

**THE BALKANS IN AN AGE OF BAROQUE?
TRANSFORMATIONS IN ARCHITECTURE,
DECORATION, AND PATTERNS OF
PATRONAGE AND CULTURAL
PRODUCTION IN OTTOMAN EUROPE,
1718-1856**

by

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Abstract

This study aims to shed light on transformations in architecture and architectural decoration in the Ottoman Balkans during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. That this is a period linked to imperial decline on one hand, and to national “revivals” on the other, has had a considerable impact on the interpretation and assessment of the art of this period in modern historiography. It is the aim of this thesis to challenge some of these interpretations and analyze this art primarily within its socio-cultural context. Explanations will also be sought as to why Baroque forms exerted such a strong influence in the region when they had already faded out in Western Europe. Rather than “westernization”, decline, or “national revival”, alternative causes and motives will be sought for the development of the art of this period. As the agents of change, actors such as merchants, notables, builders, decorators, bandits, and guildspeople will be explored instead of the more traditional empires or nations. Rather than mere descriptions of buildings, trends, and developments embedded in established historical narratives, the art and architecture of this period will be analyzed in the framework of changing dynamics and patterns of patronage and cultural production, centres and peripheries, the construction system, and mechanisms of exchange with the non-Ottoman world.

Özet

Bu çalışma, onsekizinci yüzyıl ve ondokuzuncu yüzyılın ilk yarısında Osmanlı Dönemi Balkan topraklarında mimarlık ve mimari dekorasyon alanlarında görülen değişimlere ışık tutmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu dönemin, bir yandan imparatorluğun çöküşüyle, diğer yandan ulusal canlanmalarla bağlantılı olması, söz konusu sanatın modern tarih yazımında yorumlanması ve değerlendirilmesinde oldukça etkili olmuştur. Bu yorumların bazılarının sorgulanması ve bu sanatın kendi sosyokültürel bağlamında analiz edilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Bununla beraber, Barok formlarının, Avrupa’da çoktan sona ermiş olmalarına rağmen, neden bu kadar kuvvetli bir etkiye sahip oldukları sorusuna cevaplar aranacaktır. Bu dönem sanatının gelişimini ortaya koymak için “Batılılaşma”, çöküş ya da “ulusal canlanma” gibi tanımlamalar yerine, alternatif nedenler ve dürtüler araştırılacaktır. Değişimin temsilcileri olarak imparatorluklar ya da uluslar yerine, tüccarlar, ayanlar, dülgerler, nakkaşlar, eşkiyalar ve loncalar incelenecektir. Yerleşmiş tarihi anlatımlarda görülen yapıların, akımların ve gelişimin salt tanımları yerine, dönemin sanat ve mimarisi, değişen dinamikler ve himaye modelleri, kültürel üretim, birincil ve ikincil merkezler, inşa sistemi ve Avrupa ile olan değişim mekanizmaları çerçevesinde analiz edilecektir.

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Preface

The prehistory of the idea for taking up this specific topic as subject for a later thesis began a few years ago on a trip around Bulgaria. With a friend from Sofia insisting on showing us her hometown, Šumen, having arrived there she directed us towards two monuments she found representative of her town. One was a communist-period memorial generously overlooking the town; the other was the mosque of Šerif Halil Pasha, the only survivor of more than 40 mosques still only a century ago. Now I had been familiar with the general characteristics of Ottoman mosques in the Balkans due to a year-long stay in post-war Sarajevo and, admittedly, had found them all to be fairly alike, but what I saw in the interior of the mosque at Šumen was dissimilar from what I had previously come to know. Some of the decoration and motifs felt oddly familiar, and in the concise leaflet the keeper had provided us with upon entering, a preliminarily satisfactory answer was obtained in the classification of the style as “Islamic Baroque”. Different from the plain exteriors of “Turkish houses” I had previously come across in Bosnia and Serbia were then also some of the residences on the next stop on the itinerary, Plovdiv. Eager to learn more about what I had seen back home, I stumbled upon publications mentioning not only a “Bulgarian Baroque”, but a “Turkish Baroque” and “Serbian Baroque” as well; all terms I had fell upon at some earlier point, but never had suspected a real correlation; them maybe forming part of a general, regional trend in a specific period. This, after all, would also have meant that what is so often, if indirectly, suggested in the histories of Southeast Europe, namely an isolation of the peoples of Ottoman Europe from the art and architecture of Europe so as to explain why the Balkans townscapes look so unfamiliar to “us”, would not be entirely accurate. Beginning my research on this “Baroque influence”, soon came the realization that there is much more to it than merely an occidentalist fad, akin to the *Turquerie* in the west.

In regional and national histories the Balkan societies' changeover from "oriental" to "European" is more often than not portrayed as a reasonably clear break, as could be expected from someone supposedly breaking away from the bondage of domination by an alien civilization, into freedom. Other than as an early stage in the "liberation" movements of subjected peoples, little space has been lavished on the cultural history of the eighteenth century Balkans. To declare nationalist-secessionist sentiment as the defining entity in the everyday lives of individuals at that period, however, is in all probability delusional. Habitually, as if requiring no further periodization, the whole half-millennial period of Ottoman-Balkans culture is presented as a monolith. Fortunately, also a vast body of more enlightened literature exists; few of which, however, specifically dealing with the post-classical, pre-Tanzimat cultural history of Ottoman Europe. Much of this thesis thus consists of piecemeal information, often from quite unrelated sources, collected over a period of three years. Only towards the end of this research I could grasp the larger picture, the interrelation between different factors (and not only in terms of culture, art and architecture), and eventually had to revise many "truths" that I had held for such through previous readings. It is the purpose of this thesis to communicate and share these insights, and I am left to hope that the arguments brought forward throughout this discussion will be convincing for the reader.

The necessary prerequisites for this enterprise I found during my two-year residence at Koç University in Istanbul. That Günsel Renda, an internationally renowned art historian of the late Ottoman period came to be first one of my professors and eventually one of my advisors proved a fortunate instance. Continuing the study of established areas of interest in a previously unfamiliar environment has also provided

me with a new and different, maybe “more Ottoman”, perspective, which many works on the Balkans produced in “the region” or in “the West” perhaps lack. Occasional stays in Vienna, on the other hand, have enabled me to access an often very different body of literature from that found in collections in Istanbul. It should also be noted that throughout my research I have, without exception, only made very positive experiences with the staff of libraries the collections of which provided the essentials for my work: in Vienna these were the Austrian National Library, the main library of the University of Vienna, the libraries at the departments for Art History, East- and Southeast European History, Turkology, Byzantine Studies, and even the city-run Public Library provided for some surprising discoveries. In Istanbul, these were the libraries of the Koç, Boğaziçi, Sabancı, Bilgi, and Mimar Sinan universities as well as that of the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT) and the Institut Français d’Études Anatoliennes (IFEA). Resources that otherwise could have been located only with enormous efforts have been made available to me through the article- and inter-library loan request system at Koç University’s Suna Kıraç Library, personified by Ayla Tüfekçibaşı, whose support and swiftness, despite my seemingly never-ending requests, must be commended. I am furthermore indebted to Alicia Simpson, my second advisor, for giving this work a thorough reading and making constructive suggestions for improvements, and Ayşe Dilsiz for help with translations from Turkish and all other kinds of support during the writing-process.

Next to publications in English, German, and French, considerable use has been made of sources in the Turkish, Serbian-Croatian-Bosnian, Bulgarian, and Macedonian languages. There exist a few interesting sources in Italian and a vast amount in Greek

which, regrettably, could not be accessed.¹ In the case of Greek publications, however, now and then substantial summaries in English or French are included.² Given the involvement of such number of languages and scripts, a consistent transliteration or consistent use of region-specific terms in one of the relevant languages is almost impossible. For much related to the Ottoman period, modern Turkish terms have been given preference. In the transliteration of Bulgarian Cyrillic, which, unlike Serbian Cyrillic, does not have a generally accepted Latin equivalent, the mode more accepted among linguists of Slavic languages has been chosen over the “international” option (much like Russian transliterated into English). Where applicable, Bulgarian letters have been reproduced as what they would look like in other Slavic languages written in the Latin alphabet (**ш** = **š**, **ч** = **č**, **ж** = **ž**). The “problematic” **ѣ** (equivalent to the Turkish **ı**) has been transliterated as **ǎ**, and not as u, a, i, or y, in order to be clear which original character is being referred to.

For those not familiar with the pronunciation of special characters (diacritics) in the Latin(ized) alphabets of the Turks, Albanians, Romanians, and the south Slavs, a small (and simplified) chart should provide guidance for the correct reading or reproduction of words frequently used in this work:

¹ Among the works in Italian are studies of mosques in Tetovo, Samokov, and Kavala. For reference, these can be found in the bibliography as articles by Scarcia (1981) and Curatola (1981), and the book by Bruni (2003). Also Roškowska's concise “book” (46 pages) on the mosque at Samokov (1977), although published in German, French, and English, could not be located in libraries accessible to me. While all these are key monuments on which information can be found in greater detail also in the other sources I used, the reader should keep in mind that the aforementioned works may include additional information.

² This was, for example, the case with Moutsopoulos (1967). The citations from this book thus refer to the chapter-length English summary.

Slavic languages	Turkish	English
š	ş	sh
č	ç	ch or tch
ć (serb.)	-	similar to the ch -sound in “future”
đ (serb.)	-	similar to the dj -sound in “forge”
ă (bulg.)	ı	very short ü or other vowel
-	ğ	not pronounced; lengthens preceding vowel
Dž	c	dj as in “jungle”
	â	long a (not used anymore)

The Romanian **â** is pronounced like the Turkish **ı**; the Albanian **ë** like a short German **ö**, the **gj** like the English **dj**. In the case of Albanian place-names there exist two simultaneously used versions (e.g. Korçë = Korça), which, if he/she is used to another, should not surprise the reader. In the case of Gjirokaštër, this version has been preferred over “Gjirokastra”. In the case of Tīrana, however, the internationally accepted Tīrana rather than “Tīranë” has been used. Where places have accepted equivalents in English, such as Belgrade (serb. Beograd) or Bucharest (rom. Bucureşti), these forms have been given preference. I will use both Istanbul and Constantinople, given that there never was one name used by everyone, and in rare occasions “Constantinople” seems more adequate. Mistakes and inconsistencies in transliterations and translations, or any mistakes this work might possibly suffer from, are the sole responsibility of the author.

Introduction

This study aims to shed light on developments in architecture and architectural decoration in the Ottoman Balkans in the pre-modern era. The period covered is roughly the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. As this thesis aims to demonstrate, this is not a random choice but indeed a period of a reasonably distinct visuality and different dynamics, and with a fairly clear beginning and closing stage. As the endpoint has been determined the year 1856, the year of the proclamation of the Islahat edict, after which the art and architecture of the Ottoman Christian subjects revolutionarily change. In this age of already institutionalized westernization in the Ottoman Empire, however, also in the architecture of mosques, residences, and administrative buildings there are perceptibly new directions. At the beginning of the narrative stands the year 1718, the start of the “Tulip Era”, in which among rulers and administrators a novel approach to the non-Ottoman world develops as a result of incisive changes in Ottoman realities after the failed siege of Vienna in 1683, ultimately resulting in a loss of substantial territory to a strengthened enemy in the north.

Both Kiel (1985) and Bouras (1991) justify the year 1700 as the chronological termini of their respective surveys arguing that it makes little sense to go beyond this date which, taken symbolically, witnesses drastic breaches. While Kiel (1985:17) assesses the Ottoman fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries as “a period that stands out as more or less homogenous”, the eighteenth century is stated to mark “the beginning of profound changes in society, thinking and art”. It is interesting that Kiel (1990a:289-90) further seems to differentiate between Ottoman art in the Balkans and art in the late Ottoman Balkans: The former is said to witness a “slow but steady decline” beginning

in the seventeenth century, while, writing more specifically of Albania, where only after that century a massive need for Islamic infrastructure arises, he explains the subsequently different spirit of Albanian-Ottoman art by inferring that the imperial centre could no longer “guide the work in the province” since “Ottoman civilization had declined”.³ What or whose art was it then? Was it a genuinely Balkan art with its own dynamics or simply a provincial reflection of general post-classical Ottoman trends?

What concerns Christian architecture and art (which otherwise will not be the at the centre of this study), Vryonis (1991:30) similarly confirms a “a certain decline in the quality of the art” after 1700, which he explains by referring to a rapid increase in the number of artists, most of who were from rural origins. In contrast to both the Muslim and Christian religious art and architecture of this period, the residential structures (“traditional housing” or “vernacular”), usually receive a rather enthusiastic evaluation. This is, on one hand, certainly due to their classification as “traditional” (whose tradition notwithstanding), and, on the other hand, likely also due to the fact that we are simply left with very few surviving examples predating the late eighteenth century, whereby a comparative assessment would not really be feasible. Scholars, however, seem to agree that the houses built in the century after 1750 show the most developed form of this type, while the mass of earlier dwellings are believed to have been much humbler (as confirmed in depreciative accounts of western travellers). But also in the late period these buildings, while in almost all cases a version of what has come to be known as

³ In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries most buildings, including mosques, were indeed not anymore built by architects sent from Istanbul but by Christian masters from the wider region. The previously highly centralized process, which accounts for the region-wide uniformity of classical-period mosques in the Balkans, is described by Kiel (1990c:xi-xii), based on the analysis of detailed registers, as follows: “Architects and workleaders, trained in the capital, were dispatched to the province. Models of what to build were sent with them ... With the help of these models the individual patrons, or the state commission, could decide what kind of mosque or fortress they wanted.”

“the Ottoman house” (a concept which will later be explained) show not one but a variety of styles; some are more “traditional”, some more “Baroque”.

Nonetheless, in these two assessments by Kiel and Vryonis, and without even yet citing the much more dismissive evaluations of Turkish architectural historians about “their” architecture in the late period, we can already discern a common indication that the study of the art of this period is somewhat less rewarding. To demonstrate that such a conception is erroneous, aside from not very helpful, will be one of the objects of this study. We are dealing with a different kind of art, less “classical” than its predecessor and sometimes more a “folk art” than an “academic” one. Less stale and codified, more secular and personal, it also attests to the vitality of its age, particularly after the 1770s. Remarkable works of creativity are patronized by increasing segments of society and produced by a steadily increasing number of non-formally trained builders-decorators, whose role and histories have, I believe, not been fully appreciated. Instead, historiography has every so often interpreted their works as the artistic component of a nationalist renewal among the Balkan Christian societies; a notion which will be challenged in the last two chapters of this study.

The same authors have endeavoured to explain a seemingly low level of productivity in Christian architecture for much of the period of Ottoman rule in the Balkans - stretching over half a millennium hardly to be considered an “occupation”, as is still the paradigm - with two reasons: 1) the annihilation of a local (Christian) class to patronize “their” art(s), and 2) severe Ottoman-Islamic laws that forbade the building of new churches and made even the repair of older churches very difficult. Both claims are, admittedly, not entirely false, but we will also see that realities sometimes differed. This also includes the conception of the Ottomans purposefully isolating their subjects from

the achievements contemporary Europe made in culture, the arts, and sciences, whereby the 'Turks have been made the scapegoats for the modern Balkan nations' "backwardness". It is true that major artistic movements in Europe, like the Renaissance, pass the Ottoman Christians' visual culture largely unnoticed, but we will see that in some parts of the Ottoman Balkans, at different times, vivid exchange with the West, not only in commerce but in cultural vocabulary as well, was indeed possible. In no instance more than in the Age of Baroque is this noticeably in the Balkans, or really in Ottoman culture as a whole. Baroque motifs can not only be found in the decoration of Christian merchants' houses or paintings and iconostases of Orthodox churches, but in Muslim (and Jewish) residences and houses of worship as well. What we see there is an "Ottomanized" reflection of Baroque ideas. But, then, is the Ottoman art of that period to be considered part of a wider Baroque sphere, which would include other exports to non-European destinations, like the "Mexican Baroque" which, despite Spanish origins, takes very individual forms in the process of dislocation?⁴ If yes, why then does this "Ottoman Baroque" (or the "Bulgarian Baroque", for that matter) only show at a point in time when the Baroque in much of Europe has already come to an end?

This study's prime objective will not be to discern western influences on architecture in the Ottoman Balkans, or to locate and position the Baroque in the region's evidently changing visual culture after 1700. Rather, it will be concerned with mechanisms of exchange, not only between "East" and "West" but within the Balkans and between "centres" and "provinces" in the Ottoman world. The aim is to describe, interpret, and/or explain why, when, and how changes occur and materialize in the *loci* of public

⁴ On the "surprising afterlife of Baroque beyond its natural boundaries", see Harbison (2003; cit. x), esp. chapters VII and VIII.

and everyday lives of Ottoman subjects in the way they did. This will mean to try to understand the society that produced these works of art and architecture, and not merely to point out to familiar features in certain trends and sweepingly attribute them to an increasing western influence emerging from an imbalance of power between two societies, whereby one eventually begins to culturally dominate the other.

In such an endeavour, much of the historiography generated in the region under discussion - a region which the outside world mainly associates with conflict and contesting nationalisms - is not a natural ally. Next to the works of art and architecture to be treated herein, historiography and its readings of the cultural past must thus take a prominent place. Historiographically, one crucial problem seems that our knowledge of the Ottoman Balkans in the eighteenth century is very limited, particularly if compared to the vast amount of scholarship produced on the nineteenth century. Much of what has been written on the period often focuses on the resurgence (or emergence) of national sentiments among the Balkan peoples, and certainly much more than on their everyday lives. In this sense, it is more a history of nations rather than a cultural history. But also from the other, Ottomanist viewpoint, Faroqhi (1995:29-30) had identified „particular difficulties” in the expansion of our knowledge of the cultural history of the eighteenth century; a paradox being that it is very well documented but at the same time relatively little research has been made, particularly for the period after 1730. She attributes this in part to that the foreign-influenced art of that century had been dismissed in the writings of nationalist Republican-period art historians, who classified that style as an alien import by a court forgetting “national” traditions and borne by a society whose lifestyle was frowned upon by many contemporaries. European historians, on the other hand, were too much concerned with national-cultural peculiarities to really appreciate this “cosmopolitan style”. Not anymore solely identified

with cultural decline, more recent research eventually began to appreciate this age representing, in Faroqhi's words, "the vitality and elegance of a late period."

Particularly in the last two-three decades a considerable amount of studies have focused on Ottoman eighteenth-century culture. Scholars such as Maurice Cerasi, Shirine Hamadeh, Günsel Renda, or Doğan Kuban have contributed a great deal to our knowledge of the art and architecture of this period which now appears to fascinate a growing number of people.⁵ Regrettably, the same can not be said for contemporary developments in the provinces. In fact, and aside from a few case studies, close to nothing has been published on late Ottoman mosques in the Balkans. Were it not for the many publications by Machiel Kiel, the works of some Yugoslav scholars like Andrej Andrejević, or the inventory of Ottoman monuments in Europe prepared by the Turkish researcher Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, we would not know much about the classical-period mosques either.⁶ Despite these essential contributions, still no comprehensive, synthetic, and critical work, covering the whole region, that is, the region that it was when this architecture developed, has been created to convey to us the history and the character of Ottoman architecture in the Balkans. In Turkish works on Ottoman

⁵ While noting that the "recent surge of interest in the artistic and architectural production of the eighteenth century has rescued this period from its earlier characterization as an era of decline", Hamadeh (2004:33-4) also criticizes that "the emphasis placed on the influence of European culture and aesthetics and on the role of the Ottomans' westernizing aspirations in informing architectural change has considerably eclipsed the extensive and multifarious nature of the century's developments ... To regard the eighteenth century as a turning point in Ottoman interaction with Europe is to ignore over two centuries of virtually continuous cultural and artistic contact."

⁶ Admittedly, there have been a couple of books published in Turkey on the "Turkish" cultural heritage in the Balkans (e.g. Yenişehirlioğlu 1989; Turan and İbrahimgil 2001; Çam 2000), but these are rather photographic essays with only very little information on the buildings. A prominent exception, on Ottoman architecture in the Balkans, Ayverdi's four-volume inventory from around 1980 remains the basic source. Despite its age and his obvious dislike of anything produced after the seventeenth century, sometimes expressed in open disgust, it is still much more informative and contains far less mistakes than the more popularly written works written after it. In defence of these well-meant attempts, it must be noted that during the Socialist period in Southeast Europe the research possibilities for surveying these countries' suspicious Ottoman architectural heritage were limited. Even the Dutchman Kiel (1990c:xv) reported of having been "arrested and confined" and having had his "notes or films confiscated" in each of the Balkan countries, "for no other reason than taking photographs of Ottoman buildings."

architecture examples from the Balkans are conspicuously absent, implicitly suggesting that this region did not play a significant role in its development; a view with which Kiel (1990c:x) would sharply disagree.

Less for political reasons, also the church architecture of the eighteenth century remains fairly little studied, although much has been done in this field in the last few decades as well. In contrast, “traditional” dwellings are extraordinarily well researched, whereby we were able to rely on extensive studies by the likes of Nikolaos Moutsopoulos, Yiannis Kizis, Sedad Hakkı Eldem, Halûk Sezgin, Christo Péew (Peev), Georgi Arbaliev, Pejo Berbenliev, Anna Roškovska, Dušan Grabrijan, or Aleksandar Deroko. While consulted, not all of them needed to be cited in this study, as the dwellings they speak of, although in their readings they are Serbian, Bosnian, Turkish, Greek, Albanian etc. traditional/vernacular architecture, really constitute one main type with minor regional differences, which (Cerasi 1998:149) explains as due to epoch and social class rather than to region, climate, or ethnicity. A useful provision has been the volume *Architecture traditionnelle des pays balkaniques* (1993), to which many of the aforementioned contributed a well-researched piece. Indicative of the questionably productive approach of studying these structures in the context of modern nation states’ borders, which appeared where they had been none at the time when these houses were built, however, is that each country is represented by a chapter, but no synthesis from these cases has been attempted by way of a concluding chapter. The readers of many works like this will also notice that only seldom exact (or any) dates are given for the houses covered, which brings us to the next problem: dating. Inscriptions indicating the construction dates of houses are rare, and in many places seem to become common only toward the mid-nineteenth century. Inescapably, this poses an obstacle for tracing the development of residential architecture and its regional variations. But also in terms of both Muslim and

Christian religious architecture, where we typically find inscriptions with dates, dating is sometimes problematic. They can refer to the founding date of the institution as well as to later re-building (“repair”), but are seldom clear on when the building acquired a characteristic shape.⁷ A “repair” can mean in some cases that only minor changes have been made to the structure; in others that it was completely built anew. The same is valid for the decorations of interiors. Many fifteenth century mosques have been redecorated in the early nineteenth century and thereby in the contemporary style. In some cases we know the dates of these redecorations with certainty, if mentioned in chronicles or inscriptions, in others we can only guess.⁸ In such cases one is left to compare the decorative features with similar designs in Istanbul or other parts of the southern Balkans where exact dates are available. But also the interest in interior decoration is a more recent development, whereby only few more comprehensive studies have been produced, mostly by Turkish scholars and hence often only partly accessible to academics in the rest of the region. An additional problem is that we can only guess how widespread such elaborately painted interiors were, for so many buildings have been lost either through wanton destruction (mosques) or frequent fires, which have left us only with a small sample of the residences which, to a large extent, were built from wood and therefore highly vulnerable. These and other inescapable problems accounting for the provisional disposition of many eventual conclusions must be kept in mind by the reader.

⁷ The fact that some Ottoman inscriptions only provide dates encoded as chronograms adds a degree of obscurity, as they are not always easy to decipher and are therefore occasionally misconstrued.

⁸ In the case of the Tombul mosque at Šumen (Bulgaria), for example, we know that the structure dates from the 1740s. But the interior decoration, featuring some baroque motifs and patterns as well as painted landscape-panels, apparently dates from a later point, possibly from the early nineteenth century. And although this is one of the few mosques in Bulgaria which have attracted considerable attention, there was found no hint to this decoration having taken place at a later date in the literature consulted.

Having so presented the topics to be covered in the present study, it may appear to some that, in the context of the limitations of a Master's thesis (time available for research, capacity of researcher, etc.), both the period - one and a half centuries - and the vast region covered were an exaggerated, if not pretentious frame if the aim is to produce a really conclusive architectural survey, whereby more wisely a specific case or sub-region would have been chosen. However, both the factors *period* and *region*, as must lastly be stressed, are key hypotheses of this study, which will be less concerned with descriptions of individual structures than with the aim of understanding the cultural-historical context in which the works in question materialized.

1. A “Window to the West”

1.1. The political prelude to cultural change: 1683-1718

With the treaty of Karlowitz (1699) a new phase in Ottoman history begins. For the first time an Ottoman Sultan formally acknowledged his defeat and the permanent loss of lands conquered by his ancestors rather than temporary withdrawal from them. In the negotiations at Karlowitz, and again in 1730, the Ottomans, furthermore, for the first time accepted the mediation of a European power, namely France, an almost permanent ally of the sultans, on their behalf. The borders emerging from this treaty – the Sava-Danube-Carpathians line - proved to be exceptionally long-lived. With the exception of some Austrian gains⁹ and the creation of a Neo-Hellenic state in 1830 - long confined to the southern portion of modern Greece - and notwithstanding internal autonomies, the borders drawn at Karlowitz survived until the Treaty of Berlin in 1878. Not incidentally, it is exactly this area which is routinely thought of as “culturally Balkans”. The “Ottomanization” to take place in these last two centuries of Turkish presence in the Balkans was a process aided not least by the Balkan Christians trying to emulate the Muslim upper classes, their houses and lifestyle, as soon as economic potency permitted.

As a result for the devastation caused by the Austrian army penetrating deep into the Balkan peninsula after the second Ottoman siege of Vienna (1683) had failed, eminent cities like Sarajevo or Skopje did not recover for one and a half centuries.¹⁰ It is thus not

⁹ The Banat of Temesvar in 1718 and the northern Moldavian region henceforth known as Bukovina were lost to the Habsburgs in 1775.

¹⁰ Classical-period Skopje had enjoyed over-regional importance due to the good reputation of its *İsakiye medrese*. After those in Istanbul, Bursa, and Edirne, it was reported to be the best in the empire (Adanir 1994:155). But Faroqhi (1995:88) notes that by the eighteenth century also Bursa and Edirne had lost their

in these centres of the classical Ottoman period in the western Balkans that the most noteworthy expressions in art and architecture of the eighteenth century are to be expected. Instead, new focal points emerged, and urban hierarchies began to shift. But the Austrian advances in the Balkans also triggered significant events whose cultural implications still echo today. When the Habsburg army was forced to retreat to north of the Danube-Sava border after a French attack on the western borders of the Holy Roman Empire, it was followed by many Balkan Christians fleeing their homes out of fear of retaliation for collaboration with the foreign intruders. In what became known as the “great migration” (*velika seoba*) some 30,000¹¹ Serbs left the core territories of their medieval states, most prominently Kosovo, to settle in the newly Habsburg territories north of the 1699 border.¹² There they were integrated into a different cultural and social mainstream than their kinsmen remaining under Ottoman rule for almost two more decades, accounting for an intra-Serbian cultural division which still reverberates today. But also Romanians and Croats were henceforth found on both sides of the long-lived Austrian-Ottoman border.

As a consequence of the treaty of Karlowitz, eighteenth century Southeast Europe came to be divided between two multiethnic empires. But although the two empires shared many similar problems, “to the outside observer at the time the differences were profound” noted Jelavich (1983:166-7). She continued by drawing a fundamentally polarized picture, which became the paradigm of modern historiography’s imagery:

role as centres of theological and juridical education. On the significance of classical-period Skopje, see also Kiel (2002), esp. the concluding remarks (p.41).

¹¹ Exaggerated estimates claim a migration of up to 500,000 people. See Malcolm (1998:140;156).

¹² The depopulated areas in the central Balkans are then repopulated by montagnards from surrounding areas, mostly Albanians gradually converting to Islam, constituting a demographic shift which was to become the core problem of violent conflicts three centuries later.

“Most obvious were the outward forms of two contrasting civilizations. In the eyes of educated Europeans the Ottoman Empire was a backward, even barbarous, state ... The custom of collecting heads and of staking out bodies and heads in public places revolted citizens of countries where such activities belonged to the past. Moreover, Ottoman cities were dirty, congested, and primitive in comparison with those of the West. Conspicuous display of wealth could be dangerous; luxury and wealth were confined to the homes, where they could not be viewed by foreign eyes. In comparison, in questions of style the Habsburg Empire was one of the great centers of Europe. In an age of baroque culture, Habsburg civilization was splendid. The nobility could afford to maintain magnificent residences and to endow the arts. There was also a comfortable middle class. Law and order were assured; bands of robbers did not roam at will. Public officials were supposed to uphold certain standards. Although corruption exists in all societies, the Austrian service was relatively honest and efficient. General standards for sanitation, cleanliness, and order were maintained at a high level. In contrast, corruption was blatant and open in Constantinople.”

Ortaylı (1994:9) predictably only partly subscribes to the totality of such assessment:

“Briefly put, in the late seventeenth century the Ottoman Empire was in social and economic chaos, and there is no doubt that practically all its institutions were moving towards collapse. But on the other hand, the rulers of the empire were able to come up with brilliant and interesting examples of bureaucratic manipulation to cope with this imminent threat. The decline of the state did not mean cultural decline, of course. Ottoman society was in search of a new life-style, and a new art and social culture was emerging, which would come down through successive changes and evolutions to the present day.”

The political decline emanating in this period is routinely linked to the decay of old Ottoman institutions that had accompanied the empire during its expansive period, which – after a seventeenth century of stagnation without significant territorial losses or gains, except for Crete - really comes to an end with Karlowitz. The *devşirme* system of recruitment of able boys from the Balkans countryside - many of which had become some of the most capable and respected Ottoman officials after being brought up as

Muslims - had already been abandoned under Murat IV. In the eighteenth century viziers and military commanders were mostly of Turkish extraction. At the beginning of this century Mustafa II also “somewhat shockingly” (Quataert 2000:43) confirmed hereditary rights to the *timars* (fief-holders), the financial backbone of a cavalry that was already militarily obsolete. While the *timar*-system had been a pragmatic solution encouraging and rewarding individuals’ commitment in military campaigns, once the empire ceased to expand it became obsolete.

Whereas sultans of the classical period had looked towards Rome, Paris now became a reference for things western. While Petersburg was not yet to play a significant role in the region, another centre in the north became a vital point of reference for the Balkan Christians in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite the eventual retreat from territories already conquered by Austria in the late seventeenth century. This was Baroque Vienna, mythified as a Christian bulwark against the Muslim threat, and gaining immense attraction for the Christians under Ottoman rule, for whom it became a major intellectual centre in the course of the century.

For a perspective on the architecture of the first half of the eighteenth century we will start with the Istanbul of Ahmet III as a centre of dissemination of trends then reflected in buildings in three cities in the east of the region: Şumen in northeast Bulgaria, and Bucharest and Iaşi in the Danubian Principalities (the later Romania). That almost no new building from the western half of the peninsula merits inclusion in this chapter must be explained with that after the devastations in the late seventeenth century the minds may have been set on rebuilding rather than on the construction of new icons.¹³

¹³ One remarkably large “rebuilding” project in Lepanto (İnebahtı) has been brought to our knowledge by Kiel (1991b). During the Venetian occupation of the town (1687-1700) apparently all Ottoman buildings were either totally demolished or ruined. When it was then regained by the Ottomans a new start had to

However, a short section will be devoted to the architectural interactions between the Adriatic coast and its Ottoman hinterland, which also continued in this period. Cultural impulses from a different geographical direction will be treated at the end of this chapter. For two decades the very north of the region in question is temporarily annexed by Habsburg forces, and the Ottoman Belgrade was redesigned as an Austrian Baroque city until returned to Ottoman sovereignty in 1739. Despite large-scale demolitions, the empire therewith inherited an actually Baroque tradition in monuments that were to remain part of the Ottoman possessions for another century and a half.

made, and the sultan and his grand vizier Köprülü Amcazade Hüseyin Pasha laid the foundations for the revival of Islamic life in the town by erecting a number of schools mosques, baths, and other public works; ruins of the buildings of the Hüseyin Pasha complex survive.

1.2. The “Tulip Era” (1718-1730) and its repercussions in the provinces

1.2.1. The Istanbul of Ahmet III and Damat İbrahim Pasha

The so-called “Tulip Era” (Lâle Devri) gained notoriety for its extravagant pleasure-loving lifestyle and disinterest in war. It is not the accession of Ahmet III (1703), a ruler usually portrayed as rather passive and romantic, that is considered the beginning of this period, but the assumption of office of the liberalist Grand Vizier (Nevşehirli) Damat İbrahim Pasha in 1718. To claim this era as the beginning of westernization in the Ottoman Empire would not only be an overstatement but would also ignore the contacts that well existed already in the classical period. Indubitably, however, it is in the Tulip Era during which the cultural exchange is considerably accelerated; not least through an embassy sent to France in 1721. The mission of the envoy, Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi, was not only purely diplomatic; he was also entrusted to observe the ways and technologies of the Franks. With a similar curiosity to that which he was greeted with in Paris, his *sefaretnâme*, a detailed documentation of his observations, was received back in Istanbul. Next to noting the dissimilarities in dining manners and the attitudes to women, he was also greatly impressed by the streets, buildings, and palaces (and their interiors), some of which he had had the opportunity to enter as a privileged guest.

With the readiness to accept and absorb new ideas a characteristic of the Tulip Era, “a time of extraordinary experimentation in Ottoman history” (Quataert 2000:44), the court of Ahmet III becomes a meeting place for artists, poets, and intellectuals. In 1726 the first printing press in Ottoman script is introduced by İbrahim Müteferrika, a Hungarian-born convert. Reportedly commissioned in the style of Versailles, İbrahim

Pasha had a leisure palace (“Sa’dabad”) [Ill.1.1] built by for his Sultan on the “other” side of the Golden Horn; in contrast to previous Sultanic projects far from the walled city. Unfortunately, nothing has survived of this monument so central for modern historiography’s thesis of a gradual westernization complementing imperial decline. Our present knowledge of this structure owes much to the attempted reconstruction by Eldem (1977) and painted illustrations by foreigners visiting the Istanbul of Ahmet III. We note that the exterior of the palace looks typically Ottoman, and it is in the interior that the supposed European influence must have been more apparent. More revealing, we find geometrical garden arrangements with planned flower beds; a novelty in Ottoman conduct, for which European models seem apparent.¹⁴ For Goodwin (1977:373), still, the complex was only “a clumsy imitation of only partially understood ideas.”

Thanks to pictorial and textual evidence that we can re-enact that the palace consisted of harem and *selamlık* (male quarters), around which were grouped a mosque, a garden pavilion, a large pool, a small fountain, as well as some 170 residences and gardens for state officials, “built in a hitherto unseen style”, as a contemporary source (in Hamadeh 2004:38) attests. European travellers of the period reported that the palace was modelled after a contemporary French palace, a set of whose plans had been brought back from Paris by Mehmet Çelebi in 1721, nine months before the construction of Sa’dabad (“Abode of Happiness”) began. Depending on the author, the supposed model was Versailles, Fontainebleau, or Marley-le-Roi. But historians or poets of the Ottoman court, devoting more space to Sa’dabad than to any other building of the time,

¹⁴ If we look at an engraving of the Moldavian prince Cantemir’s palace [Ill. 1.17], built before 1711, we notice that garden arrangements in Istanbul must actually have predated Sa’dabad. On this engraving we even see a classicistic garden portal with a triangular pediment. On the history of this palace, see also Göçek (1987:126) or, directly, Cantemir (1734).

neither offer any clue that a western prototype had served as model, nor that it may have been related in some way to the architectural knowledge Mehmet brought back from his embassy to France (Hamadeh 2004:38-40). Goodwin (1977:373), in fact, asserts that “[n]othing was farther from the ideas of permanence and overwhelming pomp that created Versailles”, as he identifies the Kağıthane area as “really no more than a field of 173 tents since the kiosks were built of lathe and plaster, their frailty adding to the delight.”

Despite an indubitably increased interest in things western, Cerasi (1997:42) reminds that - despite wars and dynastic hostility – it was really Persia that was “regarded by the average Ottoman, educated or not, as the symbol of enjoyment of nature and literature and of refinement, and became the real point of reference for the innovative imagery of the first half of the century.” Also in terms of the building of the Tulip Era, Hamadeh (2004) is not the first to juxtapose the “westernization” thesis with the suggestion not to disregard ostensible “eastern” references, notably Safavid Persia. The noticeably altering reception of Europe in this period should also not lead to the conclusion that the attitude towards Christians in the empire would considerably change. Ahmet III issued *fermans* that limited the height of non-Muslims’ houses so as to not be higher than Muslims’ houses and forbade Muslims to sell their houses to Christians (Karaca 1995:33). He also prohibited Christian Ottoman subjects from converting to Catholicism (Girardelli 2005:242) and, noting that some “good-for-nothing” women had also “adopted various innovations in their clothing, imitating Christians in the deliberate effort to lead the public astray on Istanbul’s streets”, the Sultan issued a decree specifying the precise widths and measurements of the items used for coats and headgear (Quataert 1997:409).

The Tulip Era's most visible legacy in the former capital's cityscape are not the palaces, of which none has survived into the present, but the fountains [Ill.1.2].¹⁵ In principle a utilitarian building type, it was the fountain in which creative minds discovered an ideal object for experimentation. Devoid of religious connotation, it is thus the fountains and not (yet) the mosques where outside influence first become most apparent. While the interest in water and fountains itself is a quality of the Baroque age, an important transformation of the type in Ottoman architecture is that, rather than as previously typically integrated into a wall, the now often free-standing fountains increasingly created their own public space, as quasi-monuments. Goodwin (1977:374) already noted "the contrast between the curvular and the straight" in the 1720s fountains, but not yet "the flow essential to truly baroque monuments. [Only] one of the patterns is new to Ottoman architecture: it is the quantity which contrasts with the sober lack of ornament of sixteenth-century ideal." Nonetheless, not only the gradual swell in novel decorative elements, including increasingly sculptured surfaces, but also the sheer inflation of new fountains and their locations attest to a certain change during the Tulip Era. Cerasi (1997:41) reports of 216 new fountains alone built during the reign of Ahmet III in the newly popular suburbs, whereto the well-to-do had relocated, permanently or not.

In the perspective of the social historian Quataert (2000:44), the court society's suburban pleasure palaces (the building of which the court had encouraged) were not primarily a matter of changed preferences but of new methods. Also he points to a French parallel, yet not in style but in the means of propping up legitimacy employing the weapon of consumption:

¹⁵ The habitual translation of the Turkish *sebil* into the English "fountain" is in fact a misnomer. Typically, a *sebil* is a small kiosk with grilles, from behind which an attendant dispensed water. The proper term for an actual fountain or tap that provides drinking water is *çeşme*. "Water house" may be a more appropriate translation of *sebil*, but since "fountain" is so incontestably established in the literature it has been used here as well.

“Like the court of King Louis XIV at Versailles, that of the Tulip period was one of sumptuous consumption – in the Ottoman case not only of tulips but also art, cooking, luxury goods, clothing, and the building of pleasure palace. With this new tool – the consumption of goods – the sultan and grand vizier sought to control the vizier and pasha households in the manner of King Louis, who compelled nobles to live at the Versailles seat of power and join in financially ruinous balls and banquets. Sultan Ahmet and Ibrahim Pasha tried to lead the Istanbul elites in consumption, establishing themselves at the social center as models for emulation.”

Almost predictably, the flamboyance of the “Tulip Era” was not to last long. Giving voice to “the resentment long felt by the clergy and the lower classes at the waste, the flaunted wealth and the innovations regarded as contrary to morality and religious precepts” (Cerasi 1997:44), the junk dealer Halil instituted an uprising which ultimately succeeded in its goal to dethrone Ahmet III and have his Grand Vizier Ibrahim Pasha decapitated.

1.2.2. The *külliye* of Halil Şerif Pasha at Šumen

The short-lived “Tulip Era” had few repercussions in the Balkans. Not only due to the devastations caused in the wars of the late seventeenth century, the time of really monumental endowments in the European provinces was more or less over.¹⁶ An exception is the *külliye* of Halil Şerif Pasha (“Tombul Mosque”) at Šumen¹⁷ in northeast Bulgaria [Ills.1.4-6], the largest Ottoman religious building in Bulgaria (and the only of formerly more than 40 mosques in Šumen spared demolition). Built where the two main lines of communication in the town crossed, and according to the designs of an unknown architect (Ivanova 2004a:503), the ensemble comprises a mosque, a *medrese* (religious high school), a library, and a *mekteb* (primary school).¹⁸ The 40m high minaret rises from the centre of the complex enclosed by walls. In addition to the date of construction generally given as (1740-)1744, which would be too early for the maturity of some of the occidentalizing wall paintings dominated by floral and vegetal motives (including tulips), in which Kiel (1989:42) believes to identify a Central European

¹⁶ Kreiser (1979:61) had generally noted that, save for a few exceptions, the endowments of the late period are of small dimension, and even a sultan with a relatively long and relatively successful reign, like Mahmut I (1730-1754) endowed little; according to a *vakefiye* transcript only a few schools and libraries with limited follow-up costs.

¹⁷ Šumen, while presently hardly familiar to anyone outside Bulgaria, should briefly be credited with its historical role as a leading Islamic city in the European provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Particularly in the eighteenth century it emerged as an important urban centre for the region and expanded north- and eastward. The town acquired strategic importance during the Russian-Turkish wars between 1768 and 1878, when it was part of the fortified quadrangle of Ruse-Varna-Silistra-Šumen. As a consequence of these wars and the *kardžali* conflict, many villages around Šumen were ruined, whereby the Christian population, previously restricted to the eastern part of town, increased and formed new quarters. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, and into the period of Bulgarian independence, Šumen became one of the centres of Turkish education and of the Turkish intelligentsia in Bulgaria (Ivanova 2004a). It is due to the patronage of Şerif Halil Pasha, who endowed a post for a calligraphy teacher in his eighteenth century religious complex, that Stanley (2003:135) attributes the subsequent emergence of an important school of Qur'an production. Between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries Šumen also was a centre of Sufism in northeast Bulgaria, which Georgieva and Sabev (2003:322) explain as due to the city having been the winter camp of Ottoman troops in the course of the wars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At that period it was unsuccessfully attacked by Russian forces thrice; in 1774, 1810, and 1828.

¹⁸ The foundation deed for Halil Şerif Pasha's complex has been published by Duda (1949:115-126).

influence having reached this province via Istanbul.¹⁹ Most elaborate around the windows [Ill.1.6] and especially around the *mibrab* [Ill.1.5.], for these works also a much later date could be suggested.

In terms of the architecture, Stajnova (1990), for good reasons, has linked the Tombul mosque to the “Lâle style” of Ahmet III, although, completed in 1744, it appears more than a decade after that period “ended” in Istanbul. While first explaining the belated appearance of such mosque with that architectural trends from Istanbul reached the provinces usually a bit later, more plausible is her suggestion of seeing the style as a preference of its patron. Halil Şerif Pasha - born either in the village of Madara or in Šumen proper at an unknown date, died in 1752 (Ivanova 2004a:503) - had been part of the court society during the Tulip Era as “one of the most fervent participants in all the innovations of the period” (Stajnova 1990:227). When he became the *kethüda* (high-ranking assistant) of the Grand Vizier for the second time he constructed the Tombul complex as well as an ensemble of buildings around it. It was said that columns and blocks of stone had been brought from the nearby ruins of the medieval Bulgarian capitals Pliska and Preslav as well as from the Šumen fortress. From the 1740s also date the clock tower, a stone prism with a built-in drinking-fountain with rich ornamentation, but not the Kurşum çeşma (trk. *kurşunlu çeşmesi*) [Ill.1.7], a drinking fountain (so called for its original façade covered with leaden plates), which with its low-relief Baroque ornament dates from 1774.

Halil Şerif Pasha was an outspoken admirer of Damat İbrahim Pasha, to whom he even dedicated some odes (Stajnova 1990:229). It thus may not be all that coincidentally that

¹⁹ Ivanova (2004a:503) also mentions a new inscription from 1772, composed by the local poet Ni'met. Could this also be the date for the painted decoration on the interior, or for at least a part of which?

probably the closest relative to his mosque at Şumen is the one the same İbrahim Pasha built in 1726/7 in his hometown Nevşehir (previously Muşkara) [Ill.1.3],²⁰ and not in Istanbul, where the Tulip Era has left few noteworthy religious buildings. While both mosques still evoke the spirit of classical Ottoman mosque architecture in most aspects - Goodwin (1971:370-1) also declares that it were “difficult to define why the building is of its own period and not classical” and that “[o]nly certain details point to change” - it is the slender corner turrets that appear a remarkable feature.²¹ Much of what Kuran (1977:305), writes of the mosque at Nevşehir is thus equally relevant for our building at Şumen, while he further elaborates on the dilemma of mosque architecture in the first half of the eighteenth century:

“What attracts the attention in İbrahim Pasha Mosque is not so much an innovative feature or the absence of some essential classical element as a weakening of style. The corner towers, which visually hold the mosque together in classical architecture, seem to be unrelated to the whole structure, and rather than exerting weight from the top, they spring up like acroterions marking the corners. The eight domed-turrets holding the corners of the octagonal drum likewise seem ornamental, not because they do not perform a structural function, but because they rise above the cornice of the drum, beyond the line of the dome’s lateral thrust. A similar process of elongation takes place with the minaret, which is far too tall compared with minarets of the classical era. This type of change cannot be attributed to European influence. Before all else, it is a manifestation of boredom with a style which has gone on too long. The Mosque of İbrahim Pasha shows that its architect is not reacting against the classical style; yet he

²⁰ Following Faroqhi (2004a:11), İbrahim, in fact, had his *külliye* modelled after the mosques of sixteenth-century Grand Viziers. Among the architects we know a Sargis Kalfa, apparently a Greek. İbrahim also involved the Chief Architect Mehmet Ağa, ordering him to send some of his co-workers (Faroqhi writes “junior colleagues”) to visit and study the Mustafa Pasha Mosque at Gebze (not far from Istanbul) and other mosques in western Anatolia. “The architects were enjoined to study the aesthetic appearance of the buildings and also construction details, bringing back drawings for the Grand Vizier’s inspection. The latter apparently reserved for himself the ultimate decision, and, taking an eclectic approach, consciously modelled his foundation on the buildings put up by 10th/16th century Grand Viziers.” The mosque of Mustafa Pasha at Gebze (1519 or 1525-6) would, however, been quite a curious choice, as this was the commission of an official from Egypt who had the decoration for this mosque carried out in the Mamluk style (cf. Taeschner 2004:982).

²¹ It is probably these turrets Kuran (1977:304) had in mind when lamenting that the “clarity of structural expression slowly disintegrated because of the inclusion of superfluous elements”.

does not possess the bold strokes of his predecessors. In a changing era he feels the need for innovation. Inventiveness, however, requires imagination and self-confidence. Lacking these, he resorts to distortion and his work becomes mannered.”

1.2.3. The Danube Principalities under Phanariote rule

In no case more than in the Romanian one, it is argued that really the eighteenth century had brought about an “Ottomanization” of Balkan territories. Before 1711 both principalities had merely been Ottoman vassals, attached to the Sultan’s domain but retaining large autonomies. But when the relations between the Wallachian and Moldavian princes and the neighbouring Russian and Austrian empires became too friendly for the Sultan’s taste, the previously wide-reaching autonomies were abolished. In 1711 the untrustworthy Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir, allied with Peter the Great, was replaced with a man the Sultan could trust, Nicholas Mavrocordatos, son of the Sultan’s chief interpreter (*dragoman*). In 1715 the Wallachian prince Stephan Cantacuzino was executed on suspicion of league with Vienna. Both these actions led Castellan (1992:206) to the conclusion that the Sultan considered the rulers of the principalities as “no more than provincial governors whom he could appoint, displace and remove whenever he wished.” Henceforth the princes were appointed by the Sultan himself and usually recruited among the Greeks of Constantinople’s Phanari (Fener) quarter. Between 1711 and 1821 a few mostly Constantinopolitan families provided no less than 31 princes (now called “hospodars”) in 80 periods of rule, which lasted on average only two and a half years (cf. McGowan 1994:670). Having to disburse a heavy bribe to enter this prestigious if dangerous office, they became not hereditary rulers but temporary Ottoman officials. As such, as pictorial evidence of the time shows, they dressed in the Ottoman manner, with large turbans, wearing Ottoman dress and insignia, and a beard (Plemmenos 2003:183). Castellan (1992: 207) appends that “[a]mong the Hospodar’s entourage there emerged a court nobility which lived and dressed according to the fashions of the palace of Istanbul.”

The condemnation of the Phanariot era (1711-1829) has been a focus of Romanian nationalism and has come to be portrayed as the “dark ages” of Romanian history. In cultural terms, this is partly due to enthusiastic assessment of the preceding period, the rule of Wallachian prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1688-1714), under which Wallachian architecture had reached its creative peak. Brâncoveanu had given his name to a style too eclectic to be properly categorized. It is maybe this incomprehensive hybridism – with Baroque, Renaissance, Persian, Byzantine, Serbian, and Armenian some of the influences customarily mentioned – that made modern Romanians consider the Brâncoveanesque to be the only genuinely Romanian style (cf. Popescu 2004). With evidence of constant and close contact with Western culture during the seventeenth century (Jelavich 1983:69), the genesis of this style “distinguished by an almost classical equilibrium in the compositions, and by an extremely rich decoration of a baroque taste” (Popescu 2004:28) is often linked to an Italian influence. The Brâncoveanesque, however, also showed some decidedly non-Western features, which Jelavich (1983:69) identified as a combination of “Eastern opulence with Western refinement.” To Ulea (1966:9) the principal palaces at Potlogi (1699) and Mogoșoaia (1702) [Ill.1.8] “combined Turkish and Italian elements with traditional Rumanian forms”, with their “gracefully vaulted interiors ... richly decorated with stucco ornament of an oriental kind.”

Of the Romanian lands Wallachia had always been the region most open to “eastern influences”, but the fact that this decided “orientality” is also often linked to an actual Ottoman influence is debatable. The lobed and ogee arches of windows and arcades so characteristic of the Brâncoveanesque and post-Brâncoveanesque [Ill.1.8-10], accounting for its exotic appearance, do generally not figure on contemporary Ottoman exteriors of

this period, and are most often found on fountains or interiors. But next to the sumptuous palaces, the pre-Phanariote area also saw the boyars affording luxurious mansions, a general improvement of living conditions, the blooming of monasteries and great accomplishments in historiography (Jelavich 1983:69). That the Phanariotes then sought a visual continuation of this tradition in the style of religious edifices they sponsored leads Theodorescu (2002:9) to suggest this as part of an attempt “to make the shift from being an Ottoman-imposed foreign governing élite to that of quasi-national and dynastic ruling families.”²² The Văcărești Monastery in Bucharest (1716-22) and the church of the Pantelimon Monastery (1750) in the suburbs of the Walachian capital consciously make references to those erected under Brâncoveanu;²³ at times and in details “heavily baroquified”, as the portal of Pantelimon (Theodorescu 2002:80).

The best-known surviving monument from this early period of Phanariote rule in the Danube Principalities is the Stavropoleos church [Ill.1.10], erected by the Greek Archimandrite Ioannikos (rom. Ioanichie) between 1724 and 1730 in Bucharest. For Plemmenos (2003:181) an epitome of “Greek-Romanian co-operation during the Phanariote era”, the right-hand choir sung in Greek while the left-hand one answered in Romanian using the same melody. In structure otherwise not untypical for the post-Byzantine centuries, it is the “oriental” multi-lobed arches of the portico as well as the painted exterior that makes this monument a fairly unusual one. We find circular recesses with painted figural representations as a belt around the monument, embedded

²² An exclusively Christian Ottoman territory ruled by Christian Ottoman officials, it is not too surprising that we find almost no mosques in present-day Romania, save for the Dobrudja region on the Black Sea, which formed an integral part of Ottoman Rumelia.

²³ Ulea (1966:9) sees Văcărești, built by the Phanariote Mavrocordatos as the largest eighteenth century monastery in Southeast Europe, and the Stavropoleos church as the “last important examples of the Brâncoveanan style ... The rest of the eighteenth century is a period of decline in religious architecture.”

in rich vegetal ornament. The monastery to which it belonged, sustained from the incomes of an inn run by the archimandrite, is not extant.

In contrast to the churches, the Phanariotes' country estates reflected, according to Theodorescu (2002:75), "both the orientalism of Istanbul and the influence of the Western rococo, just as their owners were authentic examples of western-oriental gentlemen." In several instances Theodorescu suggests a Phanariote orientation after Istanbul trends of the Tulip period. The Frumoasa ("the Beautiful") complex at Iași, for example, was supposedly modelled after Constantinopolitan prototypes, whereby master builders were specifically called into the country. The closest analogy for the palace of Wallachia's Gregory II, a mid-eighteenth century two-storied structure next to his monastery, Theodorescu believes to have found in an illustration of Ahmet III's Sa'dabad (1722).²⁴ But an eastern impact also influenced spatial considerations, as he suggests to have been the case with the Moldavian prince Gregory's palace, rebuilt twice as large after destruction by the Russian soldateska in 1740, and with a separation of male and female quarters ("selamlăc" and "harem"). While exceptionally few structures from the Phanariote period survived until today, the fountains at the churches of St Spiridon [Ill.1.11] and the Golia Monastery at Iași, dating from 1765-6, remain as rare materializations to influence from Ottoman eighteenth century modes. (Theodorescu 2002:80-3)

Given the insecurity of the period and the patrons' position, "caught between the dream of Byzantium and the executioner of Stambul" (Theodorescu 2002:75), it is still remarkable how luxury and pleasure came to be pronounced in Phanariote Wallachia

²⁴ Disappointingly, however, Theodorescu neither provides pictorial evidence nor source material as basis for this comparison.

and Moldavia; especially under two quasi-dynastic families, the Mavrocordatos and the Ghika, arguably under the impact of the lifestyle of the Tulip Era. Nevertheless, when the French traveller Flachet visited the Bucharest estates of Constantine Mavrocordatos²⁵ in 1741, his assessment was as follows:

“I went to the leisure palace of the prince, which, like the prince’s [city] palace, still reminds one of its main purposes. They used to be monasteries, somewhat beautified by his predecessor princes. Most of our second-hand private residences are far better looking and there are none in our country where the furniture is worse than here ... Just by seeing what his residence looked like, I could have gotten an excellent impression about his valour, but I was able also to treasure his intelligence and heart: I was able to discover the artist and the man of good taste everywhere. His book collection was rich and exquisite; he owned some valuable paintings, some wonderful sculptures, a lot of devices of all kinds and several parts of very unusual mechanisms brought by him from Germany or England. I think he deserves me to praise him by saying that he was a savant without preconceived ideas and completely impartial. He would speak all European languages and was familiar with the most important writers whom he tried to know as well as possible.” (cit. in Berkta and Murgescu 2005:106)

Ottoman officials, the Phanariote princes in Romania attempted to project the profile of enlightened rulers. Having themselves having been exposed to western European culture through the education which they had received in western universities, it was as early as 1714 that the Moldavian prince Mavrocordatos founded an Academy of Letters in his capital Iași, with a curriculum copying that of renowned European universities, but with Greek as official language (Plemmenos 2003:186). At the same time, however, the Phanariotes have been accused of not having taken the opportunity to provide patronage for art and learning of a kind not available to non-Muslims in the ‘core territories’ of the empire, and furthermore hampering local cultural development

²⁵ One of the most enlightened Phanariote rulers, Mavrocordatos (1711-1769) reigned six times in Wallachia and four times in Moldavia. Among the reforms he undertook was the abolishment of serfdom.

through imposing heavy taxes on their subjects to finance the appointments of the rapidly changing hospodars (cf. Adanır and Faroqhi 2002:26). Gradeva (1994:25), however, mentions a case where a Wallachian prince had acted as benefactor transcending his own territory into an Ottoman “core territory”: Without notification of, or permission from, the Sultan he had restored and enlarged a church in Silistra (on the Danube, the border between Wallachia and Bulgaria) in 1741. Runciman (1991:13-4) also disagrees, and asks that credit be given too “to the much maligned Phanariots, who stimulated a renaissance of Hellenism in the eighteenth century, making a far more solid contribution to it than did that overpraised anticlerical Korais.”

1.3. Developments on the edge of the Ottoman world

1.3.1. Belgrade 1718-1739: from Ottoman to Baroque city and back

Between 1688 and 1791 Belgrade was occupied by Austria thrice. Considering the drastic transformations the city underwent from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century - from an Ottoman regional centre of some 50,000 (Kienitz 1972:217)²⁶ to a border town, to ruins, to a prospering “little Vienna” - it is somewhat surprising that this subject has so far been given not much scholarly attention.²⁷

When Eugene of Savoy took Belgrade again in 1717 it was to last, at least for two decades. The destroyed fortress was restored with great effort according to plans of the Swiss-born General Nicholas Doxat de Morez to shield the city from further attacks. From the ruins of the Ottoman city rose an orderly, characteristically Austrian town with burgher houses, army barracks, churches, and even monasteries in the styles of contemporary Central Europe. There is also evidence of a large palatial building, reportedly reminiscent of Fischer von Erlach’s works, which came to be known as the “Palace of Prince Eugene”; the ruins of which could still be seen in the early twentieth century. German-speaking settlers were living inside the walls, along with a number of Greeks, Armenians, and the wealthier Serbs, who had their houses around the Serbian cathedral.²⁸ The vast majority of Serbs, however, dwelled outside the walls on the Sava-

²⁶ Kienitz (1972:217) also mentions that, among the population consisting of Turks, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and Serbs, the latter were even a minority among Belgrade’s Christians.

²⁷ Exceptions are a book by the military officer Stefanović-Vilofsky (1908), in German, and the Serbian-language works of Popović (1935, 1950, and 1958).

²⁸ Destroyed when the Ottomans returned, it was rebuilt on the same spot (the present *Saborna crkva*) a century later.

side in the “Raizenstadt” (Serb town), as opposed to the “German town” *intra muros*. This separation into two municipalities followed a (never truly working) regulation that the town proper should be Catholic and German. Already by 1721 the “German town” housed 400 families, mostly settlers from the German Rhineland as well as former soldiers, and selected its own mayor. The Serb town, however, was equipped with several trade privileges, that enabled quite a many of its inhabitants, most of which involved in commerce, to gain comfortable wealth. When the question of the city’s coat of arms came up, the administration, somewhat bizarrely, decided on a design depicting three Turkish minarets, the emperor’s eagle, and the slogan “Alba graeca recuperata”²⁹. (Stefanović-Vilofsky 1908:26-34)

Save for a modest house without, the only surviving example of residential architecture from that time, all of the noteworthy architectural remains of this period are located within the fortress area (Kalemegdan). The Baroque clock tower [Ill.1.13] – an octagonal tower sitting on a square socket, complete with a bulbous dome – had been spared by the Ottomans upon their re-conquest of Belgrade and was used as watchtower as it enjoyed a view over the whole town. The triumphal gate of Charles VI [Ill.1.12], often also called “Eugene of Savoy gate”, was erected in 1736 as an entrance to the lower city on the Danube side. On both sides, in the tympana of the pediment we see a sculpture depicting Austrian coat of arms of the kingdom of Serbia (as well as the initials of the emperor) that seems not to have bothered the Turks when they re-entered the town in 1739. The other curiosity surrounding the Charles gate, customarily portrayed as the most important Baroque creation south of Danube and Sava, is that it is reported to have been the design of Balthasar Neumann. The famed Baroque architect, whose best-

²⁹ To the Germans Belgrade (“white city”) was then known as “Griechisch [read ‘Orthodox Christian’] Weissenburg”, hence “alba graeca” in Latin.

known work is the Würzburg Palace, had indeed entered Belgrade in 1717 when participating in Prince Eugene's Serbian campaign.³⁰

After the treaty of Belgrade placed Serbia under Ottoman control again, in 1739 and 1740 the Germans and Serbs of Belgrade (as well as Serbs and Albanians from the central and western Balkans) were resettled to the nearby Austrian towns of Petrovaradin/Novi Sad, Osijek, Szeged, and Temesvár (Timișoara). Also Zemun, just across from Belgrade, had a large increase in population following the Habsburg withdrawal. Receiving mostly German artisans but also Serb and Greek merchants, Zemun remained under Habsburg rule, equipped with several privileges, and follows another path in the century to come. Already by the mid-eighteenth century we find several stately mansions, churches, and a primary school. (Stefanović-Vilofsky 1908:60) For more than another century Zemun thus became an Austrian town just at the doorstep of the Ottoman Empire, and subsequently the main reference for the Belgradians for emulating European ways.

That so little of the Austrian Baroque Belgrade has survived into the twentieth century has sometimes led to the misleading conclusion that this town had been completely demolished upon return of the Ottomans. A century after the takeover, however, an English traveller still stumbled into

“a singular looking street, composed of the ruins of ornamented houses in the imposing, but too elaborate style of architecture, which was in vogue in Vienna, during the life of Charles the Sixth, and which was a corruption of the style de Louis Quatorze. These buildings were half-way up concealed from view by common old bazaar shops.

³⁰ Also Johann Lukas von Hildebrandt, architect of the prince's Belvedere Palace (1717-1724) at Vienna, had started his career as fortification engineer in the service of Prince Eugene of Savoy (cf. Uzelac 2004).

This was the “Lange Gasse,” or main street of the German town during the Austrian occupation of twenty-two years, from 1717 to 1739. Most of these houses were built with great solidity, and many still have the stucco ornaments that distinguish this style. The walls of the palace of Prince Eugene are still standing complete, but the court-yard is filled up with rubbish, at least six feet high, and what were formerly the rooms of the ground-floor have become almost cellars. The edifice is called to this day, “*Prinzeß Konak*.” This mixture of the coarse, but picturesque features of oriental life, with the dilapidated stateliness of palaces in the style of the full-bottom-wigged Vanbrughs of Austria, has the oddest effect imaginable.” (Paton 1845:59-60)

Another interesting account is that of the Ottoman chronicler Mehmet Subhi, who recorded that the “palace” of the civil and military administrator Prince Alexander of Württemberg was handed over to the Ottoman governor, and that this residence later burned down (see translation by Hauptmann et al. 1987:140,159-60,207). This building identified by Paton and others as the palace of the Prince Eugene was really the military barracks built during Württemberg’s government (“*Alexander-Kaserne*”), which, as another eyewitness confirms, indeed served as the Ottoman pasha’s residence when Gudenus (1957:21) visited the town in 1740.

1.3.2. Dubrovnik and the Herzegovina

The connection between Dubrovnik (Ragusa) and the Porte was based on economic and political interests from which both sides profited much more than if the commune were an actual Ottoman possession in the strict sense. The Ottoman impact on culture and architecture of the quasi-Republic ruled by its Patrician class, which did not mind paying regular tributes to the Ottomans for “protection” as long as it served the commune’s interests toward rival Venice, was thus negligible. Dubrovnik, surrounded by Ottoman territories on all sides, remained within an Italianate-Adriatic cultural orbit, becoming “the main window of Bosnia and Hercegovina towards Western European culture” (Pašić 1994:190). When a devastating earthquake shattered the proud commune in 1667, Italians were called in to redesign the city, whereby it acquired some Baroque characteristics.³¹ It was at this time that the broad main street with its uniform burgher houses emerged, and the cathedral received its characteristic dome.³²

While treating the Ragusan merchant colonies in the Ottoman cities would exceed the scope of this study, it must however be noted that masters from the coast played a not unimportant role in Balkans architecture since the middle ages.³³ Particularly in Bosnia and even more so in Herzegovina we see that the skilled masters from the nearby coast were also sought after in the Ottoman period.³⁴ Their impact on Ottoman-Bosnian

³¹ The three great Baroque churches from after the earthquake – St Vlaho, the Cathedral, and the Jesuit Church – were, for example, all designed by Italians (cf. Trifunović 1981:XXXV).

³² For a comprehensive account on the history of Dubrovnik, including occasional perspectives on architecture, see Harris (2003).

³³ This accounts, for instance, for the Romanesque rather than Byzantine appearance for some of the medieval Orthodox monasteries in the old Serbian territories.

³⁴ Under the leadership of Ramadan Ağa, a close aid to the celebrated Mimar Sinan, and next to a delicate decoration possibly attributable to Persian artists, masters from Dubrovnik, for example, proved

architecture can be discerned not only in the different building techniques employed for many mosques in Bosnia, but also in that some Herzegovinian mosques' minarets intriguingly look like church-towers.³⁵ In terms of ornament a particularly curious example of this interaction is the mosque of Nesuh-aga Vučijaković at Mostar (1568), which displays several elements of Renaissance and Gothic architecture; a mixture characteristic for Dubrovnik. More than in the mosques, the Dalmatian influence is visible in one particular building type: the clock-towers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which, with their quadrangular body and pyramidal roofs, reminded many an observer of the Adriatic campanile.³⁶

With those of Sarajevo and Banja Luka probably the best known, it is in the Herzegovina in the Dalmatian hinterland that we find the largest concentration. One particularly interesting example is the clock-tower (*sahat kula*, from trk. *saat kulesi*) at Trebinje [Ill.1.13],³⁷ only a few kilometres from the Ottoman border with Dubrovnik. Commissioned when the local Osman Pasha Resulbegović fortified Trebinje, whereto many Muslim families from the now Venetian coast had resettled in the first three decades of the eighteenth century,³⁸ it had been built by a master from the nearby coast

responsible for the construction of the Aladža ("colored") mosque at Foča (1550-1). In an act of barbarity, this mosque sometimes reputed to be the most beautiful Ottoman mosque in the Balkans, was blown up in 1992. For the involvement of builders from Dubrovnik in other monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see also Pašić (1994:153) and Zlatar (2003).

³⁵ But also Ottoman forms had an impact of Christian religious architecture. See, for example, Andrejević (1963) on "Islamic" features in Serbian monasteries of the Ottoman period. Bouras (1991:118) also mentions examples from Athens where Ottoman construction and forms have influenced churches in Athens.

³⁶ For pictures and a few notes, see Pašić (1994:64-5,89-90, and 191-3).

³⁷ Following Hasandedić (1990:240) and the sources he quotes, the Sahat kula in Trebinje was built at the beginning of the eighteenth century, probably by the Dizdarević family, a branch of the Resulbegovići, who in winters resided below the tower.

³⁸ Another settlement in Herzegovina that grew as a result of developments in this period is Stolac. A first mosque (Selimiye) at the Vidoš fortress (of which Stolac later emerged as a suburb) had been built in 1519 by masters from the Dalmatian island of Korčula. The fortress was destroyed in 1593, and only renovated

at the beginning of the century. The decidedly western appearance of the edifice from the first half of the eighteenth century – with semicircular window openings, the cornice, and protruding pieces of stone - has led the Turkish architect Ayverdi (1978:469) to erroneously date the “rococo-rocaille” structure into the nineteenth century.

Unfortunately, the mosques built in this period, the Sultanahmet Mosque (1719-20), named in honour of the Sultan, and the Osman-paša Resulbegović mosque (around 1726) – both built by masters from the coast and showing some coastal characteristics - were wantonly destroyed in the 1990s war.³⁹ A Council of Europe report (1994), however, attests the latter “decorative fittings in the style of Turkish baroque”. That this decoration, so far from the imperial centre and so close to the Adriatic, would have really reflected the style of the post-1750s phenomenon later coined “Ottoman Baroque” of course appears somewhat questionable. Following the dates provided by Hasandedić (1990:232,236), the fact that the first mosque (after one destroyed by the Uskoks in the seventeenth century) was built only in 1719-20, thirteen years after Resulbegović was made pasha and moved to Trebinje, and allegedly with the stones of the older ruined mosque, is also somewhat surprising. Is it in the fact that his families

starting from the beginning of the eighteenth century because of bandit incursions of Dalmatian Uskoks. In this period four new mosques were built. It should be mentioned that the rather individualist Podgradska džamija (mosque of Ali Rizvanbegović) dates, in its present form, not from its foundation in the 1730s (as habitually stated), but from a renovation in 1812-3, and then again in 1888-9. (cf. Hasandedić 1990:7-9,15,18-9,23,30)

³⁹ An interesting anecdote, narrated by Hasandedić (1990:238), is that after the second mosque was built, the Sultan accused Osman of building a new mosque in his own name that was more beautiful than the one previously built in honor of the Sultan. Ahmed III then issued a *ferman* that ordered Osman and his nine sons to death. He hurried to Istanbul to defend himself, but was still executed in 1729.

were recent converts that we have to look for an apparent lack of zeal in religious patronage?⁴⁰

The Resulbegovići are also our connection to some monuments built in the coastal city of Ulcinj (now Montenegro), which then remained under Ottoman control. There, a different part of the same family had resettled after the fall of their native Herceg Novi in 1687, and held leading positions into the twentieth century.⁴¹ Also there, the main Ottoman monuments - five mosques, a *hamam*, and a clocktower - all date from the century after 1689. A curious example of a fountain is that named after Sinan Pasha. Built probably around 1719 (when also the mosque of Sinan Pasha was erected), it looks more like a Renaissance work than an Ottoman *çeşme*. [Ill. 1.16]

⁴⁰ The Resulbegovići had settled in today's Herzegovina only after the coastal city of Herceg Novi they hailed from fell to the Venetians in 1687. Osman's father was born a Burović, and had changed his Christian name Mišo for the Muslim Resul when he converted. His sons thereafter continued the patronymic Resulbegović ("descendents of Resul Bey"). Before they came to Trebinje in 1707 when Osman was made *kapetan*, they had first settled in the nearby Stari Slan, where they also built a castle and some *konaks*. (Hasandedić 1990:232) Osman was in fact the first *sancakbey* of Herzegovina residing at Trebinje. Previous administrators had resided at Dračevo, which was destroyed in the uprising of Bajo Pivljanin. See also Figurić (1930).

⁴¹ The Russian historian/consul Aleksandar Giljferding (Hilferding) called the Resulbegovići a "local Muslim aristocracy" in 1859 (cf. Zirojević 2001).

1.4. Recapitulation

Of all the periods dealt with here, the first half of the eighteenth century has probably attracted least attention in the literature, save for the “Tulip Era”. Its powerful imagery directing the eyes toward the capital, little has been written about the provinces in this period. It can be suggested that, at least in the western half of the Balkans, construction projects mainly consisted of repair and reconstructions. An exception to this is the complex at Šumen, probably the most monumental (surviving) example of Ottoman architecture in the Balkans from the entire eighteenth century, and closely following trends emanating from the capital. Here, an analysis of this building in comparison with the mosque of Damat İbrahim Pasha in the Anatolian Nevşehir, with which it is evidently stylistically related, may also yield additional information. Given Halil Şerif Pasha’s admiration for this Grand Vizier, it should also not be completely impossible that he had commissioned the same architect that had built the Grand Vizier’s complex at Nevşehir, but this has to remain a speculation. As with the “Tulip Era” in general, a wish for “westernization” is certainly not sufficient alone to explain the creations of this period.

Another interesting offspring of the “Tulip Era” has been noted in the designs of the Phanariote princes in the Danubian Principalities, and should be investigated further through analysis of visual materials, which the article by Theodorescu (2002) regrettably did not offer, as well as descriptions by visitors. That such cultural export from Istanbul through the Constantinopolitan Greeks seems to not have been noted before, at least in the Ottomanist context, has perhaps to do with the historiographical traditions: with the Romanian lands never forming a “core territory” of the Ottoman state, not integrated

into many mainstream Ottoman institutions (and thus Ottoman history); the generally negative assessment of the foreign Phanariote reign by Romanian historians; and on a focus on the Hellenic rather than the Ottoman element by Greek historians, who have also displayed great interest in “their” role in eighteenth-century Romania.

Another region not studied well in the Ottoman context is the Ottoman hinterland of the Adriatic. Here, the conclusion was that a western influence - with the main vehicle being the builders from the coast working for Ottoman clients - was nothing new to the eighteenth century, but essentially a continuation of practices necessitated by professional geography. The rather individualistic monuments of this region suggest that further investigation into the specificities of the culture and society of this micro-region may yield interesting results as well.

The redesign of Ottoman Belgrade under Austrian occupations falls out of the scope of this study, but is nevertheless an interesting chapter in the history of the eighteenth century Balkans. This is in part because, when the Ottomans re-conquered the city, they inherited (and, as we have seen, also came to inhabit at least one of several) actual Baroque buildings.

2. “Ottoman Baroque” and beyond

2.1. Historical framework

After the violent close of the “Tulip Era”, and the restoration of Ottoman rule over Serbia, the period 1739-1768 (“the long peace”) was characterized by the total absence of military conflicts. It was in this period that the phenomenon later called “Ottoman Baroque” develops, largely in parallel (though unrelated) with a “Serbian Baroque” among the Serbs who had fled to Austrian soil. From the opposite direction, and on Ottoman territory, a Baroque influence began to be felt in the interior of the Orthodox churches. At the same time anti-Greek feelings among the Slav subjects of the empire begin to mount, next to an evident mistrust of their Muslim overlords. Early “nationalist” writers warned of a cultural domination by their Orthodox co-religionists, a process only further aggravated by the closure of the Slav bishoprics of Ohrid (Ahrida) and Peć (Īpek) in the 1760s, whereupon their responsibilities are henceforth controlled by the Greek patriarch at Constantinople.⁴² In 1762 the Bulgarian clergyman Paisij Hilendarski (of Hilendar monastery) concluded his “Slavo-Bulgarian History”, seen as the starting point of the “Bulgarian National Revival”, and containing several passages warning of Greek cultural imperialism.

The term “Balkan Renaissance” is occasionally more generally used for the “cultural emancipation” of the peoples of the south and central Balkans after 1750. An early manifestation to a new self-understanding of the Christians in the empire, the city of

⁴² Another interpretation is that the suppression of the Slavic patriarchates was really not aimed at strengthening Greek predominance over the Balkan peoples but intended “to relieve their acute financial embarrassment” (McGowan 1994:669).

Moschopolis saw its peak by the mid-eighteenth century, only to be soon thereafter devastated in several incursions, heralding an age of instability, of banditry and the *ayan*, which was to dominate life in much of the Balkans toward the end of the eighteenth century (to be treated in greater detail in Ch.3). The “long peace” between the Ottomans and neighboring powers ended in 1768 with the Russo-Turkish war and the consequent Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca (1774), which both proved to be crucial turning points in the history of the Ottoman Empire. For the first time a traditionally Muslim and Turkic-speaking territory, the Crimea, was permanently lost to a Christian power, Russia, which had become a threat to the Ottomans in the north and increasingly comes to assume a self-proclaimed role as a protector of the Ottomans’ Orthodox subjects. The treaty, however, was in part also responsible for increasing wealth generated among an Orthodox Balkans merchant class in the period thereafter. The Black Sea and the Dardanelles were now opened to ships flying a Russian flag; a provision of which many Greeks took advantage. Another stipulation of the treaty allowed the Russians to build a church in Istanbul.⁴³ After these defeats the minds of the sultans began to be set on reform, peaking a half-century later in the Tanzimat Edict (1839).

But also a new era of relationships with western powers commenced. In gratitude for diplomatic aid, France was given the privilege of a permanent “capitulation” in 1740. This meant that within the empire French (and soon thereafter other western powers’) citizens were not subject to the Sultan’s legal and fiscal jurisdiction, remaining under the laws of their own king (or republic) and exempted from Ottoman taxes. While such previously temporary measures were harmless in the sixteenth century, they proved to

⁴³ Since this church was never built, Dawson (1990:56) suspects that the intention behind such demand was solely for Russia to be elevated to a level of theoretical equality with the Catholic powers.

be dangerously undermining Ottoman sovereignty in the last decades of the empire.

(Quataert 2000:77)

2.2. The “Ottoman Baroque”

2.2.1. Its characteristics and place in historiography

To be clear, the phenomenon termed “Ottoman (or Turkish) Baroque (and/or Rococo)” was neither a contemporary label for this style, nor did western visitors identify it as an Ottoman variant of the European art and architecture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, it is a product of modern historiography. Therein, its development is unquestionably linked with the thesis of a gradual imperial decline accompanied (if not caused) by a westernization of Ottoman traditions.

In an important piece (“Nationalism and Art”, 1934), the young republican architect Aptullah Ziya (cit. in Bozdoğan 2001:50) identified the period since the Tulip Era as that in which “the historical process of contamination” of Turkish architecture began. That Celal Esad [Arseven] in his “L’art ture” (1939) first referred to the post-classical period in the writing of Turkish art history at all attested to this publication’s “pioneering role”. Significantly, he classified the post-classical period into “Baroque”, “Empire”, and “Neoclassical”, in sequential order, as European styles which have entered into Turkish art (Ödekan 2000:56). Doğan Kuban’s thesis from the mid-twentieth century (supervised by an Italian professor) was the first more comprehensive work on this specific subject, and really the work that put the “Turkish Baroque” on the map. Only in the 1980s the previously accepted terminology regarding styles was opened to discussion.

Most authors, nonetheless, agree on the building with which “Ottoman Baroque” began, namely the Nuruosmaniye mosque (1749-55) [Ill. 2.1-5]. Though next to the

Sa'dabad Palace probably the most often mentioned single monument of Ottoman eighteenth century architecture, much of its history remains a mystery. It begins with identifying the person to whose creative energies the flamboyance of this structure without precedent (and, arguably, without successor) can be attributed. While a certain Simeon Kalfa is generally assumed to be credited as architect, his career before and after the Nuruosmaniye project remains obscure. "Whether he was an Ottoman carpenter-architect, like Sinan, or a man with experience in European countries, one cannot say", writes Kuban (1996:350), but that "Nur-u Osmaniye and the buildings around it do not imitate, in their planning and decoration, any known Baroque building and decoration ... might indicate that the architect had had a certain visual experience with the Baroque but not much experience in a European country." To Goodwin (1971:387) there is a possibility that "foreign advice, French in particular, was sought but some elements of the complex remain traditional, or a possible logical development from the past. Other elements in its design are alien although assimilated to an extent which makes it most improbable that it was the work of a man inexperienced in Western baroque and rococo." Kuran (1977:313-5), while first rightfully pointing out to that it was "obviously inspired" by the much earlier mosque of Mihrimah Sultan at Edirnekapı (1560s), a work of Sinan, does discern "a break with the past, far beyond the normal processes of evolution. The use of European motifs clearly points to outside influence and possibly the hand of a foreign architect. Yet curiously, the Nuruosmaniye does not invoke the spirit of the baroque, for that which is baroque does not penetrate the skin but merely scratches the surface"; or, in the words of Kuban (1954:36), simply "old tunes sung with new lyrics".

Kuran (1977:313) thus finds the significance of the monument in the treatment of certain decorative features: the classical stalactite (or chevron) pattern is replaced by a

simplified form of the Ionic capital. Although the great arches are slightly pointed, others are round or multi-foil. Portals are taller than customary and their niches are crowned by tiers of diminishing semicircles instead of the classical stalactites. Hamadeh (2004:36) pronounces the uniqueness of the Nuruosmaniye in that it was the first Ottoman religious building to “exhibit a panoply of western, particularly French Baroque and Neoclassical, details like scrolls, shells, cable and round moldings, undulating and heavily molded cornices, concave and convex façades, round arches, engaged pillars, and fluted capitals”.⁴⁴ In addition, it was the only Ottoman mosque to have a courtyard shaped in the form of a horseshoe.⁴⁵

In European travellers’ accounts the “curious tale” was recounted that for the building of this mosque the Sultan had procured the plans of Europe’s greatest churches to form his own perfect model, and that then the *ulema*, the class of Islamic scholars, opposed it, whereupon the design was made less “offensive”.⁴⁶ While admitting that it also cannot be proven that this story was entirely fabricated, Hamadeh still noted it as

⁴⁴ Again, we should not conclude misleadingly that this mosque’s obvious stylistic references to Europe already meant that all western imports were henceforth welcomed or accepted. Göçek (1996:93) reports that Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757-74) had been irritated with his subjects dressing in the “Frankish” way, whereupon he issued an imperial decree in 1758 limiting “Frankish clothing” to foreign embassies’ employees.

⁴⁵ Hamadeh also mentions it to have been the first Istanbul mosque to have a generously fenestrated façade and a royal ramp, but this seems not to be correct if we consider the very similar fenestration of the sixteenth-century mosque of Mihrimah Sultan, and the ramps at the Sultanahmet and Yeni Valide mosques from the seventeenth century.

⁴⁶ This story has then also entered the writings of Turkish scholars. To which extent shows a paragraph in Göçek’s well known work on westernization in the Ottoman Empire (1996:41), where, in reference to Denel (1982:28), the following is recounted: “For the construction of this mosque, the sultan had pictures and models of the most famous religious buildings brought from Italy, England, and France, and he had a mosque plan drawn accordingly. Yet this plan was never applied because Ottoman religious scholars, upon seeing the plan, stated that the building looked more like a Christian temple than a mosque – they suggested that a more Islamic shape be adopted to prevent unrest among the populace. Another plan that united Western and Ottoman styles more to the liking of the religious scholars was drawn up.” Cerasi (1999:130), picking up on the selective rejection of certain alien form, comments as follows: “We do not know how near those first designs were to Western religious architecture, nor which particular elements had been perceived as alien or non-Islamic. We do know that there had been no specific protest when the portals were decorated with Rococo modanatures which only vaguely recalled the traditional muqarnas.” But would the Muslim religious scholars have really had the trained eye to identify as “Rococo” (and thus to protest) one feature in a design, that looked, on the whole, very familiar?

“odd that that not even a hint of such intentions on the part of Mahmud I should be dropped by the usually well informed court chroniclers”. Also as to the style no references to an intended Europeanness of the monument can be found; unlike earlier examples, such as Mehmed II’s gate at the Topkapı complex, which fifteenth-century historians had described as having “Frankish towers”.⁴⁷ This does, however, not mean that the unusual style was not noticed by the contemporaries. The assistant comptroller of the mosque’s construction, a certain Ahmed Efendi, referred to the building as “the honorable mosque in the new style”. (Hamadeh 2004:36-8)

For Cerasi (2000:36-38), already the completion of the Nuruosmaniye marked the end of a phase that can justly be called Baroque for its outstanding ornament on projects of the 1740s and ‘50s clearly referring to European Baroque. The period after 1755, “though still defined as Ottoman Baroque by most scholars, actually brought a sort of decantation of the Baroque spirit in which the ornamental aspects are not determinant.” Already in 1757 the construction of the Ayazma mosque in Üsküdar [Ill. 2.6-7] began, to Goodwin (1971:387) a “small version of the Nuruosmaniye”, where several details follow the style of the Nuruosmaniye so closely “that it would seem either that the architect was the same man or that he had worked extensively on the former building.” Completed in 1760, it is only one of Sultan Mahmut III’s three important mosques. The process of elongation and sense of height continues at the Lâleli mosque (1759-1763), based on a podium whose height Kuran (1977:307) already finds “exaggerated”. Excluding the (fairly conservative) almost *ex novo* reconstruction of the Fatih mosque, destroyed in an earthquake in 1766, the Lâleli mosque was to be the last Sultan’s mosque in the old town. A novelty with two of his successor Abdülhamit’s mosques

⁴⁷ Indeed, Fatih’s gate was modelled after the Byzantine gate of Saint Barbara and “may have involved some European artists.” (Hamadeh 2004:35)

was their placement on the shoreline of the Bosphorus. Unlike previous projects, the Beylerbeyi mosque (1778) did not ignore the sea but opened its garden-like courtyard to it; indubitably an expression of a newly acquired sense of theatricality. His other mosque on the Bosphorus, in the newly founded quarter of Emirgan, faces the water with a timber façade typical for the Bosphorus mansions.⁴⁸ Next to perceptibly changed approaches in ornamentation, placement and height in the mosques of the second half of the eighteenth century, Cerasi (2000:39) has noted the rear-façades (the *mibrab* walls) are exceptionally elaborate in some mosques from this period, while entrance façades are conventional. He thence deducts that

“*mibrab* facades were subject to fewer inhibitions [where] architects could experiment creative forms for their own satisfaction. In certain moments of architectural history, when innovation is in the air and yet patrons or public opinion still demand that traditional conventions be respected, architects have experimented with innovation in the less visible parts of their designs ...We might then deduce that the architect’s perception of his own role had changed, that he was aware of the distinction between what he was required to express and what he was capable to do in his own field if he was let alone to do so.”

⁴⁸ Finished in 1781, Goodwin (1971:398-9) finds it already “so Western in atmosphere that it is difficult not to believe that the architect was a foreigner.” Suitably, he also notes that the reign of Abdülhamit I (1774-89) had seen the arrival of “increasing numbers of foreigners in all the creative fields, often men of indifferent caliber who could not find lucrative appointments at home.”

2.2.2. The impact of the “Ottoman Baroque” on non-Muslims’ and provincial architecture

In the Balkan provinces large mosques from the second half of the eighteenth century are again rare, and no building comparable to contemporary ones in the capital are known.⁴⁹ More than on the façades, the “new style” becomes visible in the interiors, whose decorative programs had also undergone changes in the first half of the eighteenth century, an early example being the mosque of Grand Vizier Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha completed in 1734 [Ill.2.8. see also 2.4,7,10-12]; but it also transcended the boundaries of Muslim religious architecture. In the Fener quarter, the Constantinopolitan Greeks, many of who were able to accumulate some wealth in that period, constructed houses built of stone rather than the traditionally employed wood.⁵⁰ While only a dozen of these have survived into the twenty-first century, pictorial evidence shows that in the interiors Baroque-influence decorative programs not dissimilar to those in the mosques were used [Ill. 2.9.] (cf. Sezgin 1990 and 1993:349-351).

⁴⁹ McGowan (1994:639-40) sees the eighteenth century changes in architectural production and typology as a direct result of changed expectations: “The unprecedented program of fortress building during the first decades of the century gave perfect architectural expression to a more defensive outlook upon the world. The fact that few great mosques were built in the eighteenth century reflects not so much a lack of means as a lack of confidence. It is arguable whether the Ottoman elites became more or less worldly. But their expectation of worldly success, as defined by their forefathers, was in decline. The architectural expression of this shift in attitude can also be seen in the characteristic civic structures of the century: libraries, schools, baths, fountains, and shoreline pavilions – embellishments to ease life in a transient and unsteady world.” Cerasi (1999:131) similarly wants to explain the architectural production of this period with that the “late Ottomans lived in an emotional world. The Islamic universe had long lost its intellectual domain of social and artistic life. Aesthetics and feeling rather than ethics and rational reflection gave form to daily life and cultural production.”

⁵⁰ Stephanidou (1997) has noted that these houses in Fener, as well as some in Pera, were in fact the only ones to respond to the sultans’ repeated decrees prescribing the use of stone in residential construction to counteract the frequent fires.

In the western Balkans, following the destruction caused by Eugene of Savoy at the end of the seventeenth century, several mosques were repaired and also repainted in the following century.⁵¹ In Sarajevo, greatly devastated in 1697, Mutapčić (1997:459) already identified two different styles in the redecorations taking place between the 1750s and 1770s: the “classical Islamic arabesque” and other interiors stylistically approaching the decorative painting of the “Turkish Baroque” [e.g. Ill. 2.10]. Among the new motifs in painting are naturalistic forms (leaves, flowers, trees), but also architectural elements (capitals, oculi, stalactites, and marble and stone surfaces).

A significant exception to the stagnation of mosque-building in the eighteenth century Balkans are the Albanian lands, much of the southwest Balkans including areas in present-day Greece, Macedonia, and Serbia/Kosovo. The reason is simple: While most of the other parts of the Balkans had acquired large Muslim populations due to immigration (Macedonia, Thrace, eastern Bulgaria) or large-scale conversions (Bosnia) already by the sixteenth century, it is only after the seventeenth century that the majority of the population of Albania - till then little more than a neglected mountainous buffer territory on the edge of Ottoman Europe - converted to Islam in order to improve their social and economic status. This naturally generated a new demand for Muslim religious architecture. Most of the buildings of relevance to our survey, however, date only from the last quarter of that century, and are therefore included in the next chapter. There they also belong for another reason, namely that the architectural influences from Istanbul of the period treated so far remain rather limited for a variety of reasons; one being that the builders responsible came not from the distant capital but - as in previous

⁵¹ In Prizren, invaded and devastated by the Austrians in 1689/90 and then again in 1737, many schools and mosques were repaired by a certain Salih from a village near Prizren. Thereupon awarded the title of Pasha, he had earlier exerted himself in the expulsion of the Austrians, and eventually became the founder of a hereditary dynasty; the Albanian Rotullu family of Pashas, which ruled Prizren well into the nineteenth century. (Kiel 2004:339)

times - were locals (in a regional sense). Much more than in the classical period, geography became an important factor in the characteristics of late Ottoman architecture. At the opposite end of the peninsula, and thus fairly close to the capital, the best example of the impact of trends from the capital transported to the provinces remains the mosque at Şumen, [Ill. 2.11] for which we also must consider the likelihood that the painted decoration in the interior at least partly dates from maybe as much as a century after its construction in the 1740s.

Back in Istanbul, another curious influence of the “Ottoman Baroque” should be mentioned, as it can be found where least expected: in a Latin Catholic church.⁵² The altar and chancel area of Pera’s Saint Mary Draperis (1767-1772) were truly late (European) Baroque, “an imposition of the Austrian ambassador [who paid for it] rather than a choice of the local friars”, as Girardelli remarked. But whereas this prayer hall was “an architectural symbol of Roman allegiance” shaped by an Italian artist, Girardelli supposes that the space of the refectory, built later and with an unmistakable “Ottoman Baroque” appearance,⁵³ “was probably the work of an Armenian *kalfa* with experience in the construction of Islamic buildings of the new, post-classical style.” The choice for this style, however, was not purely incidental, if we follow Girardelli. The language of Armenian Catholicism (to which the majority of Pera’s Armenian community adhered) was not Armenian but Turkish, used by missionaries and in masses and ceremonies. Girardelli thus interprets the Ottoman elements in the refectory as a decision to

⁵² Ottoman influence on Christian architecture arose from the sensibilities to Muslim environments and was also noticeable in the structural layout of churches. The Church of Saint Francis (1660s, destroyed in 1696), for example, serving the Catholics of Galata, had women’s galleries in the prayer hall, an anomaly explained to surprised visitors from Italy as a “reflection of local habits”. Catholic churches of Istanbul would continue to adopt this feature until the late nineteenth century. (Girardelli 2005:236,256)

⁵³ This is most evident in the characteristic multi-centered arches and capitals of the arcade in the parish office. The Ottoman structures Girardelli (2005:241-2) chose for the establishment of this analogy are the Nuruosmaniye mosque, the *medrese* of Seyyid Hasan Pasha, and the *küllîye* of Beşir Ağa, all from the mid-eighteenth century.

architecturally “speak Turkish” as well, according to what an Armenian audience, largely responsible for the growth of Catholicism in Pera in the eighteenth century, “could perceive as a pleasant, novel image of its own culture and city.” Going even further he speaks of a “Catholic Ottoman-ness” in the eighteenth century, “which is gradually replaced by estrangement and conformity to nationally defined standards and cultural identity.” (Girardelli 2005:237,248,257)

2.3. On Orthodox Christian culture in the eighteenth century

2.3.1. The “Serbian Baroque” and the iconostasis as *ersatz*-façade

The second half of the eighteenth century saw a considerable stimulation in the crafts of painting and woodcarving. In the first half of the nineteenth century this development was increasingly felt in the interiors and exteriors of both secular and religious architectural and decorative programs particularly. Already in the eighteenth century a Baroque influence is noticeable in the transformation the Orthodox church iconostasis undergoes. As an object of relevance for this study, whose target is mainly architecture not artisanship, it may appear questionable.⁵⁴ However, as the restrictions on Christian architecture in the eighteenth century still prevented the façades from assuming an all too expressive character, we could consider the concentration of creative energies on this particular element as a kind of *ersatz*-architecture.⁵⁵ Maybe not so incidentally, some of these iconostases are reminiscent of the façades of Renaissance or Baroque churches.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ While we note its existence, the influence of Central European and Russian-Ukrainian Baroque on the painting of icons in the Balkan churches clearly transcends the scope of the study and is an entirely different subject.

⁵⁵ Interesting in this respect are also observations of an English traveller, who on two occasions noticed local Serbs' limited interest in the church exteriors (which, of course, is also not enough for a generalization). Visiting the medieval Studenica monastery, he remarked: “Those who accompanied us paid little attention to the architecture of the church, but burst into raptures at the sight of the carved wood of the screen, which had been most minutely and elaborately cut by Tsinsars [sic], (as the Macedonian Latins are called to this day).” Proceeding to the church of king Lazar at Kruševac, he lamented: “The late Servian [sic] governor had the Vandalism to whitewash the exterior, so that at a distance it looks like a vulgar parish church. Within is a great deal of gilding and bad painting; pity that the late governor did not whitewash the inside instead of the out.” (Paton 1845:192,218)

⁵⁶ Koeva (2005) tries to explain this with that “iconostasis forms follow the architectonics and composition of those stylistic genres that architecture would most likely favour in the respective period ... In terms of form, they resemble the outer walls of a building, with their window-like vents hosting the images of heavenly creatures to mediate the communion of Lord and the faithful congregation. ... During the 18th and 19th centuries, Bulgarian iconostases were composed in reproduction of the architectural facades of Renaissance and Baroque buildings, obviously taking the effort to conform to the specific relations and proportions of the latter styles in the architectonic structure, and to reproduce the number and form of elements characteristic of classical order systems.”

The iconostasis in the Balkans is for the most part a feature of the Ottoman period and in particular a trend emerging from the monasteries of Mount Athos in the seventeenth century. While in the previous centuries there had been a strong drive to cling on to the old traditions, it is in this century that the previously marble or stone screen (used to separate the altar from the public parts of the church) was increasingly replaced by the wooden iconostasis, then spreading over the Balkans and consolidating itself in the eighteenth century. That the relief, on the screens still very low, gradually gets deeper on the wooden iconostasis is usually linked to a western influence, Venetian in origin, as the Athonite monks had called on the craftsmen of Crete⁵⁷ to produce their iconostases (and paintings as well). (cf. Nikonanos 1997, Koeva 2005)

While Hoddinott (1954:278) writes of a “vigorous tradition of [Macedonian] wood carving that, after four centuries of Turkish domination, exhibits not a single trace of Oriental influence”, Nikonanos (1997:261-2) sees in the Athonite eighteenth century iconostases - next to Byzantine and Renaissance motifs - also elements of European and “oriental Baroque”. “Greek folk Baroque” is the term he then uses to describe for an Athonite iconostasis of the 1740s, but it is with “modern Greek Baroque” that he categorizes the century after it: “Fretwork dominated and the relief was high, almost sculptural. Forms tended to be elliptical, the arrangement diagonal, the whole surface was gilded, there was a strong impression of depth, and the thematic repertory was enriched with fresh motifs and new combinations of old ones.” The gradual increase of plasticity can be traced. The iconostasis of the Sveti Naum monastery (1711) near Ohrid [Ill. 2.13], one of the earliest examples, still featured carving in low relief, displaying

⁵⁷ The island, a possession of Venice since the Fourth Crusade (1204), became an Ottoman possession only after 1669.

floral designs and animals, but no human figures. Following Hoddinott (1954:278,281) high relief had been “barred on the grounds that they were too reminiscent of idolatry, an objection subsequently reinforced by the popularity of the style, in particular following the development of Baroque, in the Roman Catholic West.” He then maintains that the trend for high relief with free human form had particularly spread from the Serbian monastery of Hilandar at Athos, and claims that “an original and distinctive Macedonian style” can be identified, whose

“principal foreign influence appears to have been the once rejected Baroque, filtering across the mountains from the Adriatic [!] coast. As during the Middle Ages, the artists, who regarded themselves rather as craftsmen, ceased to be drawn chiefly from the ranks of monasteries. The leading wood carvers, in fact, were a pastoral tribe, the Mijaks, who had their centre at Galičnik near Debar, close to the present Albanian border. [They] produced much of the best work of the first half of the nineteenth century, which can still be seen today ... in Skopje [Ill. 2.14], Priština, Prilep, Bitolj, Štip, Kruševo, and in many other places.”

For Stelè (1972:356), these iconostases were, however, more reminiscent of the art of woodcarving of the seventeenth century Early Baroque, than with the more contemporary Late Baroque in Europe. In his chapter in the survey “Kunstschatze in Jugoslawien”, four iconostases of the Debar School⁵⁸, created between 1811 and 1840 in present-day Macedonia, are the only works created on Ottoman territories that he qualified for inclusion under the label “Baroque”. It is only second to those in Macedonia, that he sees the artistic significance of iconostases created by the Serbs on Austrian territory in the eighteenth century, thereby largely contemporary with those in

⁵⁸ “Debar school”, as should be noted, is a bit of a misnomer, as the craftsmen hailed not from this town in the Albanian-Macedonian border region, but from the outlying villages. Vasiliev (1965:147) alternatively suggests the wording “Galičnik-Reka school”, after the Reka region (east of Debar) and the major settlement Galičnik.

the Ottoman Balkans. A difference, however, is that outside the Sultan's domain the Baroque also left its impact on the exteriors of Orthodox churches.

While already the Serbian churches in Szentendre near Budapest from the 1690s had been stylistically assimilated into a Central European mainstream, the most important example of the phenomenon later termed "Serbian Baroque" is the synodal church [Ill. 2.17-8] at Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci), "the real Serbian capital of the 18th century" according to Castellan (1992:201).⁵⁹ Built between 1758 and 1762 by German masters and represented by its façade typical for the Danube monarchy's architecture of its time, Medaković (1991:42) remarked that "as a pale and faded memory to the old architecture there had initially been a small cupola in the centre of the nave, which today is not extant." Of the monastery churches at the nearby Fruška Gora ("the Serbian Athos"), where some existing medieval/post-Byzantine churches were "baroquified" mostly through construction of a belfry or through enlargement of window openings,⁶⁰ some new structures had been sponsored by Serbian merchants, signifying the emergence of a Serb bourgeoisie on Austrian soil as patrons of (religious) art. This, however, did not mean that all of this emerging bourgeoisie were fervent upholders of Serbian religiosity. Spokesman of a generation educated in the age of Joseph II, the later national hero Dositej Obradović, for instance, had expressed that it were

"much better to translate and print in our language one intelligent and useful book, regardless of the cost involved, than to build twelve belfrys [sic] and to hang a large bell

⁵⁹ In 1713 it was in Sremski Karlovci that a Serbian Orthodox metropolitanate on Austrian soil was established, including the necessary infrastructure. It was promoted to a patriarchate in 1848, after the Serbs had supported Austria in the Hungarian revolt.

⁶⁰ The odd mixture of Byzantine cupolas and Baroque belfries, which we see for example at the originally sixteenth century monastery church of Jazak (Fruška Gora), to which in 1753 a Baroque belfry was added, later gains acceptance and is purposefully built, as we see for example in the "Upper Church" of Sremski Karlovci from 1746, and as late as the Serbian Cathedral of Sarajevo from the 1860s.

in each of them: our children would not gain a grain of intelligence if the bells were to ring for a century.” (quoted in Jelavich 1954:149-150)

In any case, the skills developed in the eighteenth century also benefited the refinement of interior ornamentation in residential architecture. By the nineteenth century often the same masters were responsible for the painting and woodcarving in churches, houses, and mosques. Unsurprisingly, we thus find similar decorative elements and techniques. While not all this can be used to establish Baroque analogies, we shall note that the eighteenth century iconostasis conformed to a truly Baroque code: the unification of architecture, plastic, and painting on a single work.

2.3.2. The rise and fall of Moschopolis

While only of secondary relevance for a discussion of Baroque influence in this period,⁶¹ the mysterious rise and fall of the city of Moschopolis (alb. Voskopojë) cannot be excluded from any architectural survey of the eighteenth century Balkans, be it to demonstrate what was in fact possible in that period. Stoianovich (1992:17) narrates the genesis and disappearance of this once large and flourishing centre of trade and urban culture as follows:

“Hidden in a mountain fastness [1115m above sea level] and thus long secure from the envy of outlaws and Ottoman officials, the residents of Moschopolis grew rich through the sale of the products of their flocks – wool, hides, and cheese – to Jewish buyers of Salonika and to Italian merchants. After the treaty of Passarowitz they extended their trade to Hungary. In the war years of 1769 and 1788, however, rude Albanian bandit raiders⁶² ... fell upon and devastated Moschopolis. At the head of the band in 1788 was the father of Ali pasha [of Ioannina]; Ali Pasha himself later completed the destruction, and soon, it is said, the town was reduced to two hundred shepherd huts.”⁶³

⁶¹ In the art history timeline of the Metropolitan Museum of New York [<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ht/09/eusb/ht09eusb.htm>], the Church of Saint Nicholas (1721), whose porch and interior is almost completely filled with portraits of saints, emperors, and warriors, is mentioned as one of “finest examples of the surge in Christian church-building that occurs during this century with the introduction of Baroque and Neoclassical structural developments and decorative motifs.” Peyfuß (1996:33) notes that the frescoes in the interior are indeed from the 1720s, but the murals in the porch date from 1750, and finds it worth noticing that the depictions include the donor of the church, Georgios Gyra. For an account (in Greek) of the churches of Moschopolis, see Konstandinou (1999).

⁶² In Koch’s version (1989:194) “the Turks”, in 1769 and 1789, sent penitentiary exhibitions to Moschopolis, which burnt down the houses of the Christians, but respected the churches. The explanation offered by Konstandinou (1999:137) is that the prosperity of Moschopolis “aroused the greed of the Turks and Albanians, who destroyed it in 1769.” For Peyfuß (1996:30) “the Turks” were in part responsible for the success of Moschopolis in the first place. As evidence, he points to the settlement having received privileges from the Valide Sultan, rather than having developed *despite* the Ottomans.

⁶³ Peyfuß (1996:12-3;30), however, reminds that the present inaccessibility conceals that in previous times the city was well connected from a caravan road from Berat, and to the region’s main centres (Korça, Elbasan, Ohrid, Kastoria, etc.). He also does not attribute the decline of Moschopolis after mid-century solely to the unquestionably destructive raids, but to that as a result of the Treaty of Belgrade (1739) the developing inland commerce deprived the city of its position as centre and distributor for the Adriatic trade. The survivors of the raids fled to the nearby town of Korçë or eastward to Macedonia, where they founded Kruševo as a successor to Moschopolis in 1770. A century later this city was a rich merchant town and centre of revolutionary activity.

The fact that, except for some churches, little has remained from this exclusively Christian settlement⁶⁴ in the Albanian-Greek-Macedonian border region has fostered romantic exaggerations about its golden age in the mid-eighteenth century (cf. Peyfuß 1996:8-46). While sometimes claimed to have had up to 70,000 inhabitants in its heyday, in Ottoman Europe thereby theoretically only surpassed by Constantinople, Stoianovich (1992:17) believes that even 40,000 around 1750 would have been “much too high”, and suggests that in this number the surrounding rural district may have been included. Peyfuß (1996:36) even deems a calculation of around 3,500 possible, and concludes that Moschopolis was certainly not one of the largest cities in the Balkans. Undisputed, however, is the existence of a higher school, several monumental churches, and a famous printing press, which elevated the settlement to a “metropolis of Orthodox Christian culture” (Kiel 1990a:25). In the educational facility that by the mid-eighteenth century even bore the name of “academy” (sometimes even called “university”), next to theology also history and philosophy were taught (Koch 1989:194). The city’s famous printing press produced at least 21 works between 1731 and 1769. Of great importance to the neighbouring archdiocese of Ohrid (Ahrida), the majority of the publications were hagiographies and religious texts (in Greek), but also a dictionary for all four languages used in the region – “simple Rhomaic” (=modern Greek), “Moesian Vlach”, Albanian, and Bulgarian(-Macedonian) – was published in 1762. With their number also sometimes put at three times that quantity, Koch (1989:194-4) also attests to the existence of 26 churches - Konstandinou (1999:137) speaks of 22 - and remarks that alone between 1721 and 1724 three unusually big basilicas were built, each holding around 1,000 worshippers. While many had interior domes hidden under pitched roofs

⁶⁴ Thereby it naturally enjoyed a larger degree of autonomy than Christian quarters in Ottoman towns with Muslim populations (Peyfuß 1996:32).

(conforming to Ottoman law), the monastery church of St John the Baptist outside the city had a freely projecting cupola. Peyfuß (1996:33-4) also mentions two churches having a belltower.

Mythified as a quasi “sunken Atlantis” of Orthodox Christian Balkan culture, the case of Moschopolis provides yet another example of a pre-national society hardly definable in modern national categories, yet typical for Ottoman Europe. Located in present-day Albania, its Vlach inhabitants were speakers of a language close to Romanian, but identified with their Greek religion and high culture. As such it does not surprise that there is more than one modern claimant to Moschopolis’ cultural heritage.

2.4. Recapitulation

Both the “Serbian Baroque” and the “Turkish Baroque” are modern concepts. The former, where the western influence is direct, definite, and traceable is, however, a less problematic designation than is the latter; in part, because the “Baroque” influence on Istanbul architecture was, as we have seen, not a linear process. A detailed critique, however, cannot be the subject of this work, but a basic acquaintance with its development and character (as in Ch.2.2.1) was still necessary as a framework for comparison with contemporary and successive developments in the Balkans. The excursus on Catholic churches in Istanbul may appear somewhat unrelated, but, and if we accept Girardelli’s theory, it is still interesting to see that a western patron would have commissioned some parts of a church in a stylistically “Turkish” vocabulary to cater to the cultural sensibilities of Ottoman Christians. How far we can apply this to other examples, perhaps in the Balkans, remains to be established.

However problematic the label “Ottoman Baroque” may be, it is indisputable that it embraces some of Istanbul’s most emblematic monuments. In the provinces, however, the “new style” of architecture again has few repercussions (as far, of course, as such absolute statement can be made in the context of the drastic decimation of the Ottoman architectural record in the Balkans). New directions in decorative painting, however, seem to spread rather quickly, which will also be explored in Ch.3.

It may be too daring to say that the Orthodox Church iconostasis developed as a kind of *ersatz*-façade, essentially as a reaction to the restriction that the church exteriors could not be properly embellished. That the focus of creative energies is re-directed towards

the interior, lessening the importance of architecture at the expense of graphic and plastic arts now combined towards the perfection of one element, the iconostasis, is still evident. Paton's observations on the relative indifference of his local companions toward the church exteriors, and notably toward those of medieval monuments (to which these restrictions not yet applied), is very interesting, but also not enough for a generalization (changed preferences according to changed realities). The consolidation and development of the iconostasis goes hand in hand with the advance of the craft of wood-carving and the expansion of decorative painting, forming one part of a general drive in the Balkan provinces after 1750 later termed "Balkan Renaissance". This expansion of the "minor arts", as will be discussed later in greater detail, cannot be analyzed solely in the context of art history but must be supported by findings in the area of economic history, whereby it will be possible to more concretely determine where, when, and why the preconditions for the commissioning and development of such art were given.

2.5. A note on the “Ottoman House”

That so far little space has been devoted to dwellings is decidedly not a preference of the author but due to the fact that our knowledge of residential architecture prior to the late eighteenth century remains very limited as only few surviving examples predate the nineteenth century. Dating, in general, has been a problem as well, since only in exceptional cases houses feature an inscription of their date of construction; in contrast to public buildings, where we mostly find such. Other than that, older examples are likely to have been considerably altered in the course of time. Another reason for the non-survival of many houses are the construction materials used, predominantly wood. Stone was a scarce material reserved for public edifices “whose inspiring grandeur formed a striking contrast to the simplicity of the unpretentious habitations of the citizens.” (Goodwin 1971:449) Given the frequent fires in Ottoman towns, only aggravated by this construction material, only samples of nineteenth century townscapes are preserved. The nature of the houses in the Balkan-Anatolian region has thus often been described as “ephemeral dwellings” (Bammer 1982). This “transitoriness” is explained by Goodwin (1971:450) as “due to the Moslem respect only for the permanence of God, which had inbred habits of building afresh instead of maintenance.”⁶⁵ While this only reflects a tendency among many western scholars to explain all materialized “otherness” in the Muslim world as grounded in the other religion, at least to some extent, others sought to explain these phenomena with the characteristics of Ottoman society as a whole. Jezernik (1998:213-4), for example, had concluded the following on the perception of houses in the (mostly late) Ottoman Balkans by western travellers:

⁶⁵ In this context, Bammer (1982:116) reminds us that nineteenth-century Moscow was also still a city largely built of wood.

“Some supposed that the custom derived from the ancestors of the Turkish population – being a people given to camp-discipline they did not care for building great houses, but looked upon their towns only as temporary settlements which were to be vacated at short notice. They were of the opinion that it was a sign of pride to covet sumptuous houses, such as if frail creatures as humans could achieve a kind of immortality and an everlasting habitation in this life, when they were but pilgrims on this earth and therefore ought to use their dwellings as travellers do their inns, merely to be secure from thieves, cold, heat and rain. Some argued that the Ottomans did not dare to make a display of wealth, and if someone was so fortunate as to accumulate a large sum of money, their first care was to conceal it from view. The chief Dragoman of the Porte in Istanbul at the beginning of the nineteenth century, for example, had his large house painted three colours in order to make it look like three houses, so that no one passing would be struck by the size of his mansion. Whatever the reason, it remained true that all over the Ottoman Empire, wherever European travellers went they could barely find a stately home, whatever the wealth of the inhabitants; most lived in huts and cottages, and while the nobles favoured handsome orchards, gardens and baths, their houses had no gatehouses or porches, no courtyards or anything else magnificent or worthy of any admiration, despite the numerousness of their families.”

The reason for such unenthusiastic assessment was certainly less a “lower” level of civilization than a dissimilar ambition for representation in urban space. The “Ottoman House” had simply not shared the development of the “façade cult” emerging in medieval Europe, when burgher houses – in contrast to the courtyard houses of antique urban cultures – came to be oriented towards the street with an ornamented elevation representative of the owner’s social status (cf. Lichtenberger 2002:23-4). “In the Turkish house decoration is a programme of the interior”, the difference is made clear by Renda (1998:103):⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Renda appends that it is often the decoration itself, “much more than the architectural design, that reveals the different phases of artistic currents within the Ottoman Empire and reflects the social and cultural changes that occurred, especially in the later centuries.” (Renda 1998:103)

“Every Turkish house has a *başoda*, the main room that serves as the guest room and which is always decorated with much care ... The room has two levels, the *seki üstü*, which is a platform usually raised one step above the entrance and the *seki altı* which is on the same level as the entrance. On the entrance wall there is usually a built-in cupboard and niches placed on the two sides for lamps or other articles. This wall and the ceiling usually display elaborate woodwork, sometimes painted or even gilded. Painted decoration or wall paintings are found as narrow friezes or panels on the upper sections of the wall between the cupboards or wooden panelling and the ceiling.”

In describing so, Renda certainly speaks of the upper-class houses of the late period. This type of larger house (*konak*) had, according to Goodwin (1971:433-5), only appeared in the provinces in the seventeenth century, while it was only in the eighteenth century that it rapidly spread. That only few “approach a Western country house in size” leads him to the conclusion that buildings on a large scale must have “seemed impersonal and comfortless to the Ottomans”. While it is most often these wealthier houses that have been preserved, they are not indicative of what the vast majority of dwellings in Ottoman towns should have looked like. Goodwin (1971:447) suggests that these “must have resembled the *gecekondü* of the present day. These are humble dwellings based on a primitive law of squatters’ rights which enables anyone who can put up a roof in one night to hold the grounds that he has taken.” This is well in line with many western observers’ accounts on dwellings outside the very town centres, but also Paton’s (1845:198-9) description of Novi Pazar (southwest Serbia), which he visited in the 1840s: “On entering, I perceived the houses to be of a most forbidding aspect, being built of mud, with only a base of bricks, extending about three feet from the ground. None of the windows were glazed”. At the same he noted that this had been “the first town of this part of Turkey in Europe that I had seen in such a plight.”

Invariably, the introversion of the Ottoman house surfaces as the major divergence from its western counterparts. More than a feature conditioned by Muslim religion and tradition, this appears to be a result of social conditions in Ottoman Balkans. Leon Trotsky (1981:123), who had travelled Kosovo and Macedonia in 1912, thereby late enough to be outside the period in which the religion of the conqueror may have played a decisive role in the everyday designs of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, had been given the following explanation for the lack of ornament on the “Ottoman House”:

“The Serbs don’t keep a lot of livestock since they would only be carried off by the Albanian bandits. The Serbs, even the rich ones, don’t build fine houses, either, in the villages where there are Albanians. If a Serb has a two-story house, he refrains from painting it, so that it shan’t look better than the Albanians’ houses. Later on, after the capture of Bitolj, I happened to spend the night at Resen, in the house of a Greek doctor. A splendid house, with every comfort, yet the outside was unplastered. Why? I asked. He didn’t want this to be done, he said: if it had been, his house would be one of the best in town”.

3. Banditry, *ayanlık*, and a proto-bourgeoisie: the Balkans before the reforms

3.1. The *kărdžalijstvo* and the fortified house: dwellings around 1800 and the place of art in an age of insecurity

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Balkans were not dominated anymore by decisions made by the sultans in Constantinople, but by local (or localized) groups: the autonomously-minded provincial notables, the prospering merchants, and roaming brigands (often former janissaries). All these were, of course, not completely new to the scene, but while in earlier centuries the Ottoman rulers had been able to guarantee safe passage more effectively, it is in the last third of the eighteenth century, when banditry seems to escalate. The effects of this “time of supreme anarchy”, however, went beyond severe conditions for those affected by it at that time, if we follow Kiel (1985:44): As this was the last “historical memory” Bulgarians still had in the late nineteenth century when the country became (de-facto) independent, the “destructions of this sad epoch were projected backward into the past [and in] historical thinking all the centuries of the Turkish period have been as gloomy as the last one”, which essentially accounted for the fundamentally negative assessment of the whole Ottoman period by modern Bulgarian historiography.

At the beginning, however, most of the brigandage had befallen not the Bulgarian lands in the east, but the western parts of the peninsula. In the 1770s much of it centred on central and eastern Macedonia (McGowan 1994:666), but banditry and disorders had brought ruin to almost the entire countryside of the Peloponnesus as well (Stoianovich 1992:18). Even in Kosovo, as the archbishop of Skopje (cit. in Malcolm 1998:178)

reported to the Vatican in 1772, all the villages, “Catholic and Orthodox and Muslim, have indeed been exterminated and depopulated.” Crampton (1997:54) maintains that the beginnings of the *kārdžalijstvo* or *kārdžalijsko vreme* (as the age of banditry came to be called among the Slavs) could be seen already in by that time, but reached their culmination in the 1790s and 1800s.⁶⁷ Centred on eastern Thrace, noticeably close to the capital, McGowan (1994:666) identified many of the bandits as “Muslim smallholders from the Haskovo region”. In the 1800s the disorders partly shifted to north of the Balkan mountains (“Danube Bulgaria”), but were still disturbing much of Thrace, and “even as late as 1816 much of the Adrianople area was beyond the reach of the central government and around Burgas the only effective authority was a band of brigands some 300 strong.” (Crampton 1997:54)

Naturally, these developments in the half-century after 1768 also had left their trace on the architecture of the region. On one hand, as Kiel (1985:49) noted for Bulgaria, countless medieval and post-medieval churches and monasteries disappeared, thereby significantly reducing the architectural record of the past. On the other hand, as evidenced by many examples all over the south Balkans (and beyond), dwellings assumed a more fortified appearance. Some features typical for the Ottoman Balkans, such as the wood-built residential floor with projections, remained unaltered. But while previously only the ground floor was built of stone, a considerable elevation of the dwelling’s main rooms took place, whereby we came to know this architectural type as “tower houses”. Often also completely built of stone, on the lower parts of the building only few window openings can be found. That such structures appear in an age of disorder and banditry - and notably, outside larger urban centres - is certainly no coincidence, rather a necessity.

⁶⁷ For a more comprehensive account on the *kārdžali* period in Bulgaria, see Mutafčieva (1993).

Kizis (1997, see also 2000), in fact, traces the tower house in Thessaly, where many examples have survived, back to the residences built by Ottoman landlords in the seventeenth century; to be imitated a century later by an emerging Christian middle class. Greek scholars have often insisted on the revival a pre-Ottoman Byzantine model, which Arel (1993) also believes to have identified in contemporary examples of such “tower houses” in western Anatolia.⁶⁸ But also in the European middle ages such residential towers could be found (see Lichtenberger 2002:29), foremost in Italy (e.g. Segovia), but also in Vienna, Prague, or Regensburg. Built to surpass and overtop surrounding medieval burgher houses they, however, did not survive into the modern period, as increasing communal autonomy forced the patrician classes to tear them down. More than other scholars, who aim to explain the emergence (or revival) of this type as due to general lack of security, Faroqhi (1995:262-3) sees them as intended demonstrations of power by the *ayan*. These were directed toward the area’s peasant and nomad population, as they would certainly not have survived a siege by a larger army.

One version of this building type found mainly in the Albanian lands is the *Kulla Shqiptarë*, the “Albanian tower[-house]”. It is this also one of the better-studied types, as many examples are well-preserved; at least until the recent Kosovo-conflict, in which many were damaged. Equally linked to Albanians more than to others, its forbidding appearance is often explained as a response of recurrent blood feuds. The monolithic Kulla (from trk. *kule*) are usually built of stone, less often of brick, and display few

⁶⁸ Moutsopoulos (2005:19), for example, holds that such dwellings developed in the Byzantine period due to the insecurity in the mountain areas in the Balkans, and that tower-like habitations were predominant. He names as examples buildings in Melnik, Epirus, and the Peloponnese. Cerasi (1998:127), however, believes the “compact tower-like, two-or-more-story stone masonry, fireplace-centered *fogo* houses” to be a regional phenomenon of the wider Adriatic hinterland, the *kulla* only being a variant of which. He further maintains this to be an older form than “gradually superseded by the Ottoman house concepts and timber-and-infill techniques”.

architectural elements. If at all, it is typically only on the portal that decoration in the form of carvings of floral elements can be found. These kind of dwellings had supposedly already been built 500 years ago in central northern Albania (Graf 2003:46), but their peak period clearly was the nineteenth century.⁶⁹ [Ill. 3.1]

A more elaborate form of a fortified house-type we find in Gjirokastër, north of the Greek-Albanian border. It was this not primarily a centre of crafts and trade, but residence of landlords and administration, whereby the need for such buildings on the part of the here concentrated land-owning upper social strata is often explained, particularly by Marxist authors, as due to class conflict; next to the omnipresent blood feuds. Lawless (1979:9) situates the “appearance and full development of the fortified house – the most characteristic house-type found at Gjirokaster” already in the seventeenth century, prior to which only few had more than one storey. It is in this century that the settlement sees its major phase of urban development, and next to the citadel a proper *varoş* with 8 *mahalle* had emerged, but it is only in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century that Gjirokastër reaches its zenith (Shkodra 1988:162). Alone in the eighteenth century four mosques were built; three of which, probably from between the 1720s and 1755, survive (cf. Kiel 1990b:138,141-3). But more noteworthy than the religious architecture of this period are the residences. Described by Lawless (1979:9-11), these impressive dwellings are constructed almost entirely of stone and consist of three, four, and sometimes five storeys. While some have a simple square or rectangular plan, the more complex examples have one or two projecting wings. For reasons of defence, only the top storeys possessed large windows, while openings on the lower levels are small and grilled casements or merely loopholes. The external walls of the upper storeys are often plastered, occasionally also painted. Most elaborate in the

⁶⁹ On the *kullas*, see also Riza (2005), one of the authorities in that subject.

interiors, the carved ceilings, cupboards, and fireplaces in the upper rooms are the work of builders and craftsmen, who Lawless identifies as Albanians from nearby villages.

The one building most often depicted must be the one described by Shkodra (1988:163) and identified as the house of the Bakiraj in the Palorto quarter [Ill. 3.2.], showing mural paintings on the façade where floral motifs, landscapes, and hunting scenes – curiously also depicting a lion – are represented. While the date for the building is usually given as the late eighteenth century, only Shkodra mentions that the paintings actually date from a later period, namely 1853. Next to decorative semi-circular arches, we also find examples of oval top windows betraying a Baroque influence.

It is interesting that also in Wallachia at this period fortified rural mansions appear. Even more interesting is that these houses, built to shield the boyar class from bandit incursions from south of the Danube (see also later section on banditry under Osman Pazvantoglu), are also named after a derivation of the Turkish *kule* (tower): *cula*.⁷⁰ While most of these are located in Oltenia, the western portion of Wallachia bordering central Serbia and the western section of Danube Bulgaria, and many from the late eighteenth century, an interesting example for comparison is the Cula Duca [Ill. 3.3.] at Maldaraşti from 1812. While the character of the exterior is equally forbidding, we note the steeper roofs (typical for the more northern parts of the peninsula, including Bosnia), and more architectural features, such as semi-circular arched arcades. A more western influence betray the stucco ceilings as a later addition from 1827⁷¹.

⁷⁰ In the discussion whether to include Romania in a “Balkans” definition, it is sometimes suggested to include Wallachia, the southernmost of three large historical regions forming today’s Romania (the others being Moldavia and Transylvania), on the grounds that it had been the region most open to “eastern” influences. That the fortified house around 1800 is known by the same (Turkish) term as its Albanian counterpart on the other end of the peninsula would be a case in point to support the perspective on Wallachia in a “Balkans” scope.

⁷¹ Information at the website of the Museum of Valcea City

As we can deduct from the examples given, dwellings assumed a more fortified character not only in rural areas (as the boyars' or *ayan*'s residences in Wallachia or Anatolia), mountain towns (as the classical examples of industrious settlements in Thessaly and Macedonia, which will be discussed later in this chapter), but also in actual urban centres (as in Gjirokastër). But realities of the *kărdžali* period had not only an impact on the architecture but on cities as well. While town growth in this period was first a result of the expansion of trade and crafts, the flight from the insecure plains to the safer urban centres, or to remote mountain towns, was only speeding up this process. But while urban populations increased, the Ottoman Empire had failed to participate perceptibly in the general European demographic expansion of the eighteenth century (Stoianovich 1992:18). McGowan (1994:646;652) cites an estimate of the population of the Balkans having fallen from a sixteenth century high of eight million to a mid-eighteenth century low of three million. At the same time he noted the "paradox that the Ottoman territories were strikingly urbanized, when compared with Europe", and cites a contemporary estimate of two-thirds of the population of Macedonia and Thessaly living in towns instead of on the land. But also the towns had changed. According to Stoianovich (1992:61,14-5) the number of cities had grown while at the same time the Turkish-Muslim population declined in the period 1660-1800. Gradually and "almost imperceptibly, Balkan towns became less Jewish, less Armenian and sometimes even less Turkish, and more Greek, more Slavic, and more Albanian."

Another noticeable difference in this period is the regional hierarchy between cities, which is not the urban balance (in terms of population and importance) we know today. Some older centres lost their prominence to "younger" towns; the best example being

[<http://www.muzee-valcea.ro/index.php?f=muzee&m=5>].

Tirana. Belgrade or Skopje, which only a little more than a century earlier may have attained populations of 40-50,000, by 1800 still only numbered around 25,000 and 6,000, respectively (Stoianovich 1992:14-5). On the other hand, unfamiliar towns like Tyrnavos in the mountains of Thessaly were reported to boast a population of 20,000-35,000 at their peak (cf. Lawless 1977:522; Kienitz 1972:260). Sofia, since the middle of the fifteenth century the seat of the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli and thus practically the capital of the Ottomans' European possessions, also entered a period of decline. While the number of costly houses in the city had still doubled in the second half of the eighteenth century (Todorov 1977:61), Sofia suffered harshly from *ayan* warfare and *kârdžali* attacks. In 1836, eventually, the *beylerbeyi* of Rumeli officially moved his seat to Bitola, where he had already resided in the eighteenth century. In terms of its economy, Ianeva (2000) suspects that by the 1850s Sofia may have become a "reservoir of free artisan labour", with craftsmen emigrating to other centres with a higher demand for their work. The downward spiral continues when Sofia decays after the Crimean War (1853-6), whereupon the former "capital of Ottoman Europe" was further degraded to only a *sancak* of the Danube *vilayet* a decade later (Ivanova 2004c:703). Ridiculed as merely a large village, in 1879 Sofia (not Târnovo) was surprisingly elected to be the capital of the Bulgarian principality. Thessaloniki's crisis at the end of the eighteenth century was not as dramatic but, still, its role as an international port declined; partly due to established trade routes being interrupted by the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, partly probably also as a result of the general downturn in the Ottoman economy in that period (Faroghi 2004b:125).

3.2. Provincial notables and merchants as “new” patrons of representative architecture

“The most important changes in Ottoman society and government since the sixteenth century had been gradual, unintended, usually unrecorded and therefore poorly understood”, judged McGowan (1994:658). “The eighteenth-century Ottoman leadership was unable either to defend effectively what was left of the empire, or to reform the system in a manner which took account of the changing world order.” The centre’s weakness had become very obvious to the provincial elites after the Russian-Turkish war of 1768-74, and McGowan (1994:645) noted it as an irony that “the climax of confusion and misrule in this century coincides with the reign of the first real reformer, Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) [“harbinger of a new line of sultans raised to govern outside the cage system”]. This well-meaning but irresolute sultan proved unable to master the spiral of violence and disorder in his most important provinces and instead allowed rising provincial warlords and Mamluk elites to find their own solutions.” The *ayan* were no longer “simply servants of the empire, but instead quite ready to take a role in deciding its fate.” (McGowan 1994: 666)

The origins of the *ayanlık* remain obscure. The word itself is an Arabic plural referring to eminent personalities, and originally the friends of the prophet Muhammad. The Ottoman-Turkish use of the term, referring to the most distinguished inhabitant of a district or quarter, is usually translated as “a notable”. While *ayan* are noted in numerous towns and villages already during the seventeenth century, it is only at the time of the Austro-Turkish war of 1683-99 that the term acquired a more specific connotation. It

came to be used to refer to certain wealthy individuals elected by the people to act as intermediaries between the local populace and officials of the Porte, especially in matters of finance, taxation, and military recruitment, as well as to shield them from the consequences of corruption. Neither their precise functions nor the nature of these elections are known, but it is clear that the *ayan* was an urban functionary not formally recognized by the government, but reluctantly accepted. Often powerful enough to secure the removal of a pasha who ignored their advice, they constituted an element of municipal government. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, the *ayan* gradually evolved into a powerful landed quasi-aristocracy. (Sadat 1972:346-7)⁷²

The outbreak of the war with Russia in 1768 had forced the Porte to eventually grant the *ayan* official status in exchange for otherwise unobtainable men and supplies. The governor (*vali*) of the province in which the *ayan* administered over a township (*kazâ*) confirmed the election by the award of a document upon payment of a fee, selling the *ayanlık* as a source of revenue. The *kadı*, previously responsible for such duties as local security, provisioning of towns and troops, and the collecting of taxes, was now restricted to matters of Muslim law. The *ayan* had purchased tax-farming leases, gradually converted tax revenues into personal income, and eventually turned the land itself into an extralegal form of private property through the acquisition of deeds and titles from the peasants. With an increase in power, they resorted to armed mercenaries, largely Albanians. The *çiftlik* (farms) were converted to commercial agriculture with the introduction of new cash crops - principally cotton, wool, corn, tobacco, and wheat - and it was on the basis of this economy that the export trade flourished, much of it illegal, as the exportation of grain was generally forbidden by the Ottoman government. (Sadat 1972:349-52)

⁷² For more comprehensive treatises on the *ayan*, see also Sućeska (1965) and Özkaya (1994).

Of course, all *ayan* were Muslims, but their backgrounds differed. Quataert (2000:46-7) categorized the provincial notables into three groups, only two of which are relevant for the Balkans: 1) descendents of persons who had come to the area as centrally appointed officials, put down local roots,⁷³ and through negotiations with the central government gained the legal right to stay; or 2) “prominent notables whose families had been among the local elites of an area before the Ottoman period. In some cases the sultans had recognized their status and power at the moment of incorporation, for example, as they did with many great landholding families in Bosnia.”

Besides the *ayan*, McGowan (1994:669) identifies a second elite, the by-product of increased trade, as “more consequential”: native men of influence appearing “in more than one guise – as merchants, as money-lenders, and sometimes as tax-collectors, and landholders.” An interesting coalition between the Muslim *ayan* and the mostly Christian merchants evolved. Comparing İsmail Pasha of Seres and Osman Pazvantoglu at Vidin, McGowan (1994:666) notes that “both were on good terms with the merchants and tradesmen of their respective towns, to whom they offered the best chance for security and peace.” As long as the *ayan* were able to fulfil their function of supply and protection, they and the merchants shared what Sadat (1972:355) called “a communality of vested interests”. If the peasants were the victims of the *ayan*, the merchants were their natural allies.⁷⁴

⁷³ Quataert (2000:46-7) notes this as “a marked violation of central state regulations to the contrary” but appends that central control “indeed had never been as extensive or thorough as the state’s own declarations had suggested. Officials did circulate from appointment to appointment, but ... not as often or regularly as the state would have preferred. Nonetheless, such appointees to positions of provincial authority, whether governors or timar holders, remained in office for shorter periods in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and longer periods during the eighteenth century.”

⁷⁴ Sadat (1972:356-7) also noted another coalition, “a strange triangle of Janissary-guild-ayan”, which evolved “[i]nfused with the Bektashi mystique” when Muslim artisans enrolled in the Janissary corps, providing them with status and the right to bear arms, and the decay and corruption of the “religious

It was a characteristic of the evolving Ottoman bourgeoisie that it came to be split along religious lines: a non-Muslim commercial bourgeoisie and an Ottoman Muslim bureaucratic bourgeoisie. Göçek (1996:34;37;44-45), however, maintains that the social status of both groups differed; that of the “Ottoman merchants was significantly lower than that of the administrators, who had the sultans’ delegated authority for two reasons. First, the Islamic religious attitude toward making large fortunes through usury was negative. Second, compared to the skilled labor of the artisans, the merchants’ profits from charging interest were regarded as unearned gain, profiteering.” She further explains this with the Ottoman perception of material culture having been

“embedded in the Islamic maxims, which saw goods as a means to an end, as a means to support oneself and one’s dependents without burdening others. It was not the social art of procuring goods or the number of goods so procured that the Qur’an objected to. Rather, it was the use to which these goods were put, the interpretations attached to them, that the Qur’an often took issue with: the goods had to be used piously, with modesty. For the benefit of society.”

Lewis (1961:35), on the other hand, explained this split less on religious grounds than with the structure of the empire inherited:

“In the military empire, at once feudal and bureaucratic, which they had created, the Muslims knew only four professions – government, war, religion, and agriculture. Industry and trade were left in large measure to the non-Muslim subjects, who continued to practise their inherited crafts.⁷⁵ Thus the stigma of the infidel became

institution” did not lead to a secularization of Muslim society, as among the Christians, but to “a more overt expression of religious heterodoxy, the traditional Islamic form of social protest.” She thus remarks it as a contradiction that “while the Bektashi and Janissaries were consolidating their reactionary coalition with orthodoxy, the same Dervish order was experiencing a revolutionary, interconfessional revival in Albania and northern Bulgaria.”

⁷⁵ It should be mentioned that this statement certainly represents a view which, in its total claim, has been largely deconstructed in more recent scholarship successfully demonstrating that considerable numbers of

attached to the professions which the infidels followed, and remained so attached even after many of the craftsmen had become Muslim.”

The Balkan merchant is of course not a phenomenon that appeared overnight. Stoianovich (1992:1) reminds us that the origins of an Orthodox Christian merchant class in the Balkans can in fact be traced back to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; but it was not until the eighteenth century that such a group became “sufficiently strong in wealth and number to capture a good part of the trade of Hungary, southern Russia, and the eastern Mediterranean.” The “commercial revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries” (Sadat 1972:347) is even more astonishing as it defied the general downward trend in the Ottoman economy. The turn from prosperity to economic depression had occurred between the 1760s and ‘70s, and naturally also had a negative impact on construction and cultural activity. Among the affected were the pious foundations, which sustained not only mosques but schools, convents, and libraries, and therefore were one of the pillars of cultural life in the Ottoman Empire. In the eighteenth century the state often minimized payments or sometimes confiscated properties to finance wars. The only solution left to the foundations to keep generating income was to raise the rents of shops (which often formed part of endowments), but this only bewildered the shop-leasing craftsmen, who were equally affected by the economic crisis. As a consequence many endowments were not able to keep up services; some even fell into ruins, as there were no funds for repairs. But this also does not mean that the Ottoman dynasty and the notables refrained from endowing monumental complexes after 1770; these just assumed more modest dimensions. (Faroghi 1995:31,255-6) In the provinces the most significant building projects of this period are

Muslim merchants traded in Venice (Kafadar 1986), Thessaloniki (Ginio 2000), and many other cities. Dimitriadis (2006:137) reports the “Turkish element” in mid-nineteenth century Thessaloniki to have controlled as much as one third of the commercial activity of the city.

not anymore patronized by centrally-appointed government officials, but by self-appointed notables erecting monuments not in the praise of god or the Sultan but to themselves.

3.2.1. Architectural patronage of the *ayan* and its place in Ottoman art

3.2.1.1. Ioannina under Ali Pasha

It is around 1800 and under the famously rebellious Ali Pasha that the city of Ioannina in Epirus achieves unprecedented prosperity. Governed since the fifteenth century by a succession of pashas chosen from same loyal local Turkish family, under Ali Pasha the city was elevated to “the most important town in Albania, if not in the whole of Greece, with a population of about thirty thousand, mostly Greek and mostly engaged in trade”, wrote Plomer (1970:48-9) in his *The Lion of Jannina* of 1936. “Ali could not have chosen a more suitable place to establish himself in than Jannina, its appearance being half splendid and half squalid, its climate subject to sudden changes and violent extremes, its situation of great strategic value, and its history consisting largely of acts of tyranny and cruelty.” Ali was no exception, roasting personal enemies on the spit and burning to the ground entire villages. Yet, Skiotis (1971:223) appends, he was also “invariably presented as an enlightened and progressive ruler with a capacity, rare among his caste, to learn and adapt from the modernizing West. Most often mentioned are his achievements in the fields of public order and security, justice, trade and commerce, transportation, and education.” As most studies, however, have concentrated on Ali the man, considerably less information is available on the quasi-state he created.

At the peak of his power in 1812 he ruled over a population of one and a half million in a large area north of Attica and south of the line Durrës-Bitola-Thessaloniki, and could, in case of a crisis, field “40,000 hardy mountaineers, generally considered among the best troops in the Empire.” (Skiotis 1971:220) Aiming to be classed “as a true world

ruler worthy of the accolades of a Napoleon”, he also set about to leave a physical mark on his lands, as Fleming (1999:44-5) narrates:

“Upon assuming the title of pasha of Ioannina [in 1787], he embarked on an ambitious program of public works, building roads and lodges, improving communications routes, and encouraging trade. [He] was clearly interested to some extent in portraying himself as a benevolent and protective ruler who improved the lot of his people by opening their lands and decorating them with architectural splendors ... Summer homes and secondary residences were built for him in all major towns for tactical reasons and in smaller villages for sentimental reasons. For example, Ali built one of his most sumptuous secondary residences in his native village of Tebelen. In addition to facilitating his [frequent] travels, such structures provided the local population with a physical reminder of its overlord’s power over them ... Ali had tea-houses and lodges established along the primary travel routes and paved the prime road from Ioannina to Preveza on the Adriatic coast. In 1804 Leake reported that the route between Ioannina and Trikkala had khans along its entirety, at intervals of about one hour’s traveling time ... These public works projects, along with the dramatic reduction in brigandry in the area, made Ali’s territories accessible to foreign and domestic mercantilism.”

Conspicuously absent from this account of Ali’s building projects are mosques, and Kiel (1978:548) sees the works of Ali Pasha as “largely restricted to a number of castles (Jannina, Preveza, Porto Palermo, Butrint, Gjirokastër, Tepelene, etc.” But we know that, at least, Ali restored the late sixteenth-century Fethiye mosque in 1795 [Ill. 3.7.], located right next to his *saray*.⁷⁶ The exterior is not particularly elaborate, but an elongation must have taken place during this rebuilding. The portal is a very simple recess framing a double-arched door (the original portico has not been preserved). The

⁷⁶ If not great palaces or mosques, several minor and utilitarian works are, however, indeed preserved from Ali’s rule in Ioannina. These include the huge cavalry school (“Soufari Sarai”; presently renovated to house the city archives), the power-magazine building, a ruined *medrese* kitchen, and the building usually identified as “treasury” and a stone-built kitchen house, both believed to have formed party of Ali’s palace. The mosque, *medreses*, and *türbes* named after a founder Aslan (“Lion”) Pasha, however, do not refer to Ali (“the Lion of Jannina”), but date to a seventeenth century ruler. From Ali’s time furthermore survive two commissions of his son Veli Pasha: the restoration of a mosque and the construction of a medrese, both bearing his name.

octagonal drum (supporting an eight-sided roof, a later replacement of a dome?) is especially high, and the windows are not anymore pointed but circular; as with other provincial mosques of the period, and particularly in the wider Albanian region. Noteworthy in this respect, however, are the slightly double-S curved voussoirs of the windows on the ground floor. We can thus notice some features known from the “Ottoman Baroque” period in the capital, although generally the Fethiye at Ioannina bears little resemblance with the mosques built at Istanbul at the same time.⁷⁷ For someone like Ali Pasha, who challenged the Sultan’s sovereignty, the dimensions of this prominently located edifice are surprisingly modest.

On the other hand, his palace or rather “palace complex” was anything but modest. Destroyed in 1822, when Ali was overthrown and beheaded by the Sultan’s forces, illustrations and descriptions of this structure fortunately survived in the accounts of the numerous westerners (including Lord Byron) who visited the capital of this intriguing ruler.⁷⁸ On these engravings [Ill. 3.4. & 3.5] we can see the extent of this complex; unfortunately, however, we cannot confirm what Cambridge’s Reverend Hughes (cit. in Stoianovich 1992:35) noted in 1814, namely that the palaces of Ali and his two sons were not only “in the best style of Turkish architecture” but, far more interestingly, that these were also “painted in the most gaudy colours”.⁷⁹ We also know the name of Ali’s

⁷⁷ In the file for this monument at the “Cultural Library of Epirus and Southern Albania” (www.epcon.gr/interreg) we are informed not only that two marble pillars in the Fethiye mosque probably came from the Byzantine church of Archangel Michael, but also read of “internal plastered or painted decoration”; illustrations of which could, however, not be obtained for this study.

⁷⁸ On western visitors at the court of Ali Pasha, see also Marinescu (1998).

⁷⁹ Also Pouqueville (1820:56) noted the palaces of Ali’s sons to be “in the general mode of Turkey” but with the peculiarity of having been “adorned with paintings in fresco, executed by Armenians; productions perfectly adapted by their absurdity to the taste of the princes their admirers. One, for example, over the entrance of Mouctar’s palace, represents him surrounded by his guards, assisting at the execution of a man suspended on a gibbet. This piece is not, however, held in such estimation by the connoisseurs as another, exhibiting a landscape, in which his excellency appears in the midst of a groupe of horses, oxen, mules, and asses — the usual society of that illustrious personage. In the palace of his younger brother, Veli Pasha, the scenes are of a different character; camps, piles of human heads, colours,

chief architect, Petro Korçari (of Korçë), who is credited with many building projects, including that of the *sarays*, several fortresses, and a mosque at Souli castle near Parga (see Shuteriqi 1978).

Next to Ali, also Ioannina's Greeks assumed a remarkably active role in the patronage of public commodities. Fleming (1999:48) gives the example of the prominent Zosimas brothers who "founded institutions for higher education, endowed schools, and underwrote the local priesthood. As a result, Ioannina came to gain such a reputation as a place of letters that it attracted students from throughout Greece. Virtually all contemporary accounts agree with Miller's assessment that 'to Ioannina Greece owes the resurrection of education ... All Greek authors were either natives of Ioannina or pupils of the Ioannina school.'" Promer (1970:72) highlights the local Argyri family, whose head Anastasi "had made a lot of money in trade and had used it well in various charitable and public services: he had founded a hospital, established a fund for poor prisoners, to whom he sent a hot dinner every Sunday, and built roads and bridges. He had been on excellent terms with Ali, who had treated him as a friend." Elaborating on Ali's relationship with the local Christians, Promer (1970:55) writes: "Unlike his predecessors, he surrounded himself with Albanians and Greeks. He liked the Greeks

sieges in which the bombs are larger than the houses. The ceiling of his sleeping apartment exhibits at once the sun, the moon, the stars; a comet with its blazing tail, and the thunderbolt darting athwart the heavens. Aly's own palace is adorned in a much better style, with arabesques in good taste." Frashëri (2006), extrapolating from Shuteriqi (1978) and travellers' accounts, describes the complex as follows: "[T]he architectural ensemble at Ioannina Castle (1805; destr. 1822), consist[ed] of five palaces (seraglios), of which the Litharici and the Qoshk [= *kôşk*] were recorded as the most beautiful. As in all his palaces, the ground floors had very high and thick stone walls, characteristic of the 'Albanian tower' type of house ... The upper storeys, which were lit by many big windows, contained: a hall of ceremonies, 49 m long in the palace of Litharici; halls for entertaining Muslim guests; special pavilions of octagonal design with alcoves in the corners, as at the Qoshk, for entertaining non-Muslims; a hall for the ruler and the members of his family furnished in the local taste; rooms for the exhibition of trophies; and servants' rooms. Marble was prevalent in the interior, while the upper storey was painted on the exterior. Stylistically the Ioannina ensemble combined Islamic and western Baroque elements, with forms from the 18th-century Albanian town house. Ioannina was his [Korçari's] most representative work, but the palace (1806; destr. 1821) at Preveza, built with marble from the ancient city of Nicopolis, was considered the most beautiful of his palaces."

because many of them were rich, and he appreciated their adaptability and suppleness of character.”⁸⁰ A contemporary depiction of the Argyri family’s mansion at Ioannina [Ill. 3.6.] illustrates how the residence of a wealthy local Greek must have looked like. It must also be due to the patronage of Ioannina’s well-to-do that, mentioned by Hadjimihali (1949:32), in 1800 also a “cathedral” was built. Faveyrial (see Elsie 2001:273) further mentions that in 1813 Ali himself ordered a church to be built in “Calicoudési” in honour of the Vlach-origin monk Cosmas who, before being impaled by Kurd Ahmet Pasha of Berat in 1779, had predicted Ali’s great career which must have secured him Ali’s devotion.

European travellers had recorded Ali Pasha’s Ioannina as a city of between 30,000-50,000 inhabitants, with 16-19 mosques (three of which survive), 6-8 churches, 2 synagogues, and 5 *tekkes* (Arafat 1987:177). Due to the devastating fire of 1869 we are unfortunately left with little insight on the urban architecture of Ioannina of this period (cf. Dimitriadis 1997), save for what remains on depictions on engravings and descriptions.⁸¹ Cambridge’s Reverend Hughes (in Stoianovich 1992:25), for example, had in 1814 not noticed much divergence from other Ottoman towns:

“The interior of the city, like all others in Turkey, disappointed our expectations: its houses are not built for external show: that part of them which is turned towards the street consists almost entirely of bare wall ... [S]till however a much greater degree of

⁸⁰ It is also often mentioned that Ali Pasha used Greek as the language of his court. According to one traveller, Ali himself could both read and speak Greek, while, next to his mother-tongue Albanian (then only a spoken language), could read Ottoman. Greek was also the mother tongue of most local Muslims (“Turkoyaniots”), probably for descending from Christian *şipahis* converted towards the mid-seventeenth century. (Anastassiadou 2004:282; Arafat 1987:178; Skiotis 1971:227)

⁸¹ Nonetheless we know of at least one preserved example of residential architecture from Ali’s period: the “House of the Despot”, the residence of a Turkish family, featuring an arched stone-staircase entrance so typical for Albania. This feature can also be seen at the equally well-preserved Ottoman-period library-building.

neatness and stability was visible in the habitations of Ioannina than in those of any other city we have yet visited.”

Comparing western travellers’ descriptions of places in Thessaly and neighbouring Epirus from around 1800, McGowan (1994:700) comes to conclude that “the degree of foreign influence upon these merchants was uneven”. The visitor to a Vlach village of Thessaly had reported that “[t]he wealthier inhabitants are merchants, who resided abroad many years ... and who, after a long absence, return with the fruits of their industry to their native towns, which they thus enrich, and in some degree, civilize.” A contemporary visitor to Ioannina, however, judged that “[t]he domestic manners of the Greeks of Ionnina [sic] have in general been little affected by the long residence of many of the merchants in foreign countries. They are almost identical with those of the Turks”. Epirus, in fact, already had a long history of international trade, with nearby Italy in particular, and Venice as the primary link. Many wealthy Ioannite families maintained residences both in Ioannina and abroad. As a result of the provisions from the Küçük Kaynarca treaty with Russia, the Greeks shipping magnates prospering in Black Sea trade maintained Ioannina as a natural hub, which made the city share in their increased wealth. If Fleming (1999:46) then writes that its trade revolved to a good extent around the import of luxury items from the west, it would be safe to assume that some of the items remained in the salons of Ioannina’s merchants. Ali’s strategy to keep the commercial connections from being transferred elsewhere through emigration was, reportedly, to not allow a whole family to leave the area. In that way the remaining members (and their property) would guarantee return (Arafat 1987:178).

3.2.1.2. Vidin under Osman Pazvantoglu

The second most often mentioned *ayan* of the Balkans is Osman Pazvantoglu (also Pasvanoglu) of Vidin.⁸² By the mid-1790s he had established himself as the leading power in the northern Balkans, controlling much of the area between Belgrade and Edirne. Zens, who holds that Pazvantoglu prepared the ground for the Serbian uprising in the same way that Tepedelenli Ali Pasha laid the foundation for the Greek revolution of 1820, sees the difference to other *ayan* in the Balkans in the strategic value of Pazvantoglu's land and "capital", Vidin. Not only did it enjoy easy access to neighbouring Wallachia, Serbia, and the Austrian border, it was also central to many of the trade and communication routes of the region. When Ottoman forces besieged Osman's fortress on the Danube in 1798, he could hold out for eight months, undefeated, as the failing siege was unable to prevent supplies and food from crossing the Danube into the city. He continued to fortify Vidin and formed a militia of 12,000 loyal and well-trained soldiers of various backgrounds – Albanians, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Turks; allegedly even French officers and soldiers, as the British believed – and paid them himself from the taxes he levied. The promise of lower taxes was chief reason he enjoyed the support of the *reaya*, whereby he also collected additional revenues by continually raiding Wallachia and eastern Serbia. For many former janissaries the life of brigandage he offered was more appealing than farming or living off a meagre salary. Not only because of his enormous wealth and prestige, he came to see himself as the greatest of the *ayan* in the Balkans, but also on account of the various

⁸² As Bajraktarević (2004:284) stresses, not Osman but in fact his father was an *ayan*. Osman himself became the de-facto ruler of the Vidin *paşalık* not by appointment but by force. The use of the term *ayan* remains ambiguous, as must be stressed, but there is no place for a more detailed discussion here. For brief discussions on terminology, see also Skiotis (1971) and Sadat (1972).

communications he had with foreign envoys. Both France and Russia sought to establish a consulate in his city. (Zens 2002:83;93-4;99,103)

Although, as Zens (2002:96) reveals, in 1794 alone the *şeyhülislam* in Istanbul had issued four *fetva* calling for his capture and annihilation of this rebel and “godless traitor” who had no respect for any authority or Islam, it is to the Bosnian-origin Osman that Ivanova (2004b:207) relates the “florescence of Vidin as a centre of Islamic culture”.⁸³ But next to the construction of a mosque, a *medrese*, and a library, Ivanova also mentions that he “repaired the four main roads going out of Vidin and regulated the city street network; provided the town with *çeşmes* or fountains, as well as a *mosluk* and Sebil with an ice-house [and built] a stone tomb of the local hero of Turkish folklore, Salaheddin Baba.” The most unusual of his building projects, however, were probably the barracks constructed in cruciform shape between 1798-1801 by French and Polish builders (Ugrinov 2004:35) for Pazvantoglu’s garrison.⁸⁴

The mosque [Ill. 3.8.], built by (and named after) him in 1800-1, has a dedication to his father Ömer and an inscription for which the poet Mahir was commissioned (Ivanova 2004b:207) as well as a few other noteworthy features. Instead of the more slender Ottoman porticoes, Osman’s mosque is entered through a massive arcade with square

⁸³ At the same time he is not unpopular among the Greeks, for he first saved the Greek revolutionary and poet Rigas Feraias (Velestenlis), with whom he had friendly and close relations, from the vengeance of the Wallachian prince (in whose domain Osman plundered), and later, this time unsuccessfully, tried to save him from being strangled by the Ottoman authorities in Belgrade. Rigas had come to know French revolutionary ideas among the Greeks of Vienna, and maybe it is thus due to his influence that Pundeff (1994:104) writes of Osman issuing “manifestoes in the phraseology of the French Revolution to win popular support”. Oddly, he adds: “Pazvantoglu helped to spread the message of liberty, equality, and fraternity.”

⁸⁴ The *konak* at Vidin, most probably the one identified by Mijatev (1987:22) as the *konak* of “İnceli Ahmet Bey Zogu” (now the municipal museum), also dates from the second half of the eighteenth century, but from before Osman’s time. That it, however, looks as dating from the mid-nineteenth century is reportedly due to a late nineteenth century reconstruction in which it acquired some elements from Bulgarian National Revival architecture. (cf. <http://dutch.discover-bulgaria.com/Articles.aspx?ProductID=281>)

columns, over which we see not a dome but a four-sided roof. Although the overall appearance of the structure is rather bulky and modest, ceilings and doors are adorned with wood-carvings. Eckert (1989:257) also mentions that the minaret is not topped by a crescent but with a heart, and relates this with the will to pronounce independence from the Sultan. Stajnova (1979:61) also mentions that the “Ak Cami” was repaired by Osman in 1799-1800, as an inscription on the building (presumably demolished in the 1980s) revealed.

The library [Ill. 3.9.], built in compound with the mosque and, according to Stajnova (1979:60), close to his *konak*, is also a very simple building holding a domed square room entered through a stone-made porch, topped by a small dome and resting on two columns. The inscription, framed with stylized floral ornaments consisting of tulips and patterns of interlaced leaves and also composed by Mahir, who mentions the building as one of the “useful works accomplished” by Osman (transl. in Stajnova 1979:64), gives the building date as 1802-3; but more interesting is that the library was in fact a public library bringing together all books accumulated in the town, with the donation of the Pazvantoglu family as core collection (Ivanova 2004b:207). Stajnova (1979:66-7) stresses that it in fact was a “court library”, as Osman wished it to be known in the inscription, and moreover comes to call it a “family” monument, as Osman dedicated the library to his father, “so that ‘his soul may rest in peace’, not in his [own] praise, as was customary in Ottoman building practice.”

3.2.1.3.. Shkodër and Prizren under the Bushatli and Rotulla

In the Albanian lands, several powerful local families came to the foreground as well between the 1750s and 1830s. The Rotullu dynasty ruled Prizren, while Prishtina and Gjiilan (Gnjilane) were ruled by the Gjinolli, who became so powerful in the early nineteenth century that they were called the second rulers of Kosovo after the Sultan. But only one local dynasty could (and did) rival and challenge the power of the Sultan, the Bushatli, who ruled from 1757 to 1831. Mehmed Bushatli came to power as governor of the Shkodër sancak (incl. areas in western Kosovo) in 1757. An independent-minded individual, his plans were subsequently resumed by his son Mahmut upon his death in 1775. The latter succeeded in conquering parts of southern Albania and Kosovo a decade before he died in 1796. That “[p]opular history in the West has taken too little interest in this extraordinary man, compared with the attention it has lavished on his southern counterpart, Ali Pasha”, Malcolm explains with “the fact that he was never visited by Romantic English travellers.” (Malcolm1998:175-6)

His main architectural legacy is the Kurşunlu Camii (alb. *Xhamia e Plumbiit*) [Ill. 3.10.], the largest mosque of Albania, and an exceptional building also in other respects. Built in 1773/4 by Bushatli Mehmed Pasha Plaku, the founder of the infamous Bushatli family, it was clearly inspired by the Sultanic mosques of Istanbul, as the otherwise rare courtyard layout suggests.⁸⁵ Kiel (1990a:231) suggests that such forms were chosen by Mehmed to demonstrate his power; the *mibrab* was inspired by Sinan’s works, and the

⁸⁵ More specifically about the inspiration is the “In your pocket instant guide” for Shkodër (2006:23), which claims the model to have been the Sultanahmet mosque. Given the relatively modest dimensions of the mosque at Shkodër, this is of course a brave comparison.

conservative, sharply pointed Ottoman arches are in contrast to that of most mosques built in this period which “returned” to semi-circular arch forms.⁸⁶ But the mosque was not to be the only embellishment Mehmed commissioned for his town. He also established a large *çarşı* complete with *medrese* and library (Eyice 1976:76, see also Luzati 1998), but the location was not wisely chosen. Flooded every year, the town eventually had to be moved to where the modern city stands at present. Kiel (1990a:231) also dates the walls of the Shkodër fortress to the same period, the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and notes that the decorative niches above each centre arch of the gates, featuring tulips and an accolade arch “reminding us of the works of the Lale Devri” but previously thought to be Venetian, are also really the eighteenth century work of the Bushatli dynasty.

In Prizren, despite interferences by the Bushatli of Shkodër, the Rotulla family had remained in power since the 1770s. From 1809-36 the town was ruled by Mahmut Pasha, the most important of this dynasty, who erected a large mosque, a *mekteb*, a *medrese*, and also rebuilt the mosque in the Prizren castle. He fought in the suppression of the Serbian and Greek revolts, but then sided with Mustafa Bushatli and was defeated by Ottoman forces. His brother Emin Pasha Rotulla succeeded him and remained in charge till his death in 1843, without heir, and the rule of the family ended. In 1831 Emin constructed the last great mosque of Prizren, named after himself, and a fourth *medrese*.⁸⁷ (Kiel 2004:339) Interestingly, the architecture of the former follows the model of the local Sofu Sinan Pasha mosque from 1614/5. In the interior we find painted

⁸⁶ Kiel (1990a:204-5) also noted different construction techniques in north Albania from those used by the masters from the Pindos mountains in the middle and south of the country. In the north, and the examples he gives are the 1770s Kurşunlu at Shkodër and the 1830s mosque of Abdurrahman at Peqin, these appear more Dalmatian.

⁸⁷ When the *eyalets* were reorganized in the 1840s, Prizren then replaced Skopje as the *sancak* capital, whereby the town grew considerably, and was considered by some to be “the capital of Albania.” (see Kiel 2004:339, and 1990a)

landscapes (including a mosque, trees, curtains, etc.) stretching around the lower parts of the domes and semi-domes. The Sofu Sinan Pasha mosque, on which that of Emin Pasha was modelled, is painted in a very similar mode, and must have been decorated at the same time and probably by the same artist [Ill. 3.32-3]. The paintings already display a very realistic mode of depiction, and are rather different from the interiors of other mosques in Kosovo or Albania (which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section). Blue takes a much more important place, while elsewhere black, yellow, and red appear to predominate.

3.2.1.4. Preliminary conclusion and a note on Mehmet Ali's *külliye* in Kavala

In conclusion, we note that there was no thing as a typical “*ayan* mosque”, as the greatly differing designs herein discussed show. Closest to contemporary trends in Istanbul, and this only due to some rather minor features (arches on ground floor, elongation), is the mosque Ali Pasha (re-)built next to his palace complex in Ioannina. The Pasvantoglu mosque at Vidin clearly had no imminent Constantinopolitan model in mind, and is massive and simple instead of playful or elaborate. The mosque of Emin Pasha at Prizren was simply modelled after the early seventeenth century mosque of Sinan Pasha, which still dominates the town's skyline. Bushatli's Kurşunlu mosque at Shkodër intentionally followed an outdated model, that of the classical sixteenth-century sultanic *külliye* in the capital; not to underline allegiance to the Sultan, but to stress own greatness.⁸⁸

The architecturally most interesting building project of this period, however, was patronized by an Albanian whose self-reliance proved equally problematic for the Ottoman rulers. Mehmet Ali was not an *ayan*, but nevertheless came to rule Egypt in much of the first half of the nineteenth century. The *külliye* [Ill. 3.11-3.16] he commissioned to be built in his hometown of Kavala, while he himself resided in Cairo, is an unusually grand architectural statement for the period and its difficult circumstances. The date of construction is usually given as 1800-11 (cf. Turan and

⁸⁸ Another example of a surviving mosque built by a wealthy Bulgarian *ayan*, which could not be included but should be mentioned, is the Saat Cami (in reference to the nearby clock tower) at Tărgoviște (trk. Eski Cuma) built by a certain Mollazade. It is the only of formerly 16 (admittedly much more primitive) mosques to survive (Kiel 1990b:112).

İbrahimgil 2001:121; Ayverdi 1982:236-7), but the latter also mentioned an inscription reading 1808 on the door. While Turan and İbrahimgil (2001:122) report that all buildings are in the “Ottoman Baroque” style, Sezgin (1973:115-6) identifies characteristics from two different periods: a very classical appearance of *medrese* and *imaret* (kitchen for the poor), while the mosque reportedly follows the “Ottoman Baroque”. Most remarkably, the eave of the drum swings with the windows; a feature that can be seen at the 1769 Zeynep Sultan mosque in Istanbul, but is much more typical of medieval Orthodox churches in the Balkans and Byzantium (e.g. the twelfth-century church of St Nicholas at Kuršumlja, Serbia). The outer wall facing the citadel is curved around the portals in a way similar to that around the Nuruosmaniye, with which it also shares the elevated lateral arches on all four sides; but their saddle-form is closer to Byzantine prototypes, and with the traditional portico in front of it, the sea façade achieves a similar effect as the 1830s catholicon of the Rila monastery. There is no information about the architect, but Sezgin (1973:118) believes it to have been a “Turkish architect”, and indirectly goes as far as suggesting the Armenian-origin architect Krikor Balyan, who had been commissioned with several residences and also the Nusretiye mosque during the reign of Mahmud II. But with the Nusretiye we can see only very few similarities, for it represents already another stage in Ottoman architecture, and it moreover appears rather unlikely that a court architect would have built a structure in a provincial town for an individual like Mehmet Ali, who by 1800 really was not yet likely to have been in the position to patronize such a project. Born the son of a soldier and tobacco trader, and a mother from the family of the town governor, Mehmet Ali most probably did not dwell in poverty. But it was only in 1801 that he was among the contingent recruited in Kavala to join the Ottoman forces in Egypt, becoming deputy-commander of an Ottoman-Albanian battalion dispatched to fight the French in Egypt. Only then began his spectacular rise, appointed (or

“acknowledged” as) viceroy of Egypt in 1805, and it was only after his *küllîye* at Kavala was supposedly finished, thereby after the 1810s, that Mehmet came to enjoy a peak of power (cf. Toledano 2004). That Kızıltoprak (2006) gives the date of the *vakfiye* (foundation deed) of the complex as 1813 finally proves impossible the year 1800 as the date of the start of construction. The date 1817-21, given in a restoration report by the “Imaret Hotel” (2006/I:1), into which it has been transformed in recent years, appears much more reasonable in terms of the buildings’ architectural character as well. The authors of this report equally believed the “turco-baroque influences” to be an indicator “that the architect should have been from Istanbul”. After all, Mehmet Ali had also commissioned several Greek and Turkish artists from Istanbul to decorate his palaces in Cairo (Renda 1998:106-8). His identification with things Ottoman, despite his questionable allegiance to the Sultan, becomes most apparent in his better-known building project of the 1840s Muhammad Ali mosque at Cairo, which had renounced the post-Mamluk mainstream that had previously characterized Cairene architecture for a more Ottoman appearance.⁸⁹ If these two projects are compared, the one in Cairo is much more the monument of a ruler, while that at Kavala, low-rise and distinguished by its social-educational and not primarily religious or representative function, is that of a benefactor.⁹⁰

Mehmet Ali’s buildings in Kavala, though at some point certainly in a deplorable shape, survived in a country that was not particularly fond of preserving its Ottoman past for the simple reason that Mehmet, a local, openly challenged the Sultan’s authority. His

⁸⁹ On Mehmet Ali and the arts, see also Wiet (1949).

⁹⁰ Beldiceanu-Steinherr and Giannopoulos (2004:776) cite an Ottoman document that reveals that he had the revenues of the nearby island of Thassos assigned for the upkeep of his endowment at Kavala, including a school, a madrasa, a mosque, a library and a soup-kitchen (“imaret”). It is indicative of the social function that characterized this structure that it came to be known as “Mehmet Ali’s Imaret”, not “Mehmet Ali’s mosque”.

konak serves as a museum, his tomb remains in the yard, and next to a neo-Byzantine church of questionable appeal he is represented with an equestrian statue. But not all of the independent-minded notables in the Balkans have enjoyed a similar afterlife. Faroqhi (1995:260) rightfully noted that, as these notables' commissions were built with the goal to underline their power and position, this was also exactly the reason why many of those buildings closely associated with individuals fell into ruins or were even torn down after they lost their power. The *ayan* remain as a symbol of the centre's inability to effectively control even the least distant regions, and this period has thus been labelled as a period of imperial decay, with the *ayan* as its motor. But how was it really for ordinary subjects to live under their rule?

Yenişehirlioğlu (2006:321;326), in her article on the architectural patronage of *ayan* families in Anatolia, arrives at a far less negative conclusion than most Ottomanists' assessment of developments in the age of the *ayan*: "Villages and towns flourished under their patronage and in some cases whole geographical areas were populated for the first time under their authority." The patronage of the Karaosmanoğulları family (Aegean Anatolia), for example, "covers a large range of building activities and demonstrates how this notable family felt the need to provide for various aspects of social and cultural life of the region, and endowed and distributed parts of their income for this purpose." Is the "centro-centric" approach to the role of the *ayan* in Ottoman cultural history to be re-evaluated?

If we further compare the patronage of *ayan* in Ottoman Europe with that of their Asian counterparts we find that in the Balkans there is no example like the palace of İbrahim Pasha at Doğubeyazıt (on the Turkish-Iranian border); a real palace on which three generations of Pashas had built until 1784, and which curiously shows ornament in

Baroque spirit consciously merged with Seljuk rather than Ottoman forms imported from Istanbul (Faroghi 1995:260). The actual conclusion to this section must be that, just as many sub-topics in this thesis, the architectural patronage of the Rumeli *ayan* would merit a separate study, also in order to provide for more than the superficial and fragmentary survey of monuments produced by them that could be compiled here. Such undertaking would also be necessary to support the argument that, as it appears from the pictures of interiors and architectural details compiled, largely from previous studies, by Yenişehirlioğlu (2006), somewhat paradoxically, a “Baroque” spirit may in fact have been more apparent in the *ayan* architecture in the Asian parts of the empire than in the European ones.

3.2.2. The Thessalo-Epirote-Macedonian region in the last quarter of the eighteenth century

While in the chapter covering the second quarter of the nineteenth century developments in Thrace will take the most prominent place, for the last third of the eighteenth century the focus invariably shifts to the west of the peninsula, more concretely an area covering the historic regions of Epirus, Thessaly, and (mostly the western part of) Macedonia. The reason is the emergence of an Orthodox merchant class in this part of the Balkans which, according to Stoianovich (1992:42) “produced more carters and merchants in the eighteenth century than any other Balkan area of comparable size.” The “Macedo-Vlach” merchants of this region had in fact traded with Italy and engaged in trans-imperial commerce before the eighteenth century but, as held by Stoianovich (1992:63), they did not achieve distinction until the Treaty of Passarowitz (1718). Kienitz (1972:259) names several factors for the development of “Greek” commerce in the eighteenth century: a longer absence of wars with Austria after the peace of 1739; the loss of Venice as a serious competitor; and, last and probably least, a desire for “oriental” goods at the western European courts (“Turquerie”).

While McGowan (1994:669) asserts that in “many places, as at Larissa and Salonica, it was common practice for such prosperous families to buy protection from some powerful Muslim”, industry could thrive in a few geographically isolated communities left alone by bandits and governments alike. In the second half of the century Macedonia and Thessaly may have exported roughly half of their grain, cotton and tobacco production. Local merchants, mainly Greeks and Vlachs, held a quasi

monopoly on the overland export of wool and cotton to western markets. As European merchants were unfamiliar with the ways and languages of the Ottoman peoples they depended on local brokers and carters to dispose of their merchandise in the Balkan interior as well.⁹¹ The newly acquired wealth resulted in the replacement of formerly modest huts with more representative dwellings furnished “in the Turkish manner” but already with reference to the West, often Vienna, which they had come to know abroad.⁹² (Stoianovich 1992:21-22;41) As for the mechanisms of influence and factors of transformation in the process of dislocation, Walkey (1990:119) had concluded the following:

“[T]hose living abroad were to be heavily influenced by the artistic and formal ideas of the countries in which they found themselves. Returning home or in simply remitting money to improve the family home, they would leave instructions to the master builder to include such-and-such an element, such-and-such detail. With the owner’s description, and with the builder’s knowledge (either from his own travels or word of mouth within the Guild) this request would be translated into the new house in an appropriate and often daring way.”

In the late eighteenth century, in fact, a whole quarter of Ottoman exports went to Austria (cf. Göçek 1994:88), where “Greek” colonies had emerged in major towns. Ottoman residents in Vienna numbered 50-60 in 1760, but Stoianovich (1992:56) estimates that by 1783 they must have increased to “perhaps even ten times this number”. The Balkan merchants in the Habsburg lands did, however, not come from

⁹¹ European merchants have usually preferred to deal with Ottoman Christians rather than Muslims in their trade enterprises, which has often been explained as a preference on religious grounds. Rather, they chose to deal with non-Muslim merchants because they were afraid that contracts entered into with an Ottoman Muslim would be struck down in an Islamic court, where the word of a Muslim was worth more than that of a Christian (see Göçek 1996:97). An additional reason must have been that Ottoman Christians were simply more likely to be versed in European languages than their Muslim co-subjects.

⁹² Conversely, also merchants from Vienna came to settle in the Ottoman Balkans in the late eighteenth century, as the example of the Jewish Arie family (Samokov) demonstrates. This, however, should have been an exception.

the “wretched villages of Macedonia”, as some had speculated, but mostly from the upland communities of the Epirote-Macedonian-Thessalian region (Stoianovich 1992:38). It was not merely coincidental that the wealthier Greek merchants resided in cities outside the Ottoman Empire (e.g. Vienna, Trieste, Amsterdam) for, in the words of Stoianovich (1992:52), “both person and property were insecure in Turkey and thus both person and property like ‘good money’ often fled to areas of greater security. [A] balance between the accumulation and concentration of capital could not be achieved in the Ottoman Empire. As a result, both the prospect of Ottoman economic growth were thwarted and virtually eliminated until the middle of the nineteenth century.” Given the circumstances, it was very difficult for a group to succeed more than locally. Ottoman mercantile capital was large and growing, but also widely dispersed, and a good part of it was externalized, diverted to other states.⁹³ A part of the family, however, always remained on Ottoman territory.

The classical example is the Thessalian town (often “village”) of Ambelakia. In 1778 its inhabitants organized themselves as a joint-stock company for the purpose of exporting cotton yarn, spun and dyed in the community, to Germany and Austria.⁹⁴ From fewer than 1,500 inhabitants in 1783, it grew to 6,000 in only two decades of prosperity (Stoianovich 1992:18,21). Kienitz (1972:261) sees it as an indicator for the intensive

⁹³ Stoianovich (1992:21-2) appends: “When, at the close of the eighteenth century, a number of Greeks opened soap, macaroni, or other “factories,” they founded the new ventures more frequently in the ports and towns of the Ukraine or southern Russia than in their native towns.” Sadat (1972:355) holds the “Turkish habit of confiscation” accountable to have discouraged “conspicuous consumption and/or investment ... Commercial capital was either reinvested in trade or sent abroad.”

⁹⁴ Jelavich (1983:176) calls Vienna “the major center” of Greek cultural revival in the eighteenth century. It was also in the Habsburg metropolis that the first Greek journal appeared in 1793 (Ortaylı 1994:101), while Greek books were printed there already since 1783 (Jelavich 1983:176). Also the first “Bulgarian” printed book with a purely secular content, the *Stematografija* of Hristifor Žefarovič, had been published in Vienna in 1714 (Macdermott 1962:61). Ortaylı (1994:34;27) sees the reason for Austria assuming such an important role in the cultural development of the Balkan Christians in the eighteenth century in that the Habsburg Empire under Maria Theresia turned its attention from western to Southeast Europe. In part, he explains the attraction as due to the cultural flourishing of western Slavs in the empire.

relations Ambelakia had with the German-speaking world that one of the leading families (the Mavroi) had their last-name translated into the German “Schwar(t)z”.⁹⁵ It is thus the “Georgios Schwartz” mansion [Ill. 3.17. & 3.18.] that serves as architectural monument to Ambelakia’s golden age. More than its architecture, it is the interior which impresses in its richness of painted decoration (including depictions of Istanbul and Venice) in a style whose genesis will be discussed later in this chapter. The Schwartz mansion is further interesting because we know in this case how long it took for an elaborate house like this to be completed: five years (=seasons) for the building, and three years for painting and decoration (Walkey 1990:188).⁹⁶

Just like Ambelakia, the Thessalian towns of Tyrnavos and nearby Tsaritsani flourished through trade with textile,⁹⁷ while Kastoria and Siatista, both in Macedonia (which really made no difference at that time), dealt with fur.⁹⁸ Metsovo in the Pindos mountains, on the other hand, was wealthy not because of local production but because of trade activity of its more successful sons (such as the Averoff family) abroad (Kienitz

⁹⁵ The communication between Ambelakia and Vienna was directly maintained through a courier service, circulating every 15 days and via Zemun (near Belgrade). Travellers had also reported the presence of “Germans” in the mountain “villages” of that region (spouses?) and that German was “generally” understood. In this area many German loanwords have been preserved into the twentieth century, including many words related to household items and furniture, such as “firhan” (from German “Vorhang” = curtain). See Turczynski (1959:23-6 and ref.)

⁹⁶ According to Bammer (1982:35-6; and ref.) it was in fact built between 1787 and 1798 (equalling 11 years, which again does not imply that it could have not been built and decorated at different times within this period) and by the team of Ioannis Xarbinos, presumably a local to the region. Of the painter-decorator only the initials “L. L.” are known. Built as the residence of the Ambelakia cooperative, the Schwartz mansion also functioned as the headquarters of which in this institution’s four decades of existence (1778-1820).

⁹⁷ The success of these towns is explained by Lawless (1977:523) through that both “enjoyed judicial and administrative autonomy granted to them at the time of the Turkish conquest.” More specifically on this matter, see Kiel (1996).

⁹⁸ Interestingly, already by the late seventeenth century Evliya Çelebi reported the houses in Kastoria’s Christian quarter to be “grand seraglios of a strange and curious nature. All the houses on the shores of the lake possess boatsheds and enclosed balconies. The seraglios are mansions with ports, and with one floor above the other in the Constantinople style.” (cited from <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/en/C3.4.1.html>)

1972:260;263). After 1800, however, the total number of Greek merchants in Central Europe declines (Stoianovich 1992:56). German markets, and then even the Ottoman markets, came to prefer the cheaper British cotton, but also the Napoleonic wars did their part. In 1811 Ambelakia was annexed and heavily damaged by Ali Pasha (a fate shared by Moschopolis decades earlier), and Tyrnavos and Tsaritsani were haunted by epidemics in 1813. Jakob Philip Fallmerayer (in Kienitz 1972:261-2) observed in 1841/2 that one third of Tyrnavos' houses had disappeared since the beginning of the century, and parts of the town had transformed into fields and pastures. The legacy of this period and this “new” merchant class in the southwest Balkans, however, are a considerable number of their mansions to this day. More than on the façades, their former wealth can be seen in the often highly ornate interiors, mostly showing the same decorative program as those elsewhere in the empire (to be discussed in the next section).⁹⁹

In only few cases, at least in Greece, we also find paintings on the façade; an example being the Poulkos mansion in Siatista [Ill. 3.21 & 3.22] which, built in the 1750s, must have been one of the earliest examples of a wealthy house in this town. In terms of architecture it is a typical “Ottoman house” with a ground floor of stone, a plastered upper floor with projections, and a rather flat roof with overhanging eaves. Next to the top windows, which are exceptionally large (almost as large as the lower windows), we find painted decoration (not necessarily from the same date): ships and geometric motifs which, if we ignore the Christian cross of course, are closer to those found in earlier mosque interiors than to the later merchant houses of Plovdiv. In the “*bas o(n)das*” (main room, from trk. *başoda*) we find another curiosity: While depictions of

⁹⁹ Bammer (1982:125) suspects that the lavish use of colours in these houses was also conditioned by that many of the owners entertained cotton mills and tanneries, whereby otherwise expensive colours could be used extensively and cost-efficiently.

Constantinople are a frequent feature of mural paintings in *konaks* of the late eighteenth century and beyond, here it appears as if the city is depicted during the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople, which could be suggested from the lack of minarets, while the red dragons flying in a darkened sky may represent the malicious conquering forces. It should be noted, however, that such depiction is an absolute exception. In Christian as well as Muslim houses usually a harmonic Ottoman Istanbul, complete with minarets and mosques, is depicted. These examples survive in a few mansions in this region, most notably at Kozani, Kastoria, and Siatista.

3.3. New trends in architectural decoration

3.3.1. Transformations in Ottoman art and its dissemination to the provinces

The most significant change in the embellishment of residential and religious spaces around 1800 occurs not in architecture itself but in architectural decoration. Renda (1977:263; 1978:711) attributes this marked change to an interest in European architectural motifs which started at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Painted floral decoration, mostly consisting of bowls of fruits or panels of flowers, could be found on the walls of residences already in the seventeenth century, but it is in the second half of the eighteenth century that this genre comes to be replaced by a more monumental type of mural painting, applied directly on plaster. Among the new motifs are most prominently landscapes, often topographical representations of Istanbul, depictions of mosques, and less often other towns; all enframed in Baroque motifs. Although this kind of painted decoration had been well documented by European travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it was not taken up as a serious subject of study until the 1970s. In opposition to the lack of interest encountered among scholars until that date, Renda (1977:265) insists on its significant role in the history of Turkish art, for it represents the phase of transition from the (from that point on declining) art of miniature painting, used in the illustration of handwritten books, to painting in the western sense; on canvas. Given that in the “Ottoman house” decoration was a program of the interior and not the façade, as previously discussed, this trend unquestionably deserves mention as an important phenomenon in the architecture and visual culture of the late Ottoman Balkans.

Because the first examples of this style are found in Istanbul, Renda (1977:263) concludes that this art was initiated in the capital. The earliest examples date from the mid-eighteenth century, with murals in the Topkapı Saray's *harem* section forming the largest group. But also outside in the palace, for example in the 1750 *konak* of an Armenian family of notables, narrow friezes with landscape elements can be found. In the provinces, the earliest known example of frieze-type landscapes was found in a residence in Bursa dating from 1768 (Renda 1978:714). In the later half of the century also larger compositions framed with Baroque cartouches came to be favoured; but notwithstanding size or form, the content remains similar: seaside mansions or small kiosks on the Golden Horn or the Bosphorus; bridges or fountains; boats, and birds. The colours are restricted to shades of green, brown, and blue. In the techniques employed, Renda (1977:263,265) sees "a definite indication that the artists were aware of western methods of perspective". The reason for the specific choice of landscapes, while evidently approaching western modes of expression, she suggests, lie in social and religious restrictions on monumental representations of the human figure, as well as certain Ottoman traditions in topographical painting. Western commentators, as illustrated by Kreiser (1978:549-51), had reviewed this restriction on figural representation as the main obstruction to the emergence of a "successful" school of painting in the Ottoman Empire. He, however, could locate "only a few" examples of *kadı* protocols in which a non-Muslim is advised to dispense with "images" (probably referring to icons) and an altar in his home.

Problematic in the study of this kind of art, Renda (1977:264-5) admits to the difficulty of identifying the artists responsible for these paintings, as information is scarce or non-existent; even for the royal residences, where these artists figure neither in archives nor payrolls. But as there is no evidence of foreign artists until the mid-nineteenth century,

she concludes that at least the earlier examples were certainly works of local artists, probably trained in the Istanbul workshops under foreign influence. Notwithstanding the ethno-confessional origins of patrons or artists, these works display a strong unity in expression in a vast territory between the Danube and the Nile. Renda's survey of buildings from various parts of the empire has shown that this new wave of painting spread rapidly from the capital during the reign of Selim III (1789-1807), and links this dissemination with the *ayan*, as it was

“only natural that the provincial elite should follow the example of the capital in all affairs and build in their home towns buildings to equal, even at times to surpass, those in the capital. Therefore, mural paintings and landscapes are found in several buildings including mosques, *türbes*, libraries, *şadırvans* and especially the houses of the upper classes in Anatolian and Rumelian towns. Most of the murals dating from the period of Selim III are similar in style to those in Istanbul, suggesting that at first, artists from the capital were employed by local patrons. The frieze and the panel type landscapes were both used widely, some being views of Istanbul, although representations of local towns were also common ... During the first half of the 19th century buildings with murals increased in number and provincial styles emerged showing that local craftsmen started to follow the models from the capital. Subject matter and style took a local form and can be considered as examples of folk art. ... A few examples ... show a similarity in style suggesting that they must be the works of a group of artists ... The majority of murals, however, reflect individual styles. Provincial artists were more strongly bound to the esthetics [sic] of the traditional art of miniature painting, but their efforts to create depth, although primitive, are encountered in all these murals and they should be evaluated as the provincial versions of a new concept in pictorial art.”¹⁰⁰

Faroghi (1995:95) found it noteworthy that these eighteenth century pashas, who sought to rule most autonomously in “their” province, did *not* pick up on the regional culture of

¹⁰⁰ Among the examples from the Balkan provinces surveyed and illustrated by Renda (1977,1978,1996,1999) are houses in Kastoria, Siatista, Ambelakia, Verria, and Plovdiv, as well as mosques in Skopje, Bitola, Tetovo, and Samokov. Some of these will be dealt with in greater detail in the following chapters, appended by the examples given by Kiel (1990a) for the Albanian lands and other examples found in Bulgaria and Macedonia. In Bosnia and Serbia examples for this decorative art are rarer, the reasons for which will be explored in Ch. 4.

that province, but cultivated the connection with Istanbul, particularly in cultural matters. That panoramas of Istanbul were a preferred motif in their reception rooms, she sees as evidence supporting this assertion. Moutsopoulos (1967:108), writing not about provincial rulers' but merchants' houses, attempts a more narrative illustration of the character and reception of these "interior mural paintings" in the mansions Verria (western Macedonia), where the finest examples date from the early nineteenth century:

"The themes which interest the popular artist concern far off cities, especially Venice and Constantinople. He paints houses, great numbers of them, either singly or all together, using a somewhat elementary form of perspective ... Ships, of all sizes, shapes and kinds are a second favorite theme ... And they are beautifully done, with billowing sails and flags in unknown harbours, ready to sail and loaded with all sorts of goods. And as the winter approached, the old men would sit on their low seats by the blazing hearth and tell their grandchildren about the long voyages the sailors made to carry the flax from Verria to Constantinople and the Black Sea, about the armed schooners on the long haul to Zemoun, about the attacks of the Albanian brigands, about the halt at Bitolia. So, following the panorama of the painted parlour frieze, they gave vivid presence to the far-off world they dreamed, of the distant world which always attracted the best men of Macedonia, great grandfathers, grandfathers, fathers who, in far-off lands, enjoyed the best conditions, the freedom to absorb new ideas and to become acquainted with new ways of life far from slavery under the Turkish tyrant. Thus it was that they were able freely to develop their innate abilities and thus it was that an outlet was provided for the commercial genius of the Greek race."¹⁰¹

That in the ornately carved wooden ceilings of these houses Moutsopoulos (1967:109) also believed to identify a "strong arab influence", he attributed to the fact that in the provinces the same masters and craftsmen had worked in the construction and decoration of mansions and mosques alike. And indeed, it appears noteworthy in this

¹⁰¹ He then adds that after the great fire of 1854 the murals became "more conventional and only a distant recollection of the traditional ideas survives." It should be mentioned that none of the interior mural paintings at Verria have been preserved. Only the Manolakis house's have been documented by Moutsopoulos before it disappeared by 1967. (Moutsopoulos 1967:109)

context that landscape paintings figure far more often in provincial mosques than in those of the capital. Was this kind of decoration then really more of a phenomenon of the Balkan provinces, less often also found in Anatolia, than of a general trend in Ottoman architectural decoration emanating from the capital, as most trends did? Faroqhi (1995:266) concedes the possibility that in Istanbul these might have fallen victim to later restorations.¹⁰²

Another eighteenth century innovation that, if we follow Bakırer (2001:4), has its source of dissemination in the *ayan* as well, are the stained-glass top windows (*revzen*) with elaborate stucco grilles with glass insets, often seemingly imitating the “Ottoman Baroque” arch forms (semicircular but widening and turning at the corners). Bakırer (2001:12) dates these to the Selim III period (1789-1807), with examples being his Topkapı wing dating from 1790 and the Aynalıkavak Palace “repaired” during his reign. If we accept that the typical mansions of Gjirokastër and Macedonia-Thessaly, which often display very similarly elaborated top windows, date from the late eighteenth century, the conclusion would be that, at least in this period, the trends from the capital spread very fast. It is also interesting to note that next to Gjirokastër we find many (if not most) examples for these embellished top windows (or painted *faux* versions of these! [Ill. 3.17.]) in the Thessalian-Epirote-(west) Macedonian region, presumably dating from shortly before and around 1800. They apparently do not figure much in

¹⁰² That more conservative forces were not particularly fond of such unorthodox decoration is illustrated by the “restorations” of mosques damaged in the Yugoslav conflicts of the 1990s, sponsored by “philanthropists” from the Arab world, where charmingly decorated Ottoman interiors have given way to almost completely whitewashed interiors. As these destructions took place only recently, the original character of these mosques had luckily been documented and published in earlier decades. In some cases, as in the Gazi Husrevbegova at Sarajevo the Saudi restoration has been reversed again (see also archnet.org entry “Gazi Husrev Bey Complex” and related links). A different example from within Turkey, mentioned by Kiel (et al. 2001:6), is the “catastrophic restoration” of the Eski Cami in Edirne whose “lovely, colorful 18th- and 19th-century decoration was replaced by a soulless pseudo-Ottoman decoration in two dull colors: Nescafe-with-milk and Nescafe-without-milk.” The reasons for such undertaking he, however, does not see in religious motives, but in the simple fact that the work was done by architects of the Pious Endowments Directorate alone, while art historians were not consulted.

what is preserved east of Thessaloniki, much closer to the capital.¹⁰³ This only supports the argument of a regional disparity between the West and East of the peninsula, with the former preserving much of the houses from its period of prosperity in the last third of the eighteenth century, and Thrace with the most splendid examples of architecture from after the 1820s. Of course, this does not mean that all towns in the western part lost their significance. Berat in Albania, for example, flourished in the first half of the nineteenth century as a centre of crafts production, whereby it achieved a rather different appearance than the nearby Gjirokastër, whose best-known houses' shape dates from a half-century before that. The houses of Berat, as most nineteenth-century houses in the Ottoman domain, do not have top windows anymore, as glass - previously a luxury good - eventually became available to broader segments of society. Thereby the top windows, invented to provide the main room(s) with natural light while making minimal usage of the expensive glass, became obsolete.¹⁰⁴

Mural paintings will be found in the houses of the wealthy in the Balkans until the end of the Ottoman period, but the time-frame set in this work (1700-1850) does still make sense, as after the mid-nineteenth century, in a time of institutionalized westernization, the artistic programs develop in a different direction. Decorators of the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century still used the traditional brushwork technique using paints mixed with water and glue or egg-yolk, taking up the traditional *kalemişi*

¹⁰³ A contemporary (and habitually referred to) example in the Anatolian province is the Çakırağa konağı at Birgi. It should be noted that this *konak* has been dated differently: as late eighteenth century (cf. Bakırer 2001:13, in reference to Eldem) and to the 1830s (cf. Kuyulu 2000:3, in reference to Renda, Arık, and herself). If we compare with the examples from Epirus and Thrace, and accept their dating, the explanation that the mansion dates from the late eighteenth century but the facade decoration from the 1830s appears most reasonable.

¹⁰⁴ The early nineteenth-century traveller Leake (1967:144) reported that in Ioannina “a very bad kind of glass” (as well as “every thing but the stone and the mortar”) was imported from Trieste and Fiume (Rijeka), while “seldom seen in Asiatic Turkey”. In Greece, however, it was “rendered necessary by the long winter.” Also the window glass for the mosques and palaces of Istanbul had been imported from Venice (Goodwin 1971:113).

decoration of geometric and floral motifs and applying to landscapes and still life. In the second half of the century, however, western-type oil painting comes to be preferred, and techniques of European painting are applied with more skill and precision. What concerns the themes, now also foreign-looking landscapes as well as hunting scenes, in which animals and sometimes even human figures are depicted in small dimensions, become popular. Residences become increasingly furnished with European-type furniture, which is free-standing, in contrast to the typical Ottoman built-in cupboards and multi-functional spaces, and also paintings come to be hung on the walls, which was not a widespread feature in the “Ottoman house” until the later nineteenth century. Due to these spatial changes within the reception room, painted decoration comes to be concentrated on the ceilings of rooms, or on panels near the ceiling. At that time also foreign artists also came to work in the Ottoman palaces at Istanbul, while entertaining workshops in Galata, where their skills and techniques were passed on to local masters. (Renda 1977:264, 1998:103-105; 1999:320) On their way to Istanbul, where many little-known European artists found work at that time, they occasionally also stopped in the Balkan provinces and taught locals in western painting skills, if they had not already studied abroad themselves. So had, for example, Toma Višanov “Moler” (from the Viennese pronunciation of the German “Maler” = painter), who was trained in Vienna in the second half of the eighteenth century and thereupon founded the “Bansko School” of painting in Bulgaria. Also the painting school of Samokov had developed after its “founder”, Hristo Dimitrov, had, after studying iconography on Athos, gone to Vienna. His son, Zahari Zograf, the most important representative of the Samokov School, then furthered his knowledge of western modes by taking lessons from French artists travelling to Constantinople in the 1840s. (Roškovska 1982:130; Doytchinov/Gantchev 2001:59) Gradually, craftsmen in the Balkans came to be better informed of styles, trends, and techniques in Europe, which is duly reflected in their

works after this period. Before that, however, we detect the consolidation a regionally fairly coherent expression of a late Ottoman Balkans art.

3.3.2. The Albanian lands at the peak of Islamic culture in the Southwest Balkans

It has been noted earlier that the Albanian lands pose an exception to the rule of architectural-typological “Ottomanization” of the Balkans. In most of the region this was a development of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, coinciding with the spread of Islam which subsequently generated a need for Muslim religious infrastructure.¹⁰⁵ In Albania, only the eighteenth century up to 1830/40 was a “time of large-scale Islamization”¹⁰⁶ (Kiel 1990a:290) among the Albanians, whereby “groups of masters could do nothing else but build and decorate new mosques etc. and a great consistency of style emerged in Albania for the first time.”¹⁰⁷ While not providing a wholesale definition, in various parts of Kiel’s work on Albania we come to understand what he means by referring to this specifically Albanian style: unusually spacious porticoes; rounded rather than pointed arches; unconventional capitals; the “law of the periphery” influencing the appropriation of Ottoman forms; a partial survival of pre-Ottoman Byzantine and Dalmatian building traditions blended with an “oriental concept of

¹⁰⁵ In Ottoman Albania prior to the eighteenth century neither a colonization with Turks nor conversions to Islam had taken place on a larger scale. Ottoman art was therefore only represented by a loosely knit network of administrative settlements (the *sancak* capitals, such as Vlora, Elbasan, Ohrid, Shkodër, Peć, etc.), usually around a pre-Ottoman castle, where we find some works of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The largest monuments of Ottoman architecture in this period are works of military engineering; a situation characteristic of Albania. Kiel thence describes Ottoman art as remaining “basically a foreign, imported art, the subtle play of lines and sensitive code of aesthetics of which were never fully understood ... The country was too far away from the centres of gravity of the empire to feel direct contact and inspiration.” (Kiel 1978:542-5)

¹⁰⁶ The literature mostly explains this development with a policy of Islamization as a means of pacification in these unruly peripheral areas after the 1690s, and/or with heavy new taxes laid on the Christians, driving many subjects into accepting the faith of the conqueror (cf. Malcolm 1998:164-5). Apart from socio-economical motives, Kiel (1978:546) also mentions the work of various dervish orders as a moving force behind this conversion.

¹⁰⁷ In another article, Kiel (1978:17) indirectly suggests that the reason for some mosques from the early nineteenth century being spared destruction is because their style (wall paintings) was considered genuinely local.

decoration”; and some Baroque influences coming from both Venice and Central Europe.¹⁰⁸ While calling this “Albanian” style a “truly national art” as well as “local and provincial and even sometimes un-Ottoman” (1990a:290-1), he identifies the builders and decorators as “local groups of ambulant masters, usually Valachians and Christian Albanians from the villages in the Pindus Mountains [Greece] at the point where Albanian territory meets the lands inhabited by Slavs and Greeks. These masters were trained in the construction and decoration of churches, mansions and mosques alike, all showing the same cosmopolitan style.”¹⁰⁹ The period between 1780 and 1840 Kiel (1990a:57) then classifies as “the period of greatest flourishing of Ottoman-Albanian art”. That it assumes such a specific character he attributes to the provincial origin and orientation of its patrons, which were no longer “Ottoman officials, educated in the capital and in touch with the latest architectural developments, but ... members of the local feudal aristocracy, the Derebeys of Bushatli, Ali Pasha, Kurd Ahmet and Rotullu, all with strong local ties. Other patrons were the relatively influential guilds of the principal craft centres of the country, and also local people.” (Kiel 1990a:290)

A considerable number of noteworthy works are found in Berat, now largely preserved due to a “museum town” status granted by the Albanian government even during communism. The town witnessed a particular prosperity in this period due to crafts and trade being highly developed, while it achieved political significance as well when it was made *sancak* capital instead of in the decayed Vlorë (Avlonya). With a population of 14-

¹⁰⁸ As illustrative examples of this art outside Albania, all from between the 1790s and 1830s, Kiel (1978:548) mentioned the “Coloured Mosque” and the Sersem Ali baba (or “Arabati Baba”) *teke* in Tetovo (Macedonia), the mid-nineteenth century Avzi Pasha mansion in Bardovci near Skopje, the Prizren Rotulla Emin Pasha mosque, numerous mansions of the Greco-Albanian Christian merchants in Kastoria, and the monastery of the Holy Virgin between Kastoria and Florina (rebuilt in 1813).

¹⁰⁹ Somewhat less enthusiastic than his general assessment of their work, Kiel (1990a:291) then notes this situation as “characteristic for the time of decay of the Ottoman Empire”, and that in the “classical 16th century, at the time the Süleymaniye complex was built, not a single master came from this mountain district.”

16,000 Berat was considered a large town in its time (Kiel 1990a:51-2). All mosques in Berat thus date from this “golden age” between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but the Mosque of Beyazit (as the name suggests) is apparently an older foundation, the rebuilding of which Kiel (1990a:57) believes to be contemporary with the Bachelors’ Mosque, thereby from around 1820, as exemplified by the ornamentation typical for this period.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, it is only second to the decoration found at the Halvetiye *tekke* [Ill. 3.23.] that Kiel (1990a:52;63-4) ranks the qualities of the Beyazit mosque. Built by Kurd Ahmed Pasha in 1782 or 1785, for him it is “perhaps the finest tekke of the country.” Its *semahane* ceiling, covered with “a multitude of inlay work and gilded, painted and sculpted elements of the highest quality”, “belongs among the very best of the Balkans”. The upper sections of the four walls are adorned with a broad belt of calligraphy,

“linked with the ceiling by imitation wainscoting filled with ornamental flower designs. The whole work is in the best tradition of 18th century Ottoman decorative art which continues much of the great finesse of the works of the Lale Devri, the so-called ‘Tulip Period’.¹¹¹ Only some 18th century rooms in the Topkapi Saray in Istanbul can be compared with the extraordinary feeling for detail and quality as exposed here at this ceiling in Berat.”

The possibly best-known Ottoman-period structure at Berat, however, is the Bekârlar Camii (Bachelor’s mosque) [Ill. 3.24-26].¹¹² Erected in 1827-8¹¹³ by Süleyman Pasha of

¹¹⁰ Another somewhat more curious rebuilding project was the great mosque at Lezhë (Alessio). Previously a Gothic cathedral converted in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, Sultan Selim III sponsored the renovation which, according to Kiel (1990a:192-3), was nothing more than an attempted reconstruction of the former church. Another “minor” structure from that period mentioned by Kiel (1990a:182) is a *türbe* at Krujë, where we find three windows in “the gracious style of the Ottoman Baroque” and decorative painting in the interior, with an inscription mentioning the date 1780.

¹¹¹ Kiel (1990a:290), however, also notes that the “great art of the Lale Devri” itself went “almost unnoticed in Albania” in his suggestion of a provincial scope of Albanian architecture.

¹¹² Why this mosque came to be known as that of the Bachelors’, “the organization of unmarried men who did military duty but lived from the work of their hands in time of peace”, is - according to Kiel

Vlorë, for Kiel (1990a:70-1) it “counts among the most remarkable creations of Ottoman-Albanian art.” A rare privilege, the building has benefited from research and restoration works in 1960s and ‘70s. Mural decoration covers the greater part of its outside walls and also the interior, with “very colourful paintings representing imaginary Turkish cities, mosques, palaces and rivers with boats floating on them, as well as panels with rich floral motives, garlands, bouquets and draperies. [In] a few places are representations of mosques inspired by the great imperial buildings in Istanbul, but as a whole, the themes of the paintings in the interior are less secular than those on the outside, where we even find battle scenes.” Next to the decoration the plan of the Bachelors’ Mosque appears noteworthy as well. Because it is built onto a slope it has two stories. The prayer hall is accessed from the upper level, while the ground floor with three arcades accommodates shops to generate income for the upkeep of this foundation (Koch 1989:211); a pragmatic solution encountered as well in the roughly contemporary “Coloured Mosque” in Travnik (to be dealt with later).

In the Albanian capital Tirana only one Ottoman mosque has survived the Hoxha-period.¹¹⁴ The Mosque of Ethem Bey [Ill. 3.27-29], begun in the 1790s and coinciding with the transfer of the seat of the Toptan family, the most powerful feudal family of Central Albania, from Krujë to Tirana. It was to prove of principal importance for the later development of Tirana, till then an insignificant Ottoman-founded small town, and the patron’s intention to contribute to the revival of the town through the funding of

(1990a:73) not known, but in Albania “the Beqars appear to have been an important element in society; in Berat they clearly were.” Koch (1989:211), on the other hand, identified the “bachelors” as an association of policemen and night guards in the bazaar of Berat.

¹¹³ Koch (1989:211) mentions that the inscription “1827” in fact refers to a “repair”, and suggests that this may have been the date when the decoration was painted, while the structure itself could be from the eighteenth century.

¹¹⁴ Kiel (1990a:250) refers to information provided by the nineteenth-century traveller Von Hahn (1854), who noted several “gaily-painted” mosques in Tirana. These, lamentably, have not been preserved.

this mosque is even stated in the inscription (Kiel 1978:544 and 1990a:250). Koch (1989:124) suspects that the delayed completion of the building, whose construction stretches over three decades, was due to conflicts with the Pasha of Shkodër. According to the same author, the dome was completed in 1807 after the initial patron Molla Bey's death. His son Ethem then continued the project, adding portico, roof, minaret, and interior paintings before 1821, whereas the paintings on the exterior date from 1823. The central-domed prayer hall plan is far from unusual, but it is odd that the outer portico was built around only two sides of the building. Kiel (1990a:251-2) suggests that this may have been due to contemporary circumstances, preventing the builders from erecting a fully symmetrical building. The style of the capitals of the columns connecting the rounded (not pointed) arches he identifies as "of local origin and not related to Ottoman building tradition." Not only the interior, but also the portico is completely painted with stylized plant and flower motifs in soft red and green colours. Kiel (1990a:252) finds the style of these paintings finished in 1822/3 "somewhat vulgar at close quarters", but assesses the mural paintings in the prayer hall as "even more fantastic":

"The entire surface of the walls and the dome is covered with brilliantly preserved and radiantly executed ornamental paintings as found in no other place in the country. The background has the soft colour of sand against which the dominant brownish-red and a little soft green contrasts harmoniously. Intricate flower designs mingle with pictures of fantastic cities and great mosques, the subject-matter being very much the same as that seen in the rich interiors of old Turkish houses preserved in Verria, Kastoria and Siatista in Macedonia, or those in the Bulgarian cities of Plovdiv, Koprivštica or Smoljan, and in many places in Anatolia. The painted interior of the Tirana mosque certainly belongs to the same groups of master builders and painters from the Albano-Valachian villages of the Pindus Mountains, who since the late 17th century monopolised the art of painting for religious as well as civil purposes [and is a splendid example] of a local version of oriental art blended with Baroque elements in a profusion of vigour and inventiveness, but still connected with the main stream of late Ottoman art."

It must have been the same artists that re-decorated the interior late sixteenth-century Hadum mosque [Ill. 3.30] at Đakovica (Gjakova) in Kosovo, for we find there exceptionally similar patterns; even the same empty landscapes with cypresses. But more numerous than the few redecorations of older structures are the new mosques built in this period of expansion of Islam in the Albanian lands. Next to the mosques at Prizren and Shkodër already discussed in the section on the *ayan*, these include the “Red Mosque” of Sinan Ağa at Peć (1759-60), the Ilijaz Kuka Mosque at Prizren (1792), the Yaşar Pasha mosque at Priština (1832), but also the sixteenth-century Suzi Çelebi mosque and the Gazi Mehmet Pasha mosque at Prizren must have received their wooden porticoes in the decades around 1800. Most of these structures include painted decorations typical for the period, although alone three of the abovementioned must have been already (re-)decorated at a later point, after the mid-nineteenth century. As examples for redecorations of fifteenth and sixteenth-century mosques in the first half of the nineteenth century the examples of the Fatih mosque in Prishtina and the Bayraklı mosque in Peć [Ill. 3.31] can be mentioned.¹¹⁵ The latter is particularly interesting, for it displays a striking similarity to the decoration of the Şerif Halil Pasha Mosque at Şumen, but it also has similarities with other mosques in the Albanian region: landscapes with cypresses, depictions of a mosque, and the common vegetal patterns. Also the spandrels of the *mahfil* (with rounded arches) are decorated; a sight resembling what we find in churches after the 1820s.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Such redecorations are of course not restricted to Albania and Kosovo. As examples in Macedonia can be mentioned the Muradiye in Skopje and the mosque of Isa Bey in Bitola; in Bulgaria the “old mosques” (Eski Cami) at Jambol and Stara Zagora. The latter (also called Hamza Bey Cami), mentioned by Kiel (1974:637), is also interesting in another regard: This early fifteenth century mosque, one of the oldest in the Balkans, seems to have been exposed to an attempt to “baroquify” not only the interior but the exterior as well. The twelve windows in the drum of the dome were enlarged and cut into an oval shape.

¹¹⁶ It should be addressed that nearly all the mosques in Kosovo mentioned here were damaged to varying degrees, many completely, during the last decade. Some are now restored with funding from abroad, with Turkey assuming a prominent role.

Next to present-day Albania and Kosovo, Albanians also lived in much of northwest Greece but also as far south as Athens and some Aegean islands. These, however, were predominantly Orthodox Christians, whereby we would look in vain for monuments of Islamic architecture closely related to those in Albania. To the north the Albanian settlement area extended into what gradually became part of Montenegro towards the end of the century; the areas of Podgorica, Ulcinj, and a part of the Sandžak region (split between Serbia and Montenegro). But next to Albania proper and Kosovo it is in the western half of the Republic of Macedonia that we find important Albanian-Muslim monuments from that period, and particularly in Tetovo, not far from Skopje. Of two fairly well-known structures there, the earlier one is the Arabati Baba *tekke* (= dervish lodge) [Ill. 3.34], also called Sersem Ali Baba tekkesi, of the Bektashi order. First mentioned in a *vakıfnâme* of 1799, it was obviously built at an earlier date; Cerasi (1988:98) mentions “around 1770”. The buildings themselves, however, must have received their present shape and decoration in the early nineteenth century, maybe in the 1820s. In this complex several structures are worth mentioning, most importantly maybe the central *şadırvan* which, really more than a normal fountain, is extended to a colonnaded rectangular pavilion with a raised platform for ceremonies to be held in the outside during summer months. The spandrels, resting on wooden columns supporting S-curved arches, are adorned with painted decoration typical for this region and period, and are found on several of the complex buildings. Similar patterns we find on the “tower”, which consists of a ground floor of stone and an elevated seating area above it. A frieze with painted decoration and rosettes runs around the level above the windows. Much devotion was dedicated to the intricately carved ceilings in many of the buildings of the complex, but especially to the highly ornate entrance of the *şadırvan*. Palikruševa and Tomovski (1965:209-10), without further elaborating on their assumption, believe

that the work was done by the well-known masters from the Mala Reka region east of Debar. It seems noteworthy that these are held to have been Muslims, the Macedonian-speaking Torbeši, which poses an exception to the masters so far mentioned, which were all Orthodox Christians.

The other, better-known, structure in Tetovo is the Alaca Camii (Šarena džamija, “Colored Mosque”) [Ill. 3.35-7]. The date of its foundation is not known with certainty, but may have been as early as the end of the fifteenth century. The date most often given in non-expert sources, however, is the seventeenth century, which is evidently wrong for its present shape acquired later (clearly in the nineteenth century) through rebuilding and redecoration. Ayverdi (1981b:76) mentions masters from nearby Debar as the artists to have painted interior and exterior of this structures, and suggests a date between 1818 and 1822, while Ibrahimgil (1995:250) suggests, in line with other sources, that the present shape dates from the 1830s. It appears not too unlikely that the same artists may have worked in Tetovo at both structures at the same time. On the other hand, this region abounded in qualified artists. Ibrahimgil (1995:250), next to mentioning the version of a master Nikola of Tetovo being responsible for the design, also cites a curious theory, admittedly held by some rather prominent Yugoslav scholars (Redžić, Zdravković), that the artists responsible were Italians.

Ayverdi (1981b:74-5) also notes the Alaca mosque’s contemporaneity with the Sulejmanija at Travnik [Ill.4.16], equally nicknamed “Colored Mosque” for its painted façade. But save for the fact that both are rectangular and roofed (not domed) buildings with painted façades, the mural paintings of the mosque at Travnik have a very different character, making it unlikely that they were built by the same masters, which Ayverdi might have wanted to suggest. In Travnik floral motifs dominate, painted in a rather

naïve manner and less sophisticated technique, and with almost no references to anything Baroque. This is different in the Tetovo mosque, where Baroque motifs can be found next to landscape paintings and other elements typical for the period and the area. In the interior all surfaces are completely covered with painted decoration. Truly baroque balconies add to the flamboyant effect.

While Ayverdi (1981b:76), in his usual disgust of anything post-dating the “classical” sixteenth century, finds it “far from being beautiful”, the Tetovo mosque is really a (if not the) masterpiece of late Ottoman Balkans decorative art which has few competitors in terms of the maturity of style; possibly only the Rila Monastery, where masters from the same region (Debar) worked. But we should also note that the decorative programs differ on three parts of the structure: the portico (north wall) with “Ottoman Baroque” arches and paintings on white surface, having close parallels in many places of the southern Balkans from Albania to Bulgaria; the interior, where we basically find the same motifs but also much richer colours as well as landscape paintings (Istanbul and, curiously, Venice); the exterior side walls on the West, East, and South, where the style clearly differs. These walls are arranged in rectangular panels filled with different colours and more geometric schemes (star-shaped rosettes), thereby showing little resemblance to the decoration of the portico and the interior. Could they have been painted at a later point, and/or by different artists? İbrahimgil (1995:251), attempting a comparison with roughly contemporary mosques in Anatolia,¹¹⁷ maintains that in the Asian examples the influence of Ottoman miniature painting is more visible, while the Balkan examples show a stronger influence of western Baroque, and believes that this has to do with

¹¹⁷ The mosques he mentions are, next to the Beyazıt mosque at Amasya, the Hızır Bey mosque in Soma (in the Aegean hinterland) and the Başçavuşoğlu mosque at Yozgat (north-central Anatolia), built in 1791-2 and 1800-1, which Renda (1999:317) also holds to be the first examples of decorative programs otherwise known from residences are used in mosques. For a brief (and mainly photographic) discussion of similarities between Balkans and Anatolia in terms of this art, see Arık (2002).

painters working in Macedonia not having been too familiar with Turkish decoration traditions.

3.4. On the “architects” and “painters” of mansions and mosques in the late Ottoman Balkan provinces

To identify the persons responsible for the construction and decoration of the works hereupon mentioned, and to clarify the use of terms, the distinction between an actual architect and that of the master builder - called *maistores* in Macedonia and Epirus, *kalfa* (“helper”, same Arabic root as “caliph”) in the capital, in Anatolia and sometimes in Bulgaria - must be made. Of the two, writes Cerasi (1988:87), “the architect was apt to be the more cultured and better integrated into official institutions; the master builder belonged to a socially broader sphere. [By] the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries master builders were often called upon to assume full responsibility for public buildings, though their works for private clients continued to outnumber their public projects.” In reference to Bernard Lewis’ thesis that the decline of Ottoman culture at the beginning of the nineteenth century was restricted to court culture, whereas popular culture continued to retain its vitality for many decades, Cerasi (1988:88) declares that in the provincial towns “the master builders were the symbol of that vitality.”¹¹⁸

Anhegger (1954:90) traces their origin to some areas, in which some villages or population groups had almost exclusive worked as itinerant builders.¹¹⁹ That at that time

¹¹⁸ It should be noted that this is also a rather liberal interpretation of what Lewis (1961/1968:35) originally wrote: “[The] apathy of the Ottoman ruling class is the more striking when contrasted with the continuing vigour of their intellectual life ... It is not until the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth that we can speak of a real breakdown in the cultural and intellectual life of Turkey, resulting from the utter exhaustion of the old traditions and the absence of new creative impulses. And even then, behind the battered screen of courtly convention, the simple folk arts and folk poetry of the Turks continued as before.”

¹¹⁹ As the area they travelled from, Anhegger (1954:90-1) mentions a region with northern Macedonia as centrepiece, stretching westward into central Albania, while experienced masters hailed from Kolonje (Greek-Albanian border region), Debar, or Kastoria. While this roughly coincides with where other authors locate these builders’ villages, he further adds the mountainous lands between the upper Struma and the Morava, and some places north of Kjustendil (Bulgarian/Pirin Macedonia), the Rhodope

whole villages or towns specialized in one craft is no big exception, if we follow Moutsopoulos (1967:102-4) on Macedonia: “Castoria and Siatista were occupied exclusively with the furrier’s craft; Dimitsana made nothing but gunpowder; Stemnitsa had metal foundries and goldsmiths; Cosmas, in the Kinouria area made the combs for weaving looms. In Epirus, the inhabitants of Soupikia were all coopers, and the people of Zagoria were specialised in nature-healing and oven-building.” He then mentions a large number of little-known villages in northern Epirus and western Macedonia as areas of Greece which produced the greatest builders, including the villages around Kozani, Florina, and Siatista, and further singles out Hionades as “home of renowned painters with a tradition in the painting of ikons [sic]” and Tyrnavos, “where wood-carving was a traditional occupation.” From these villages “boulakia”, groups (= trk. *bölük*) of builders set out,

“usually after the carnival season, to begin jobs which had been arranged in advance by the head of the guild. At the head of every group ... was the first master-builder. They stayed away from their villages until mid-November when they usually returned to look after their land. Each group of koudarai consisted of 10-20 building craftsmen. But there were sometimes larger groups of up to 100 for the big projects. They visited the big towns and built the bridges, the caravanserai, the roads and aqueducts. The routes followed by these groups are of special interest, for they bear witness to the spread of local building techniques and, especially, of design and even the foreign influences which the building craftsmen probably brought back with them from their travels abroad. It would seem, however, that the craftsmen usually built in accord with the tradition of the place where they worked, with the materials they found on the spot and, of course, following the instructions of the owner.”

mountain villages Bracigovo and Široka Laka, as well as Zlatina (close to Šumen and Varna). For an excellent if brief account of work migration (prominently including builders) in the late Ottoman Balkans from an ethnological-historical perspective and based on secondary sources in the Slavic languages (thereby excluding Greece), see Palaiet (1987).

While Kiel (1990a:252) goes as far as to state that “master builders and painters from the Albano-Valachian villages of the Pindus Mountains [had] since the late 17th century monopolised the art of painting for religious as well as civil purposes”, Cerasi (1988:89) positions the beginning of the heyday of “Balkan mason corporations” in the late eighteenth century and in the western parts of the peninsula. “All of them were organized as traveling confraternities of masons and carpenters, often belonging to the same family, town, or village. In more than one case, the family or village corporations ... had a secret language which extended from building nomenclature to everyday terms. The best-known companies worked over a vast territory, even as far as Cairo.”¹²⁰ He moreover attests them “openness to foreign influence (Italian in Epirus and Central European in Macedonia and Bulgaria)”. As few of the more famous master builders were born or raised in towns, Cerasi (1988:89-90), significantly, notes it as a “paradox of Ottoman civilization - centered in towns and dominated by towns - that its architectural culture should have been almost entirely produced by villagers.”¹²¹

Malcolm (1998:203-4), upon noting that among the Albanians of Prizren the terms “Vlach” and “Gog” (stone-mason) were used interchangeable, remarks that the craft of

¹²⁰ Similarly exotic, Walkey (1990:119) mentions that the team of Kominos Kalfa was invited to Jerusalem in 1808 to restore the church of the Holy Sepulchre. Palaiet (1987:46) mentions a song sung by the women of Galičnik (near Debar) where reference is made to their men working “far, far away in Alexandria.”

¹²¹ Another actor which played a role in the architectural production in Ottoman cities was the “town architect” (officially “chief architect of a region”), as researched and portrayed by Orhonlu (1978). As far as can be understood, their duties included mainly control of the guilds of construction (builders, carpenters, stonemasons, whitewashers, bricklayers, tile makers, timber merchants, marble cutters, stone cutters, glaziers, etc.), previously a responsibility of the *kadı*, as well as the technical aspects of construction business in their regions or cities and the solution of conflicts occurring among the members of the guilds of construction. No one could start building without a certificate issued by the town architect. In the Ottoman Balkans this functionary figured in Belgrade, Vidin, Plovdiv, Komotini, Edirne, Tekirdağ, and Ahiyolu (Pomorje near Burgas). They were centrally appointed by the chief architect in Istanbul, but recommended to him by local administrators. Also non-Muslims were appointed to these posts. Orhonlu suggested the establishment of this office to have taken place in the seventeenth century, being related to the “urbanization movement” of that century, but Necipoğlu (2005:157-8) has found evidence for the existence of such (or a very similar) office in places like Skopje or Sarajevo already in the sixteenth century.

stone-masonry was one “rather unlikely skill developed by Vlachs in this region”, given their pastoral-nomadic traditions. But if we look at the areas of Vlach settlement in the Macedonian-Albanian-Greek border region, from which so many of the travelling builders hailed, it appears plausible that they were pushed into the building industry exactly because this mountainous region could not have sufficiently supported extensive agriculture. The Vlachs’ “pastoral-nomadic traditions” Malcolm refers to may have only further supported the choice for such profession.¹²² But also one occupation did not necessarily preclude the other, as the observations of a traveller (in Lawless 1977:525-6) have shown. Visiting Trikala in the early nineteenth century, he noted that some Turks let rooms out to Vlachs who came down to the plain with their flock in the harsh winter months and took up employment as artisans or labourers. If we believe Walkey (1990:118) that, on average, a building troop could complete only a large house or a small church, we can guess how large the demand for these workers must have been.¹²³

While the aforementioned excursion to Cairo should have been an exception, Hadjimihali (1949:30) maintains that builders-decorators from the *mastorohoria* (“masters’ villages”) of Epirus and western Macedonia worked as far as Bucharest, Istanbul, even

¹²² It seems worth mentioning that these “nomadic-pastoral traditions” were by that time not already a thing of the past but, if we take the Vlachs of northern Greece as example, survived even into the second half of the twentieth century. See, for example, Sanders (1954). The building-crafts traditions of these societies must have lost their importance much earlier with the arrival of modern technologies. It is, however, still interesting to notice that the interwar mayor of Skopje was an architect from the village of Tresonče in the Debar region, which had produced so many master builders in the late Ottoman period. If there is any connection at all, this may be a case in point to suggest that in some areas preferences for certain professions persisted. While these groups’ end is easier to explain, little information is provided about earlier centuries and the origins of these groups. Moutsopoulos (1967:102) holds that the builders’ guild was the only one neither discontinued nor disrupted upon Ottoman conquest, because of the recognized need for new buildings. And indeed, the accounts of Ousterhout (1999) and Bouras (2002) on master-builders in Byzantine times sound very much like those on Ottoman times, save for the places of origin. The earliest building that I have come across as being attributed to “Valachian or even Albanian master builders”, thereby likely to be from the region which has figured so much in this respect in the eighteenth century and beyond, was for supposedly being responsible for the mosque of Ibrahim Pasha (1616/7) at Razgrad, while Kiel (1991a:496-7) finds dubious, but also cannot exclude that they may have participated.

¹²³ Walkey (1990:118) hence believes it to have been a record that alone in the season of 1795 the team of Demos Zoupaniotis could build three churches.

Asia Minor. Was it because of these travelling masters that Bucharest acquired a more Ottoman appearance, as is held particularly for the second half of the eighteenth century (cf. Berindei 1994:38), when the Danube Principalities were more closely linked to the Ottoman mainstream under the rule of the Phanariotes? Streetscapes aligned with typical “Ottoman houses” in Bucharest have only survived on engravings from the first half of the nineteenth century. The late eighteenth century *han* of Manuc Bey (Hanul lui Manuc) [Ill. 3.39], however, survives as a testimony on an “Ottoman influence” in the architecture of this period. Built by a rich Bulgarian-born Armenian, standing in the spacious courtyard we are reminded of very similar examples south of the Danube and on the opposite half of the peninsula. It is only here that Bucharest appears to have been an Ottoman core land. We even find the same painted motifs on the galleries’ walls but also, untypically, low-relief stucco ornament (a later addition?). The only really “local” elements are the steep roof and the galleries’ arch-forms, which could be found in earlier examples of Wallachian architecture; but they do not really change the overall Ottoman character of this *han*, or at least its inner courtyard.

While the scholars previously cited name a variety of villages as the homes of these masters, most of which were located in a region where Albanian, Greek, Vlach, and Slav (Macedonian-Bulgarian) areas of settlement met. It thus comes as no surprise that different authors voice different interpretations on the ethnic identities of these builders. Acculturation must have been a normality within the Balkan Orthodox Christian “community”, but a Hellenization - in this region where Greek was the *lingua franca* particularly in commercial contacts - may have been the most likely advance. For the inhabitants of the Debar region it has been suggested that these were actually Vlachs which had been slavized in time (cf. Koukoudis 2003:435-6). Davidov (1991:180) also mentions the case of a Greek master in Hungary adopting a Serbian name. “Ethnic”

identities within the Balkan Christian Orthodox “community” were certainly more fluid than can now be imagined. But our masters must have been much less affected by such processes as the merchants were. Hellenization essentially went hand in hand with social mobility. Even if located in regions whose settlement pattern had been as much Vlach, Slav, or Albanian as it has been Greek, the mansions that have been preserved today are known as the houses of wealthy Greeks. In this context it should also be noted that, even if craftsmen came from nearby, the building of houses was at that time still a very costly affair (cf. McGowan 1994:700-1).

One of the problems associated with studying these travelling craftsmen is what to call them: builders, decorators, builders-decorators? Apparently they must be considered a single phenomenon, as most authors assure us that they were in often responsible not only for the building but all tasks related to it (or at least the coordination of which), including painted and carved decoration. Versed in these skills, the same persons worked in the building and decoration of houses, mosques, and churches, but they also painted icons (with which the painted decoration in the houses of this period has close to nothing in common, whereby we may assume that they learned several styles or modes of painting in the course of their training). At the same time the information offered about individuals, and if really one person may have been versed in all these “arts” at the same time, is meagre.

We might be best advised to illuminate one case where the biography of one builder-decorator does not share the fate of most, anonymity, and also information on the condition in which he worked and the people he worked with is available: the case of Aleksi Rilec (“from Rila”), as documented by Daskalova-Obretenova and Obretenov (2005). His “surname” is already a misnomer having led some to the conclusion that he

was from Rila. In fact he was born near Debar in 1760, where he first had learned the craft of wood-carving. In his twenties he had already worked at Rila, maybe Athos, and other monasteries and churches in Macedonia and western Bulgaria. But we know that he also fabricated liturgical “furniture”, employing the wood-carving skills he acquired earlier in his career, and maybe he even built some houses for private persons in the Rila village. In 1816 he was again invited to work in restorations in Rila, which had been plundered in the 1760s and ‘70s. There he remained until 1819 as a chief master with experience. His coordination was recorded in a memorial slab describing Aleksi (in church Slavonic) as both “arhitekton” and “chief master builder”. After a devastating fire haunted Rila in 1833, it was again rebuilt under Aleksi’s supervision. From this period date several new additions, including beautiful kiosks projecting from the galleries of the northern and western wings [Ill.4.5]. These were created by another master from Debar (village of Lazarpole), a man named Krustju, who also eternalized his own name in a frieze. As Aleksi was not able to finish the restoration in the foreseen time, other “good builders” were invited. More than their names, it is their places of origin that interest us; these were Pavel from Kimin near Kastoria and Milenko from the village from Blatešnica (near Rila). Pavel was then recorded as “arhitekton” of the Church of the Holy Virgin (Sveta Bogorodica), but at the same time also signed himself as “protomaistor” and “maimar” (a corruption of the Turkish *mimâr* = architect)^{124 125}.

Was this the time in which we have to situate the transition from master-builders to “architects”, that is, the perception of this profession in a more western sense, and does

¹²⁴ In Serbia and Bosnia also *neimar*, ostensibly similarly derived from the Turkish *mimâr*, was used for master-builders and architects.

¹²⁵ This is not to say that “arhitekton” was henceforth the common designation. Even in the 1850s the famed Andreja Damjanov, later most often called an “architect”, signed himself as “proto-majstor” (cf. Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova 2001:18).

it stand in imminent causal connection with the more liberal attitudes of Ottoman rulers toward church architecture after the 1820s? The Rila monastery may be a bad example, as Ottoman restrictions of Christian architecture traditionally applied less to monasteries than to the more problematic (re-)building of churches in urban areas. The mid-nineteenth century works of Andreja Damjanov (also from a well-known family of builders-decorators from Tresonče near Debar) in Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia, or, in Bulgaria, the famed “Usta” (trk. for “master”) Kolju Fičeto (from Drjanovo near Tărnovo) already appear more like architects in the western sense: well-known by their names alone (and not only by the reputation of their villages or areas), and, with a few exceptions, for the first time in centuries building monumental churches in urban centres, in which we find already two divergences from practices only a few decades earlier.

Writing about art and architecture in the Balkans between 1700 and 1850 we must acknowledge that our knowledge of the individuals who produced these works is fairly limited, while at the same time they are not always as anonymous as is often portrayed. Mostly illiterate, they left no personal accounts. It is thus difficult to trace their works beyond monasteries (where records were more likely to be kept), and most often they did not sign their names perhaps because they were not expected to do so.¹²⁶ An important tentative conclusion is that the residential and religious architecture and art dealt with here was for the most part produced by builders-decorators from non-urban

¹²⁶ Again this is not universally true. Walkey (1990:118), from the region and literature he covered, concluded that the master of the team would often leave his signature carved into the house, e.g. “Kosmas from Zoupani” (= Pentalofos near Kozani) or, more pretentiously, “Theodoros Zoupaniotis, the great star from Zoupani”. In some cases we also find carved faces in the stone work of some house, which may represent the builders, clients, or no one in particular.

backgrounds and without a formal training.¹²⁷ As such, they almost certainly did not enjoy the social position an architect enjoyed in the West. At the same time, the quality of many works attests a high level of sophistication. We also notice a change in the relationship patron/architect in terms of association. With the possible exception of the highly acclaimed Sinan, in Ottoman architecture the patron enjoyed the credit for a building and not the architect(s), who in the vast majority of cases remain(s) completely anonymous.¹²⁸ This has been considered a general feature of “eastern” (including Byzantine) art history, vis à vis its western counterpart, where the emphasis has been on the artist; an “artist history”, rather than “art history”.¹²⁹ That this pattern appears to change in the period of a yet incoherent western impact on the cultural life of the Balkan peoples seems noteworthy. That some of these masters may have been versed in two or three of these “crafts” - architecture, plastic, painting - may, on the other hand, only be an accidental parallel with some geniuses of the western Baroque (Bernini, Fischer von Erlach, Asam brothers), but may well have similarly benefited a certain unity of style within individual projects.

Apparently, almost all of these builders-decorators were Orthodox Christians, with a considerable portion hailing from the Mala Reka region around Debar. They appears to

¹²⁷ Although we speak of “schools” (e.g. Bansko School, Debar School, etc.) they certainly did not enjoy a formal training but a “learning by doing”; a process, however, often described as lengthy and rigid. By no way should they therefore be called “self-taught”, as is often done.

¹²⁸ This relative indifference towards architects-builders-decorators may be exemplified by that Muslim patrons were evidently not bothered by the fact that an Islamic house of prayer was built by the hands of infidels; and not slaves (which, from the point of view of a conservative endower, would have positively underlined religious hierarchies), but paid workers. As Kiel (1990c:xiii) stressed, sometimes they were, depending on their experience an reputation, even better paid than Muslim workers. Cerasi (1988:88) moreover assures us that Christians were also members in the sultan's *has* workshop, producing the works of architecture commissioned by the Ottoman rulers, and not only as Islamicized *dersirme*.

¹²⁹ Goodwin (1971:201-2), while admitting to “strictest protocol to diminish the importance of the individual before God”, holds that the Ottomans “were still freer than other Islamic states, where the names of any artists are hard to find, but they were not concerned with individual rights however much some personalities contrived to emerge and radiate.”

have achieved particular prominence in the decades after 1800, while prior to that the villages in the Pindos mountains and surrounding areas are most often referred to. As we know with certainty, however, both these regions produced masters that worked all over the southern Balkans from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. In the first half of the nineteenth century further “art schools” emerge in Bulgaria, most prominently those of Trjavna, Bansko, and Samokov. But even then, with good masters so close at hand, the work of masters from Debar and Kastoria - or in fact from the villages around these centres - was still sought after in Bulgaria up to the mid-nineteenth century, as we have seen in the case of Rila monastery.

Mobility emerges as a major factor and problem in the art historiography of the Balkans, particularly between the “Balkan Renaissance” period after 1750, with the problem that so many of those who created the most splendid works of art were not from the country for which an art history needed to be written once the nation-building project began. Problematic is also that for a long time virtually all trends, apart from those directly connected to church-related works, emanated from Istanbul; including those understood as western imports, such as the murals with landscapes. Even if at times Frankfurt or Venice rather than Constantinople were depicted, this formed part of a late Ottoman phenomenon, with Ottoman techniques employed. On the mechanisms of dissemination of trends from the centre to the provinces Cerasi (1999:123), extrapolating from the results of Stajnova’s research, had concluded that “novelties were first experimented with in the imperial court, then had some success in Istanbul, and finally spread into the provinces. House types had a slightly different movement because of the action of the builder squads.” Thereby, we can give these local builders credit not only for the dissemination of trends, but also for their development and consolidation. Mobility of artists had, of course, also existed in Europe in the Age of Baroque, if we

think of the work of Italian architects in Vienna after the mid-seventeenth century (“an Italian colony”). But the unity of art created in the Balkans from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century renders any approach other than the regional (read “trans-national”) fairly fragmentary if not questionable. We could not imagine a “Bulgarian National Revival” without the contributions from Debar, Kastoria, or Athos; all outside the boundaries of the modern Bulgarian national state. The case of Albania where, if we believe Kiel, for more than a century virtually all works of art and architecture had been produced by the same masters from the Pindos mountains in Greece, is somewhat similar; even if he is among the few to claim that among these were also Christian Albanians, and not only Vlachs (or “Greeks”).

3.5. Recapitulation

The chapter comprising the developments between the 1770s and 1820s grew to be the longest and, not only in terms of division, the most complex. This reflects not only a new dynamic in economic and cultural affairs and a more comprehensive record in the historiography of the region, but also a new dynamic triggered by the gradual dissolution of established patterns and actors of cultural and artistic production. The best art is no more monopolized by the religious sphere and patronized by an administrative class in close connection with the imperial centre, but by newly prominent (though not new) groups: the *ayan* and the merchants. A third group, the brigands, is significant for architectural history as well; not only because it decimated the architectural record of the past, particularly in Bulgaria, but also because their actions resulted in a more defensive appearance of dwellings in many places.

As we have seen, the “tower house” emerges not because of terror by “the Turks” but by groups of roaming bandits which the government could not control. That this in many areas was not only a problem of the eighteenth century, and under Ottoman rule, has been suggested by architectural historians maintaining that this form had already existed in Byzantine times. In other cases we have seen that the emergence of the fortified dwelling, as in the Albanian lands or the Peloponnesus, had sometimes more to do with local feuds than Ottoman terror or unmanageable brigands. That much of this insecurity centred on the western parts of the Balkan Peninsula, where some mountainous regions had never been under the tight control of the Ottomans (as can also be seen from their non-partaking in the Ottoman *timar*-system), is not that surprising. That around and after 1800 the anarchy reigned in areas very close to the

capital must, however, be taken as evidence for the decay of the Ottoman system and the inability of its administration. The reaction to this situation may not have been prompt but was still incisive. By the mid-nineteenth century some territories that had been nominally part of the Sultan's domain for centuries eventually become integrated parts of the empire for the first time; ironically, only decades before the empire's dissolution.

While the brigands naturally received a negative evaluation (except for where they were mis-interpreted as freedom fighters for the national cause), further researches into the role culture and the arts played in the political and personal designs of the *ayan* still promise to yield interesting findings. This, however, should be the subject of a separate study integrating Ottoman sources (and the important literature thereupon already produced mainly by Yugoslav and Bulgarian scholars), local chronicles and folklore, the impressions and descriptions of the numerous western visitors, as well as the buildings themselves, which, as we have seen, can indeed provide us with information on the personal ambition and taste of the patron; more than they would enlighten us about general developments in the context of Ottoman architecture.

Concerning merchants and artists (builders-decorators), it is hard to overlook the predominance of the southwest Balkans (Epirus, Thessaly, western Macedonia) in the last third of the eighteenth century. Why this comparatively small and curiously mountainous region emerges as perhaps the most dynamic region of the empire in terms of commerce and "craftsmanship" should be the focus of a separate study. An explanation may begin with the nature of the terrain, which would not have supported extensive agriculture. Thereby, work migration became a long-standing feature of this region, both for the merchants as well as the groups of builders-decorators, which of

course also resulted in a different dynamic of exchange; both with the Ottoman and non-Ottoman world. Also here the connection between economic potency and the increase of skilled builders-decorators is evident. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, however, this region loses its prominence to central Bulgaria, where the riches are again based on textile trade, but guilds and artisanship play a greater role in the local economy. We will then also note a transfer of skills, in a few cases also persons (e.g. Greek merchants resettling in Plovdiv), and possibly also stylistic originalities from the southwest Balkans to the central Bulgarian districts, where many of the most dynamic centres will again be relatively small settlements – sometimes called villages, sometimes towns – in mountainous expanses.

Yet another new dynamic is encountered in the Albanian lands at this period. Our knowledge of this subject has remained limited for a long time because of, on one hand, the lack of interest in late Ottoman decorative art and, on the other, due to the isolation of Albania from the outside world during the Hoxha government. Now we can determine that also monuments in neighbouring Kosovo and Macedonia formed part of a general trend in this part of the Balkans and in this specific period. The conversion of a large part of the population to Islam necessitated this population's provision with the relevant infrastructure. In this long neglected corner of Ottoman Europe this art, almost predictably, assumes a reasonably distinct character. Yet, as can be seen from the examples mentioned, it did also not develop in absolute isolation from general trends in post-classical Ottoman art. More than in architecture, innovation is yet again most visible in the decorative programs embellishing structures which are seldom of really monumental dimensions.

Finally, much can (and should) still be written about the lives and the work of the itinerant builders-decorators. Here, most documentation is available in the languages of the region, while to English- and Turkish-readers it remains a rather unexplored subject. Cerasi's article *Late Ottoman Architects and Master-Builders* (1988) may have been the first attempt to treat the Balkan builders in the context of late Ottoman architectural history. As he could not directly access the publications in Bulgarian-Macedonian and Greek, this article of course leaves much to be desired, but - as can be seen from this article featuring in the reading lists of some 'Turkish universities' syllabi - it still serves its purpose in that it provides a basic reading for those not versed in the Balkan languages. Another important contribution has been the article by Palairret (1987), which looks at the topic from the perspective of work migration. Vasiliev's book (1965) on the builders, decorators, and wood-carvers of Bulgaria (including Macedonia), despite its age, seems to still be the most comprehensive treatise on the subject, but, a product of its time, is of course lined with anti-Ottoman sentiment. In more recent decades additional studies on individual masters (Fičev, Kănev, Damjanov, Korçari, etc.) or regions (cf. the *Greek Traditional Architecture* series, or the books and articles of Moutsopoulos, where builders-decorator often take an important place) have been published. The future goal of a (necessarily polyglot) researcher should be to integrate this fragmented body of literature into a regional, Ottoman-historical context and narrative. This would be not solely a study of one of many professional groups in the Ottoman Empire, but essentially an answer to the question of the identity of the people that produced the architectural landscapes, the "face" of the Balkans that we have come to know.

4. Reorganization (*Tanzimat*) and Rebirth (*vъzraždane*)

The last period to be covered here is the 1820s to 1850s. By that time Ottoman control over many territories previously included in this survey was considerably weakened or already ended. An independent neo-Hellenic state, covering Attica, central Greece, and the Peloponnesus, emerged after a decade-long struggle. Of the other historical regions frequently mentioned here, Thessaly was only to join the modern Greek state in 1881 (despite objections by its Vlach inhabitants), and large parts of Macedonia and Epirus in 1914. Wallachia and Moldavia formally remained under Ottoman suzerainty for another half-century until 1878, but the rulers were no longer appointed from Constantinople. In 1859 both principalities elected the same ruler (now “domnitor”) and were henceforth called “the United Principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia”, and eventually “Romania”. Serbia also gradually achieved far-reaching autonomy within the empire and even became a threat to neighboring Bosnia which, despite movements for autonomy - the only case where such enterprise was motored by Muslim subjects - remained an integral part of the empire until occupation by Austria-Hungary in 1878.

While around 1800 architectural phenomena were still largely shared on a regional basis, after the 1820s a greater range of differing, more individualistic expressions evolved. In the south, in Bulgaria and Macedonia, where this period came to be known as the “[national] revival” or “Renaissance”, this was partly due to the Christian subjects successfully re-claiming urban space, either through elaborate residences or newly built or re-built houses of worship under the patronage of wealthy merchants and surpluses generated by the prosperous guilds. In Wallachia and Serbia, both on the border with Austria and enjoying far-reaching autonomies, soon a modest version of European

Classicism in the form of residences built from solid materials superseded previous Ottoman customs, and are thereby not longer of concern to us. In the case of Serbia, however, this development did not take place without a short but interesting period of transitional architecture. In neighboring Bosnia, likewise sharing a border with the central European empire, the influence of the West or of developments in the Ottoman south Balkans, however, seems to have been almost negligible. Possible reasons for this will be explored later in this chapter, which will begin with a discussion of interpretations of how the “revival period” in the culture of Bulgaria and Macedonia came about.

4.1. The “Bulgarian National Revival” and its architectural manifestations

Of the groups of structures mentioned in this thesis the “Bulgarian National Revival Houses” are probably the best known. Therefore, instead of mere description, we shall concentrate on the interpretation of this architecture in- and outside of regional trends in the Ottoman Balkans, where some problematic readings exist, as will be discussed.¹³⁰

To understand the development of a “Bulgarian National Renaissance” in its political as well as cultural and artistic implications we will first be concerned with the historiography of this process, from which our modern understanding of which derives. Its beginning is usually situated in the second half of the eighteenth century. But were people during the century after that really aware of a national revival taking place? And did they know that they themselves as well as the material culture they produced formed a part of it? Daskalev (2004:1) maintains that the Bulgarian Revival’s interpretation as “a process of the formation of the Bulgarian nation - or, in contemporary parlance, its revival, awakening, coming to its senses, being brought back to life, resurrection, etc. - began [only] in its final phase”, the 1860s and ‘70s, when the Bulgarian exarchate (and thereby a Bulgarian nation) was established (1870) and people started looking back at the Revival as a historical process. Those who had taken an active part in this process usually dated its beginning only to the 1820s coinciding with Mahmud II’s reforms. In 1871 an influential article appeared by Martin Drinov who is regarded as the first

¹³⁰ In Bulgarian, publications on the “Revival Architecture” abound. Pars pro toto could be mentioned Arbaliev’s often cited work of 1974. In western languages, however, few comprehensive studies have been produced. Péew’s “Alte Häuser in Plovdiv” of 1943, a summary of his previous studies re-issued in German by the archaeological institute of Hitler Germany (allied with Bulgaria in WWII), seems to still be the main reference for scholars to whom the Bulgarian sources are inaccessible. Despite the brevity, Péew delivered a comprehensive survey leaving only few questions unanswered, while also being refreshingly devoid of unnecessary romanticism and ideology.

professional Bulgarian historian. He traced the beginnings of the Bulgarian Revival to 1762, to Paisij Hilendarski's "Istorija Slovenobolgarska" (Slavo-Bulgarian History). This was widely accepted despite later attempts to shift back the beginning of this period back to 1700 or even 1600 ("proto-Revival" and/or "early Revival"). The term *vъзраждане* (mostly translated as "revival", but actually better and also often translated as "rebirth" = "Renaissance") itself was first used in 1842 in a pamphlet appearing in Russian in Saint Petersburg, but long competed with other designations such as "awakening" or "resurrection". Post-"liberation" (i.e. after 1878) historiographers then "selected a glorious, heroic image of the past and projected it onto the collective consciousness in such a powerful way that it came to be accepted as the 'sacred truth' by future generations." (Daskalev 2004:2,5,12,100-1)

In critically reviewing this development, Daskalev touches upon an important subject, namely that historical processes are not always as linear as historiography has interpreted them. This problem includes the use of the term "Renaissance" in suggesting a belated (through Ottoman "bondage") relative of the Renaissance in Europe. This is not only a matter of translation of *vъзраждане*, but an actual reference many Bulgarian authors have made in writing of the cultural development of their nation in this period. Why this is somewhat problematic shall briefly be discussed here.

The movement in Italy was a conscious process of revival of the classical heritage; perhaps most visibly in terms of architectural culture it was also a reaction against the "barbarous" Gothic. In the Bulgarian case, following Daskalev, the "Bulgarian Renaissance" was, for the most part, an assessment of a period once it came to be seen as a historical process. We also can hardly discern a real reaction in terms of art and architecture, rather a largely regionally shared and very gradual further development of

an established type. The view of a “Bulgarian Renaissance Architecture” catching up to European achievements in the nineteenth century also somewhat competes with the view that Ottoman classical architecture did not materialize in total isolation from the Italian Renaissance, but shared some striking similarities.¹³¹ Other than the general western principles of plan and decoration that filtered through Ottoman building practices, no direct influence of the European Renaissance on Bulgarian mid-nineteenth century houses can be detected. One general problem seems to be that, rather than in the context of the architectural history of the late Ottoman Balkans, this form is most often interpreted emotionally:

“The structure, ornamentation and decoration of the Revival houses reflect the ideas, the emotions and the aspirations of a nation striving for freedom and independence. The buildings of the period are stamped with the people’s optimism, inward spiritual strength, indomitable resolve and hopes for a better and happier life.” (Arbaliev 1974:349)

The influence of the “Ottoman Baroque”, or of Istanbul in general, is not always but often entirely dismissed. Doytchinov and Gantchev (2001:51), for example, maintain that the influence of the “Turkish Baroque” (“1730 to 1808”) on the “Bulgarian Baroque”¹³² was not considerable because the Bulgarian style evolved through

¹³¹ Such view is held by prominent scholars like Goodwin and Necipoğlu, but is also strongly disagreed with by Cerasi (1999:126), who sees

“absolutely no sign of Renaissance forms or schemes in Ottoman architecture (the role of Renaissance artists has certainly been overplayed, and there have been too many facile inferences regarding the contributions of Bellini and Filarete in Istanbul), and there is no single architectural work which bears the imprint of a major Renaissance concept. The plan of the Fatih complex ... and its arid grid, for which the name of Filarete ... has been evoked, have none of the distinctive finesse of either Ottoman or Italian monumental architecture. Its regularity is just a scheme with no conceptual or linguistic implications, as if some architect or traveler had given an oral description of Filarete’s ideas and some other architect or builder had simply conscientiously applied the little he had inferred from those few phrases.”

¹³² What was perhaps the first comprehensive discussion of nineteenth century art and architecture in Bulgaria under the banner “Bulgarian Baroque”, and thereby most probably instrumental in the establishment of this notion as scientific fact, see the still frequently cited work by Bičev (1955): “Bălgarski barok”.

identification with the western Baroque and a negative attitude toward the Ottoman Empire.¹³³ So it is, somewhat ironically, exactly the “mural paintings during the Bulgarian Revival” that for authors like Arbaliev (1974:350) “constitute the best evidence of the universal cultural and economic revival, the people’s aspiration to perfection, national freedom and independence.” The peculiarities of residential architecture in Bulgaria in that period, admittedly, are apparent and not at question, but it is evidently less the interior than the exterior that distinguishes the mid-century *konaks* in Bulgaria from designs in the wider region. These features include, most distinguishably, the curved eaves and gables and the painted decoration on the façades, in combination with the often perfectly symmetrical layout. These are, admittedly, features that can be seen in other parts of the Balkans in that period as well – the characteristic, curved eave and/or *çikma* we also see on buildings in Berat [Ill.3.24], Belgrade [Ill.4.14], Xanthi [Ill.4.6,4.9], Blagaj (near Mostar) [Ill.4.8], Ohrid [Ill.4.7], or in Đakovica – but in Bulgaria they really constituted a perceptibly broader phenomenon.¹³⁴ Interestingly, but without further elaboration, Péew (1943:22), writing of Plovdiv, states that painted house-façades were in fact typical for the Ottoman lands in that period, the decorators being travelling masters from Plovdiv, Debar, Constantinople, or Thessaloniki, but that the greater part was painted over in later decades.¹³⁵ This opens the question whether such painted façades really existed, on a widespread level, not only

¹³³ This is not to say that the wish for artistic reference to Europe was not articulated as such. Preserved is, for example, a contract from 1836 in which the patron instructs the wood-carver Ivan Paškula from Debar (alternatively identified by Vasiliev 1965:272 as “Joan Paškula” or “Jani Paskulis” from Metsovo in Greek Macedonia) to produce the iconostasis for the church of SS Constantine and Helena in the style of Vienna (“po vienski obrazec”) (see Harbova 2002:130).

¹³⁴ Kizis (1992:16,38) finds in the curved features of houses south of the Rhodopes, in the Greek part of Thrace, a “northern Thrace influence”, yet holds that “they were built by Epirot or Constantinopolitan craftsmen in the local architectural idiom which with the passage of time was heavily influenced by European styles”. Curved eaves pronouncing entrances in the style known from Plovdiv can also be seen on churches, and even in Albania, as in the church of St Mary in Berat [Ill.4.13].

¹³⁵ Péew’s work from the 1940s, for example, also shows the house A.C. Kojumdžioglu without its characteristic painted façade ornament, signifying that it must have been recreated some time later.

mainly in Bulgaria but also in other parts of the empire, and simply are not known to us as they were plastered or painted over later. But why, then, should they have only been preserved in such a large number in Bulgaria?¹³⁶

The making of the “Revival House” into a national artefact has also touched upon the specific locations and situations in which this architecture, as well as the ideology supposedly accompanying it, flourished. An imperative pillar of Revival historiography is that it was not borne in the large Ottoman urban centres (thereby under “cultural pressure” by Greeks and/or Turks) but in isolated mountain settlements,

“small craft and trade towns inhabited by Bulgarians, far from the great roads and preserved from Turkish attacks and colonization. Although these towns were not large, the manner of production, the social structure and culture in them were urban in type.”¹³⁷ (Koeva 2004)

Of how these settlements came into being various heroic and less heroic readings exist. Representative of the Bulgarian view is what Roškovska (1977:179) writes of Koprivštica, one of the centres of the Revival:

“Due to the hard times and uncertain living conditions during the epoch of Ottoman domination a part of the country’s Bulgarian population was forced to withdraw from the lowlands and to settle in various naturally protected mountainous sites. That is precisely how the town of Koprivshtica came into being.”

¹³⁶ According to Stamov (1977), more than 7,500 historical monuments dating from the National Revival Period (which Stamov strangely dates to the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century) have been preserved.

¹³⁷ For that we often, as with the cases in northwest Greece, read of these places as “villages” is due to their official status, which Gavrilova (1999:28) explains with the authorities’ ill-disposition “to recognize as towns localities without Muslim inhabitants - according to the principle: no Friday mosque, no town. Such circumstances account for the otherwise inexplicable village status of such localities as Kalofer, Sopot, Elena, Kotel, Panagyurishte, Tryavna, and many other small but economically, culturally, and politically active Bulgarian towns situated in the densely populated valleys along either side of the Balkan mountain.”

Much to the contrary, Kiel (1985:27) explains the consolidation of these exclusively Christian-Bulgarian settlements in the Sredna Gora and Balkan mountains with a purposeful settlement policy by the Ottomans. Attracted to these places by tax and other privileges, these *derben(d)ci* villages in places commanding the roads were established to guard the mountain passes (*derbend*). These villages then turned into crafts and trade centres in time, and the places Kiel mentions of having flourished in this manner (Drjanovo, Elena, Etropole, Gabrovo, Kalofer, Koprivštica, Kotel, Panagjurište, Teteven, Trjavna, and Žeravna) are identical with those towns instrumental in the Revival. This can hardly be coincidental.¹³⁸ For Kiel (1990b:84) “their emergence was part and parcel of the Ottoman policy of internal colonization and urbanization.” On their significance in Bulgarian nationalism, Clarke (1945:147) moreover holds that, although “the small mountains were the nurseries of nationalism, it was in Constantinople that the movement was focused, at any rate until the Porte recognized the Bulgarians as a distinct *millet*.”

Whereas recurrently all eighteenth and nineteenth century houses in Bulgaria, even the most typically Ottoman, are designated “Bulgarian national revival houses” or, somewhat less problematically, “houses of the national revival period”, the house-type most representative for this indubitably remarkable cultural revival seems to have reached these towns as an export (cf. Gavrilova 1999:142; Roškovska 1977:52; Bichev

¹³⁸ Another alternative explanation is offer by Palairet (1997:38): “The withdrawal of population into the hills, particularly during the seventeenth centuries, was not prompted solely by insecurity or oppression in the lowlands. When population density was low or falling and land abundant, the hills offered a more salubrious climate than the marshy lowlands, their soil was easier to clean, and supplies of water and timber more ample. The produce of the hill economy was augmented by long-established domestic industries.”

1961:68), namely from the region's multi-ethnic primate city of Plovdiv.¹³⁹ The features that set this house type apart from the typical (or earlier) "Ottoman house", whereupon it is associated with western and often Baroque influence, are, in addition to the elaborate ceiling ornamentation and wall paintings found in earlier merchant houses elsewhere in the Ottoman domain, as follows: symmetrical arrangement;¹⁴⁰ the aforementioned curvy forms on the elevation, mostly in *cumba* or *çukma* (sometimes both horizontally and vertically rounded) and eaves; façades painted with occidentalizing motifs, sometimes apparently imitating stucco ornamentation (e.g. window heads) in a one-dimensional way; oval room forms (from a clearly Baroque input); and also the western orientation reflected in choice and origin of furniture, resulting in a culturally hybrid room equipment.¹⁴¹ But to understand the society which produced this architecture, rather than to describe its features in greater detail, we shall have to look into the historical and cultural context in which the "Plovdiv houses"¹⁴² [Ills.4.1-4] with

¹³⁹ Péew (1943:33) mentions another export destination of the Plovdiv house; not to the Bulgarian mountain towns like Koprivštica, but to the nearby Rhodope village of Dermendere (also Ferdinandovo or Pärvenec), which had become a popular country residence of the wealthier Plovdiv citizens during the hot summer months. These residences were usually two-storied and, built by the same masters, looked much like the mid-century town houses. Some of these also had large gardens and stables.

¹⁴⁰ In fact, Péew (1943:26) maintains that in Plovdiv, "without exception", all buildings from between the late eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century feature a symmetrical room arrangement, and links this with trends spreading from nearby Istanbul.

¹⁴¹ This situation is described by Todorov (1998:IV/22,27) as follows: "[E]lements of Viennese life - - the chairs, candlesticks, glassware, and china from Czech and Saxon manufacturers - - which were to become typical for Bulgarian and Greek merchants and entrepreneurs of the first and middle decades of the nineteenth century ... were placed alongside the copper vessels skilfully made by local craftsmen ... In general the prosperous representative of the Bulgarian bourgeoisie was trying to catch up with the already consolidated urban bourgeoisie in the rest of the Balkans in both life style and social status. Certain features in the way of life of the rich Turks were not alien to him either." Todorov (1998:IV/27) also includes a note on the change of female dress: "Though slowly, "alien" fashions also crept into the wardrobe of women in the late 1850's. The urban woman gradually moved away from the village woman." In the 1940s Péew (1943:27) still saw goods from Vienna, such as chairs, couches, tables, mirrors, or silverware in many houses.

¹⁴² For Goodwin (1971:441) provincial residences like the *konak* of Plovdiv, which "closely follow the plan of the quasi-religious Çinili Kiosk", were the counterparts ("rivals") of the *yali* of the Bosphorus.

the most representative examples dating from the second and third quarter of the nineteenth century, came into being.¹⁴³

In contrast to the mountain towns, Plovdiv was a very old city, but the “old Plovdiv” we speak of emerged in the late eighteenth century. Accounts of the Plovdiv a century earlier greatly differ, as illustrated by Péew (1943:7,9): a western traveller had seen a city of 40,000 and of a “sad” appearance; with windowless houses built of wood and other cheap materials - a temporary architecture renewed every 40-50 years - spotted with older stone-built churches, inns, and baths. Evliya, however, visiting Plovdiv at roughly the same time, called it the most beautiful of cities of European Turkey, a large and rich centre of commerce, and mentioned 165 “palaces”¹⁴⁴ of *ayan*. Two centuries later Plovdiv, still (and probably even more so) a dominant regional centre of commerce, attracted much immigration from its rural surroundings but also many merchants and builders from the western half of the southern Balkans (Macedonia, Epirus, etc.) in search for lucrative business and work. This process was a part of a regional shift of the economic balance in favour of the Bulgarian lands. Bulgarian merchants, however, did not achieve prominence until the 1830s. Stoianovich (1992:42-3) identified four principal reasons for this:

“1) The population of the Black Sea and Aegean coasts was mainly Greek, Turkish, Jewish, or Armenian; 2) Bulgaria was the hinterland of four major Ottoman cities – Istanbul, Adrianople (Edirne), Phillippopolis (Plovdiv), and Sofia – each of which needed the production of the Bulgarian peasantry and consequently set limits upon the export of rural production beyond the confines of the Empire; 3) Greek, Jewish, and Armenian merchants possessed virtual monopoly

¹⁴³ The dating of houses in the Ottoman Empire, in general, has been a problem. Péew (1943) and Roškovsa (1977), for Plovdiv and Koprivštica, both report examples from “the eighteenth century”, but the first precisely dated examples they mention are from the 1820s. This is mostly due to the inscriptions on the houses themselves, which at that time become common. Interestingly, Roškovsa (1977:169) states that they usually follow the Muslim calendar, while in some cases also both variants can be found.

¹⁴⁴ He is indeed using the term *saray*, not *konak*.

rights to the trade of Istanbul with the eastern Balkans; and 4) little of the produce of Bulgaria could be marketed in Wallachia, Serbia, or Bosnia, because of the basically similar agricultural production of the four areas.”

At least until about 1750 the role of Bulgarian traders thus remained negligible. It was at this time that the Greeks and Bulgarians of mountain villages like Stanimaka (Asenovgrad), Melnik, Razlog, Panagjurište, Koprivštica, Karlovo, and Gabrovo began to make long commercial odysseys to Russia and Hungary. Many of these villages (or small towns) then suffered harshly, or were completely destroyed, in the unrest of the *kărdžali* period. Some places, however, could quickly recover. Koprivštica, for example, a centre of large-scale livestock husbandry, was thoroughly destroyed by bandits, but could recover rapidly because most of its capital - flocks of sheep on pasture in Thrace or artisan goods sent by caravans for sale in Istanbul and Anatolia - had remained intact. By the 1830s this “village” had maybe 5,000 inhabitants and furnished Plovdiv with some of its “merchant dynasties”. The *kărdžali* period had not only resulted in migration movements to Wallachia, but then also to the depopulated valleys.¹⁴⁵ Not anymore solely between village and city, a more expanded exchange of goods began between individual towns and production areas on both sides of the Balkans mountain range, and between Macedonia and the ports on the Danube.¹⁴⁶ By the 1840s areas like Plovdiv, Sliven, or Samokov represented an enormous workshop operating less for

¹⁴⁵ Romanian cities like Bucharest, Brăila, or Braşov had in fact played an important role in the cultural development of the Bulgarians (see Crampton 1997:64-5). Clarke (1945:144) even believes that the “Bulgarian emigré [sic] colonies north of the Danube played somewhat the same role in the Bulgarian renaissance as the north-of-the-border Serbs of Hungary did in the Serbian”. Nevertheless, Clarke (1945:154) appends that around 1800 the Bulgarians in Wallachia were known as “Sarbi” (Serbs), supporting his suggestion that the strict separation between these two groups is a more recent development.

¹⁴⁶ Lawless (1977:529), however, maintains that (at least for Thessaly, which he writes of) a true urban system did not emerge until long after the end of Ottoman rule: “Far from serving the rural areas around, the towns were economically parasitic, and, as the home of the landowning class, much of the wealth from agriculture was concentrated there. Each town, furthermore, served only the surrounding area and because of the poor communications there was little or no differentiation in the services which each town offered, and little or no economic competition and interaction between different centres.”

domestic consumption than for the general Ottoman regional market.¹⁴⁷ (Stoianovich 1992:43; Todorov 1983:212-3 and 1998:IV/21,24-5; Detrez 2003:32)

Plovdiv, a large accessible urban centre located in the Thracian plain, became a target of considerable immigration in this period, which ultimately also changed the ethno-confessional make-up of the city. By 1850, at the peak of Plovdiv's prosperity, however, the Orthodox Christians, numbering around 40,000, constituted only a slight majority over the Muslim population (Detrez 2003:33). Insight into the composition and identification of the Plovdiv society of the mid-nineteenth century can be afforded from Moravenov's "Record of the Plovdiv Christian population in the city and of its common institutions, according to oral tradition" (1867), as studied by Detrez (2003). He, according to self-definition of the persons he interviewed, divided Plovdiv's Orthodox Christians into not only Greeks and Bulgarians but additional categories: *gudilas* (hellenized Bulgarians; apparently also a self-designation)¹⁴⁸ and *langeras* (ethnic Greeks from the region, as opposed to the "Greeks" hailing from elsewhere)^{149, 150} From the

¹⁴⁷ Taken the Danube Vilayet (much of northern Bulgaria and the Dobrudja) as example, by the 1860's only 19% of the working population (of which we have knowledge of) engaged in agriculture, almost as much as those engaged in trade (16%), but altogether less than those engaged in artisan and manufacturing branches (46%). The percentage of those who sold their labour reached about 36%. (Todorov 1998:IV/27)

¹⁴⁸ Harbova (2002:135) dates the "appearance" of the "grécomanes" among the Bulgarians into the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century. The reason for this process she explains with the desire for integration into the higher cultural level of the Greeks. As "language" of the *gudilas*, Moravenov speaks of "gudilski", which the linguist Detrez (2003:38), on examples given by Karavelov, identifies as a "weird mixture of Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish words."

¹⁴⁹ The division between "Greeks" and *langeras* is moreover accounted for by Detrez (2003:31-2,36): The *langeras* (named so after their widespread occupation of wine-growing) hail from the nearby mountain town of Asenovgrad (Stanimaka) and its surroundings, whereto a great part of Plovdiv's Byzantine Christian (mostly Greek) population had settled after Plovdiv had been taken by the Ottomans. The few persons identified by Moravenov as "Hellenes" came from Macedonia, Epirus, Thrace, even Athens and Ionian or Aegean islands. The existence of holders of passports of the neo-Hellenic state, however, do not offer definite indication of ethnic identities, as many *gudilas* had Greek passports, the Bulgarians generally did not. A few inhabitants of Plovdiv were also Russian citizens, including Greek-speakers.

¹⁵⁰ The numerical relation between these groups in Plovdiv (center and periphery) was, in Moravenov's count, as follows (by households): 237 Bulgarian, 163 *gudilas*, 58 *langeras*, 53 Bulgarian parents with *gudila* children, 4 both Bulgarian and *gudila*, 21 Greek. (Detrez 2003:34)

1830s onward, the upward social mobility of many Bulgarian immigrants eventually resulted in a power struggle with the Greeks and the hellenized Bulgarians, as the Bulgarian immigrants, mostly peasants from the hinterland, resisted hellenization and demanded church services in Bulgarian. There was much hostility between the Bulgarians and the *gudilas*, but the development of Bulgarians turning *gudilas* was ongoing, and essentially seen as a form of social promotion rather than as a renouncement of one's ethnic identity. Thereby, when members of a Bulgarian family became *gudilas*, Moravenov's account provides no evidence that this would have provoked tension or rifts within the family. (Detrez 2003:33-5) But language did not constitute the main distinction between the *gudilas* and the Bulgarians, if we again follow Detrez (2003:38,41-2), who maintains, based on Bulgarian not Greek sources, that

“all Plovdiv citizens spoke Greek, including those with an active sense of Bulgarian awareness and who were opposed to the spread of Hellenism in the city ... Bulgarian was spoken only in some Plovdiv neighbourhoods and by the servants; in the city centre households that spoke Bulgarian were rare ... Before the 1850s in Plovdiv there was little serious resistance offered to the use of Greek as the common language of the entire urban elite, even by those members of that elite who allegedly possessed an active sense of Bulgarian consciousness. What those people actually possessed was Bulgarian *ethnic* awareness, which did not constitute an obstacle to speaking Greek in everyday life and adopting the Greek urban life style ... Even families who had preserved a sense of Bulgarian consciousness did not object to sending their children to schools where they were taught in a language that was not their mother tongue. As elsewhere in Bulgaria, the first demands to have Bulgarian education were inspired more by pedagogical than by nationalist considerations. All this again indicates that prior to the 1850s and obligating national consciousness was still absent ... Given the fact that nations were still in the process of formation, it would be an anachronism to define the *gudilas* in national terms – as “Bulgarians” or “Greeks”. They were Bulgarians by ethnic origin, but Greeks in the sense of *Romaïos* – “Orthodox Christian”, or in the sense of “city

dweller” or “member of the urban social elite”, meaning which the word *Romaïos* had acquired in the nineteenth century.”¹⁵¹

On acculturation in mid-century Plovdiv, and how his “Bulgarian barbarism” was pruned, the Koprivštica-born Ljuben Karavelov, an important figure of the “National Revival”, left a personal account (translated in Detrez 2003:37-8):

“Really, tell me, can a Bulgarian wear a pair of [full-bottomed and tight legged] breeches and a red belt, when the Graecoman civilization required long and high-bottomed *karavani* (trousers) with a multitude of decorations and a yellow belt with a knot in the middle? Among the Graecomans it was considered a disgrace to wear a woollen jacket lined with sheepskin, and Stanyo attempted to reform me and give me a Plovdiv appearance. He bought me blue trousers, a yellow belt, shiny shoes and a purple fez. The only shortcoming was my socks. Everyone knows the great descendants of the Byzantine empire wear cotton socks, tied below the knee, like women; and my woollen socks from Koprivshica were short, so the shins of my legs remained completely bare. But anyhow, for 500 Grosches Mr. Stanyo made me a Greek.”

From all this one is tempted to assume that those who built the famed Plovdiv mansions could hardly have called themselves “Bulgarians”, even if evidently of Bulgarian origins, and that such branding is a reading-back into history. This is not to say that these houses should be considered “Greek” or “Turkish” instead. Rather, they simply formed a part of a late Ottoman Balkans artistic trend that had differing manifestations in different localities of one region; created for the upper crust of a ethnically diverse, pre-national society by an ethnically diverse group of artists and

¹⁵¹ Thence Detrez (2003:39-40) concludes, that instead of a Bulgarian or Greek ethnic state the *gudilas*, who “were also the most fierce proponents of the use of the Greek language in church and at school” and identified with the Constantinopolitan Patriarchate, “probably would have preferred the Ottoman Empire or a successor state in the form of a restored Byzantine Empire as a homeland. They did not differ, for that matter, from the majority of the wealthy Greek urban establishment all over the Ottoman Empire.”

craftsmen.¹⁵² Not only residences but also mosques in Greece, Macedonia, and Albania equally form part of this art. This, unsurprisingly, resulted in some curious outcomes. One of which, sometimes mentioned in the same sentence with the roughly contemporary “coloured mosques” in Tetovo and Travnik, is the Bayraklı mosque at Samokov [Ill.4.17/18], which Kiel (1990b:128) found to be a “curious structure, looking more like some sort of rich house than an Ottoman mosque”. This mosque had been rebuilt and redecorated by local (Bulgarian) masters in the 1830s. During a restoration of the mosque these masters’ signatures, scratched into the soft lime of the first layer, were discovered. The building of the Bayraklı coincided with the bloom of the Samokov School of painting, of which the interior and exterior painted decoration is one of the most important examples.¹⁵³ As previously mentioned, this school of painting had had more direct connection with western art; through its founder Hristo Dimitrov studying in Vienna in the 1770s and, more than a half-century later, his son Zahari taking lessons in painting from French artists who were travelling to Constantinople.¹⁵⁴ It is this one of

¹⁵² From the names provided by Péew (1943:34-40) we see that the persons who had these houses built were not only of Slav/Bulgarian but of Bulgarian, Armenian, and often Greek origin (or orientation, in these case of the hellenized Bulgarians). The owner of the Mavridi House, one of the most often depicted Plovdiv houses, may for example have been the *gudila* of the name of Černev (“black”) that, as Moravenov reported, changed his name (Detrez 2003:39). More generally, Detrez (2003:35), noticing the frequent inter-ethnic marriages between Albanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Vlachs in Plovdiv, also suggests that “no great store was set by loyalty to one’s ethnic community, although we may assume that everyone was perfectly aware of his own ethnic affiliation and that of his fellow citizens”.

¹⁵³ From the *temettuat* registers of Samokov in 1845 (published by Ianeva 2004) a few interesting conclusions can be made on the socio-economic status these painters-decorators (registered as “nakkaş”) enjoyed. In this town of almost 8,000 inhabitants, in fact only 5 households depended on the income of its head as decorator. This, however, seemed to have been a rather prestigious and lucrative occupation, as the average household income of a decorator was 834 kuruş, almost twice as much as the average income of those engaged in manufacturing, trade, and services (484,5 kuruş). Of the more than 60 crafts professed in Samokov by mid-century, only the drapers (*çuhacı*, often Jews) and the candle-makers (*mumcu*) had higher average household incomes than the decorators, who also brought home more than four times as much as the 40% of Samokov’s population who Ianeva characterizes as “low income” for earnings of less than 200 kuruş. But they also earned more than those engaged in textile production and trade, on which the town thrived. Striking is also that they had an average income 3-4 times as high as the local builders/carpenters (*dülger* and *doğramacı*), whereby we may conclude that their services must have been really considered a luxury rather than necessity.

¹⁵⁴ Art histories of the late Ottoman Empires are multi-sited histories. Although a “Bulgarian school of painting”, works of the Samokov masters can thus be found in southeast Serbia (cf. Popova 2005) or northern Greece (Athos, prominently) as well.

the last domed mosques built in the Balkans, but, with its painted exterior and almost Byzantine church-like appearance, a monument of its own.

With Samokov providing some of the most sought-after decorators of this period, builders from the Rhodope mountain villages assume a prominent (if not dominant) role in much of Thrace and beyond.¹⁵⁵ Of these, the gifted builders of Bracigovo were perhaps the most famous, achieving region-wide popularity after building the bridge over the Marica river near Pazardžik (Tatar Pazarcık) in 1799. At first they only built in the surrounding region, in and around Plovdiv and Pazardžik, but they soon broadened their area of work to most of Bulgaria, Wallachia, Edirne and Istanbul. Based in the Rhodopes, their presence there, however, did not reach back long. In the second half of the eighteenth century Bracigovo had received around 150 families from around Kastoria and Korçë, fleeing from the terror of Ali Pasha of Ioannina. Most of the settlers came from the builders' villages of Omocko (now Livadotopos, near Kastoria) and Orešče, and they continued their profession in Thrace. By 1875, still, 393 out of 3,054 inhabitants worked in construction (and if we assume a household size of 5 persons, that would mean that around two thirds of the village's households would have been supported by a member working in this profession). Due to their region of origin, the mountains of western Macedonia ("Albania"¹⁵⁶), they were locally called "Albanians", their distinct dialect "Albanian". (Berbenliev 1963, esp. 11-21) From the list of names provided by Berbenliev (1963:18-19) we can, however, see that these were

¹⁵⁵ For the builders of Thrace, Moutsopoulos (1967:102), as should be mentioned, identified completely different areas of origin than had Anhegger (1954:91) and Péew (1943:42), who stressed the role of the Rhodopes. It is very probably that Moutsopoulos speaks only of the Greek portion of Thrace when he writes that there the builders came from "from the Sofides in the Vizii [Vize] district, Souli (Souli), Ortakioi and Adrianoupolis."

¹⁵⁶ This is not as curious as it may sound for, historically, the toponym "Albania" had little coincidence with the territory of the modern nation state but was sometimes applied to include not only Kosovo and western Macedonia but even Montenegro and Epirus.

really Slavs. So, in conclusion, it can be said that a group of Macedonian Slavs from present-day Greece were instrumental in the “National Revival”¹⁵⁷ of Bulgaria, where they were called “Albanians”¹⁵⁸.

Among the assistants from the Balkan range that came to work with them was the Drjanovo-born Nikola Fičev, nicknamed Kolju Fičeto, probably the best-known builder of the Bulgarian Revival. More than in Thrace, he worked in north Bulgaria (especially around Tărnovo) and much in Romania (Wallachia and Dobrudža). After mid-century he also worked for the Ottoman state, as locally represented by the reformist Midhat Pasha, and for his bridge over the Bjala received the *Mecidiye* medal. In the new Bulgarian principality, after 1878, he then spent his last three years as “city architect” of Tărnovo, having changed the “usta” or “maistor” titles for “architect” in his signature. A Baroque curviness can be noticed throughout much of his work, whereby the term *Fičevska kobilica* (“the Fičev sweep” or “yoke”)¹⁵⁹ came to be used for the wavy roof-lines and pediments that characterize many of his buildings [e.g. Ill.4.27], including one of his last works, the *konak* of Tărnovo (1872-4), an almost western building (as many of the provincial *konaks* after mid-century). (Tuleškov 2002)

What concerns the elaborately carved ceilings of Plovdiv houses, Péew (1943:30,42) states that most craftsmen responsible for these came from the Balkan mountains –

¹⁵⁷ That the apparent bloom in the art of this region at that time was supposedly “stimulated by [national] revival ideas” (“*izkustvo v Makedonija be stimulirano ot vāžroždenskite idei*”) is, for example, held by Vasiliev (1965:147). He further states (1965:740-1) that the representatives of the schools of Debar, Samokov, Trjavna, and Bansko “created the so-called Bulgarian National Revival style” as they “left works with specific national spirit, in strongly expressed national style.”

¹⁵⁸ But not only the masters from Kastoria but also those from Debar, as Vasiliev (1965:147) confirms, were called “Albanians” in Bulgaria.

¹⁵⁹ In a rather romantic interpretation, Todorov (1966:7,22-3) believed Fičev to have drawn the inspiration for these “graceful curves” from the forms of the mountain range behind his native Drjanovo, maintaining that Fičev’s *leitmotiv* “is not a Baroque meander, and is not to be found on any West European Baroque building.”

from Trjavna, Teteven, Elena, and Žeravna – but also from Kastoria and Debar, and that among the builders those from the Rhodopes and Macedonia played a far more important role than those from the Balkan mountains.¹⁶⁰ Interesting is also the information provided by Papoulia (et al. 1994:Ch.7.2) that Plovdiv indeed had a large number of guilds, but that that of the *doulgerides*¹⁶¹-masons, though one of the oldest guilds in Plovdiv, was founded only in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. It did not have a written charter because most of the masons were illiterate migrants from elsewhere. According to Péew (1943:42) a unique item for Bulgaria, a chronicle for the Plovdiv builders' guild covering the years 1850-1906 has survived. Entries were written in Greek (in Péew's judgment a "bad Greek") until 1880 and after that in Bulgarian. It recorded 440 masters on the occasion of a guild celebration and, generally, listed all masters regularly paying their membership fees. However, only first names are mentioned, and information about families and lives are lacking. Nonetheless it can be seen that most members were indeed Slavs from Thrace and Macedonia. The guild not only represented them professionally but also contributed to public welfare, for example by providing for a voluntary fire-fighting team.

¹⁶⁰ In the ceiling ornamentation, often with very high ("hanging") relief, Péew (1943:27) discerned two motif programmes: one displaying complicated geometric and vegetal patterns, covering the whole space, and the other, more pronouncing the middle of the room, with a star-like pattern, which reminded him of the sculpture and ornament of contemporary carvings in churches. Péew (1943:42) found the ceilings at Trjavna, though less majestic than those of Plovdiv, very precisely worked, but also characterized more by the influence from the Orient than of Western Baroque. Thereby he indirectly suggests that, if not from the carpenters from the Balkan mountains, the more western-looking works must have been produced by the western Macedonian craftsmen working in Plovdiv. Interestingly, also Harbova (2002:130), while recognizing the simultaneous impact of trends spreading from both Istanbul and Vienna, attributes the western influence on Plovdiv architecture as due to the masters coming to Plovdiv from Debar in western Macedonia. If this is a fact, could this have been due to the Macedonian-Epirote-Thessalian region, and foremost its Christian merchants as patrons and thereby giving directions to the masters they commissioned, having established direct cultural connections with the West (Vienna, often, but also the borders with Venetian and Austrian territories in the Western Balkans were not that far) decades earlier before similar developments took place in the eastern half of the Balkans?

¹⁶¹ This was the designing for the building craftsmen in Thrace, while in Epirus and western Macedonia they were known as "koudarei" (Moutsopoulos 1967:102).

By the 1830s the guilds, still controlling much of the economic activity, began to generate their own disposable surpluses. These then came to be spent on what could be broadly called “public works”, including new churches (not anymore the modest typically single-aisled but now larger and often three-aisled churches), renovations of monasteries (with that of the Rila monastery becoming a great symbol of the Bulgarian Revival), schools, and urban commodities such as fountains and, very visible, clock towers showing the time according to Christian rather than Muslim modes, “a symbol of cultural self-assertion and modernity as well as a material attestation of recent attainments”¹⁶² (Crampton 1997:59). Unlike sometimes stated, clock-towers in the Ottoman Empire were not an innovation of the nineteenth century. Already in the sixteenth century some Balkan towns like Banja Luka or Skopje, the latter with a clock brought from conquered Hungary, had clock-towers (Kreševljaković 1957). There were usually built next to mosques, as *vakıf* (endowments), and an early concentration of such structures we find particularly in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where their shape has often been linked to the Italianate campanile of the neighbouring Adriatic coast.¹⁶³ This is not to say that the resurgence of this type in the eighteenth and foremost in the nineteenth centuries was not understood as a marker of modernization in the Tanzimat era of reforms (which it undoubtedly was) but that it was not an invention of this period. Whatever its prehistory, particularly in Macedonia and Bulgaria this trend left some remarkable monuments reflecting the general architectural (including “Baroque”) trends, next to some more rustic examples. Reflecting the baroque curviness of contemporary

¹⁶² In a more nationalist interpretation, these clock towers are considered as “demonstrative constructions, built to express and defend [sic] the Bulgarian national presence, allegiance and self-confidence, and to show the desire of the Bulgarian people for national and cultural freedom. These towers are the psychological accents, which Bulgarians oppose to the official Islamic architecture of the Ottoman invaders.” (Roškovska 2003:109) For Bichev (1961:57), the reasons were more practical: “The fixed working hours [in the commercial districts], which were strictly observed, led to the simultaneous opening and closing of the stores. To keep the proper working hours, however, every merchant had to know the exact time. Thus the clock tower emerged as a child of necessity.”

¹⁶³ For a survey of clock towers in Anatolia, see Acun (1994).

designs of houses and churches, noteworthy are the clock-towers in Prilep (1858) and Botevgrad (1866) [Ill.4.23] near Sofia, both of which have become signature landmarks for their respective cities and are claimed to be the most beautiful of their kind in their respective countries. The structure in Prilep (Macedonia), renewed after a fire in 1856/7, has an inscription (published in Kiel 1990c:VIII/170) from 1863/4 which proudly reads: “Not every place has a clock to strike the hours”. Stylistically, Kiel (1990c:VIII/171) finds that it belongs to circle of architecture of the “sturdy but nevertheless elegant Neoclassistic [sic] style of the Macedonian Revival Period of the 19th century ... rather than to late Ottoman art.” The really Baroque feature is in fact not the octagonal tower itself, but the drinking fountain below it [Ill.4.24].

Having already mentioned Macedonia, it must be stressed that these lands must be considered part of what has come to be called the Bulgarian National Revival as well. Skopje, for example, was a decidedly Bulgarian city in the church conflict.¹⁶⁴ In the 1830s the Slav guildsmen demanded a Bulgarian instead of a Greek Metropolitan, and then built a church for use only by Bulgarians, Sveta Bogorodica (Our Holy Mother of God) in 1835. (Adanır 1994:159) Destroyed in World War II, it survives only in older illustrations [Ill.4.25] where we see an interesting building of rectangular plan of modest size, pitched roof, blind arcades with semi-circular arches on the ground floor, and overall a building that, though not as a church, may not look out of place in Italy. The team responsible for its construction was that of Andreja Damjanov (1813-1878), the most famous representative of the Renzovski-Damjanovi family of builders and icon

¹⁶⁴ By the 1830s Skopje had a population of around 10,000; still nothing compared to the 60,000 before the Austrian invasion, but at least twice the number it had a half-century earlier. Adanır suggests the revival of the overland route through the Balkan interior during this period (Napoleonic wars) as a reason for this growth. Among the towns of Macedonia, however, it ranked only behind Thessaloniki (60,000), Bitola (40,000), Seres (25,000) and Štip (20,000). (Adanır 1994:156-7)

painters from around Debar.¹⁶⁵ This church was only a modest prelude to the truly monumental structures he would “design” in the following half-century in much of the Balkans, but particularly in Serbia and Bosnia, where he built the Orthodox cathedrals of Mostar and Sarajevo in the 1860s and ‘70s; both in a hybrid mix of Byzantine and Baroque forms and much reminiscent of the “Serbian Baroque” churches that had been built in Austria during the previous century.¹⁶⁶ The architecture of the churches does not concern us much, since they already show a maturely occidentalized emancipation from Ottoman-period models after mid-century, when many of the restrictions on church building had been lifted (which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter). Useful, however, is the insight Filipović (1949) provides on how the choices for designs were made at that time. When Damjanov negotiated with the Orthodox parish of Sarajevo over the design of a new church he was asked to deliver a plan or drawing. Rather than doing this, however, Damjanov advised them to see as examples the churches he built in in Niš and Smederevo, and promised he would construct an even finer one for them. When the parish of Mostar, who also planned the construction of a cathedral but was not satisfied with the work of another master-builder from Macedonia, then asked Damjanov for a design, he sent them to Sarajevo to see the cathedral he had just finished there. Filipović, however, believes that some kind of plans must have been used in the construction of these churches. Although churches were evidently his speciality, Damjanov and his team also built secular structures. In the Mostar church one fresco painting is attributed to him as well. While working in

¹⁶⁵ Damjanov, however, was born in Papradište near Veles (central Macedonia), whereto his family, originally based in the Reka village of Tresonče, had moved in the later eighteenth century. He was also buried in Veles, next to the church built by himself.

¹⁶⁶ To Serbia he had moved in 1851, his first project being the church of Smederevo (1851-5) on the border with Austria. In this context it is interesting to note that the “Turkish” builder Damjanov had been given preference over the “Austrian” (Czech) architect Jan Nevola, whose original design for the church had been dismissed by the parish, who then decided to opt for a builder more familiar with the Orthodox Slavs’ medieval church heritage. (Kadijević 1997:17)

Sarajevo, he was also commissioned with the repair of the clock tower and the building of the Kršla barracks (later demolished). Of the latter Damjanov had a model built of wood and, when taking it to Istanbul to show it to the Sultan (only after it was built)¹⁶⁷, he was reportedly decorated by the ruler - an honour already Andreja's great-grandfather had had for having painted an appreciated portrait of the Sultan (Vasiliev 1965:151) - and was conceded the right to wear a sword.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ This was because the sultan, surprised at the high cost of the building, had asked the responsible pasha to justify the expense, whereby Damjanov was asked to craft a model and accompany the pasha to the capital to show it to the ruler (Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova 2001:19). The sultan, apparently, was pleased with the design.

¹⁶⁸ How these masters presented their ideas to their patrons has been a subject of discussion, as detailed architectural drawings are rare for the whole Ottoman domain up until the nineteenth century. Fičev had presented to Midhat Pasha a wax model of the bridge over the Jantra he was commissioned to build, whereupon Cerasi (1988:94) asks: "Could this have been an Ottoman tradition?" Walkey (1990:118) mentions that in the case of the builders of northwest Greece no drawings were made either. "The only written evidence of their work is a number of one-page documents each describing the number of rooms to be built, how many special doors, how many fireplaces and a schedule of payment and bonuses." In the case of Damjanov's church at Niš, however, a careful if basic drawing from 1856 by the master exists (published in Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova 2001:15). Interesting is also the case of the Trjavna-born Genčo Kānev (dealt with in greater detail by Koeva 1987), who had learned how to make technical blueprints of buildings when working in construction projects supervised by foreign-trained engineers in neighbouring Romania (Bichev 1961:78).

4.2. Serbia under Miloš Obrenović

While in the south Balkans from the late eighteenth century onwards cultural innovation had been borne and patronized chiefly by an emerging urban merchant class, Serbia (=the principality in central Serbia) had neither cities, save for the Ottoman garrison towns of Belgrade and Užice, nor cosmopolitan merchants.¹⁶⁹ A wealthy class of Serbian merchants had existed in “old Serbia” (Kosovo) prior to the eighteenth century, but many of these individuals had migrated northwards to Austria with the retreating Habsburg troops after the failed occupation of Ottoman lands in the late seventeenth century. There, many Serbs continued to prosper, soon controlling a large portion of the trade. With Kosovo soon becoming repopulated with Albanians, and gradually acquiring a Muslim character, the area thereafter coming to be identified as Serbia was the central region between Belgrade and north of Niš, thereby north of where the medieval kingdoms had been centred. When this region (Šumadija), especially after the 1760s, began to raise pigs for export to Austria to satisfy demands previously met by Hungary, Slavonia, and the Banat, we see the emergence of a “rural middle class of battle-trained pig merchants, half merchants and half warriors”.¹⁷⁰ Austro-Ottoman agreements of

¹⁶⁹ In the 1830s and 1840s only some 6% of Serbia’s population lived in cities (cf. Yerolympos 1996:17). In Danube Bulgaria, at the same time, the urban population should have been around 20% (cf. Palairret 1997:28). In the otherwise surprisingly urbanized Ottoman Balkans, particularly in Serbia a trend for de-urbanization was noticeable from the late eighteenth century onwards. According to estimates available to Palairret (1997:28-9), Belgrade’s population declined from some 6,000 houses (30,000-55,000 inhabitants) in 1777 to only 769 (7000 inhabitants) in 1834. Užice declined from maybe 20,000 inhabitants in the late eighteenth century to 2,490 in the 1860s, when this (until then still predominantly Muslim) town was vacated from its Muslim inhabitants. But even before the expulsions in 1863, Užice’s population would already have declined to 4,100. While before the time of the Serbian Uprising the urban population in the Belgrade *paşalık* must have accounted for 27% or higher, afterwards it shrank to maybe 5%.

¹⁷⁰ Despite the lack of urban centres of commercial prominence the *paşalık* of Belgrade, the later principality, was fairly prosperous due to its fertile land, and even attracted migrants. Judah (1997:50,87) cites estimates according to which in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries maybe half a million Serbs came escaping poverty from the mountains of Montenegro and Herzegovina or from Kosovo and the *sancağ* of Novi Pazar; including the families of the later rebel leaders Karađorđe and Obrenović. Between 1815 and 1833 alone the Serb population in the region is believed to have doubled, partly certainly due to Miloš’ policy of distributing land to immigrants and refugees.

1784 and 1791 further stimulated Serbian trade, giving rise to this class which then was to furnish the uprising of 1804 with some of its most prominent leaders. (Stoianovich 1992:18;44;51-2;59)

This revolt, unlike often later interpreted, had not begun as a spontaneous nationalist uprising but as a protest against the unruly Janissaries, who had had dominated the *paşalık* of Belgrade until the 1790s. Withdrawn by Selim, Serbia then was “wisely administered by an enlightened but firm Hajji Mustapha, who rebuilt the churches and encouraged trade.” (Swallow 1973:21) This ruler “of Greek extraction” - something which Castellan (1992:234) found noteworthy - was also popular among Serbs, earning him the title “Mother of the Serbs”. However, when Selim allowed the Janissaries back to Serbia to fight the rebel Pazvantoğlu and restore order in 1798 Mustafa Pasha and some senior officers were assassinated. Anticipating large-scale massacres, a peasant uprising broke out under the leadership of Karađorđe in 1804. After nine years of revolt the Ottomans regained control over Serbia, only to face another uprising in 1815, led by Miloš Obrenović as Karađorđe had fled to Austria. In several stages (1817, 1830, 1833) Serbia was made an autonomous principality (under Ottoman suzerainty but emptied of its Muslim population)¹⁷¹ with Miloš as hereditary ruler. Partly contemporary with the Greek revolution and the Greek enlightenment, Scopetea (1991:204), however, suggests the Serbian revolution and the Serbian enlightenment to be studied as “two parallel and mutually independent complexes.” The enlightenment took place in Austria under the guidance of wealthy Serbs, the revolution was an uprising brought about by peasants. Miloš, characterized by Jelavich (1983:239), “was not an educated man; he could not

¹⁷¹ That those Muslims living in the principality but not connected to the Ottoman garrisons would have to sell their property and leave was specifically spelt out in clauses in the documents by which the sultan formally granted autonomy to Miloš. Before the first uprising maybe some 40,000 Muslims had lived in the *paşalık* next to 250,000 Serbs. (Judah 1997:75,87)

read or write. Nor had he experienced life outside the Ottoman Empire. With this background he naturally adopted Ottoman examples in running his state; essentially he acted like a 'Turkish pasha.' His autocratic and often brutal rule resulted in a rebellion against him, in which a constitution was demanded. Inaugurated in 1835, along with a flag and a ministry of foreign affairs, it had to be withdrawn at the demands of the Sultan, Russia, and Austria. Though Miloš might have lacked a wider vision, several interesting architectural and "urbanistic" projects took form during his reign (1815-1839). We will have a brief look at three "ensembles" emerging under Miloš: the *srpska varoš* at Belgrade, the Topčider "complex" near Belgrade, and the *Milošev venac* at Kragujevac.

The core of the Serbian suburb (*srpska varoš*) of Miloš' Belgrade was just outside the fortress. Along one street, Kralja Petra, three buildings from between the 1820s and '40s remain, representing a spectrum of builders from Macedonia, from Serbia, and from the Austrian towns just across the border (Zemun, Pančevo).¹⁷² The earliest of these is the present-day Kafana "?", built in 1823 by Miloš for his commercial consultant Petar Ičko by "Greek" builders in a typical "Balkan style". The other is the "palace" of Miloš's wife Ljubica [Ill.4.14], built between 1829 and 1831 under the supervision of his personal builder Hadži Nikola Živković, and some workmen from Pančevo who are possibly, or at least in part, to be credited for some of the palace's occidental features. It is this a structure often mentioned in the same paragraph with the houses at Plovdiv, which it in fact mostly pre-dates. Most noteworthy is the curved projection on the first floor and

¹⁷² Krunic (1996:26) mentions *dunderi* (carpenters) from Struga, Debar, and Veles (all in the present Republic of Macedonia or, anachronistically "South Serbia" or "Old Serbia") and that these brought house-types from the south. *Dunder* must be a corruption of the Turkish *dülger* (as also confirmed by Kreševljaković 1935:98). In the translation of Ottoman texts from Bosnia, Nagata (1979:61,79) had noted that locally the G in *dülger* had been replaced by a (modern Turkish) C (→ *dülcer*), as in the regional dialect the Ottoman-Turkish K (or G, in this case) was often substituted with a Č (or the softer Đ, in this case) With the Ü naturally becoming an U (as the Ü does not exist in Slavic pronounciations), the L, less rationally, must have become an N.

the rigorous symmetry. Discrete mouldings on the front facade, otherwise exhibiting the typical whitewash of the “Ottoman house”, betray a Central European influence. The interior again is more “traditional” with its wood-carved elements of typically late Ottoman character. Also by name it is not yet a palace or court (as later royal projects) but a *konak*. Just across the street we find the main Cathedral (1837-40) [Ill.4.28] dating from a period - according to Manević (1972:7) a time after the mid-1830s - when Miloš not anymore entrusted his building projects to the local self-trained builders but to “foreigners”, that is, mostly Serbs or other Slavs from Austria. The odd blend of classicist (pediment) and Baroque (bell tower) has often been noted, and a “German” influence is even visible on the frescoes in the interior.

Although his (or in fact his wife’s) *konak* in the Serbian quarter is the most representative residential building of Miloš’s reign, so curious that even Le Corbusier found it worth drawing, the “prince” (a questionable but customary translation of the Serbian *knež*) himself chose to reside in the fairly remote Topčider area, supposedly to not be too close to the Turkish garrison in the citadel. There, after 1831, Miloš had a residence built for himself [Ill.4.15], a church, a park, coffeehouse, and army barracks. Despite the solid building materials used, Akin (2001:148) still attests the Topčider residence the continuation of Ottoman traditions, which she identified in the ceilings, benches, cupboards, and niches, and a hall resembling a central *sofa*.

After the second uprising, Kragujevac (not Belgrade), the hub of the central Serbian Šumadija region and the epicentre of the uprising, had served as the capital of the Serbian *knež* between 1818 and 1839, grew considerably. Several buildings materialized in the area now called “Milošev Venac”: a court, a high school, a theatre, an arsenal, barracks, a theatre, and a new church. Built as early as 1818, this church was still of very

modest dimension as a mosque was in its vicinity.¹⁷³ At that time Miloš still seems to have asked for permission. The churches of the 1830s, however, already leave little trace of such considerations, coinciding with the new autonomies achieved, and a shift of interest towards Serbia's real urban centre, Belgrade.

In terms of secular architecture the period until the 1860s was then characterized by what Manević (1972:8) described as a provincial European Classicism, miniature versions of palaces. Thereby it must be comparable to the “vulgarized” version of European Classicism professed by local builders that Popescu (2004:32) speaks of for Romania after the 1820s. The years around 1860, however, then again mark a profound change. In Belgrade the Captain Mišo building is the first true “palazzo” of European dimension in the capital, and the wealthy Serb merchant community of Trieste built a large cathedral, setting the “neo-Byzantine” style that was henceforth to dominate Serbian religious architecture and thereby putting an end to the century of “Baroque”.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, however, Serbia appeared to westerners like Paton as a mixture of German and Turkish. The *konak* of Šabac, for example, he reported to be

“a large building, in the style of Constantinople, which, with its line of bow windows, and kiosk-fashioned rooms, surmounted with projecting roofs, might have passed muster on the Bosphorus. On entering, I was ushered into the office of the collector, to await his arrival, and, at a first glance, might have supposed myself in a formal Austrian kanzley [=chancellery]. There were the flat desks, the strong boxes, and the shelves of coarse foolscap; but a pile of long chibouques, and a young man, with a slight Northumbrian burr, and Servian dress, showed that I was on the right bank of the Save

¹⁷³ The present building of the Stara Crkva (Old Church), remodelled in 1907 in a neo-Byzantine-Baroque spirit and with addition of a belfry, bears little resemblance with the original structure, save for its approximate dimension.

... I accompanied [the pandour] until we arrived at a house two stories high, which we entered by a wide new wooden gate, and then mounting a staircase, scrupulously clean, were shown into his principal room, which was surrounded by a divan à la Turquie; but it had no carpet, so we went straight in with our boots on. A German chest of drawers was in one corner; the walls were plain white-washed, and so was a stove about six feet high; the only ornament of the room was a small snake moulding in the centre of the roof. Some oak chairs were ranged along the lower end of the room, and a table stood in the middle, covered with a German linen cloth, representing Pesth and Ofen". (Paton 1845:94,96)

It was this a visual culture in transition, and Cerasi (1999:131) has found it paradoxical that

"the non-Muslim middle classes ... bred very un-Ottoman nationalistic ideas, enthusiastically converted to Western house appliances and gadgets, dressed in public in the European fashion, yet up to the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, built houses very traditional [read Ottoman] in their outer aspect. The *konaks* of the ruling house in Belgrade in the first half of the nineteenth century and a few decades later the so-called [sic] Plovdiv-Filibe symmetrical house type built by Bulgarians and Greeks ... are proof of the relative indifference of cultural patterns to political influence."

On the occasion of Paton's visit to the tax collector's house in Šabac, a border town with Austria, he recorded a simpler explanation:

"'We are still somewhat rude and un-European in Shabatz,' said Gospody Ninitch, for such was the name in which the collector rejoiced. 'Indeed,' quoth I, sitting at my ease on the divan, 'there is no room for criticism. The Turks now-a-days take some things from Europe; but Europe might do worse than adopt the divan more extensively; for, believe me, to an arriving traveller it is the greatest of all luxuries.' Here the servants entered with chibouques. 'I certainly think,' said he, 'that no one would smoke a cigar who could smoke a chibouque.' 'And no man would sit on an oak chair who could sit on a divan:' so the Gospody smiled and transferred his ample person to the still ampler divan." (Paton 1845:97)

Paton also visited other houses in Šabac, and interestingly, also saw wall paintings showing Constantinople, here, right on the Austrian border, and in the house of an Orthodox bishop, while suggesting that this may have been a general feature of houses in this, and probably many other towns.

“We had now arrived at the house of the Bishop, and were shown into a well-carpeted room, in the old Turkish style, with the roof gilded and painted in dark colours, and an un-artistlike panorama of Constantinople running round the cornice.¹⁷⁴ I seated myself on an old-fashioned, wide, comfortable divan, with richly embroidered, but somewhat faded cushions, and, throwing off my shoes, tucked my legs comfortably under me. ‘This house,’ said the collector, ‘is a relic of old Shabatz; most of the other houses of this class were burnt down. You see no German furniture here; tell me whether you prefer the Turkish style, or the European.’ ... We now took our leave of the Bishop, and on our way homewards called at a house which contained portraits of Kara Georg, Milosh, Michael, Alexander, and other personages who have figured in Servian history. I was much amused with that of Milosh, which was painted in oil, altogether without *chiaro scuro*; but his decorations, button holes, and even a large mole on his cheek, were done with the most painful minuteness. In his left hand he held a scroll, on which was inscribed *Ustav*, or Constitution, his right hand was partly doubled *à la finger post*; it pointed significantly to the said scroll, the forefinger being adorned with a large diamond ring.” (Paton 1845:111-4)

¹⁷⁴ It should be assumed that if Paton had seen a Byzantine Constantinople without the Ottoman minarets, he would have specifically noted this.

4.3. The Bosnian exception

Bosnia appears to go a different way in the period after 1700. Developments in Bulgaria, Albania, or Macedonia in the first half of the nineteenth century, with a few debatable exceptions (see below), seem to have had no real impact or counterpart in this region. Although the province closest to “Europe”, European influence on the architecture of the post-classical Ottoman period seems almost negligible in Bosnia. For Cerasi (1988:91) it is due to the area’s conservatism that, similarly to Kosovo, “not only the western idiom but also that of Istanbul” was refused, and the “fundamental concepts of the earlier Ottoman town and architecture” were kept. “[Walled] street fronts and middle-class houses strictly divided into *harem* and *selamluk* were common in the nineteenth century after they had disappeared elsewhere.” The conclusion he thereupon makes is significant:

“[I]nnovations originating in Istanbul penetrated more easily along the most important routes and in the liveliest urban system ... Innovation and conservatism were not a matter of religion or nationality, but of school and taste and of contact with the capital.”

In the specific case of Bosnia, however, additional reasons may be sought in historical developments as well, namely in continuities and disruptions of cultural production and its protagonists. After Bosnia was taken by the Ottomans in 1463, Ottoman architecture and typology soon entered the country, making it an outpost of classical Ottoman culture in the north. At the same time, however, the cultural and economic life of the Bosnian Catholics (later “Croats”), which at the time of conquest still formed a majority, was not interrupted. Local merchant families like the Brnjakovići, Grurevići, or Brajkovići continued prospering trade relations with Dubrovnik, but also the Franciscan

monks, equipped with privileges and guarantees by the conqueror, remained very active. They built churches and monasteries, schools to fight illiteracy, and developed a rich literary production. Books printed in Venice (in the Bosnian Cyrillic font) were also read by a considerable number of people. At the same time also paintings, now still found in monastery depots, were commissioned from artists in Venice and Austria. But also local artists were trained in the style of the Italian Renaissance. The presence of Bosnian Catholics in the cultural life of Bosnia received a catastrophic blow only later, through the incursion of their Austrian co-religionists in the late seventeenth century. When Prince Eugene eventually retreated to north of Danube and Sava, the majority of Bosnian Catholics decided to follow him out of fear of retaliation, putting an end to the predominance of the Catholics in the urban commercial middle class; a role then gradually claimed by Serbs, Vlachs, and Greeks. The Bosnian Franciscans remained in the country but were henceforth met with distrust on the part of the Ottomans for feared coalitions with the Austrians.¹⁷⁵ (Lovrenović 1998, esp. 121-36; Malcolm 1994:69-70;85;96)

After 1699 Bosnia became a borderland with Austria and at the same time “more Muslim”, not only as a result of emigration of a part of its Christian population but also through large-scale immigration of Muslims from the coastal and Pannonian regions - Croatia, Slavonia, Dalmatia, Hungary - now held by Austria and Venice. In the nineteenth century Bosnia then became the main destination for Muslim refugees expelled from neighbouring semi-independent Serbia. That travellers described the Muslims of Bosnia as “paranoid” and “fanatic” does not really surprise in this context;

¹⁷⁵ Even if less visibly, the Franciscans continued to play a significant role in the cultural history of Bosnia. In the eighteenth century the first historiographical works, not anymore mere chronicles, appeared. An important mid-nineteenth century figure was Ivan Franjo Jukić. He founded the first secular school, a cultural association, and a journal. In 1842 he sent a draft for a Bosnian constitution to the Sultan, resulting in permanent exile.

neither does the supposed conservatism. It is plausible that this political situation resulted in a general climate in which Bosnian Christians simply did not have the possibilities of expression they claimed in places in the southern Balkans, that is, much closer to the imperial capital (as the Bulgarian mountain towns). But the comparatively minor role Bosnia had in the intra- and trans-regional commerce certainly also played a role.

After 1699 not only the prominence of the Bosnian Catholics came to an end, but also the predominance of an established Ottoman urban centre of cultural production. Devastated by Austrian troops, Sarajevo lost its role as provincial capital to the small Travnik in central Bosnia.¹⁷⁶ Now seat of the Ottoman vizier in Bosnia, Travnik developed as a fairly new centre at the expense of Sarajevo, resulting in a prospering of craftsmanship and commerce, while after 1800 also becoming seat of French and Austrian consulates from 1806-20 (as narrated in Ivo Andrić's novel "Bosnian chronicle"). Promoted from the status of *kasaba* (small town) to *şehir* (large town), even by 1850, when the capital was again permanently moved back to Sarajevo, Travnik would only have a population of some 7,000 (Popovic 2004:573).

With the Süleymaniye at Travnik dating from that period already discussed (Ch 3.3.2), one contemporary but very different mosque is the one built by Husein Kapetan Gradašćević, an initially loyal *kapudan* (frontier military chief) in northern Bosnia. During his rule of little more than a decade his hometown Gradačac, for almost a century ruled by his family, became one of the most prosperous captaincies in Bosnia.

¹⁷⁶ Indicative for this changed situation is that Mulić (1998), in his essay on the urban development of Sarajevo, mentions no single event or building from the period 1697-1878. Nonetheless, Sarajevo in the eighteenth century developed rather interestingly, into what has been called a "city state" or "guild republic", where the Ottoman vizier could only stay as a guest, and only for three nights (see Hadžijahić 1961).

He was also popular among the area's Christians, permitting them to build new village churches and schools even without the approval of the Sultan. He entered the political scene in the late 1820s when he was given responsibilities in the event of aggression towards Bosnia in the Russo-Turkish war, as well as defence against potential aggression from Serbia. After the Sultan had then given the autonomous Serbia six districts that had traditionally belonged to the Bosnian province, he came to be involved in the so-called "Bosnian autonomy movement", of which Husein became unofficial head. He overthrew the Bosnian vizier, took the capital Travnik and Sarajevo, and moved further to Kosovo where he dealt a heavy defeat to the imperial army under direct control of the Grand Vizier. The self-proclaimed "Commander of Bosnia, chosen by the will of the people" was then defeated by forces gathered in Herzegovina and had to flee to Austria, but remains one of the most popular figures in Bosnian national history. (Kamberović 2002)

Husein also undertook a couple of building projects in his home-town, most prominently the restoration of the castle and his residence, with bricks brought from nearby Austria, but he also built a clock-tower (1824) and a mosque (1826). This mosque is a central-domed square building with a three-domed portico and a rather tall minaret, as very typical for Ottoman Bosnia. The really unusual elements are the portal and the *mihrab* [Ill.4.20/21], where we find various motifs (vases of flowers, cypresses, ribbons, geometric forms) carved into the stone.¹⁷⁷ The heads of portico and *mihrab* are curved rather individualistically whereby they have been linked to the "Turkish Baroque" with which they, however, have little in common. Ayverdi (1981:164-5) who, predictably, finds these features "extremely ugly", notes the "Rococo" elements, but suggests that such style may have been due to the closeness to the Austrian border or,

¹⁷⁷ As a result of an unprofessional restoration in 1996 part of the relief was lost due to an over-painting.

admittedly less plausibly, because Husein may have wanted to win over the Slavs with such style.¹⁷⁸

A minor but very interesting work sometimes linked to the “Turkish Baroque” as well (apparently out of lack of alternative associations) is found in the courtyard of Banja Luka’s Ferhadija mosque (destroyed in 1993) [Ill.4.10/11]. Demolished in 1955, the beautifully decorated canopy over the well fortunately at least survived on postcards and photographs which, although from roughly the same period, already show different states of decoration. The painted postcard shows a style untypical of Bosnia, but very much reminiscent the decorative programs we find in the southern Balkans. Could it have been produced by craftsmen from Macedonia or Bulgaria, maybe in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, as could be suggested from similarities in style with mature works further south? Although we otherwise find few works in such spirit in Bosnia, we know that masters from the south also worked in the northern regions of the Ottoman domain; Bosnia, Serbia, and Wallachia. In any case, it is a different style from what we see in Travnik on the “Coloured Mosque”, which has been briefly discussed before, or the *türbe* there, which both take a similar form but are decorated in different patterns. Other than the cases mentioned, no other structures with painted exteriors seem to exist in Bosnia.¹⁷⁹ From an example of an interior of a wealthy citizen’s *konak* in Sarajevo [Ill.4.22], we can at least be sure that painted decoration also existed

¹⁷⁸ Ayverdi also notes that the inscription is in bad Turkish, and content-wise rather individualistic.

¹⁷⁹ A somewhat unclear if interesting case is that of the Çarşı mosque in Stolac, with a porch wall painted with naturalistic motifs. Built by Sultan Selim in 1519, it was renovated in 1788-9, as stated in the inscription (see Mujezinović 1998:367-8), where it is reported that the conqueror of Egypt had built it in fine fashion, “but there came the need for repairs, and everyone anxiously awaited its renovation ... This edifice is painted with fine adornments and resembles a beauty clad in silken garments”, a “rapturous renovation of the mosque in a new mode!” Hasandedić (1990:12, see also 9-11), however, has been told that the present paintings date from 1968, when local craftsmen first copied the paintings, and then reapplied them to the renovated walls. It is thus not clear if we can really conclude much on the 1780s shape from this 1960s “repainting”. In 1993 the mosque was destroyed and later rebuilt without the paintings.

here in house interiors. However, in the case illustrated, these assume a slightly more conservative stand. Such kind of decoration must have also existed outside Sarajevo as can be concluded from the observations of our often-cited traveller Paton (1845:143-4) made in Zvornik (on the border with Serbia) in the 1840s. He reported of the pasha having his *konak* decorated by a “house-painter” from Montenegro, accompanied (aided?) by a German (from Austria?). When he had half accomplished his task, however, the pasha accused him of being “a Servian captain in disguise” and threw them into prison. Paton does not mention any features of that decoration, as he could not see it. It is still interesting to note that also here, in the deepest province, the fashion of painted decoration was popular, and that the painters were a Montenegrin and a German; both not the typical nationalities for such work in the Ottoman Balkans.¹⁸⁰

The last monument of concern to our narrative is the dervish *tekke* at Blagaj near Mostar, rather well-known since it is popular among tourists. It is usually dated to the seventeenth century, which is true for its foundation, but in its present shape dates to the mid-nineteenth century. For Ayverdi (1981:64), following the not very helpful chronological sequence along western styles, the repair of 1851 was not in the Baroque or Rococo but in the “ampir” (from fr. “Empire”) style.¹⁸¹ With the usually elaborate ceilings with folk motifs in the interior, the most noteworthy feature on the exterior is the curved gable, much in the way we find it on houses in Bulgaria, featuring an oval disc in the tympanum. Čelić (1953:189-93), who restored the building in the 1950s, believes the 1850s shape to have been in the spirit of the “Istanbul Baroque”.

¹⁸⁰ Untypical, because the men of Montenegro reportedly regarded as derogatory any work save that of a pastoral or military nature. Crafts were practiced mainly by immigrants, who consequently enjoyed high wages because of lack of labour market competition. Even before WWI, trade and commerce were largely in the hands of Muslims and Albanian Catholics. (Palairot 1997:148)

¹⁸¹ Ayverdi (1981:65), indignant at his Bosnian colleague Džemal Čelić’s allegation that the Bosnians were not very pleased that the Turks brought their Baroque-Rococo styles from Istanbul, counters with the accusation that the Bosnians produced the worst works in this style.

Mujezinović (1997:335-43) in fact confirms that the sheikh at that period, the “Indian” Muhamed, was indeed sent from Istanbul, allegedly to spy on unruly feudal lords in Herzegovina.

If a provisional conclusion is to be made, it would not be wrong to say that the examples in Travnik (mosque and *türbe*) and Gradačac (mosque) show a rather individualistic style with few imminent contemporary parallels, while the ones at Blagaj (*tekke*) and Banja Luka (*sadırvan*) could have been influenced by trends in the southern Balkans. Still, these few examples are also not enough for a valid generalization.

4.4. The “return” of the monumental church

Up until now little space has been devoted to Christian religious architecture. This is, of course, partly due to restrictions laid upon their subjects by the Ottoman administration, which hindered the construction (or even the repair) of churches, and thereby doubtlessly seriously obstructed the development of church architecture well into the nineteenth century. To understand the basis for these restrictions we have to go back another one and a half millennia, to the rules set Abu Hanifa, the founder of Hanefite Sunnism (to which the Ottoman sultans adhered), who stipulated that, when cities taken by Muslims had not voluntarily submitted, churches were to be confiscated.¹⁸² Construction of new churches was not allowed in towns and cities or in the vicinities at a distance less than 10 miles. It was also agreed that churches generally should not be bigger than mosques, whereby many monumental churches were also converted into mosques. In exclusively Christian settlements there was seen no reason for the ban on church building, but in mixed communities such projects were barred. Any deviation from the law would lead to the destruction of the building, and it was usually the vigilant local Muslim community that instigated such orders.¹⁸³ Sometimes local administrators also simply did not grant permission for repairs, although they should have. (Gradeva 1994:17,19,23-5)

¹⁸² The Byzantine city of Didimotihon (Dimetoka), later birthplace of Bayezid II, for example had voluntarily submitted, whereby not only the Greeks' houses and the fortress were spared but also the church was preserved (Gradeva 1994:19).

¹⁸³ On two very differing accounts of how (and why) a newly, legally or illegally, built church in Bijeljina (northeast Bosnia) was torn down by local Muslims, see Gölen (2001:239-40) and Paton (1845:121-2).

As harsh as these regulations may sound, the realities slightly differed as more recent research has shown, while exceptions abounded.¹⁸⁴ While we often read of a general ban of church building in Ottoman Europe, Bouras (1991:111) attests a “vast wealth of monuments surviving from the Turkish period”. Kiel, on the forefront of scholars pleading for a reconsideration of established views on the negative impacts of Ottoman laws regarding its Christian subjects, however, also concedes that these regulations indeed were

“a formidable obstacle to the development of Orthodox Christian art, or rather architecture, because there were no regulations concerning the decoration of the interior of the church with fresco or al secco paintings. On paper they were an obstacle at least. Yet the actual situation differed greatly from those on paper. Here we immediately touch upon the problem that those who have written about the status of the Christians under the Sultans and who are largely responsible for the existing ideas about that status, were ‘Stubengelehrten’ who worked conforming to the old-established tradition of writing history: no documents no history. Yet the Balkan provinces abound with evidence that shows us that the reality was rather different: the multitude of village churches of all kinds and the monumental monasteries, decorated with exquisite paintings.” (Kiel 1985:192)

Gradeva (1994:25,28) also points out to evidence which proves that Christians, sometimes successfully, tried to build new churches; by relying on the laxness of authority and the difficulty of control, or sometimes just on bribery.¹⁸⁵ “But vigilant

¹⁸⁴ During lifetime of St Pimen Zografski , for example, the sultan permitted the Christians in western Bulgaria to freely (re-)build churches, whereby 300 churches and 15 monasteries were built or renovated in the area of Sofia alone (Gradeva 1994:26). When Serbs (and/or Vlachs) migrated into Bosnia in large numbers in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also quite a few monasteries and churches were allowed to be built (Gradeva 1994:28). At the end of the seventeenth century the Köprülü viziers made repairs easier, by rejecting the previous prohibitions that Christians had to use used stones and timber for repairs (Karaca 1995:34). Mustafa III, on the occasion of the festivities of his son, also allowed his subjects to repair their churches for a duration of 10 days (Karaca 1995:35). Another strategy, Moutsopoulos (1967:99) suggests that it was due to the virtual invisibility of the architecturally unassuming churches of Verroia and Kastoria that these two towns managed to acquire the largest number of churches in all of northern Greece.

¹⁸⁵ As can be proven by Ottoman and Bulgarian sources as well as archaeological findings, after the devastations of the *kārdžali* age the Christian subjects launched a large campaign to restore their churches,

local religious leaders and communities did what the administration failed to do.” While not encountering such enmity between the confessional groups, the subject of bribery is also touched upon by Leon Allacci, who was sent to the empire by the Vatican to study churches of the “recent Greeks” in the mid-seventeenth century. Read by Cutler (1966:81,84-5), he in fact regarded as extraordinary

“the persistence of the Greek rite under Turkish domination and the lengths to which the faithful went to rebuild collapsing churches and even, with bribery, to circumvent the Ottoman prohibition on the construction of new buildings ... Allacci suggests, in fact, that many restrictions imposed upon the Greeks were honored rather in the breach. Not the least contribution to peace was made by the relationship between Turkish women and the Greek church. In exchange for baptism of their children, the wives and daughters of the Conqueror made sure that “the light before the holy images does not fail lest they suffer harm ... Turkish women, he reports, compete to bring gifts to the church.”

The date 1700 again figures, symbolically, as a boundary to what preceded it. Bouras (1991:110), speaking of the change in the character of architecture and painting after that, believes “that it was at this time that the post-Byzantine period [in Orthodox church architecture] ended and the modern began.” Vyonis (1991:30) reports of 750 Greek painters active in the eighteenth century, and that this were two and one-half times the number known for the previous century, but also that the numbers of the second half of the eighteenth century are four times greater than those for the first half. “This sudden rise in the number of painters, most of whom were of rural origin, meant a certain decline in the quality of the art” or, in the words of Bouras (1991:109), a

whereby they were also often enlarged, which at times resulted in conflicts with the local Muslims and the Ottoman authorities (Gradeva 1994:25). At that time, however, not only were some churches illegally enlarged or rebuilt, some communities also tried to build completely new ones. Anscombe (2005:93), for example, found an Ottoman document from 1795 in which the Orthodox residents of Stara Zagora are accused of building an unsanctioned new church, taking advantage of the government’s preoccupation with controlling both plague and bandits.

“corruption of the arts through the adoption of a popular style”. Both make the changed economic situation responsible for the increase of patronage in this period. Gradeva (1994:30) also makes a growing confidence among the Balkan Christians to claim all rights and possibilities provided by the legislation in force responsible for their Revival starting from the eighteenth century.

In the nineteenth century the churches gradually wrestle back their place in urban space and their possibilities for artistic expression. Until the 1850s they still take the inconspicuous forms of one- or three-naved hall churches without domes or bell towers, thereby often resembling houses or factories, but in many cases already assume considerable dimensions. The aforementioned Sveta Bogorodica in Skopje (1835), built by Damjanov's *tayfa* (team)¹⁸⁶, is already a quite interesting statement.¹⁸⁷ The church of Sveti Pantelejmon at Veles [Ill.4.26/27] which he built a decade later (and finished when he was only 27!) already belongs to a different generation.¹⁸⁸ Huge even on the outside, domes and towers are still omitted, but on the inside we find, concealed from the public eye, interior domes and a decorative program capable of challenging the most elaborate works of its day. Two decades later, the churches built under his supervision in Sarajevo and Mostar are already a full-fledged architecture without restraint, dominating the urban space they are set in with their multiple cupolas, bell towers, and largely Central European appearance. These stages reflect the gradual loosening of restrictions

¹⁸⁶ Of the four sons of Damjan, each was versed in a different craft: Gjorgji was a painter-decorator, Andreja a builder, Nikola a wood-carver (*režbar*), and Kosta both builder and painter-decorator (Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova 2001:11)

¹⁸⁷ The building of this church had actually begun earlier, and under his father, Damjan Rencovski, but “but several times the Turkish authorities have stopped the building” (Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova 2001:21) and Damjan died in “1834-5”, whereby his son took over the project. Damjanov's Bulgarian counterpart and contemporary, Kolju Fičeto, came to his first big project in a similar way: When, during the construction of the St Nikola church in Târnovo, the head builder got very sick, the team elected Fičev to take over his task (Todorov 1966:40).

¹⁸⁸ For Hadžieva-Aleksievska and Kasapova (2001:49) it is “the best renaissance work in the history of Balkan architecture”.

throughout the nineteenth century. The role of the Tanzimat edict (1839), however, appears to have been overstressed in its effect on church (re-)construction. If we look at Istanbul (cf. Karaca 1995:315-7) in the decade before the Tanzimat and after the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), the city witnessed a small boom in (re-)building activity. At that time, during the reign of Mahmut II, the ban on new buildings had been removed.¹⁸⁹ From that point on a *ferman* was no longer needed for simpler repairs, but only for rebuilding (Karaca 1995:35 and Kiel 1985:49).

Some churches (re-)built during the second quarter of the nineteenth century are already very large, but it is not until after the Islahat edict of 1856 that Christian architecture regains monumental dimensions, ornamented façades, and characteristic traits such as cupolas and bell towers. An immediate reaction to these changed realities we see in Smyrna, by that time the empire's second largest city, where in the same year the Islahat was proclaimed the church of St John (Aya Yorgos) acquired a dome and twin towers, while Aya Fotini was equipped with a huge campanile (see Colonas 2005:99). In the capital, the Ayios Atanasos church (1858) in the - by decree - exclusively Greek quarter of Tatavla (Kurtuluş) was the first church with a dome erected since the conquest. Both these elements, dome (previously reserved for Islamic buildings) and bell tower, so significant in the reclaiming of urban space by the empire's Christian subjects, are, however, not specified in the edict. In fact, given its consequences what regards the transformation of Christian architecture following its proclamation, the text of the edict

¹⁸⁹ In the literature we can find some confusion over when the ban on church building was lifted. Bichev (1961:64), for example, first claims this to have been the the year when the Tanzimat Edict was proclaimed (1839), but then mentions new churches built in Târnovo and Pazardžik already in 1836 and 1837.

still sounds rather restrictive, as we can see from the part referring to church building and re-building.¹⁹⁰

Also in the Balkans, particularly in Bulgaria and Macedonia, the majority of churches built or re-built after 1856 boast a cupola and a bell tower, or eventually acquire these features. Less close to the imperial centre, in Bosnia a somewhat different dynamic can be detected during the reform period. The archival study by Gölen (2001) provides us with useful insight on how this process worked in Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout the nineteenth century. In Bosnia, the Tanzimat had only arrived in 1851, with reforms delayed by the local *beys*. Soon thereafter quite a few requests for the rebuilding and building of churches were submitted to the *vali*, including very detailed descriptions as well as justifications for these requests. Interestingly, all of these belonged to the Catholics, who lamented a privileged position of the Orthodox in this regard. An inspector was eventually sent to assess *in situ* whether the permissions should be granted. Reasons given to justify the (re-)building of churches was either that the community had no church at all, that the present church was too small for the increased population, or that the churches had been destroyed by bandits. Additional explanations given in the written requests for permissions included descriptions of unfavourable

¹⁹⁰ “In the towns, small boroughs and villages, where the whole population is of the same religion, no obstacle shall be offered to the repair, according to their original plan, of buildings set apart for religious worship, for schools, for hospitals, and for cemeteries. The plans of these different buildings, in case of their new erection, must, after having been approved by the Patriarchs or heads of communities, be submitted to my Sublime Porte, which will approve of them by my Imperial order, or make known its observations upon them within a certain time. Each sect, in localities where there are no other religious denominations, shall be free from every species of restraint as regards the public exercise of its religion. In the towns, small boroughs, and villages where different sects are mingled together, each community, inhabiting a distinct quarter, shall, by conforming to the above-mentioned ordinances, have equal power to repair and improve its churches, its hospitals, its schools, and its cemeteries. When there is a question of the erection of new buildings, the necessary authority must be asked for through the Sublime Porte, which will pronounce a Sovereign decision according to that authority, except in the case of administrative obstacles. The intervention of the administrative authority in all measures of this nature will be entirely gratuitous. My Sublime Porte will take energetic measures to ensure to each sect, whatever be the number of its adherents, entire freedom in the exercise of its religion.” The English translation of the Islahat edict is available at www.bilkent.edu.tr/~genckaya/documents1.html. The paragraph spaces in the original text are omitted in my citation.

situations like that of the inhabitants from the Livno region having to go across the border to Austria for ceremonies, people standing outside the church in the rain during masses because churches were too small, or people praying in tents because no church existed. Except for the case in Gabela (Herzegovina), where permission was declined because a mosque was nearby, all other requests were replied to positively, whereby new ones kept coming. Seeing the Catholics' success, soon also the Orthodox started submitting requests, whereupon additional permissions were granted. Apparently very pleased with the new conditions, both Orthodox and Catholics sent letters of gratitude to the *vali*, the inspector, and even to the Sultan, who in turn issued a decree (*irade*) expressing how pleased he was. At last also the Jews sent requests for the enlargement of their synagogues. Gölen (2001:241) eventually concludes that the rights of the Islahat edict were realized in Bosnia before its proclamation in 1856. He, however, concedes that also a large number of churches had been built in Bosnia between 1820 and 1850. Only after 1851, however, did a real boom begin.

4.5. Recapitulation

As can be seen from the less complicated sub-division of this chapter, it is almost within the boundaries of the later nation-states that we could discuss the regions in question: the still very Ottoman-Muslim Bosnia, the - in stark contrast - predominantly rural and Christian Serbia, and the Slav-Greek region in the central and southern Balkans which is now Bulgaria, Macedonia, and northern Greece.

The residential architecture of the “Bulgarian Renaissance” has been a repeated subject of dispute between Bulgarian and Turkish scholars, with the former insisting on its “national” specificity versus claims of the latter that these houses were typically Ottoman. The truth, as so often, lies in the middle, as I hope to have convincingly demonstrated. Certain features of these charming mansions are indeed much more typical of what now is Bulgaria than of other Ottoman territories. That the individuals - admittedly typically Orthodox Christians - who first brought this style to the scene would have proudly identified themselves as Bulgarians, however, is fairly unlikely. Such suppositions can now be afforded in the light of more recent scholarship more critically approaching the historiography of the “National Revival” or the pre-national realities of the mid-nineteenth century Balkans (Daskalev 2004; Detrez 2003), and not least by the re-reading of original (Bulgarian) accounts from that period, as we have seen. Ultimately, this should lead to a de-mythologization of Balkan history, including the artistic history of this region and more specifically the cultural context which produced this art.

Had the enterprising elements in Bulgaria really supported an ultimate independence, they would have been ill advised, as the decline of Balkan economies after secession

from the Ottoman Empire and its markets, as demonstrated by Palairé (1997), has shown. This is not to say that these Orthodox Christian merchants should not have bred anti-Ottoman sentiments towards their Muslim co-subjects, who had always been in a slightly privileged position; or toward the distant ruler in the not-so-distant Istanbul; but, then again, not really toward the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople which, however despised by the Bulgarian peasants, had plenty of support among, for example, the citizens of Plovdiv. In the same vein, Detrez (2003:39-40) has suggested that they would have preferred, if not the Ottoman Empire, a kind of restored Byzantine (or “Romaic”) Empire, as most of the urban establishment of Greek extraction or orientation and Orthodox religion did in what remained of the Ottoman domains. This is not to say that the mass of Bulgarians of rural background would not have preferred a self-governing entity outside Ottoman control. But this was apparently less in the interest of the affluent middle and upper classes, who contributed to the “revival” by their patronage of the arts and education, and under whom the “Plovdiv house” emerged and flourished. Much clearer is in the case of the itinerant masters that they did not trouble much where, for whom, or what – church, houses, or mosque – they were commissioned to build or embellish. That they later became “national heroes” has fortunately benefited us in that much documentation has been made available about them and their creations. That they would have seen their work as contributing to a national cause, however, is highly unlikely.

Concerning the study of decorative art in the late Ottoman period, it was noticed that also in Bosnia and Serbia the wall paintings - so well-covered in the publications on Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey – indeed existed while generally not mentioned in this body of literature. How far the examples from Bosnia and Serbia still survive and how far they are really comparable to those further south must be the

subject of a separate, focused survey. This concerns not only the residences mentioned, but also the decorative art in mosques. While the examples from Bosnia appear to have a rather heterogeneous character, there were also examples which reminded us of the art of the capital or the south Balkans. Without Muslims there was of course no new Muslim architecture in Serbia. Throughout the nineteenth century the remaining building work, even in Belgrade, was undertaken by itinerant workers from the South; by the 1830s already in competition with engineers from the Habsburg Empire - ethnic Serbs or not. When Ottoman subjugation was replaced by local government, a clear break ("back to Europe") did not occur immediately as is clear in the hybrid visual described by the traveller Paton in the 1840s. Cerasi has asked the legitimate question why the Balkan middle classes continued to build such basically Ottoman houses if the ultimate goal was to be western. In part this can be explained by the specific skills of the local builders-decorators, who still did all the work. The contemporary narrative source cited, however, also suggests that some "Ottoman" features were simply still favoured over western modes. Although by now well-aware of the ways of the Franks, *divan* and *çibuk* were simply still preferred over chairs and a cigar. This should suffice to demonstrate the transition from Ottoman models to European ones was not a clear break, not a matter of dates when autonomy or independence were achieved, but a very gradual process stretching from the later eighteenth century through much of the nineteenth century. That the Ottoman Christians, once their economic potency permitted, adopted the lifestyle of the Ottoman-Muslim elite should have further impeded the swiftness of such process.

Although the total claim that the Ottomans banned any church-building or repair activity is a myth, the vast record of examples of churches from the Ottoman period before the 1830s also makes clear that the architecture of the Balkan Christians did not

develop much in these conditions. But, as Medaković (1991:Ch.4) shows, also in “free” Austria the Serbs sometimes had considerable difficulties obtaining permissions for the building of Orthodox Churches. That Serbian architecture in Austria developed along the lines of the art of the hegemonic culture of that empire, rather than “organically” from their medieval heritage (as could be argued for Romania, where Ottoman restrictions did not apply), may serve as an indicator. This, rather than the supposition that the Serbs adopted the western Baroque because they were now free and could re-establish their connections with the western world, can explain artistic developments in Austria. After all, it was not the “Serbian Baroque” but the medieval monuments – and not the western-influenced ones of the Raška school, but the later, and thoroughly eastern ones (Serbo-Byzantine and Morava schools) – that served as model when, in the late nineteenth century, the Serbs were looking for a style that best represented their national spirit.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ On this matter, see also the critical article by Pantelić (1997), or the lengthy and more descriptive book by Kadijević (1997).

Conclusion

Many of the questions and problems raised and announced to be treated in the introduction already anticipated the conclusions to be made here, and it is only left to the author to hope that the arguments have been convincing for the reader. A conclusion without sentences ending with a question mark is, however, in many cases not a good sign, so rather than to reiterate the suppositions made in the introduction, I shall focus on a few additional questions raised throughout the process of research.

One concerns the question of periodization, and the conception of a “late Ottoman” period stretching from 1700 to 1923. As we have seen, the art and architecture from after 1700 was very different from the one it succeeded, but it was also very different from that after the 1850s, whereby a clearer distinction should be made.¹⁹² Next to architectural and other visual-cultural phenomena previously discussed in detail, it is another particularity of “the period 1718-1856” that it has its own urban (or semi-urban) and cultural centres, and that these are to a considerable extent already very different from those of the late nineteenth century. Places mentioned over and over again in this study - Kastoria, Debar, or Ioannina, not to mention once booming centres like Ambelakia, Siatista, or Tyrnavos - while at that time even familiar abroad, are hardly remembered or figure in the history of the twentieth century. Another problem concerns the causalities for the success of specific places. In the case of Smyrna, it has been argued that it developed and eventually flourished not because, but rather *despite* the Ottoman administration, which has been blamed with a general disinterest in

¹⁹² Arel (1993), for example, writing of the period between the Tulip Era and the Tanzimat, speaks of “post-classical architecture”, while Hamadeh (2004:46-7) sees in the eighteenth century the beginning of an “early modern period”.

economic development planning (cf. Goffman 1999). In contrast to notions of suppression, exile, and enslavement, however, in many cases mentioned here the prosperity and vitality of places in improbably remote mountain areas of Thessaly-Epirus-Macedonia and central Bulgaria came about not *despite* the Ottomans but, at least in part, *because* settlements like Moschopolis, Koprivštica, or Tyrnavos had been equipped with certain privileges by the sultans or their relatives that fostered their development.¹⁹³ Also in the case of the Bulgarian mountain towns, icons of the “National Revival”, these had not come into being because proudly Bulgarian subjects fled from Ottoman suppression in the valleys to preserve their national culture. Instead, or at least many of which, had originally developed as part of an Ottoman settlement policy in which settlers were attracted by the granting of certain (economic, religious, political) privileges, whereby they gradually, and particularly after 1750, developed from villages into prospering secondary urban centres.

Other polarities between productive and destructive forces in this period must be reassessed. For the “dark age” of Ottoman control over its Balkan territories, the age of the *ayan*, we must admit to a limited knowledge of what this period, usually portrayed as chaos and tyranny, really meant in the lives of those living under the *ayan*, or at least those in the towns. As we have seen, many individuals did prosper economically, and certainly not least because the local tyrants in part depended on their taxed income. While usually identified with violence, and for a large part justifiably so, we have also witnessed certain degrees of interest not only in infrastructural and economic development (which previous administrators apparently did not find as necessary), but also in “cultural affairs”. We have also occasionally noticed a more relaxed attitude

¹⁹³ On the privileged towns in the Ottoman Empire, including some seldom mentioned parallels with the autonomous towns emerging in medieval Europe, which in Orientalist writing have often been juxtaposed with the presumably solely despotically ruled “Muslim” towns, see Hadžijahić (1961).

towards the Christian subjects and the ban on church building. While previous scholarship has focused on the destructive impact groups like the *ayan*, but also the Phanariotes, had in their respective areas of influence, their positive influence remains to be assessed, and it is to be expected that future research of a more extensive scope may yield interesting findings. In the case of the Habsburg invasion of the Balkans in the late seventeenth century, on the other hand, it appears as if the destructive effect it had on both the cultural production and development of the Ottoman Christians and Muslims has not been fully appraised. Besides the destruction of great centres of Ottoman culture like Sarajevo or Skopje, the Habsburg advance and retreat also resulted in a considerable fading of those elements among the Balkans Christians that had continued to play an important role in the cultural life of the region even after the conquest; patronizing the arts and, in the case of the Bosnian Croats, entertaining vivid contacts with “the West” (via the Adriatic) even under “Ottoman enslavement”. Fearing retaliation after the Habsburg retreat - as many of them (including the clergy) had indeed supported the invasion through instigation of local rebellions - many then migrated to Central Europe, where they continued to exist as successful merchants. But that meant at the same time that these industrious elements were now missing in those areas subsequently re-settled by mountaineers and refugees, whereby these permanently changed their character.

So has art in eighteenth century Ottoman Europe really declined? The answer tends to be subjective in accordance with different preferences of different authors. What is true, concerning mosque architecture, is that particularly after 1750 the structures no longer display the strong unity in design that had characterized earlier centuries. Instead, mosques like the ones mentioned in Tetovo, Travnik, Samokov, Kavala, or Berat are monuments to individuality, expressions of local-regional resources rather than

provincial deviations of ideas emanating from an imperial centre. Historians of Ottoman architecture had traditionally shown little interest in such buildings, possibly also because in nationalist constructions a strong national culture was thought to be best represented by a strong unity in art. “Westernization”, however, would not yet play the vital role in the transformations post-classical architecture underwent. Admittedly, architecture in the Ottoman provinces was never comparable to that in the capital, but as an explanation for the individualist character of post-classical mosques in the Balkans we must credit foremost local factors, such as the regional mobility of builders-decorators, and a subsequent transfer of styles and skills. What could not be considered in the scope of this study were contemporary developments in the provinces east of the capital. In terms of both architecture as well as decoration of both mosques and houses we find stylistically related examples foremost in western and north-western Anatolian towns like Bursa, Birgi, Bademli, Kula, or Safranbolu, but also further east.¹⁹⁴ Riotously decorated nineteenth century mosque interiors in the Pontus (eastern Black Sea region), for example, show some similarities with those in Albania on the diametrically opposite end of the empire.¹⁹⁵ The houses of Akçaabat (near Trabzon) could be mistaken for the Vlach merchant houses at Kruševo (western Macedonia), while again other buildings in that district, such as the Yakupoğlu Konağı at Sürmene (Trabzon district),¹⁹⁶ remind us very much of the fortified houses in the region of Gjirokastrë. The communication and transfer of trends and skills not only between Istanbul and the provinces or within the European provinces, but between the European and Anatolian provinces is certainly a topic which would require further attention.

¹⁹⁴ For a study of wall paintings in Ottoman Damascus very similar to those discussed in Istanbul, Anatolia, and the Balkans, see Weber (2002).

¹⁹⁵ For plenty of photographic material, see the inventory by Sümerkan and Okman (1999).

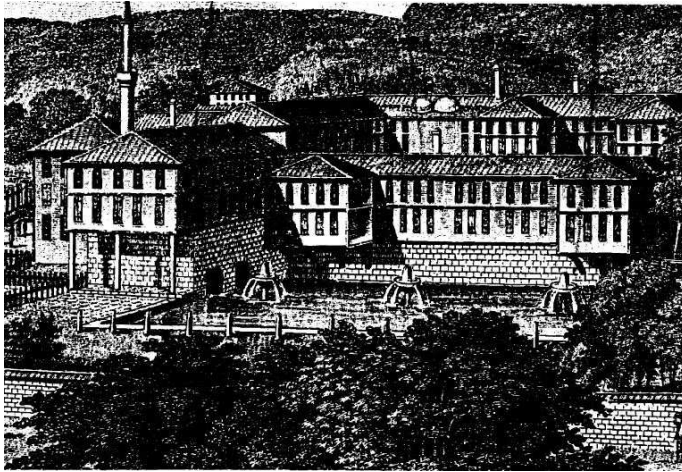
¹⁹⁶ It should be said that Bammer (1982:39), and the sources he cites, hold this *konağ*, built around 1720 for a Memiş Ağa, to be in a style “not autochthonous” to the eastern Black Sea region, which would only confirm that this form reached this area as an import.

Finally, we must ask through which channels the “western influence” reached the Ottoman Balkans. If we accept both that provincial administrators desired to have their residences decorated in the contemporary style of Istanbul (whereby they probably would have invited decorators from the capital, as had Mehmet Ali), and that also the merchants demanded from local builders to make reference to what they saw in Europe, there can be no one answer. The “Baroque” in the Balkans must have emerged from a much more multifarious dynamic than just a direct or indirect influence from one place or the other. While the Renaissance had been dominated by Italy, in the Baroque the “national schools” of European countries played a far more important role. In the same way the “Baroque” in the Balkans came through a variety of sources to which the region had been exposed at different times and through different channels: from France (in an “Ottomanized” variant spreading from Istanbul), from Austria (through individual exchange going hand in hand with trans-imperial commerce), and/or from “Italy” (the Adriatic, including Venice and Dubrovnik, or Venetian possessions like Crete). The fact that the very same persons who produced this art were constantly roaming within the region makes this transfer very complex and almost impossible to reconstruct with passable certainty.¹⁹⁷ The transfer of skills and ideas should also be considered; this must have taken place must have taken place during each of the building projects, both between individuals as well as between different crafts which, as we have seen, were sometimes professed by one and the same person or group.

¹⁹⁷ There are also occasional references to foreigners working in construction in the Ottoman Balkans in the nineteenth century, which could have been another agent in the spread of European forms. Hildebrandt (in Turczynski 1959:25), for example, met a German mason in Plovdiv, while Todorov (1966:7,40) and Bichev (1961:73) write of Fičev wandering around with Italian masons, who were appreciated because they knew how to make waterproof mortar. Pouqueville (1820:56) noted that Ali Pasha’s palace at Premiti was built by a renegade architect from nearby Calabria (Italy). The German decorator Paton (1845:143-4) met in the Bosnian town of Zvornik has already been mentioned earlier.

For such a wide range of topics discussed it is difficult to find a single overriding conclusion. It is only through filling gaps in our knowledge of the various histories of this period that more satisfactory and conclusive results will be achieved. It is left to the author to recommend not simply to compare the monuments from this period with the more “classical” art it succeeds but to acknowledge them as expressions of the societies by which they were created in this specific cultural-historical context. To explain the wish for westernization as the principal basis for the Baroque-influenced transitional visual culture among the Balkan Christians, particularly after the 1830s, is unreasonable for at that time the Baroque in Europe was long over. As an alternative explanation one may well suppose that rather than (or in addition to) cultural ambitions this “style” developed as a mirror of social processes in the late Ottoman Empire, and in recognition of the superior potential that the vivacious Baroque forms offered in terms of representation.

Illustrations



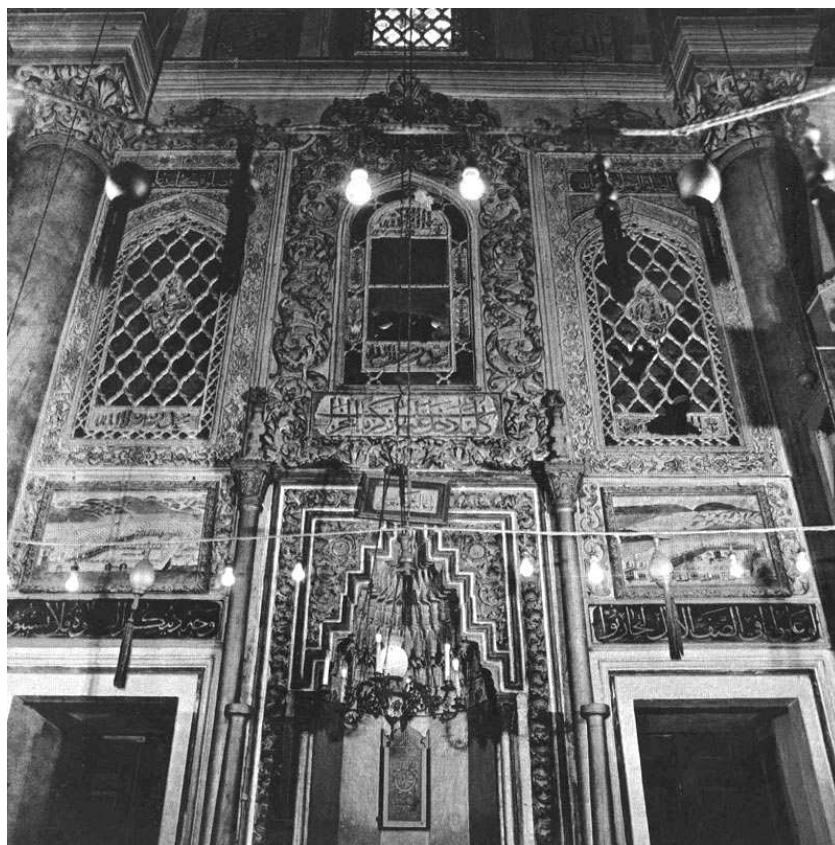
Ill.1.1. Istanbul, Sa'dabad palace, 1722, in reproduction (engraving) by L'Espinasse

Ill.1.2. Istanbul, Sultanahmet *sebil*, 1728



Ill.1.3. Nevşehir (Cappadocia), mosque of İbrahim Pasha (1726-7) (Source: Goodwin)

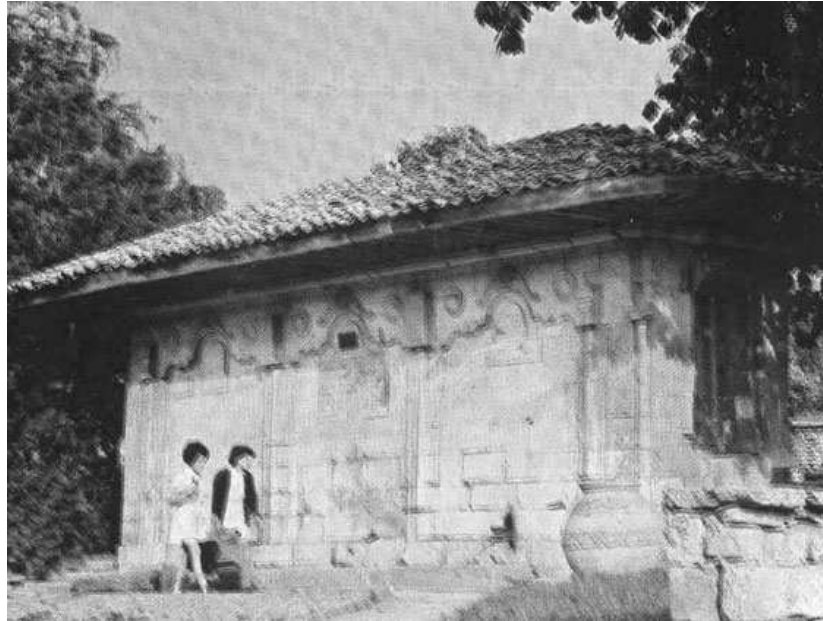
Ill.1.4. Şumen (Bulgaria), mosque of Halil Şerif Pasha (1744)



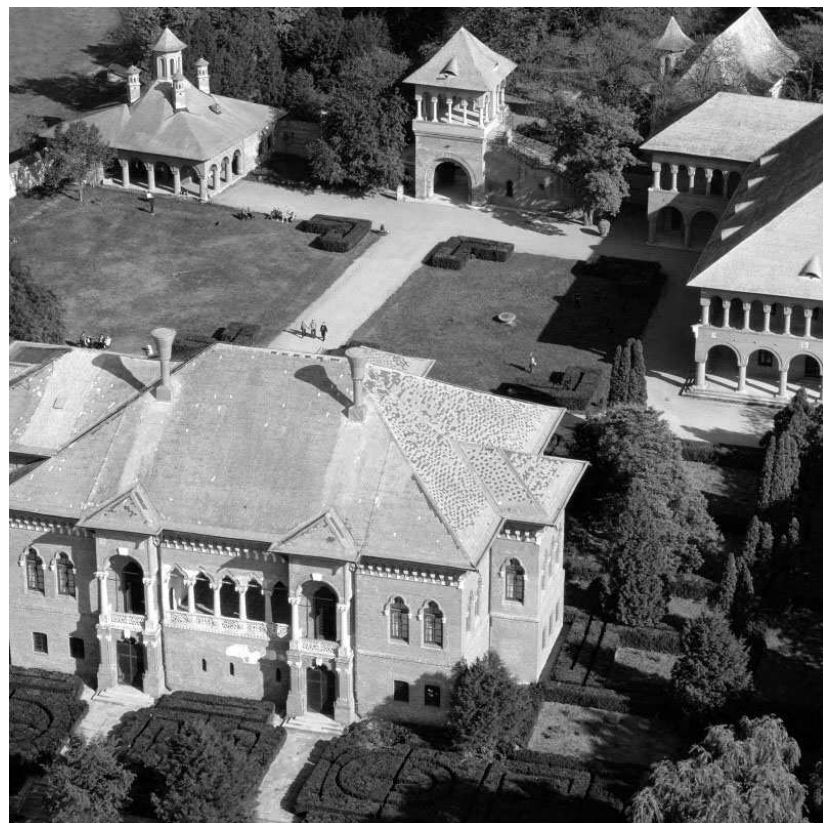
Ill.1.5. Šumen, Halil Şerif Pasha mosque (1744), *kible*-wall with decoration from later period (Source: Topchiev)



Ill.1.6. Šumen, Halil Şerif Pasha mosque (1744), painted window-head in prayer hall facing courtyard



Ill.1.7. Šumen, fountain with leaded panels and cartouches, 1774 (Source: Topchiev)

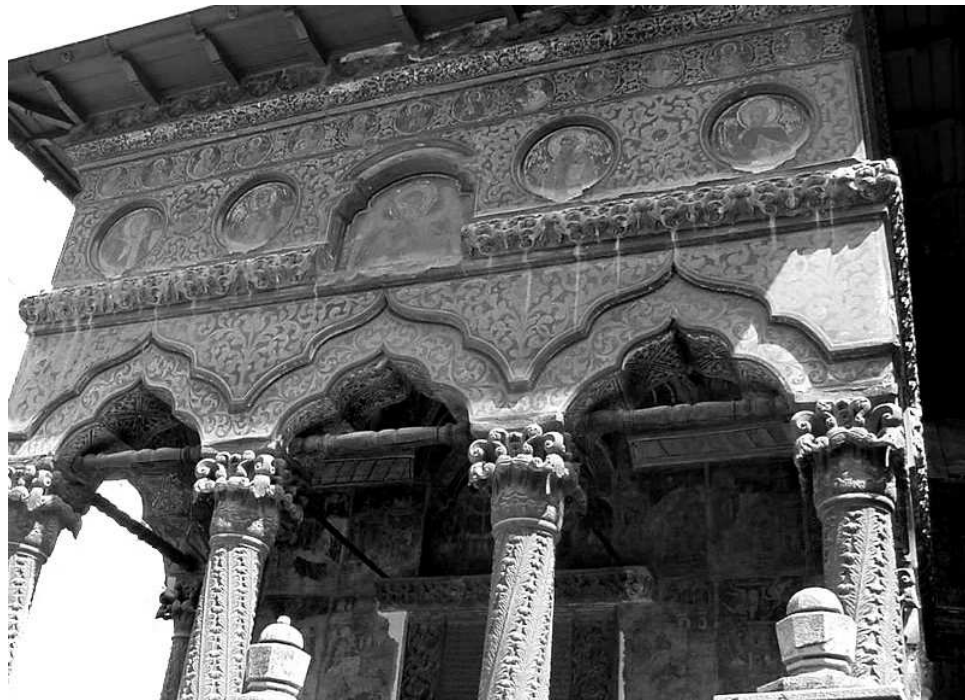


Ill.1.8. Mogoșoaia palace near Bucharest, 1702 (Source: Internet¹⁹⁸)

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.romaniatravel.com/media/pictures/mari/8MOGOSOA.jpg>



Ill.1.9. Bucharest, Greek Church, eighteenth century, lithography
(Source: Internet¹⁹⁹)



Ill.1.10. Bucharest, Stavropoleos church, 1724-1730, portico (Source: Internet²⁰⁰)

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.show.ro/bucuresti/images/025.jpg>

²⁰⁰ http://bucharest.usembassy.gov/resources/gallery/Michael_Guest/Stavropoleos_15.jpg



Ill.1.11. Iași, fountains at St Spiridon monastery, 1750s and 1760s (Source: Internet²⁰¹)



Ill.1.12. Belgrade, triumphal gate of Charles VI, 1736

Ill.1.13. Belgrade, clock tower at Stambul gate, 1720s or 1730s (Source: Internet²⁰²)

²⁰¹ http://www.geocities.com/costel_isro/iasi_spf/iasi028.jpg



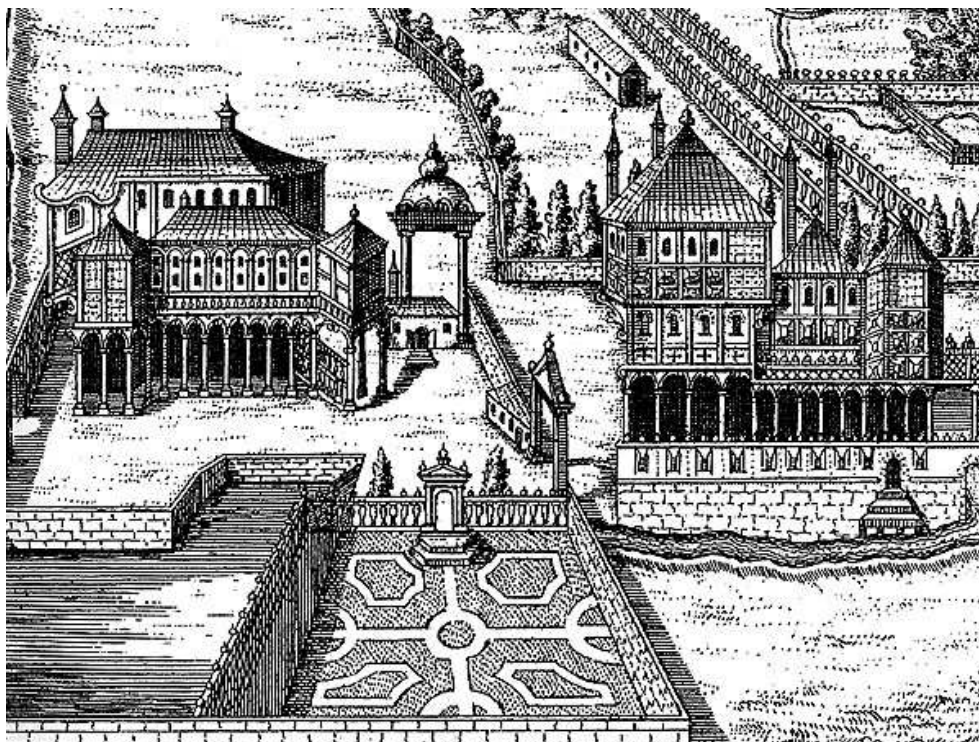
Ill.1.14. Trebinje (Herzegovina), clock tower of Resulbegović Osman Pasha, early 18th ct. (Source: Pašić)

Ill. 1.15. Vienna, belfry of church at Neulerchenfeld, 1733-1753



Ill. 1.16. Ulcinj, fountain of Sinan Pasha, around 1720 (Source: Mehling)

²⁰² http://mishuna.image.pbase.com/u44/alangrant/upload/28485350.SerbiaMontenegro_PICT0288.jpg



Ill. 1.17. Istanbul, palace of Moldavian prince Dimitrie Cantemir (before 1711), detail of engraving (Source: Cantemir)



Ill. 2.1. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye mosque (1749-55), *mihrab* façade



Ill. 2.2. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye complex (1749-55), library



Ill. 2.3. Vienna, Baroque burgher house (built before 1712), portal



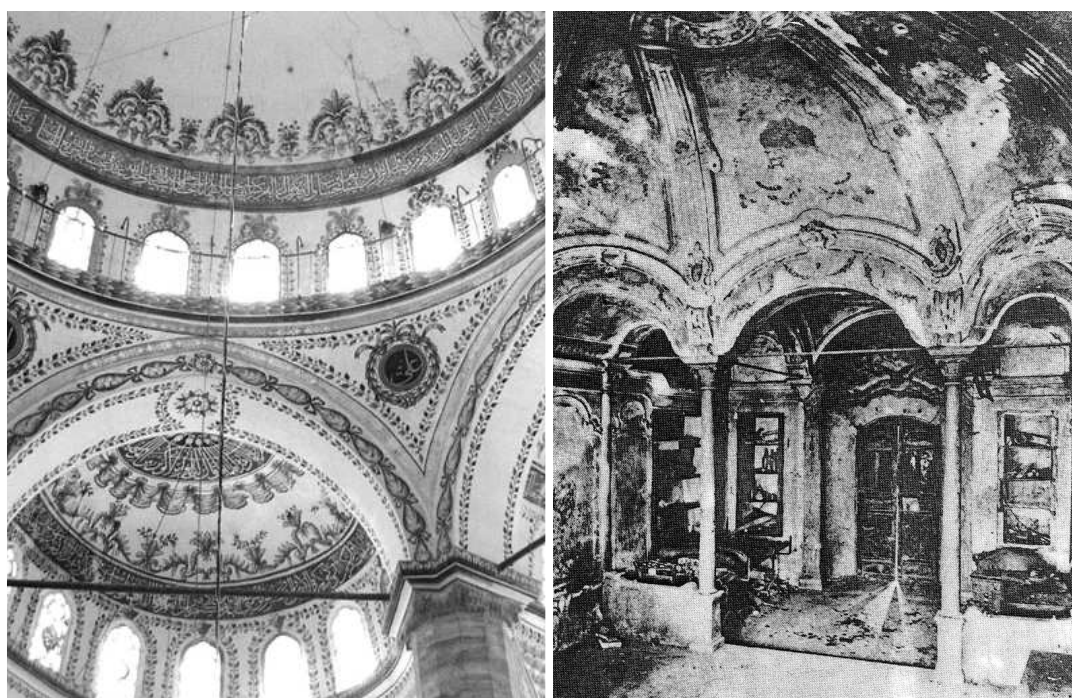
Ill. 2.4. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye mosque (1749-55), interior

Ill. 2.5. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye mosque (1749-55), *sebil* at entrance wall



Ill. 2.6. Istanbul-Üsküdar, Ayazma mosque (1757-60), elevation, minaret with bulbous top

Ill. 2.7. Istanbul-Üsküdar, Ayazma mosque (1757-60), interior



Ill. 2.8. Istanbul, mosque of Hekimoğlu Ali Pasha, completed 1734, interior

Ill. 2.9. Istanbul, Greek house at Fener (Source: Gurlitt)



Ill. 2.10. Sarajevo, mosque of Ali Pasha, interior (Source: Internet²⁰³)

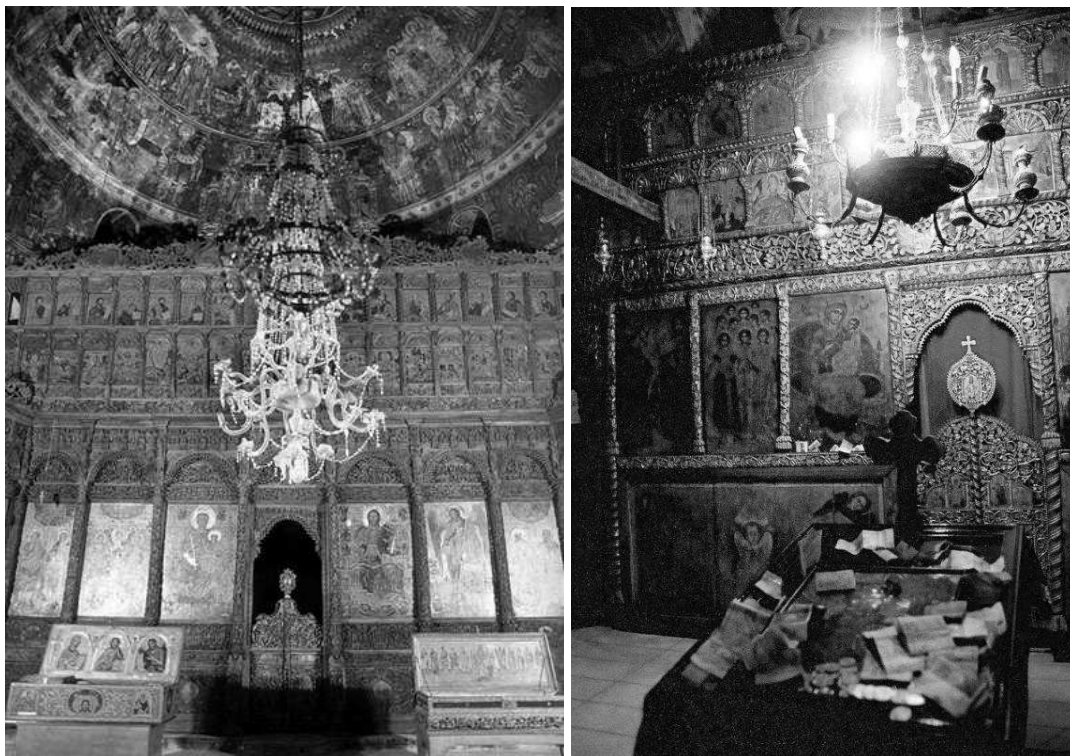


Ill. 2.11. Šumen, Tombul mosque, interior, after 1740 (Source: Internet²⁰⁴)

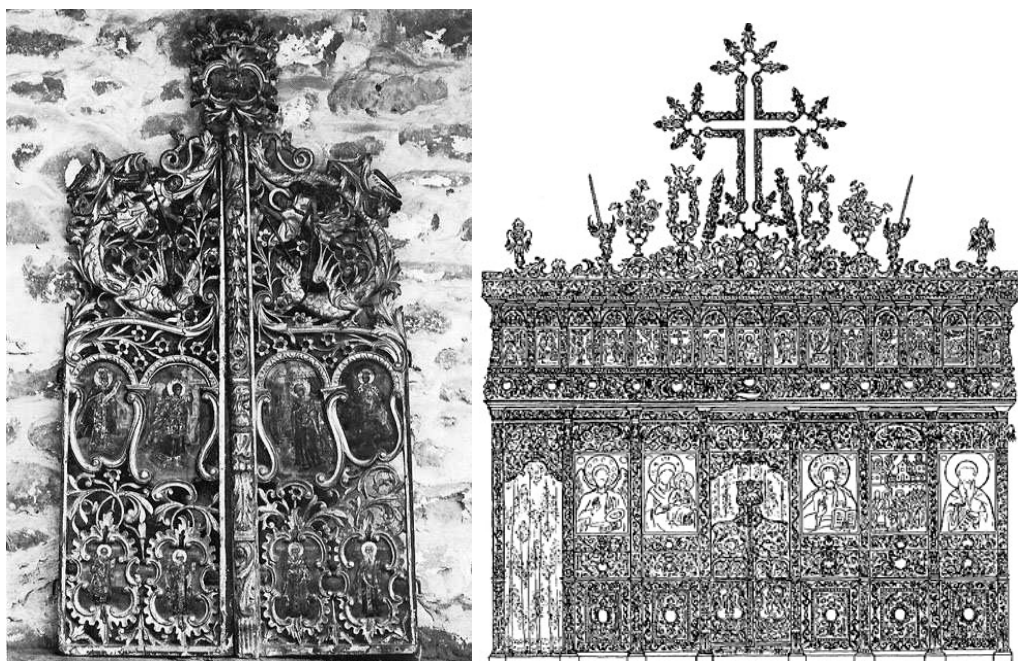
Ill. 2.12. Istanbul, Küçük Ayasofya (previously the Byzantine church of St Sergius and Bacchus), interior after redecoration in the 1760s

²⁰³ <http://www.tremembe.unimondo.org/foto/bigBosnia03/Turismo%20Responsabile81.JPG>

²⁰⁴ http://www.flickr.com/photo_zoom.gne?id=18431148&context=set-435436&size=o



Ill. 2.13. Ohrid, Iconostasis of St Naum monastery church, 1711 (Source: Internet²⁰⁵)
 Ill. 2.14. Skopje, iconostasis at St Saviour (Sveti Spas), 1828 (Source: Internet²⁰⁶)



Ill. 2.15. Troyanski monastery (Bulgaria), door (Source: Eckert)
 Ill. 2.16. Rila monastery (Bulgaria), iconostasis (Source: Eckert)

²⁰⁵ <http://k53.pbase.com/u35/jbrandvoll/large/23379660.IconostasisSvetiNaum.jpg>

²⁰⁶ <http://faq.macedonia.org/images/sv.spas.sk.1824.jpg>



Ill. 2.17. Sremski Karlovci, synodal church (1758-1762), elevation

Ill. 2.18. Sremski Karlovci, synodal church (1758-1762), iconostasis (Source: Internet²⁰⁷)



Ill. 2.19. Sremski Karlovci, “Upper Church” (1746)

²⁰⁷ http://k43.pbase.com/u44/alangrant/upload/28529715.SerbiaMontenegro_PICT0989.jpg



Ill. 3.1. Peć (Kosovo), Kulla of Yaşar Pasha, 1803 (Source: Herscher/Riedlmayer)



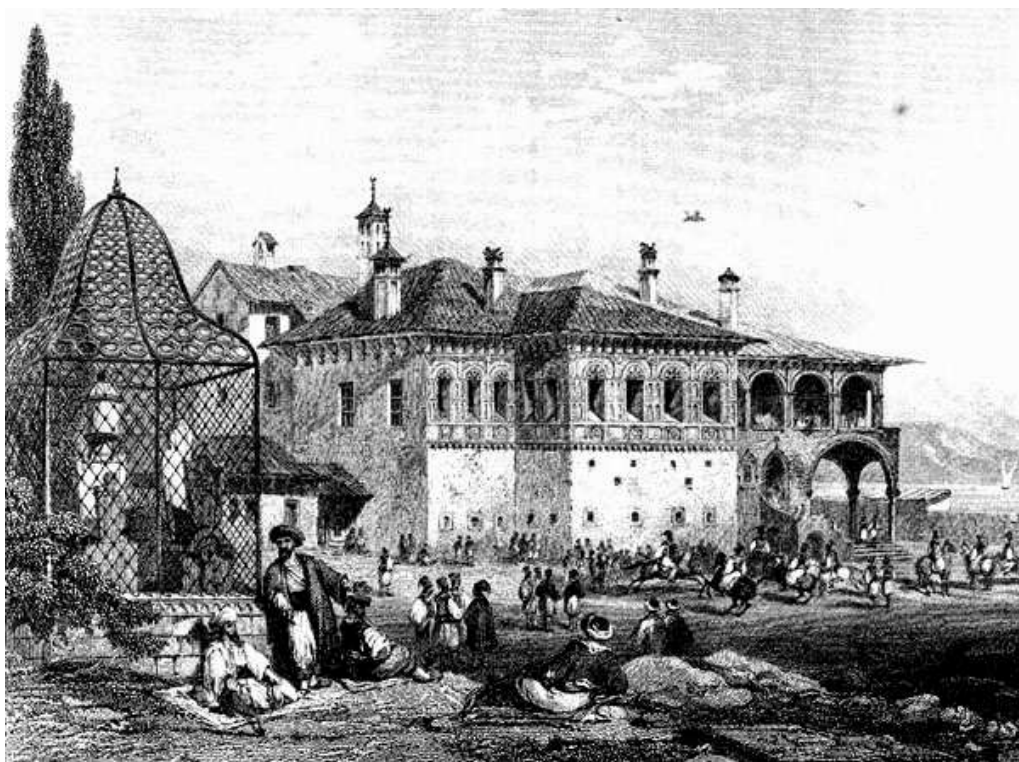
Ill. 3.2. Gjirokastër (Albania), late eighteenth century house of the Bakiraj in the Palorto quarter, murals from 1853 (Source: Riza/Thomo)



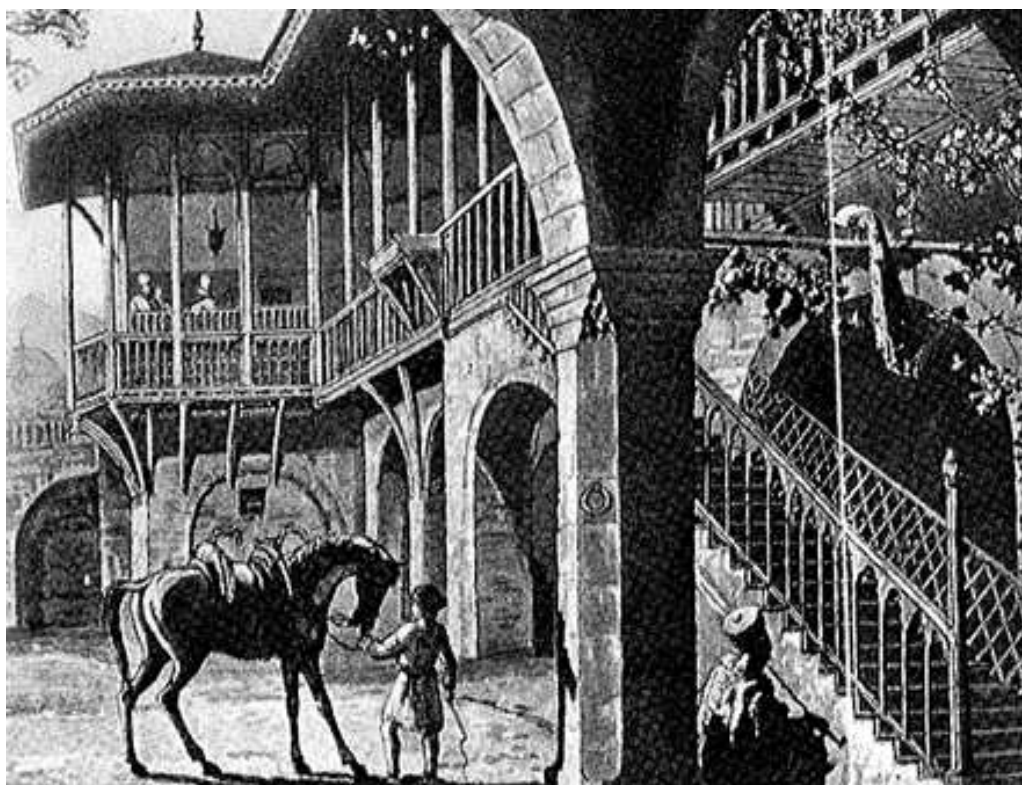
Ill. 3.3. Maldaraști (Wallachia), Cula Duca, 1812, altered in 1827 (Source: Stoica)



Ill. 3.4. Ioannina, palaces of Ali Pasha and his sons (not extant), engraving, early nineteenth century



Ill. 3.5. Ioannina, palace of Ali Pasha (not extant), engraving, early nineteenth century



Ill. 3.6. Ioannina, house of Nikolas Argyris, engraving, early nineteenth century



Ill. 3.7. Ioannina, Fethiye camii, end of eighteenth century (Source: Internet²⁰⁸)



Ill. 3.8. Vidin (Bulgaria), mosque of Osman Pazvantoglu, 1800-1801 (Source: Internet²⁰⁹)

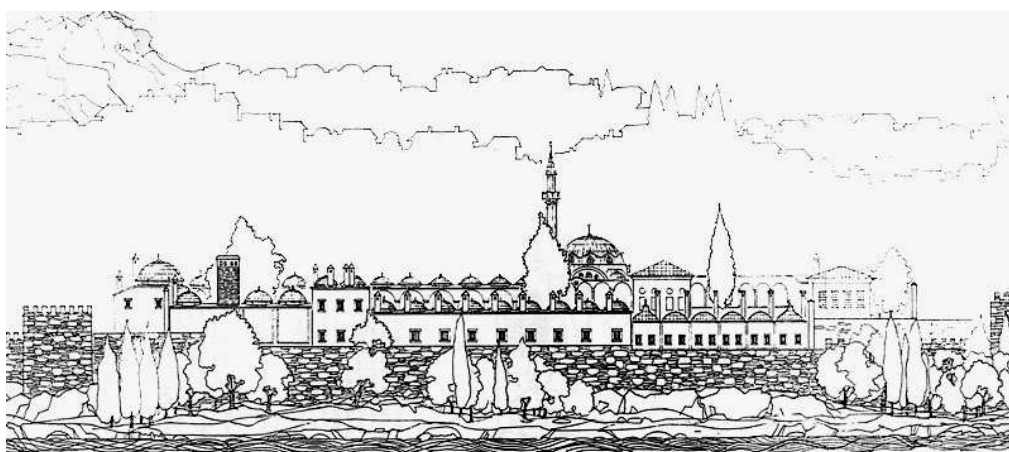
²⁰⁸ http://www.allempires.com/forum/uploads/Neoptolemos/2006-05-03_204449_fethiye_3.jpg



Ill. 3.9. Vidin, library of Osman Pazvantoglu. 1802-1803 (Source: Internet²¹⁰)



Ill. 3.10. Shkodër (Albania), Kurşunlu mosque, 1773-4 (Source: Internet²¹¹)



Ill. 3.11. Kavala (Greece), Mehmet Ali's *külliye*, 1800-11 or 1817-21 (Source: Sezgin 1973)

²⁰⁹ <http://vidin-info.hit.bg/photogallery/Zabelejitelnosti/Jamiq%20Osman%20Pazvantoglu.JPG>

²¹⁰ <http://vidin-info.hit.bg/photogallery/Zabelejitelnosti/Biblioteka%20Osmanpazvantoglu.JPG>

²¹¹ <http://rattle.bloguje.cz/plumbit.JPG>



Ill. 3.12. Kavala, mosque in *kütülliye* of Mehmet Ali, view from street



Ill. 3.13. Kavala, mosque in *kütülliye* of Mehmet Ali, views from harbour



Ill. 3.14 and 3.15. Kavala, *külliye* of Mehmet Ali, portals on wall facing the citadel



Ill. 3.16. Kavala, *külliye* of Mehmet Ali, detail in interior of mosque
(Source: Imaret Hotel)



Ill. 3.17. Makrinitza (Thessaly), Mouslilis mansion, 1833
(Source: Leonidopoulou-Stylianou)



Ill. 3.18. Ambelakia (Thessaly), Giorgios Schwartz mansion, late eighteenth century, top windows and decoration on interior (Source: Akin)



Ill. 3.19. Ambelakia, Giorgios Schwartz mansion, late eighteenth century (Source: Akın)

Ill. 3.20. Gjirokastër, interior of late eighteenth century mansion (Source: Akın)



Ill. 3.21. Siatista (Greek Macedonia), Poulkos mansion, after 1750, painted decoration on exterior (Source: Internet²¹²)

²¹² <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/media/original/c3312a.jpg>

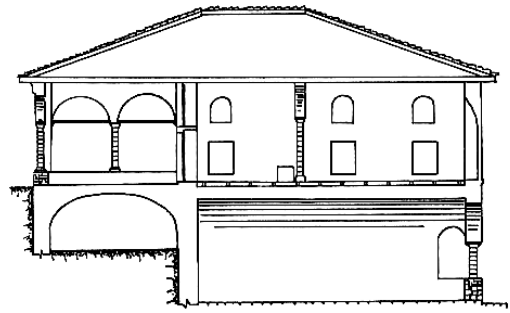


Ill. 3.22. Siatista, Poulkos mansion, depiction of Constantinople (Source: Internet²¹³)



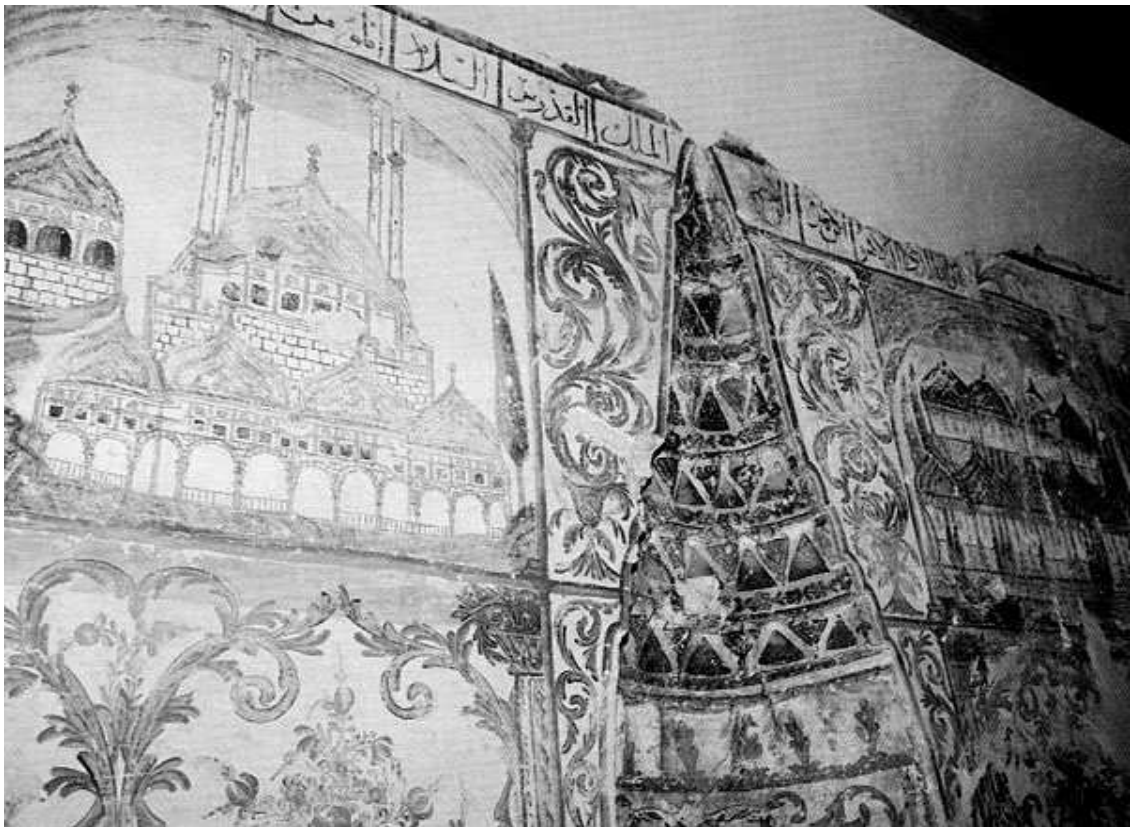
Ill. 3.23. Berat (Albania), Halvetiyye tekke, built in the 1780s, interior (Source: Strazimiri et al.)

²¹³ <http://www.macedonian-heritage.gr/HellenicMacedonia/media/original/c3312b.jpg>



Ill. 3.24. Berat, Bachelors' mosque, 1820s (Source: Strazimiri et al.)

Ill. 3.25. Berat, Bachelors' mosque, section (Source: Koch)



Ill. 3.26. Berat, Bachelors' Mosque, 1820s (Source: Akın)



Ill. 3.27. Tirana, mosque of Ethem bey, 1790s-1820s, capitals of porch

Ill. 3.28. Tirana, mosque of Ethem bey, interior



Ill. 3.29. Tirana, mosque of Ethem Bey, painted decoration in porch



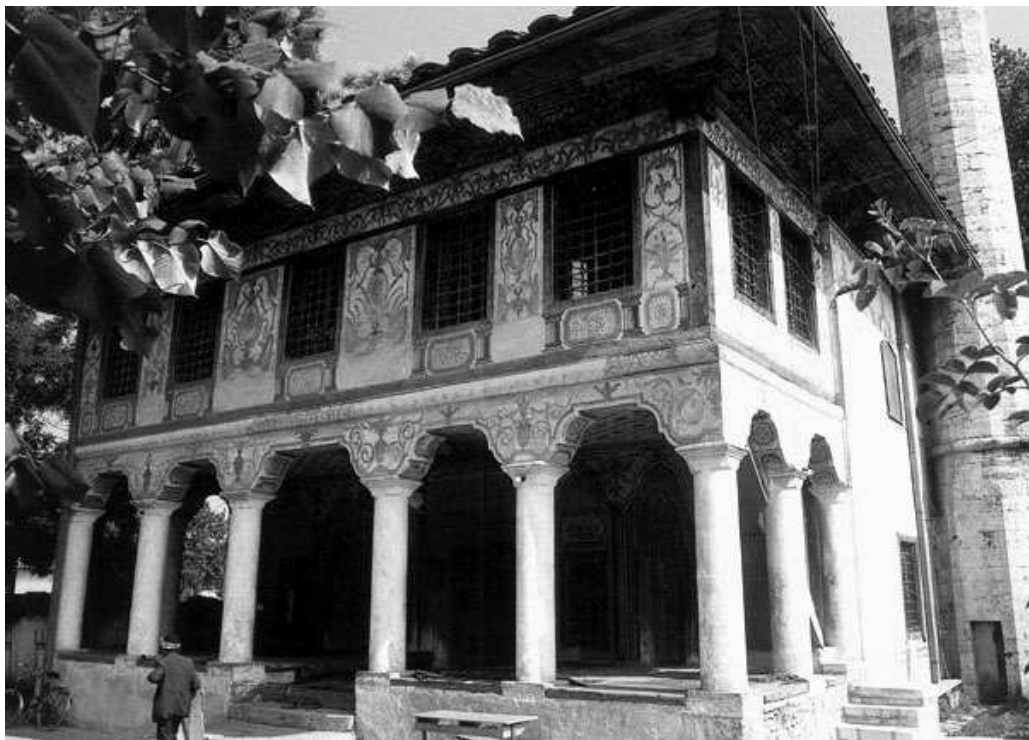
Ill. 3.30. and 3.31. Nineteenth century redecorations of sixteenth century mosques in Kosovo: Hadum mosque in Đakovica and Bayraklı mosque in Peć (Source: Unesco)



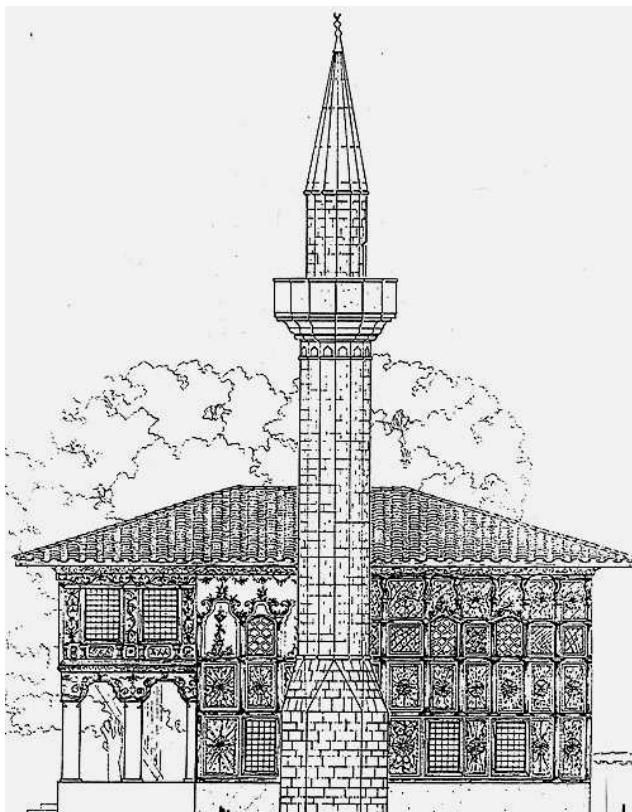
Ill. 3.32 and 3.33. Prizren, Sofu Sinan Pasha mosque (16th century) and Emin Pasha mosque (1831); decoration from the 1830s or after (Source: Unesco)



Ill. 3.34. Tetovo (Macedonia), Arabati Baba tekke; built/decorated between the 1770s and 1830s (Source: Oppeln)



Ill. 3.35. Tetovo, Alaca camii, around 1820 (Source: Akın)



Ill. 3.36. Tetovo, Alaca camii balcony on interior (Source: Mehling)

Ill. 3.37. Tetovo, Alaca camii, section of side wall (Source: Sezgin)



Ill. 3.38. Debar, Monastery of St Jovan Bigorski, self-portraits of masters from Debar (Source: Plavevski)

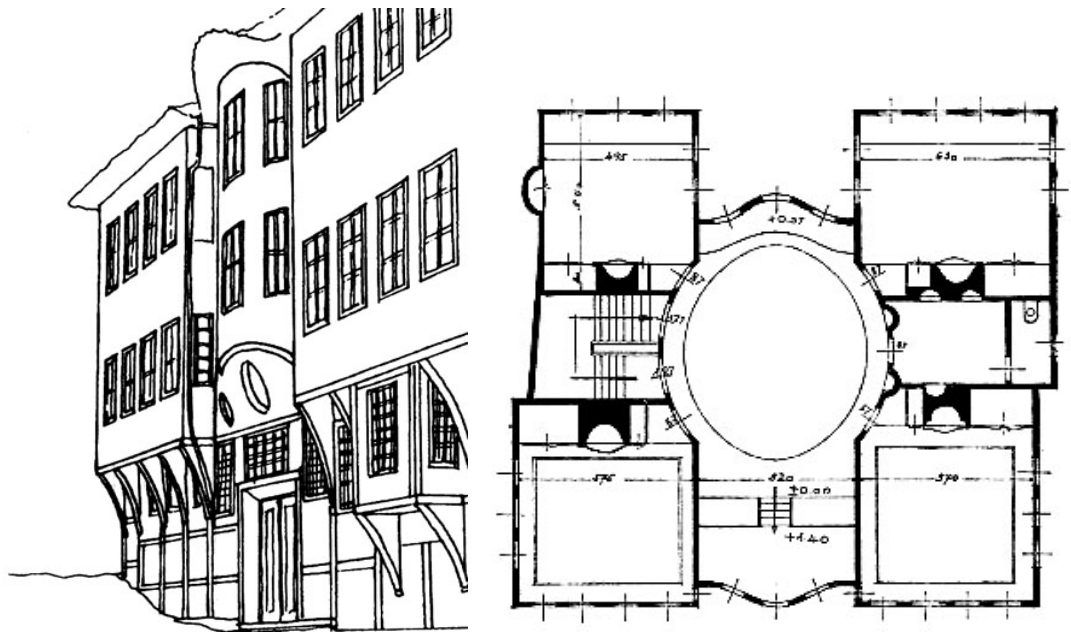


Ill. 3.39. Bucharest, *han* of Manuc Bey, around 1800



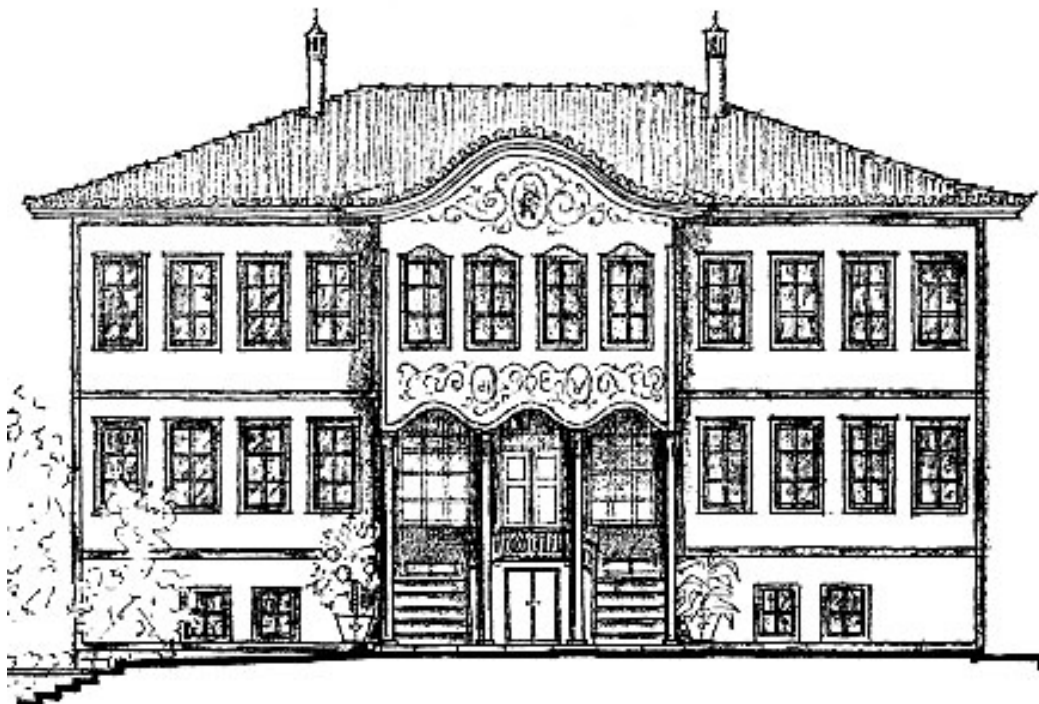
Ill.4.1. Plovdiv (Bulgaria), house of A. Kojumdžioğlu [Kuyumcuoğlu], 1840s
(Source: Internet²¹⁴)

²¹⁴ <http://www.clement.li/bulgarien/plovdiv/dsc00026.jpg>



Ill.4.2. Plovdiv, House Georgiadi, 1840s, façade with curved projection
(Source: Cerasi 1999)

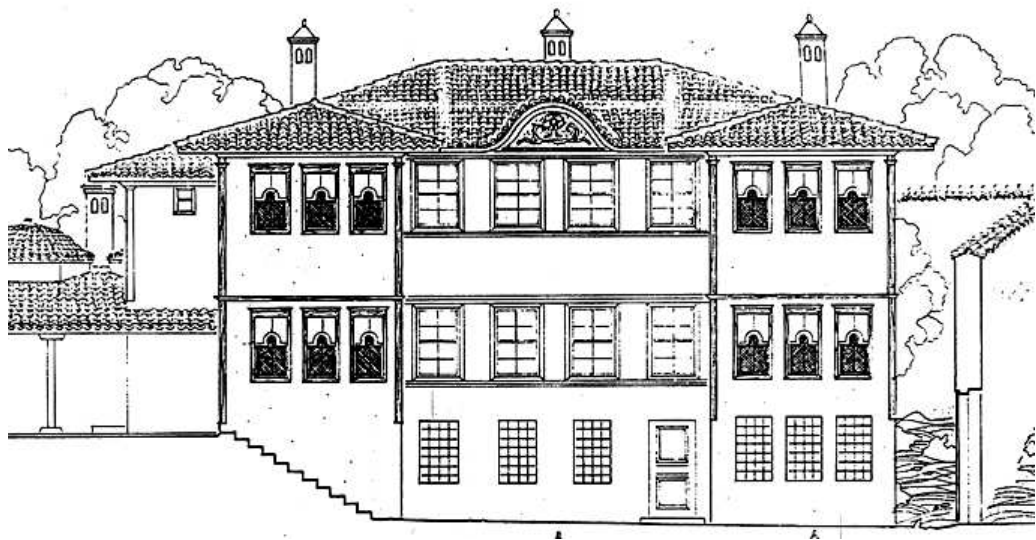
Ill.4.3. Plovdiv, House Georgiadi, floor plan with central oval *sofa* (Source: Péew)



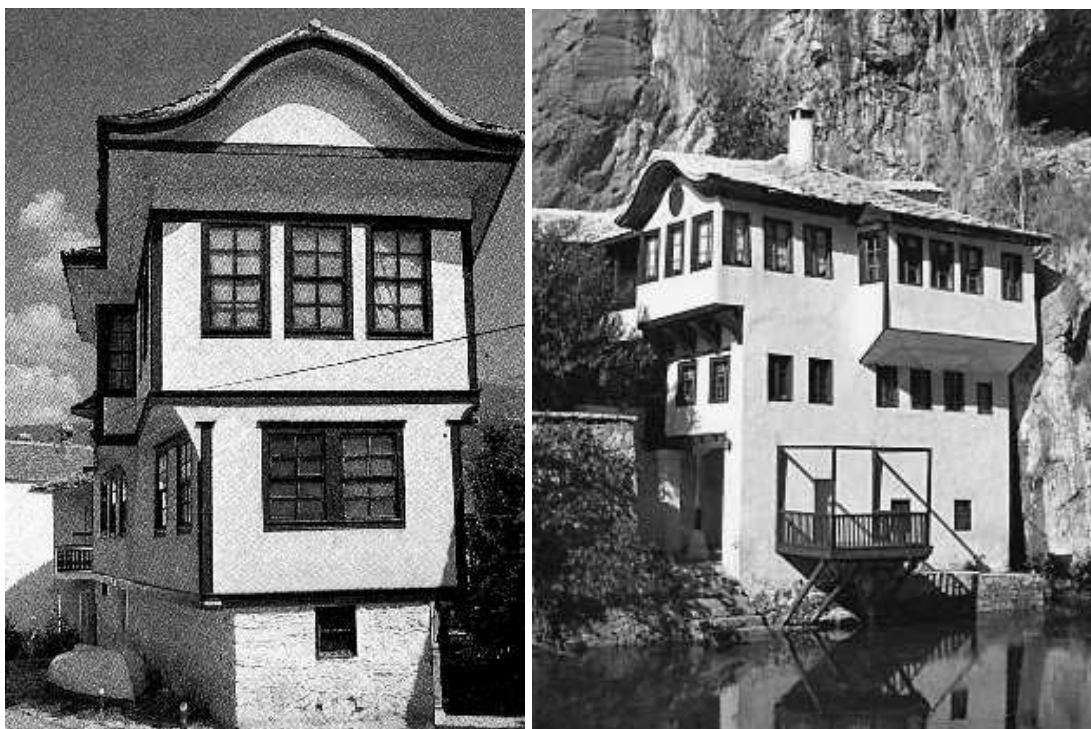
Ill.4.4. Plovdiv, House of I. Kojumdžioglu (not extant), façade toward courtyard
(Source: Péew)



Ill.4.5. Rila monastery, projecting *kiosk*, 1830s (Source: Bozhilov et al.)



Ill.4.6. Xanthi, house of Muzaffer Salih Bey (Source: Sezgin 1973)



Ill.4.7. Ohrid, house with curved eaves-line (Source: Pavlovic)

Ill.4.8. Blagaj (near Mostar), Dervish *tekke*, shape of mid-19th ct. (Source: Internet²¹⁵)



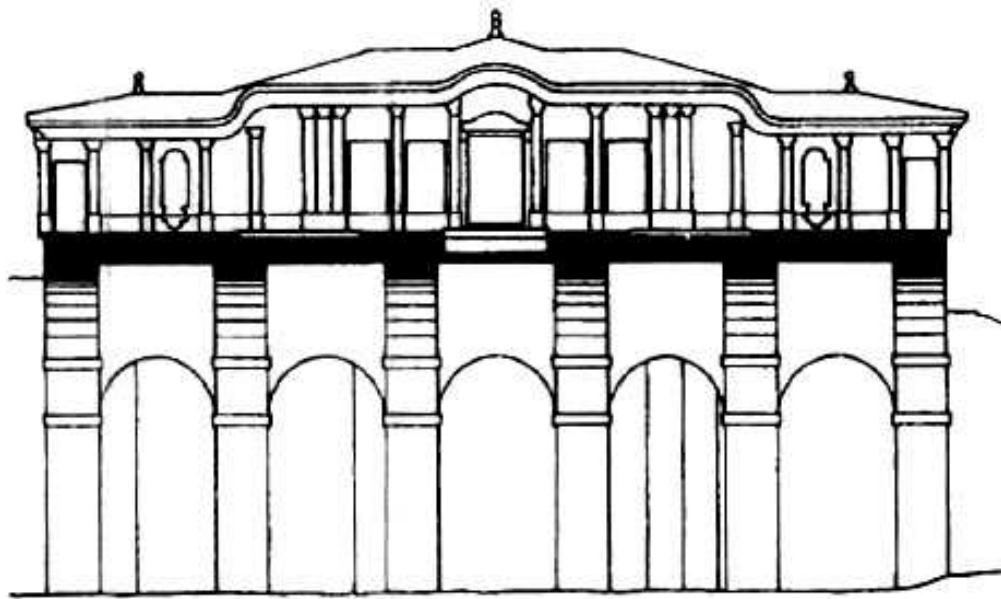
Ill.4.9. Xanthi, houses with curved features.

Ill.4.10. Banja Luka, canopied *şadırvan* of Ferhadija mosque (not extant), photograph (Source: Internet²¹⁶)

²¹⁵ http://k53.pbase.com/u10/alangrant/upload/37824970.Bosnia2004_PICT5137.JPG



Ill.4.11. Banja Luka, canopied *şadırvan* of Ferhadija mosque (not extant), postcard



Ill.4.12. Istanbul, Topkapı complex, *köşk* of Osman III., mid-18th ct.
(Source: Cerasi 1999)

²¹⁶ <http://www.bosnafolk.com/banjalucka/images/sadrvanv.jpg>



Ill.4.13. Berat, church of St Mary (Source: Koch)



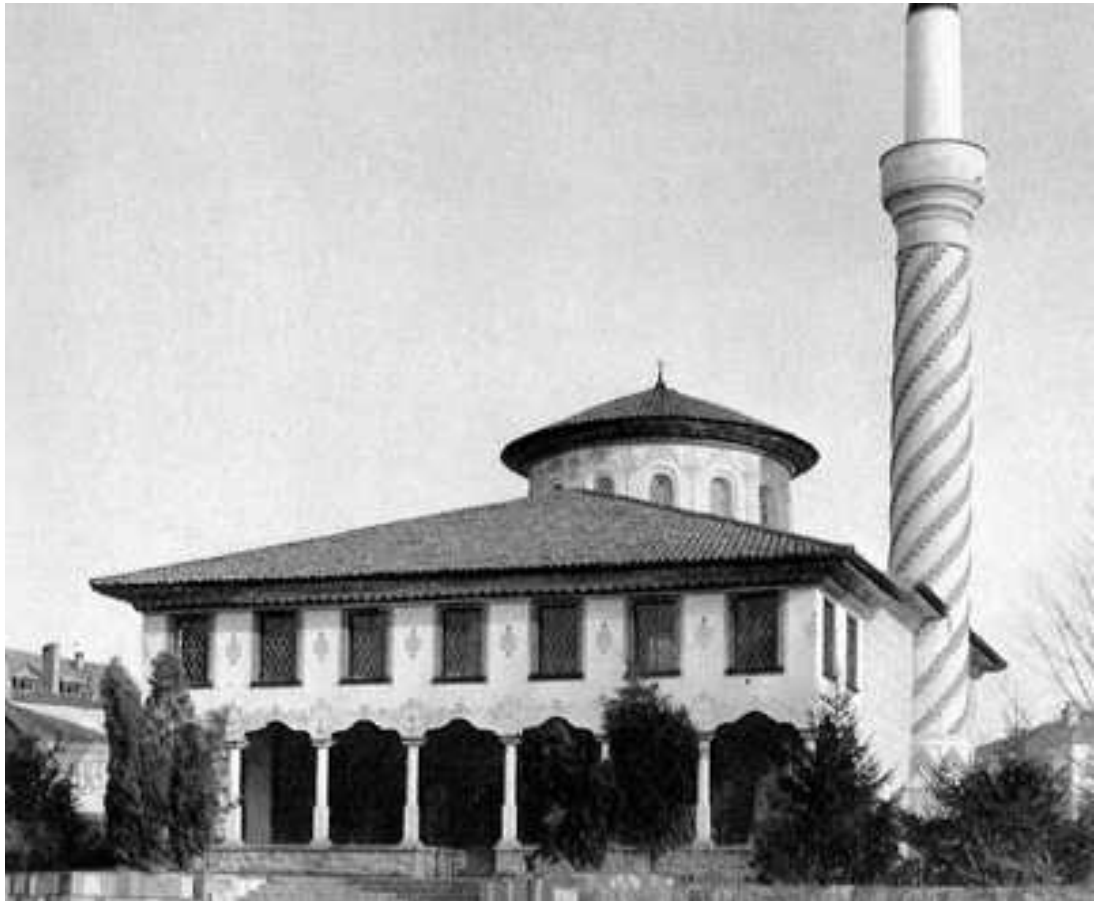
Ill.4.14. Belgrade, *konak* of Princess Ljubica, 1829-31



Ill.4.15. Belgrade, *konak* of Prince Miloš at Topčider, 1830s

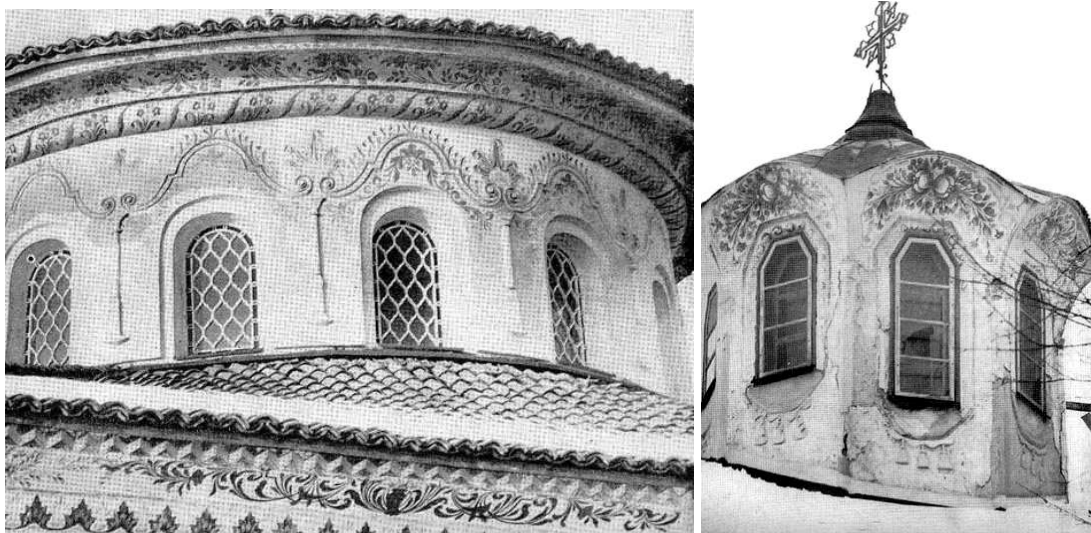


Ill.4.16. Travnik, Colored Mosque (Sulejmanija), after 1815 (Source: Internet²¹⁷)

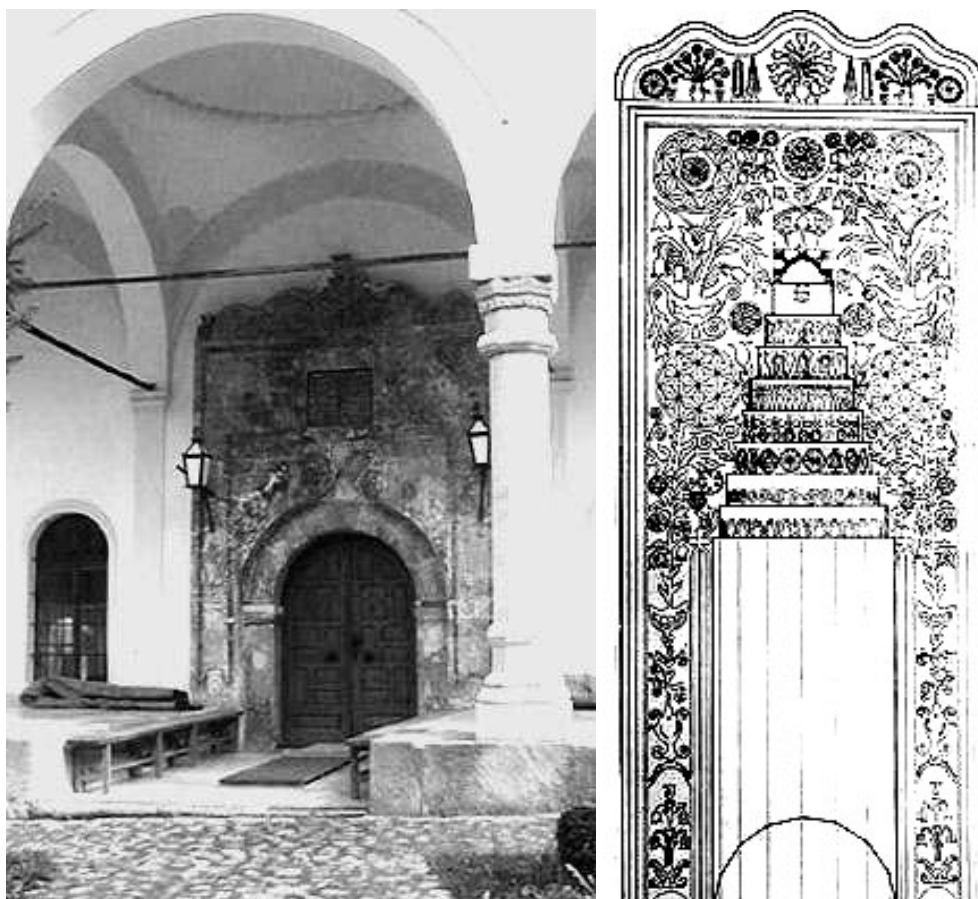


Ill.4.17. Samokov, Bayraklı mosque, rebuilt and redecorated in the 1830s
(Source: Berbenliev)

²¹⁷ <http://www.studenti.de/bih/slike/Elzedina20020401212317k.jpg>



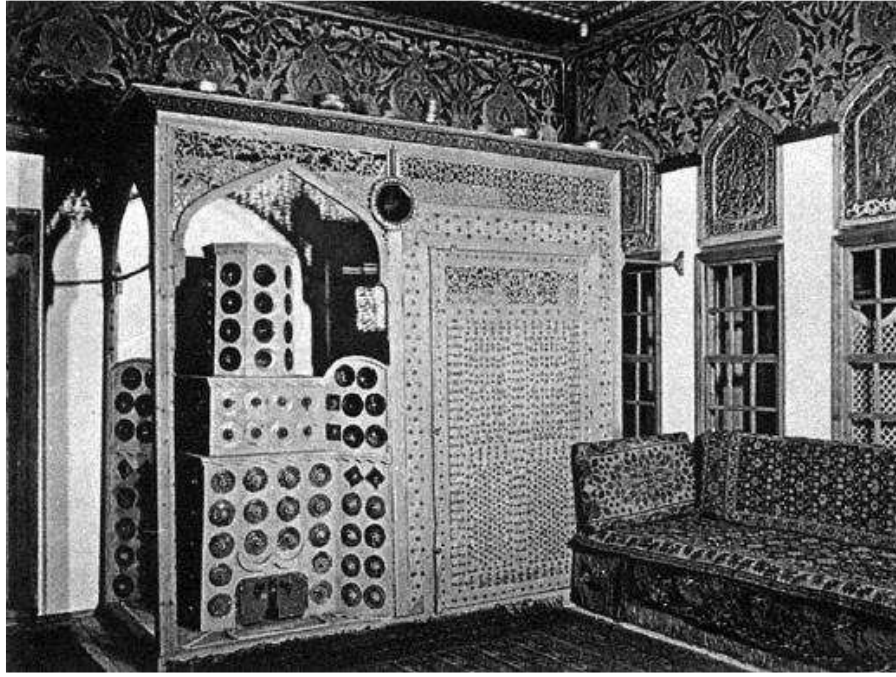
Ill.4.18/19. Samokov, cupolas of mosque and church, both decorated by local masters
(Source: Roškowska 1982)



Ill.4.20. Gradačac, mosque of Husein Gradašćević, 1826, portal.

Ill.4.21. Gradačac, mosque of Husein Gradašćević, 1826, mihrab (Source: Internet²¹⁸)

²¹⁸ <http://www.aneks8komisija.com.ba/html/slike/1102593849.jpg>



Ill.4.22. Sarajevo, interior of house (Source: Grabrijan)

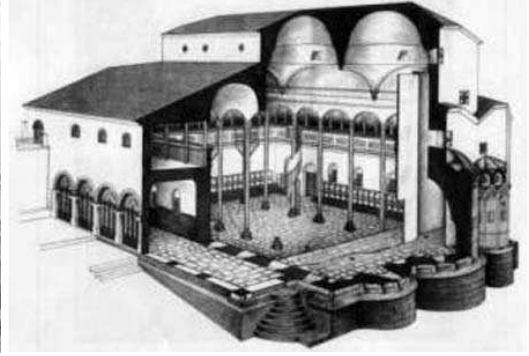


Ill.4.23. Botevgrad (Bulgaria), clock tower, 1860s (Source: Internet²¹⁹)

Ill.4.24. Prilep (Macedonia), fountain under clock tower from 1850s (Source: Internet²²⁰)

²¹⁹ <http://dzver.com/strange/botevgrad-center-1.jpg>

²²⁰ <http://www.cs.unca.edu/~boyd/touring/tour05/day9a/2.jpg>



Ill.4.25. Skopje, Sveta Bogorodica (not extant), 1830s by Andreja Damjanov
(Source: Internet²²¹)

Ill.4.26. Veles, Sveti Pantelejmon, 1840s by Andreja Damjanov, section revealing hidden cupolas (Source: Internet²²²)



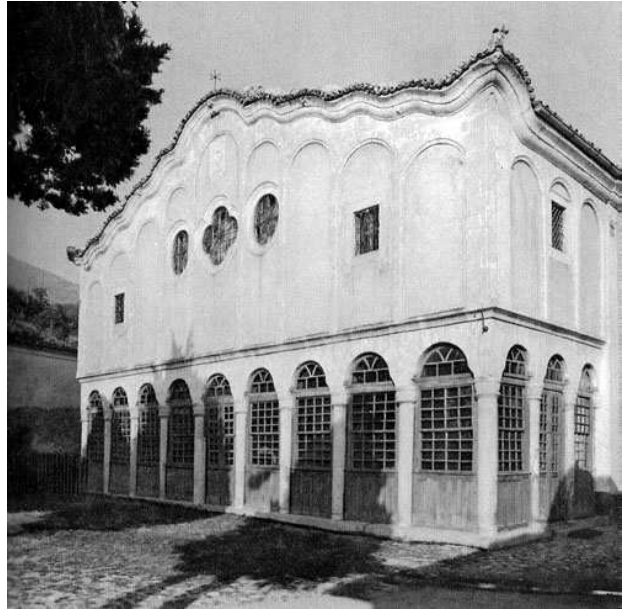
Ill.4.27. Veles, Sveti Pantelejmon, 1840s by Andreja Damjanov, interior
(Source: Internet²²³)

Ill.4.28. Belgrade, Saborna crkva, 1837-1840.

²²¹ <http://smk-wmc.org/UploadedImages/MPC%20Sveta%20Bogorodica%20Skopje.jpg>

²²² <http://tresonce.com.mk/images/veles02.jpg>

²²³ <http://www.heriquet.com/index.php?p=28&c=9&id=498&l=2#>



Ill.4.27. Svištov (Bulgaria), Church of the Holy Trinity, 1865-1867 by Nikola Fičev
(Source: Berbenliev 1983)

Ill.4.28. Sopot (Bulgaria), SS Peter and Paul, 1846 by masters from Bracigovo
(Source: Berbenliev 1983)

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Map with places mentioned in the text

