

a project by  with the support of
the European Union 

produced by 

partners    FONDI SHQIPTAR
PER MONUMENTET
(Shqiptari Fond i Monumenteve)   *Cool Culture*

ISBN 978 960 9761 00 0

This catalogue is part of the cross-media project 'A Balkan Tale'.

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www.balkantale.com

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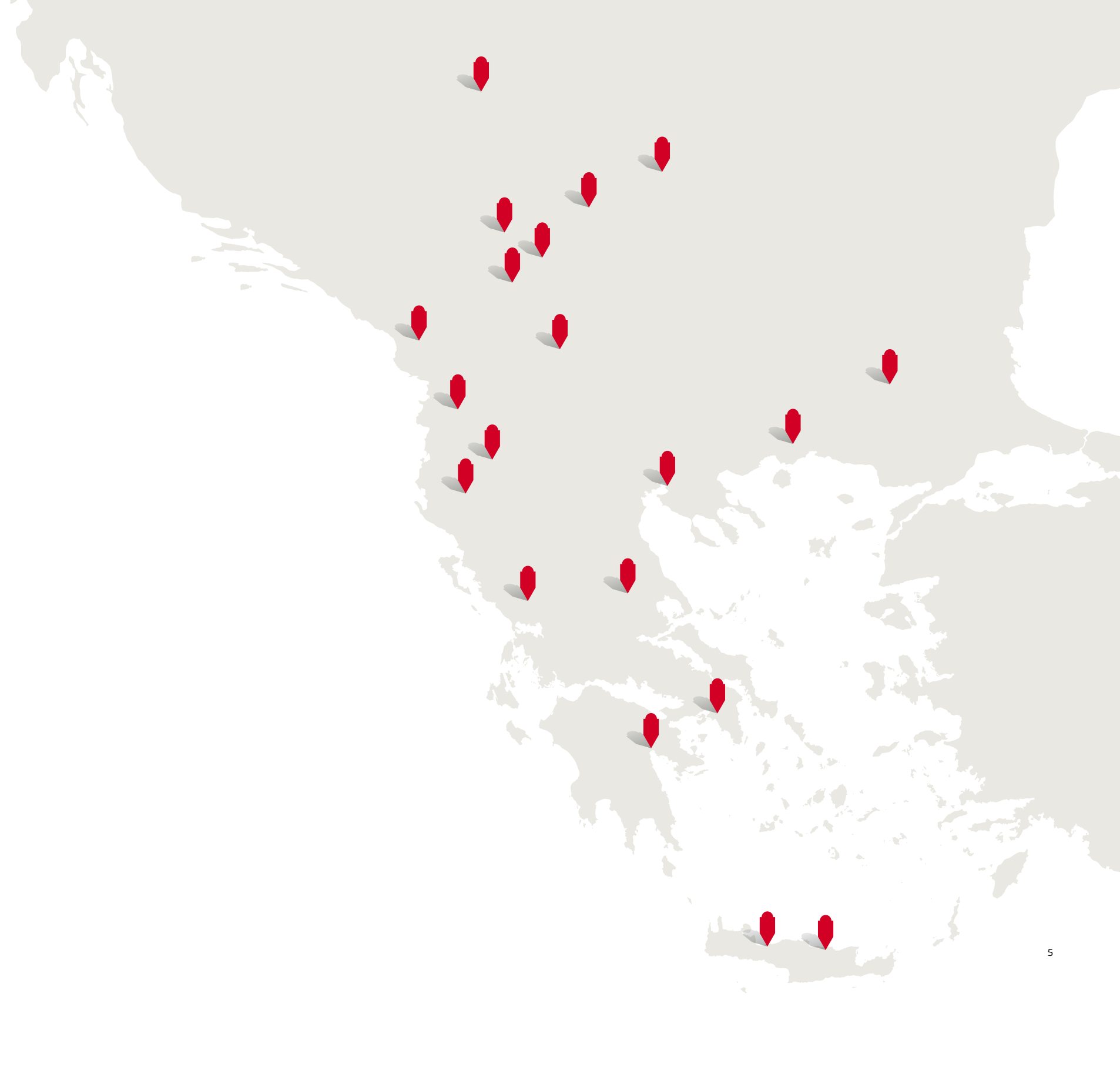
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How significant is the notion of collective memory in the search for a common European identity? Are we connected by a form of collective identity that needs to be reinforced? How do the nation states of Europe engage with their (collective) past? What sort of future does the idea of Europe as a community of culture, solidarity and collegiality have?

These are the questions asked by our multimedia project; 'A Balkan Tale' is looking for answers that will make it possible to write a new kind of history. A history of the Balkans that holds a magnifying glass to a region of Europe which is still largely unknown in the West; a place where the nation states have tended to emphasise historical diversity instead of drawing on their collective past.

In their search for a national identity, the countries of the Balkans have approached their own history in similar ways. The period of Ottoman rule has often been neglected and made synonymous with a long, obscure domination by a foreign power, when no progress or cultural development took place. So it comes as no surprise to learn that the cultural heritage of this period is at serious risk.

'A Balkan Tale' has addressed this cultural heritage and legacy by inviting five photographers to shoot fifty monuments of the Ottoman period across the Balkans. The resulting photo-series sets these buildings within a new, unfamiliar narrative context. The display includes detailed captions and explanatory texts written by well-known historians from the participating countries. They offer the viewer a new way of looking at the multi-layered history of the region.

This constitutes the principal charm of 'A Balkan Tale'.

PREFACE



The viewer's experience is enhanced by a soundwalk and an installation of perfumes of the Ottoman period. A range of educational materials encourages children and teenagers to develop interest in their common cultural heritage and history. The photographs, accompanying texts, teaching aids, videos and an interactive map will be available online in all the languages of the participating countries on the website balkantale.com. The project also includes the documentary 'Silent Balkans', produced by ANEMON on the occasion of the anniversary of the Balkan Wars, which features rare archive material and interviews with historians. In 2012, the exhibition will travel to cities across the Balkans and Europe.

The Goethe-Institut seeks to show how cultural diversity can be a rich resource, by organising cultural events and promoting inter-cultural dialogue, in the belief that these efforts will make an important contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage. The project's primary aim is to look beyond each country's national take on history, and to approach the Ottoman interlude in the Balkans in a new way. In recalling this collective history, we want to engage in dialogue, with a view to uncovering and looking beyond prevalent stereotypes. At the same time, we hope to encourage a sense of European identity by enabling some of its collective and interconnected elements to be expressed through the project.

The success of this ambitious project is due to the involvement and commitment of partners, artists and historians from across the Balkans. The aim has been to involve participants and observers in a dialogue, with a view to forging enduring links and setting up sustainable cultural networks. Indeed, the success of the project in setting up cultural exchanges between the participating countries represents one of the Goethe Institute's main ambitions.



So, we particularly wish to thank ANEMON Productions, which worked with us in developing, curating and implementing this project, and our partners in Belgrade (REMONT), Prizren (EC Ma Ndryshe), Skopje (CeProSARD) and Tirana (Albanian Fund for Monuments). We are equally grateful to the photographers Jutta Benzenberg, Ivan Blazhev, Samir Karahoda, Kamilo Nollas and Ivan Petrovic, and to the sound installation artists Geert Vermeire, Stefaan van Biesen, Enrique Tomas and Andreas Diktyopoulos.

This project would not have been possible without the contribution of historians Tülay Artan, Halil Berktaç, Frasher Demaj, Ferit Duka, Elias Kolovos, Mark Mazower, Irena Stefoska and Radina Vuçetić.

Finally, we would like to thank the project editor, Christina Koulouri, for her expert work in coordinating this multinational team of historians, for writing the introductory texts and guiding 'A Balkan Tale' from beginning to end.

This project was produced with the financial assistance of the European Union, without whose support it would never have gotten underway.

Goethe-Institut Athen, January 2012

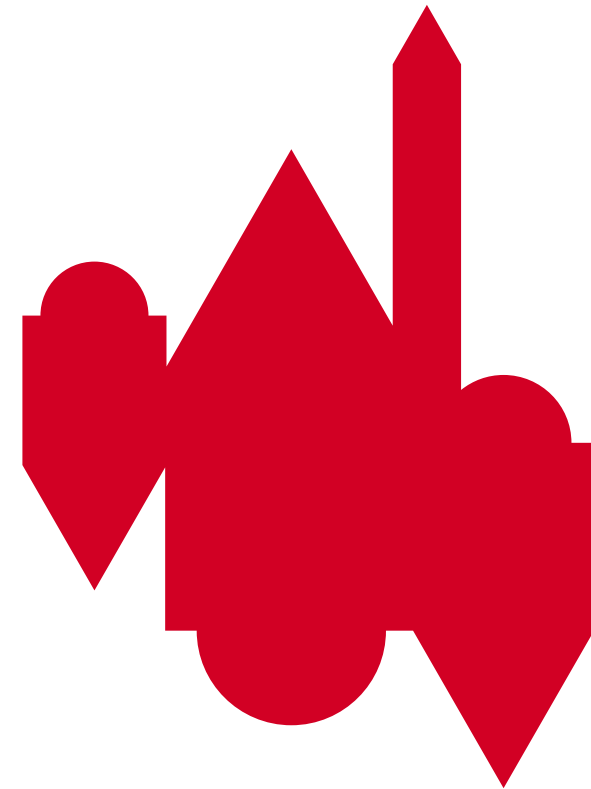


The Ottoman presence in the Balkans lasted from the 14th to the 20th centuries. In some regions this presence was continuous, in others interrupted (in the Morea, for instance), and still others never suffered an Ottoman conquest (for instance, the Ionian Islands and the Dalmatian shores). Yet, for almost the entire population of the Balkan Peninsula, the Ottoman centuries have been an important part of their historical experience.

To a great extent, this history is unknown, or known under different perspectives in each country. This is due to the fact that the Christian peoples of the Balkans established their nation-states through, usually military, conflict with the Ottoman Empire. These conflicts placed a great emphasis on the religious difference between Christians and Muslims. At the same time, the appeal of the Western European model led to the devaluation of the cultural significance of the Ottoman centuries. The Ottoman Empire thus became identified with cultural 'backwardness' and was considered by all its successors as an 'undesirable heritage'.

Nevertheless, for some 600 years, Christians, Muslims and Jews lived together in urban and rural areas, farmed the land, patronised each other's shops, met, and entertained themselves at bazaars and coffeehouses. Ottoman society was, of course, a society of hierarchies and discrimination between rulers and subjects. For the reayas [taxed subjects], everyday life had its cruel side, conflicts and hardships.

Today, memory of this period remains hidden in buildings that have changed use, or has faded out completely due to negligence and destruction. Yet, whatever their condition, ruined or preserved, the buildings of the Ottoman period, private and public, Christian, Muslim and Jewish, remain as documents of a common history – the history shared by the peoples of the Balkans for some six centuries. The contemporary photographs of these monuments enable us to see in a different light the Ottoman heritage, to revisit our common past and to tell our Balkan tale.



Many believe that the Balkans were conquered by the Ottomans after the fall of Constantinople in 1453. The truth is, though, that a large part of the Balkan Peninsula had already been conquered in the 14th century, and the sultans had located their palace on European ground, in Adrianople (Edirne), as early as the 1360s. Despite the turmoil and destabilisation caused by their defeat by Tamerlane in the Battle of Ankara (1402), the Ottomans ultimately completed their conquest of the Balkans in the late 15th century. They twice attempted to conquer Vienna, in 1529 and 1683, but their conquering impetus in Europe definitively came to a halt in front of the city's walls.

Through its territorial expansion, from the 14th century to the late 17th, the nomadic kingdom of the Osman dynasty became a global Islamic empire, which held as its duty to pursue a holy war against the Christian West. During its heyday, in the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, the Ottoman Empire extended from the Danube to the Nile. The Balkans formed an important part of this empire for six centuries.

The Ottomans expanded in the Balkans to the west, towards the Roman Via Egnatia, which, through Serres and Monastir (Bitola), led to the Albanian shores, as well as north, towards Philippoupolis (Plodviv) and Sophia, up to Belgrade. Muslim populations from Anatolia followed behind the armies and settled in the occupied territories. Conversions to Islam, whether voluntary or not, and population movements slowly yet radically changed the demographic profile of the Balkan Peninsula.

Equally dramatic was the change of the landscape in Balkan cities with the Ottoman conquest. As soon as the Ottomans occupied a city, they would transform the large churches into mosques, or build new, imposing mosques with tall minarets, and other 'public' buildings (*bedestens* [covered markets], hamams [bathhouses], imarets [public kitchens], *caravanserais* [inns]). The urban landscape of the Balkans thus acquired 'Ottoman' features, reflecting the new political reality. The Ottomans indeed sought to make their conquest 'visible'.

CONQUERING

1453
1402

1529
1683

1402
1453

1683
1529

1453
1402

1402
1453

1453
1402

1402
1453

1453
1402



01

CONQUERING

İSHAK BEY (ALADŽA) MOSQUE, SKOPJE

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Mosque

Place: Skopje

Date: 1438-9

Patron: İshak Bey

History: Originally a guesthouse

Current condition/use: In use

The İshak Bey (Aladža) Mosque is one of the oldest buildings in Skopje and was built in 1438-9, initially as a guesthouse. Its founder, İshak Bey, was a pioneering Ottoman patron of architecture and the son of Paşa Yiğit Bey, the conqueror of Skopje. Because of its formerly rich decoration (a painted portico), it is also called *Aladža* (colourful; from Turkish 'alaca'). The minaret, approximately 30 m high, is built of finely chiselled rectangular stone blocks. The building formed part of a cluster of buildings sponsored by İshak Bey, which consisted of an inn, a public kitchen and a *medrese* (Muslim theological school). Behind the mosque there is a tomb (*türbe*), probably built in the second half of the 15th century. It is believed to be the burial site of İshak Bey's son, known as Deli Paşa. The main feature that makes this mosque unique in the Balkans (with the exception of the portal of the Yeni Mosque in Bitola) is the decorative use of blue, green and turquoise tiles, found on the tambour of the dome.



02 CONQUERING

TOMB OF SULTAN MURAD I, MAZGIT

Photographer: Samir Karahoda
Type: Tomb (<i>türbe</i>)
Place: Mazgit, Kastriot or Obiliq
Date: 14th century
Patron: Bayezid I, son of Sultan Murad I
Current condition/use: Restored many times over the centuries

.....

This monument commemorates the Ottoman victory against the Serbian and Bosnian army in the famous Battle of Kosovo (1389) and honours Sultan Murad I, murdered on the battlefield. His son Bayezid I (*reg.* 1389-1402) erected a *türbe* (tomb) at the location of his death. According to an old Turkish tradition, the internal organs of the body of the sultan were buried here. His body was sent to Bursa, then the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The tomb has been renovated several times over the centuries and has managed to survive the wars that ravaged the region. It is encircled by the tombs of 19th-century Ottoman officials, with detailed inscriptions about their lives. The square building that still stands today was built by the Ottoman official Hürsid Paşa in 1845. Sultan Abdülhamid II (*reg.* 1876-1909) ordered the construction of a spacious two-storey building, located behind the tomb, to host visitors (completed in 1896).



03

CONQUERING

MIRAHOR İLYAS BEY MOSQUE, KORÇË

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Mosque

Place: Korçë

Date: 1495-6

Patron: İlyas Bey

Current condition/use: In use

The construction of the mosque in 1495-6 was sponsored by İlyas Bey, a high-ranking Ottoman administrator who originated from the same district. This building is related not only to the early phase of Ottoman rule in Albania, but also to the beginnings of the history of Korçë as a town. By erecting such a monumental building, İlyas Bey aimed to found the core of a new urban centre. The mosque is a sturdy, single-domed structure. The lead-covered dome, which rests on an octagon, creates a harmonious silhouette with its semi-circular shape. The mosque once had a minaret, which almost totally collapsed as a result of a powerful earthquake that struck the area in 1961.





04

CONQUERING

TOMB OF GAZI EVRENOS, YANNITSA

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Tomb (<i>türbe</i>)
Place: Yannitsa
Date: 1417
Patrons: The sons of Gazi Evrenos
History: In its current form, the building is the result of several interventions, the latest in the early 20th century
Current condition/use: Excellent condition; recently restored by the Greek Archaeological Service

Gazi Evrenos was the most famous of the quasi-independent warlords who led the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans in the 14th century. Fighting in the name of the House of Osman, Evrenos advanced by constant conquests the frontier westward in Thrace and Macedonia, where he founded the city of Yannitsa (Yenice-i Vardar). Following his death there, in 1417, his family, who went on to administer Yannitsa for centuries to come, had a tomb (*türbe*) built in his memory. In the early 20th century (1908-10) the tomb was restored and received its present-day form, with prominent Neoclassical decorative elements. The marble sarcophagus in which Evrenos was buried stands empty today. Above it there was a second sarcophagus, which was the one visitors to the tomb could see: its inscription (now in the Ephorate of Antiquities at the Rotunda, in Thessaloniki) reads as follows: *‘He died and has been transferred from the Abode of Transience to the Abode of Permanence. The recipient of mercy and forgiveness, the martyr, King of the Gazis and fighters of the Holy War, slayer of the infidels and the polytheists, he who has visited the sacred house of God [Mecca]... Hacı Evrenos, son of İsa, may God illuminate his grave and may his dust be fragrant to the mercy of Almighty God and his approbation, on Wednesday, the 7th of the month of Shawwal in the year 820 of the Hijra’* [7 November 1417].





05
CONQUERING

DIDYMOTEICHO
MOSQUE,
THRACE

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Mosque
Place: Didymoteicho
Date: Building began c. 1400; completed c. 1420
Patrons: The sultans Bayezid I (<i>reg.</i> 1389-1402), Mehmed I (<i>reg.</i> 1413-1421), Murad II (<i>reg.</i> 1421-1451)
Architects:Doğan, son of Abdullah, and Hacı İvaz, son of Ahi Bayezid
Current condition/use: Stabilisation and maintenance works in progress by the Greek Arcaeological
Service; no public access

Didymoteicho (Ott. Dimetoka) was one of the first towns conquered by the Ottomans in the Balkans (c. 1360). The Ottoman sultans established in the 'twin wall' of the fortress (Didymoteicho actually means in Greek 'twin wall') their harem, attendants and treasury in the fortress. The Christian population of the city did not leave with the Ottoman conquest. They continued to live in the fortress. The Muslim settlers lived outside of the fortress. During the reign (1389-1402) of Sultan Bayezid I, the main mosque of the city began to be built outside of the walls, to be completed many years later, during the reign of Sultan Mehmed I, around 1420. An imposing structure, with a tall minaret and a unique pyramidal wooden roof, rather than the two domes initially planned to cover it, the mosque continues to rise majestic in the main city square even today. The weekly open-air market that takes place in the square in the shade of the mosque demonstrates the continuity of economic and social life in the town from Ottoman times to date.



FORTRESS OF ELBASAN

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Fortress

Place: Elbasan

Date: 1466

Patron: Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror

Current condition/use: Partially preserved

The fortress of Elbasan was built in 1466 by Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror on the Via Egnatia. The newly founded and fortified city was to be used as a stronghold against the forces of George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg), who resisted the Ottoman expansion into Albania. The fortress was erected on the foundations of a military structure dating from Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The walls of the fortress enclose a rectangle with large rounded towers in the corners, which are equipped with casemates for guns and embrasures. Of the three gates of the fortress, only one, the so-called Bazaar Gate on the southern side, could be partially preserved. Despite the damage the monument has suffered over the centuries, it is one of the best-preserved buildings from the Ottoman period in Albania.



07
CONQUERING

MOSQUE OF
THE CONQUEST
(FETHIYE),
ATHENS

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Mosque
Place: Athens
Date: 1670-71
Current condition/use: Restored in 1935. In 1963, its interior was renovated to be used as a storeroom of the Greek Archaeological Service; no public access

Having been conquered by the Ottomans in 1456, Athens was the largest town in the southern Greek peninsula. During the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, according to the 1521 register, there were 2286 Christian and only 11 Muslim households in the town. The only mosque at the time was the Parthenon, used by the Acropolis guard. However, In the following years the Muslim population grew, and mosques began to be built in the city to accomodate its religious needs. The Mosque of the Conquest (*Fethiye Çami*) in Athens commemorates the last great Ottoman conquest, Candia (today's Heraklion), which completed the long Cretan War, in 1669. An inscription on the marble window frames of the façade documents that the mosque was completed in 1670-71. The 'quatrefoil' plan of the mosque was very much *en vogue* at the time in the Ottoman Empire. Archaeological excavations indicate that the mosque was built on the site of a Byzantine basilica that had been converted into a mosque by the Ottomans in the 1660s, before it was demolished in order for the new mosque to be built, with the appropriate orientation towards Mecca. The Mosque of the Conquest was located in the Upper Bazaar of Athens, the financial and social hub of the city.

MOSQUE OF SULTAN MEHMED II FATIH, PRISHTINA

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Mosque

Place: Prishtina

Date: 1460-61

Patron: Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror

Current condition/use: In good condition; recently restored by the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA)

In 1455, Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (Fatih) finally subjugated and incorporated Kosovo into the Ottoman territories. In 1460-61 he built an imposing mosque in Prishtina, with a 14 m diameter central dome, to commemorate his victory. Until the region was annexed to Serbia in 1912, the city had a mixed population of Orthodox Christians, Muslims, and some Catholics and Jews. In 1530 the Mosque of Sultan Mehmed Fatih was one of three mosques in Prishtina serving a population of 144 Muslim and 390 Christian households. Soon the religious composition of the population changed, so that, by the late 19th century, Muslims accounted for 76% of the total population in the sanjak of Prishtina. The number of mosques also increased. Today, the Mosque of Sultan Mehmed Fatih is still the most important in the city. Its interior decoration dates to the late 18th century, when the mosque was repaired after damage inflicted by the war between the Ottoman and the Habsburg Empires (1736-9).



During the Ottoman centuries, religion represented a key element, not only of people's identity but also of their everyday life. Social events related to birth, marriage and death, dietary practices, ways of thinking and doing things were all inextricably related to religion. This is a reason why places of worship and religious manifestation were points of reference in Ottoman cities.

The Ottoman state was undoubtedly Islamic, largely based on the Islamic Holy Law (*şeriat*). Yet, for this huge, multi-ethnic state to function, it was necessary to include non-Muslims and recognise their own religious leaders. *Şeriat* entitled Christians and Jews to repair their churches and synagogues, yet not to build new ones. Permission by the Ottoman authorities, either the local judge (kadi) or even the central administration in Istanbul, was required for each repair. Yet, in actual practice, the Ottoman state demonstrated realism and flexibility, so that new churches and synagogues were built, in spite of the official ban. Besides, there was quite a margin for adaptation on the local level. Yet, aggressive actions against other religions by fanatical *ulema* [Muslim scholars of sacred law and theology] or local Ottoman dignitaries also occurred. There was enmity, especially against Catholics, as the pope was considered the sultan's greatest enemy. Only after the 1683-99 wars with the Habsburgs did the Ottoman authorities change their attitude. Since the Reformation era (Tanzimat), though, in the 19th century, and the liberalisation of religious policy, many more churches – including Catholic ones – were erected.

The co-existence of different religious communities was reflected in space by the mosques, churches and synagogues. Another important presence was that of dervish orders, whose life revolved around their lodge, the *tekke*. This was a mystical and popular version of Islam that became very popular also in the Balkans.

WORSHIPPING



SINAN PAŞA MOSQUE, PRIZREN

Photographer: Samir Karahoda
Type: Mosque
Place: Prizren
Date: 1615
Patron: Sofi Sinan Paşa
History: Armoury, storeroom
Current condition/use: Interior currently being restored

Built by Sofi Sinan Paşa, a former beylerbey (governor-general) in Bosnia (twice, 1600-01, 1607-8), the mosque dominates the city of Prizren. Sinan Paşa had the prefix ‘Sofi’ added to his name in recognition of his wisdom. The construction of the mosque seems to have been completed after his death, in 1615. It is thought that the stones used to build the mosque were taken from the nearby Holy Archangels Monastery, which seems to have been abandoned after the Ottoman conquest. The mosque was functioning until the beginning of World War I, when it was transformed into an armoury and suffered structural damages. In 1939 the portico was demolished. Until 1941 the mosque served as a storeroom; in the same year it was given back to its Vakıf (pious foundation).

10

WORSHIPPING

BLAGOVEŠTENJE MONASTERY, OVČAR-KABLAR GORGE

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Monastery

Place: Ovčar-Kablar Gorge

Date: 1601-2

Current condition/use: In use

Blagoveštenje Monastery is located in the scenic Ovčar-Kablar Gorge, which is also known as the 'Serbian Mount Athos', thanks to the numerous monasteries situated in this area. Blagoveštenje (Annunciation) Monastery is situated on the left bank of the River Morava, under Kablar Mountain. It was built in 1601-2 and is one of the rare monasteries in this gorge for which precise dates of its foundation are available, found on the inscription above the entrance to the monastery. The architecture of the church is quite monumental; it features a conical rather than semicircular cupola. The frescoes, painted from 1602 to 1632, are among the principal accomplishments of Serbian painting from this period. The library of the monastery contains manuscripts from the 16th and the 17th century. The monastery is also known today as the place where the Serbian Patriarch Pavle (1914-2009) took his monastic vows.



11 WORSHIPPING

DURBALI SULTAN TEKKE, ASPROGEIA, FARSALA

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Dervish convent (<i>tekke</i>)
Place: Asprogeia, Farsala, Thessaly
Date: 17th century
Current condition/use: Under the supervision of the Greek Archaeological Service - occasionally used for pilgrimage

In Islam, Sufi mysticism (*tasavvuf*) flourished. Mystics, called dervishes, established orders, each with its own ritual practices and convents. The dervish convents (*tekke*) were often large buildings in the countryside, enclosed in courtyards, similarly to Christian monasteries. This applies to the Bektashi *tekke* of Durbali Sultan at Asprogeia, Farsala. The Bektashi order was one of the largest in Ottoman society. The monastic complex comprises two monumental tombs, a cemetery, a meydan (where the Bektashi rituals take place), the *şeyh*'s quarters, cells, kitchens, a guesthouse, a refectory and stables. The oldest tomb dates back to the 17th century, and the most recent one carries two inscriptions that date it to the year of Hegira 1286 (1869), in a one-word chronogram (which reveals the year if the numerical values of the Arabic letters of the word are added up): *ghafour* (the All-Forgiving). The *tekke*, which owned a large agricultural property, continued to be in use after 1881, when Thessaly was attached to Greece, as well as during the 20th century. Hasluck mentions that it was also visited by local Christian peasants. It stopped functioning in 1973, when its last *şeyh*, the Albanian Sait Baba, died. Today, the site is visited by members of the Albanian immigrant communities in Athens and Thessaloniki for the *kurban* ceremony, the Muslim ritual of sacrifice.



12

WORSHIPPING

ALADŽA MOSQUE, TETOVO

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev
Type: Mosque
Place: Tetovo
Date: 1495-1564
Patrons: The sisters Hurşide and Mensure
History: Rebuilt and painted in the 1830s
Current condition/use: In use

The Aladža Mosque (the 'painted' mosque) in Tetovo is one of the most resplendent edifices of Islamic architecture from the Ottoman period in the entire region. Historians disagree about the year of the construction of the first mosque, dating it from 1495 to 1564 or even to a century later. According to recent research, the mosque was founded by two sisters, Hurşide (who is buried in a tomb [*türbe*]) in front of the mosque) and Mensure, who had moved to Tetovo from Anatolia. The mosque was rebuilt in the early 1830s by the local potentate Abdurrahman Paşa and lavishly painted, supposedly by artists from nearby Debar. While the interior features murals painted in oil, the façade was painted in the fresco technique, in emulation of marble.

13

WORSHIPPING



CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, SHKODËR

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg
Type: Catholic cathedral
Place: Shkodër
Date: 1858-67
History: Seriously damaged in 1905 and 1912-13; used as a Palace of Sports during communist rule
Current condition/use: In use

The Catholic Cathedral of Shkodër was erected in the years 1858-67. The permission for the construction of the church was granted by the Ottoman administration in a decree issued by Sultan Abdülmedid I. The church is an imposing, large building constructed with financial and material support by the Papacy, the Sublime Porte, the local Catholic population and the Habsburg Empire. The cathedral was 74 m long, 50 m wide and 23.5 m tall. The dome of the cathedral was initially built of wood, but in 1897 was replaced with more solid materials. The paintings made in 1909 by the renowned Albanian painter Kolë Idromeno, notably that depicting the Lady of Shkodër followed by two angels dressed in local costume, can still be seen today. The church was seriously damaged in an earthquake in 1905 and bombing during the siege of 1912-13 by the Montenegrin army. Following the ban in 1967 of religion and religious institutions during communist rule, the cathedral was transformed into a Palace of Sports. It once housed the Congress of the Union of Women of Albania. It was also in 1967 that the towers were destroyed and the portal of the church was boarded up.



14

WORSHIPPING

SYNAGOGUE IN THE JEWISH QUARTER, VEROIA

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Synagogue
Place: Veroia
Date: 16th century (?); rebuilt in 1850 (?)
Current condition/use: Restored in the 1990s

Veroia (Ott. Karaferye) was conquered by the Ottomans following the fall of Thessaloniki, in 1430. Under Ottoman rule, it evolved into a mixed Balkan town, with 16 Muslim and 15 Christian neighbourhoods, according to Evliya Çelebi, and 2 Jewish communities. The elite of the town included both Muslims and non-Muslims, who sometimes collaborated in business ventures and shared similar luxury tastes. The Veroia Jewish community dates back to Roman times. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Jews of Veroia, alongside those of Thessaloniki, were forced to move to the new Ottoman capital. However, the Jewish communities of Veroia and Thessaloniki were revived in the late 15th century by the exiled Sephardim from the Iberian Peninsula, who settled in the two cities. The Jewish district in Veroia (Barbouta) survives today as a unique example of a small Jewish neighbourhood in the Ottoman Balkans. Access to the neighbourhood was possible through gates that closed at night. The synagogue stands at the centre of the neighbourhood; it was rebuilt in 1850 (or earlier) with permission from the sultan. Complying with Sephardim interior organisation, the building is reminiscent of the old synagogues in Thessaloniki. In 1943, the Veroia Jews were transported by the Nazis to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. The synagogue building was restored during the 1990s.





15

WORSHIPPING

BALI BEY MOSQUE, NIŠ

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic
Type: Mosque
Place: Niš
Date: Early 16th century
Patron: Bali Bey, a high-ranking civil servant from Edirne
History: Disused after Ottoman departure in 1878; repaired 1976-7
Current condition/use: Art gallery

The Bali Bey Mosque is located in the central part of the Niš Fortress, to the right of the main path from the entrance, and dates to the early 16th century. It was first mentioned in the Ottoman tax register of 1523 as a *mescid* (small mosque), having probably been constructed at some point after 1516. It was built on the foundations of a medieval building, pulled down by the Ottomans in 1428. The mosque was the endowment of Bali Bey from Edirne, a high-ranking Ottoman civil servant. Around 1760 a *medrese* (Muslim theological school) was built next to the mosque. In 1868 Abdurrahman Paša from Niš placed an Islamic library next to it, adding two separate rooms along the north wall. The Bali Bey Mosque remained unused for many years after the Ottomans were ousted from Serbia in 1878. In 1976-7 repairs were undertaken; today it operates as the 'Salon 77' Art Gallery.

16

WORSHIPPING

MELANI TEKKE, GJIROKASTËR

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg
Type: Dervish convent (<i>tekke</i>)
Place: Gjirokastër
Date: 1800
Patron: Ali Baba from Gjirokastër
History: Built on the site of a Christian monastery complex and an earlier Bektashi <i>tekke</i>
Current condition/use: In use

The Melani *tekke* was founded in 1800 by Ali Baba from Gjirokastër; his tomb is in front of the main structure. The actual building is a reconstruction of an earlier Bektashi *tekke*, which had been built by Hasan Baba on the site of a Christian monastery complex. The main building consists of a circular prayer hall with attached rooms and galleries. The façade of the building, which boasts a fine gallery, is constructed in the local style with finely cut stone blocks typical of the area. At present, the *tekke* serves as a religious centre for the Albanian Bektashi Muslims, who celebrate the annual feast-days and Nevruz there. The holidays which mark the end of the month of Ramadan (the period of fasting for Muslims) and commemorate the willingness of Abraham to make a sublime sacrifice for the sake of God are celebrated by distributing sweets and meat among relatives, neighbours and needy people. The Bektashi Muslims in particular celebrate the holiday of Nevruz (22 March) to commemorate the birthday of Imam Ali. Today, there is one dervish in permanent residence in the Melani *tekke*.



17

WORSHIPPING

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN MARY, BERAT

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Orthodox church

Place: Berat

Date: 1797

Current condition/use: In use

The Orthodox church of the Virgin Mary in Berat represents one of the most important churches built during the Ottoman period in Albanian territories. It is distinguished from the typical local churches by its unusually large size. It was constructed in 1797 on the foundations of an older church. The church is composed of the main nave, the sanctuary, and a series of auxiliary one-storey rooms to the north and two-storey ones to the west. Interestingly, the arches of the portico rest on marble piers brought from the nearby ancient city of Apollonia. The construction is distinguished for its great height, typical of the religious architecture in the period from the 13th century to the 19th. The Church of the Virgin Mary also housed many icons distinguished for their artistic value.

18

WORSHIPPING

ARABATI BABA TEKKE, TETOVO

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Dervish convent (*tekke*)

Place: Tetovo

Date: 16th or 18th century

Patron: Sersem Ali Baba

Current condition/use: In use

The Bektashi Arabati Baba *tekke* in Tetovo is by far the largest and most elaborate Ottoman dervish convent in the Balkans. There is no reliable data on the time of its building. Legend claims that it was founded in the 16th century by a leading member of the Bektashi order, Sersem Ali Baba, who after a short stay in the *tekke* of Didymoteicho (Greece) was reassigned to Tetovo (1538). According to another, 18th-century legend, the *tekke* was built by Arabati Baba (who died in 1780). It was renovated by Receb Paşa Kalkandelenli (d. 1822) and his son Abdurrahman Paşa in the early 19th century. Receb Paşa owned many villages, *çiftliks*, shops and houses in the Tetovo district, but also in Tirana, Elbasan, Thessaloniki and Istanbul. The convent functioned until 1912 and recently reverted partly to its old function. The surviving buildings are divided into two types: buildings for ritual purposes or accommodation of the dervishes and the baba, their spiritual guide (*türbe*, *mescid*: small mosque, *semahane*: building or hall where dervishes perform their ritual/whirling dance [*sema*], house of the *şeyh*); and buildings which served the daily needs of the complex (*misafirhane*: guesthouse, *şadırvan*: ablution fountain, 'Fatima's house', kitchen, etc.).



19 WORSHIPPING

THE CHURCH OF SVETI SPAS, SKOPJE

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Orthodox church

Place: Skopje

Date: After 1689

Current condition/use: In use

Situated in Skopje's Old Bazaar, the Church of Sveti Spas (Holy Saviour) is characterised by an unusual design: half of the original church was constructed underground, supposedly as the result of a 17th-century edict by the sultan that prohibited Christian structures from being taller than mosques. The church acquired its present appearance in the early decades of the 19th century. It is a typical pseudo-basilical structure with a simple exterior, a gallery in the interior, and a separate entrance. The most beautiful element in the church interior is the magnificently carved wooden iconostasis, created between 1819 and 1824. It is the work of a famous team of artists, headed by the master-craftsmen Petre Filipovič, from the village of Gari, and Makarija Frčkoski, from the village of Galičnik. In its present form, the iconostasis dates from the 1870s, when icons by various Balkan artists were affixed to it.



20

WORSHIPPING

BAYRAKLI MOSQUE, BELGRADE

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic
Type: Mosque
Place: Belgrade
Date: c. 1690
Patron: Sultan Süleyman II
History: Also served as a Catholic church in the 18th century
Current condition/use: Belgrade's only functioning mosque

The Bayraklı Mosque is named after the Turkish word for the 'flag' (*bayrak*) that was waved from the mosque to signal the beginning of the prayer to other mosques in the town. It was built around 1690 by Sultan Süleyman II, and it was one of around a hundred places of Muslim worship that existed in Belgrade during Ottoman rule. Between 1717 and 1739, during Austrian rule, it was converted into a Catholic church. When the Ottomans returned to Belgrade, Hüseyin Bey, the *kahya* (valet de chambre) of the chief commander, Ali Paşa, renewed the building in 1741. For some time thereafter it was known as Hüseyin Bey's or Hüseyin Kahya's Mosque. After a restoration in the 19th century, undertaken by Serbian noblemen, it became the city's principal mosque. Today it is the only active Muslim place of worship in Belgrade. The Bayraklı Mosque was set on fire on 18 March 2004, in the course of a nationalist riot. It was subsequently repaired with the help of the citizens of Belgrade, the Serbian government and international funds.



ALTIN ALEM MOSQUE, NOVI PAZAR

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Mosque

Place: Novi Pazar

Date: Early 16th century

Patron: *Müezzîn* Muslihuddin Abdülgani

Current condition/use: Reconstructed in 2011; in use

The Altın Alem Mosque ('mosque with the golden crescent') is the best-known mosque in Novi Pazar. It is one of the most famous Ottoman religious buildings in Serbia and is situated in a complex that also includes a school and a cemetery. It was built in the first half of the 16th century, probably before 1528, by *Müezzîn* Muslihuddin Abdülgani. The mosque has a single space in the interior, with a dome and twin-domed portico. The main part of the mosque was built from roughly shaped and broken stones with rows of bricks. Its reconstruction was completed in 2011.

HACI EDHEM BEY MOSQUE, TIRANA

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Mosque

Place: Tirana

Date: 1793-1823

Patrons: Molla Bey and his son Edhem Bey

History: Served as a museum during the communist era

Current condition/use: In use

The Hacı Edhem Bey Mosque is located in the main square of Tirana. Representing one of the most significant and important monuments of the Ottoman heritage of Albania, it was erected and decorated between 1793-4 and 1822-3 and is considered by historians of architecture as a work of outstanding value. The oldest part of the mosque is the domed prayer hall, which has shaved-off corners and a very low octagonal tambour. The construction of the mosque was initiated in 1793-4 by Molla Bey, the great-grandson of Süleyman Paşa, the founder of Tirana. The building was subsequently enlarged and completed in 1822-3 by his son, Edhem Bey, who gave his name to this monument. The interior is decorated with colourful wall paintings of different motifs. After having served as a museum during the communist era, it was returned to its original function as one of the main worship places for the Albanian Muslim community during the post-communist period.

Ottoman society was strictly hierarchical. Social relationships were determined by the discrimination between Muslims and non-Muslims (*zimmi*), on the one hand, and between the ruling class, which was not taxed, and the taxed subjects irrespective of religion (reayas), on the other. The non-Muslim inhabitants of the empire were considered institutionally inferior to Muslims, but were entitled to practise their religion and own property.

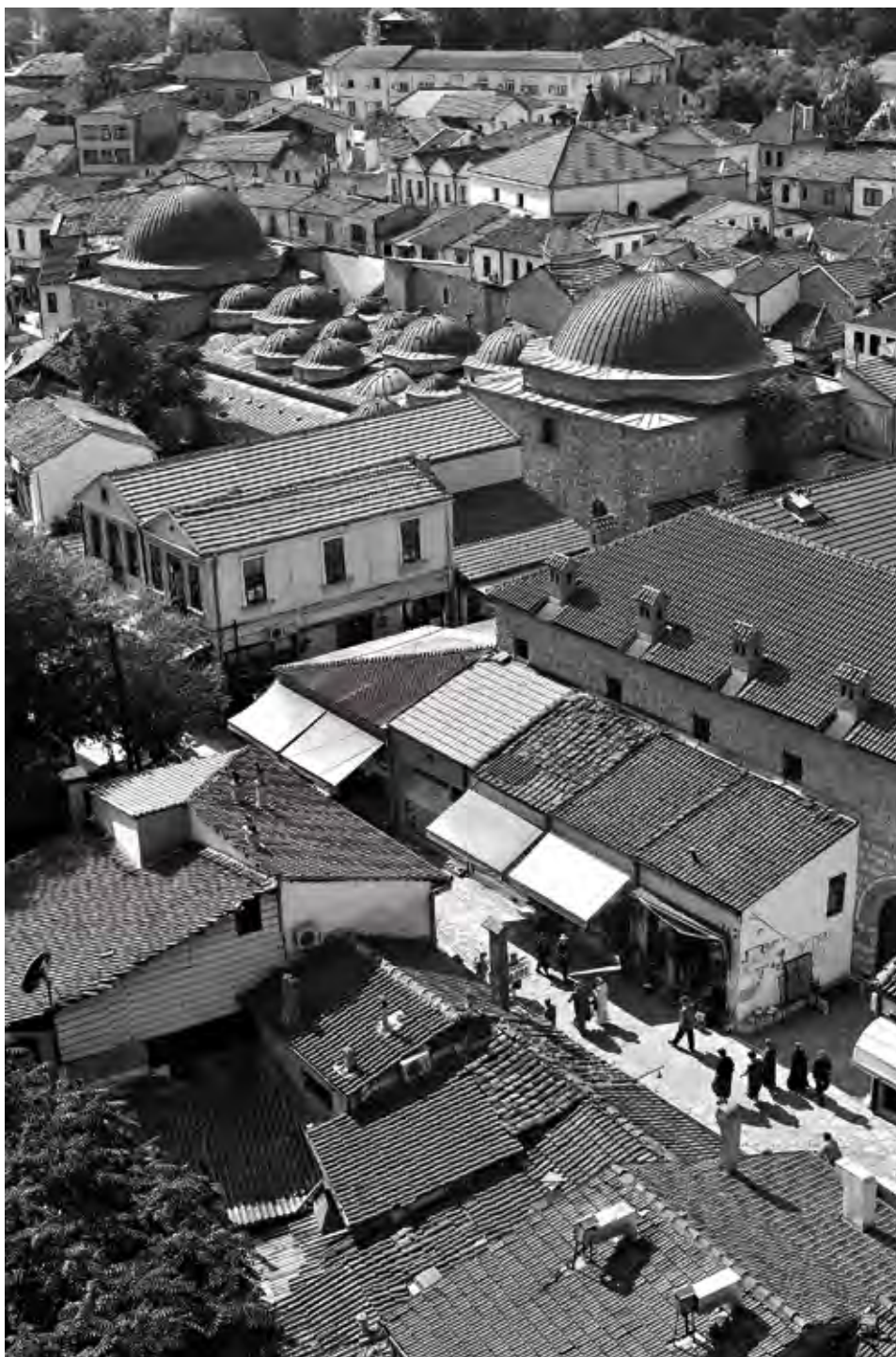
This hierarchy is also reflected in the form of cities. In Ottoman cities, sometimes there were separate neighbourhoods for Muslims, Christians and Jews. At any rate, they lived all together, in the alleys and bazaars of their cities. The *bedesten* (covered market) was the heart of the city, a meeting place, and the commercial centre. In fact, Evliya Çelebi, in the 17th century, distinguished two kinds of Ottoman cities, depending on whether there was a *bedesten* or not.

In all three religions, water was symbolically associated with inner cleansing. The Koran provided for several ritual uses of water, especially of flowing water. This is the reason why public baths (hamams) were built in all Ottoman cities; they were double, with separate sections for men and women, or single, open to men and women at different times. The hamams were socialising hubs, especially for women, above all Muslims ones. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, wife of the British ambassador to Istanbul, in the 18th century, called them ‘coffeehouses for women’.

The donation of water was, according to the Koran, a major act of benefaction, and many wealthy Muslims, even the sultan, sponsored more or less sophisticated fountains. The prevailing notion was that public works were an expression of piety and charity, and consequently were not considered government activities. Ottoman cities were full of building complexes made for charitable causes. These buildings were typically *waqfs*, that is, charitable institutions devoted to God.

Inter-city contact was facilitated by an extensive network of roads, in which solid, arched bridges played an important role. Traders’ caravans travelled throughout the Balkan Peninsula and Central Europe, blazing trails for communication and exchange of products and ideas.

LIVING TOGETHER



23

LIVING TOGETHER

ÇIFTE HAMAM, SKOPJE

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Public bathhouse

Place: Skopje

Date: c. 1470

Patron: İsa Bey

History: Also used as storage space

Current condition/use: Exhibition space

The Çifte Hamam ('double hamam') is situated in the centre of Skopje's Old Bazaar, near the *bedesten* (covered market), the Sulu Han (inn) and the Murad Paşa Mosque. It was built around 1470 by İsa Bey, the son of İshak Bey, and it is the second largest bathhouse from this period. It is a double bath, with the women's section in the south-western part of the building and the men's area in the north-eastern part. It also had a space for use by Skopje's Jewish community. The building was damaged several times: in an earthquake in 1555, a great fire in 1689 and another devastating earthquake in 1963, after which it was restored. Although the characteristic elements of all Ottoman bathhouses have not survived, the hamam has mostly preserved its original appearance. It operated as a bathhouse until 1916-17, subsequently as a storage room and is now used as an exhibition space by the National Gallery.

24

LIVING TOGETHER

FOUNTAIN OF THE VALIDE SULTAN MOSQUE, HERAKLION

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: Ablution fountain (*şadırvan*)

Place: Heraklion, Crete

Date: 1672

Patron: Ayan Mehmed Efendi

Current condition/use: It has been renovated and functions as a coffeehouse

Crete was the last great conquest of the Ottomans, won over from the Venetians after a long war (1645-69). A large wave of conversions to Islam during the war and the ensuing years established a large Muslim community on the island, mostly in the towns. After surrendering to the Ottomans, in 1669, Candia, the Venetian capital of Crete, gradually became a predominantly Muslim city, in which many buildings were converted for Muslim use. The Catholic church of San Salvatore was converted into a mosque in honour of Hatice Turhan Sultan, mother of Sultan Mehmed IV. In 1672, a fountain was built near the mosque for the ablutions of the faithful before entering the mosque. The fountain was built next to the Venetian Bembo fountain, which, according to Evliya Çelebi, had been used as the mosque fountain initially. The cost for its construction, which rose to 200,000 akçes, was covered by the notable (*ayan*) Mehmed Efendi, deputy of the Governor of Crete and Candia, İbrahim Paşa. The fountain is described in the register of the judge of Candia as having stone foundations, 10 marble columns, 12 iron railings, 19 spouts, and a roof cover. The building of the fountain functions today as a coffeehouse in the bustling Kornarou Square. During the 18th century, fountains in Ottoman cities became a kind of an obsession for wealthy patrons. One of them, the wealthy merchant İbrahim Ağa, built another fountain in Candia, in 1776; he saw that it was supplied with ice from the mountains of Crete for passers-by to refresh themselves during the hot summer of the Mediterranean island.

25

LIVING TOGETHER



TAILORS' BRIDGE, GJAKOVA

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Bridge

Place: Gjakova

Date: 18th century

Patron: Tailors' guild

History: Restored in 1982-4

The Tailors' Bridge (Terzijski/Ura e Terzive) over the Erenik River was built by a tailors' guild from Gjakova during the 18th century to connect Gjakova with Prizren. An Ottoman inscription on the bridge confirms the guild's donation. Guilds were the foundation of the economy of Ottoman cities, with craftsmen, small tradesmen and merchants as members. Apart from an economic function, these unions also had a social role, developing charitable projects and public benefit works. At the head of each guild there was a şeyh, who represented moral and religious authority. Both Ottoman officials and the local population cared for the maintenance of roads and construction projects, such as bridges and inns (*caravanserais*), in order to facilitate transport and communication. Tax exemptions were often given to support these actions. This bridge is over 192 m in length. It has 11 semi-circular arches and 10 vaulted windows. The bridge facilitated the movement of merchant caravans between the two parts of the Gjakova Highlands, as well as Lezha and Shkodër. It was restored in 1982-4.

26

LIVING TOGETHER



BEDESTEN, ŠTIP

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Covered market

Place: Štip

Date: Late 16th century

History: Market, prison, warehouse, food store

Current condition/use: Art gallery

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This well-preserved *bedesten* (covered market) is located in the centre of the town of Štip, which was an important Ottoman urban centre: in 1896 it had eleven mosques, one *medrese*, eight dervish convents, four churches, one synagogue and three hamams. Built at the end of the 16th century, the *bedesten's* interior consists of three parts, separated by columns. Though lacking decoration, the simple forms of this stone building provide it with a degree of monumentality. The purpose of the *bedesten* changed several times: in the late-18th and early-19th centuries it was used as a prison, then as a warehouse and a food store. Today, it is used as an art gallery.

27

LIVING TOGETHER

GAZI MEHMED PAŞA HAMAM, PRIZREN

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Public bathhouse (*hamam*)

Place: Prizren

Date: 1570s

Patron: Gazi Mehmed Paşa, Sanjak-bey of Shkodër

History: Cheese production, warehouse, cultural events

Current condition/use: In good condition; used as an exhibition space

Ottoman Prizren was a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community and an important town on the Balkan trade route. Its Ottoman hamam (bathhouse) was built by Gazi Mehmed Paşa, Sanjak-bey of Shkodër, in the 1570s. It is part of a complex which included a mosque, an imaret (public kitchen), a *medrese* (a Muslim theological school), a library and a tomb. Two big cupolas and nine small ones cover the roof. The building has a double bath, one for men and one for women, separated by a special entrance for each. The men's gallery has a fountain at its centre and sofas to sit and drink coffee and tea. The Gazi Mehmed Paşa Hamam is one of the most imposing public baths constructed in the Balkans during the Ottoman domination. In 1833 two local dignitaries, the brothers Mahmud and Emin Paşa, restored the building, which functioned as a hamam until 1944. It was then used for cheese production, as a warehouse, and later for different cultural events. Under state protection since 1954, the hamam was repaired and maintained until 1981, when it was left to the mercy of time. Currently, the galleries of the Gazi Mehmed Paşa Hamam are used for photo exhibitions, promotions, literary events and concerts.

28

LIVING TOGETHER

‘JEWISH’ HAMAM, THESSALONIKI

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: Public bathhouse (hamam)

Place: Thessaloniki

Date: c. 1500

Patron: Halil Paşa

Current condition/use: Restored by the Greek Archaeological Service; excellent condition;
exhibition space

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This bathhouse was built in central Thessaloniki by Halil Paşa, possibly the Governor General of the Ottoman Balkans, around 1500. Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula came to settle in Thessaloniki, particularly in the vicinity of the hamam, at that time; this is why it was called Yahudi Hamamı, the Jewish hamam. It may be assumed that it was used by the local Jews. As a double bath, it was undoubtedly used as a women’s hamam, too; the name Kadınlar Hamamı, the women’s hamam, also survives. Centrally located in the city’s marketplace, the Halil Paşa Hamam was additionally called the Grand Bazaar Hamam. Its location continues to be at the heart of the city’s commercial life: a flower market occupies the pavement in front of the hamam; this location is now named ‘Louloudadika’ after the Greek word for flower.





KURŞUNLU / KURŞUMLI HAN, SKOPJE

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Inn (*caravanserai*)

Place: Skopje

Date: 1549-50

Patron: *Müezzín* Muslihuddin

History: Used as a prison, again as an inn, then as a weapons depot

Current condition/use: Museum statue collection

Situated on the edge of the Old Bazaar district of Skopje, the Kurşunlu/Kurşumli Han is the only entirely preserved Ottoman inn (*caravanserai*) in the Balkans. It was built by *Müezzín* Muslihuddin in 1549-50. It is a massive structure with an open courtyard, featuring a beautifully crafted ablution fountain (*şadırvan*) at its centre. There are 68 rooms in the building, which served as an inn until it was transformed into a prison in 1787. The inn acquired its present-day name, *kurşunlu*, in the 19th century, after the lead roof with which it was covered. At the beginning of 20th century, it served again as an inn before it was turned into a weapons depot. Since 1955 it houses the statue collection of the Archaeological Museum.



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LIVING TOGETHER

WHITE BRIDGE, VRANJE

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Bridge (and fountain), infrastructure

Place: Vranje

Date: 1844

Current condition/use: Bridge; fountain not in use

The White Bridge (also called the 'Bridge of Love') was built in 1844. According to legend, it was constructed in memory of an ill-fated love between a Muslim woman, Ayşe, and a Serbian shepherd, Stojan. The story relates that the prophets foretold the paşa that his daughter Ayşe would suffer a violent death, so he built a white palace, with only one small window, near the bridge and locked her inside. Every day, she saw Stojan and she fell in love with him. Somehow, she managed to sneak out of the palace to meet him, but the paşa surprised them and took out a gun to kill Stojan. Ayşe threw herself in front of him and was killed instead. After that, Stojan slit his throat. The paşa then ordered a new bridge to be built there, with an Arabic inscription saying: 'Cursed be the one who separates what love brings together.' Đerenka Fountain is situated near the White Bridge. Tradition has it that it was built by the Ottomans in commemoration of the famous hero Alija Đerzelez, who, despite his courage and good looks, could not conquer the heart of a beautiful black-eyed Serbian woman named Đerenka.

31

LIVING TOGETHER

GRAND BAZAAR, GJAKOVA

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Marketplace

Place: Gjakova

Date: 17th century

Current condition/use: Rebuilt after it was burnt down in 1999

The Grand Bazaar developed along with the growing prosperity of Gjakova during the Ottoman period, with its population of Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Jews and Catholics. In 1595 Hadım Süleyman Ağa, a court dignitary, built a mosque with a complex of library, school, bathhouse and *caravanserai*. The first writings about the Grand Bazaar belong to the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi (17th century), who wrote: 'Gjakova has 2000 decorated houses, which are located in the wider area. There are two beautiful mosques, *mescids*, dosshouses covered with lead [...] a beautiful Turkish bath to indulge your heart and 300 shops with 1000 different crafts.' On 24 March 1999, after the first NATO bombing of Kosovo, the Grand Bazaar burnt down. According to a report by the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Gjakova, 423 shops, 246 houses, 7 official buildings, 6 workshops/clinics, 4 buildings of associations and political parties, and the office of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments perished in the fire. After the war, the Grand Bazaar was rebuilt and today it gives a picture of what an Ottoman market looked like.

İSA BEY HAMAM, NOVI PAZAR

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Public bathhouse (*hamam*)

Place: Novi Pazar

Date: 1460s-1480s

Patron: İsa Bey (Ishaković, İshakoğlu)

History: In use until the 1920s

Current condition/use: Disused and in rapid deterioration

The İsa Bey Hamam is situated in the centre of the city, in the Old Bazaar (*Stara Čarsija*), on the right bank of the Raška River, near the Altın Alem, Arap and Gazi Sinan Bey mosques. The hamam was constructed between the 1460s and 1480s and is mentioned for the first time in 1489, which makes it one of the oldest Ottoman bathhouses in Serbia. This 15th-century building was an endowment of İsa Bey (Ishaković, İshakoğlu), the founder of Novi Pazar and Sarajevo. The Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi described this hamam in the 17th century, praising its construction, water and air. The structure features 11 domes of varying sizes, alternating brick and stone walls, and glass windows. There are male and female areas, symmetrically divided by a wall, as well as disrobing, relaxation and massage rooms. It was used until the 1920s by the local community (both Serbs and Muslims). Today the hamam is not in use and is rapidly crumbling.

The 19th century was the time of Tanzimat, that is, the reforms introduced between 1839 and 1876 by the sultans Abdülmecid and Abdülaziz, aiming to establish a modern state according to European models. Contact with Western Europe, its customs and culture had begun to influence the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire very early on. The Christian merchants and scholars who travelled to Western Europe, in particular, returned with numerous new ideas and models in their luggage.

The dramatic changes that occurred in 18th-century Europe in economy, society and politics were echoed in an Ottoman Empire that, while searching to be considered as an equal by the European states, continued to impose an absolutist rule on its subjects. The Ottoman modernisation was indeed precipitated by the emerging national Balkan movements, particularly by the success of the Greek War of Independence. The nationalist ideology, the parliamentary institutions, the modern army fighting for the homeland, the central administration, were all elements of the 19th-century European nation-states. Against these international and local developments, the Ottoman Empire put in place the ideology of ‘Ottomanism’, that is, the equivalent participation of Muslims and non-Muslims, an element that clearly deviated from *şeriat*.

Yet, changes were far broader and deeper. The steam engine, banks, railways, factories, telegraphs, all transformed the life of Muslims and non-Muslims in the cities. The very landscape in the Ottoman Empire changed dramatically. New trends in architecture, painting and music, influenced by the West, swept the Empire. Women’s public presence changed, too. Muslim women teachers were employed in girls’ schools. The Sublime Porte now set as its goal mass education according to Western models. To a great extent, modernising meant Westernising.

Clock towers can be regarded as the epitome of modernising in urban areas. Prominently located so that everyone could see them, they reflect the radical change in the perception of time from the traditional measuring by the imam’s call to prayer from the minaret. To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Abdülhamid II’s reign, more than 100 clocks were built throughout the Ottoman Empire (1901-3).

MODERNISING

33

MODERNISING

YENI MOSQUE, THESSALONIKI

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: Mosque

Place: Thessaloniki

Date: 1900-1902

Patron: Sultan Abdul Hamid II

Architect: Vitaliano Poselli

Current condition/use: Serves as a City of Thessaloniki exhibition venue

In 1900-1902 the rich Dönmes of Thessaloniki, the Jewish families converted to Islam since the 17th century following the conversion of Sabbatai Zevi, a self-proclaimed messiah of the period, sponsored the construction of one of the last Ottoman mosques to be built in the Balkans. The design, inspired by European eclecticism, was made by the Italian architect Vitaliano Poselli. The Yeni (New) Mosque in Thessaloniki was built, according to its inscription, 'at the initiative of the General Commander of the 3rd Imperial Army Corps, Hacı Mehmed Hayri Paşa, under the auspices of His Highness, the Protector of the Caliphate', Sultan Abdülhamid II. A few years later, in 1909, Abdülhamid found himself as an exile in Thessaloniki, after the Young Turk Revolution. This was the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire.



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MODERNISING

PAŠA'S RESIDENCE, VRANJE

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Private residence

Place: Vranje

Date: 1765

Patron: Raif Bey (Džinić)

History: Used as a grammar school from 1881-1932

Current condition/use: National Museum and restaurant

The Paša's Residence was built in 1765 by the powerful Raif Bey (Džinić). It consists of two buildings and is one of the most beautiful examples of Balkan vernacular architecture. The *selamlık*, reserved exclusively for men, faces the street and was used by the paša and his male entourage. The *haremlık* was reserved for women. These two buildings are connected with a wooden bridge, which is located on the first floor. The Serbian Bishop Pajsije purchased the residence from the daughter of the last Ottoman administrator and donated it to the city. In 1881 a grammar school (the first one in Vranje) was established in it; this existed until 1932, when it was turned over to the municipality. Today the *selamlık* is a National Museum that features a collection of Roman excavation finds, medieval coins, traditional costumes and handicrafts, while the *haremlık* hosts one of the most renowned restaurants in Vranje.



35
MODERNISING



BENÇA
AQUEDUCT,
TEPELENË

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg
Type: Aqueduct
Place: Bença
Date: Early 19th century
Patron: Ali Paşa of Ioannina
Current condition/use: Partially preserved

The construction of the aqueduct near the village of Bença was sponsored by Ali Paşa of Ioannina in the first decade of the 19th century to provide his native town of Tepelenë (Tepedelen) and its great fortress with fresh drinking water. This aqueduct, though only partially preserved, is one of the most significant works from the period of Ali Paşa.

An almost legendary figure, Ali Paşa managed to establish a ‘state within a state’ and to dominate in the largest part of the Western Ottoman provinces. At the height of his power, he ruled over an extensive territory that comprised a large part of today’s Albania and Greece. A charismatic leader, he collected untold riches and organised a powerful army and an efficient administration. Tolerant of other religions, he appointed several Christians to high military and administrative offices. The large-scale public works that he constructed reflect his ideas regarding a modern centralised state.



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MODERNISING

CLOCK
TOWER,
BITOLA

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev
Type: Clock tower
Place: Bitola
Date: 16th or 19th century
Current condition/use: In use

It is not known when the clock tower (*Saat kulesi*) in Bitola was built. Written sources from the 16th century mention a clock tower, but it is not clear if this is the same one. Some scholars believe it was built at the same time as the church of St Demetrius, in 1830. Legend has it that the Ottoman authorities collected around 60,000 eggs from nearby villages and mixed them into the mortar to make the walls stronger. The tower has a rectangular base and is about 30 m high. Near the top is a rectangular terrace with an iron fence. On each side of the fence there is an iron console that holds the lamps for illuminating the clock, which is on the highest of three levels. The original clock was replaced during World War II with a functional one donated by the Nazis, because the city had maintained German graves from World War I. In 1994-5 the municipal authorities put a cross on the top of the clock tower.



37

MODERNISING

‘VOULEFTIKO’, NAFPLIO

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Mosque
Place: Nafplio
Date: 1716-17
Patron: Sultan Ahmed III
History: Rebuilt c. 1800, hosted the first Greek House of Parliament, in 1825
Current condition/use: In excellent condition after being restored; functions as a lecture and conference venue

Nafplio was under Ottoman rule between 1540 and 1686 and also from 1715 until the outbreak of the Greek War of Independence. A strongly fortified city, with the Palamidi Fortress and the Bourtzi, it was besieged from land and water by the Greek revolutionaries, led by Laskarina Bouboulina, the captain of Spetses. The treaty for the surrender of Nafplio was finally signed on 3 December 1822. The Muslim population, who had suffered during the siege, was taken to Anatolia. In 1823 Nafplio became the seat of the provisional revolutionary government and, until 1834, was the first capital of the independent Greek state. The first Greek House of Parliament convened in Nafplio (1825-6), in the former Mosque of Sultan Ahmed III (built in 1716-7 and renovated in ‘Europeanising’ style around 1800), which had been repaired by a military engineer of the Revolution. This is why it was called ‘Vouleftiko’ [parliament]. The building reflects the transition from the multinational Ottoman Empire to the modern nation-state with Western-inspired political institutions. It was in this building, also, that the trial of Theodoros Kolokotronis, one of the military leaders of the Greek War for Independence, took place (1834). During the same period (1828-34), the ‘Vouleftiko’ was also used for hosting balls and many other functions. Restored in 1994-9, the building now houses a lecture and conference venue. The Nafplio Municipal Art Gallery is housed on the ground floor.





'RÉGIE' TOBACCO WAREHOUSE, XANTHI

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: Industrial building

Place: Xanthi

Date: c. 1890

Patron: Régie Co. Intéressée des Tabacs de l'Empire Ottoman

Current condition/use: Fair condition; a restoration study has been approved

Tobacco was a major export commodity of Ottoman Thrace as early as the 18th century. In the region of Xanthi, tobacco had become the sole agricultural product by the late 18th century. In spite of the two destructive earthquakes that destroyed much of the city in 1829, Xanthi (OH. iskeçe) soon turned from a small town of the late Byzantine and early Ottoman eras into a large tobacco processing centre of the Southern Balkans. The city's economy grew even more rapidly when the Istanbul-Thessaloniki railway was completed (1891). The tobacco merchants who built luxurious mansions in the city also built large warehouses on the outskirts of Xanthi for collecting, storing and processing tobacco. Around 1890 the Ottoman Tobacco Monopoly (*Régie Co. Intéressée des Tabacs de l'Empire Ottoman*), based in Istanbul, constructed in the south-eastern part of town, where the tobacco stores were located, a large tobacco warehouse, surviving today between Kapnergaton, Pavlou Mela and Anaxarchou Streets. The warehouse is divided into four two-storey sections with a semi-basement, one of which housed the business offices. The architectural form of the warehouses was inspired by industrial buildings in Western Europe. There was only a single entrance to many tobacco warehouses, as the Ottoman law on tobacco duties of 1875 did not allow a second one, in an attempt to prevent illicit trade. Thousands of tobacco workers, belonging to various Ottoman communities, made their living at the tobacco factory-warehouses of Xanthi.



39 MODERNISING

'SARAY', RESEN

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev
Type: Private residence
Place: Resen
Date: 1905-9
Patron: Ahmed Niyazi Bey
History: Administration, city hall, library
Current condition/use: Museum and art gallery

The most impressive building in the town of Resen is the Saray (palace) built by the Resen-born Ottoman governor Ahmed Niyazi Bey. An ethnic Albanian and a member of the Committee for Union and Progress (Young Turk Revolution), Niyazi Bey was a key figure during the imperial visit of Sultan Mehmed V Reşad to the region in June 1911. Because of the Albanian revolts in 1909-10, the Ottoman state needed people like Niyazi in order to cement ties with the Albanian Muslim population; this was one of the main political goals of the Sultan's visit. The construction of Niyazi Bey's Saray had started well before, in 1905. He desired a French-style estate, perhaps after receiving a postcard of Versailles. Construction was completed in 1909, after the Young Turk Revolution, though the interior was completed a few years after the Balkan Wars. Ahmed Niyazi Bey, however, died in 1912 in Durrës (Albania) and never lived to see his estate completed. After the Balkan Wars, the building served different functions. During World War II it was used by the occupying forces, and after it was used as the city hall and later as the municipal library. Today, it is a museum and gallery.

DOSITEJ OBRADOVIĆ LYCEUM, BELGRADE

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic

Type: Private residence / Ottoman mansion

Place: Belgrade

Date: 1739-89

Patron: *Reis-ül küttab* (chief scribe) Hacı Mustafa

History: French consulate, educational establishment

Current condition/use: Now a museum; in very poor condition

The building later known as the Lyceum of Dositej Obradović was most probably erected between the re-establishment of Ottoman rule in Belgrade in 1739 and 1789 by the *reis-ül küttab* (head of the Imperial Chancery and record offices of the Imperial Council) Hacı Mustafa. Ottoman sources record that a large house with a garden was built on endowed property at the junction of three streets. It is a typical Ottoman building, divided into a *selamlık* for men and a *haremlık* for women. Towards the end of the 18th century it was the seat of the French consulate. Belgrade College, founded in 1808 by the Serbian key figure of the Enlightenment, Dositej Obradović, moved into it in the spring of 1809. The College educated two generations of students in this building, but ceased activity in 1813, when it was closed as a result of the Serbian Uprising. When the Ottomans returned to Belgrade, the building became the property of the previous owners and remained in their possession until the mid-19th century. The new owners of the house were the wealthy trader Nikola Kutula and his descendents. After World War II, the building was restored to house the Museum of Vuk and Dositej, founded in 1949. The building is presently in a very bad condition.

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MODERNISING

CLOCK TOWER, PRISHTINA

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Clock tower

Place: Prishtina

Date: 19th century

Current condition/use: In use

The clock tower lies in the centre of Prishtina, like all similar towers in the Ottoman Empire. The evidence for the date of its construction is contradictory. According to legend, Yaşar Gjinolli, a local paşa, ordered the bell to be stolen from the clock tower of the town of Vushtrri/Vucitrn and to be placed in the tower of Prishtina. It seems, however, that it was built at the turn of the 19th century. Some historians argue that the current clock, which dates from 1898, replaced an older clock destroyed by fire. It has also, however, been suggested that the clock was built in 1904 during the reign of İbrahim Paşa and of Sultan Abdülhamid II. It has a hexagonal shape and a height of 26 m. Up to the level of 16.5 m it is built of sandstone rock and red brick. Its bell came from Romania.



42 MODERNISING

'TURKISH SCHOOL', RETHYMNO

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: School (*mektep*)

Place: Rethymnon, Crete

Date: 1892-3

Patron: Sultan Abdülhamid II

Architect: Georgios Daskalakis

Current condition/use: Houses a public primary school

In the course of the 19th century, the modernising Ottoman state extended its control over education through the Tanzimat reforms. Modern schools were built everywhere in the Balkans. A new school was built in Rethymnon, Crete, in 1892-3, 'for the advancement of the education of Muslim girls', according to its inscription. The same inscription mentions that, 'by God's good grace, the star of Abdülhamid Han shined in the states of the kings of all the world; this building came into being due to his great generosity. Day and night the Muslims pray for him. Let this school stand forever by the will of God... which was built for the sake of Islam in Rethymno.' The building was constructed by Georgios Daskalakis and funded by contributions from Rethymnon Muslims and the state. It was inaugurated in November 1893 by the Governor General of Crete, Mahmud Celaleddin Paşa. The so-called 'Turkish School' continues to house a public primary school even today.

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MODERNISING

OTTOMAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS, SHKODËR

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Military building

Place: Shkodër

Date: Mid-19th century

Current condition/use: School

The Ottoman Military Headquarters of Shkodër were built in the second half of the 19th century. It resembles most public buildings of the period, being a simple U-shaped structure with a central courtyard. With the construction of this new building, the Ottoman authorities aimed to strengthen the military position of the Empire in the border area with Montenegro. After the proclamation of Albania's independence (1912), the building became a state-run school and continues in this function to date. The military training ground, on the other hand, now serves as a courtyard for the high school and, in a way, as an urban park.



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MODERNISING

GOVERNMENT BUILDING, THESSALONIKI

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas
Type: Administration building
Place: Thessaloniki
Date: 1891
Architect: Vitaliano Poselli
Current condition/use: In good condition; today houses the General Secretariat of Macedonia-Thrace and other government entities

In 1891 Thessaloniki obtained a modern Ottoman government building (*hükümet konağı*) with a Neoclassical façade and Renaissance elements, designed by Vitaliano Poselli, an Italian architect whose name has been linked to the city's new architectural face in the late 19th century. Poselli also designed the Ottoman Middle School (*İdadiye*), in which the School of Philosophy of the University of Thessaloniki is housed today, the Ottoman barracks, which now houses the 3rd Corps of the Greek Army, the Yeni Mosque, the city's Catholic and Armenian churches, the Bet-Saul Synagogue (not extant), the Villa Allatini and other mansions. The building housed the new Ottoman administration of the Tanzimat reforms period, which sought to modernise the Ottoman state according to Western European standards: the Council of the Prefecture, the Courts of Justice, the Municipal and the Land Register, the Public Records Office, the Vakıf Department, the Police and the Gendarmerie. During the Tanzimat period, similar buildings were made in several provincial cities in the Ottoman Empire. In 1911 Sultan Murad V was hosted at the building during his official visit to Thessaloniki. Today, the building, still called 'Konaki' in Greek, houses government agencies.

The Ottoman Empire finally collapsed in 1923. The Turkish Republic took its place, alongside a string of nation-states that had gradually been established since the early 19th century. All Balkan states, even the modern Kemalist Turkey, sought to eradicate the memory of the Ottoman Empire and differentiate themselves from all that was 'Ottoman', which was considered unfit for modernising and 'progress'.

Fostering distinct national characteristics in each nation-state entailed erasing the multi-ethnic Ottoman heritage. The ideal of national homogeneity, besides, led to the assimilation or concealment of diversity. This development was encouraged by the major demographic changes that occurred in the Balkan Peninsula in the 19th and 20th centuries. Wars, migration and population exchanges dramatically, and violently, changed the urban and rural landscape. In some regions, there were no more Muslims to use the mosques. In others, the Orthodox monasteries were deserted. World War II and the Holocaust brought to a tragic end the centuries-old presence of Jewish communities in the Balkans. The Jewish synagogues and districts were desolated.

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes and fires, destroyed entire districts, which were never rebuilt, or were rebuilt with a new, 'modern' design. Broad avenues and the new urban plan of the Balkan cities replaced the old Ottoman alleys; apartment buildings overshadowed imarets and *türbes* [tombs], while mosques, stripped of their tall minarets, disappeared in a dense urban environment.

Nevertheless, the memory of the Ottoman period still exists: in place names, which resist the changes attempted by central authorities; in places of worship, such as mosques, synagogues and *tekkes* that are used once again; and in the informed activity, in recent years, of national and local entities to preserve a historical heritage that is under re-evaluation.

FORGETTING & REMEMBERING

45

FORGETTING & REMEMBERING

TOMB
IN
BERAT

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Tomb (*türbe*)

Place: Berat

Date: 17th century

Current condition/use: Destroyed

Three tombs (*türbe*) for the paşas of Berat, who ruled over the sanjak of Vlora, were built in the 17th century. According to legend, these tombs were erected at a sacred location where the body of Ali Baba had been buried. The locals told how Ali Baba would rise from his grave at night to perform his ablutions. The tombs survived until the first half of the 20th century, albeit abandoned. During World War II, two of the tombs were destroyed by the Italians, and the third was converted into a warehouse after the war. What was left of them was finally completely destroyed a few years ago, when a modern housing complex was constructed at the tomb site.

JEWISH
CEMETERY,
NIŠ

Photographer: Ivan Petrovic
Type: Jewish Cemetery
Place: Niš
Date: 18th century
History: Burials until World War II; expropriated in 1948; burials prohibited after 1965
Current condition/use: Overgrown, rubbish-filled, polluted; area inhabited by Roma population

Located on the north-western outskirts of Niš, the Jewish Cemetery contains the remains of more than 1000 Jews, primarily Sephardim from Niš. The extant monuments are sarcophagus and memorial plaques engraved with Hebrew texts. The oldest gravestones date from the 18th century. Burials were performed at this cemetery until the beginning of World War II. In 1948 the cemetery was expropriated, and in 1965 the Assembly of the County of Niš prohibited burials there. This devastated cemetery is now used as a garbage dump, polluted by locally produced industrial waste; some gravestones have been dug up and used by local Roma in the repairs of their houses and as household objects. Today the Jewish Cemetery in Niš cannot be properly examined. It is overgrown by grass and weeds, and covered with tons of rubbish. Since 2004 the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia, the City Assembly of Niš and private donors have been working to restore the site.



PAŞA'S GATE, BERAT

Photographer: Jutta Benzenberg

Type: Palace gate

Place: Berat

Date: 19th century

Patrons: Vrioni family

History: Part of the Vrioni family palace (*saray*)

Current condition/use: Poor condition

Berat was conquered by the Ottomans in 1417 and has experienced periods of great prosperity as well as stagnation to date. With a population of some 6000-7000 inhabitants in the 16th century, it was one of the most important cities in the Ottoman Balkans. In the 17th century it contained 19 Muslim and 10 Christian neighbourhoods and 1 Jewish district. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of the Venetian-Ottoman War (1685), the Jewish population of the city grew rapidly, as a large number of Jews moved for security reasons from Vlora to Berat. Growing steadily, Berat succeeded Vlora as the provincial capital town. In the 19th century the powerful Vrioni family dominated the city and the sanjak of Berat. The imposing gate of their palace (*saray*) and the tomb of one of the members of the family survive today. Ilyaz Bey Vrioni was a key figure in the political elite of the Albanian national movement and independent Albania in the early 20th century. The mansion is in ruins today. Despite the destruction, the Paşa's Gate is, thanks to its decoration, one of the most beautiful monuments in Albania.

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FORGETTING & REMEMBERING

BUDISAVCI MONASTERY, KLINA

Photographer: Samir Karahoda

Type: Monastery

Place: Klina

Date: 14th century

Current condition/use: In use, under the protection of Kosovo police forces

The Church of the Transfiguration is the only surviving part of the medieval monastery. Severely damaged at some point in the late 15th century or the early 16th, the church was extensively restored in 1568, under Patriarch Makarije, whose portrait, in which he is holding a model of the church in his hands, is preserved in the building. The church underwent further interventions in the 19th century. All of the preserved frescoes in the interior date from the 16th-century restoration. The church survived the armed conflict in 1999 without any serious damage. The building and its three remaining resident nuns are protected by the Kosovo police forces. The local Christian population uses the monastery for religious rites.

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FORGETTING & REMEMBERING

JEWISH
CEMETERY,
BITOLA

Photographer: Ivan Blazhev

Type: Jewish Cemetery

Place: Bitola

Date: 1497

History: Abandoned after 1943

Current condition/use: Neglected, in decay

'Today there isn't a single Jew in Monastir [Bitola]. One hears no more the sound of the songs and the ballads, nor the voices of mothers and prayers. The synagogues that survive are like mountains of rubble. Only the cemetery and ruins remain.'

Jamila Andjela Kolonomos

Founded in 1497, the Jewish Cemetery of Bitola is one of the oldest Jewish cemeteries in the Balkans – if not the oldest. It was abandoned and left to ruin after the deportation of all of Bitola's Jews in 1943. Thousands of grave markers remain, but only a few, located in the lower left corner as seen from the entrance, are in a good condition. Most are eroded and illegible, and many have fallen from their original upright position. This part of the cemetery also contains more sophisticated gravestones with legible inscriptions dating as far back as the 17th century.





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FORGETTING & REMEMBERING



IMARET, ARTA

Photographer: Kamilo Nollas

Type: Mosque

Place: Marati, Arta

Date: 1481-1512

Patron: Faik Paşa

Current condition/use: Abandoned

In 1449 the Ottomans occupied Arta, previously under the Tocco dynasty. Muslims came to settle in the Christian city, where there was also a Jewish community of Romaniotes, and mosques were built to accommodate the needs of the Muslim population. The Arta imaret was established by Faik Paşa during the reign of Sultan Bayezid II (*reg.* 1481-1512). The imaret complex included the mosque that survives today in Marati, a school and a *medrese* (Muslim theological school). Its operation was funded by the *waqf* of Faik Paşa, which included the rents of a hamam, workshops and mills in Arta, and also supported a mosque and a school in the fortress of Cephalonia. The surviving mosque, which reflects the architecture of early Ottoman mosques, comprises a large square prayer hall covered by a hemispherical dome. The existence of a gallery, now lost, is documented in old photographs. The mosque has particularly fine stonework, with layers of double bricks that separate the stones. In the north-western side, the cylindrical minaret rises on the top of a square base. Being largely forgotten and abandoned today, immediately beyond the outskirts of Arta, it is nearly impossible for visitors or passers-by to realise the past use of the building.



‘A Balkan Tale’ is a cross-media project by the Goethe-Institut, produced by Anemon Productions with the support of the European Union, in partnership with CeProSARD, EC Ma Ndryshe, Fondi Shqiptar per Monumentet, Remont, ABOUT: and Cool Culture.

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Special thanks to

- Machiel Kiel



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