

Vernacular and Style relations: Architectural Developments of Macedonian¹ Cities from 19th - 20th Century

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Abstract

The problem of common existence of both consolidated and recognizable architecture nominators: architecture style (according to the 'western' traditions), and the vernacular, as a second and important part, deserves attention as a result of constant and intense changing of the cultural and global political emergencies. European style influences entering the Ottoman architectural and cultural context in the period mentioned with the title was frequently observed. But Ottoman vernacular in Macedonia from the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century exists through varieties of appearances being problematized with the ongoing theoretical mainstreams in two main domains today: architectural style on the one side, and varieties of definitions of vernacular and its meanings and influences on the other. The complexity of cultures and their signs, together with the new methodologies of evaluation of cultural participation into the formation of more broad cultural units today, introduces the enormous diversity of building traditions.

Since we are introduced to the historical reality of a vast territory (of the Ottoman Empire) with complex cultural milieu created in time as a result of different traditions and histories, we will localize them by comparing and presenting selected buildings from Macedonia constructed in the above period, being aware about the individual ethnic components and undeniable synthesis and typological consolidation. In this context, this article discusses some basic definitions and principles of architectural styles and relations with the vernacular, recognized through a prism of historical retrospection, and main theoretical developments. It concludes that some constant values exist as inseparable part of the enormous architectural production of the period. The paper presents several examples of such buildings.

Keywords: Architecture style, vernacular architecture, relations, theoretical mainstreams, case studies

Introduction

The reason why we have constructed our interest in architecture with boundaries in the wide space between the European definitions and concepts, up to the regional specifics which include the anonymous folklore repertoire (varieties of the existence of the vernacular) was to contribute to the affirmation and emphasizing of different values and national identities as complex. Alternate changes marked in their various forms of tight-national to the

¹ With the term Macedonia, we are marking the territory under the same name in the mentioned period until the recent political developments in 2019. However, the most contemporary and ongoing political introductions, points to the newly accepted name of the country as "North Macedonia", referring to the state in its today's international, political and cultural context. The same note is to be applied through the entire text.

European-global and *vice versa*, oscillate permanently in the boundaries in which the problems of style are treated as immanent compared to the general conditions, and prove that the appropriate treatment of this term (the style) is of a common interest to all known definitions and theoretical frames in which the style was analyzed in different ways. That is the reason why we build the interest about style with boundaries within the wide space of the 'euro-centric definitions and concepts', to the regional specifics which include the anonymous folklore repertoire (and vernacular) and contribute to the affirmation, as well as emphasizing similar national identities in the light of ethnocentricity and tight national definitions (Grchev, 2004).

Complexity of the 19th century Ottoman architecture in Macedonia points to a practice of mixing elements from different historical sources whereas the historicist compilations and forms mutually render themselves void as the result of the eclectic procedure. Loosely standing stylistic colonnades turn into shallow reliefs treated completely differently from their original looks and volume; arches are moved in the tympanums, and the compactness of unique architectural volumes is broken by mixing elements from stylistic tiers. Some discord among buildings and materials, methods and programs, the emphasized and excessive freedom in interpreting the sources, stylistic transformation, and eclectic perfecting would gradually start ruining the initially embedded qualities of the forms while redefining the aesthetic attitudes and contexts wherefrom those same forms were taken over. Such a relation would contribute in a specific way to emerging (or, putting into usage) of the term 'fashion' in architecture as a paradigm for a permanent shift of interests (and their mutual interactions) that will reflect both on urban or rural vernacular applications.

In that sense, by determining clearly the necessity for a corresponding definition of the notion of taste, in particular when it comes to domains which affect architecture (its synchronized historicity and development), we define the notion of taste (in the mentioned period) as capacity for adequate aesthetic value that can be applied on different, in historical meaning, ideal periods. Such an approach also includes a determined relation to the notion of the aesthetic, which purports the necessity to be pre-determined within its normative frames and limited in relation to and depending on the social predisposition and belonging to a certain community, which influences indirectly or directly the creation of value parameters participating in the process of valorization of the phenomenon in question. In such a way, and in correlation with the recent critical thought of certain historically limited periods, taste becomes a defining factor for a certain architectural performance, building, work of art or another essential existential occurrence.

What is the role of the historical factor in this process of observation? Is the general establishment of criteria defined and how? Is there an exceptionally significant role in determining the point of the sociological and other research discourses in how we define the selectivity of values, and their possibility for the historical duration? In an attempt to answer these questions, we probably establish the reasons why a cultural phenomenon (such as style and vernacular defined architecture) is actualized or re-actualized in certain social and historical contexts and ambiances. They are most often related not only to their inner dynamism but, above all, to the economic, ideological, political, social, technical and technological factors.

In accordance with such commitment to interpreting the cultural and historical factors, which we determine as being present in any historical type of 'taste', it appears as specific perception even in the modern understanding of the taste as an important and unique result of experiencing in general. So what can be the real impact of the ongoing sensitivity towards style and vernacular both? How can any of the above postulates interfere with the different types of today's understanding of 'collectives' representing varieties of levels in these domains? Can this be based on a presumption that "...in direction of 'flirting' (or doing) with tradition, the postmodern era has offered us a cheap and infantile eclecticism that hasn't

even reached and deepened discourses of tradition present in the modern era but have instead only blurred them even more” (Petkovska, 2001). Such was the case with the traditional culture as part of a tradition in general, as well as part of the current value systems with special meaning and functions.

Vernacular

In his text ‘Architectural Style: High Style vs Vernacular’, Robert Roscoe comments about architectural historian Talbot Hamlin, who defines the term style in his book ‘Architecture Through the Ages’, when applied to architecture, as a particular set of architectural elements or articulated features that serve to identify the building’s architecture as belonging to a body of similar structures with common characteristics placed within a culture in a defined period. Typically, this form of architecture can be broadly termed ‘high style’. With this research, we don’t intend to deal with the broad varieties of the definitions of architectural styles (Hamlin, 1953).

Moreover, it is already accepted that in some regions and cultures (Macedonia and the Balkans) the style in architecture can have its own ‘binary’ structure by facing its inner components: long lasting components from traditions including established and well known architectural styles, no matter how long they survived in their original context on one side, and outer, local influences (being of formal-style or wide artistic types) including the broad set of social and cultural nature at the other (Grchev, 2002, 2003). As a result of this specific binary coding and mixture, the results of the above components almost always result in the completely new, unpredictable and the defined-by-itself structures that are recognized later as vernacular responses to established consensuses and values (Rosco, 2018).

So, in the case of Roscoe, applying a style to a building, is understood as ‘entire misapprehension of the artistic process and denies the architect or builder the creative imagination which is his or her greatest quality’. This generally ‘western’ interpretation is completely redefined in the context of the variations of Ottoman architecture developments in varieties of regions and cultures, especially taking vernacular as a midpoint of the investigation (Grchev, 2002).

Consequently, we can easily conclude about the plurality of architectural discourses in academic publications and attitudes that will occupy the theoretical mainstreams with the style architecture nomenclature and evaluation. At the other side of this understanding is the ‘vernacular’, almost always generally understood as categorization of architectural structures that belong more to the type instead of style.

“Their identifiable architectural elements often develop from tradition-based uses and construction methods, occasionally exhibiting elements of commonly known architectural styles... Vernacular architecture is a response to adapting style elements to common buildings in ways that provide a more or less modest architectural expression.” (Rosco, 2018, July 5, Retrieved from: <https://streets.mn/2018/07/05/architectural-style-high-style-vs-vernacular/>).

The term vernacular as a particular pattern of buildings coming from a local tradition that was, and to a limited extent still is, a practice handed down throughout generations of builders and carpenters, the more experienced of them becoming master builders. They communicate what their purposes and fabrication can tell us about their function and place in our working and cultural environment, why they were created in the traditional patterns they were built with, occasionally with minor reference to their historical and social origins (Rosco, 2018, Grchev, 2002). In general, the wide frame integrating any theoretical mainstream should accept that all forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific

needs, accommodating the values, economies, and ways of living of the cultures that produce them (Oliver, 1997).

Any of the directions that research like this can lead, points somehow to the same set of values referring to the basic definitions of culture as well. At the other side, “vernacular architecture owes its spectacular longevity to a constant redistribution of hard-won knowledge, channeled into quasi-instinctive reactions to the outer world” (Nakamura, 2015). He is arguing that as representing vernacular domain, (it’s main contributors, the masons, builders of local type distributed all over a vast area of the Ottoman provinces especially by the end of 19th century), had no desire to dominate it, to own this as a specific expression or language, especially by witnessing the constancy as the vernacular’s unforgivable weakness as he notes. But, although in some parts of the world by vernacular we understand that it follows no fads and fashions but evolves only unperceptive in time, in these provinces that are of our interest, we will face the ‘fashion’ and ‘trendy’ as ongoing and particularly emphasized attitude of the main investors, the specific citizens class able to influence their orders by being affected by the seen and experienced.

Facing the inconsistency (or fragile and open inner structure) of the vernacular as a term, it is difficult to oppose to a defined system of valuations in architectural styles:

“...we call buildings "vernacular" because they embody values alien to those cherished in the academy. When we called buildings "folk," the implication was that they countered in commonness and tradition the pretense and progress that dominate simple academic schemes. Folk buildings contained a different virtue. The study of vernacular architecture, through its urge toward the comprehensive, accommodates cultural diversity. It welcomes the neglected into the study in order to acknowledge the reality of difference and conflict.”

(Nakamura, 2015, January 1, Retrieved from <https://nakamurayuko.wordpress.com/2015/01/23/vernacular-architecture-the-issue-of-definition/>).

However, it seems that we can accept the standing that “the study of vernacular architecture is an approach to the whole of the built world. It favors completeness, recognizes diversity, and seeks ways to use buildings as evidence in order to tell better versions of the human story.” (Glassie, 2000).

Methodological Standpoints – Aspects and Relations

By defining and understanding historical styles in the Western European countries, it is difficult to establish analogy with the processes carried out in the areas of the Balkans and Macedonia (which is a problem in this research); above all, we assume this because of the actual existence of a heterogeneous historical matrix and successiveness of processes, i.e. a differently shaded historical reality reflected directly on the nature of the conditions. Stating the differences influences and obliges one to differently structure the relation to the notion of style in architecture in Macedonia, which was an integral part of the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the considered period. In addition, observing the development of the Macedonian architecture at the beginning of the 19th century through a process of gradual implanting of elements from different cultural environments, we notice a specific process of gradual refinement of some types of solutions. Having in mind similar patterns that appeared in different environments and cultures in the same period, they also acquired the corresponding specifics of an autochthonous and separated value category. We determine what was the factor influencing the conditions because of the specificity of historical relations and the

nature of some processes as well as the existence of essential requirements for detailed perceptions of the general architectural development and the complexity of ties, influences and results of historical movements (positive and negative) in the Ottoman Empire. (Grchev, 2003)

What is especially interesting for us, and what points directly to the different traditions according to which the occurrences in our areas essentially inclined from the general European and world trends, is the conclusion that the 19th century in effect did not manage to create its own architectural style failing to carry through a general discipline of construing and shaping within its time. "The revived styles were just ornaments of architecture, not essential principles by which it would develop and live." (Hickok and Johnson, 1997). Even though we record the development of architecture in Macedonia in the context of analogies of the medieval heritage implemented through the last offshoots of the post-Byzantine architecture, as well as the presence of generally defined Ottoman, Oriental and local influences, we have to point to generally different cultural modification of identity development processes. Not having pretensions to define separate, synchronous and plan-implemented processes of style integration around homogeneous patterns, we define the processes in Macedonia and in most Balkan countries as the independent and separate phenomena existing within a different historical and social reality. The differences we state were situated in the cultural coding, which was formed almost independently from the general streams of European architecture and art. They would meet late enough not to allow complete substitution and transfer of experience which, fortunately, would be one of the factors for the observance of designated and adequately defined traditions being possible (Grchev, 2014).

The events in the Balkan countries in the same period would get, in their recognizable way, the marks of an emphasized individual development. Researchers of the architectural development agree that the effects of Europeanization in the Ottoman architecture could be initially observed through changes in the applied façade decoration after 1720. Changes and transformations in the classical Ottoman architecture in space and composition terms became evident only at the end of the 19th century whereas decorative baroque and rococo forms had already shown certain achievements in design. During the 19th century, Western European influences would bring a complete change in architectural style.

In this direction, we can conclude that viewed from the present-day perspective and knowing the essence of some processes of development and transformation of architecture and art in Macedonia, certain features of architecture enabled indirect reaffirmation of some presumptions in the context of accurate perception and comparison of the conditions vis-a-vis their broad European and world surroundings in the same period. The complexity of the historical context thereby goes beyond one-sided historical and artistic interpretation. As the result of such processes, the expression in architecture that was formed via an amalgamation of older masonry models and their adjusting and uniting with other means of expression and style, in the final instance was a reflection of a complex culturally transformation, established in radical and deep processes of inner movement. Such processes, which were almost identical according to the structure of their "inner dynamism of transformation," would be the denominator determining/signifying the architectural development in Macedonia in continuity.

Professionalization of masonry and organization of masons' guilds in the changing conditions of the 19th century also created conditions for faster development of certain endeavors in construction, which initiated development of certain branches that rapidly reached the level of a specific and recognizable art. In such conditions, we clearly record a joint existence of identical tendencies and movements (especially accentuated in the church art in the Balkan countries and Macedonia), set on different levels. They would appear as the first "synthesis" understood as a definition of iconological, esthetic, and didactic tasks of the church art, which would find its place in the construction of some buildings as an occurrence within the romantic historicism of Central Europe. However, the global situation in the

Balkan countries at that period was much more a bastion of the old lifestyle, and thus of a corresponding relation to art with lots of inertia and traditionalism in its segments.

In the newly created conditions in the Ottoman Empire in the second half of the 19th century, the complex activity for construction of new buildings based on traditions and with elements and influences of modern architectural movements from Western European countries was an objective expression of the newly created social circumstances and needs, which created new esthetics. The intersecting process between the Eastern and Western cultures in the Balkan states, gradual crumbling of old Oriental structures, the process of Europeanization of civil engineering and the interior of buildings as well as the manifestations of historical styles in architecture, which meant getting closer to Europe, would be in service of the state, the church and the enriched civil class. A specific architectural morphology in such developmental processes would be gradually created owing to the developed ties and communications with different cultural environments (Grchev, 2003, 2014).

Examples²

Within the scope of this research, we are presenting a set of architecture realizations from both groups: rural and urban vernacular; they present a specific basis for developing an open relationship with the problem of defining different influences. This is especially related to the attitudes towards European architecture (style determined), in relation to the architecture of any local environment, no matter if it is in the urban or in rural region or area (vernacular determined). In this sense, taking into consideration our opened discourse towards all, even most modest appearances of style appearance, we emphasize those structures that symbolize most relevant evidence of all style or other developmental processes as an object of our interest. Architectural production of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century is related to the engagement of the construction guilds and local builders and skilled masons; the architecture that they created in this period is underlined with high aesthetic references.

1. Rural Vernacular

Research that was done so far in a domain of architecture history, point to the specific development of almost two centuries of specific history and traditions in Macedonia and Balkan countries. Most significantly, discovering different processes of style transformations in all types of architecture and building production, remarkably "speaks" about local adaptations and powerful individuality of some of the masters from the period of the 19th century and the period between the two World Wars later. In general, this will approve the specific contribution of Macedonian architecture in the mentioned period, marked with its originality and richness of "transitional" values of different interpretative variants.

The genesis of forms in reference to the anonymous construction business specifically depicts the profile of the Macedonian architecture in the 19th century. It facilitates the determination of processes and transformations influenced by certain external factors. Nevertheless, there is not enough relevant material for a stiff and rigid definition.

Relation to the basic shaping of the elements of front pieces, or creation of the functional organization which is obviously transformed during the 19th century, points to strong relations of the traditional stream of recent architectural production in that period, with the architectural elements, style forms, decoration etc., that will be brought to Macedonian cities from different surroundings. Because of constant migrations, this process is not one-sided. The complex structure of the processes of inside transformation of the style and the

² Most of the buildings in this analytical part belong to a wider research process that was presented in different contexts and publications. The presented selection is purposely selected for this paper.

other expressive architectural assets requires appropriate treatment of the mentioned problems, through which we build the entire system of founding the values in architecture



Figure 1-4: Varieties of examples of rural vernacular architecture from different regions of Macedonia (mostly constructed in the late 19th century)

Source: Author

2. Urban Vernacular

The second half of the 19th century marks the beginning of the construction of specific buildings in Macedonia. They were built according to defined examples brought from different countries. This is the first appearance of two-story and three-story houses that had wide eaves and ceilings decorated with wood carving ornaments. In that sense, regarding the contribution of that building tradition in the creation of different (often named as national) architecture expressions, we can discuss the change of roles while interpreting the qualifications regarding varieties of housing architecture representatives in the region.

The attitude towards the basic conception of front piece elements or the creation of a functional organization was evidently transformed during the 19th century. It demonstrates the strong connection of traditional currencies in architecture production with the architectural elements, style forms, ornaments, etc., that are brought into the Macedonian cities from different regions and cultural environments. Constant migrations will not let this process evolve in only one way. There were migrations towards the faraway cities where the merchants and craftsmen formed colonies; such as in old Ankara, Smyrna, Bursa and other places. These Vlach merchants and craftsmen from Bitola, Krushevo, Thessaloniki and other places brought building masters back home to build their houses. This is the reason for a great resemblance in comparison (in an ambient and general sense) with the architecture in Macedonia.

The complex, urban city milieu at this point comprises parallel existence of buildings from the beginning of the 19th century, and further on buildings of the so-called "Thessaloniki type" typical for the second half of the 19th century, in which we can notice the European style influences applied according to the principle of free and casual compilation.

The European influences could be felt in the very appearance of the cities, as well as in the manner of execution of the new houses, which clearly directs the transition from an oriental into a new, modern city. That was the spirit that marked many public buildings in that period: consulates, churches, mosques, public and military schools, and hospitals. The architecture styles of the East and West stand by one another and complement each other. Influences of the Western-European eclecticism and other styles reach their peak regarding the construction and exterior appearance. Abundantly ornamented facades are comprised of neo-classical tympanums, baroque attics, and various ceramic-plastic decorations, especially in the treatment of the windows, balconies, stairs, pillars and other architectural elements.

Accordingly, towards the end of the 19th century, and during the first decade of the 20th century, the choice of decorative elements on the facades represents an evident demonstration of vernacular transition towards the European influences and experiences. Moreover, the application of elements marks an identical treatment of individual residential buildings made by local masters and building guilds, as well as in buildings made for the official administration.



Figure 1: High School building, Bitola
Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gimnazija Josip Broz Tito Bitola \(3\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gimnazija_Josip_Broz_Tito_Bitola_(3).jpg)



Figure 2: "Stopanska Banka", Bitola
Source: <https://whereismacedonia.org/building-of-stopanska-banka-bitola/>

Following the same traces, we point out the High School building (Figure 1) located on the river bank in the city of Bitola, as one of the most interesting buildings, originating from the last decade of the 19th century. During 1892 this building was extended, and started to function as a pro-gymnasium – "Ruzdie". From 1896 till 1912 it operates as a complete Turkish gymnasium – "Idadie". Different expressions have been used regarding architecture and ornamental-decorative repertoire applied on the facades. The southern facade represents a synthesis of baroque and renaissance elements as well as applied decoration and elements. In terms of composition, the pilasters reinforce the function of vertical divergence and the influential presence of Renaissance architecture can be recognized in the triple horizontal division of zones separated by emphasized decorative cornices. Furthermore, it can also be recognized in the appliance of different windows in the three horizontal zones. Similar to the rest of the Imperial center towns in those days, this kind of architecture regarding public and administrative structures, manifests a clear desire of belonging to the European cultural context. Hence, it represents a justification for the specific eclectic manner in the choice of decorative elements used to define the facade appearance of the building.

We can find abundant structuring of facade surface as well as a balanced composition of all shaped and decorative elements in the branch office building of so-called "Stopanska Banka" in Bitola (Figure 2). This building was constructed at the end of the 19th century, and it was built for the needs of the newly operating branch office of the Imperial Ottoman Bank

from Istanbul. During the period between the two World Wars, this building was used as a branch office of the French-Serbian Bank.

There are several reasons that characterize this building as a so-called "transitional" type. It is evident that we can recognize its characteristics in its symmetry, logic of horizontal division and general functional disposition of the base. Consequently, we determine the local influence as a direct repercussion on the total building appearance. The applied facade decoration cannot be treated as a simple total summary of style elements or style marks by analogy. This assumption is based on the nature of the applied material that can be found in other buildings in this period (the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century). The nature of such decoration can be established as a presence within the shaping of facades on several important buildings in this period (the Niazi Bey' Palace in Resen, Figure number 7, the City House in Gevgelija, Figure number 8. further on in the text). The development of the so-called "transitional" model is applied according to the well-known traditional resolution, as well as according to the rules for the horizontal and vertical articulation of basic facade elements. This type of buildings displays identical tendency that can be noticed in the previously mentioned building of the former "Ottoman Bank", which is generally regarded as "renaissance" influenced. We can interpret that these buildings develop as a kind of "style condensations" while following a distinguishing traditional form; a definition that leads towards the local construction experiences from the previous period.



Figure 3: The Bitola' University Rectorate building
Source: <https://bitola.info/university-st-kliment-ohridski-bitola/>



Figure 4: A building of the former branch office of "Thessalonica Bank", Bitola, built around 1906
Source: Author

The Bitola' University Rectorate building (Figure 3) was built in 1911, as a residence of the Sultan Reshat V for his visiting trips to the town of Bitola. This example comes from the traditional model of a city house from the previous period and wears all marks that originate from that qualification and being transiting from specific vernacular realizations already applied and known. The specifically developed rhythm of the windows, a repetitious appearance of identical window groups as well as the timid conception of all other details are characterizing this building. The colonnade of columns that form the covered porch with a jetty outlet from the story contributes to the achievement of a neo-classical manner in its appearance as well as in the total treatment of the structural elements. Even though it generally deviates from the basic neo-classical conception it can be said that at the same time it comprises elements that lead more towards style canalized architecture than towards a non-determined traditional concept. This building can be placed specifically in the space between local vernacular traditions from the 19th century and the Historicism coming from European architecture.

Unambiguous use of neo-classical style elements is evidently an indicator of the taste sense of the period as a result of specific social and cultural transformations. Accordingly, it expresses the need for reaching for these style references whenever a tested model for achieving desired effects is necessary. This is evident in the example of the building which is a part of the street front assembly (Marshal Tito, Bitola Figure number 4). The present appearance and condition of the facade are similar to almost all other facades in this group. The structure was built around 1906 on an important location and it was primarily used as a branch office of the "Thessalonica Bank". The neoclassical elements take the predominant place in the shaping of the facade of this building. Nevertheless, the applied facade decoration manifests a serious retreat which is evident on the decorations above the windows, on the ground floor and in the specific refraction of the roof finish and cornice as well.



Figure 5: A residential building, Bitola
Source: Author



Figure 6: Residential building built in 1905, Bitola
Source: Author

The presence of European neo-classicism regarding the architecture of the period can be established as a dominant and widely spread influence. With its solid and tight structure, it is compatible with the aesthetic and social imperative of the new citizenry. The functional organization of these buildings is compared to the so-called "double" houses, or houses with four or more different rooms, built during the whole period of the 19th century. These buildings manifest special respect towards total symmetric of the entry, central hall with a staircase, as well as the symmetric organization of the rooms. This is certainly one of the reasons that imply the "European manner", according to the existing sources of information.

The influence creates certain pressure on the local construction masters, and make them dress locally developed types of architecture into "European" costumes, transforming one type of vernacular into others. The neo-classical style expression, as well as its stability and reference, will be widely applied to different but compatible architecture and style interpretations. Application of methods in order to achieve optimal coordination regarding vertical and horizontal divisions would lead to the achievement of pure style articulation effect on most of the buildings (Grchev, 2003).

Another set of style influences on the development of different vernacular concepts can be followed at the beginning of the 20th century with the town of Resen that develops as a remarkable place in terms of development of trade, economic and cultural relations with the European countries. Consequently, the town of Resen will nurture the appearance of the so-called "city architecture" that would be mainly commissioned by the wealthier class of citizens comprised of merchants, craftsmen, and emigrants. It participates in the creation of the complex picture regarding architectural style influences at the beginning of the 20th century, till the end of the First World War in 1919.



Figure 7: North facade of the Palace of Ahmet Niyazi Bey
Source: Author



Figure 8: Former residential building of Mulalija Effendi, Gevgelija
Source: Author

The former building of the so-called "Saraj" (The Palace of Ahmet Nijazi Bey, Figure number 7) gives the town a remarkable characteristic (Grchev, 2005). This "palace" was built in the period of 1905-1909 with a part of the handicraft work being executed later. The building of this structure is connected to an interesting story confirmed by written historical sources. It is about its commissioner Ahmet Nijazi Bey who was a student at the Military Academy in Istanbul. He had progressive ideas and probably was a member of the young Turks movement, so he was sent to Resen. His name was connected to the activities of this movement in the Prilep-Resen region. The story says that a school mate of his was sent abroad to Paris, and he sent him a postcard of some Palace. Being astonished by the beauty of the palace on that postcard he will decide to build the same structure as his own residence. According to this source, the construction began in 1904, and finished in 1912, before the beginning of the Balkans Wars.³

The building is mentioned as one of the most representative structures of architecture at the beginning of the 20th century. It is evidence of architectural realization possessing high aesthetic and functional values as well as elements from European Historicism regarding architecture.⁴ The most remarkable thing is the fact that such a building with such dimensions, decorations, etc., was realized by the local builders. The lace-like facade decoration is a manifestation of the local masons' signature at the beginning of the 20th century. The applied decoration of the assumed original, which was most surely from another style origin, was replaced by available material in those days, to be more precise it was replaced by ceramic-plastic elements which were identically applied in the shape of a decorative frieze, "scaled down version" of an already known building with much larger dimensions (Grchev, 2005).

³ Niyazi Bey was killed in 1912, in the town of Drach in Albania. He left the vivid story behind, and its exceptional uniqueness to face us with the indisputable facts: 25 meters of height, 4800 square meters interior, high-quality material used for the interior and a serious attempt to build in luxury that was obviously partially realized. All of this is evident in the choice of material as well as in the sophisticated manner of its master treatment.

⁴ In the attempt to determine its distinctive style references, besides its alleged relation to the Versailles Palace (according to which it was built and yet seems most distant as far as style analogy is concerned), we can take other well-known buildings that were possibly on the postcard sent to Niyazi Bey such as the City Council building in Paris (Pierre Schambigge and Boccador, 1533-51), the Fontainebleau Palace (1528) as well as some later realizations. Which one of these buildings was on that postcard is not quite clear, but on the other hand, it is not relevant in this context.

In the city of Gevgelija, one of the most famous houses, preserved among the others is the former house of Mulalija Effendi also known as the "European type" of the house (Figure number 8). The brave composition of facade volumes, expressed through the free disposition of elements manifests special construction work and decoratively treated facade surface that shows the precision of a filigree. The application of a shallow facade decoration has a different origin; it has been used freely through adjustment of decorative forms for the purpose of treatment in relation to the adequate facade or constructive element. In this original composition of different decorative motifs, we discover a specific eclectic procedure that has been applied in the function of "total aesthetics and ornamentation".

Conclusion

General statements about the development of European architecture in the 19th century are based on many presumptions that mainly start from the revolutionary movements of European societies induced by the explosive development of the industry. The 19th-century historicism as the basic (or possible) style expression would mean a realistic continuation of certain flows of historical styles from previous epochs. Having in mind the exceptional complexity of procedures under the methodology of which the program selection of essential architectural determinants was made, we perceive salient clashes and struggle in the architecture that would be fought between representatives of the two main tendencies. Their opposition pointed subtly to the fact that in the same time span, similar processes would not bypass the Macedonian cultural area of that period either. That is imposed as a reasonable presumption having in mind the development and the performance of Macedonian builders, who would make their contribution from cherishing and continuing the experiences and the traditions of the late post-Byzantine era, recognizable in church construction, up to the presence of the Eclectic procedures and Romantic tones, which gave a special mark to that huge building endeavor.

However, because of the level of development of Macedonia at the times, direct style analogies and references, as well as parallelism in perceiving the processes, may be interpreted as being wrong. This particularly because in the European frameworks, examination of the historical styles during the period of the 19th century resulted in increasing awareness of new and harder adjusting to the new materials and the industrial time, which imposed completely new architectural themes. At the same time, the vernacular developments will show the strong ability of adaptation, transformation and flexibility towards different parameters of architectural program and themes. In the "Western" world, Historicism of the 19th century will remain defined through style; at the same time, the "Oriental" context of Balkan countries including Macedonia will remain in the domain of the rich typology of vernacular.

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