



Architectural Distinctiveness of the 15th Century Ottoman Tombs in Skopje: Learning from the Recent Archeological Excavation

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Abstract

Grave structures are architectural works reflecting the cultural accumulation, continuity and political power of societies. In addition, graveyards or necropolises and grave structures themselves, have an important contribution in shaping urban forms of cities. This article aims to evaluate the impact of crypted tombs (*mezar odalı türbe*), originating from the Kurgan culture of the Turks, in shaping the urban morphology of Skopje, as a Turkish city during the 15th century. Crypted tombs, which are very few in the Balkan geography, are a type of tombs mostly built during the Seljuk and Early Ottoman periods. The rich architectural forms and local aesthetic qualities of tombs have attracted a lot of research attention. As a result, tomb typology was defined by classifying the tombs according to the architectural peculiarities such as plan, volume shape, roofing system and applied materials. For the purpose of this paper, available sources were examined and the typology for six crypted tombs of Skopje was prepared. In addition, the archive documents describing the immediate surroundings of the tombs were examined, and the confusion of information about the tombs was clarified.

After the definitions and typology of the tombs were determined, the locations of these tombs in the city of Skopje were defined, confirming the urban development approach applied since the Early Ottoman period.

This paper relies on the results of Archaeological Excavation and Research Project of the Pasha Yiğit Bey Tomb, which was done under the auspices of the Şarık TARA, in Skopje, during which three crypted tombs were found beside the previously known ones.

In this study, the tombs unearthed as a result of archaeological excavations are defined in the context of the 15th century Early Ottoman city structure. The crypted tombs found in Skopje are discussed for the first time in this study.

Keywords:

Skopje, architectural heritage, early Ottoman architecture, crypted tomb

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INTRODUCTION

Located in the centre of the Balkan peninsula, Skopje is an important centre located in the middle of Vardar and Morava rivers valley spreading from north to south. Reaching the Thessaloniki and the Aegean Sea in the south and the Panon basin via Nis-Belgrade in the north, this axis is one of the oldest and important south-north connections of the European continent.

Founded under the name of “Scupi” during the Illyrian period in the 5th century B.C., the city has been the capital of the Serbian Kingdom for 110 years from 1282 until the First Battle of Kosovo in 1389. (Deroko, 1971, s. 4). Skopje was conquered by the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 14th century, and since the 15th century became important logistic and military center of the Ottoman Empire in the west (Şabanoviç, 1959). The first commander of Skopje *uçbey* was Saruhanlı Pasha Yiğit Bey (1391-1414). After his death, he was succeeded by his adopted son İshak Bey (1414-1439). Afterward, İsa Bey (1439-1464), was appointed as the last commandor of Skopje. During this period, İsa Bey served also as the Governor of Bosnian Sancak (İnbaşı, 1995, s. 16). With the conquest of Bosnia, the region became the centre of the Ottoman aristocracy, and officers of Skopje played an important role in the raids to the east, west and north (Curcic, 2010, s. 755).

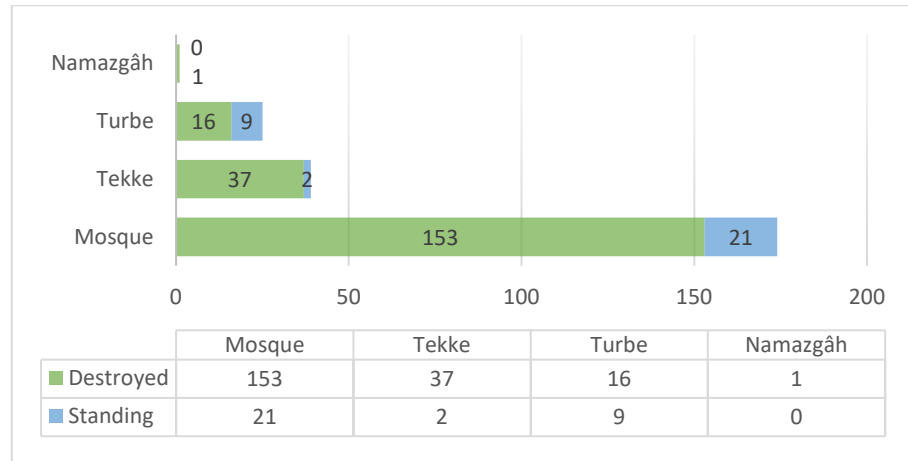
According to İnbaşı (1995) between the years 1455-1569, a very dense Turkish population has been settled in Skopje since 1455 and constantly increased until the last period. İnbaşı also stated that in 1455, 23 of 31 neighborhoods were inhabited by Muslims, while approximately a century later, in 1569, this ratio was 57 of 67 neighbourhoods to be distinguished as Muslim (İnbaşı, 1995, s. 42).

Further on, the establishment and development of settlements and cities in the Ottoman Empire was followed by neighbourhoods that grew around religious, social, commercial and educational facilities established through foundations - *waqf* (Özcan, 1991, s. 6).

However, the most important of these are religious buildings. Currently, 21 (12%) of 174 mosques; 2 (5%) of 39 *tekkes* (sufi lodge) and 9 (36%) of the 25 *turbes* (tombs) are still standing in Skopje. In addition to these, the *namazgâh* built has not survived to the present day (Table 1). In total, from 239 religious buildings, only 39 (13%) survived until today, (İbrahimgil A. , 2018, s. 94).

Among built structures grave structures played important role in reflecting the cultural accumulation, continuity and political power of societies. The subject of this research is newly discovered tombs with crypt sections in Skopje as a result of recent archaeological excavations. The richness of the architectural work of turbe in Skopje is one more confirmed by the detailed study of revealed crypted tombs. However, the idea of preserving heritage is not every time properly embraced, due to many disputes arouse around the historical facts which also affects the proper reading of urban history.

Table 1. The current state of religious buildings in Skopje (2020)



In this paper crypted tombs of Skopje were reconsidered in particular naming, dates, description and comparative studies in the light to the new information revealed. The purpose of conducting this study is to create resources for researchers from architecture and different disciplines by re-evaluating the new findings. Within the scope of the study is the tomb with underground chambers reflecting the same cultural continuity in Skopje, which was shaped by the influence of Paşa Yiğit Bey and his family in about 100 years, what was documented from written sources and examined in terms of location and architectural formation. Other tombs in Skopje were not included in the study.

METHODOLOGY

The fact that the tombs have many local aesthetic qualities has triggered many researches on this subject what has resulted in rich bibliography. Among these valuable contributions done by O. Arık's *Erken Devir Anadolu-Türk Mimarisinde Turbe Biçimleri* (1969), H. Önkal's *Anadolu Selçuklu Turbeleri* (1996), O.C. Tuncer's *Anadolu Kümbetleri* (1986) have been studied. On the other hand, extensive research on the city of Skopje has been conducted in order to understand the local effects on the subject. Regarding Skopje, work of G. Elezovich (1933), S. Asım (2004), K. Balabanov (1980), L.K. Bogoyeviç (2011) focus on the general Ottoman legacy in Skopje, while M.Z. İbrahimgil (2001) examined the mausoleum structures in North Macedonia. In addition to these, Stefanovska and Kozelj (2012) have been consulted as well as regarding the development of the city, individuals and events related to Skopje.

Tombs (Turbes)

Turbe or tomb structures are architectural work usually built as a sort of mausoleum for nobles or royalties. The root of this tradition in Turkish societies can be traced to the in pre-Islamic Turkish societies *Kurgans* (burial mounds) were made for purpose of burring. With the conversion

of the Turks to the religion of Islam the tradition on burring has radically changed afterward depending on the belief of Islam.

In Islamic architecture, mausoleums were first seen in the Abbasid period and gained a monumental dimension during the Karahanlı, Gazneli and Seljuk period (Yetkin, 1984, s. 71). The tombs, which were built in the name of political, religious, scientific, military, etc. important personalities, have gained a rich architectural form with local influences in Anatolia and in the Balkans after a very short time (Arık, 1967, s. 58). Its examples in Central Asia have square, rectangular, circular and polygonal plans and were built using different top covers (Koshenova, 2019, s. 525). In the examples in Crimea, it is more similar in plan type and size (Dişli, 2014, s. 183). The tomb structures in the cemeteries or, in the cemeteries which are set within the mosque courtyards, are mostly located at a central point as structures that strengthen the belief in the afterlife from religious point of view.

Tombs (*Turbes*) Of Skopje

The oldest known tomb in Skopje was the gravestone of Meddah Baba (death 1426) in the courtyard of the Pasha Yiğit Mosque in the bazaar and the tomb of Pasha Yiğit from the same area, whose archive photograph only survives. Apart from these two works, within the complex built by Sultan II. Murat in 1436 there is partially destroyed tomb of İshak Bey (death 1444) which is considered to be among the oldest works in Skopje (Bogoyević, 2011, s. 44). However, information about the tombs built during the 15th century in Skopje is mostly a repetition of Elezovich's article "*Turski Spomenici u Skoplju*" (1933).

In 2013, within the scope of the Research Project of the Tombs of the of Paşa Yiğit and İshak Bey, archaeological studies were conducted for those tombs. Before the archaeological studies were carried out, the area was bought by Mr. Şarık Tara and donated to Çayır Municipality. Within the scope of the archaeological excavations at the depth of 250cm crypt section of the tomb was found which remained standing until 1963. In addition, the wall of the holy spring (healing water) reservoir mentioned in the documents was found. Thereupon, the archaeological excavation was expended and it was understood that the place considered as the water reservoir was a second squared tomb with crypt section. During the archaeological excavation, different parts of wall were found between these two tombs and the archaeological excavation was expanded in the direction of a third tomb. Thus, a third tomb with squared chamber was found, slightly larger than the second tomb. While naming this structure, which does not have any traces like a tombstone, documents and sources were researched again. This third tomb unearthed in the excavation is one of the early period tombs with crypt sections called "*Akıt*"¹ in Anatolia, which are frequently applied in Ahlat (Van, Turkey) Seljuk

1 It is a tomb style that the tomb which has the crypt section but there hasn't superstructure on the ground. All the grave structure is underground. It means final point in Kyrgyz language.

Cemeteries. These types of tombs generally have a simple foundation consisting of a square plan and a single crypt section partially buried in the ground, without a monumental tomb body at the top, but the substructure ends in a pyramidal shape (Karamağaralı, 1992). However, there are not any precise information about the body and the covering system of the two tombs, except the Pasha Yiğit Tomb. It is the first time in the Balkans that grave of “Akıt” style tomb was found. In other excavation drillings carried out in the field, the foundation traces of the lodges and madrasa structures were also brought to light. Along with excavation work on these structures’ documents from the state archives in Turkey and Macedonia have also revealed new information.

In previous studies on tombs in Skopje, the general mistake was in mixing the two individuals of Pasha Yiğit Bey and Meddah Baba which perhaps occurred following the old photo of Pasha Yiğit Bey Complex from before 1963 where the tomb and Meddah Baba tombstone are located. As a result of extensive resource research on the tombs, the classification of tombs in Skopje has been made in terms of the volumes period in which they were built, the plan type, the superstructure building material, the tomb chamber top cover, the entrance of the tomb chamber and the overall dimensions (Table 2).

Table 2. Typology of Tombs in Skopje according to the architectural forms

Date of construction	Plan Outline type	Crypt section Top Cover	Crypt section Entrance Side	Superstructure Arch. Form.	Superstructure Material	Tomb Dim.	Seating Part ²
1st half of XIV.	Square	Dome	North	Akıt Type	Cut stone	Width	One
2nd half of XIV.			South		Brick	Length	
1st half of XV.	Hexagon	Cross vault	East	Baldachin	Stone and Brick Row	Height	Two
2nd half of XV.			West				

Turbe of Yahşi Bey (Six Pillar), 1402

The Six Pillars Tomb, located in the Tophane neighbourhood to the east of the Skopje Castle, was named due to its architectural form created by the six pillars. While there is no exact information about the construction date of the tomb, Balabanov (1980) associated the tomb with Yahşi Bey, the commander of the Ottoman army cavalry in the early 15th century, whereas Bogojević (1964) and Tomovski (1958) defined the construction date of the tomb as 1690 (İbrahimgil M. Z., 2001). Bogojević explained that it must be closed to the year 1690 when Austrian Army confront Turkish-Tatar Army (Bogojević, 2011, s. 224). However, the difference between the architectural form of the building

² It is the frame that covers the crypted section underground. Mostly the opening area took a place in this oturtmalık (seat) part.

and the period of construction weakens this statement (Figure 1).

Based on Balabanov's approach, Yahsi Bey was the eldest son of Kara Timurtas Pasha, who was one of the first important figures during the establishment of the Ottoman Empire. Yahsi Bey captured Nis and Prevadi in the raids he made with his troop (Apak, 2002, s. 189). Yahsi Bey, known as the conqueror of Nis (in 1836), was killed in the Ankara war in 1402 (Süreyya, 1996, s. 1667). His father, who was killed in the same war, was buried in Bursa, while there is no information that his children were also buried next to him.

Yahsi Bey went to Rumelia with a large cavalry unit from Anatolia and commanded the conquests between Vardar and the Danube for nearly 30 years. It is possible that Yahşi Bey was buried in Skopje, the center of his fellowship, instead of Nis, which was ruled by the Serbian despot at that time. In addition, the fact that 10 villages from 22 villages were named in the name of Sûbaşı Yahşi Bey in the tax registers (tahrir defteri) dated from 1444. However, there is no a foundation certificate issued in the name of Yahşi Bey in Skopje, and it shows that Yahşi Bey who was mentioned in the registration book was not alive, but his name was kept alive. In summary, the view that Balabanov put forward by associating the tomb with Yahşi Bey is not certain, but has been accepted as more appropriate in terms of the historical course and architectural style.

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Figure 1. Tomb of Yahşi Bey (Six Pillars) before the 1963 Earthquake (Bogoyeviç, 2011, s. 225) and its appearances after the earthquake (2001, 2018)

The tomb is a six-pillars structure made of cut stone, on one side of which is placed on a 275cm hexagonal base. These six pillars are connected by semicircular arches and metal tensioners. The arched sections rising on the pillars are built in three rows of bricks and a row of cut stones. The top of the tomb in baldachin style is covered with a dome. A symbolic stone sarcophagus was placed on the floor of the tomb (Figure 2). The entrance to the crypt section of the tomb is in the form of a small window facing south. There are two levels of seating section surrounding the crypt section. The lower seating level is made of rubble stone, and the upper seating level with the entrance window is made of cut stone. The crypt section is covered with a barrel vault made of bricks. The tomb has the characteristics of the 15th century in terms of decoration. It is a simple ornamentation style that reflects the period when the arch stones were pulled inwards from the facade besides the stone-brick masonry. It

was largely destroyed in the 1963 earthquake. Only two pillars of the building, have survived to the present day. Moreover, it has been subject to some unconscious interventions over time. The bases were plastered with a thick layer of lime. In the seating section, there is a large amount of molten wax traces and soot covering a large area on the surface around the burial chamber window.

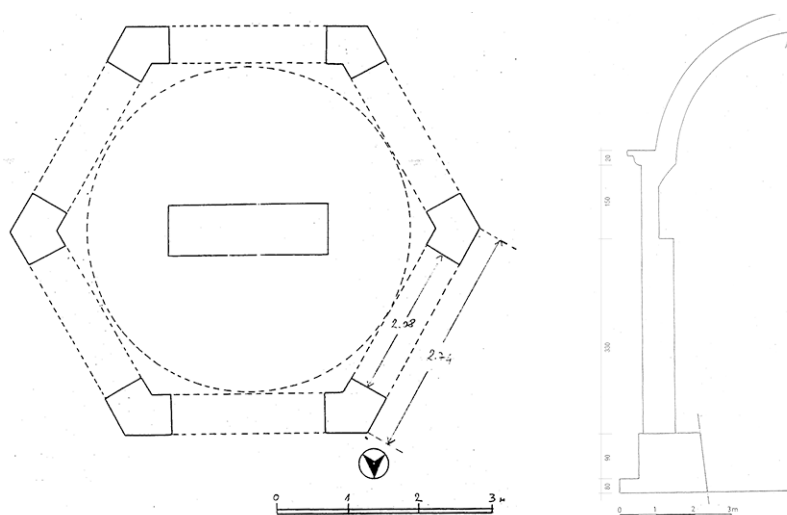


Figure 2. Survey drawings of Yahşi Bey (Six Pillars) Tomb (1960, Bogojević Archive)

Turbe of Hoca Salahuddin, XV. Early Century

The documents related to Skopje for the third uncovered tomb after the archaeological excavation were examined. In the records of Paşa Yiğit Bey Masjid dated from 1469, the name Hodja Salahuddin was found. According to the document in the Macedonian State Archive (Državen Arhiv Na Republika Severna Makedonija), “Pasha Yiğit Bey Masjid was located in Skopje between the Isa Bey foundation shops in the Tuz Pazarı area and between the Hoca Salahuddin cemetery and the main road”³. In the vakıfnâme, the area where the cemetery is located is described between the Yiğit Bey Mosque, Mustafa bin İshak Bey house, İsa Bey foundation shops, the Ferras Doğan property and the main road. Urošević, who first mentioned this name in academic sources, accepted Hodja Salahuddin as Harajcı Salahuddin (Urošević, 1961, s. 233). Considering that there were 47 Muslim and 61 non-Muslim households in the Haraccı Salahuddin District in 1841, Bogojević claimed that Harajcı Salahuddin Bey was a person in charge of collecting taxes from non-Muslims on behalf of the Ottoman State in Skopje. (Bogoyević, 2011, s. 175). All this information confirmed that Hodja Selahaddin, who is mentioned in the endowment dated 1469, is not the same person as the Harajcı Selahaddin claimed by Urošević.

Also, it is interesting to mention the title of “*Hodja*” that was associated to the Hodja Salahuddin. There is an understanding that the Turks regard as an important principle raising administrators and

³ Vakıfname:17, YB-021-VKF-0017-19-24; Date: H.1 Safer 874 / M. 10 August 1469

express them as “*rutbetu'l-ilmi ale'r-ruteb*” (the rank of science is above all ranks). Every ruler was definitely mentioned with an *âlim* (scholar), e.g. in the 15th century, among the Ottoman Sultans, Emir Sultan was adjective for Sultan Yıldırım Beyazid and Hacı Bayram Veli for Sultan Murat II, Akşemsettin for Fatih Sultan Mehmet, Kemalpashazade for Yavuz Sultan Selim. Therefore, Pasha Yiğit Bey cannot be considered independent of this understanding. It is understood that Hodja Salahuddin, was a person whom the conqueror of Skopje Pasha Yiğit Bey highly valued since he named the cemetery which started from the Pasha Yiğit Bey Complex and spread over a wide area, after his name. In the light of all the information, it can be said that Paşa Yiğit Bey, who conquered Skopje, was a valuable scholar and even his teacher who raised him. Although the cemetery was named by Hodja Salahuddin the fact that he did not have any property arranged in his name by him shows that this person's dignity is not directly based on a military or political power. Considering the respect shown to scholars by the ruling class of the Turks, Pasha Yiğit Bey had built the tomb of a scholar, who was probably his teacher, in the area that will be a cemetery, in the courtyard of the complex, and the cemetery's name is much more likely to be mentioned by this name. While this area where the Pasha Yiğit Bey Kulliye is located is described in the documents, the name of the cemetery is always referred to as Hodja Salahuddin Cemetery besides the names of the neighborhoods that have survived until today (Figure 3).

In term of architectural peculiarities and buildings materials, it is visible that on the foundation of the square planned tomb made of rubble stone, there is a base part made of three rows of bricks and one row of cut stone. There is no trace of any architectural element on the base of the superstructure. In this respect, it resembles akit style tombs. Inside the pedestal there is a cross vaulted crypt section. Material losses were detected on the top cover of the tomb chamber made of brick. After the restoration, the missing parts were completed and the structure was reinforced with steel carriers from the inside. The entrance to the crypt section is through a small opening in the south-west facade.



Figure 3. The discovery of Hodja Salahuddin Tomb and the emerging tomb structure

Turbe of Pasha Yiğit Bey, 1414

Timurtaş Pasha, Evrenos and Pasha Yigit Beys, one of the important raider beys of the Ottoman Empire, acted as fighter (raider beys) in different geographies of the Balkans. Among them, Pasha Yiğit Bey conquered Skopje in 1392 after the First Kosovo Pitched Battle at 1389 (Şabanović, 1959, s. 280). He has chosen Skopje as the centre for the

operations to be carried out in Bosnia and Serbia as the Ucbeyi (İnalçık, 2018, s. 119). The oldest record about Pasha Yiğit Bey is found in the Vakıf General Directorate in Ankara (VGMA)'s in Gazi İshak Bey Vakıfnâme from 1445.4 While describing the properties of the foundation in the document, the phrase “with the main road on both sides, the Pasha Yiğit Bey Foundation on one side and the Old Han (Sulu Han), which is limited to the Serava River on one side, and with 24 shops adjacent to it” is used. Masjid, imaret, madrasah and school buildings were listed among the buildings included in the Paşa Yiğit Bey Foundation in the detailed tax registers numbered 12 belonging to the period between 1452 and 1455. In addition, according to the document related to Paşa Yiğit Bey Masjid in the Macedonian State Archive dated from 1469, the mosque is described as “Isa Bey foundation shops in Tuz Pazari area, between Hoca Salahuddin cemetery and the main road.”

Pasha Yiğit Bey complex was destroyed by the time (Bogoyeviç, 2011, s. 168). From documents, it is understood that the place where Pasha Yiğit Bey built his *kulliye* was surrounded by Hoca Salahuddin cemetery, and this cemetery remained in the bazaar with the addition of structures such as a han and hammam (public bath). The tomb of Paşa Yiğit Bey and a few other tombstones have survived to the present day.

Paşa Yiğit Bey *turbe* has a hexagonal plan, 250 cm on one side. The tomb in baldachin style has a dome sitting on a raised drum section. Pillars, made entirely of bricks, are connected by semi-circular arches. The seating part of the tomb is made of three rows of bricks and a row of cut stone. The dome of the crypt section raised in the seating part is made of bricks. The entrance to the burial chamber is in the form of a small opening in the eastern façade (Figure 4). The fact that the stone is used only in the seating part of the tomb, and the superstructure is completely made of brick, makes this structure distinguished from other of the same period. Besides, the stone arches were pulled inwards from the façade (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8). It was completely destroyed in the 1963 earthquake. The tombstone, which was found before the archaeological excavation, was added after the earthquake.

Turbe of Meddah Baba, 1426

Meddah Baba is among the veteran dervishes who participated in the conquest of Skopje. After the conquest of Skopje in 1392, he built his lodge next to the Pasha Yiğit Bey Complex. However, since it is located next to the mosques of Pasha Yiğit, all these structures were called “*Meddah Baba mosque, school and madrasa*”. This confusion was evident in the endowment of Havva Hanım (Kaleşi & Mehmedovski, 1958, s. 6)

⁴ VGMA Df. 632, Sf. 424, sıra:194; Tarih: H. 1 Zilkade 848 / M. 9 Şubat 1445



Figure 4. General view of the Paşa Yiğit Bey Tomb before the 1963 Earthquake (Bogoyeviç, 2011, s.172)



Figure 5. Turbe of Paşa Yiğit Bey archaeological excavation (2014)

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as well as of Şafizade Seyyid Sâdi Efendi bin Ahmed dated from 1719 and the endowments of Ramiz Bey bin Hasan Bey from the Hüdâverdi District from 1900.

Talking about the Meddah Baba Tekke, Evliya Çelebi mentioned “There was ‘healing water’ or ‘Meddah Baba water’ next to the Meddah Baba grave (mezar) in Skopje. It is the most visited dervish lodge, as both Muslim and Christian people believe that this water is healing.” (Çelebi, 1979, s. 285). As stated it was believed that water was healing by the presence of Meddah Baba and the structures to be called this name. The fact that Evliya Çelebi did not mention the tomb but mentioned a respected mezar (grave) in his statement strengthens the argument that this tomb structure is a akit type tomb.

Salih Asım clarified this situation in his work named “*Üsküp Tarihi ve Civarı*” (1932) Asım named Pasha Yiğit Bey as the builder of Meddah Baba Mosque and described the Meddah Baba Tekke, which was in ruins next

Figure 6. Tomb foundations found in the archaeological excavation

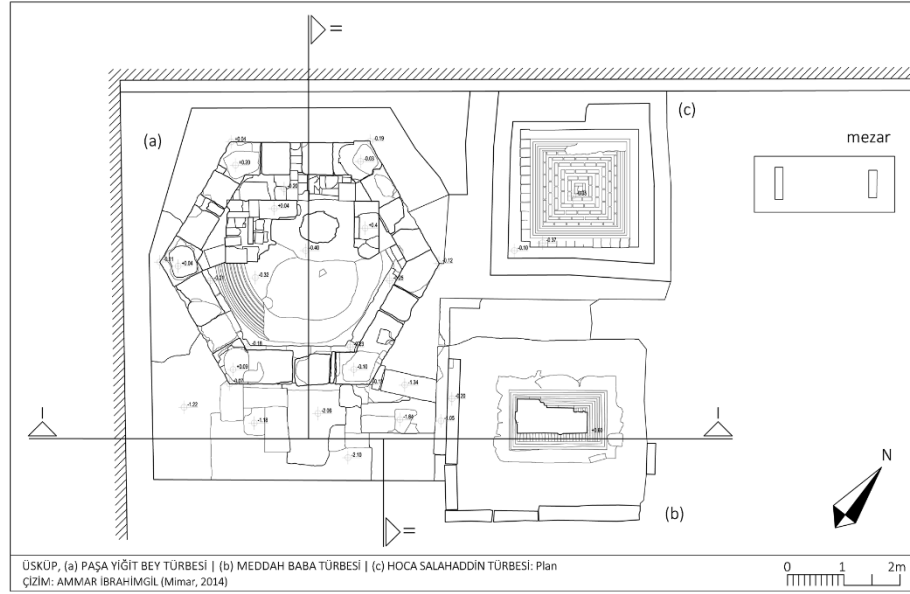


Figure 7. Archaeological Excavation Site Section I-I

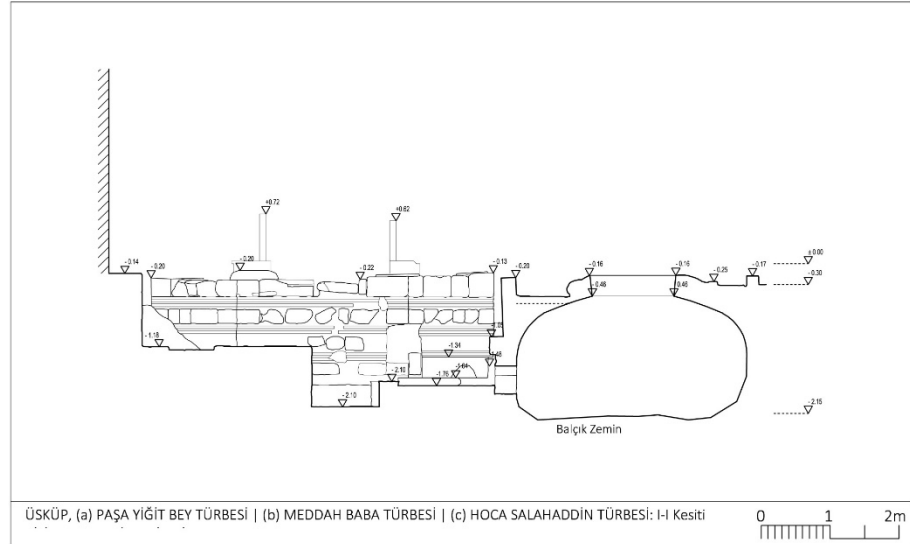
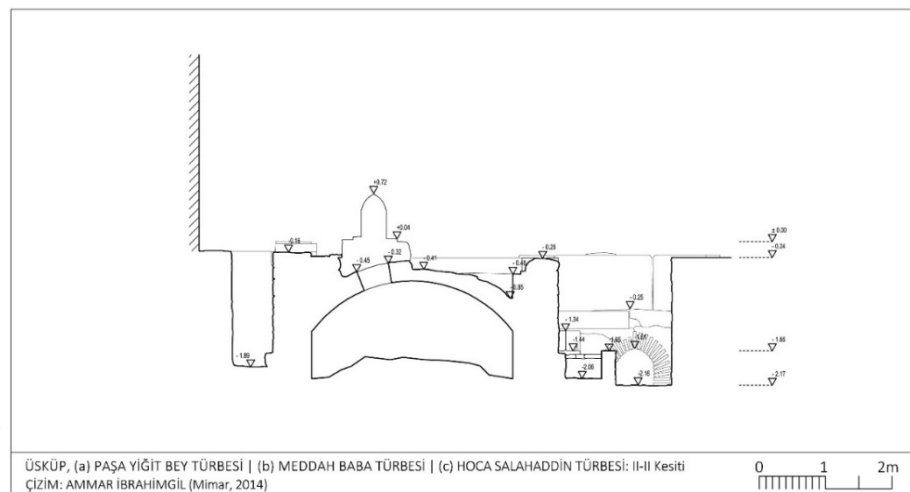


Figure 8. Archaeological Excavation Site Section II-II



to this mosque as a school (Asım, 2004, s. 21). On the other hand, Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi mentioned separately as Meddah Baba Mosque and School and Pasha Yiğit Mahallesi Masjid, based on foundation records (Ayverdi, 1981, s. 247).

Due to the demolition of the buildings during the World War II and the problem of the rescuing earthquake victims after the 1963 earthquake, who were temporarily placed in Hoca Salahuddin Cemetery, no detailed research could have been done on this subject. In this case, until the archaeological excavations in 2013, only one headstone inscription from Meddah Baba survived. The modern Turkish version of the inscription, which is decorated with a large wheel of fortune motif on its upper side, is as follows: "*Hüve'l-hallâku'l-bâkî / El-merhum el-mağfur / Fatih Üsküp eş-şeyh / Meddah Baba ruhiçun / El-Fatiha / sene 830 (M.1426)*" (Figure 9). The title of "sheikh" in the inscription and the mention of the Meddah Baba Tekke by Evliya Çelebi in the description of the region confirms that the person was a sheikh (head) of tekke. In addition, taking the name "Baba" over time, the hook wheel of fortune motif and the mention of Skopje as the conqueror on the tombstone indicate that the person was veteran, one of the Bektashi dervishes associated with janissaries.



Figure 9. Meddah Baba Tomb archaeological excavation and consolidation works

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Documents and sources were re-examined in order to fully define this newly discovered structure. According to the available sources, Skopje was developed around the Serava creek after the big earthquake in 1518 and after the 1963 earthquake, the Sereva creek was completely covered (Stefanovska & Kozelj, 2012, s. 94).

Since (Sereva) creek passes very close to the cemetery, water filled the burial chamber, and the effect of the Bektashi lodge, the belief that the water in the crypta chamber is healing has become widespread. In time, it was forgotten that this area was in the crypt and it was accepted as a holy spring.

In the light of all this information, it is possible to conclude that the lodge structure next to the tomb was built in the name of its founding sheikh who participated in the conquest. The tomb was built very similar to Hoca Salahuddin turbe and in a square plan of 220 cm. After the foundation was made with brick material up to the crypt section, large regular cut stone blocks were used for the ground level. The grave chamber has a cross-vaulted covering. After the archaeological excavation, it was covered with a transparent protective cover made of steel and glass.

Turbe of Hacı İshak Bey, 1439

Gazi İshak Bey (1414-1439) is the son of Paşa Yiğit Bey, the conqueror of Skopje, and the brother of Turhan Bey. Gazi İshak Bey became Skopje *uçbey* when his father passed away. During the period of Gazi İshak Bey, the Skopje *uçbeylik* (border principality), acting in a special status in the Balkans, adopted a joint administration with the Serbian and Bosnian principalities (Pepić, 2002, s. 133). İshak Bey, as a *uçbey* of Skopje, entered Bosnia with a great force upon the request of Hrovje Vukčić and defeated them especially in the struggles with the Hungarians, thus weakening the Hungarian influence that lasted for decades (Çorović, 1940, s. 413). Having strengthened his influence in Bosnia, İshak Bey turned to the Serbian lands after 1425 and supported the Serbian nobles who agreed with him with a similar policy. He participated in the siege of Belgrade during the operation launched by Sultan Murad II (1421-1444) against the Hungarians in 1438 (Efendi, 1999, s. 197). İshak Bey conquered Semendire and remained here as the sanjak beg, and his son Isa Bey was brought to the Skopje frontier / *uçbeylik*. İshak Bey, until his death in 1444, directed the raids and conquests in the territory of Serbia. With the 1444 Edirne-Segedin Treaty, Semendire was left to Curac Branković (Pepić, 2002, s. 61).

The most definite record of İshak Bey is the Arabic inscription of the mosque he built, dated from 1438, Modern Turkish writing of the inscription is as follows *“El-imratu’s-şerifetu binahu fi eyyami devleti Sultan / Murad bin Mehmed Han esere emru’l-hayr İshak / Beg bin Paşa Yiğit Beg fi sene isneyn ve erbain ve semane mie / Fi sene 842” (M.1438/39)*. The imaret in its inscription is a part of a large complex such as İshak Bey Mosque, which is now known as *Alaca* Mosque, a madrasah that has not survived, the double bath, Kapan and Sulu *han*. In a sense, this shows that İshak Bey was important figure in the shaping Skopje during the Ottoman period and the original establishment of the Skopje Bazaar.

Regarding the tomb of İshak Bey, Evliya Çelebi used the statement *“There is a grave of Gazi İshak Bey in front of the Hünkar Mosque”* in Skopje (Çelebi, 1979, s. 293). In addition, in the plan drawing of Sultan Murad II Mosque (Skopje) dated 1711, the tomb structure near the mosque is stated as the *“Tomb of the late Gazi Hacı İshak Bey”* (Stojanovski, 1981, s. 218). According to Bogoyević's research, the tomb was damaged during the severe earthquake in Skopje in 1555 and the Austrian occupation and remained neglected afterwards. The last surviving pieces were destroyed by the 1963 earthquake (Bogoyević, 2011, s. 219). In 2013, with the initiative of the late Şarık TARA, the Chairman of the Board of ENKA Holding, efforts were initiated to revive the tomb again in memory of his beloved mother, *“Yaşar Beg Kumbaracı’s daughter Mahmure Hanım”*, one of the well-established families of Skopje.

Before the archaeological excavation, the tomb structure consisted of only foundation remains and an unnamed tomb in a cemetery located between Sultan Murad II and Isa Bey Mosque. The foundation walls of the tomb structure are made of fine cut blocks and have a hexagonal plan. The

stones are tied together with lead clamps in both directions, longitudinally and transversely (Figure 10). The ground of the tomb is covered with stone stones of 70x100cm size, and only some of these stones have survived to the present day. The sarcophagus, which has survived the least damage until today, is made of two blocks of stones that complement each other (Figure 11). The entrance to the crypta of the building is on the southeast side and is covered with an iron railing. Vents were made to coincide with the middle of the hexagonal body walls of the crypt section (except the north wall adjacent to the surrounding tombs).



Figure 10. The archaeological excavation and crypted section conservation.

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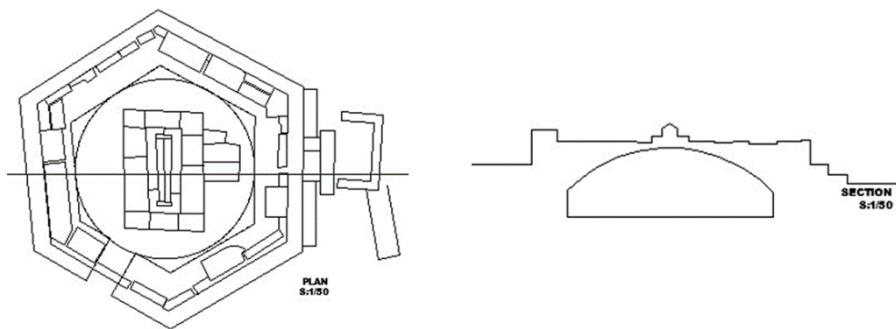


Figure 11. Ishak Bey Tomb survey drawing (ENKA)

During the archaeological excavations the large crypt section of the tomb was entered. The burial room dome is fully exposed inside and outside. Cracks and slips in the domed, shifts in the cut stones forming the body walls outside. Missing parts were identified as the most important structural problems in the building. In addition, it was understood that the roots of the plants covering the ground of the tomb completely damaged the mortar and brick of the dome of the crypt section. Besides to these structural problems, due to the fact that the building blocks are open to atmospheric effects for a long time, there is evidence of increased porosity. Also, ruptures, melting, cracking are visible as a consequence of the frost cycle. The structure was also exposed to fires and vandalism.

By removing the floor of the tomb, the dome of the grave chamber was reinforced from outside and inside, and a drainage line was created around it. The reconstruction dimensions of the building were

determined with comparative examples, and a reconstruction project was prepared for the tomb and the cemetery where it is located (Figure 12). The tomb was reconstructed from reinforced concrete and covered with stone.



Figure 12. With the encouragement of the late Šarik TARA, İshak Bey Tomb was restored to Skopje's silhouette.

Turbe of Kralj Kizi (Katerina, King's Daughter), End of XV. Century

The Interregnum Period (1402-1413), when the political authority was weakened by the conflicts between Musa Çelebi, Emir Süleyman and Çelebi Mehmet at the beginning of the 15th century, was overcome with the support of the uçbegs in the Balkans. After the Ankara War (1402), it acted with the policy of gaining power by taking the uçbegs / fronts under the protection of the nobles in Serbia and Bosnia (Kiprovská, 2004, s. 56). In this period full of political turmoil in the Balkans, the Vatican had a serious impact, especially on Bosnia (Filipović N. , 1965, s. 363). Finally, in 1463, under the command of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the Ottoman army, captured Bosnia, and executed the Bosnian King Stjepan Tomasević in the city of Ključ. During this war, Queen Catherine fled to Rome, and her young children were sent to the Ottoman palace (Hammer, 1979, s. 196).

According to Elezović, this mausoleum, known as the Turbe of the King's Daughter (Kraljeve Kćeri or Kralj K'zi) in Skopje, was built for daughter of Queen Catherine and King Stjepan Tomaš. She was converted to Islam after she was taken to the Ottoman palace with her brother (Elezović, 1939, s. 50). This claim, which was controversial until recently, became more evident with the researches on the Bosnian Queen Catherine.

The Venetian historian Donado D'Lezze, in his work *Historia Turchesca* (1910), mentions a son and a daughter taken captive in the will of Queen Catherine of Rome written in 1478. In addition, it was stated that the children kept in the palace converted to Islam after their uncle, Prince of Herzegovina, Ahmet Bey Hersekzade (Prince Stjepan Hercegovac), came to Istanbul. (Škrijelj, 2017, s. 147). Thereupon, her brother Sigismund was named İshak Kraloğlu and appointed as the Governor / Sancakbeg of Karasu, and Princess Catherine was adopted by the fellow of Skopje and conqueror of Bosnia, Isa Bey bin İshak Bey. Her tomb known as the King's Daughter, was associated and maintained by the dervishes of Sersem Ali Baba Tekke with the position of Sarı Saltuk Dede in Bosnia.

The tomb is located within the borders of the present-day name Gazi Baba Muslim cemetery. Archaeological excavations were initiated and

reconstructed with the initiative of the Ministry of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014 regarding the tomb that was destroyed in the earthquake of 1963 (Figure 13). The square planned tomb was built in baldachin style. The dome of the tomb, supported by a cross-vault, resting on a four-block stone base, is covered with tiles. While the foundations of the tomb to the ground and the four pillars carrying the dome are made of cut stone, pointed arches, arch cheeks and dome are made of brick. In addition, metal tensioners are placed between the arch openings (Figure 14).



Figure 13. General view of the King's Daughter Mausoleum before the 1963 Earthquake and its view after the earthquake (Bogojević Archive) and after the restoration (Škrijelj, 2017, s. 150)

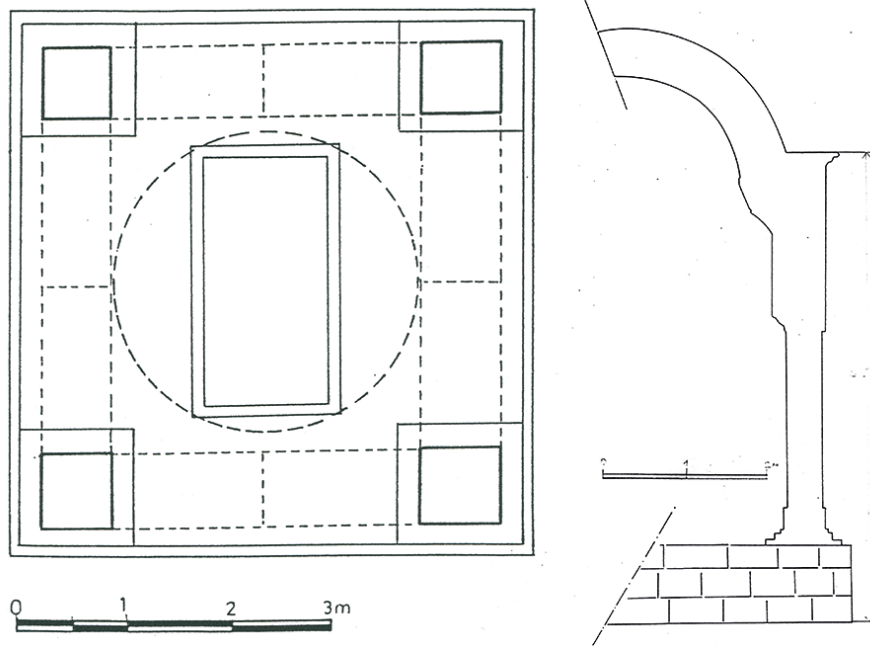


Figure 14. King's Daughter Tomb survey drawings (1960, Bogojević Archive)

EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

In essence, the restoration project includes, as Feilden and Jokilehto mentioned a wide-ranging arrangement of intervention tools that are tasked with preserving the emotional, cultural and use value of the building, preventing deterioration (Feilden & Jokilehto, 1993) (Jokilehto, 2011, s. 62). This is related to verifying and recording the technical information and memories about the work as much as possible. However, in the post-Ottoman Balkan geography, mutual sensitivities emerged over the symbols of identities. In this sense, Ottoman artefacts representing a historical period were also handled according to this identity perception, rather than understanding them as a common cultural heritage of entire humanity.

The locations of these tombs and cemeteries, which date back to the early Ottoman period, give clues to the urban structure of the city. Accordingly, there is a direct relationship between the bazaar and the cemetery in Ottoman cities. In addition to the formation of the castle, mosque and bazaar districts that are said for Ottoman cities, cemeteries are part of the urban pattern. It was used as a transition area between the bazaar and residential areas and as a reserve area for public buildings to be built in the future. The large cemetery covering a wide area between the Sultan Murat II Complex, where the İshak Bey Tomb is located, and the İsa Bey Complex, formed the eastern border of the bazaar until the 1900s. Yahşi Bey Tomb is located in the westernmost part of the area determined as a cemetery in the first settlement of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, there was never any construction in the Gazi Baba Cemetery area, which was designated as a martyrdom after the conquest of the city. Martyrdoms were used as the general cemetery of the city (Figure 15). Another area used as a martyrdom in the city is Haydar Kadı Cemetery. Today, there is the US Embassy in this area, which was not built until recently. Before the building was built in the region, the tombs were moved to another place according to Islamic methods.

When we consider the crypted tombs in Skopje within the framework of cultural continuity, in Anatolia and its near geography, the part of the tomb, crypta, funeral or mummy in the terminology of the mausoleum, was more common in the east of Azerbaijan and Anatolia geography, where the Central Asian influence was strong, and was applied until the late period. The effect of this architectural formation was felt in the west of Anatolia dominated by the Ottoman Empire and in the Balkans, albeit by decreasing until the early 1500s (Tuncer, 1986, s. 384). On the other hand, it can be said that four of the tombs with crypted section in Skopje, which is the subject of this study, are of the type of tombs, which are described as baldachin or open *turbe*, and two of them are of *akit* type, although it is not certain. Very few of the baldachin-type mausoleums in Anatolian samples have crypt sections. In addition, while in the first examples the crypt section was a more prominent place in the upper structure, it became smaller over time and transformed into a space that can be accessed by a narrow passage opening from the outside.

In Bursa, the first capital of the Ottoman Empire and where there are many dynastic tombs, there is no dynastic mausoleum with a crypt section except the Yeşil Tomb (1421) where Çelebi Mehmet is buried (Önkal, 1992, s. 19). The Mausoleum of Midwife Gülbahar Hatun (XV. Century), the midwife of Fatih Sultan Mehmet, is similar to the mausoleums built in Skopje in terms of its grave room, square plan, architectural formation and material.

Six tombs with crypt sections in Skopje are dated to the 15th century. The seated parts (oturtmalık) of the crypted section of these tombs are

Table 1. Architectural typology table of tombs with crypted in Skopje

		Yahşi Bey (Six Pillars) Turbe	Hoca Salahu ddin Turbe	Meddah Baba Turbe	Paşa Yiğit Bey Turbe	İshak Bey Turbe	King Daughter Turbe
Date of construction	XV. cen. Ist quarter						
	XV. cen. IInd quarter						
	XV. cen. IIIrd quarter						
	XV. cen. IVth quarter						
Plan Outline type	Square						
	Hexagon						
Crypt section Top Cover	Dome						
	Cross Vault						
Crypt section Entrance Side	North						
	South						
	East						
	West						
Superstructur Arch. Form.	<i>Akt</i> Type						
	<i>Baldachin</i> Type						
Superstructur Material	Cut Stone						
	Brick						
	Stone-Brick						
Tomb Dimensions	Width	275cm	250cm	230cm	260cm	420cm	470cm
	Length	275cm	250cm	230cm	260cm	420cm	470cm
	Height	850cm	-	-	820cm	1280cm	720cm
Seating Part	One						
	Two						

In final, further steps on preserving and properly presenting valuable remains, such as in the case of crypted tombs of Skopje, is of high importance, in line with the internationally accepted doctrine as stated already in 1964 by the Venice charter of ICOMOS. *"The sites of monuments must be the object of special care in order to safeguard their integrity and ensure that they are cleared and presented in a seemly manner..."* (ICOMOS, 1964). Further on, regarding archaeological heritage Charter For The Protection And Management Of The Archaeological Heritage in Lausanne (ICOMOS, 1990) states that some elements of the archaeological heritage are components of architectural structures and in such cases must be protected in accordance with the criteria for Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites.



Figure 16. Before and after the project area

CONCLUSION

In Skopje, Turkish public institutions and organizations such as Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Directorate General of Foundations (VGM), Presidency of Religious Affairs (DIB), some metropolitan and district municipalities and ENKA foundation restored a total of 15 monuments. Monumental structures to be restored are determined according to certain criteria that are deemed worthy of protection.

Evaluation of the Pasha Yiğit Bey Tomb archaeological excavation, restoration and restoration project, all together contributed to prevent further illegal construction in the historical environment. An area has been transformed into a social and cultural environment and restored to its historical texture. On the building scale, the reconstruction of the Pasha Yiğit Bey Tomb, which was destroyed in 1963, was carried out and two previously unknown tomb structures were unearthed. In addition, the foundation of the madrasah structure mentioned in the documents was also found. After the consolidation of the tombs that emerged, they were covered with glass and protected as they are.

As a result, differences are observed in tombs with burial room in Skopje in terms of material, top cover, decoration and size comparing to the Anatolian samples. Over time, the height of the seating part (*oturmalık*) of the crypt section was reduced, and most of the crypt section remained under the ground. stone and brick were used as building materials in the tombs, adobe was not used. It is seen that the dimensions of the tomb are generally small. In terms of decoration, there are no rich decorations found in the tombs from the first period. Following development of the tomb architecture, the structure of the tomb shrinks, the use of materials varies according to the geography, and some of the simple decorations were applied.

Along with the rich aesthetic reflections of the regional influences in the mausoleums design also the pronounced integration of the founder with the region is visible. Furthermore, two unearthed flow-style mausoleums as a result of archaeological excavations point to the common cultural accumulation from the Turanian geography (Central Asia).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Resume

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