

Unknown architectural heritage in the Balkans. From mining towns, commercial buildings and Tower houses in Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro.

December 9th, 2021

Ao.Univ.Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Caroline JÄGER-KLEIN



Kulturerbe – EVALUIEREN | INTEGRIEREN | KOMMUNIZIEREN



Mining Towns

- **Municipium DD** (Dardanorum): Roman colony (imperial property) and municipality: center of the imperial mines from the 1st to the 4th century BC.
- **Svač / Shas**: Medieval enwalled town with at least 32 Christian churches; peak in the 15th c.;
- **Novo Brdo / Novobërdë**, 13th-15th century largest town in the Balkans; Saxonian mining experts with special rights; Ragusan traders; silver-coin (grossi) production for the Florentine and Venetian trading activities;



Trading Routes

- **Ura ë Mesit**, essential bridge across the Kir north of Skodra (Scutari), northern Albania
- **Bashtova**, a 14-16th c. fortified trading place (type caravan-saray) of the Venetians and Ottomans at the mouth of Skumbim into the Adriatic, central Albania;

Tower Houses

kulla (sg.), kullat (pl.), Turkish for tower (kule), fortified, multistory house with loop-holes, out-look gallery in wood or stone, not accessible inner staircase and cistern/well



From 2015 to 2019, annually I took my students from TU-Wien and UBT-Prishtina **on excursion into the region**; also students from Tetovo state university (N-Macedonia) and from UPT (Tirana Polytech) joined our **field trips**; the students **prepared excursion readers** (little booklets in advance), **explained** to each other their results of research and finally wrote seminary papers on specific topics



We touched together
the objects,



Expectations before versus knowledge and understanding of the architectural heritage of the region after,
were recorded by the students with the means of filming:



... we lived and
slept within those
tower-houses and
other vernacular
architecture and met
with the inhabitants
....



For the results follow the U-tube link below:
<https://youtu.be/ZImN7g3fbKM>



Roman Empire under Cesar and Augustus

Putzger et al, Historischer Weltatlas

Lissus - Naissus Itinerary and other important routes which passed through Kosovo during Roman rule.

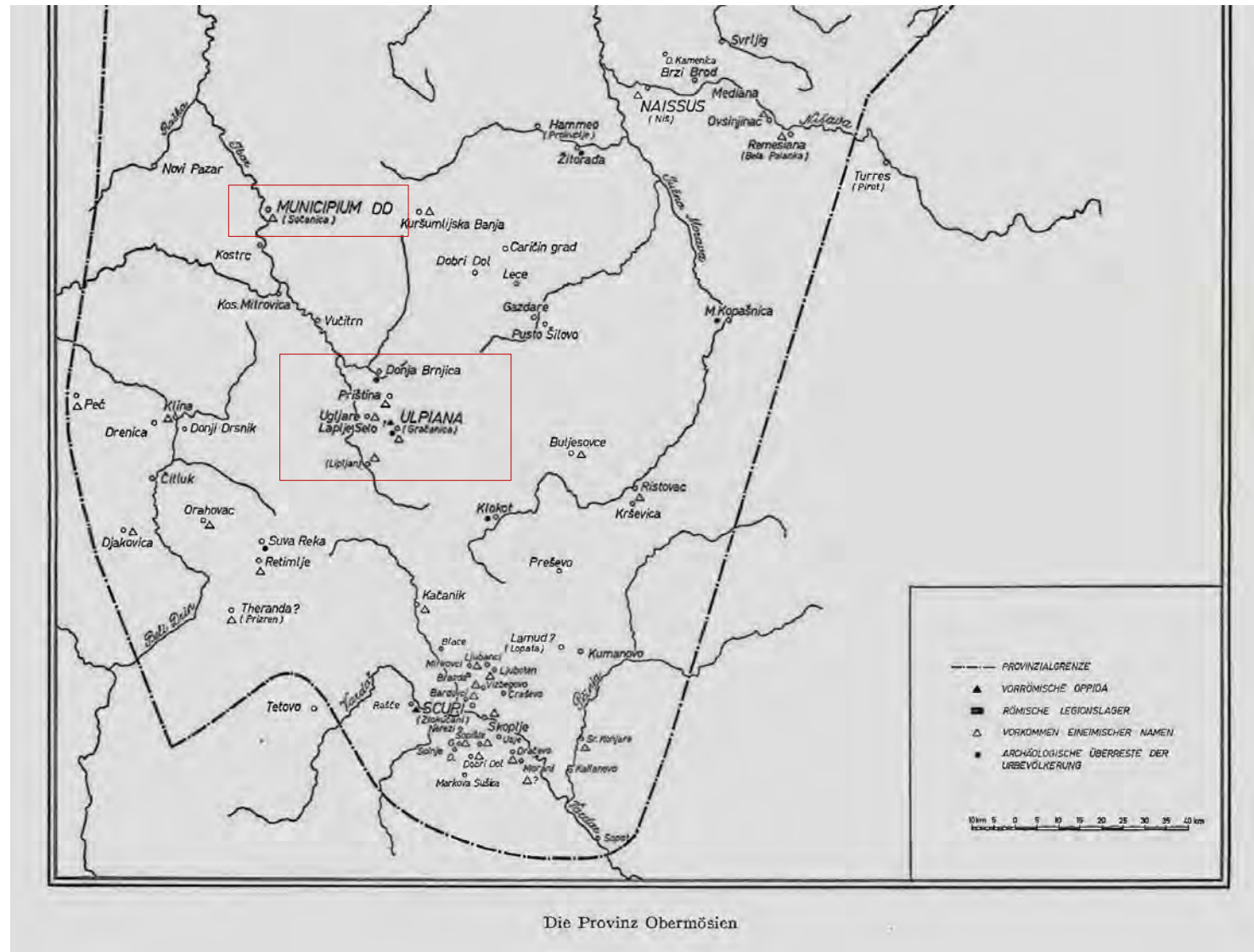
Map developed by Arnisa Kryeziu



Economy based on the
two **mining complexes**

Trepça – Kapaonik (“Silver
Mountains”) – Rogozna
(Northern Kosovo – Serbia)

Hajvalia – Janjeva – Artana /
Novo Brdo
(close to Prishtina – central
Kosovo)



Municipium DD (Dardanorum):

Roman colony (imperial property)
and municipality: **center of the
imperial mines** from the 1st to the
4th century BC.;

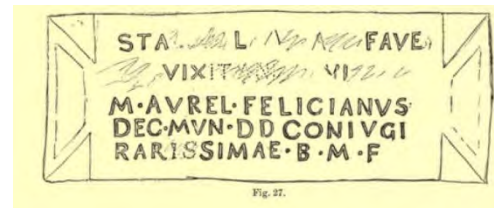
city size and scape: 30 hectares
size and trapezoid shape

Eastern part with great forum and
basilica, temple, thermal bath;

attached to the urban basilica
(typical covered hall with three
naves and middle apse – *tribunalia*)
were two *horrea* (**public
warehouses** for storing the **metal
mined** in the surrounding “silver”
mountains)



Reconstructed horreum at Saalburg-Museum



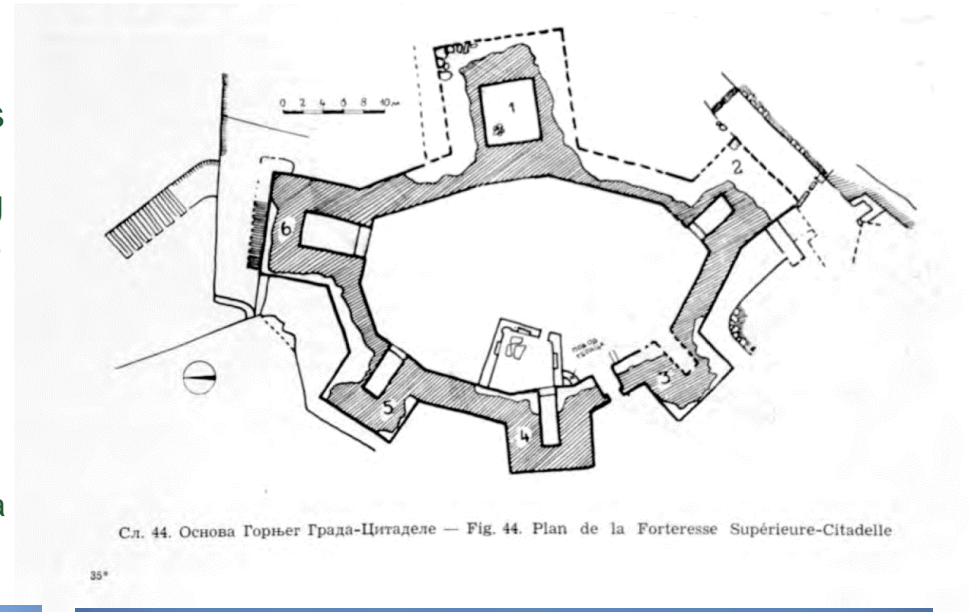
The great British archaeologist Sir
Arthur Evans (Knossos!) describes
Municipium DD already in: A.
Evans, „Antiquarian researches in
Illyricum“, London 1885)



Novo Brdo / Novobërdë (Artana)

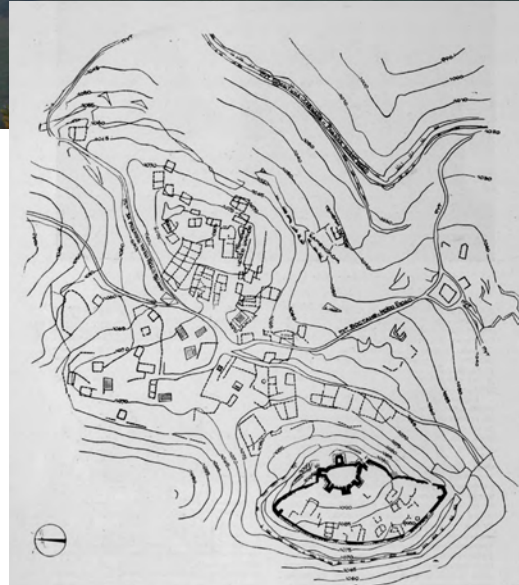
- Biggest fortress from the **Illyrian period**, 4th -3rd centuries BC.; under the named >Artana<
- Historians, chroniclers, travelers and merchants wandering at most important centers of European civilization in the **late Middle Ages** cited this city as the **most developed one in the Balkans**, built on a hill full of silver and surrounded by defensive walls.

Fortress of Novo Brdo before the latest restoration (down right) and after the UNESCO financed reconstruction through Omega Engineering Dubrovnik in 2018



Novo Brdo / Novobërdë (>Nyeuberghe<; Novomonte) 13th-15th

The Nemandjid King Uroš I. (since 1242) brought already “**Saxonian**” (**Sasi**) **mining experts** into the region. Probably they came from “Freiberg in Saxonia” (the today’s region of Harz) and the **Zips** region in nowadays Slovakia. Novobërdë is mentioned in a French travel report from 1432 as >Nyeuberghe< and was at its peak the biggest town in inner Balkans.



Сл. 5. Геометрички сликарски планови терена у размери 1 : 1000
Fig. 5. Situation du terrain entier; échelle 1:1000



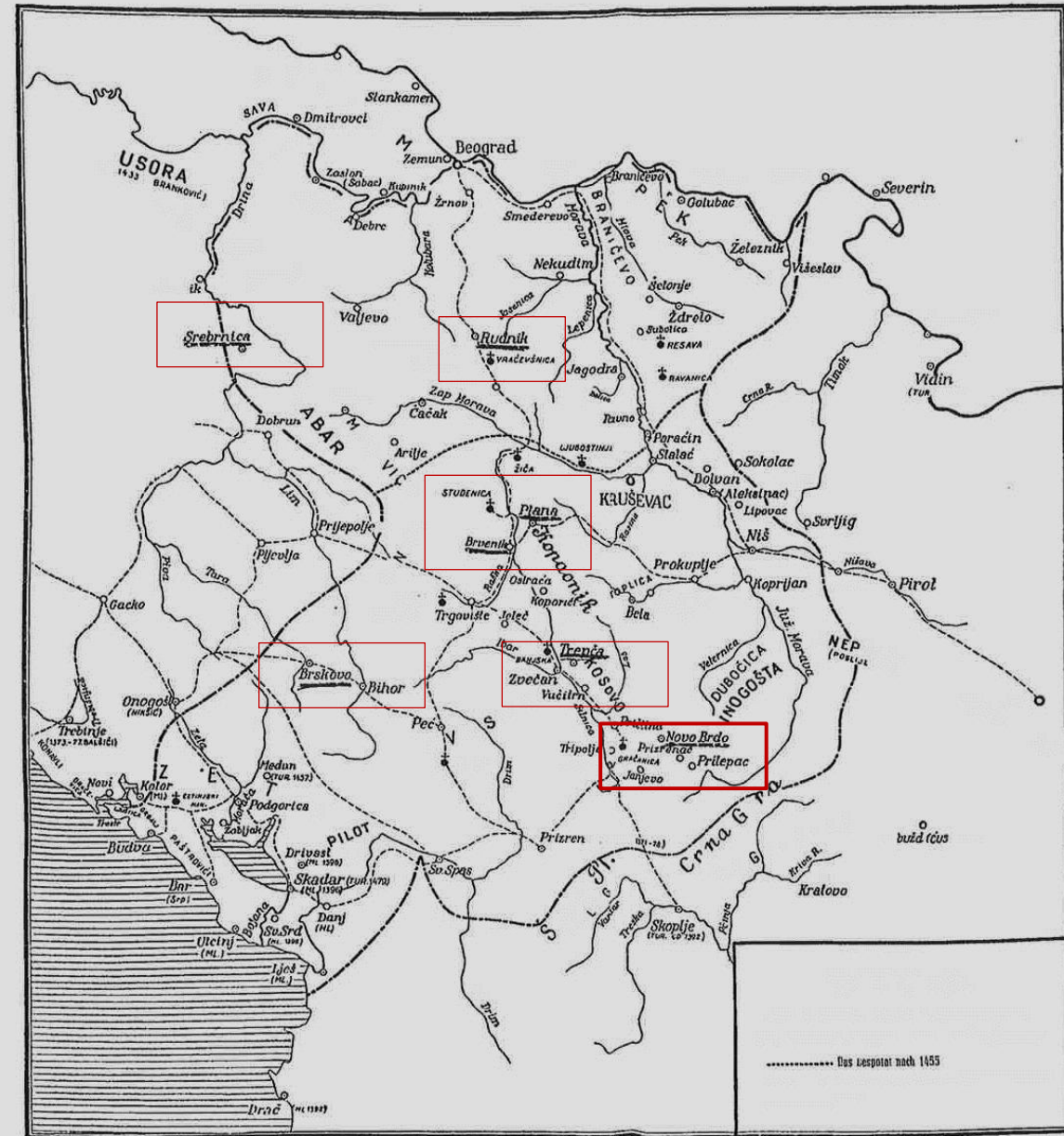
Medieval trading routes from the Adriatic coast to the inner Balkan mining towns:

„**Latins**“, catholic citizens of the Adria coastal towns like Ragusa and Kotor brought the goods (salt, silk, spices) into inner Balkans, where in the „**Saxonian**“ mining towns (Brskovo, Novo Brdo) German speaking specialists carved the silver (ans other valuable metals like zink) needed; the metals was minted mostly for the Venetian trading empire; the „Serbian“ medieval kings (like the Nemanya dynasty) profitted most from the system

RAGUSA
(DUBROVNIK)

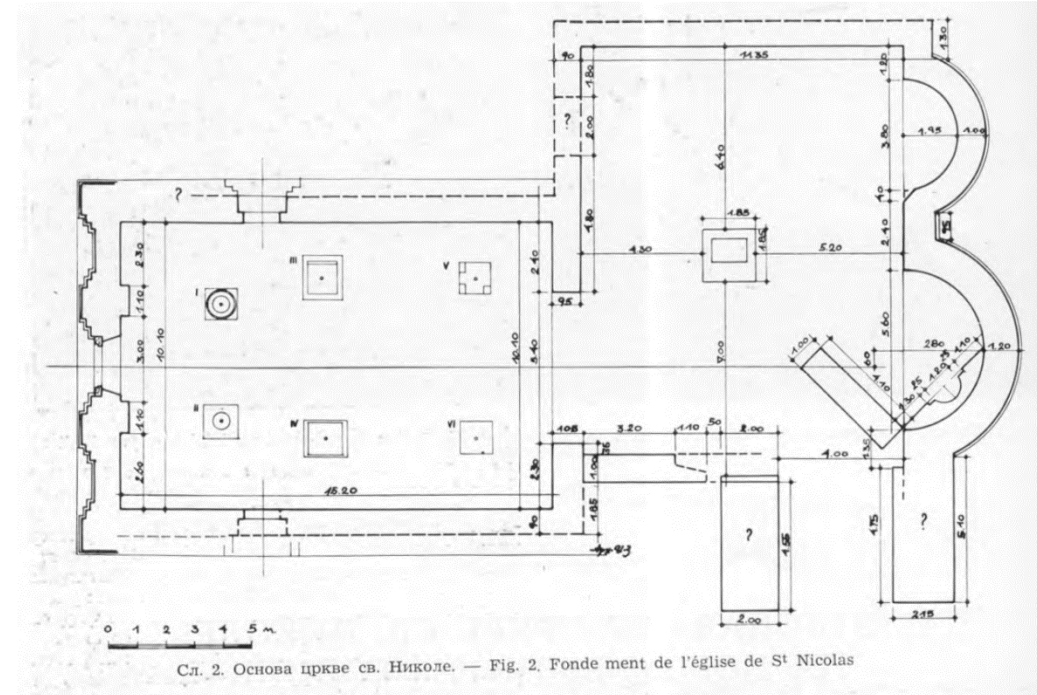


KOTOR



Novo Brdo / Novobërdë (Nuovomonte)

For its Saxonian miners, other German craftsmen, the traders from Ragusa and various catholic settlers, Novobërdë **provided at least two catholic churches**, one parish church and the **cathedral Saint Nicholas**, constructed in the 14th century, and reconstructed during the first half of the 15th. According to the report of the Kosova Archaeological Institute the cathedral had a wide narthex and the central part had three naves. The old church from the 14th century was entirely incorporated into the new construction from the 15th century, becoming the southern asymmetric nave.



Novo Brdo / Novobërdë (Nuovomonte): St. Nicholas cathedral

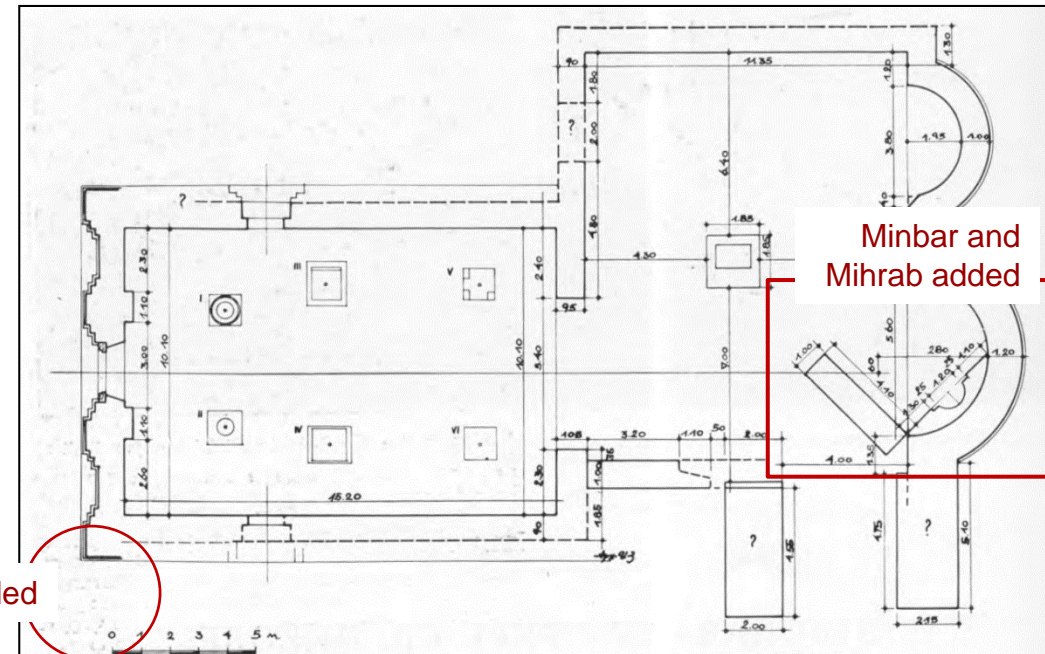
The St. Nicholas cathedral was **converted into a mosque** in 1466, when a minaret was added. The locals as well as some experts think that the cathedral with the minaret was exploited for political games in Belgrade to >prove< the allegations that Serb Orthodox churches were converted into mosques during the rule of the Ottoman Empire.

To Compare:

Left:
Athens Acropolis with
minaret, anonymous
drawing, 1670



Minaret added

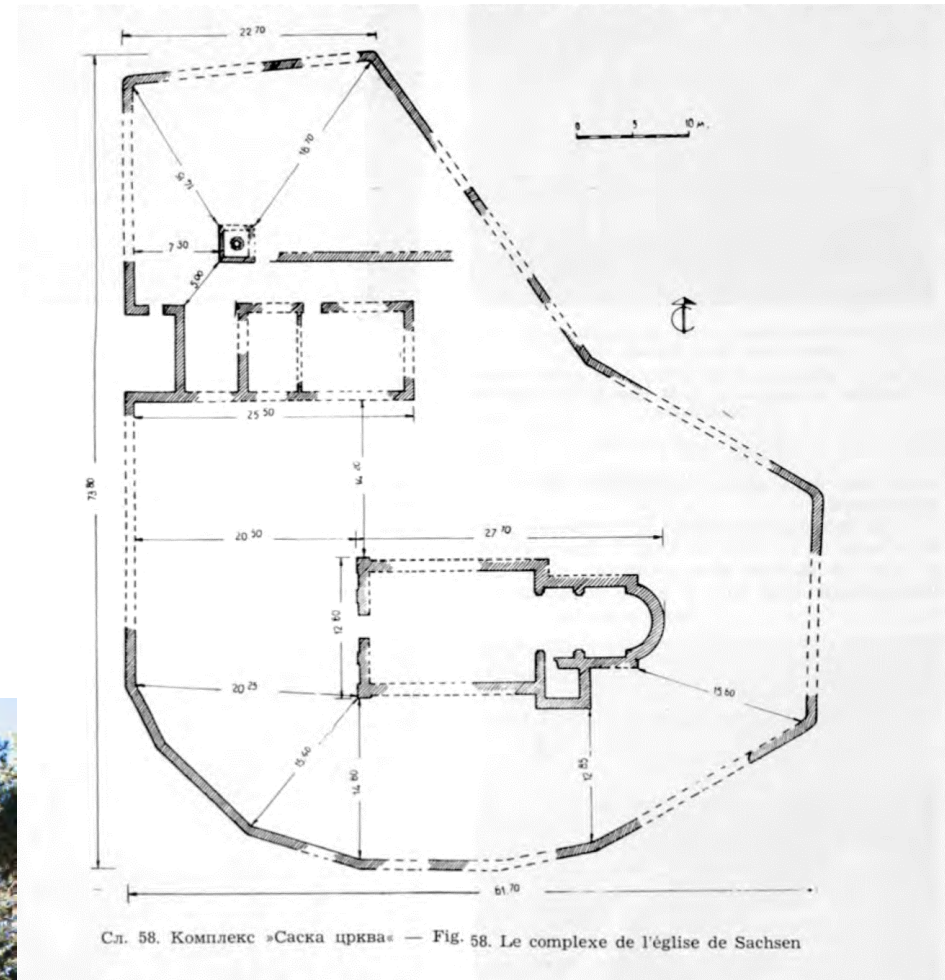


Сл. 2. Основа цркве св. Николе. — Fig. 2. Fondement de l'église de St Nicolas

Catholic Parish Churches at Novo Brdo / Novobërdë and Trepca:

The >Sasi< specialists had certain rights as citizens, guaranteed by the >kanun Sasi< all through into the Ottoman times, for example to hold their sacral services in **parish churches** built in a kind of **Gothic style**:

Saxonian Churches in Novo Brdo (*archaeological site plan - right*) and Stari Trg near Trepca (*photos 2016*)



Novo Brdo / Novobërdë
(>Nyeuberghe<; Novomonte)
13th-15th

The Nemandjid King Uroš I. (since 1242) brought already **“Saxonian” (Sasi) mining experts** into the region. Probably they came from “Freiberg in Saxonia”(the today’s region of Harz) and the **Zips** region in nowadays Slovakia. Novobërdë is mentioned in a French travel report from 1432 as >Nyeuberghe<.

„With the sophisticated knowledge of Saxonian mining experts and incorporated into the extent trading empire of the **Republic of Ragusa (Dubrovnik)**, Novobërdë grew in the 14th and 15th centuries to a good size town. **Its mint produced silver coins known as >Grossi di Novoberda<** (dating from 1349) causing rapid economic development within the region.”

This is the money used by Florence and Venice for world trade.



Right :
Stefan Uroš III .
Dečanski (King of
Rascia, 1321-1331)

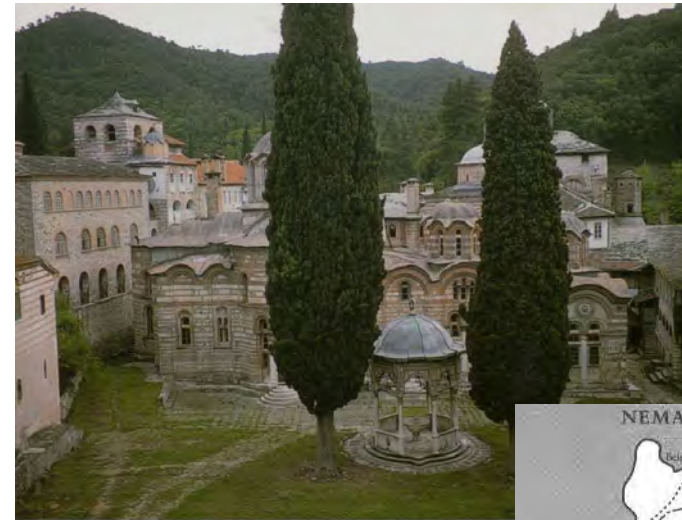
Bottom Right :
Coins of Stefan Uroš
III . Dečanski



Novo Brdo and the Nemanja Dynasty:

“...the Nemanjid dynasty took advantage of the **growing weakness of Byzantium**, ... In 1193 the younger son of Stefan I Nemanja, ruler of Serbia from 1168 to 1196, went to **Athos** and was tonsured a monk at the monastery of Vatopedi with the name Savvas. Three years later, Stefan himself abdicated and became monk, and in 1198 he joined his son on Athos with the name Symeon. In that year Symeon and Savvas were granted by imperial chrysobull ownership of the derelict Greek monastery of Chelandarios to be a gift to the Serbs in perpetuity. They founded a new cenobitic monastery of Chilandar. ... Symeon died the following year, but the work of establishing the monastery was continued with tireless energy by Savvas ... The buildings were completed on a grand scale: a typikon was devised along the lines of that in use at the Evergetis monastery in Constantinople, **large estates in Serbia were granted to the monastery**, and further privileges were assigned to it by the emperor Alexios III Angelos ...

Graham Speake, Mount Athos. *Renewal in Paradise*, Yale 2002, p.66ff.



26 The courtyard of Hilandar, the Serbian monastery founded in 1198. In the foreground is the 'canopied basin' in which water for use in the church is blessed at the feast of the Holy Spirit.



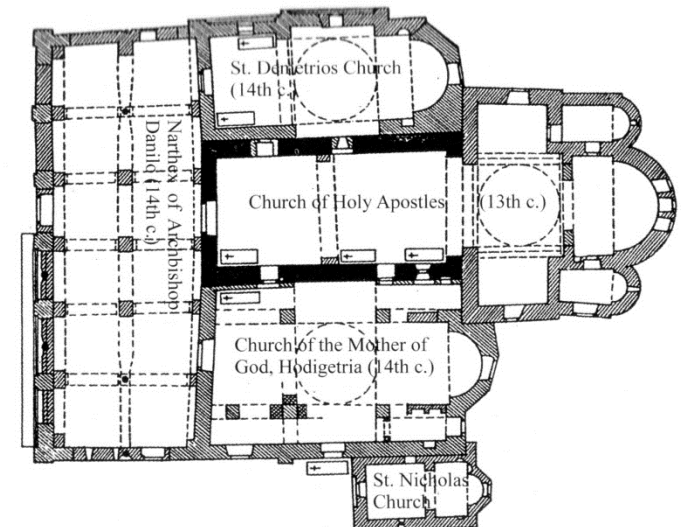
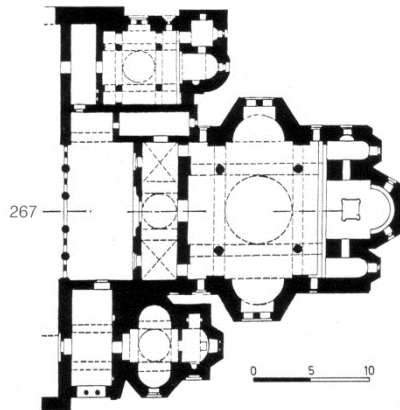
Nemanjid Dynasty and Mount Athos (Greece):



14 The katholikon of the Lavra, seen here from the east. Built by the founder in the tenth century, it was the model for all subsequent churches on Athos.

Left: The Katholikon of the Great Lavra and the plan of of Vatopedi, both 10th century

Right: Patriarchate of Peć Monastery Churches, ap. 1220-1345 and sarcophagus with burial of Savvas in the Church of Holy Apostles (*far left*)

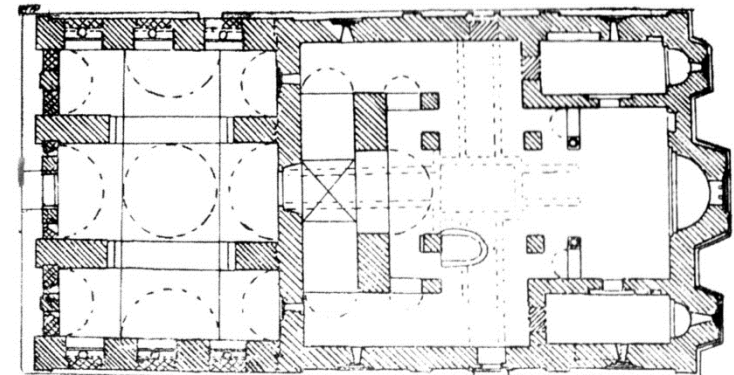
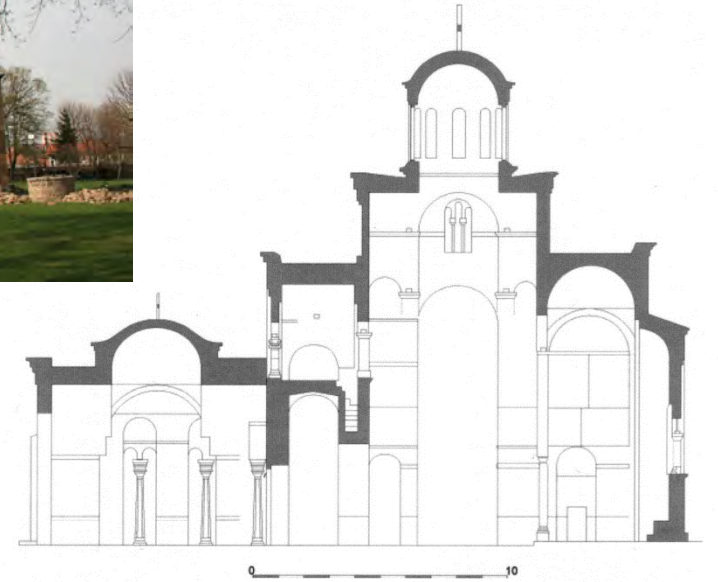


Gračanica (1310-1321) and its Byzantine legacy:

Below: The Nemanjid Stefan Uros II. Milutin on frescos in the narthex, donating Gračanica Monastery, was married with a byzantine princess, queen Simonida (*right*), painted on the same pillar within the narthex



Gračanica Monastery Church,
ap. 1310-1321, plan and
section

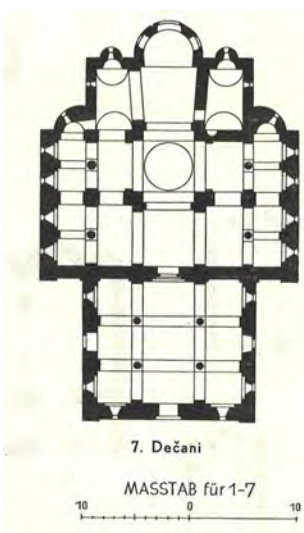


Dečan Monastery (1327-1335):

Inbetween Romanesque and Orthodox Architecture:

UNESCO-ICOMOS description for:

“**Dečani Monastery** is considered one of the most important monuments of Serbian culture and history. The main characteristics of the ensemble relate to a prototype attributed to the so-called **Ras School**, a style formed in Serbia in the 12th century.” Beyond that strong Serbian context, the international experts confess: “The plan and spatial arrangement of the church are **Orthodox**, while the exterior appearance is based on **Romanesque** tradition, ...” [2]



Why this strong contrast between Romanesque exterior and Orthodox interior in the monastery church of Decani?

“The construction lasted eight years (1327-1335), and the master builder was Fra Vita, a Franciscan from **Kotor**.”

Source: UNESCO-ICOMOS

Dečan Monastery (1327-1335)



Left below: The monastery church under construction by the craftsmen masons) and their master, Frau Vita, all from Kotor (today in Montenegro)

Center below: Decani Monastery, 1327-35, handed over by Stefan Uroš III. Dečanski

Right: Stefan Uroš III . Dečanski (King of Rascia, 1321-1331)



UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE on the Territories of Kosovo

Dečani (Serbia-Montenegro)

No 724

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Serbia-Montenegro
Name of property: Dečani Monastery
Location: Autonomous province of Kosovo and Metohija, Dečane municipality
Date received: 30 January 2003
Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a *monument*.

Brief description:

The Dečani Monastery was built in the mid 14th century for the Serbian King Stefan Dečanski, and it is also his mausoleum. The church represents the last important phase of Byzantine-Romanesque architecture in the Balkan region. Built in marble, it is the largest of all medieval Balkan churches, and is exceptionally rich in well-preserved Byzantine painting and Romanesque sculpture.

Serbian Medieval Monuments (Serbia and Montenegro)

No 724 bis

1. BASIC DATA

State Party: Serbia and Montenegro
Name of property: Serbian Medieval Monuments of Kosovo and Metohija
Location: Province of Kosovo and Metohija
Date received by the World Heritage Centre: 4 January 2005
Included in the Tentative List: 18 March 2002 (Gračanica Monastery) / 28 January 2005 (Patriarchate of Peć Monastery and Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša)
International Assistance from the World Heritage Fund for preparing the nomination: No
Category of property:

In terms of the categories of cultural property set out in Article 1 of the 1972 World Heritage Convention, this is a serial nomination of several *sites*.

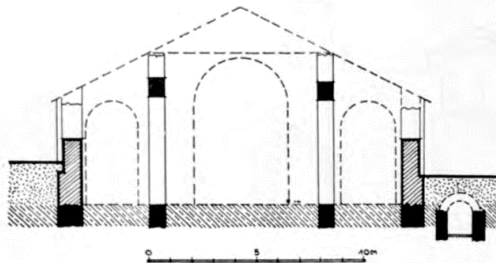
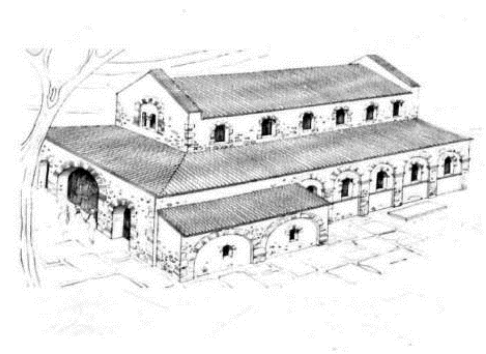
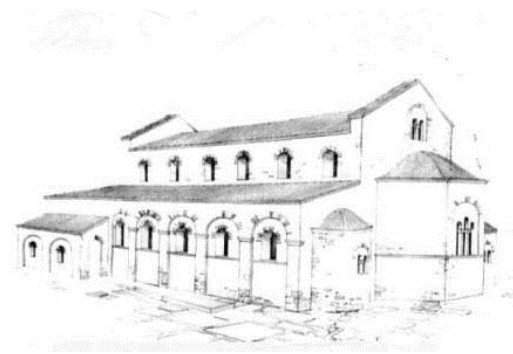
Brief description:

A group of three churches, the Patriarchate of Peć Monastery, Gračanica Monastery and the Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša, mainly built in the 13th and 14th centuries reflect with Dečani Monastery the high points of the discrete Byzantine-Romanesque ecclesiastical culture that developed in the Balkans in the 13th century under the Nemanja dynasty, and which persisted until the 17th century. The churches contain significant manifestations of the Palaiologos Renaissance style of mural painting.

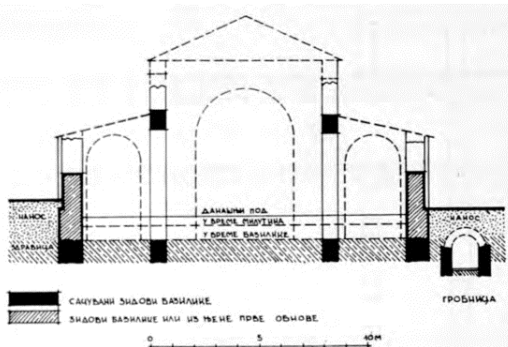
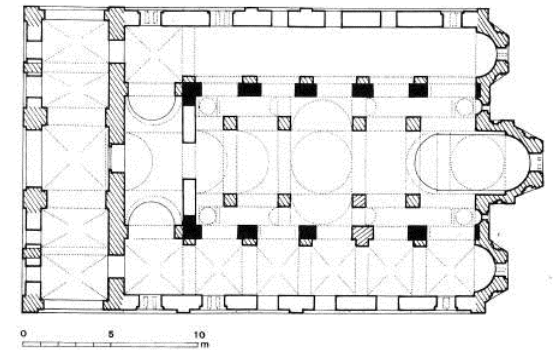
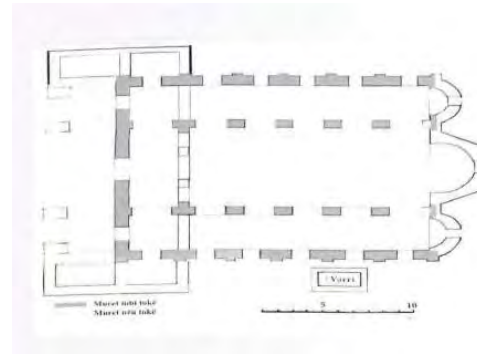


UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE on the Territories of Kosovo

Prizren, Kisha e Shen Prenda,
reconstruction of its status as 9-10th
century **Byzantine Christian basilica**
(Source: Starinar 5-6, 1954-55)



Сл. 18. Попречни пресек базилике из времена прве обнове
Fig. 18. Coupe transversale de la basilique du temps de sa première restauration



Сл. 17. Попречни пресек базилике
Fig. 17. Coupe transversale de la basilique

Top and left plan:
Prizren, Church of the Virgin of
Ljeviša in the 9th or 10th
centuries: reconstructions

Right plan:
Prizren, Church of the Virgin of
Ljeviša, finished 1313 (?) after
destruction in
12th century under Stefan
Nemanjic

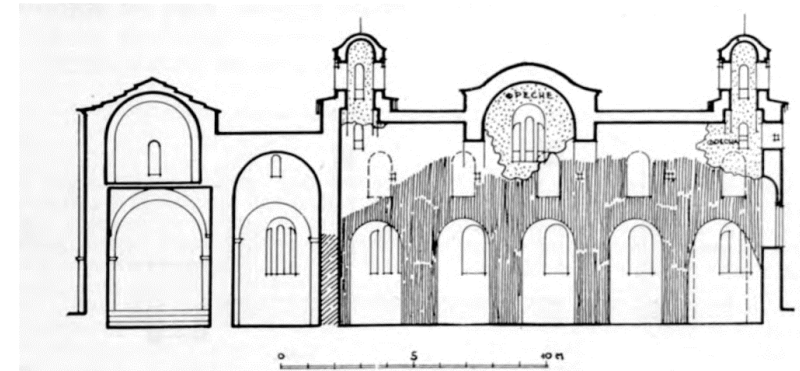


UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE on the Territories of Kosovo

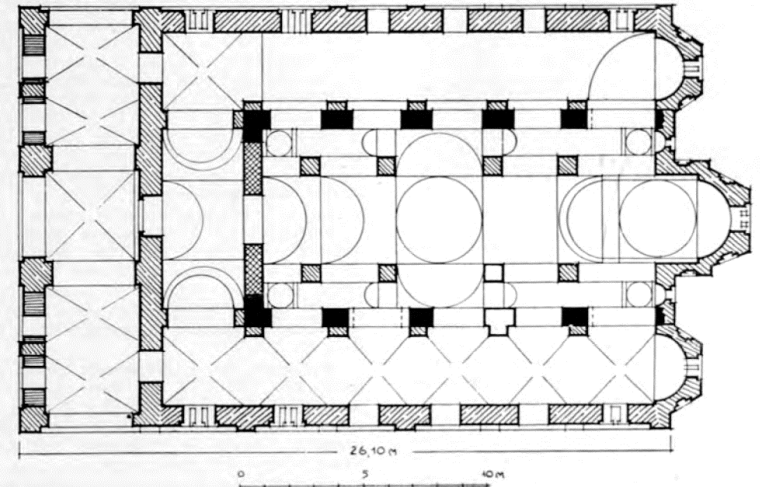
Prizren, Church of the Virgin of Ljeviša: within the main nave of a typical three naved basilica a five-dome-type Byzantine orthodox church was placed under Stefan Nemanjia in the late 12th century



Fig. 9. Kishat e tipit me 1 dhe 5 kube.
Churches of 1 and 5 cupole types



Сл. 16. Подужни пресек цркве. Шрафирана површина припада базилици
Fig. 16. Coupe longitudinale de l'église. La surface marquée appartient à la basilique



ОСТАЦИ ПРВОБИТНЕ БАЗИЛИКЕ
ОСТАЦИ ПРВОБИТНЕ БАЗИЛИКЕ ИЛИ МОША
ПОТНИЧУ ИЗ ПЕРИОДА ПРЕД ОБНОВЕ
ЗНАК ИЗ ПЕРИОДА ОБНОВЕ БАЗИЛИКЕ ИЛИ ИЗ
ВРЕМЕНА МИЛУТИНОВЕ РЕСТАУРАЦИЈЕ
ЗНАКОВИ КОЈИ ПОТНИЧУ ИЗ ВРЕМЕНА
МИЛУТИНОВЕ РЕСТАУРАЦИЈЕ
ЗНАКОВИ ПОДИГНУТИ ЗА ВРЕМЕ ИЛИ
ОДМАХ ПОСЛЕ МИЛУТИНОВЕ РЕСТАУРАЦИЈЕ
ДЕЛОВИ ПОДИГНУТИ НА СТАРИМ ОСТАЦИМА
1950-и И 1931-г. А КОЈИ СУ ТУРЦИ СРУШИЛИ

Сл. 19. Основа данашње цркве — Fig. 19. Plan actuel de l'église

Medieval trading routes from the Adriatic coast into the inner Balkan mining rows:

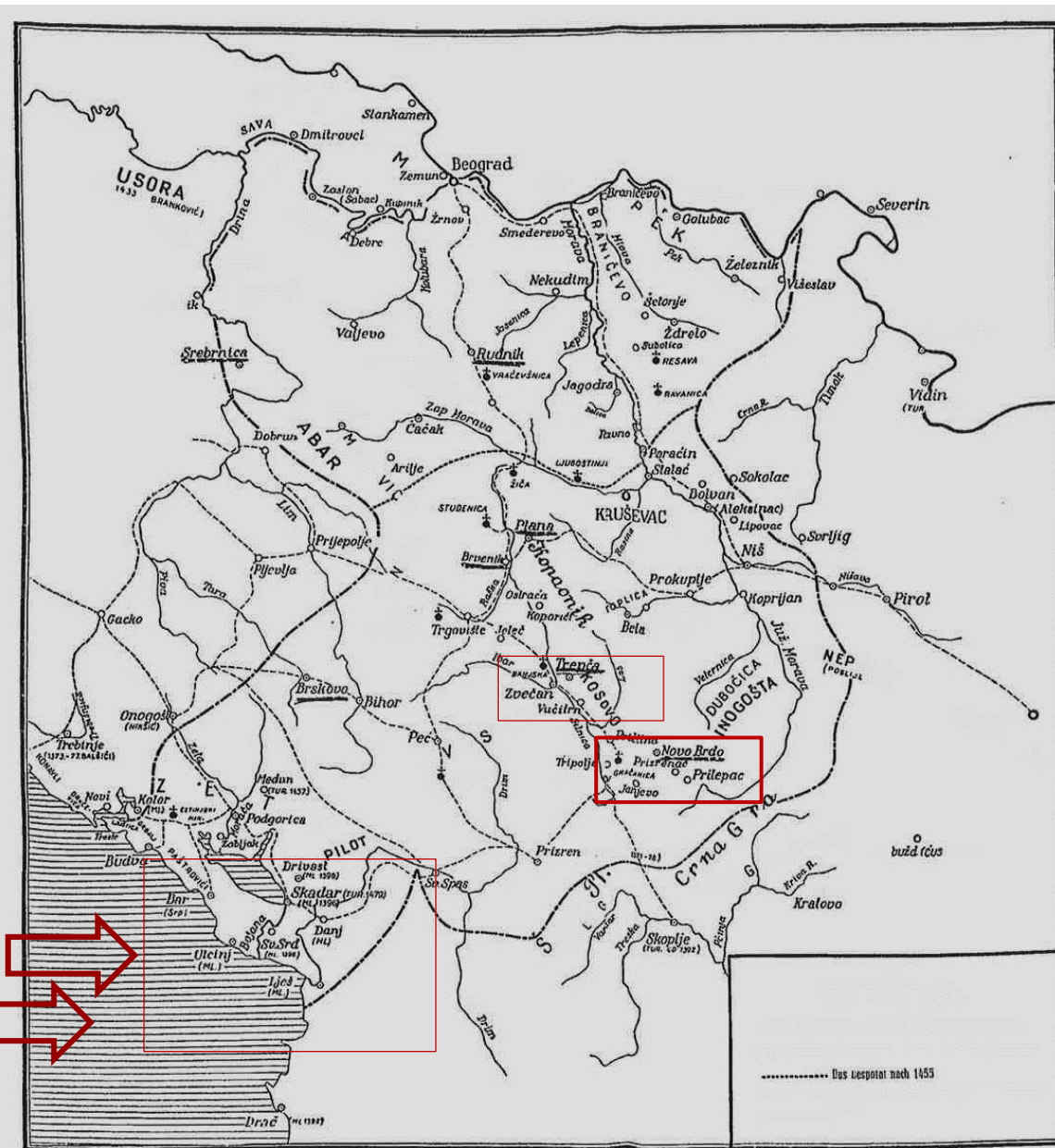
Attempts were also made to use the mountain rivers like the Bojana or the Drin for inland trading with ships Therefor some stacking places survived at least in literature for the region along the Drin gulf

The region in the old Austrian descriptions still use the names **Zaboiana** and **Zadrina** to describe their connection with the rivers.



Sv. Srd / BUNA / BOIANA

Shëngjin / Lezhë (DRIN)

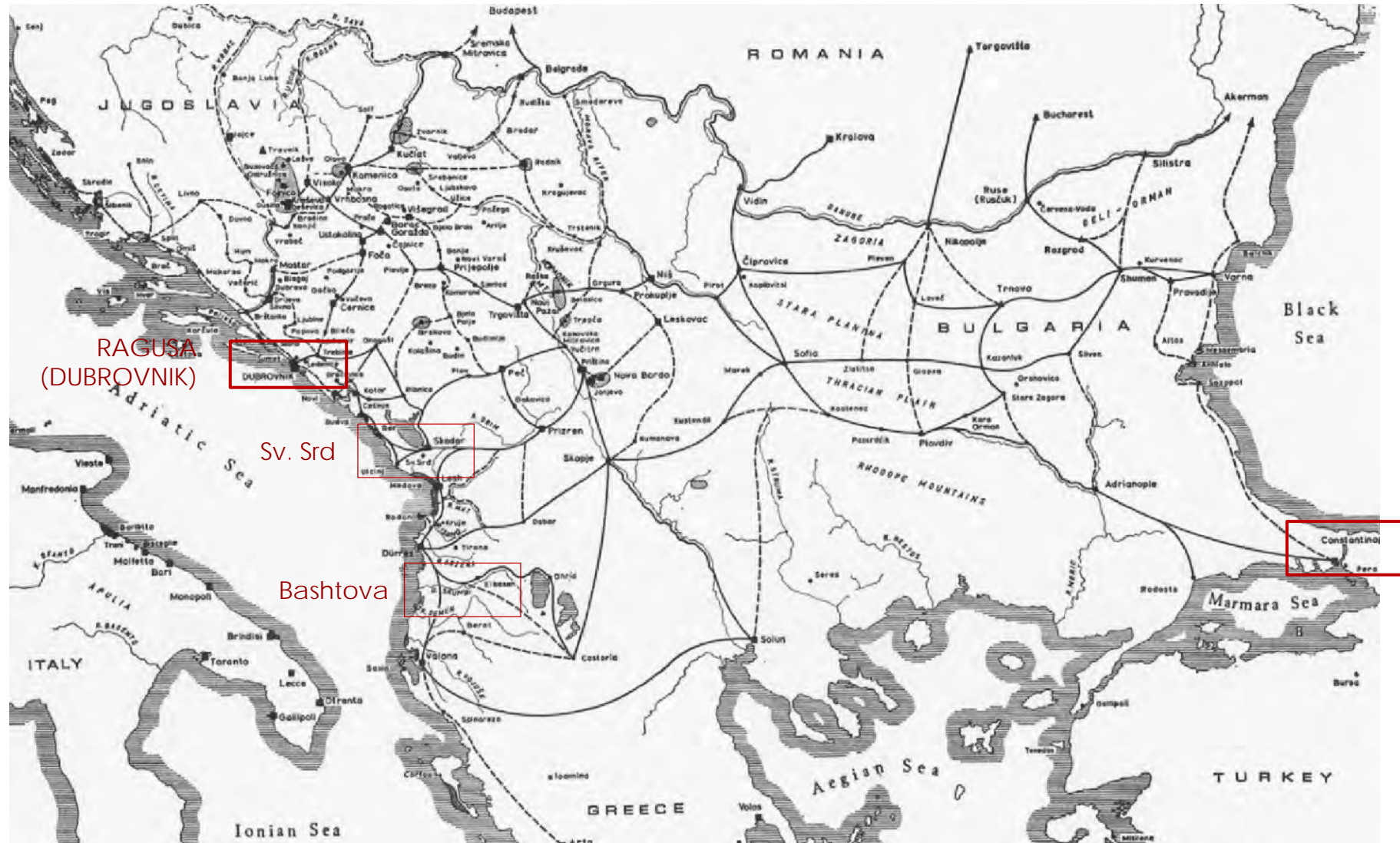


Buna / Boiana – Connecting Lake Shkodra (Scutari) with the Adriatic, but not dependable

Historic Postcards from the short Austrian rule (1912-1917)



*Historic postcard
from the Austrian
National Library and
collection of Herbert
Klein*



Prof. Paola Pinelli, FLORENTINE MERCHANTS TRAVELING EAST THROUGH RAGUSA (DUBROVNIK) AND THE BALKANS AT THE END OF THE 15TH CENTURY, Università di Firenze, Dipartimento di Scienze per l'Economia e l'Impresa

Sveti Srgj / San Sergj / hl. Sergius und Bacchus:

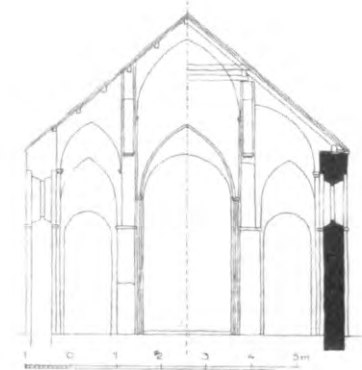
Benedictine monastery surrounded by
magazines, shops and toll authorities;
important Italian **stacking place** of the
XVIth c. to upload the goods from the
sailing boats and bring them inland;
salt depots for northern Albania;

Literature:

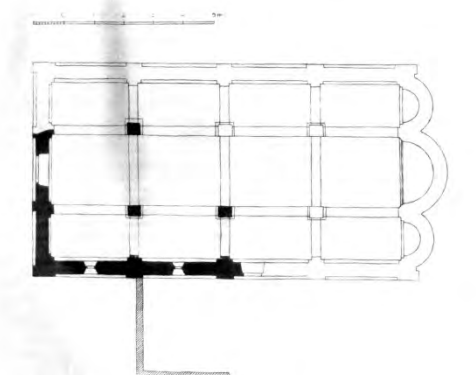
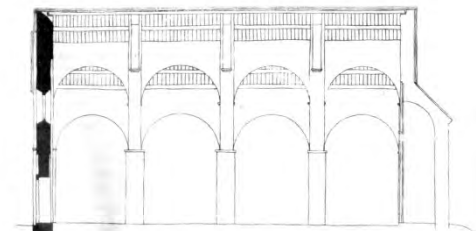
Constantin JIRECEK, Die Handelsstrassen und
Bergwerke von Serbien und Bosnien während des
Mittelalters, Prag 1879, S. 65 f.

Plans: Starinar 12, 1961, SS Sergius & Bacchus an
der Bojana (cyrillisch-serbokroatisch), S. 35-41

Photos: Jaeger-Klein, September 2017



Сл. 2. Попречни пресек, реконструкција — Fig. 2. Coupe transversale, reconstruction



Сл. 1. Основа и пресек цркве св. Срђа и Бакха, реконструкција — Fig. 1. Plan et coupe de l'église de St. Serge et Baise, reconstruction

Bashtova: 14th-16th c.

Venetian-Ottoman **stacking place and granary** at the mouth of the river Skumbin:

Rectangular structure of 60 x 90 m and 4,60 m visible wall height today; two building phases probably; spolia from early Byzantine times;

Building typology in close relationship to Persian-Turkish **caravan sarays**

Economical background : constant **shortage of grain** in Venice and Constantinopolis especially during the 16th c.

Gjerak KARAISKAJ, Die spätantiken und mittelalterlichen Wehranlagen in Albanien. Städte, Burgen, Festungen und Kastele, herausgegeben von Markus W.E. Peters, Hamburg 2010
Noel MALCOLM, Agents of Empire, London 2016

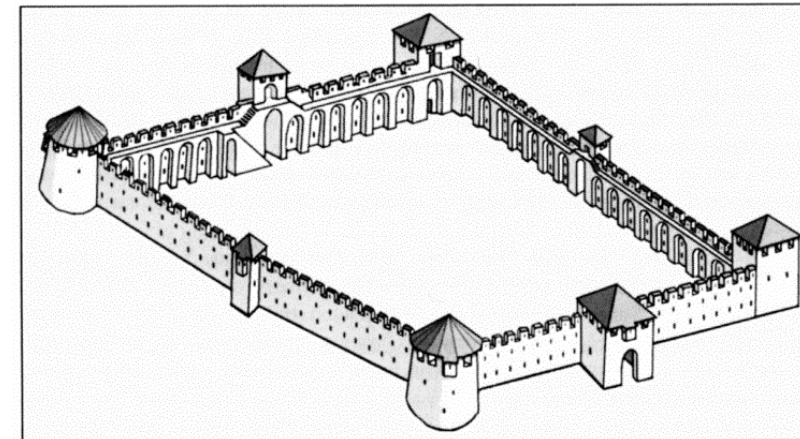
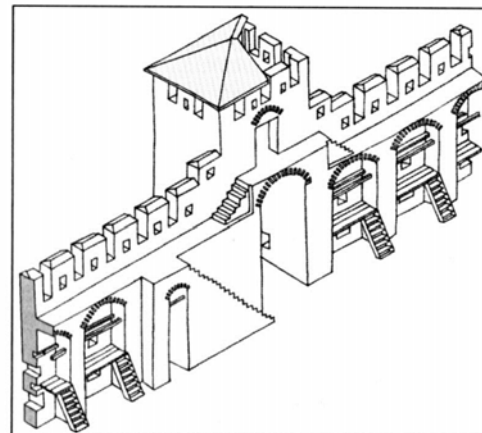
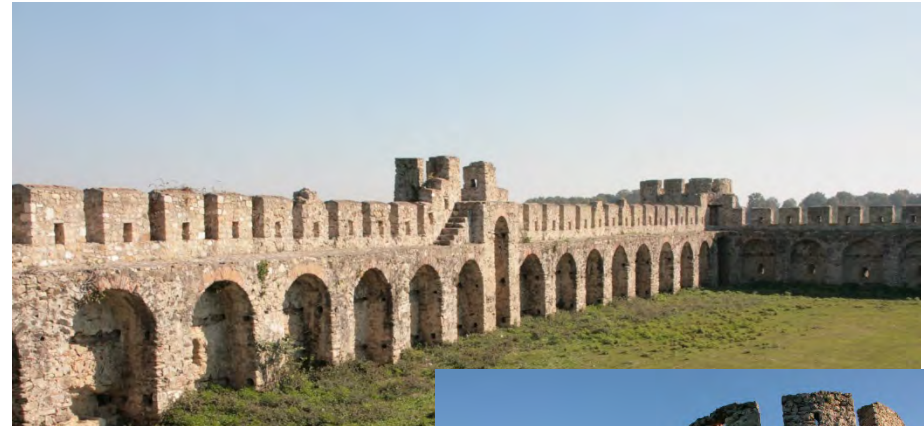
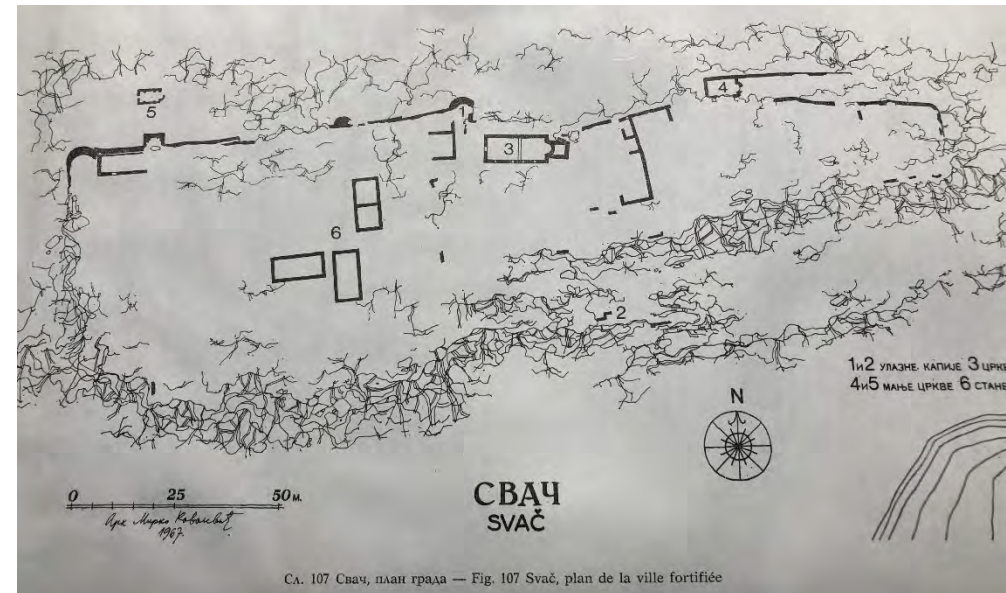


Abb. 58. Bashtova. Festung. Rekonstruktionsskizze.

Šas (Svač) / Shas (Soacia):

Medieval town within the **Zaboana** with an enwalled upper (citadel) and an extent lower part of about 15 ha.; situated in nowadays northern Montenegro between Ulcinj and Shkodra along a lake with at least 32 Christian churches recently identified and **seat of a catholic bishop**; development from the 8th to 15th c.; seized in 1571 by the Ottomans and never recovered;

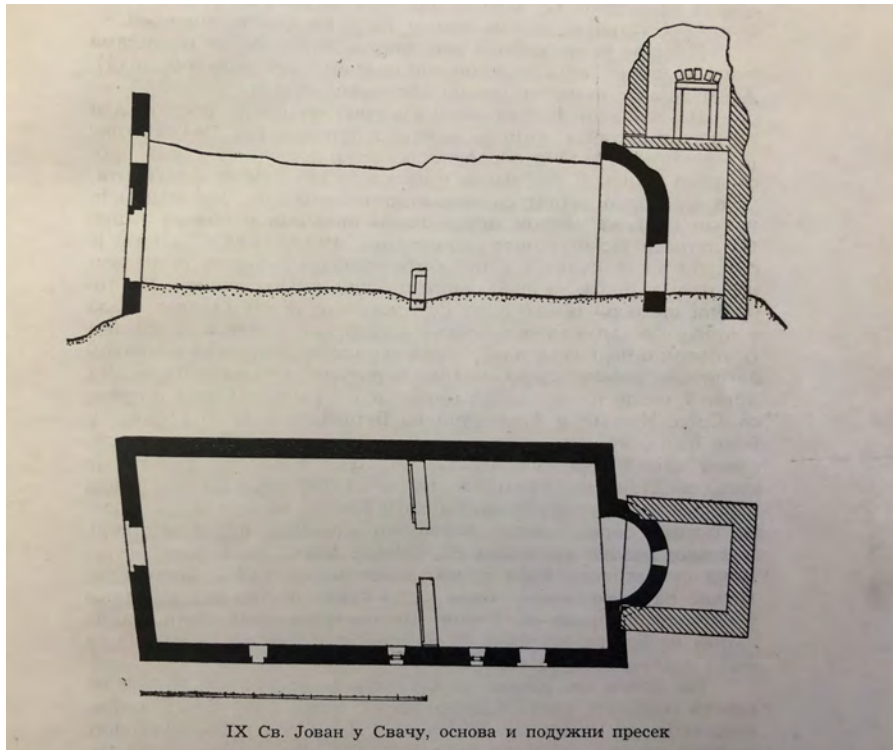
Site and impressions of Shas / Svac and the siteplan from Mijovic / Kovacevic, Villes Fortifiées et Forteresses au Montenegro, 1975



Šas (Svač) / Shas (Soacia):

Today, the ruins of two major churches are still visible: **Sv. Jovan** (3 in site-map) within the walls and outside of them Sv. Maria

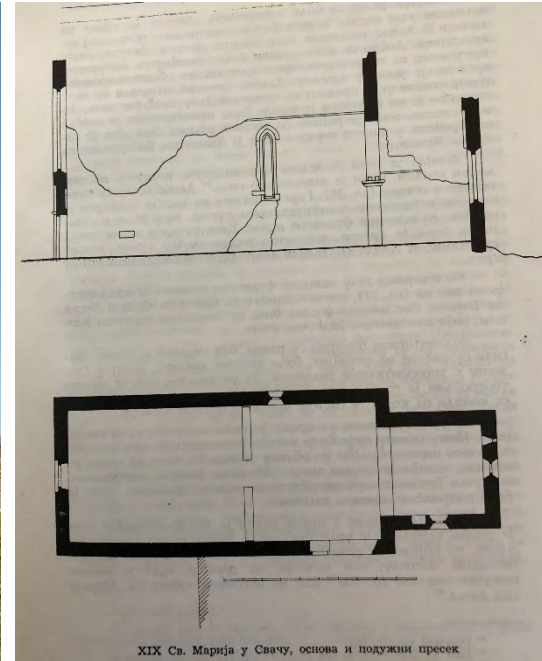
Sv. Jovan at Svac, plans from Vojislav Korać, L'Ecole des Pomorje dans L'Architecture Serbe, Beograd 1965



Šas (Svač) / Shas (Soacia):

Sv. Maria, located outside the city walls, probably a **monastery church of the Dominicans**

Sv. Marija at Svac, plans from Vojislav Korać, L'Ecole des Pomorje dans L'Architecture Serbe, Beograd 1965

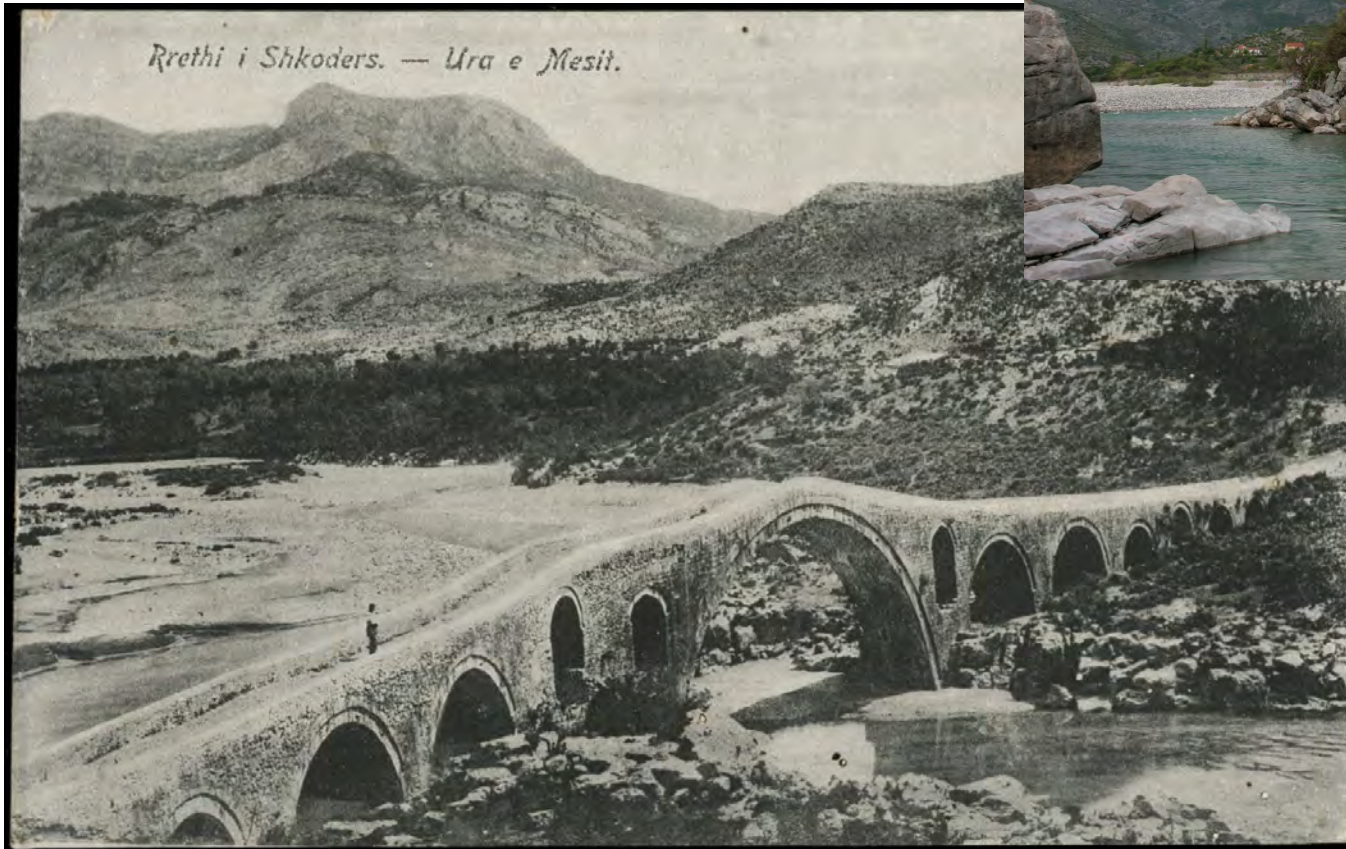




Medieval trading routes as described in the 19th c. Austrian literature f.e. Jirecek, *Handelsstrassen und Bergwerke*, 1879;
Translated into maps by Natasha Radakovic, TU-Wien

Bridges along these trading routes:

Ura ë Mesit (bridge at Mes), essential bridge on the Via de Zenta across the Kir river north of Skodra (Scutari)



Historic postcard from the Austrian National Library and Excursion with TU-Wien and UBT Prishtina Students, April 2017

Bridges along these trading routes:

Gjakova (Djakovica) is today still surrounded by those historic bridges, coming from several directions into town; their erection was financed by the specific crafts unions, which their names still explain (Bridge of the tailors, tanners etc.)



*Left: Taliqi Bridge in Gjakova
Right: Terzive Bridge near Gjakova*

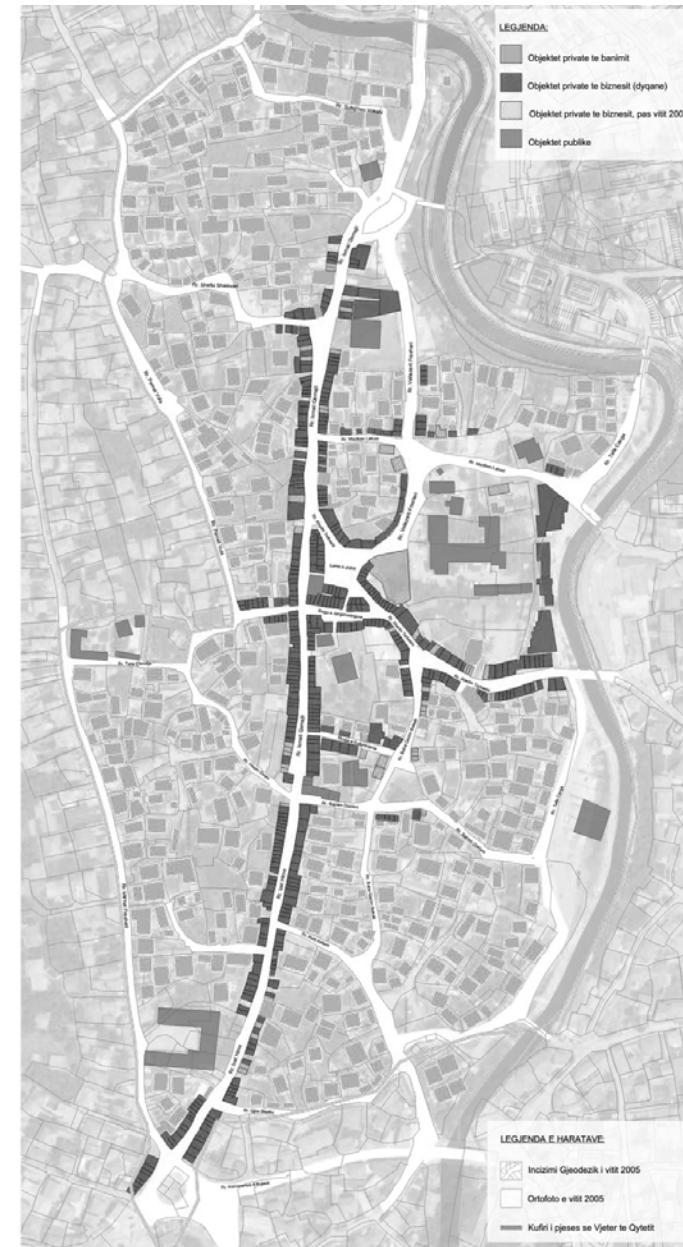
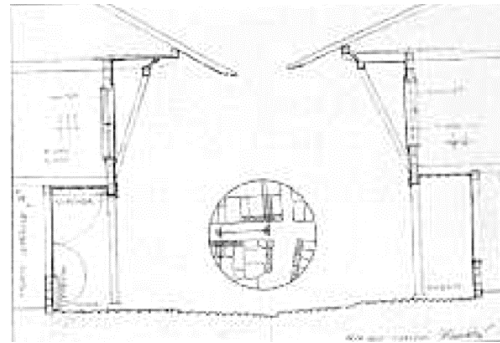
Market (Bazaar) Towns and trading routes:

Gjakova (Djakovica)



The Grand Bazaar in Gjakova is the **oldest bazaar** in Kosovo. It arose when Gjakova obtained the *kasaba* (small town) status, when in 1594, Selman Hadim Aga donated some public facilities. Around Hadum's Mosque the **Carshia e Madhe** was built. Soon Gjakova became an important economic center for the region with over 650 shop in the 17th century.

Text: Philip Frebold, TU-Wien
On base of the Masterthesis of Arnisa Kryesiu,
Izmir Technical University



Market (Bazaar) Towns and clock towers (sahat kule):

Other sahat kule in the Balkans: Travnik, Upper and Lower Market, Prishtina, Prizren :



xi. Old part of Gjakova with the two central bridges; 1. Islam Begu Bridge, 2. Guard tower, 3. Clock tower, 4. Hadum Mosque, 5. Taliqi Bridge.

Map: Shiranga Wirth, TU-Wien

Guarding the trading routes:

The trading routes certainly needed guard tower, which also served as toll-stations; at the northern end of the important market town Gjakova, this **unit** between bridge, guard-tower, family compound of the toll-collectors and market area survived to some extent (the bridge is replaced now by a modern one)



Above:
Kulla of the Kryeziu
Families, XIXth century



Below:
Guard tower (of
Abdullah Dreni Pasha)
and family compound
of the Kryeziu family at
the northern bridge of
town

Guarding the trading routes:

Along the trading routes, with certainty, **systems of fortified tower houses** served to guard the routes, for example the ones in the villa of Dujakë inbetween Gjakova and Deçan on the edge of the Dukagjini Plains in Western Kosovo or at Isniq, just outside of Deçan on the way to Peja



Kullat in Dujakë (left)
and Isniq (right)

Defendable Mountain Kullat

When Kiel summarizes, that “the history of the country is that of occupation by foreign rulers and the struggle of minor native lords against these foreigners or among themselves”, we have to assume, that **defense features** characterize the **traditional residences** of the Albanians in a specific way.

Kiel M, (1990) Ottoman Architecture in Albania (1385-1912), Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul.

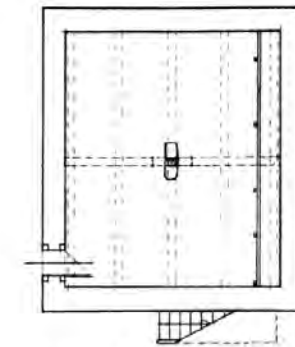
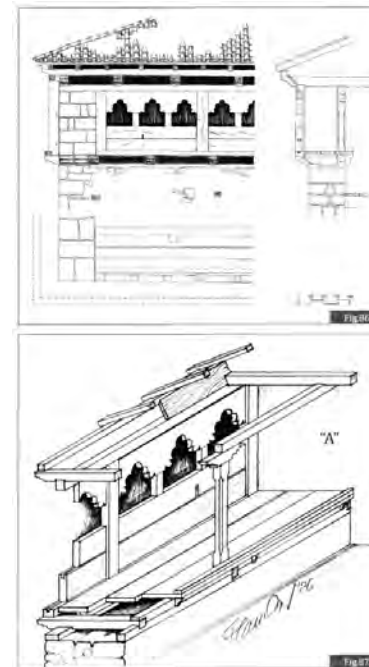
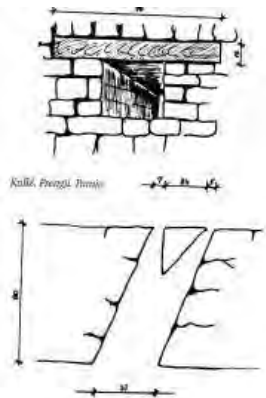


Fig.91

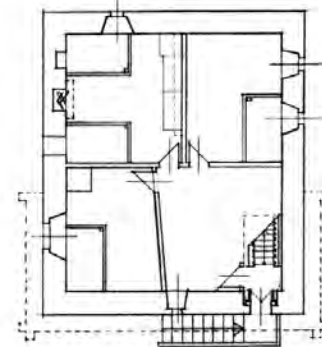


Fig.92

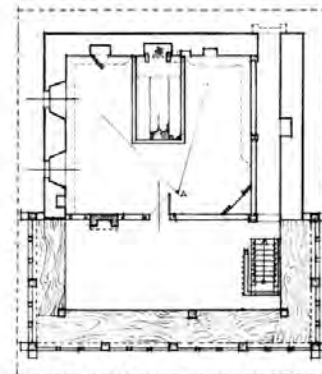


Fig.93

Defendable Mountain Kullat – Materials and Construction

Outside shell in stone with wooden inner structure;
outlook gallery in stone or wood;

Left: Kulla in Nivokaz;
Photos: Jaeger-Klein, March 2018

Right: Kulla in Isniq, October 2021

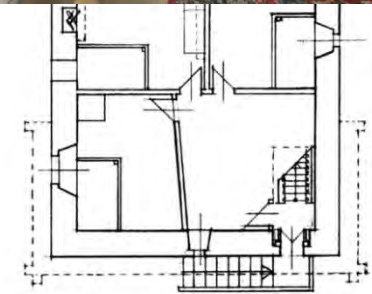
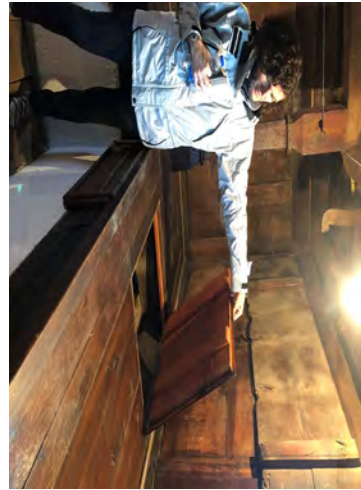


Fig.92

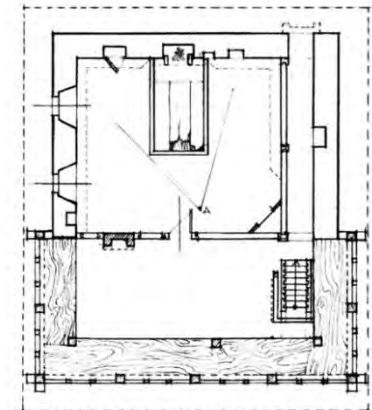
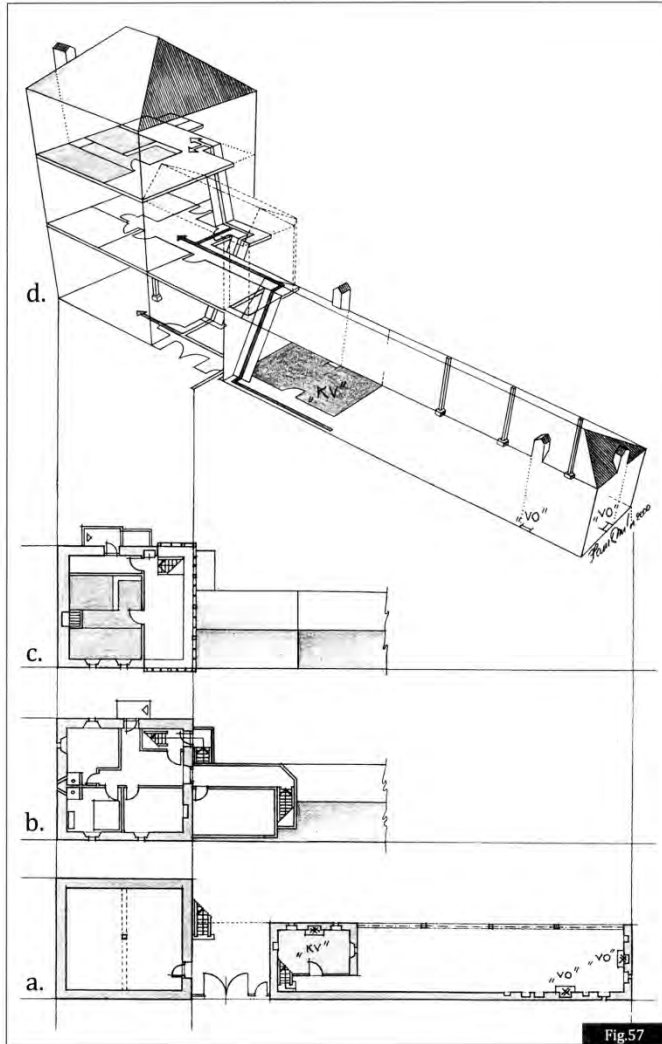


Fig.93



Kullat – lifestyle and groundplan



Ground floor:

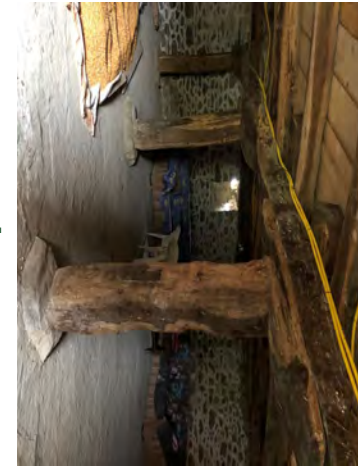
Shelter for the **livestock** and called „**aher space**“.

First floor:

Family Floor, the most intimate part; kitchen and sleeping rooms, divided by wooden interior walls;

Second floor:

The „men room“ („**oda e burrave**“), particular functions; during the day serves as living room, while in the evening it was used as sleeping room for the man of the house and the **guests**; Part of the hall in front (divanhania) before the “**oda e mique**” with the fire-place is **a platform** known as „**dyshekllek**” – **outlook**: many small windows, in the extruding outer wall of stone or wood;



Individual Farmhouse or Households in loosely settled Neighborhoods

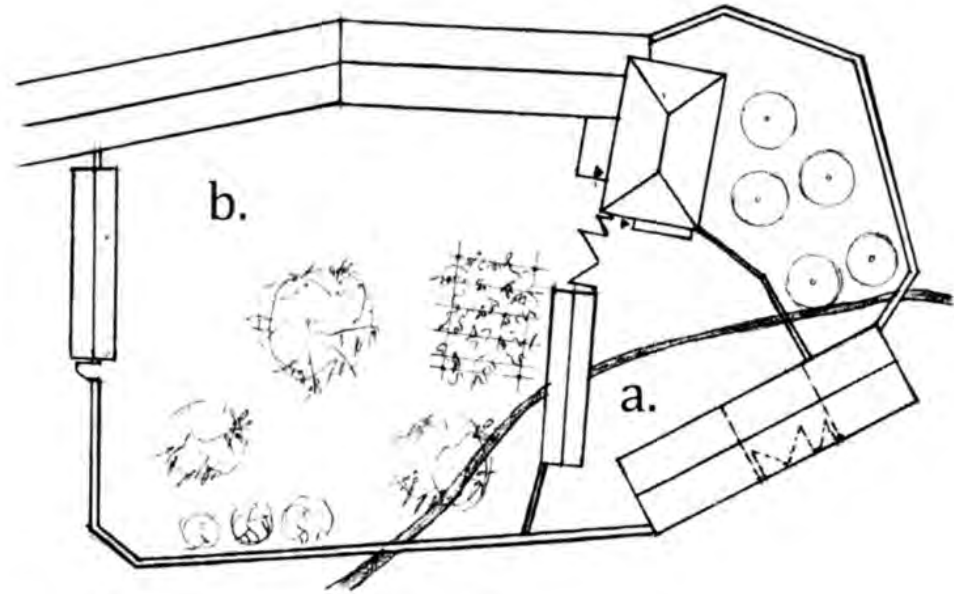
Johann Georg von Hahn describes around 1850 the region with “households ... that are scattered about, in Albanian fashion, either as individual farmhouses or as loosely settled neighbourhoods that all fall under one name”.

Von Hahn J, (2015) The Discovery of Albania. Travel Writing and Anthropology in the Nineteenth-Century Balkans, selected texts, (trans: Elsie R), London, p 19-24



Compounds of Kullat

Rural tower houses named kulla (sg.), kullat (pl.)
in Western Kosovo, combined in **fortified compounds** (mat) for farmers and landlords



Left:
Kullat-Compound at Dranoc

Right:
Kulla of Hysen Haxhijajt, Carrabreg I ulet, 1826;
Source: Flamur Doli, Vernacular Architecture 2009, p.204

Rural tower houses named *kulla* (sg.), *kullat* (pl.)
in **Western Kosovo** (Dranoç, Junik), combined to
compounds for farmers and landlords



Rural or Urban ?

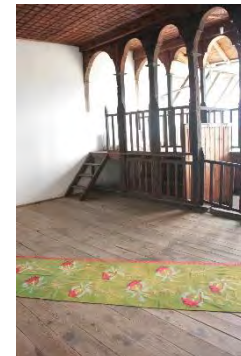
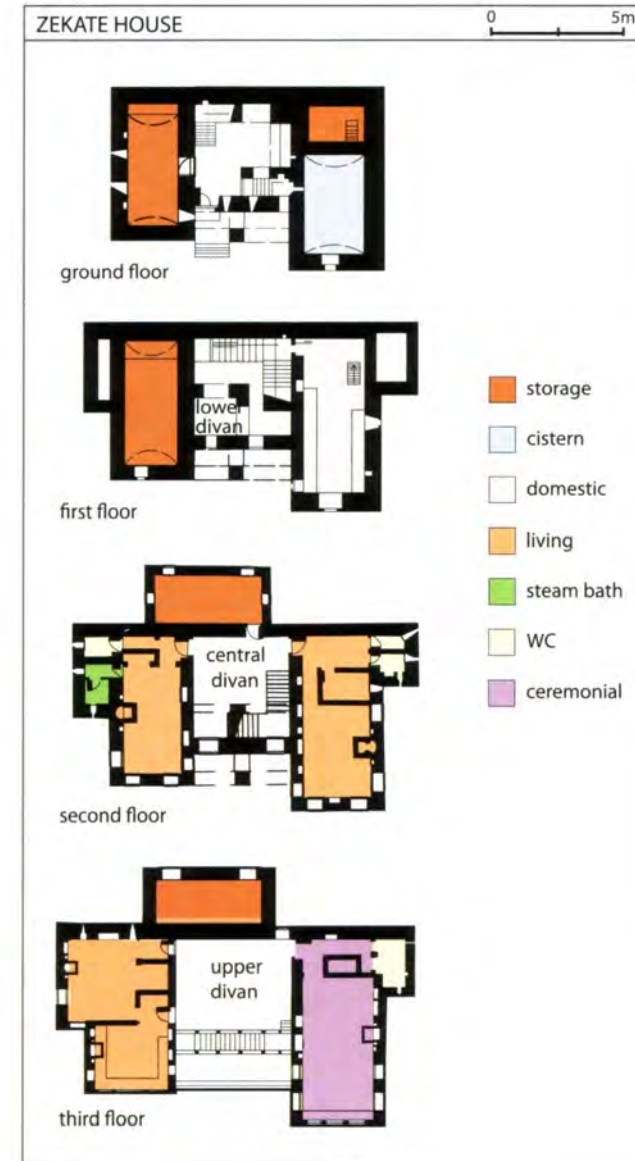
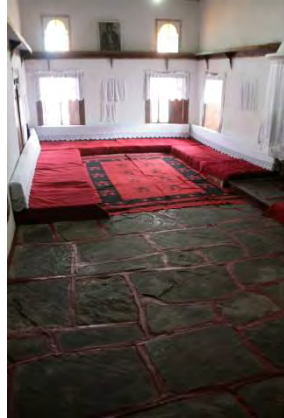


Rural-urban tower houses in Southern Albania (Gjirokastrë, Gjirokastra), scattered along the hillside of the Dropull valley, for landlords and tax collectors

TOWER HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA

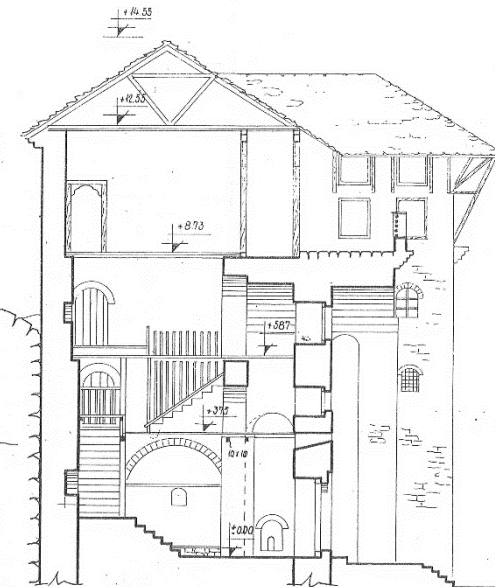
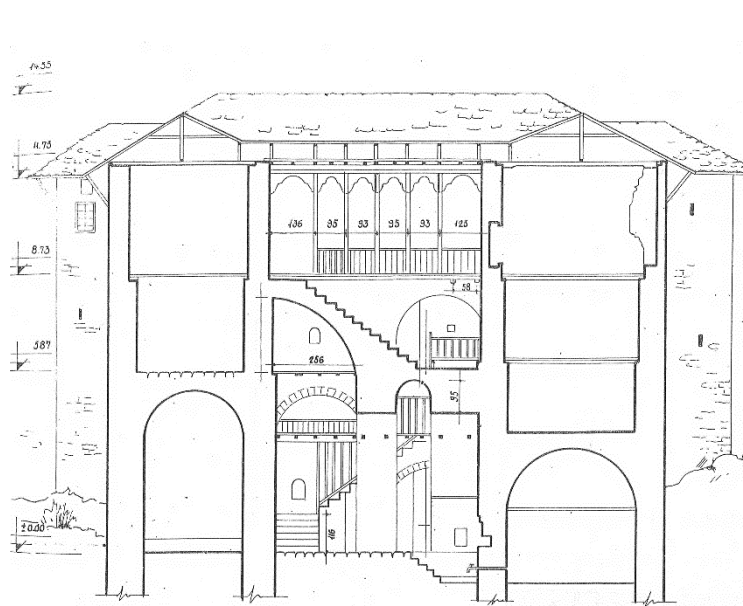
Structural Features – Space displacement

Ground floor and **first floor** for storage, cistern and kitchen;
Second floor with the central divan for family living with steam bath and the so-called wedding room with representative hearth;
Third floor with upper divan for family living especially in summer



Structural Features – Reinforced against Attack and Earth-quake

earthquake improved structures with heavy **stone arches** supporting the basement and light-weight upper floor;
horizontal wooden beams to **reinforce** the stone walls; heavy roof of stone plates;



Structural Features - defense & autonomy

Defendable through systems of gates; individual **water cistern inside**; water collected through the stone roofs;

Literature: Ismail Kadaré, *Chronicle in Stone*, 1971

TOWER HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA



Mason and Carpenter Structures

Traditional Albanian crafts do not divide into **masonry** and **carpentry**;
organized in troops (>from Dibar<) with **master-craftsman** for the **contracting**
and **interpretation of plans**;

additionally **special stone cutters** for the fortification and earthquake proof
aspects from the Adriatic coast;

metal work done by the gypsies hired at site;

TOWER HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA



TOWER HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA

Differentiation in summer and winter floors

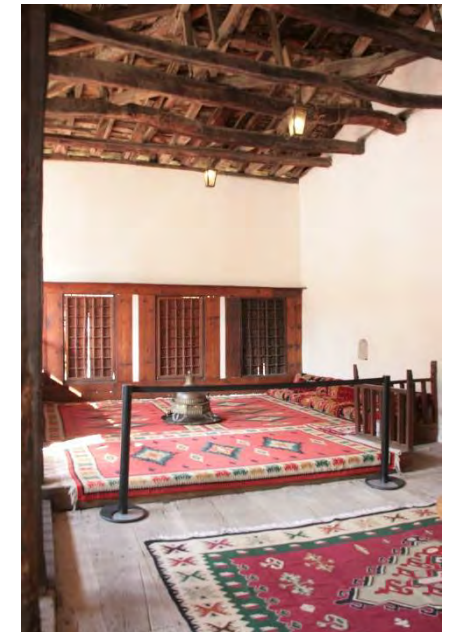
Winter: fireplaces which additionally heat the hamams and toilets inbuilt, wooden rooms within the rooms

Summer: light-weight top floor in *bondruk* construction and top window row for cooling draft



The covered open-air galleries (divan, cardak) between the towers on the solid and closed basements make the outdoor comfort in the hot climate like in Berat or in Gjirokastra's summers

HOUSES OF SOUTHERN ALBANIA & their Climatic Comfort



Urban residences

Other type of domestic structures:
banesa (pl. banesas):

expressing its major function as **comfortable**
dwellings, as **residences**;
the national attribute (Albanian kulla) is skipped;
this type might represent a rather big portion of
Ottoman life-style that transformed the Albanian
upper classes during the long-lasting rule of the
Turks;

manors of the wealthy landlords equally to the
ones of the tax collectors and other high-ranked
administrative family houses, both based
themselves within **important rural settlements**
or **urban trading centers**;

signals to the passing-by a certain will of
incorporation of its inhabitants into the Ottoman
political and administrative world;
its physical appearance is no longer of defense
character, but shows the comfortable wealth of
those, who have **arranged** with the ruling regime
as well as the ruling **climate** of the region;



With special thanks to my colleagues, friends, assistants and travel mates from the region ...
Without them, I would never have been able to explore all those treasures ...

Aleksandar Dajkovic, Alexandra Kapetanovic, Arnisa Kryeziu, Elena Mamami, Fidan Belegu, Florian Nepravishta, Gazmend Kovaci, Gjelijane Hoxha, Kaltrina Thaci, Lirjeta Avdiu-Vecsa, Kujtim Elezi, Kushtrim Riza, Luljeta Thaci-Elezi, Lulzim Beqiri, Marija Nakeva, Ngadhnjim (Gagi) Gjoshi, Nol Binakaj, Sali Soshi, Verona Ymeri-Hoxha ...



THANK YOU ALL ...