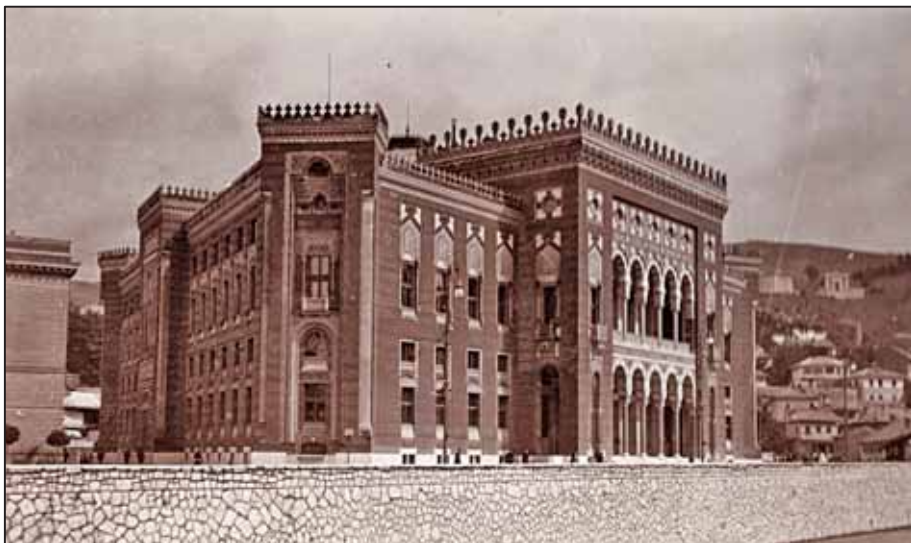


Photo 5. Sarajevo, City Hall, 1903.

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76311. <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

He was captivated by the city's public buildings and mosques, and while he was absorbed in the scenery, he was approached by a student of his own age who offered to help him with his sightseeing. His name was Ahmet Mustafa and he was a student of *shariat* law at the mosque school. Germanus had already heard of mosque schools, for he began his journey prepared and well-read, and

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 6-7.

told his partner that their religious law influenced every aspect of his life. Ahmed replied that this is their strictest code of law, because they only recognise the *Quran* and the traditions of the Prophet as the source of their legislation. The *Quran* is the most wonderful creation, the word of God. It proclaims full equality between people, regardless of who their ancestors were, rich or poor. Their religion is called Islam, meaning “resting in the will of God”. The *shariat* commits to brotherly love all those who enter this holy camp. There are 114 chapters in the *Quran*, covering public and private law, morality and ideology. Germanus “listened to his words like magic. Behold, a student almost his own age opened the door to a new world. What is the truth? What the West and Europe believe, or what emanates from the East like enchantment?”²⁰ Ahmed looked at him kindly, and, as if sensing his upset balance, guided him in a different direction, in space and time. He led him through narrow alleys and showed her the eastern bazaar, the *carsi*. Each stall belongs to a man who makes his own art. Germanus marveled at the beautiful copper bowls, the lamps from the “Arabian Nights”, the scarves, the gold and silver embroidery, the weavings, the silver work, the gold, and Ahmed warned him that he would be disappointed in life if he mistook gold for copper.²¹



Photo 6. Sarajevo, *bascarsija*, 1903.

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76312. <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, 10.

²¹ *Ibidem*, 10-11.

Ahmed then showed him the Turkish architecture, including the famous “yellow castle” built by Suleiman the Magnificent²². His new friend, with his great wisdom for life, was touchingly kind to Germanus. He took him to a small low-cost restaurant for dinner, where guslica was played and sang sweet-sad songs about the feelings and desires of a foreign people.²³



Photo 7. Sarajevo, *bascarsija*, 1903.

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76313. <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

While talking, Germanus invited his new friend to visit Hungary. He invited him with a warm heart and a true feeling, but his father’s stern face appeared in his imagination and he was seized with fear. What was his father going to say to the “Muslim student” who lived in such a different world and had the *Quran* as his code of law. He became so friendly with Ahmed that he promised to go with him to Grazova to show him the wonderful seaside resort of Dalmatia, Raguza (now: Dubrovnik). On the way to the coast, before leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina, they visited Mostar, “which means ‘bridge’, built by the Romans.” It is assumed, that they only stopped here for a short time.²⁴

²² Suleiman I or Suleiman, the Magnificent (1494-1566) was the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire (1520-1566).

²³ Gyula Germanus, *From my memories...I. In the land of the curved mountains*, Radio play. Manuscript. Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd, Germanus bequest, box nr. 21, 11.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, 11-12.



Photo 8. *Mostar, Stari most, 1903.*

Source: Fortepan. Nr. 76326. <https://fortepan.hu/hu/photos/?q=Bosznia>.

The radio play then describes their experiences in Raguza, after which the two friends said their goodbyes and Germanus continued his adventures via Cattaro to Cetinje in Montenegro, and after a difficult journey, a forced wait caused by a railway strike left him starving for two days before arriving in Fiume, where he was helped out by an acquaintance of his father. But hunger and other hardships did not discourage him from further adventures. As he said in parting with Mr. Porgess, who was helping him out, “this was only his first ‘wing-testing’ and he was only setting out after his geography and history book, but he vows and promises, and knows that he will set out again some day, on hard journeys, on any trials, on any adventures. And the goal will not be ‘adventure’, but to know people, to gain knowledge, maybe once, maybe many times, but he will set out towards the goal he has set.”²⁵ Germanus never forgot the memories of his first trip to the Balkans, the many experiences, the fond peoples and the mentality of Bosniaks inspired him throughout his life.

Summary

It should be noted that although the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy “temporarily occupied” Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was in fact planning to stay there permanently. The provinces were formally part of the Ottoman Sultan’s empire. The Monarchy was preparing to make the occupation permanent and to

²⁵ *Ibidem*, 12-17.

put internal administration on a constitutional footing. This required the “annexation”, the legal incorporation that took place six years after Germanus’s voyage, in 1908. The issue became urgent when the 1908 “Young Turk Revolution” took place in Istanbul, and it was feared that the now parliamentary Turkish state would reclaim the two provinces. The joint council of ministers took its decision in August, and on 5 October 1908 Franz Joseph proclaimed the annexation without informing the Russians in advance of the date of the announcement. Serbia protested vehemently, as it wanted the territories itself. War threatened to break out. Troops had to be sent to the southern border. Germany, of course, sided with the Monarchy, and so Russia acquiesced in the change, restraining even belligerent Serbia. This time, war was avoided, but tensions remained.²⁶

So much so, that on 28 June 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand²⁷, heir to the throne and his wife were assassinated in Sarajevo by Gavrilo Princip²⁸, a Serbian student associated with the *Crna ruka* (Black Hand, or formally: Unification or Death) secret military society. Diplomatic complications following the death of the archduke and archduchess led to the outbreak of the First World War a month later, on 28 July 1914. After the First World War, as we have already pointed out in our previous studies²⁹, Bosnian soldiers and officers were stranded in Hungary, and in 1931, they founded an Islamic religious community in Budapest under the leadership of former Military Imam Husein Hilmi Durić. They worshipped at the Gül Baba türbe in Buda, forming a disciplined, solidary community sympathetic to the host Hungarian society. The Bosnian Muslims in Hungary sought and found contact with the then well-known and respected teacher and scholar Gyula Germanus, a convert to Islam, who recalled this period in his book “Allah Akbar!”:

“During my stay in India, a Hungarian Muslim prayer community was established in Budapest. Its members were mostly Bosniaks who had taken Hungarian citizenship. After their organization in Buda, one of them sang the call to prayer (*adhan*), and the news spread through the press of the Muslim world and filled Muslim hearts with joy. (...) These Bosnian-Hungarian Muslims, all poor, hard-working, with calloused palms, came to me and expressed great hope in my help.

²⁶ [N. A.], ‘A Monarchia annektálja Bosznia-Hercegovinát’ [The Monarchy annexes Bosnia and Herzegovina], mult-kor.hu, 13 September 2004, accessed 15 June 2023 <https://mult-kor.hu/cikk.php?id=7441>.

²⁷ Franz Ferdinand Habsburg-Lorraine, (1863-1914) was an Archduke of Austria and was the heir presumptive to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

²⁸ Gavrilo Princip (1894-1918) was a Bosnian Serb student and terrorist.

²⁹ Zoltán Bolek, Zsolt Udvarvölgyi: ‘A Unique and Great Period of History of Islam in Hungary: The Community of Bosnian Veterans (1931-1947)’, *Yeni Türkiye* 23/97 (2017), 86-100; Zoltán Bolek, Zsolt Udvarvölgyi, ‘Episodes in the life of the Bosnian Muslim Community in Hungary (1920-1945)’, *Historijski pogledi*, vol. V, no. 8, Tuzla 2022, 112-133. (<https://doi.org/10.52259/historijskipogledi.2022.5.8.112>).

They wanted to build themselves a mosque and a canteen for Muslim students. They had great faith in my Eastern connections. This seemed difficult, but I did not refuse them my help. They chose a priest (*imam*) among themselves and asked my opinion whether they had the right to do so, given that the Turkish Muslim priest Abdul Latif³⁰, who was brought here by the Hungarian government to maintain contacts with the Muslim world, has been working in Budapest for more than 20 years.”³¹



Photo 9. *The praying Gyula Germanus, Cairo, 1939.*
Source: *Hungarian Geographical Museum, Érd*, Germanus bequest.

Germanus has always been a supporter of the Bosnian Muslim community and has also been involved in the so-called “Gül Baba Cultural Committee”, which was set up to support the Islamic community, as its Secretary General. His travels in 1902 certainly played a major role in developing his sympathy and helpfulness towards the Bosniaks in Hungary. Although the author of this study is a historian and not a psychologist, he believes that experiences and impressions in adolescence are crucial to the development of an individual’s personality, and this was no different in the case of Germanus. The good words and kind gestures he received as a young man kept the busy professor, already preparing for his pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj), from turning away from his fellow Bosnian Muslims and for a long time he supported them in their aims.

³⁰ Abdul Latif (1886-1946) was a Turkish lector, imam, hodja, leader of the Turkish Muslim community in Budapest.

³¹ Gyula Germanus, *'Allah Akbar!'*, Szépirodalmi, Budapest 1984, 73.

Zaključak

Važno je napomenuti da iako je Austro-Ugarska Monarhija “privremeno okupirala” Bosnu i Hercegovinu, zapravo je planirala tamo ostati trajno. Te provincije su formalno bile dio Osmanskog carstva Sultana. Monarhija se pripremala da okupaciju učini trajnom i da uspostavi ustavni poredak za unutrašnju upravu. To je zahtijevalo “aneksiju”, zakonsku inkorporaciju koja se dogodila šest godina nakon Germanusovog putovanja, 1908. godine. Pitanje je postalo hitno nakon što je 1908. godine došla “Mlada turska revolucija” u Istanbulu, te se strahovalo da će sada parlamentarna Turska država ponovno preuzeti te dvije provincije. Zajedničko vijeće ministara donijelo je svoju odluku u augustu, a 5. oktobra 1908. Franjo Josip proglasio je aneksiju bez prethodne obavijesti Rusije o datumu objave. Srbija je oštro protestirala, jer je i sama željela te teritorije. Prijetila je opasnost od rata, pa su trupe morale biti poslone na južnu granicu. Njemačka se, naravno, stavila na stranu Monarhije, pa je Rusija pristala na promjene, čak i suzdržavajući ratobornu Srbiju. Ovaj put je izbjegnuta rat, ali napetosti su ostale.

Toliko da je 28. juna 1914. godine u Sarajevu ubijen austro-ugarski nadvojvoda Franjo Ferdinand, nasljednik prijestolja, i njegova supruga, od strane Gavrila Principa, srpskog studenta povezanog sa tajnim vojnim društvom Crna ruka. Diplomatske komplikacije nakon smrti nadvojvode i nadvojvotkinje doveli su do izbijanja Prvog svjetskog rata mjesec dana kasnije, 28. jula 1914. godine.

Nakon Prvog svjetskog rata, kako smo već napomenuli u našim prethodnim istraživanjima, bosanski vojnici i časnici ostali su zarobljeni u Mađarskoj, a 1931. godine osnovali su Islamsku vjersku zajednicu u Budimpešti pod vodstvom bivšeg vojnog imama Huseina Hilmi Durića. Oni su se molili u Gül Baba türbe u Budimpešti, stvarajući discipliniranu i solidarnu zajednicu koja se sa simpatijama odnosila prema domaćem mađarskom društvu. Bosanski muslimani u Mađarskoj tražili su i pronašli kontakt s tada dobro poznatim i cijenjenim učiteljem i učenjakom Đulom Germanom, koji je prešao na islam i sjećao se tog razdoblja u svojoj knjizi “Allah Akbar!”.

“Tokom mog boravka u Indiji, osnovana je mađarska muslimanska molitvena zajednica u Budimpešti. Njeni članovi su uglavnom bili Bošnjaci koji su stekli mađarsko državljanstvo. Nakon njihove organizacije u Budimu, jedan od njih je izgovarao poziv na molitvu (adhan), a vijest se proširila putem muslimanskog svijeta i ispunila muslimanske srce radošću. (...) Ovi bosansko-mađarski muslimani, većinom siromašni, marljivi ljudi s natopljenim dlanovima, došli su k meni i izrazili veliku nadu u moju pomoć. Željeli su izgraditi džamiju i kantu za muslimanske studente. Imali su veliko povjerenje u moje veze na Istoku. Činilo se teškim, ali nisam im odbio pomoć. Među sobom su izabrali svećenika (imama) i pitali su me za mišljenje imaju li pravo na to, s obzirom na to da je turski muslimanski svećenik Abdul Latif, koji je doveden ovdje od strane mađarske vlade kako bi

održavao kontakte sa muslimanskim svijetom, već više od 20 godina radio u Budimpešti.”

Germanus je uvijek bio pristalica bosansko-muslimanske zajednice i također je bio uključen u tzv. “Gül Baba Kulturni odbor”, koji je osnovan kako bi podržavao islamsku zajednicu, kao njen glavni tajnik. Njegova putovanja 1902. godine svakako su igrala važnu ulogu u razvijanju njegove simpatije i spremnosti da pomogne Bošnjacima u Mađarskoj. Iako autor ovog istraživanja nije psiholog, vjeruje da su iskustva i dojmovi u adolescenciji ključni za razvoj osobnosti pojedinca, a to nije bilo drugačije u slučaju Germanusa. Dobri riječi i ljubazni gestovi koje je primao kao mladić zadržali su zauzetog profesora, već pripremljenog za svoje hodočašće u Meku (Hajj), od toga da se okrene protiv svojih bosansko-muslimanskih sunarodnjaka, i dugo je podržavao njihove ciljeve.

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