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## **DESTRUCTION OF OLD BAZAARS IN KOSOVA**

**Abstract:** *The model of development for Ottoman-style cities in the territory of Kosova from the 15th century to the first decade of the 20th century revolved around a distinctive triad: the local market, the mosque, and the bazaar. In the early periods of ottoman rule, mosques were strategically built in places where there was local market. This was done intentionally, since these were places where a significant number of people gathered. The bazaars and other type of buildings, as part of the mosque complexes, played an important role in the formation and development of cities during the Ottoman period as well. Thus, directly impacting the formation and growth of cities. Among these elements, the bazaars held a special significance, as they became the reference point of cities. And this was due, mainly because of their character, which was of craft, commercial and economic importance. The bazaars were more than just places of trade; they became emblematic reference points for cities, drawing local citizens and people from surrounding regions, who integrated these bustling spaces into their daily lives. In addition to their economic and commercial functions, the bazaars held immense historical, social, and cultural importance. As the centuries passed, living and engaging with the bazaars became inseparable from the life of Kosovar cities, and these spaces became an integral part of the collective memory and identity of the inhabitants.*

*Throughout the centuries, the bazaars in Kosova became inseparable from daily life, contributing to the region's unique charm and heritage. However, this rich historical fabric has suffered significant losses as many bazaar shops fell victim to destruction. The destruction occurred over time due to exposure to the natural elements and human interventions, but there were also cases of intentional and planned destruction. These intentional and systematic destructions started immediately after the conquest of Kosova by Serbia in 1912. Urban and spatial plans as well as various military armaments during the Albanian-Serbian war in Kosova from 1998 to 1999 were responsible for deliberate and systematic mass destruction of the bazaars. Although, the types and methods of destruction varied, the underlying purpose remained consistent. This was done with the aim to destroy, the cultural, social, and economic significance of the bazaars, to change the physiognomy*

*structure, and style of the old traditional cities in Kosova. Thus, by destroying Albanian tangible and intangible heritage and replacing it with the conqueror's creations, the conquerors sought to erase the cultural identity and history of the local autochthonous population.*

*This study aims to explore the motives, methods, and intentions behind the targeted bazaar destruction, drawing upon relevant documents, past evidence, and available literature. By understanding the reasons behind such destructive actions, it becomes possible to preserve and safeguard the remaining bazaar heritage and restore a sense of continuity with the past. Through this research, we can shed light on the historical, cultural and social values of these bazaars, emphasizing the importance of their conservation, protection, and promotion for future generations. By safeguarding these heritage sites, Kosova can maintain a link to its past and continue to celebrate the legacy of its ancestors, fostering a deeper sense of identity and pride among its inhabitants.*

**Key words:** *Kosovo, bazaars, architecture, destruction, cultural heritage, ottoman.*

## UNIŠTAVANJE STARIH ČARŠIJA NA KOSOVU

**Apstrakt:** *Model razvoja osmanskih gradova na teritoriji Kosova od 15. vijeka do prvog desetljeća 20. vijeka temeljio se na jedinstvenoj trijadi: lokalnom tržištu, džamiji i čaršiji. U ranim periodima osmanske vlasti, džamije su se strateški gradile na mjestima gdje je postojalo lokalno tržište. To je bilo učinjeno namjerno, jer su to bila mjesta gdje se okupljao značajan broj ljudi. Čaršije i druge vrste zgrada, kao dio džamijskih kompleksa, igrali su važnu ulogu u oblikovanju i razvoju gradova tijekom osmanske vladavine, direktno utječući na formiranje i rast gradova. Među tim elementima, čaršije su imale poseban značaj, jer su postali referentna tačka gradova. A to se dogodilo uglavnom zbog njihovog karaktera, koji je imao obrtnički, trgovinski i ekonomski značaj. Čaršije su bile više od mjesta trgovine; postali su simbolične referentne tačke gradova, privlačeći lokalne građane i ljude iz okolnih regija koji su te živahne prostore integrirali u svoj svakodnevni život. Osim svojih ekonomskih i trgovinskih funkcija, čaršije su imale ogroman historijski, društveni i kulturni značaj. Kako su stoljeća prolazila, život i sudjelovanje na čaršijama postali su nerazdvojni od života u kosovarskim gradovima, a ti prostori postali su sastavni dio kolektivnog pamćenja i identiteta stanovnika.*

*Kroz stoljeća su se čaršije na Kosovu nerazdvojno povezali s svakodnevnom životom, doprinoseći jedinstvenom šarmu i kulturnoj baštini regije. Međutim, ovaj bogat historijski okvir pretrpio je značajne gubitke kako su mnoge čaršijske trgovine postale žrtvama uništenja. Uništenje se događalo tijekom vremena uslijed izloženosti prirodnim elementima i ljudskim*

*intervencijama, ali bilo je i slučajeva namjernog i planskog uništavanja. Takvo plansko i sustavno uništavanje počelo je odmah nakon osvajanja Kosova od strane Srbije 1912. godine. Urbanistički i prostorni planovi, kao i različito vojno naoružanje tijekom albansko-srpskog rata na Kosovu od 1998. do 1999. godine, bili su odgovorni za namjerno i sustavno masovno uništavanje čaršija. Iako su vrste i metode uništenja varirale, temeljni cilj je ostao konzistentan. To je učinjeno s ciljem uništenja kulturnog, društvenog i ekonomskog značaja čaršije, mijenjajući fizionomiju strukture i stila starih tradicionalnih gradova na Kosovu. Tako su osvajači nastojali uništiti albansko opipljivo i neopipljivo nasljeđe i zamijeniti ga stvarima osvajača, s namjerom brisanja kulturnog identiteta i historije lokalnog autohtonog stanovništva.*

*Ovo istraživanje ima za cilj istražiti motive, metode i namjere iza ciljanog uništavanja čaršija, koristeći relevantne dokumente, historijske dokaze i dostupnu literaturu. Razumijevanjem razloga iza takvih destruktivnih postupaka postaje moguće sačuvati i zaštititi preostalu baštinu čaršija i obnoviti osjećaj kontinuiteta s prošlim vremenima. Kroz ovo istraživanje možemo rasvijetliti historijske, kulturne i društvene vrijednosti ovih čaršija, naglašavajući važnost njihova očuvanja, zaštite i promocije za buduće generacije. Očuvanjem ovih naslijeđenih lokaliteta, Kosovo može održavati vezu s prošlošću i nastaviti slaviti naslijeđe svojih predaka, potičući dublji osjećaj identiteta i ponosa među svojim stanovnicima.*

**Ključne riječi:** *Kosovo, čaršije, arhitektura, uništenje, kulturna baština, osmanski.*

## Introduction

The destruction of old bazaar complexes as part of traditional urban architecture in Kosova is an extremely important issue for the history, urban development and architectural, economic, commercial, social, and cultural aspects of the cities in the region. The destructive violence against bazaars as a phenomenon is quite complex and has been rarely addressed by relevant researchers such as historians, art historians, architects, engineers, etc. It can be said that until now, there has not been any specific work dedicated to the destruction of these urban-architectural complexes. Usually, this issue is addressed within the framework of general studies on historical, cultural, and material heritage in Kosova, or in studies that discuss the history of development of the respective cities.

Among the few publications that discuss the destruction of bazaars, it is worth mentioning Esat Haskuka's book, „Ura, çarshia dhe Lagjja Arasta“, published in 1999. In this book, the author addresses, among other things, the destruction of the Arasta Bazaar in Prizren. Additionally, Muhamed Shukriu in his book „Prizreni i lashtë- Morfologjia e ecurive për ruajtjen e kulturës

materiale“, in some parts provides important details regarding the development leading up to the destruction of the Arasta Bazaar. Moreover, Andrew Herscher's book, „Violence taking place: The architecture of the Kosova Conflict,“ published in 2010, deserves emphasis. In the first part of the book, titled „Modernization“- „A relic of the past, fast disappearing,“ the author mainly focuses on the destruction of Pristina's Old Bazaar after World War II, starting in the late 1940s.<sup>1</sup> Regarding the destruction of the bazaar in Pristina during the post-World War II years, there are few other articles and book parts by different authors.<sup>2</sup> However, they are not as thorough as the study of Andrew Herscher.

Regarding the destruction of bazaars during the war in Kosova in the years 1998-1999, there are very few publications. They are primarily addressed within the framework of surveys and works that generally deal with the systematic and deliberate aggression against objects of traditional architecture in Kosova. Among them, the aforementioned book by Andrew Herscher and the survey conducted in 1999 by him and Andras Riedlmayer, „The destruction of cultural heritage in Kosova: A post-war survey,“ are worthy of mention. The destruction of bazaars during the recent war is also addressed by the author Fejaz Drançolli in the book „Trashëgimia e shkatërruar në Kosovë 1998/1999 - Destroyed heritage in Kosova 1998/1999,“ published by the Institute for War Crimes Research in 2017.

In the aforementioned contributions, authors, either focus on specific cases and periods of bazaar destruction, or the treatment is done within the context of general destruction of tangible heritage. This paper, analyzes the destruction of bazaars in Kosova in general, regardless of the period, purpose, and methods of destruction. Thus, the study deals with the bazaars that were destroyed as a result of urban planning policies after the conquest of Kosova by Serbia in 1912 and after the World War II, which we will classify as institutional destruction. Additionally, we will address the Bazaars that were destroyed as a result of violence by Serbian security forces in Kosova during the war in 1998-1999.

Usually, the issues of bazaar destructions, especially during the communist period and the war in Kosova in 1998-1999, are treated separately, as events that are not interconnected. However, the question that needs to be raised is whether these crimes against cultural heritage were isolated incidents during specific periods and ideologies, or if they have deeper reasons and long-term historical and developmental connections. Therefore, alongside the history of the destruction of bazaars, the research will examine the interconnections

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Herscher, *Violence taking place: The architecture of the Kosovo Conflict*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2010, 30.

<sup>2</sup> Eliza Hoxha, "Prish-ti-na", *Heritage of Prishtina: Remained heritage of Prishtina -Trashëgimia e Prishtinës: Trashëgimia e mbetur e Prishtinës*, CHwB, Prishtinë 2008; Arbër Sadiki, *Arkitektura e ndërtesave publike në Prishtinë: 1945-1990- Faktorët shoqëror dhe formësues*, NTG Bledi, Prishtinë 2020.

between institutional destruction during the communist period and the actions of Serbian security forces during the war. Additionally, the events will be placed in the context of the historical timeline, past century's historical developments, national ideologies, and the political aims of the Serbian state regarding Kosova.

The paper is based on relevant literature that addresses the violence against material cultural heritage assets, with a particular focus on the phenomenon of destruction within the context of urban planning developments and wars as well as on studies that directly discuss the history, architecture, and the economic, commercial, and social importance of the bazaars in the cities of Kosova. Hence, in addition to the physical damage, study complements the analysis of violence against these urban and architectural complexes with other important aspects, providing a broader and comprehensive dimension of the causes and consequences of their, and looting, demolition and destruction.

### **Violence towards architecture**

Destruction of religious, secular, public and individual residential traditional architectural complexes as a form of violence is an early phenomenon of human societies.<sup>3</sup> Often, the destructions were deliberate and systematic. With further development and advancement of military technology, in modern wars, destruction of cultural heritage has increased to great proportions. Notably, 20<sup>th</sup> proved that this form of violence is already an integral part of the war. Built spaces, historical and cultural heritage, urban complexes, due to their importance are often the target of deliberate attacks, looting, damage and destruction.<sup>4</sup>

The reasons for the destruction of assets of cultural, historical, religious and artistic value during the wars are diverse. Sometimes the destruction of cultural heritage is done as a collateral damage during conflicts. Often the warring parties use the destruction and damage of heritage as a political tool.<sup>5</sup> This method is intended to achieve multiple goals. One of them is destruction of the landscape, environment, setting, and the urbanism where a certain group of people, community or an ethnic group lives. By burning down and destroying houses, bazaars, schools, architectural complexes, neighborhoods, villages and cities, apart from the destruction of the living environment, it makes conditions for living and developing a normal life in that area difficult.

<sup>3</sup> Mirjana Ristic, Architecture, *Urban Space and War: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Sarajevo-Palgrave Studies in Cultural Heritage and Conflict*, 2018, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The politics of urban destruction*, Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2008, 8-10; Joris D. Kila, Christopher V. Herndon, Military involvement in cultural property protection- An Overview, *Joint Force Quarterly*, Vol. 74, 3rd Quarter, National Defense University Press, 2014, 117.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Bevan, *The destruction of memory: Architecture at war*, London 2006, 7-8.

Additionally, it destroys the heritage, the culture and the collective memory of its inhabitants as well.<sup>6</sup>

It is precisely the destruction of historical and religious heritage, monuments, that is phenomenon leading to the aforementioned crimes. Buildings of cultural heritage, profane and sacral alike, as a part of the identity of the neighborhoods, villages, towns, cities, ethnic group, community or known and unknown master, artists, craftsmen, become the main target of ethnic cleansing in war conditions, where the destruction of heritage is used as political tool.<sup>7</sup> The aim is to erase and destroy the traces of identity of historical, cultural, and artistic creativity of a particular ethnic group.

### **Destruction of architectural heritage in Kosova**

The architectural heritage with significant historical, cultural, artistic and religious values in Kosova, during the Serbian rule (1912-1999), was subjected to systematic and planned state institutional destruction.

There is no doubt that the cause of these destructions was also the Serbian national platforms. These platforms were in service of creating Greater Serbia, extending and strengthening Serbia's territories beyond Serbia.<sup>8</sup> These Serbian state programs and objectives aimed at the ethnic cleansing of Kosova's territories from Albanians, as well as their colonization with Serbian and Montenegrin settlers.<sup>9</sup> In this context, we must mention the programs, projects, and ideas of Ilija Grashanin (Načertanije - 1844)<sup>10</sup>, Dobrica Ćosić, Vasa Čubrilović (Expulsion of the Albanians - 1937, The Problem of National Minorities in the New Yugoslavia - 1944)<sup>11</sup>, Ivo Andrić (Project for the Division of Albania - 1939)<sup>12</sup>, Draža Mihailović (1941)<sup>13</sup>, etc, as well as the Yugoslav-Turkish Convention for the Resettlement of Albanians (1938)<sup>14</sup>. Part of these programs also involved the destruction of tangible cultural heritage.

In this case, it is worth mentioning the „12 Points of the Vasojevići Canon“. This canon, though conceived earlier, it was prepared for publication

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<sup>6</sup> Helaine Silverman, D. Fairchild Ruggles, *Cultural heritage and human rights*, New York, 2007, 5; M. Coward, *Urbicide*, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Mary Kaldor, *New and old wars: organized violence in a global era*, 3d Edition, Stanford University Press, 2012, 105-106.

<sup>8</sup> Rexhep Qosja, *Shpërngulja e shqiptarëve sipas programeve kombëtare serbe- Që nga Naçertanija e Ilija Grashaninit (1844) deri te ndarja e Kosovës sipas Dobrica Qosiqit (2004)*, Tiranë 2005, 3.

<sup>9</sup> Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Kosova- Histori e shkurtër e një treve qendrore ballkanike*, Koha, Prishtinë, 2012, 145-146, 153-158.

<sup>10</sup> R. Qosja, *Shpërngulja e shqiptarëve*, 59-77.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, 31-52.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, 127-138.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, 157-162.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, 113-126.

by the author Dr. Ilija M. Jeliq and was published by the Royal Serbian Academy in 1929.<sup>15</sup>

The publication is one of the earliest written and published platforms with content that promotes division and religious hatred. Point two of this canon, among other things, discusses and shows how mosques should be treated as sacred objects. According to this law, the construction of mosques should not be allowed, and the existing ones should not be used but left to time and destroyed.<sup>16</sup> From the perspective of urban development, it is known that the mosque was at the center of the architectural complexes built in the Ottoman period and style. The bazaars were also a significant part of these complexes.

Meanwhile, in „The Exile of the Albanians,“ Vasa Čubrilović, among other things, when discussing the ways in which Albanians should be expelled from Kosova, emphasizes that their cemeteries should be destroyed, the surrounding walls of their homes should be demolished, and the permits for opening shops and practicing crafts should be taken away from them.<sup>17</sup> Of course, it is known that the craft activities in the respective shops were developed in the bazaars, the old complexes of the cities. Hence, their destruction would also contribute to achieving Vasa Čubrilović's goals, the expulsions of the Albanians.

These partial, sometimes total, destructions were realized in different forms; nevertheless, they had the same objective. Beside expulsions, the aim was to change the physiognomy of the environments in the villages and cities of Kosova, as well as to extinguish and destroy the identity of their creators and users.

Types used for destruction of cultural heritage were different. In this case we should mention the institutional type where through spatial planning, urban planning and lack of institutional care, the archeological remains and the cores of the old cities were destroyed. Besides this type, destruction by military artillery and Serbian state security structures during wars was carried out as well.

Concrete cases where we encounter the application of the aforementioned types and methods for massive or partial destruction of the cultural heritage of architectural complexes are the old bazaars of Kosova such as the Bazaar of Vushtrri, Prishtina, Peja, Prizren and Gjakova. Before diving into the destruction of bazaars in Kosova, it is of interest to mention the history, development, typology, function, and importance of these architectural complexes in the cities of Kosova.

<sup>15</sup> Dr. Ilija M. Jelić, *Vasojevički Zakon od dvanaest točaka*, Srpska Kraljevska Akademija, Posebna izdanja knjiga, LXXIII, društveni i istoriski spisi, knjiga 29, Beograd 1929.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, 13.

<sup>17</sup> R. Qosja, *Shpërngulja e shqiptarëve*, 12.

## History of the old Bazaars

Bazaars, as a type of building in Kosova, for the first time appeared with the Ottoman conquest of the region (15th century - 1912). As such, they represent the first urban planning of old cities with Ottoman influence and style. Bazaars as public commercial complexes were realized with the help of the foundations (*vakfs*).<sup>18</sup> The mosque had a central place in the design of the Ottoman-style city with local elements. Meanwhile, other accompanying buildings such as public baths, bazaars, kitchens, inns, madrasas, etc., were integral parts of the urban-architectural complexes.<sup>19</sup>

In Kosova, bazaars were built in several cities: Vushtrri, Pristina, Peja, Prizren, Gjakova, Kaçanik, Mitrovica and Gjilan. The construction of these complexes with a public, economic, commercial, artisanal character had a major impact in the development of cities in Kosova.<sup>20</sup> As in other parts of the Balkans, in Kosova as well, bazaars were built in the places of former markets or open markets.<sup>21</sup> The construction of shops was carried out continuously in order to develop the economy and the increase of the crafts and trade of the city. Another important factor in the development of markets is the development of the main roads in cities.<sup>22</sup>

## Typology of bazaars

From the urban point of view, bazaars were extended horizontally. The bazaar had a main street from which other smaller streets branched off.<sup>23</sup> The roads were curved and paved with cobblestones. We had two variants of the roads. The variants were distinguished by the way the road was laid out in order to control the flow of the rainwater. In one variant, the road was slightly elevated in the middle so that the water flowed on both sides of the road. In the other variant, the middle part was at a lower level than the edges; hence, the water flowed through the middle of the street. Shops were built on the sides of the streets, which were ground floor and one floor high. Sometimes, there were

<sup>18</sup> Skender Rizaj, *Kosova gjatë shekujve XV, XVI dhe XVII: Administrimi, ekonomia, shoqëria dhe lëvizja popullore*, Rilindja, Prishtinë 1982, 177-178; Eduart Caka, Roli i institucionit të vakëfit në zhvillimin e qytetit shqiptarë gjatë periudhës osmane, *Univers*, nr. 22, Instituti Shqipëtar i Mendimit dhe i Qytetërimit Islam, 2021, 90-91.

<sup>19</sup> Fatma Acun, A portrait of the ottoman cities, *The Muslim World Journal*, Vol 92, Issue 3-4, John Wiley and Sons, 2002, 267.

<sup>20</sup> S. Rizaj, *Kosova*, 177-178.

<sup>21</sup> Aleksandra Krstikj, Hisako Koura, Identifying the block pattern of Skopje's Old Bazaar: Analysis of blocks' development, typology and transformation, *Journal of Architecture and Planning* (Transactions of AIJ), vol. 79, No. 700, Architectural Institute of Japan, 2014, 1338.

<sup>22</sup> Serafim Nikolić, *Prizren od srednjeg veka do carvenog doba: Urbanističko- arhitektonski razvoj*, Prizren 1988, 251.

<sup>23</sup> Zija Shkodra, *Qyteti shqiptar gjatë Rilindjes Kombëtare*, Instituti i Historisë, Tiranë 1984, 399.



also shops that had a ground floor and a half floor or even two floors. These types of shops influenced the dynamics and plasticity of bazaars in the cities of Kosova.

Regarding the compositional scheme and construction, the shops had rectangular bases, with openings from the street. They were secured with wooden shutters. Meanwhile, the floors were secured with metal or wooden railings. In the technical, constructive aspect, they had a wooden structure, stones and sun-dried brick.<sup>24</sup> The interiors and exteriors of the shops were painted with lime. Interior decorations in the shops were modest, however, in some cases they had decorations, namely wooden moldings. The decorations were mainly on the supporting pillars and ceilings. The shops had single and double-pitched roofs covered with traditional tiles. They were characterized with long eaves.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the constructive and functional role, traders used eaves for the display of goods.<sup>26</sup> Normally, the structure of the walls has changed over time due to adaptations and restorations in the 19th-20th century.<sup>27</sup>

The organization of the life in bazaar was regulated based on crafts. Thus, every production, special and roughly similar craft were clustered next to each other.<sup>28</sup> These were led by guilds, which were economical and social organizations.<sup>29</sup> In addition to aspects of economic and commercial life, guilds had a political, social and religious, educative role as well.<sup>30</sup> They were part of the social elite of the cities and carried out multiple activities, which benefited the social, cultural, and political life of the city.

### **Institutional destruction of the old bazaars**

Before dealing with the deliberate destruction of old bazaars from Serbian state, we should mention that over time other factors such as climate conditions, natural disasters, new constructions without criteria, lack of awareness from some shop owners, etc. had impact on the degradation of the old bazaar complexes.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, large-scale destructions, which left

<sup>24</sup> Nađa Kurtović-Folić, *Studija o revitalizaciji Velike čaršije u Đakovici, Antikitetet e Kosovës-Starine Kosova*, VIII, EKMMK, Prishtinë 1987, 1.

<sup>25</sup> Fejaz Drançolli, *Trashëgimia monumentale në Kosovë- Monumental Heritage in Kosova*, Prishtinë 2011, 154.

<sup>26</sup> Z. Shkodra, *Qyteti*, 169.

<sup>27</sup> N. Kurtović-Folić, *Studija o revitalizaciji*, 1.

<sup>28</sup> Z. Shkodra, *Qyteti*, 169-170.

<sup>29</sup> S. Rizaj, *Kosova*, 185.

<sup>30</sup> S. Rizaj, *Kosova*, 186; Zija Shkodra, *Esnafet shqiptare (Shekujt XV-XX)*, Tiranë, Akademia e Shkencave e R.P. Shqipërisë, Instituti i Historisë, 1973, 221.

<sup>31</sup> Zoran Petrović, Branislav Milenković, *Prizren grad spomenik slika grada*, Pokrajinski zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture, 2006; Muhamed Shukriu, *Prizreni i lashtë: Morfologjia e ecurive*

bazaars in irreversible state, were caused by urban plans and the last war in Kosova during the years 1998-1999.

After 1912<sup>32</sup>, and especially after the Second World War, in the name of progress, economic development, modernism, etc. many old bazaars, the cores of Kosova's cities, were degraded and destroyed. These destructions, among others, were carried out by means of spatial and urban planning realized in Belgrade under the slogan „Tear down the old, build the new“.<sup>33</sup> During this period, mainly the old bazaars and works of other types of traditional architecture were destroyed in Prizren, Prishtina, Vushtrri, Mitrovica, Kaçanik, a part of the bazaar in Peja (the Grand Bazaar), and partially in Gjakova. It should be mentioned that institutionally, apart from the Grand Bazaar in Gjakova, where studies were carried out for the revitalization of the historical core in 1979,<sup>34</sup> there are no similar studies in other cities.

### The Arasta Bazaar of Prizren

The Arasta Bazaar complex in Prizren was an architectural structure of Ottoman type and style mixed with local elements. This complex had a significant economic and social impact as a commercial and artisanal hub in the city of Prizren. Unlike the bazaar with multiple, accessible streets, the Arasta presents a complex consisting of two rows of shops separated by street that can be closed during nights and provide extra security for the shops.<sup>35</sup> Occasionally, this street is open-air, but there are cases where it is covered with a roof or vaults. Arasta Bazaar in Prizren was the only case where this type of architectural construction is presented during the Ottoman rule. Unfortunately, we have very limited data about this specific complex. To date, we have only one publication that discusses this urban-architectural complex and its destruction.<sup>36</sup> From Haskuka's study, we can gather some information about the layout and appearance of this part of the city, specifically the Arasta Neighborhood.

The Arasta Bazaar of Prizren stretched on both sides of the Lumbardh River. It extended from the Sinan Pasha Mosque (1615) to the vicinity of the Mehmet Pasha Mosque (1561) and the Complex of the Albanian League of Prizren (19th century). The shops in this Bazaar were constructed using stone,

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*për ruajtjen e kulturës materiale*, Prizren 2001, 189. Esat Haskuka, *Ura, çarshia dhe Lagjja Arasta*, Prizren 1999, 14.

<sup>32</sup> E. Haskuka, *Ura*, 17.

<sup>33</sup> Fejaz Drançolli, Disa ndërtime arkitektonike islame të shek. XV në Prishtinë, *Feja, kultura dhe tradita islame ndër shqiptarët (simpozium ndërkombëtar)*, BIK, Prishtinë 1995, 167,168; E. Hoxha, Prish-ti-na, 6, 9; A. Herscher, *Violence taking*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Husref Redžić, Nedžad Kurto, Džemal Čelić, *Studija regeneracije i revitalizacije Velike Čarsije u Djakovici*, Gjakovë 1979.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Petersen, *Dictionary of Islamic architecture*, Taylor & Francis e-library, 2002, 24.

<sup>36</sup> E. Haskuka, *Ura, çarshia*.

brick, and wood as construction materials. The Arasta in Prizren was covered with a roof. Within the bazaar complex, there was also a covered bridge called the Arasta Bridge, with shops on both sides.<sup>37</sup> Over time, this part of the city's bazaar developed and was reconstructed, taking the form of a complex and eventually acquiring the name Arasta Neighborhood. In 1526, a masjid was built within the complex. The Jakup Evrenos Bey was the donor of the masjid. Later, a minaret was added to the sacred building, and it became known as the Arasta Mosque.<sup>38</sup> Part of this architectural complex was also the Mirihan Caravanserai, built by Kukli Bey in the 16th century. The caravanserai was demolished in 1951.<sup>39</sup> The streets within the Arasta Bazaar were paved with cobblestones.<sup>40</sup>

It should be noted that throughout history, the Arasta Bazaar suffered several times due to unfortunate events. However, it is important to highlight the deliberate destruction that occurred. Serbian institutions and security forces carried out these destructive measures. In 1913, the Serbian army looted and set fire to the Bazaar and the Arasta Bridge.<sup>41</sup> However, institutional plans for destruction had started with the occupation of Prizren by the Serbian army in 1912.

Immediately after the occupation, a new urban planning of the city of Prizren began. The architect tasked with this project was Momir Korunovic, an officer in the Serbian army.<sup>42</sup> Korunovic implemented the project based on a geodetic map created by the Directorate of Geography of the General Staff of the Serbian army in Belgrade. The geodetic map was based on the surveys conducted by Colonel Knez Milkovic of the 3rd Serbian Army during the years 1912-1913. This urban planning marked the beginning of the systematic and deliberate destruction of Prizren. The plan was completed in 1924 and legalized by Decision UB.49761 of the Serbian government. The aim was to change the physical and architectural identity of the city, specifically the destruction of the Ottoman-era and style architectural heritage, in order to create a Renaissance-style medieval city reminiscent of the time of Dušan. It is worth mentioning that during this period, after World War I, a large number of sacred and secular buildings along the river were destroyed.<sup>43</sup> There was also an attempted destruction of the Sofi Sinan Pasha Mosque, and as a result only the mosque's courtyard was destroyed.<sup>44</sup> The final destruction, from which the Bazaar and

<sup>37</sup> E. Haskuka, *Ura*, 13; M. Shukriu, *Prizreni i Lashtë*, 86.

<sup>38</sup> S. Nikolić, *Prizren od*, 99; E. Haskuka, *Ura, çarshia*, 22.

<sup>39</sup> E. Haskuka, *Ura, çarshia*, 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*, 5.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, 14.

<sup>42</sup> M. Shukriu, *Prizreni i Lashtë*, 187.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*, 187, 189.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, 298.

the Arasta Neighborhood never recovered from, was carried out in mid 60's according to the urban plan of 1961/62.<sup>45</sup>

### **The Old Bazaar of Prishtina**

The Bazaar of Prishtina, as an architectural-urban complex, was established during the Ottoman rule of Kosova. Its construction began within a part of the complex of Çarshi Mosque (1389-1461) and the Grand Mosque (1461). It extended from the old urban area of Ottoman-era Prishtina and expanded over time to other parts of the city. Architecturally and structurally, the Old Bazaar of Prishtina did not differ from the bazaars of the Ottoman-era and style mixed with local elements in Kosova and the Balkans in general. The architectural complex had hundreds of shops, although the exact number cannot be determined. According to Andrew Herscher, there were around 200 shops, mostly owned by Albanian residents.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, according to Eliza Hoxha, the number of shops reached close to 500.<sup>47</sup> If we compare the Bazaar of Prishtina with other bazaars in major cities in Kosova, such as Peja, Prizren, and Gjakova, which had similar urban expansions, we can assume that the most accurate number should be around 500 shops. The shops were on the ground floor, one floor, or one and a half floors. Some authors<sup>48</sup> also mention the existence of a *bezistan* (covered bazaar) within the old bazaar complex, but to this day there are no traces or remains found from this type of building.

The destruction of the Bazaar of Prishtina took place after World War II. The destruction of this architectural complex was carried out under the guise of the „modernization“ of the city of Prishtina. The plan for the urban planning of Prishtina, which included the destruction of the bazaar, was implemented in Belgrade by the Urban Planning Institute of Serbia.<sup>49</sup> The architect Dragutin Partonic drafted the General Urban Plan of Prishtina in 1953.<sup>50</sup> Several public buildings were constructed in the place of the old bazaar.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, as a result of this plan, the Lluqaq Mosque, the St. Ndou Catholic Church, the Synagogue, the Hamam, Inns, and other public buildings that were characteristic of Ottoman-era Prishtina were destroyed. These demolitions can be considered unnecessary, as Prishtina had sufficient land outside the Ottoman-era city to accommodate any construction and urban planning.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*, 86, 331.

<sup>46</sup> A. Herscher, *Violence*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> E. Hoxha, *Prish-ti-na*, 10.

<sup>48</sup> A. Sadiki, *Arkitektura*, 23.

<sup>49</sup> A. Herscher, *Violence taking*, 33.

<sup>50</sup> A. Sadiki, *Arkitektura*, 25.

<sup>51</sup> A. Herscher, *Violence*, 38; E. Hoxha, *Prish-ti-na*, 9.

## Destruction of the old bazaars during the war in 1998-1999

In the last war, during the years 1998-1999, the Serbian state security forces destroyed a large number of historical cultural heritage assets with artistic values in Kosova. Part of this heritage that was deliberately destroyed by various means and forms are the Old Bazaar of Vushtrri, the Long Bazaar of Peja and the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova.<sup>52</sup>

The Old Bazaar of Vushtrri (XV-1912), although it had lost much of its original condition, in its core, there were still old shops that retained the originality. At the end of March 1999, the military forces of the Serbian state deliberately looted, burned and completely destroyed 50 shops of the old complex.<sup>53</sup> Along with the Bazaar the Çarshi Mosque (1878) was burned as well. After the destruction, heavy machinery was used to clean the site.<sup>54</sup>

The Old Bazaar of Peja (XV-1912), as an architectural complex, was composed of two parts, Grand Bazaar and the Small or Long Bazaar. The Grand Bazaar was destroyed after World War II. Whereas, the Long Bazaar was looted, burned and destroyed by the military forces in the spring of 1999. On this occasion, 344 shops on the ground floor, and the first floor were burned.<sup>55</sup> In this way, the entire old urban planning of the city of Peja was destroyed, thus, losing its original state. Along with bazaar, Çarshi Mosque (1471/72), Hamam of Haxhi Isa Beg, Complex of Haxhi Zeka, etc. were looted and burned down as well.

The Grand Bazaar of Gjakova (XVI-1912) was built around the walls of Hadim Aga Mosuqe (1595) and stretched out continuously along with crafts and trade of the city.<sup>56</sup> It was among the best-preserved bazaars in its original state in Kosova and in the region. During the last war it suffered the same fate as the Bazaars of Vushtrri and Peja. Within the architectural complex of the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova, 464 shops on the ground floor, first floor as well as second floor were looted, burned, shelled and destroyed.<sup>57</sup> According to the witnesses of the case, the deliberate burning by the Serbian state security forces

<sup>52</sup> Andrew Herscher, Andras Riedlmayer, *The destruction of cultural heritage in Kosovo 1998-1999: a post-war survey*, Kosovo Cultural Heritage Project, Cambridge, Massachusetts USA, 2001, 6; Fejaz Draqolli, *Monumentet e shkatërruara në Kosovë 1998/99- Destroyed monuments in Kosova 1998/99*, IHKL, Prishtinë 2015, 117-122.

<sup>53</sup> F. Draqolli, *Monumentet e shkatërruara*, 119; Fejaz Draqolli, Osman Gojani, Njazi Haliti, *Trashëgimia Historiko-Kulturore e Kosovës (gjendja dhe dëmet)*, Dokumentacioni i Institutit të Kosovës për Mbrojtjen e Monumenteve të Kulturës, Prishtinë 2006.

<sup>54</sup> A. Herscher, A. Riedlmayer, *The destruction*, 71-72.

<sup>55</sup> F. Draqolli, *Monumentet e shkatërruara*, 117; F. Draqolli, O. Gojani, Nj. Haliti, *Trashëgimia*, 2006.

<sup>56</sup> Fejaz Draqolli, Xhamia e Hadumit Çarshia e Gjakovës- Hadum Mosque Bazaar in Gjakova, IMM, Prishtinë 2007, 8; Masar Rizvanolli, *Çarshia e Madhe e Gjakovës- Grand Bazaar of Gjakova*, Gjakovë 2009, 9.

<sup>57</sup> F. Draqolli, O. Gojani, Nj. Haliti, *Trashëgimia*, 2006.

began on March 24, 1999.<sup>58</sup> On this occasion, the core of the old city of Gjakova was destroyed. A projectile hit Hadum Mosque but fortunately only the portico was damaged.<sup>59</sup> The library of the mosque though, was not as fortunate and was burned down, thus destroying a large number of old books and scripts in Albanian and oriental languages.<sup>60</sup>

## Summary

From a historical perspective, it is clear that there is continuity in the destruction of old bazaars in Kosova. Consequently, these destructions, regardless of the period, ideology of the time, and the methods used to carry them out, cannot be seen as isolated events from one another. For example, the Arasta Bazaar in Prizren was destroyed during a different period and political ideology than the destruction of the Bazaar of Prishtina and the Grand Bazaar of Peja. Furthermore, these bazaars, in addition to the time period, also differ in terms of the forms of destruction that took place during the war in 1998-1999 in Kosova. What make these destructions similar are the perpetrators and their motives. The forms, methods, and justifications of the destruction were used and applied according to the political circumstances of the moment.

The complexes of the old bazaars in Kosova, as a part of the Albanian cultural heritage and built environment were unique and among the most valuable achievements in the Balkan Peninsula. They were distinguished by their structure and construction technique, which were made by popular Albanian craftsmen. Therefore, this traditional heritage represents a phenomenon of architectural agglomeration with urban, historical, artistic and cultural values for the creation and development of old cities in Kosova. Each of these complexes of shops on the ground floor, ground floor and half, and one or two floors high present a landscape with special architectural features for the cities where they were built. Bazaars as museums under the open sky were a tangible evidence of traditional Albanian craftsmanship that evolved over the centuries.<sup>61</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned importance, bazaars as public spaces throughout history played an important role in the economic, commercial, public, social, political and cultural life of local residents. Thus, the purpose of the violence against the bazaars was manifold and should not be separated from other forms of systematic violence, be it physical, spiritual, economic, social, political, etc., exercised against the Albanian population by the Serbian state.

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<sup>58</sup> M. Rizvanolli, *Çarshia*, 35; Josef Martinsen, *What happened in Kosovo? 1998-1999: A documentation*, Sypress Forlag, Oslo 2010, 73.

<sup>59</sup> A. Herscher, A. Riedlmayer, *The destruction*, 53-54.

<sup>60</sup> M. Rizvanolli, *Çarshia*, 35.

<sup>61</sup> F. Drançolli, *Trashëgimia monumentale*, 154.

Among other things, the destruction of the old autochthonous cores of the cities was intended to completely change the physiognomy, structure, and style of the old traditional cities. Hence, the loss of the identity of Albanian material culture in Kosova and its replacement with the identity of the conqueror's creations. This type of crime usually follows or occurs during major human tragedies such as crimes against humanity and genocide.<sup>62</sup> Another important aspect that should be mentioned is the destruction of the continuity of the organizational structure of the guilds, which, apart from their economic and commercial importance, had a political, social and cultural influence on the daily life of the cities of Kosova as well. Furthermore, the destruction of these shop complexes also meant the loss of traces of the old crafts that had been cultivated for centuries. Along with them, many important objects such as working tools, antique chests, ornaments, antique weapons, ceilings, and many works of ethnographic value realized by the masters of the tradition were extinguished. This tradition, in addition to the economic importance for craftsmen, was also a special cultural and touristic asset and attraction in the spaces of the old bazaars.

Taking into account that the destructions during the last war (1998-1999) took place alongside a campaign of ethnic cleansing accompanied by mass executions, rapes, kidnappings, beatings and looting,<sup>63</sup> this signifies that the bazaars itself were the target of deliberate destruction, and not a consequence of the fighting. Moreover, the propaganda of the Serbian state during that time, in addition to denial, tried to attribute this destruction to architectural buildings to the NATO bombings.<sup>64</sup>

Today, from the agglomeration of old bazaars destroyed during the war, the Small or Long Bazaar in Peja and the Grand Bazaar in Gjakova were restored. Fortunately, the Grand Bazaar of Gjakova, thanks to the revitalization study of the historical core in 1979, found it easier to return the complex to its original state. Meanwhile, the Long Bazaar of Peja did not have a similar study; nevertheless, the restoration works were carried out. It should be noted that the setting of the bazaars has been restored, although many of the old crafts are not in function of their original state.

These anti-civilization, inhumane acts towards the tangible and intangible heritage were aimed at destroying the culture, identity and collective memory of the Albanian people. The destructions exceeded any human scale and as such are not only a crime against the material heritage and the Albanian identity, but are also a crime against the world heritage which is protected by

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<sup>62</sup> Zejnullah Gruda, The importance of investigating war crimes, *Challenges of researching war crimes in Kosova 1998 to 1999: presentations from the international conference held in Prishtina on december 16, 2011*, War Crime Research Institute, Prishtinë 2013, 38.

<sup>63</sup> Humans Rights Watch, *Under orders- War crimes in Kosovo*. (<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/kosovo/>) (Accessed 24/7/2023).

<sup>64</sup> A. Herscher, A. Riedlmayer, *The destruction*, 5-6.

humanitarian law according to the international norms of the highest international institutions such as UNESCO, ICOMOS, etc.<sup>65</sup>



Figure. 1. Prizren. Arasta Neighborhood in 1955. (E. Haskuka).



Figure. 2. Peja. Long Bazaar. (IKMM).

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<sup>65</sup> Fejaz Drançolli, *Trashëgimia e shkatërruar në Kosovë 1998/1999 - Destroyed heritage in Kosova 1998/1999*, IHKL, Prishtinë 2017, 213.



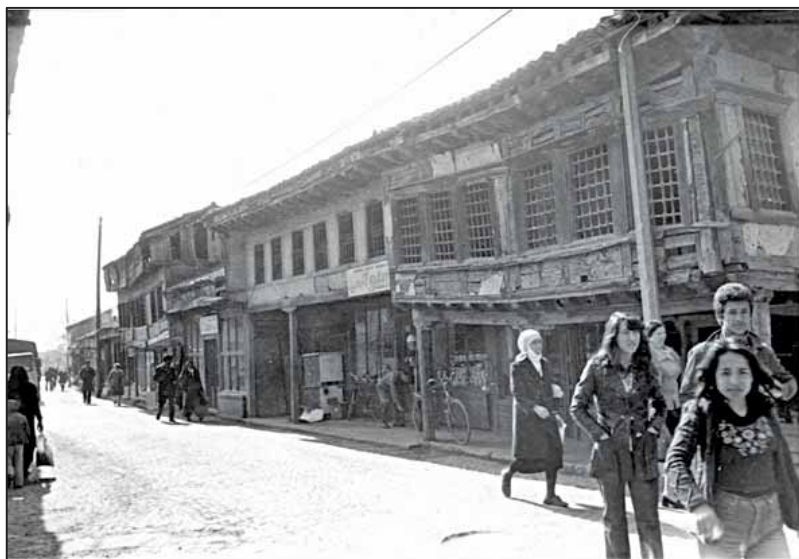


Figure. 3. *Gjakova. Grand Bazaar.* (IKMM).



Figure. 4. *Vushtri. The Old Bazaar after destruction in 1999.*  
(Exhibition catalogue: *Shkatërrimi i trashëgimisë kulturore në Kosovë 1998-1999*, IHKL, Prishtinë- Tiranë, 2012).



Figure. 5. *Peja. The Long Bazaar after destruction in 1999.*  
(Exhibition catalogue: *Shkatërrimi i trashëgimisë kulturore në Kosovë 1998-1999*, IHKL, Prishtinë- Tiranë, 2012).



Figure. 6. *Gjakova. The Grand Bazaar after destruction in 1999.*  
(Exhibition catalogue: *Shkatërrimi i trashëgimisë kulturore në Kosovë 1998-1999*, IHKL, Prishtinë- Tiranë, 2012).

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