

# Summary

## A study of the literature of Bosnia and Herzegovina

### The global in the local

This collection of studies deals with the codification of the Bosnian-Herzegovinan literary canon, or Bosniak literature, Bosnian-Serb literature and Bosnian-Croatian literature, as well as their peripheral versions, Bosnian-Jewish and Bosnian-Roma literature.

The term Bosnians refers to all inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of religion, while Bosniaks, Slavic-language-speaking Muslim inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the most western of the autonomous Muslims and the most eastern of the Muslim Europeans, retain a southern-Slav ethnic provenance, yet one that at the same time differs from the region's other nations in terms of religion and historical experience.

The case of Bosnian Herzegovinan and Bosniak literature opens up a fundamental discussion on the methodology for researching the multicultural and multiethnic canon, as well as whether there is one canon or several, and if so, what relation they should have to each other.

Aware of the the fact that for over a century Bosnia and Herzegovina was a constituent part of wider literary, cultural and civilization systems, Sanjin Kodrić, the author of this book, uses suitable research and systematizing tools, which he finds in the theories and practice of intraliterary communities of related languages and literatures that defined the southern Slav literary community. These were developed by the Slovak scholar Dionýz Ďurišin, and redefined by Zvonko Kovač. Theoretical and methodological problems are clearly stated in Chapter 1: *What is Bosniak literature, what is Bosnian-Herzegovinan literature and what is the Bosnian-Herzegovinan interliterary community? (Theoretical and literary history perspective)*. In light of the interliterary processes and the ideas in the volume of Sanjin Kodrić's research, the peculiar case of Bosnian-Herzegovinan and Bosniak literature is not that these appear in some kind of wilderness, but are the embodiment of a three civilization intercultural world literature response: the integration processes taking place at the global level take place in Bosnia and in the Bosnian language at the local level. Sanjin Kodrić defines the Bosnian-Herzegovinan interliterary community as a collection of primarily national literatures and literary traditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, among which various forms of common existence emerged, mutually conditioned development and interdependencies, and even supranational accession to the uniform literary phenomena. Like its southern Slav counterpart, the Bosnian-Herzegovinan interliterary community is characterized by past-linguistic diversity and basic linguistic uniformity in the present (Chapter VI), direct physical proximity and a common space for literature and communication (Chapter VI), but also multifarious affiliation to supranational spheres (Chapter V), multiple groups in terms of faith and civilization, and also a wealth of hybrid and syncretic forms (Chapter VI). The

concept of the Bosnian-Herzegovinan interliterary community assumes the presence of Bosniak literature in this system, and Croatian and Serbian literature in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Jewish literary tradition, and those of other Bosnian-Herzegovinan national minorities.

While Sanjin Kodrić's study seeks to realize the postulated vision of a Bosnian-Herzegovinan interliterary community, the author focuses to a much greater extent on the Bosniak component of such a community. He utilises a wide range of methodological tools that shape modern interliterary and cultural Bosnian studies, mainly their Bosniak component, and draws inspiration from theoretical and methodological aspects of historical poetics and genealogy, thematic criticism, post-colonial criticism, the culture of remembrance, and also new historicism, poststructuralism and ethnohistoriography.

In this selection related to Sanjin Kodrić's research interests, a work of particular importance is *Hasanaginica*, 1774 (Chapter II), which Kodrić accords exceptional significance in affirming Bosniak literature, noting that in earlier times this work had a unique role in the semiosphere of the Balkan peninsula. The following are of similar importance: issues of periodization and systematization in Bosniak literature (Chapter III), in particular related to the period of national rebirth (Chapters III, IV); representations of the West and the Orient (Chapter V), wars, soldiers and veterans (in Selimović's prose; (Chapter X), and also the figure of "new times" and "historical crossroads" brought by the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Muslim Bosnia, which marks a historical trauma and is expressed in modern Bosniak literature in its "Austro-Hungarian prose" (Chapter VII); syncretism and hybrid forms; the Sarajveo assassination and its representation in texts and cultural remembrance (Chapter VIII); and finally, Skender Kulenović' comedy *Djelidba* (1947) in terms of Yugoslavian socialist realism (Chapter IX) and the exceptionally interesting and revealing chapter on Ivo Andrić, about whom a multitude of texts have been written (Chapter VIII).

In this collection Sanjin Kodrić is revealed to be a versatile scholar of modern Bosnian literary history, who is engaged in fundamental reinterpretations and revisions of the Bosnian-Herzegovinan canon in favour of updating the Bosniak canon. The great merit of these studies is its revision of the Bosnian-Herzegovinan literary-history process, which thus far has been rooted in Westernist and Eurocentric contexts.

*Translated by Rob Pagett*