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# **ПАЛИМПСЕСТ**

**Меѓународно списание за лингвистички, книжевни  
и културолошки истражувања**

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## **ПАЛИМПСЕСТ**

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## **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BAZAAR FOR PRESERVATION OF THE TRADITIONAL URBAN FORM IN MACEDONIA – STUDY CASE OF SKOPJE'S OLD BAZAAR**

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**Abstract:** The significance of the bazaar in preserving the city's traditional urban concept exemplifies grounds for research. A specific model of spatial structure in the central historic core of the city of Skopje is developed during the Ottoman rule. The basic characteristics of the city's morphological structure are defined through comparative analysis of specific implementations regarding the development of urban cores on the Balkans (Serbia, Turkey, Greece, Albania and Bosnia).

In the course of the development of the bazaar, certain groupings of public buildings are established and accepted as local authentic model of urban composition by the population (Han, Hamam, Sacral object, Bezisten). The significance of the bazaar is polyvalent in relation to the centuries old development of the urban form. The development of the bazaar is associated with its size, economic power and strategic position regarding the city through different historical periods. The solidity of the bazaar is influenced and dependent on the needs of the population and the urban transformation of the city.

Skopje's bazaar is a typical model of spatial unity developed under similar circumstances as other spatial concepts on the Balkans, meanwhile under the influence of the Ottoman concept for a city, verifying as specific and successful urban concept.

**Keywords:** *bazaar; urbanism; urban typology; form.*

### **Introduction**

The development of Skopje's urban core is based on the spatial concept of a city created in the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The paper alludes to the development of urban concept in the central core where the bazaar is developed over time.

It is crucial to define the influence from the surrounding regions on the Balkan, conveyed based on political, social, economic and cultural compatibility. A certain theory is set through analysis of the spatial structure, urban concept of

the historic core and the bazaar, setting of public buildings and the intensity of their development. Through these analyses the vital elements that influenced the urban developments are defined, forming the characteristic urban structure for the region.

According to a certain methodology, the paper defines similarities of the urban concept on the territory of Macedonia, by defining a particular model with a distinctly recognizable structure. The paper attempts to define similarities with distinctive cities from the same historical period from the territory of the Balkan region. Thus, a suitable picture for the influence of the bazaar and its position with specific structure on the urban form of the city is created.

The research is setting a theory for defining the basic characteristics of a typical model of the bazaar on the Balkans, reflecting certain standards in public or commercial objects and creating a specific architectural expression.

### **Historical review of the bazaar and the city of Skopje**

Types of urban settlements found today on the territory of the Balkan region are most common and deriving from western Turkey, developed throughout time on the territory of whole Balkan region (Kojic, 1976) as Ottoman-Byzantine type (Cvijic, 1987). If we look at the chronology of Skopje's development, besides the prehistoric period, the ancient city of Skupi and the medieval period with the fortress which had a strategic position on the Balkan, another period that is important to be mentioned is the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when according to data Skopje is a city with rich architectural setting as trading center with developed crafts and organized guilds (pottery, leather, etc.), developed suburb with craft shops and neighborhoods. The monumental buildings are located on the eastern side of the city's medieval fortress (the mosques Mustafa Pasha and Sultan Murad). After the conquest of the city by the Ottoman Empire in 1392, which expands north towards the rivers Sava and Danube, the city of Skopje gets the opportunity to develop in a peaceful historical period in terms of trading and economic expansion. The peaceful period lasts until the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Austro-Hungarian – Ottoman War leaves the city partly destroyed, while in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century its trade and craftsmanship revives again (Deroko, 1971).

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century the building activity of the bazaar intensified. In different travelers' data from the period, buildings such as old and new hammam with 20 units, inn with 20 units, and a number of other shops and residential buildings are mentioned (Cipan, 1966).

The biggest trace in the history of the city was left by the reign of the Ottoman Empire, the period when the bazaars were established. After the liberation from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, new urban core developed by the example of the European cities. In the period between 14<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the population is mixed between Orthodox and Muslim and the religious affiliation was highly expressed. Skopje with its geographic and strategic position plays an important role in central Balkans, thus enabling by the presence of military garrisons to

develop economically. As a result of this development, the bazaar expanded in its dimension and structure.

In the traveler's notes by Evliya Celebi, the bazaar in Skopje is mentioned and described numerous times. The general description states that the bazaar constitutes of 2000 units made of solid construction, decorated with arches and domes, craftsmen who worked with fabrics, animal skin, shoes etc., a bedesten with metal doors and cupolas. In that period Skopje's bazaar supplied a city with 11,000 residents from 70 neighborhoods, 120 Islamic buildings, 20 tekkes, 9 schools, inns of all kinds and 2150 shops made of solid construction (Celebi, 1971). The storytellers are pointing out that Skopje was a big trading city (Edvard Braun, 1669), which we can conclude by the size and structure of its bazaar.

Development of craftsmanship and trade was observed within Skopje's province, mainly in the area of the bazaar with large number of trades (weaving, wood carving etc.). Skopje's bazaar is said to be as one of the most important trading centers during the Ottoman rule (Zografski, 1980).

After the Second World War certain values of the bazaar's structure were violated as a result of the lack of laws on the protection of historical buildings. As a consequence, a large number of the trading units in the bazaar were rebuilt without any respect of the historic values resulting in a state of disappearance of entire streets and change of stylistic ambient and historical unity.

### **Structure of Skopje's old bazaar**

The bazaar in Skopje is a public trading complex based upon the models from the other areas on the Balkans. Skopje, as one of the strategic cities in the Ottoman period, developed as an important economic center that reflected on the development of the bazaar. The bazaar was built near the medieval fortress and was connected with it in the beginning, as well as with a number of religious buildings as mosques, tekkes, madrassas, etc. These objects were built on dominant positions in and around the territory of the bazaar. Inns were built in the surrounding area of the bazaar serving as overnight places. The inns were spacious units around which a complex of stores was formed in line of the outer borders of these facilities. A number of baths were built nearby (Daut Pasin hammam, Chifte hammam, Gjulchiler hammam, etc.) placed adjacent to the inns, which formed a functional spatial unity. These large groupings of monumental buildings were built in phases and on different sides of the bazaar (west, east or south) which increased the useful area of the bazaars complex, in terms of the overall area of the city. In this way an original structure was created with trading and public purpose, developing as a public and administrative center of the city.

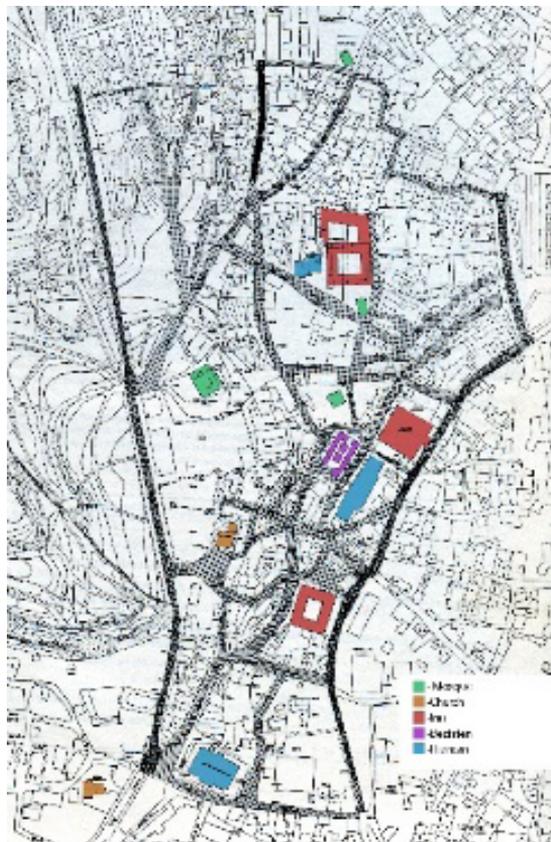
The bazaar in the urban core with the surrounding monumental buildings developed between the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century, regarding the structure of the bazaar, we can distinguish division of territory around three major mosques. The expansion of the territory of the old bazaar towards north is determined by the

structure of Yahya Pasha Mosque (1502), after many fires and earthquakes today there are few remains left.

### Evolution of the bazaar

In its basic spatial conception the bazaar was formed near the medieval fortress, as the seat of military power. In the initial period of its formation till the 14<sup>th</sup> century on the territory of the complex, a neighborhood with residential objects and public facilities for the medieval fortress was formed. In the early 15<sup>th</sup> century sacred facilities -mosques were built on dominant positions. Around the mosques a group of buildings was formed with certain functions to serve the population. Many mosques, inns, baths, bazaars, etc. were built as a result of the rule of different bays (Turkish title for chieftain) in the Ottoman Empire until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The largest numbers of sacral and public buildings were built in the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> century, marking the development of the basic core of the bazaar under great economic and trading conditions.



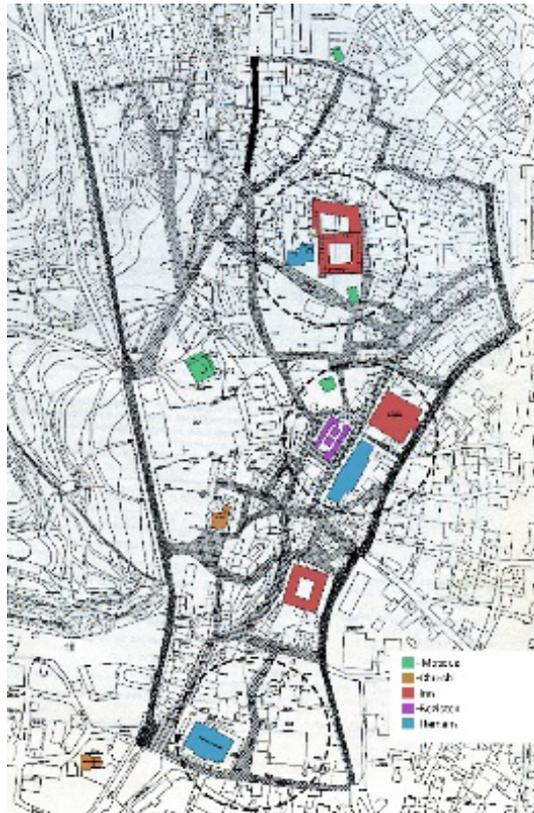
**Figure 1.** Plan of bazaar in Skopje with marked historical monuments.(Source: authors)

## Case study

### Research and methods

The complex of the Old Bazaar developed throughout a long period of time, but the most important period is from the 14<sup>th</sup> century till today. The bazaar is a living organism, in terms of objective and subjective factors. The methods of research of its structure and the transformation of its spatial structure are important in understanding the factors that influenced the transformation of its shape.

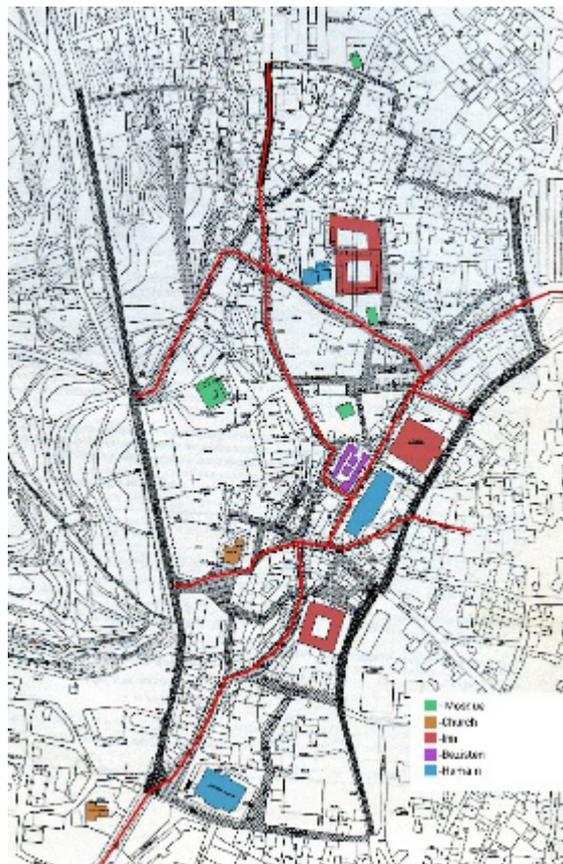
Through the use of archival documents, published plans and comparative analysis between examples of other cities, certain influence is defined in order to set the framework of urban development of cities with similar spatial concept on the Balkan region. Skopje's bazaar has a solid size regarding the position and size of the city with specific structural division. With constant maintenance of the buildings within the complex of the bazaar and with methods of adaptation, the bazaar serves as an example of a typical model in the region.



**Figure 2.** Plan of bazaar in Skopje with separately areas with specific historical monuments (han, hamam, mosque and bedesten). (Source: authors)

It is necessary to define several key elements based on the researched methodology:

- Influence of the geographical conditions on the location of the bazaar's shape (its position near the river flow, coast, roads, bridges, fortification, etc.).
- Influences from the social, economic and cultural elements on the development of the physical structure of the bazaar.
- Determining the specifics of the spatial-urban structure of the bazaar, according to the types of public buildings (sacral objects, trade, catering, etc.) that create a certain authentic spirit of the complex.
- Determining the level of influence of the traditional urban form on the contemporary urban development of the city.

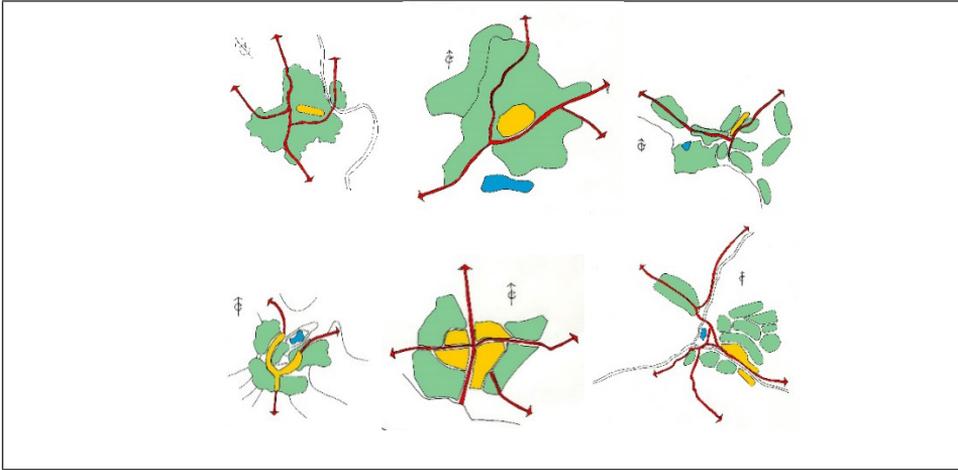


**Figure 3.** Plan of different direction in the bazaar and connections with other parts of the city. Skopje (Source: authors)

### **Basic structure of bazaar in traditional cities in Macedonia**

According to the size of the city, during Ottoman rule in the Republic of Macedonia, areas of the bazaar were built, according to the needs and number of residents. During this period, major complexes as bazaars developed in Bitola, Prilep, Shtip, Strumica, Struga, Veles, (Figure 1).

- In similar way as the model of the bazaar from Skopje, around the core of the bazaar sacred objects were built as mosques, inns, baths, bazaars, schools, shops and many more. Preserved samples of bedestens are found in Shtip, Bitola and Skopje. Hammams are present in the bazaars of every traditional city in the Balkans, mainly preserved in Skopje, Bitola, Prilep, Tetovo, as a legacy of the Byzantine public bathrooms. (Popovic, 1950).



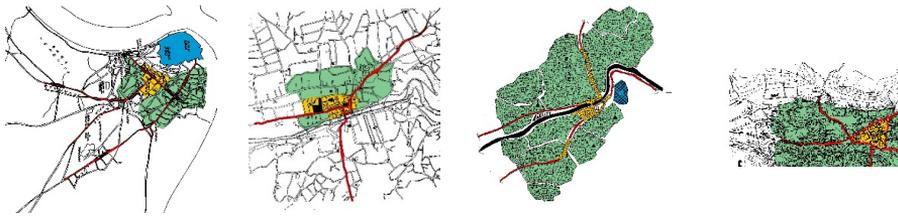
**Figure 4.** A schematic view of a central historical core with a bazaar: Bitola, Prilep, Ohrid, Strumica, Struga and Shtip.(source, authors)

- According to the functional scheme of the existence of multiple vital routes of access to the bazaar, there are small deviations in different historical periods, with minimal changes in terms of changing the main directions that are associated with urban units in the city.

We can determine similarities in the model of the spatial and physical structure of the urban development of the Macedonian cities in period XIV-XIX centuries.

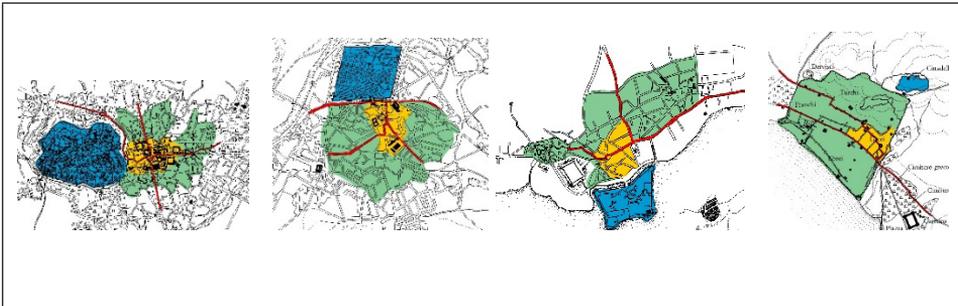
### **Findings and historic importance**

A similar structure, regarding the development of a spatial system, can be compared with the traditional part of the bazaar in Sarajevo (Grabrijan, 1985), with the bazaar in Prizren, Pec, (Kojic, 1976), Vranje (Петровиќ, 1967) Belgrade (Macura, 1984), Tirana, Ioannina, Thessaloniki, Bursa, Edirne (Cerasi 1988), Mostar.



**Figure 5.** A schematic view of a central historical core with a bazaar: Belgrade, Sarajevo, Prizren, Pec (source.autors)

Regarding the concept of the bazaar in Prizren there are similarities in terms of positioning a mosque and inns as central monuments around which a structure of commercial buildings is formed, with traditional contents in new urban concept (Petrovic 1967).



**Figure 6.** A schematic view of a central historical core with a bazaar: Bursa, Edirne, Ioannina, Thessaloniki (source.autors)

Thessaloniki is oriented towards the open marine space, in a spatial concept of fortification, where due to the multiethnic composition various spatial concepts are formed. The Bazaar is developing into a proper concept of street shopping facilities, untypical for a Balkan city, but with a strong economic and trade base, playing a key role in the city's traditional urban concept (Cerasi, 1988).

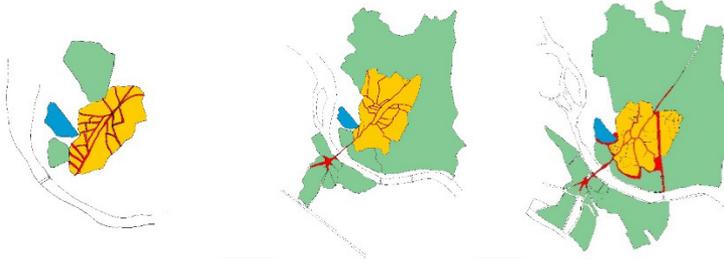
### **The role of the bazaar in the contemporary urban development of the city**

In the 1960s a Detailed plan was made for the valorization of the bazaar in three phases: 1. Historic -ethnographic analysis and architectural analysis, 2.Preparation of preliminary and general urban plan 3. Principal urban design (Arsovski 1967). The analysis of monumental memorials is emphasized, in functional and artistic glance and ambient unity of individual objects from cultural building heritage (han, hammam, mosque, bazaar, etc.). In 1962 different studies and programs were made for the Old Bazaar in Skopje. With the devastating

earthquake from 1963 and the clearance of destroyed buildings in the bazaar, clear guidelines were defined for the borders around the center and the medieval fortress. In the rebuilding after the earthquake large amount of the budget was intended for the restoration of historic buildings (70% of total funds) as the one in the Old Bazaar in Skopje (Cipan, 1966).

In the urban study by Kenzo Tange for post-earthquake reconstruction of Skopje's Bazaar, the bazaar is incorporated in the authentic boundaries, as protected historic core, important for the conservation of the spirit and the chronology of the development of the city. Despite the devastating earthquake (1963), although most of the city was destroyed, much of the bazaar passed with minimal damage, because of the flexibility of the wooden construction system, which has been used in most of the buildings in the Old Bazaar (Resurgent Skopje, 1967). As in the general urban plan, the Special fund of the UN (United Nations), in addition to the development of the city center, the historic buildings were given a treatment.

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**Figure 7.** Plan of the bazaar in the XVIth c. with position of the fortress and residential areas; Plan of the bazaar in the XIXth c. with fortress and wider residential area, and development of the new part of the town, on the other side of the river; Plan of the bazaar in the XXth c. with fortress and many developed residential areas on both sides of the river. Skopje. (Source: authors)

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a large number of professional architectural - urban studies are produced for urban solutions of the old bazaar in Skopje and the fortress (Cipan, 1966).

### **Analyses**

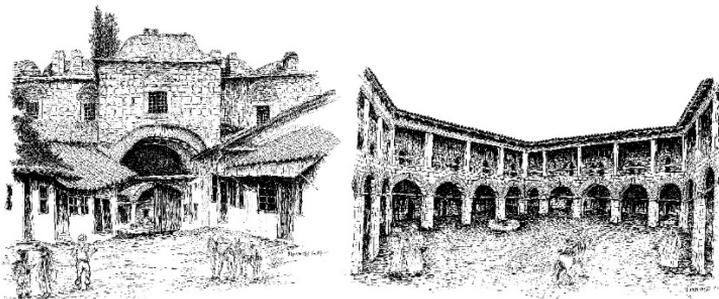
During the long period of development and transformation of the structure of Skopje Bazaar, we can emphasize:

- The development of spatial structure of the network of trading facilities depended on social, political and economic conditions during the period of Ottoman rule. Thereafter the military and strategic position after the 15<sup>th</sup> century enabled trade and economic development in Skopje, where number of stores increased, due to a large number of crafts. The largest growth is registered in 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- The structure of the spatial position of the shops depended by the monumental buildings associated with the Islamic concept of setting up public facilities. Besides the construction of sacred buildings like mosques and religious schools, a functional group was formed together with hammams, inns and bedestens, which enabled the creation of a unit (Cipan 1955).
- Modern urban interventions, mostly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as natural disasters (floods in 1992, earthquake in 1963), latest urban plans (from the 1960s, 70s, 80s) despite radical moves, maintained the basic structure of the bazaar and the shape of the shops. The new facilities that are embedded in its structure (Museum of Macedonia, National Theater, Shopping mall-as bridge) successfully fit into the traditional view of the landscape of the bazaar.

Specific cultural policy of rehabilitation (Bedesten), conservation (Kurshumli Han, Suli An) and reconstruction (Old Post Office) on certain public and religious facilities show tendency of the public for respect of traditional values of the spirit of the bazaar. Public cultural projects, like actions for animation and bringing life in the bazaar (1980, 2005), today play an active role as a large complex connecting of the traditional old core of the bazaar with the new urban complex of the city, on the other side of the river Vardar.

The Bazaar with its complex of buildings consisted of different functions and structure is a region where the biggest projects for protection of cultural heritage are realized. The realization of conservation projects contributes to the preservation and cultivation of the urban concept, not only the historical nucleus with the bazaar in its center, but the protection of the traditional urban concept of the city is applied.



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**Figure 8.** View of Kurshumli Han, Suli Han, Skopje, 15 c. (source drawing Namicev P.)

### Synthesis of results

According to the comparative analysis of certain characteristic examples from the Balkan region, we can conclude similarities as a result from certain geographical, social and economic conditions determined by the location.

- The establishment and development of the bazaar is always linked to the position of the street network, near the river, sacred buildings, public buildings, and so on. During the observations it is concluded that in many cases the surroundings of the bazaar are developed in the same concept.
- The potential of the trading markets is constantly subjected to developmental increases in the useful area with new content adapted to the needs of the population (taps, squares, public buildings, etc.).
- The placement of the bazaar at frequent positions is an influence by the Islamic concept of placing sacred objects in dominant places. In doing so, a complex structure is formed of carefully laid objects. At the same time, the concept of construction of the building groups from the period produced certain urban rules and norms, forming urban spatial structure under Islamic influence regarding the needs of the population. According to the centuries-old development, recognition is enabled of the model of urban central core, where the bazaar has a dominant position in the spatial structure of the city.
- The density of construction of sacred objects, both Islamic (mosque, tekke) and Orthodox (church, lodge, monastery), is a reflection of the social structure of the settlement and historical development of the historical nuclei, where the bazaar as a spatial structure connects the various cultural objects in a functional whole.
- In this way, the importance and the need for the existence of the bazaar, its maintenance and protection, in modern conditions, is increased as an authentic model arising from the conditions of the city's traditional urban concept.
- Under the conditions of the Ottoman Empire, we can define a general structure of a number of Balkan cities with square, public buildings, a fortress, a bridge, a street network and a trading market. The market with the street network and commercial units represent a compulsory segment in the traditional urban model of the city (Belgrade, Sarajevo, Prizren, Bursa, Jedrenje, Novi Pazar, Skopje, etc.).

The bazaar in Skopje represents a typical example of a composition in which the market has a vital role in the central city core, connected with a complex of buildings covering certain parts of different sides of the bazaar. The structure of the bazaar is functionally linked to the main street network that passes through the central arteries, with the new part of the city that is usually developed on the other side of the river bed, with the adjacent residential parts with green areas as an influence from the Islamic house and way of life.

The proximity of the medieval fortification is a specific characteristic of a building in the immediate vicinity of the bazaar, where from a certain period it is connected with the economic potential of the military activities, strengthening the economic potential (Deroko 1971).

### Conclusions

As a result of the conducted analysis we can conclude certain considerations:

- The development of street network and number and character of trading facilities develops in parallel with the formation of the traditional urban form of the neighborhood, proportionally to the needs. We can conclude that Skopje's bazaar was formed in a geographical environment similar to the characteristics of a typical Balkan city, which created the conditions for certain interactions with other cities in the region, i.e. to create an acceptable model of spatial urban structure.
- In the morphological structure of the traditional urban form of Balkan cities, the city with its neighborhoods developed around the rivers ( Belgrade, Prizren, Bursa) or on open area (Thessaloniki, Istanbul), in which the bazaar is dominant as a central spatial element (Cerasi 1988). However, there are certain diverse solutions adapted to the social, economic and cultural influences.

Skopje's bazaar, with its preserved urban form, represents a typical example of established city model based on the needs during the time of the Ottoman Empire. The morphology of the structure made it possible for the development of a Balkan city under the characteristic model, thus continuing to meet the contemporary needs of the city's urban norms. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century a number of conservation projects (adaptation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation) were undertaken, enabling the preservation of important heritage objects and their integration into the contemporary urban concept of the city. Skopje's bazaar can be defined as a typical model with its spatial concept compared with examples from the other Balkan cities. These similarities with the other cities are regarding the physical structure according to the time of occurrence and historical values, as well as geographical factors.

A complex of old bazaar which developed through many centuries contains elements of sacral, cultural and economic aspects of influence for the development of the city. The core of the bazaar has always been part of the urban structure and perspective. The complexity of all forms in the urban structure created specific authentic spirit of the bazaar. The central position of the area of the bazaar, in all historical periods was vital in linking with the new parts of the city, functionally, spatially and in terms of the city's landscape (Fig. 7-9).

Thus its monumentality established code of recognizable figures, incorporated in modern trends of urban plans, to make ancient balance in the city (Stupar, 2009). The architecture becomes an integral organic part of a spatial environment and organic architecture with elements of a pleasant setting, as a result of historical urban transformation (Dukic and Stupar, 2001). Adaptation of the existing model of the settlement was adjusted of the requirements of the oriental way of life, like the result of spiritual needs and a new culture of life (Kurtovic, 2001). The supremacy of the bazaar talks about the meaning and changes if its function, and its key role in the modern urban structure.

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