

OTTOMAN SARAJEVO

The Urban History of Sarajevo in the Ottoman Period and Into the Period of the Dual Monarchy

by Carel Bertram

[Art History, UCLA](#)



(from Plan von Sarajevo, Austro-Hungarian, circa 1910; 120 kb)

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AN OVERVIEW

So great was the architectural and cultural presence of the Ottomans, that travelers to Bosnia at the turn of the century felt that they had left The West for The Orient.

“Had a Fairy waived her enchanted wand over the scene a greater change could hardly have been effected. Save that the landscape remained the same, we might have been transported into the heart of Turkey.” (*Trevor, 1910*) pp. 24-5

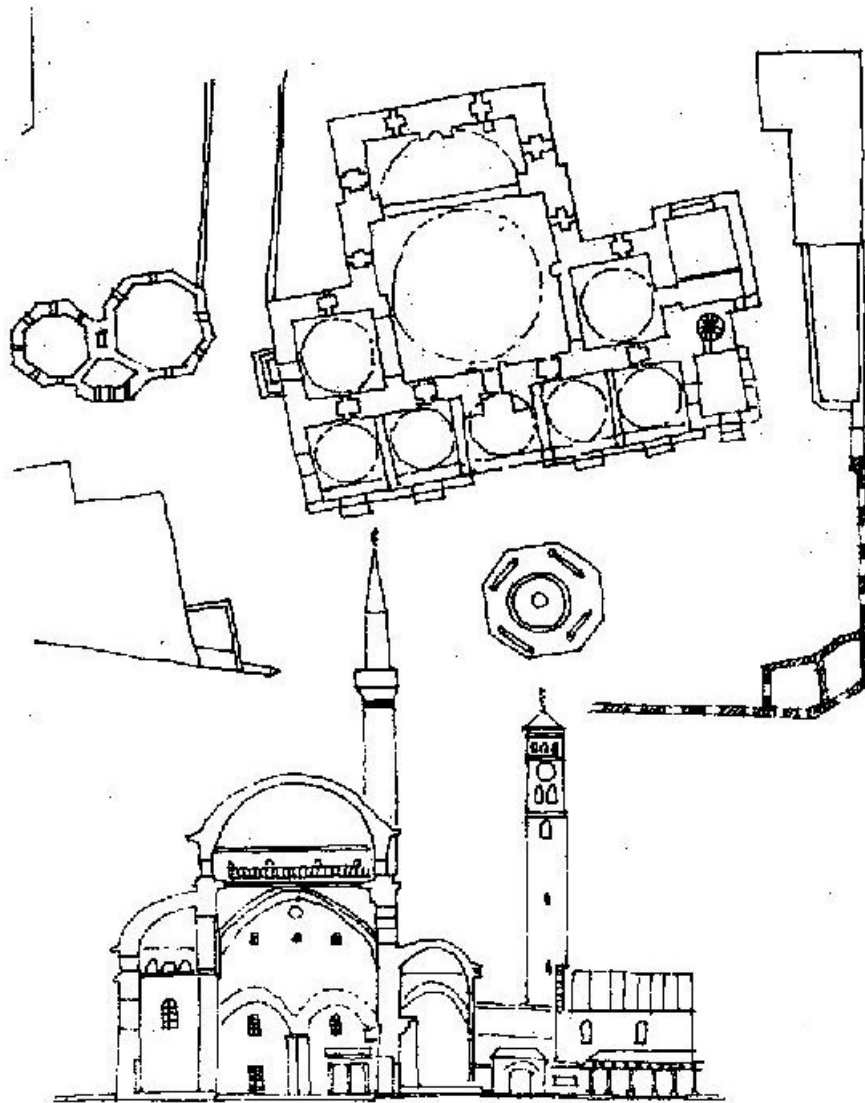
So wrote Roy Trevor in 1910 when he and his wife were among the first tourists to travel to Sarajevo by automobile; but his words are like mirrors of all who took this route. Even in 1990, before the recent war that tore Bosnia apart, Sarajevo,



the capital city of Bosnia, retained a central core that was evocative of its Ottoman past. Its Central Market—or Bascarsija—may have been a partly idealized version of that past, but it was certainly more than a veneer, for the Ottomanness of Sarajevo had deep roots and was built both into its street fabric and its

architecture by a distinctively Ottoman urbanization process. This was an empire-wide system that provided for religious and public service buildings, for residences, public fountains, bridges, and, of course, for that wonderful, exciting and enticing central market place.

Sarajevo, in fact, is a classic example of Ottoman city building¹, and documents of urban building schemes remain from its first stable governor, Isa-Beg Isakovic. Although Sarajevo was first occupied by the Turks in 1435, it was Gazi Isa-Beg who established a city center that spanned the Miljacka River. In 1457 he built a Kulliye mosque in honor of Fatih Mehmet [Mehmet the Conqueror] who had taken Constantinople five years before. Isa-Beg then built a bridge to link his mosque, the Careva Džamija [the mosque of the Tsar] to a market area directly across the river. And in so doing he established the Miljacka River as the spine rather than the edge of Sarajevo.

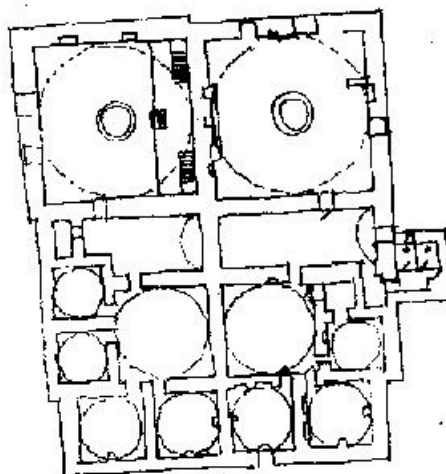


The Kulliyeh Mosque² of the Ottomans was [a group of social and municipal service buildings](#) that acted as a community center as well as the focal point of Friday prayers.³ The founder would establish a public kitchen [Imaret], to feed the needy or the traveler, a college [medresa], a hospital [darusifa], a public fountain [cesma], a guest house for travelers [musafirhana or konak-han] and a tomb [turbe]. By means of a Vakuf, which was a government

Kulliyeh Mosque Complex, Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

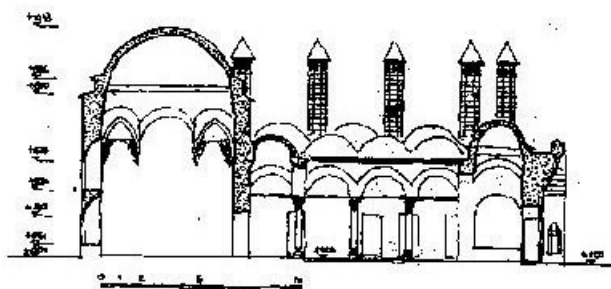
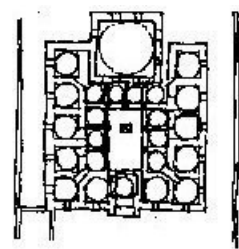
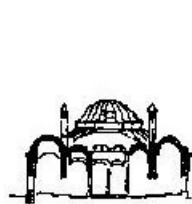
supervised religious trust fund with its own separate administration and legal identity, the donor would set aside money or income-producing property, such as farms or markets, to pay for the building, maintenance and staffing of his Kulliyeh. Lesser notables might endow just one edifice, such as a neighborhood fountain [cesma], and pay for it and protect it under the provisions of the vakuf. “Bolje je sagrađiti cesmu nego dzamiju,” it is better to build a fountain than a mosque, went the folk wisdom of Sarajevo, and so its streets were amply provided with stone cesmas. (Kreševljaković, 1939) p. 6 Once an edifice had been set up as a vakuf, it could never revert to the state, but would remain in the public service. In this way the donors, whose foundations were inscribed “for the love of God and for the salvation of my soul,” knew that what they had offered to the town would stand there in perpetuity.

The covered market that Isa-Beg built, as well as his public bath, or [hamam](#), were also established by his vakuf-nama or trust-deed, but these types of institutions were not entirely free to the public for they represented the income producing property bestowed to a vakuf, as were warehouses and caravansaries.



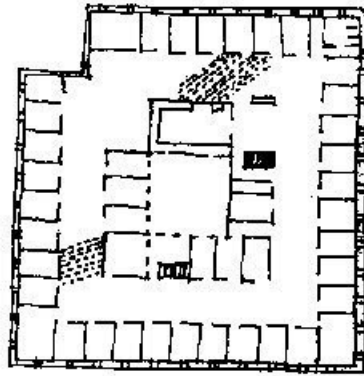
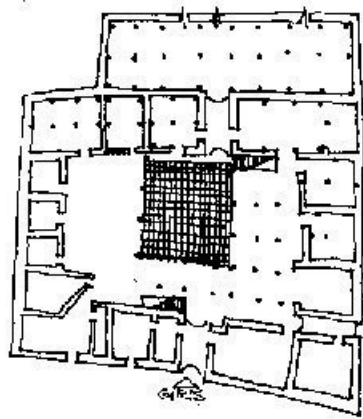
Gazi Husrev Bey Hamam, Sarajevo--drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

The carsija and Kulliye that Isa-Beg established were intended to form the center of Sarajevo, with the Kulliye mosque drawing the entire male population for Friday prayers and public announcements. During the 15th and early 16th centuries each successive pasha or governor added a new public service building or smaller mosque at the periphery until the core of Sarajevo was encircled by mosques*. By the end of the 15th Century, Sarajevo had sixteen mosques, two imarets, three dervish lodges [tekija,] one [medresa](#) and several elementary schools [mekteb], and four public baths, two large [hans](#) for merchant-travelers, and, of course, the carsija at its heart. (Grabrijan & Niedhardt, 1957) p. 52



Gazi Husrev Bey Medresesi, Sarajevo—Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

THE MAHALA [Neighborhood] and,
THE SOKAK [Street]



Morica Han, Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

Most of the mosques of Sarajevo were single-roomed wooden buildings meant to serve a local neighborhood or mahala. Like the Kulliye mosque, neighborhood mosques [mesdzids] were also built as vakuf by local notables, and placed in sparsely inhabited areas

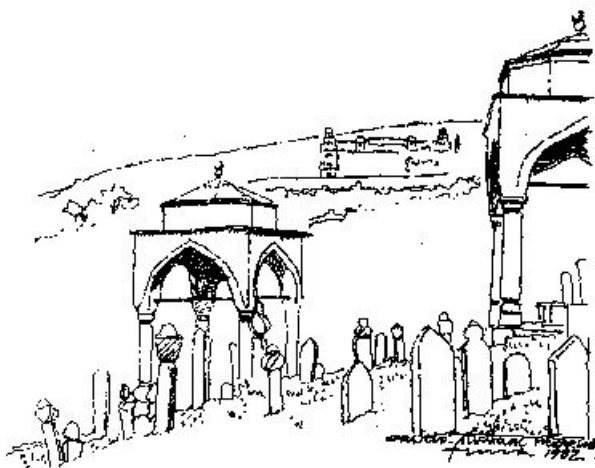
with the intention of establishing a mahala of about forty households around it. In this way, the city grew not as a series of concentric circles around a central business district, but as [a cluster of independent mahalas](#), each with its own group of services such as a bath, a Koran school, a green grocers, a bakery, and a public fountain; and of course the mosque with its own fountain for ritual washing [sebilj,]



Mahala, Sarajevo

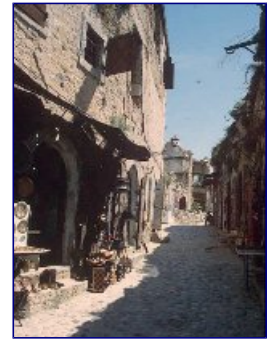
and [a cemetery](#), the entire ensemble geographically separated from the mercantile, crafts or industrial areas*. In fact, in Ottoman towns the mahalas were not

random affairs but socially and architecturally cohesive units that were spatially and administratively separate from each other. Until the close of the Ottoman period in Bosnia, the mahalas were organizational units with strict codes of responsibility; for example, the neighbors were responsible for each other and would be called to court to testify in each other's favor—or not. The men of the mahala, or certainly the prayer leader at the mesdzid, [the Hodza,] were required to



know if Amir was at prayers that day, for example, so that they could stand up for him in court. The streets of the mahala were narrow, a main street was wide enough for two pack animals to pass each other, or about 19 feet; a side street [sokak] was the width of one pack animal, or about 8 feet. Streets were named for

topographical features, such as Strmac, or for the people who lived there, perhaps a very respected person or someone who had bequeathed a fountain or a tomb. Mahalas were named for their local mesdzid, which in turn were named for their donors; or, in the early years, many mahalas represented small villages that had been incorporated into the town, such as [Bistrik](#), and so retained this name.



One of the oldest streets in Sarajevo was one that connected



Bistrik, Sarajevo

four mahalas. Its original name was Logavin Sokak, and it got the name from the locally famous 16th century Logavija family whose sons and grandsons were religious sheiks and other educated people. (Bejtici, 1973) p. 79 Since the interest of the Imperial State in the mahala was purely administrative, it felt no need to make its presence felt symbolically, so streets were never named for the Sultan or his representatives. In fact the first entrance of the Ottoman State into the Mahalas of Sarajevo was in 1853, during the period of the Turkish reforms [Tanzimat] when address numbers were added to buildings as an aid in identifying taxpayers and movable property. (Bejtici, 1973) p. 2

To the Renaissance sensibility, or to the heirs of Greek and Roman urban planning, the street system of the Ottoman neighborhood might appear to be random, or, at best, what has been called “organic,” likened to a living organism that branches out to fill the space around it. But in fact the street pattern of Ottoman Sarajevo, until it was partly regularized by the Austrians, was never merely negative space but developed according to an important conceptual plan. The neighborhood streets led to the mahala mesdzid, which was the social, administrative and religious center of the mahala, or down toward the carsija. But unlike the post-Renaissance West, the street did not have a theatrical aspect, with the mesdzid or even the Kulliye mosque rising at the end of it, as a scenographic vista. The street was not in the service of scenography but of privacy and would follow the topography in such a way that houses were staggered along it, protecting the privacy of their entrances and their views. It



was only the minaret of the mesdzid that acted as the visual marker of the center of the neighborhood, but it was a marker at the skyline rather than the street level. Until the very end of the Ottoman period, the skyline of Sarajevo was known for its 99 mahalas of whitewashed houses punctuated by 99 slender minarets that rose from their centers.⁴ It was likewise

punctuated by minaret-like poplar trees, for trees were a required adjunct to mosques and graveyards, and a preferred part of a house courtyard. Even until recently, the skies of Sarajevo must have appeared as pierced as eyelet lace, for in 1958 Sarajevo had many hundreds of mosques and mahala mesdzids and poplars. (Balic, 1994) p. 154

In the 1930s, the Slovenian architect Dusan Grabrijan fell in love with Sarajevo and spent the next twenty years studying it and documenting it. A drawing that he made of the Topal Inhanova Mahala shows how the street structure worked*. Here, the mahala mesdzid with its graveyard is at the center of the neighborhood and the bakery is at the edge, poised at a widening in the road that acted as a plaza or mejdan. The street, of course, is by its nature a public place, and not only the area in front of its bakery acted as a meeting place, but the fountains* along it were a meeting place for women and children who would come there to collect drinking and cooking water, or to do their laundry.

Men had more public meeting places, such as the mahala mesdzid or the carsija, but their favorite neighborhood spot was the kafana, or coffee house. This was a place of little architectural significance⁵ but of great social importance, and reserved for men only, who met there to socialize and even to organize. In 1827, after quelling a military [Janissary] mutiny, the Bosnian Vezier Abdurahman closed down the kafanas of Sarajevo because they served as the meeting places of the insurgents. Isak Samokovlija, who wrote of Jewish Life in Sarajevo in the

19th century, published a story in 1926 in which a Jewish notable crossed the invisible barrier into this Muslim male enclave in order to enlist the support of his Muslim neighbors.

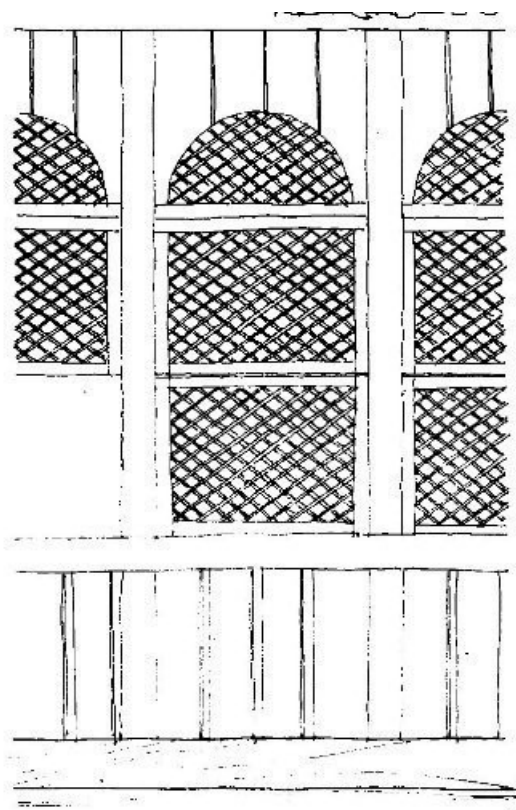
Immediately after the dinner [it was Sabbath], while the candles were still burning on his table, he stood up and without the fear that he would make a scene, he took a small sack of ducats, and putting it in his pocket, he went toward the mahalas. There had been eight of them, and each of them had a kafana, and only Muslims used to go in, because to the others, it was forbidden to come and sit in them. The great Hasid came into one and sat next to the door, and everybody was wondering about this; but since he was prominent and known as a religious man, no one wanted to embarrass him, so they didn't say a thing. Instead, the kafedzija offered him coffee and poured him a fildzan himself. (Samokovlija, 1955) p. 250

These mahala kafanas remained well into the 20th century. Grabrian describes eight of the larger and more modern ones that were used by both men and women in the 1940's. (Grabrijan, 1951) pp. 163-5 The smaller mahala kafana, the prime arena of neighborhood solidarity, began to disappear after the Turkish period. First the Turkish entertainers who had come there to sing were replaced by Serbian bards reciting national epic poetry, and by the 1960s, most mahala type kafanas were to be found only in the villages. (Vucinich, 1960) p. 93 Urban kafanas were first replaced by indoor citaonice [sing. citaonica], or reading rooms, in which Muslim men gathered to read the newspapers and to discuss local events. (Knezevic, 1928) p. 91 Along the hills and between the neighborhoods were open spaces and gardens, and, besides their usefulness in service of the kitchen, these areas were used by families for frequent picnics.

THE KUCA [House]

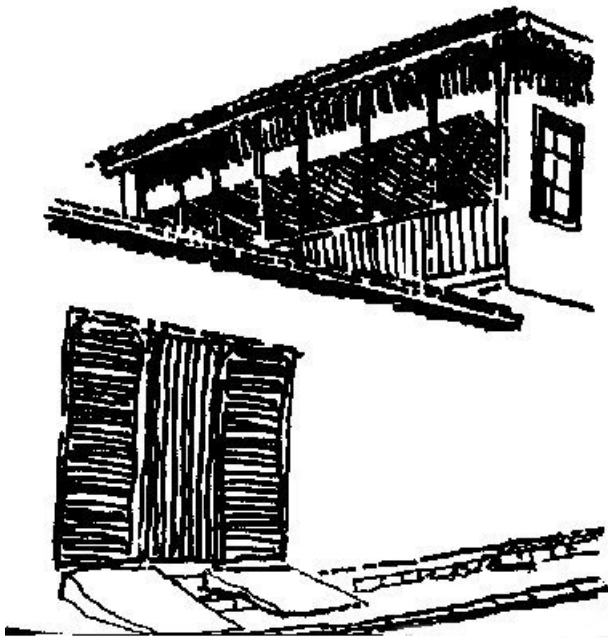
The houses of Ottoman Sarajevo were portrayed by Western writers as the private cloister of women. A traveler in 1925 wrote that

“as you swing downhill through the uneven Moslem streets you may hear through the latticed windows of the first floor the musical box a-tinkling for the Harem women's delight.” (Gordon & Gordon, 1925)



Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

The part about [the latticed windows](#) and the streets that climbed and descended the hills was correct, for one of the main features of Bosnian urbanism from the Ottoman period was a good choice of the site, so that there would be a view and good ventilation from the windows. But since in the late 19th century, certainly, women were often to be found in the streets, at the greengrocers, at the public fountains, and picnicking with their families on the hillsides, it is more appropriate to think of the Ottoman house as the private refuge of the family.⁶

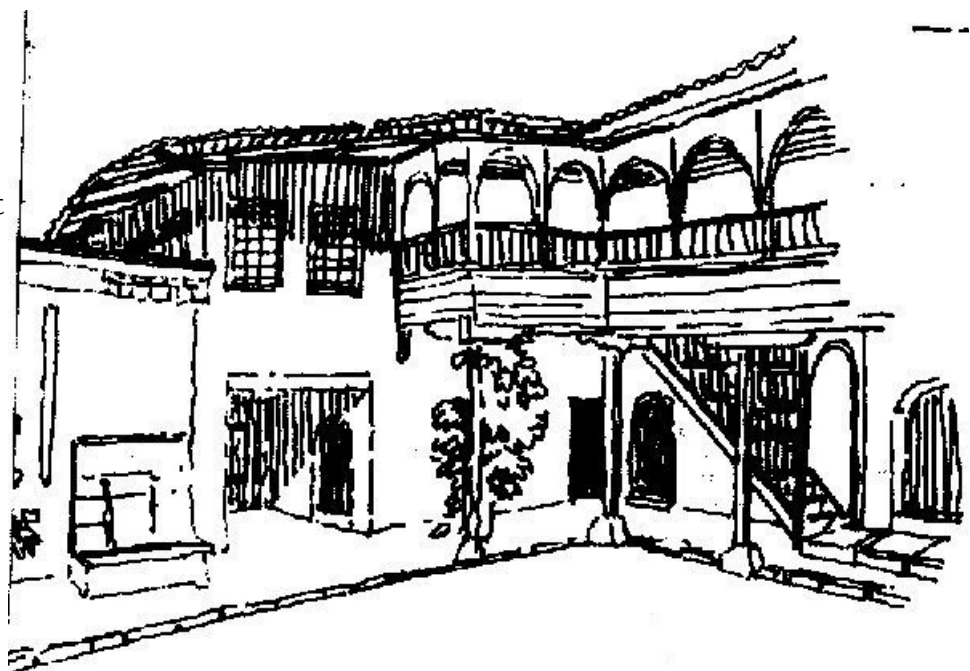


Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

The door to the house itself was inside a protected courtyard that was behind a story-high walls that must first be entered by [a gate to the street](#). The front of the house faced the courtyard, which was used for outdoor tasks, sometimes cooking, and for socializing, and for a garden.

But the privacy from the street was not sacrosanct. First of all, unlike the houses of Anatolia, Bosnian Muslim houses were often single storied, with windows onto the street. If there was a second floor, the first would be for use in the winter, the upper floor for the summer. Furthermore, the upper floors

of the houses of Sarajevo were not only windowed, but often jugged out over the street, although much less so than their counterparts in Northern Anatolia. The finest room would be one of these with a street view, and would be for the man of the house when he was entertaining. However, during hot or mild months, the most preferred area of

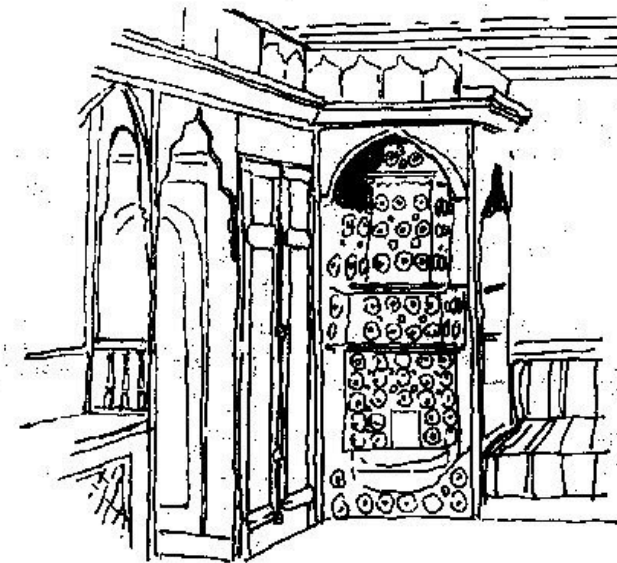


Courtyard, Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

the house was a long verandah*, the divhana, that was on the courtyard side of the house, often with raised areas at each end [kamerija] with built in seating. (Grabrijan & Niedhardt, 1957) p. 170ff In some of the grander houses, the male area [selamluk, which means greeting area] was on a different floor or in a different building than the women's area [Haremluk, which means private area], and each had [a private courtyard](#) and their own [guest room](#) for entertaining. But of course when there were no visitors, the house was used differently, and the entire family would eat their meals together on the verandah or in whichever room they chose.

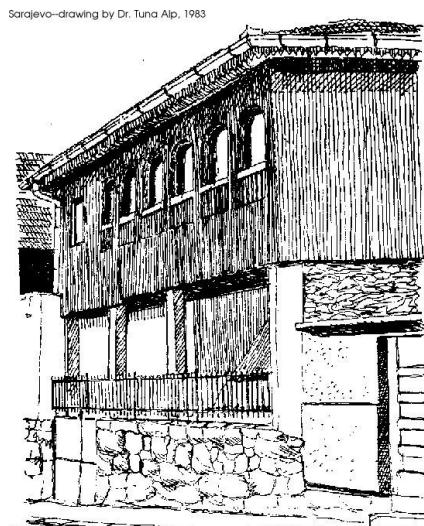
The rich Ottoman housing stock of Sarajevo represented [houses from the late 17th century to the early 20th](#), but they began to be torn down in the 1950s, replaced by modernism. Several were restored as museums such as the house of the wealthy

merchant family Despic who were fur merchants and a leading tradesmen family in Sarajevo. In their house, parties were organized and theater plays were shown. Other Ottoman houses had also been restored such as the Srvzina Kuca*, which was open for visitors, or the modest craftsmen's house, Kuca Catica. (Kamenica & Babic, 1954) These restored houses were in all the mid- and late-twentieth century tourist guide books as part of Sarajevo's community memory.

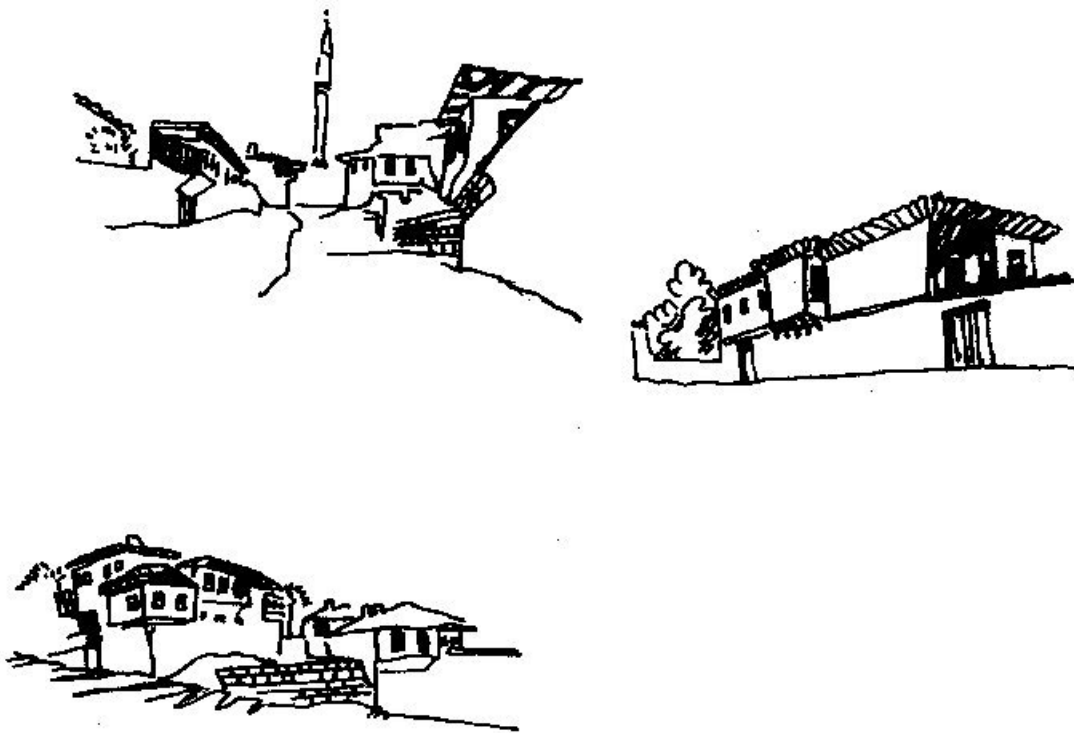


Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

Interior of a Harem, Sarajevo

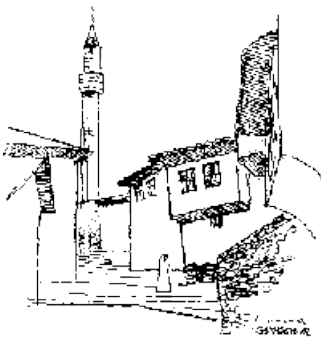


Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983



Sarajevo—drawings by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

Neighborhood streets, Sarajevo



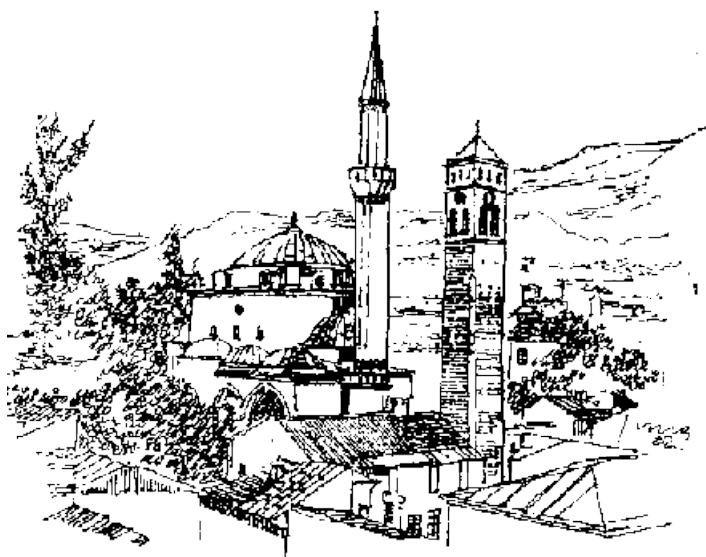
Yet even as late as 1990, [neighborhood streets](#) in the hillside mahalas of Alifakovac on the left bank of the Miljacka, or Jahja-pase on the right, had many of their houses intact, and retained both a historic and a restful quality, for the activity of the household took place in the courtyard behind high walls that rose above the eye of the pedestrian. Above eye level, the cantilevered room [doksat, cardak] would jut out slightly into the street without claiming its usable space, but only claiming its rightful view, for there were sanctions against building houses that obstructed a neighbor's view, or building windows that looked into a neighbors garden, and these were frequent issues that filled court registers. Thus the street that seemed to meander was carefully choreographed for the people who lived on it, and directed the gaze of the pedestrian away from the private family domain, redirecting it down the hill, toward that magnet of Sarajevo, the carsija.

THE CARSIJA

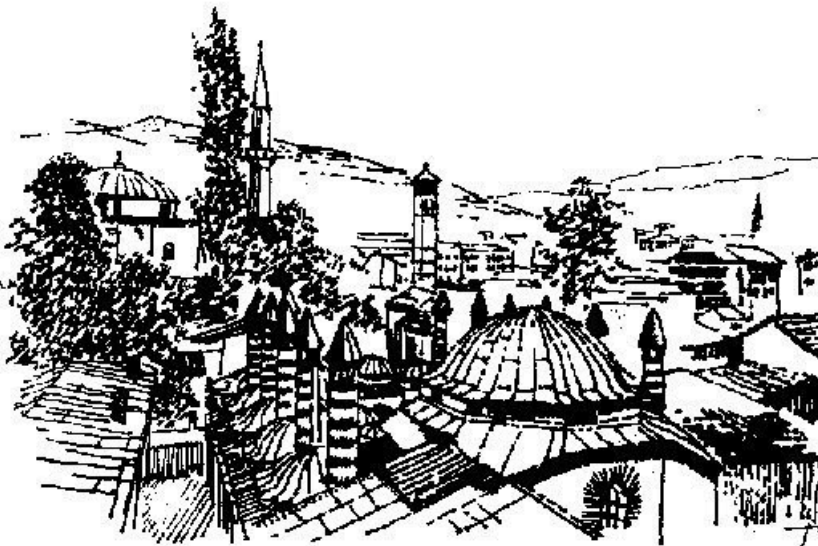
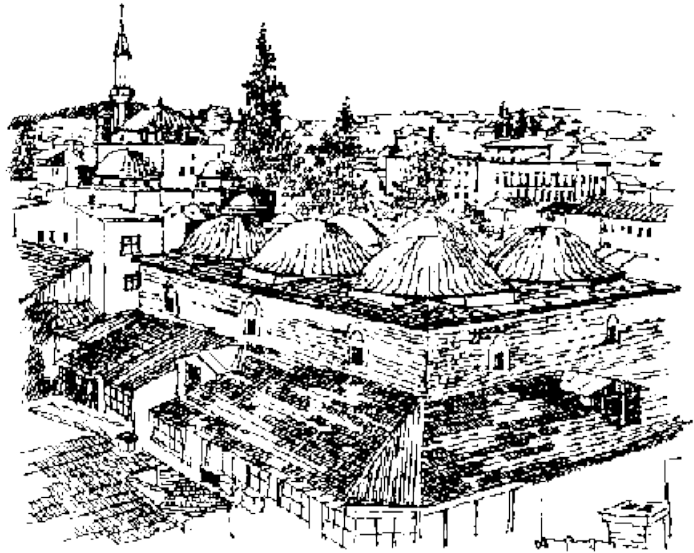
The original ring of mosques* that were built by the 15th century pashas who followed Isa-Beg were the center of 15th century neighborhoods. But with the economic prosperity during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent, these neighborhoods were swallowed by the flourishing carsija, pushing the population farther out and enticing donors to build new mahala mesdzid [mesdzidi=pl]. In 1521, Suleyman appointed Gazi Husrev Beg as Vezier of Bosnia, and he ruled almost continuously for twenty years. Because his interest was in developing Sarajevo as a commercial center, his building projects are all inside the carsija, and not only that, he refused to lend money to merchants or donors building anywhere else. Gazi Husrev Beg was an active city-builder and endowed about 300 building units*. An old Bosnian folk poem indicated the expected link between the establishment of public buildings and Ottoman notables. In the poem, Husrev Beg wonders how on earth the Sublime Porte at Istanbul could turn against him; he felt that his success as a city-builder should have made him immune to political criticism, if not immortal. Although the poem is not entirely accurate, the clock tower, for example, was built 100 years later, his works in Sarajevo have indeed brought him immortality.

*Puce pusa, puce druga
Iz Carigrada,
Da ubije Husrevbega
usred Saraj'va.
Govorio Husrevbeze:
"S to sam skrivio?
Dusmani me opanjkase
kod Sultana mog.
Ja nacinih medreseta
i imareta,
Ja nacinih Sahat-kulu
do nje dzamiju
Ja nacinih taslihana
i bezistana,
Ja nacinih tri cupriye
Posred Sarajva
Ja nacinih od kasabe
Seher Sarajvo,
i opet me ti dusmani
Gledat ne mogu.
I gora ce prestat listat
i voda teci
A dusmana na svijetu
Neceg nestati*

(Grabrijan & Niedhardt, 1957) p. 46



*A Rifle shot, a second
shot
From Istanbul
To kill Husrev Beg
In the middle of Sarajevo.
Husrev Beg spoke:
“What did I do?
My enemies must have
lied to the Sultan.
I built a madrasa
and an Imaret
I built a clock-tower
and beside it a mosque.
I built a stone han
and a Bedistan.
I built three bridges
In the middle of Sarajevo.
I built from a town
the city, Sarajevo.
In spite of all this
I still have enemies!
Everything green will die
water will stop flowing
Before my enemies
will vanish.*



Kursunlu Medrese, Gazi Husrev Bey Medresesi, Sarajevo—Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

Husrev Beg's Kullije Mosque made the carsija the undisputed center of the city, for Isa-Beg's mosque had been destroyed in 1480 by invading Hungarian Christians from Jajce. The Husrev Begova Džamija also made the carsija area the educational center of Sarajevo with a college complex [\[the Kursunlija medrese\]](#) that functioned until recently. For the

carsija itself he built a covered market [Bezistan] and a stone Han [\[Taslihan\]](#) to house the increased number of traveling foreign merchants. Another covered market, [the Brusa Bezistan](#), was built soon after his death, by Suleyman the Magnificent's Grand Vizier Rustem Pasha.

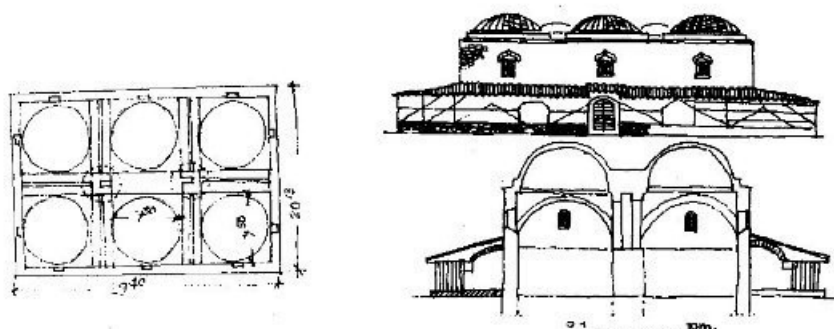
The Bascarsija, or central market, as it came to be called, was thus a center of learning and religion as well as of commerce, with a periphery of housing for foreigners, especially the Latin Christians who came from Dubrovnik. They had their own neighborhood, called the Latinluk, which extended from the west of Husrev Beg's mosque toward the river. Beside the Latinluk community of merchants from Dubrovnik, there was a neighborhood of Orthodox Christians. A Serbian Orthodox Church was built to the north of the carsija, and served this community until [a new Cathedral](#) was built in 1863. Jews fleeing Spain had been

Morica Han, Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983



welcomed by the Ottoman sultans, and they too made their way to Sarajevo in the mid 16th century, building a synagogue and communal housing on the west edge of the carsija. (Friedenreich, 1979) Thus it was in the mid to late 16th century that Sarajevo, as an economic center, began to become a multi-cultural center as well, and the carsija area was where this mixing occurred.^{7*}

The Taslihan, Sarajevo



Brusa Bezistan, Bursa Bedesteni, Sarajevo—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983

Each confessional community was related to the Carsija by profession as well as proximity. For example, the Orthodox Christians were mostly furriers [curcija, curcije=pl] and worked in the large and small curciluk carsijas, but they were also metal workers [kujundzija, kujundzije = pl] and made sacramental church vessels and the frames for icons and books. Jews were the only owners of sheet metal businesses, and were pot makers too [tenejejeski], but they also were tailors [terzija je=pl] and fisherman. However, their main carsija occupation was in currency exchange.

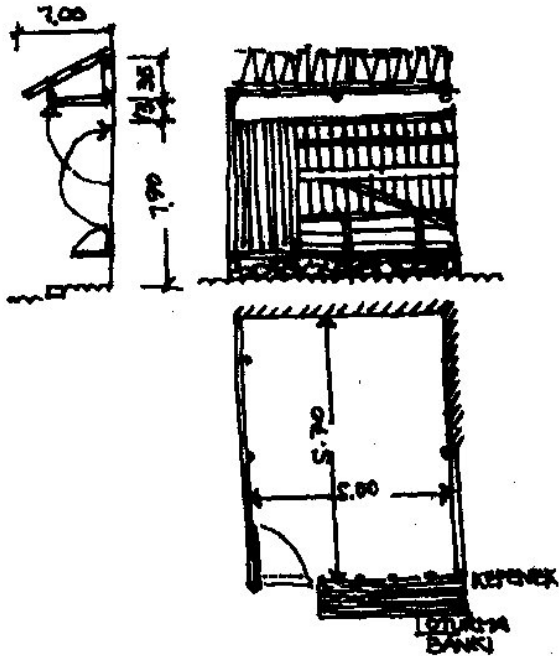


The new Orthodox cathedral, Sarajevo

The trades were topographically unified with shops grouped together by merchandise. A map of the carsija from Grabrijan shows its plan with various streets assigned to over forty crafts and trades*. Members of different confessions who were in the same trade felt a strong solidarity and dealt with the Vezier together. Together they organized a guild [teferic], or festivals in which apprentices would be promoted. These would last for several days and take place in the carsija itself, in the area reserved for that trade. Those streets would be closed for business but open to the public, with organized entertainments, and food, coffee, and tobacco would be offered. If the weather was bad, the carsija street would be set up with tents. (Kresevljakovic, 1927) p. 26

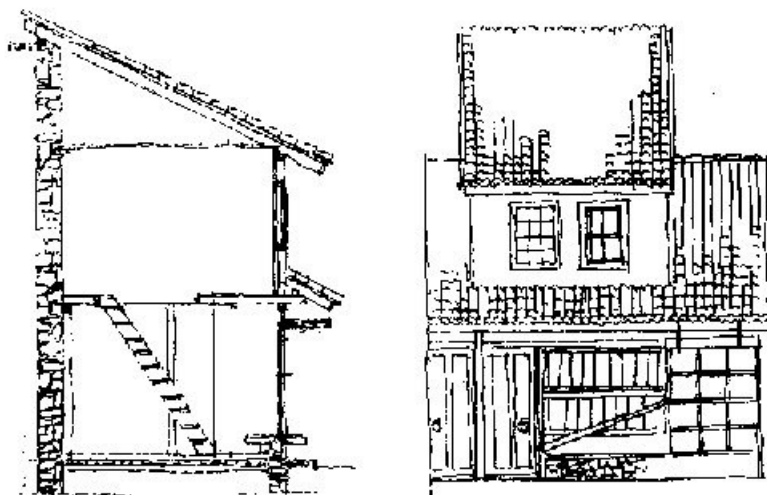
Architecturally, the carsija itself had six types of commercial units. The largest was the Han, which was an accomodation for merchant travelers. Next was the Bezistan, a covered bazaar, originally dedicated to one type of trade, usually cloth. Then the Daira, which was a communal stone storage area for goods, a building-type that was specific to Sarajevo, and came into being after the great fire of Eugene of Savoy utterly destroyed the carsija in the 17th century. There was also the Kafana or coffee house; there were at least as many coffee houses as there were trades. Separate merchants might have their own Magaza, or stone store house behind their wooden shop, and finally, the smallest: the Ducan, or

shop, where products were often both produced and sold. Originally these ducans were made of wood, and about fifteen meters square, with front shutters that opened horizontally, the bottom half folding outward to make a seat for the proprietor, the top folding up to make an awning*. These distinctive doors were called [cepenek](#) (pl. cepeneci). There were more than 1000 ducans, and they remained open to the street right through the Austrian occupation.



“Each shop is just large enough for the proprietor to squat upon his haunches conversing with a friend or client, provided that neither gesticulates too widely.” (Gordon & Gordon, 1925) p. 33

Ducan with cepenek opening—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp, 1983



Ducan, Bascarsija, Sarajevo, 1972—drawing by Dr. Tuna Alp

Alas, these wooden structures were constantly catching fire or being flooded by the Miljacka, but they were inexpensive enough to be rebuilt over and over, although less so after the Austrians when the economic importance of the Bascarsija went into a decline. In fact the period of Austrian rule was disastrous for the Carsija, for the Austrians allowed large buildings to replace those lost to fire on the western side of the carsija and regularized the Miljacka on its south in such a way that the carsija was deprived of its access to the river and to its green edge. Instead, the river was lined with a stone wall and a road. The Austrians also paved the roads inside the carsija, replacing the stone cobbles with asphalt, and electricity replaced the lovely but incendiary gas lanterns. Last of all, the open cepenek of the ducan began to be replaced by [larger shops](#) with standard doors and glass windows.

But the worst blow to the carsija came after World War II, when Yugoslav urban planners with no Ottoman roots felt that the ducans had no historical or cultural value, that they were a fire hazard and even a health hazard, and that no public money should be invested there. “Our history should not stay in the cepenek,” they claimed. In June of 1945 a committee for the destruction of ducans was formed, and the job was done in the Spring of 1950. Several people bitterly opposed this destruction but large blocks of ducans were torn down anyway. (Bejtlic, 1969) p. 61

In the 1950s there was a brief plan to raze the carsija entirely, except for its stone monuments, and to make an open air park, but this was tabled for lack of funds, allowing the carsija to continue to survive--though crumbling--until the city realized its touristic value. In the 1970s, using a model that was built in the 1940s, but based on records from 1875, the part of the Bascarsija that had not been eaten up by modern buildings was restored.⁸ There were no cepenek[s] in the restoration, only small closed shops with glass windows, but the roof and street pattern of the original plan was followed and the Brusa Bezistan returned to life. These clean shops filled up with craftsmen so that by the time of the 1984 Winter Olympics there were local crafts available such as lidded copper serving dishes [sahans] and locally made table cloths; and women sat in the streets selling home knitted stockings in traditional patterns. The Bascarsija again became a delight to all of Sarajevo, and every citizen, Muslim or not, took his guests there in pride and for lunch. For in every era, the ambiance and wonder of the Bascarsija was more than the sum of its parts; it has always either been—or seemed to be—at the center of the known world. Everything could be had there, and on top of that, magically or mysteriously, even what one had never imagined or understood, could be had there as well.

A NOTE ON POST OTTOMAN SARAJEVO:

Ivo Andric wrote a short story about how the population of Sarajevo waited with great agitation to see if the Austro-Hungarians were truly to come to their city.

In the Meclis [Parliament] the distribution of brandy was forbidden, and the Christian houses were dormant. Food was not regularly prepared because people moved from their cellars up to the windows to see what was going on, and everyone was praying for themselves and their own people and for what they felt was the only just or holy outcome.

And at the same time, among the masses and among individuals, the passions and desires that they themselves were not aware of, or that had been suppressed due to a feeling of shame or a fear of reprisal, were surfacing. One could meet completely unknown people who went out on the streets armed, sleepless, agitated and with strange looks, grinding their teeth and looking for someone whom they could terrorize in order to relieve their own anger, which was pursuing and terrorizing them. (Knezevic, 1928)

In July of 1878, the Austrians and the Hungarians did arrive, and they soon doubled the size of Sarajevo, building westward along the Miljacka, beginning a Dual-Ducal style city right where the Ottoman one left off.² During this forty year stay, they built municipal services and municipal buildings in the styles popular in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, such as the [former] Palace of Justice, the National Theater, the Gymnasium, and the Army headquarters which were built in the Neo-Renaissance style. A city wide sewage system was built and a new water supply replaced the sixty-eight separate ones that fed local cesmas. Electricity motored a new tram system and lit the streets. The Gazi Husrev Begova Mosque was, in fact, the first Ottoman mosque in the world to be illuminated by this new method. The new population that arrived with the new rulers was mostly Christian, and so the existing churches were repaired, but also new ones were built, such as the Orthodox Church and the Catholic Romanesque Cathedral. These were positioned facing squares, a novel idea for an Ottoman sensibility.



Huge apartment blocks with shops beneath them were filled by this large immigrant population who had never known the quiet mahala system that separated residence and commerce, but preferred streets formed by a grid for ease of communication rather than for views and privacy. In fact, during the Austro-Hungarian period the notion of the Mahala was obliterated and the street became the main unit, and even private houses built by individuals began to be built “by plan” with an Austrian appearance and placement.

The Austrians also took advantage of a major fire that destroyed the entire western area of the carsija in 1879, a year after they arrived. True, it was not



their fault, but due to merchant Schwartz's kerosene lamp, but they used the space to their advantage, replacing none of the 434 lost ducans or the street system, but using it as a launching area for their new city and their new system of road building. In fact, in

response to the fire, in 1880, the Austrians instigated a street regulation plan for the rest of the carsija. By widening the streets and thus destroying whole rows of ducans they decimated and eviscerated the Bascarsija and also opened the way for a decay that would last until its revival in the 1970s.

Architects came from Vienna and Czechoslovakia to design the new city and filled it with post- and neo-Renaissance, Gothic, and Byzantine styles as well as the new Secession style that was all the rage at home. (Celic, 1990) p. 28 But the most curious style was what was called Moorish or neo-Arabic. This was a Western attempt to build in a vernacular sensibility that they did not understand, and although aesthetically successful, corresponded to no known Islamic architecture in either scale, plan, or decoration. The enormous City Hall, the Gradska Vijećnica that was shelled in May 1992 is the most famous of these projects. It was positioned at the east end of the carsija, and at the entrance to town, to welcome visitors to this now hybrid city, and to become a landmark visible from all the houses on the hills. It is the most famous of the "Moorish" style buildings in Sarajevo, but not the only one, as there was also the Sheriat School for Judges [which became the City Museum], the Hotel Neretva, and the synagogue of the Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in Sarajevo when it was opened by the Austrians. (Balic, 1994)

Not every architect wanted to erase the Ottoman style. A very few, like Josef Pospisil who lived in Sarajevo from 1909 to 1918 understood the value of its local architecture from the very beginning, and he proposed that new buildings should be built only on empty land, and the old urban fabric should be preserved. Just as today, planners and visitors to Sarajevo were of mixed minds about its turn-of-the-century changes. Some saw the evisceration as an incomparable loss, and the new scale of building as "urban tumors." (Bejtlic, 1969) p. 62 Others saw the changes as welcome and needed "progress." But most Sarajevans might have agreed with the German Art Historian Cornelius Gurlitt when he wrote in 1938:

"Who wouldn't be hypnotized today by the city of the Bosnian capital? It is incomparable in the strength of its contradictions." (Balic, 1994) p.164

In the 1980s one could walk parallel to Sarajevo's Miljacka River and pass from epoch to epoch. Beginning in the Bascarsija on Saraci Street, one would pass

mosques, fountains and shops until, with a step and a name change one found oneself on Vaso Miskin [now called Ferhadije], a pedestrian street of Dual Empire Buildings. If one kept on walking, one would enter the Socialist era, and then pass the Skenderija Bridge, built to connect the cultural and sports center with the right bank. Downstream from this bridge would begin the rise of tower blocks and new estates. If one kept on walking one would see how, from Gazi Isa-Beg's time until our own, five different social systems have followed this river all the way to where the Miljacka joins the river Bosna.

The Turkish Period 1462-1878

Austro-Hungarian Period 1878-1918

Pre-War Yugoslavia 1918-1941

German Occupation 1941-1945

Socialist Yugoslavia 1945-1991

Civil War 1991-1995

Period of uncertainty

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We know that many design students will benefit from access to Dr. Alp's drawings of Ottoman Sarajevo. As befits a fine artist, designer and teacher, she lives on through her work.

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