

TWO SULTAN’S STRUCTURES WITH MULTI PATRONS (BANI) IN THE BALKANS: DIDYMÓTEICHO CELEBI MEHMED MOSQUE AND MURAD II (CARSI) MOSQUE IN PRISTINA

ДВЕ СУЛТАНСКИ СГРАДИ С РАЗЛИЧНИ СЪЗДАТЕЛИ НА БАЛКАНИТЕ: ЧЕЛЕБИ МЕХМЕД ДЖАМИЯ В ДИМОТИКА И МУРАД (ЧАРШИ) ДЖАМИЯ В ПРИЩИНА

It has been proposed that both of the mosques, Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmet Mosque (1420–1421) and the Prishtina Murad II /Çarşı/Küçük Fatih Mosque (the first half of the 15th century) were constructed by the Ottoman sultans and that they had multi patrons. It has been suggested that for Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, the construction works were started by Sultan Bayezid I (1389–1402) and were completed by Mehmed I (1413–1421). In the case of Murad II Mosque in Prishtina, on the other hand, the foundation was laid by Bayezid I, the construction was started by Murad II (1421–1451) and was completed by Sultan Mehmed II (1452–1481). With these facts in mind, our purpose is to investigate and explain the multi possessive state of these structures and their relations with the Balkans, the political conditions of the period and the architectural specificities.

Keywords: Didymóteicho (Turkis: Dimetoka), Prishtina, Bayezid I, Mehmed I, Murad II.

The relations of the Ottomans with the Balkans began with the Murad I’s reign (1360–1389). In regards to our subject, if we take a look at Didymóteicho and Prishtina especially, it can be said that both of these towns’ relations with the Ottomans also started during the reign of Murad I. It is indicated that the conquering of Didymóteicho by the Ottomans was in 1361 at first (Darkot 1963: 589; Kiel 1994: 306). However, what makes this town more meaningful in terms of our subject matter is its being used as the centre of the sultanate at the time of its construction and probably later it was used as the centre for the Sultans from time to time due to its closeness to Edirne and İstanbul (Darkot 1963: 589). In spite of the fact that made Didymóteicho as a privileged town among the other Balkan towns, no data can be found to evidence that Prishtina was also a centre of the sultanate for a short period even. What makes this town different from Didymóteicho is that it was abandoned several times after being conquered by the Ottomans for the first time. Prishtina was permanently added to the Ottoman lands in 1455 by Sultan Mehmed II (1451–1481) (Kiel 2007: 346).

In the mentioned period, the Early Ottoman Era, it is observed that the Ottoman sultans had acted in many construction actions especially in the capital city of the Ottomans, Bursa and other important towns such as Edirne having many monumental structures available as well as the towns in the Balkans. When these sultans’ constructions in the Balkans are compared, in other words the same sultan’s constructions are compared in two different geographical environments in terms of their architectures and style characteristics, it can be pointed out that these works of art had approached closely each other and had set forth a chain of relationships reflecting the conditions of the era (Gündüz Küskü 2012: 141). Within this

context, Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque (1420–1421) could be evaluated as a significant example. Especially with its arrangements in the front, its decorations and the materials used, and the technical specifications show a lot of similarities with the Sultan's mosque in Edirne – Edirne Old Mosque (1414). Both mosques had two sultans as their patrons. According to Evliya Çelebi the mosque was owned by Bayezid I (Evliya Çelebi 1999b:). The researcher Kiel on the other hand has noted that the construction of the mosque began in the time of Bayezid I, but its building was completed by Mehmed I (Kiel 1994: 306). However, the inscription inscribed at the portal door clearly indicates the date as 1420 and the Sultan's name as Mehmed I, the inscription on the west door shows the date as 1421 (Ayverdi 1989: 148-150; Eyice 1993: 262). Another data in regard to the construction year of the mosque; is the age of the wood covering systems which reflect 1420–1421 (Kiel 1994: 306). The date, which overlaps exactly with the available inscriptions, proves without doubt that the mosque is from Sultan Mehmed I's era.

As it has already been emphasized before, when Çelebi Sultan Mehmed Mosque is evaluated architecturally, it resembles the Eski Mosque, which was constructed in Edirne by Mehmed I. The building was covered with a wooden ceiling hold by four square-shaped “paye” columns with a dome in the centre. The console and arch beginnings at the northern side of the Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque indicate that there was an arrangement of a rivaq (colonnade, portico), similar to the example of Edirne Eski Mosque (Images 1-3). However, the most significant resemblance between the two buildings is the setup of the facades. In both of the buildings, lower level windows are rectangular in shape, bigger in size, with angular arched pediments and framed with bare mouldings. Upper level windows, which are placed in bare mouldings as well are smaller in size and with angular arches and bare (Images 4, 8-9). Other things in common for both of the buildings are the stalactite series on the window frames and lintels at the lower level windows (Images 5, 10). As could be observed, in these two buildings where the facade setups are almost similar to each other, another remarkable application were the materials and technical specifications. Both Edirne Eski Mosque and Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque were constructed with the indispensable yellowish Kartaltepe Köfeki stones, which were very common in Edirne (Ayverdi 1956: 14). The windows and the door arches of both of the mosques were decorated with red-white dual coloured stones and enlivened this way (Images 4, 6, 9-10).

In addition to its architectural specificities, Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque reveals the names of two different artists who have marked the era of Sultan Mehmed I. The first one of these artists is Togan Bin Abdullah who also had his signature affixed in the zawiya of the Rumelian Governor Bayezid Pasha (1414–1419). The other one is Bayezidoğlu Hacı İvaz who was one of the important patrons of the era and who had affixed his signature in three of the buildings of Sultan Mehmed I of whose vizier he was, apart from his own constructions (Durukan 2002: 1108; Gündüz 2011: 165; Tüfekçioğlu 2001: 138, 169). In addition to the architectural similarities with Edirne Eski Mosque, these artists, whose signatures are affixed in these mosques, reveal clearly that Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque was constructed by Mehmed I.

However, due to our subject matter, what needs to be discussed is why Bayezid I was defined as the patron of the mosque even though the inscription data, architectural peculiarities and the age of the wood clearly marks up Sultan Mehmed I. In the inscriptions, the written dates are 1420 and 1421, which are at the same time the date of the death of Sultan Mehmed I. If the construction of the Mosque had been started by his father, it would be expected to have the date of the inscriptions at much earlier dates. As a matter of fact the epitaph of the Edirne Eski Mosque seems to support this point of view. Mehmed I ascended the throne in July 1413. The inscription in the mosque is dated January 1414. Under the light of these two dates, in a short period of six-seven months, following a serious political disorder period, it seems more reasonable to believe that Mehmed I had actually completed the building instead of having it constructed. When it is considered that in Didymóteicho which is very close to Edirne, there were no continuous handovers as there were in Prishtina, it can easily be stated that this mosque was constructed by Mehmed I. In this case, what might be the reason for having Bayezid I's name associated with the mosque? Even though it is not possible to answer this question clearly, it could be proposed that Bayezid I had constructed a mosque in this town and it was destroyed, then his son Mehmed I had a new mosque constructed. However, since there is no data to support this fiction we can reach to the conclusion that Sultan Bayezid I's name was associated with the building in a more symbolical dimension.

In the sources, it is accepted that the foundation of the Prishtina Murad II Mosque, which was also known by three different names as “Çarşı Mosque”, “Murad II Mosque”, and “Küçük Fatih Mosque”, was done by Bayezid I's son – Murad I in honour of his name, then the construction works had been initiated by Murad II and the completion of the mosque was finalized by Sultan Mehmed II (Ayverdi-Yüksel 1981b: 157; Vırmiça 1999: 215; Kiel 2007: 347). However, researchers have especially emphasized that this mosque replaced the mosque of Murad II (Kiel 2007: 346). From the two inscriptions placed on the south facade under the eaves of the mosque, the one on the east mentions the name of Sultan Murad I and states that the mosque has been constructed by Sultan Mehmed II. The other inscription dated 1902 is about some restoration work done (Ayverdi-Yüksel 1981b: 157; Vırmiça 1999: 218).

The architectural characteristics of the Prishtina Murad II Mosque, which is square planned and with pendentive passages covered with a dome, gives us important clues about the period of the building and the restoration which was done in 1902. When the portico, which was not unique giving a tenement appearance to the building, was removed, it revealed that there were four columns and four consoles at the northern side of the building with a three partitioned portico (Images 11-13). Even though the minaret of the mosque was new, the positioning where the sanctuary and the portico met must have been unique. With its square plan covered with a dome and the three partitioned portico setup at the northern side and the minaret, it can easily be stated that the building reflected the classical arrangements of the early Ottoman prayer rooms (Image 13). On the other hand, in the system of proceeding towards the dome, the appearance of the examples showing the use of pendentives instead of the triangular corner edges in the period of Mehmed II, states that this building has been constructed by Mehmed II (Images 12). However, it is obvious that the building had gone through a serious renovation. In addition to the available renovation inscription, the positioning of the inscriptions on the southern facade

under the eaves and the round windows at the upper west side of the building are the most important indicators of the renovation work on the building (Image 14). Besides that the spoilage of the writings (Ayverdi-Yüksel 1981b: 158) and the circular inscription plates are the net indications of the late period renovation work just on the round shaped windows (Image 15). These probable data, which shows that the mosque had a late period of renovation, reveals that the upper parts of the building have been renovated substantially. The lower parts of the mosque considerably match up with that of the Fatih Mosque (1461) which is close by. The square plan covered with a dome having pendentive transitions, the three partitioned portico arrangements and the positioning of the minaret are similar in the two buildings (Images 11-18). However, the most important similarity between these two buildings are the facade arrangements. If the round shaped windows and the inscriptions situated beneath the eave lines at the Murad II Mosque are set aside, both buildings similarly have two rectangular windows, on the eastern, western and southern lower walls, and three lancet windows attract the attention on the upper levels of the walls (Images 14, 17). Except these windows, the ones at the bottom are bigger in size and they are gabled dormer windows. Instead of the two pointed lancet windows at the top of the Fatih Mosque, there are round windows in Murad II Mosque as replaced during the renovations. Despite the similarities in the architectural setup of the two buildings, which are thought to be done by the same patron, there are changes in the types of materials used during the construction. Even though that stones were used in both constructions, the quality of workmanship at the Fatih Mosque is more remarkable (Images 13-14, 17).

Based on the available architectural similarities, even though it can easily be stated that Murad II Mosque has been constructed by Mehmed II, the question arises as why the same sultan had two constructions which are very close to each other in Prishtina. When the other important cities and sultan's buildings are considered, we can reach to the conclusion that these two constructions did not have one and the same patron. As a matter of fact, the materials and technical applications in these two buildings support this conclusion as well. In this case, it would be more correct to say that the initial construction of the Murad II Mosque, which reflects architectural similarities with the other mosques dating after the 1450's in Prishtina, can be attributed to Murad II. In the historical connotation, when it is considered that Prishtina which was conquered after the reign of Murad I and was ruled by the Ottomans in five consequent years in the period of Murad II, consolidates the opinion that the mosque was constructed by Sultan Murad II. For this reason, it could easily be said that the standpoint that Bayezid I was the first patron of the building, does not comply with the architectural characteristics of the building and the political situation. As a matter of fact, if Bayezid I had initiated the construction of the mosque, the continuation of the work is expected to be pursued by either his son Mehmed I who was his successor on the throne, or in such a period of throne fights, by any other son who had influence over some of the regions in the Balkans. I don't believe that it would be right to assume that the building which has no indication or mark of the twenty years period which elapsed in between the death of Bayezid I and Murad's II taking the throne, has been protected in the form as Bayezid I had initiated the construction. Accordingly, we can reach to the conclusion that Bayezid I had no relation with the Prishtina Murad II Mosque and the mosque was constructed by Murad II, and it was renovated by his son Mehmed II.

However what needs to be discussed based on our subject matter is the question why the information that the mosque's foundation had been laid by Sultan Bayezid I prevails even though the architectural specifications point out to the time of Sultan Mehmed II and the historical conditions reflect those of Sultan Murad II's era?

It cannot be considered as a coincidence to have the name of Bayezid I as the initial patron of the two mosques, Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque and Prishtina Murad II Mosque under the absence of data. Nonetheless, it is also meaningful that the name of Sultan Mehmed I, son of Bayezid I who ascended the throne right after his death had not been mentioned at all among the patrons of the Murad II Mosque. This situation, revealing that the names of the patrons were not listed in chronological order in the buildings' documents, also points out that the name of Bayezid I was selected consciously. When considered in this context, even though it is known that the first conqueror of these towns was Murad I, we can reach to the conclusion that Bayezid I had established different relations among these regions. It is known that Bayezid I had gained important successes in the Balkans, especially in the region of Macedonia (Uzunçarşılı 2003: 268-269; Finkel 2007: 23). Especially the victory at Nikopol (1396) secured the sultan a great comfort in these regions. As a matter of fact, Evliya Çelebi had emphasized that the nickname "Thunderbolt", was assigned to Bayezid I due to his conquering of Wallachian and Moldova regions seven times in the same year (Evliya Çelebi 1999a: 27). However, most of the lands conquered in Rumelia had to be abandoned after the loss of Ankara battle (1402) (Yinanç 1997: 387). The continuous change of rulers in these regions explain why Sultan Bayezid I had no buildings constructed there. Even if Bayezid I had intended to construct mosques in Didymóteicho and Prishtina it is obvious that this would have been difficult due to the political conditions there. As has been emphasized before, when the sultans' buildings in the Balkans are compared, it is clear that all the Ottoman sultans of the early period – Murad I, Mehmed I and Murad II, all had buildings which had similarities with the examples they had in the capital city of Bursa and Edirne in terms of their styles (Gündüz Küskü 2012: 130-153). On the other hand, there is no distinct evidence as to Sultan Bayezid I's patronage of a mosque in the Balkans. It is quite provoking to think that Sultan Bayezid I was the only sultan who had not patronized any construction or whose building has not been revealed to date. For this reason, in both of the mosques we had chosen to compare, the presence of the name of Bayezid I among the patrons could be accepted as an honorific expression to a person who had gained reputation for the first time in the region.

As a conclusion, when the architectural specifications and the political environment in the period are taken into consideration, it could be said that, among the two mosques, Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque was definitely constructed by Sultan Mehmed I. As to Prishtina Murad II Mosque it could be said that the construction works were initiated by Sultan Murad II, but that they were completed by his son Mehmed II. As far as the two mosques are concerned, Sultan Bayezid I's name is mentioned as the initial patron, which should be evaluated in a symbolical magnitude. However, as to this paper, which needs to be taken as a preliminary work, there should be more research work to develop and to complete this study under the light of much stronger evidence.

IMAGES



Image 1. Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, north-west facade

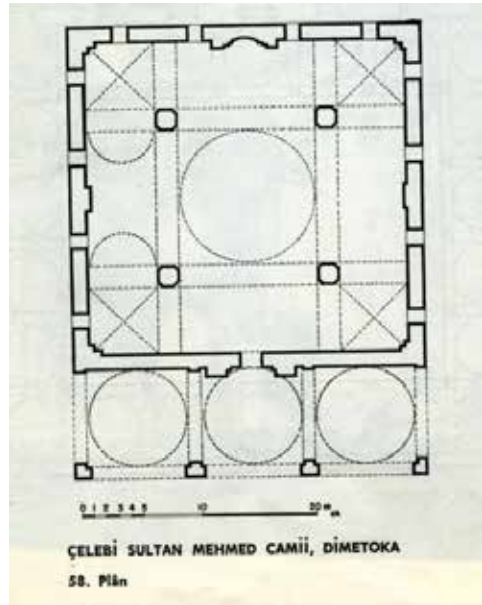


Image 2. Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque's Plan (Kuran 1964)



Image 3. Didymóteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, north façade



Image 4. Dimetoka Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, west façade

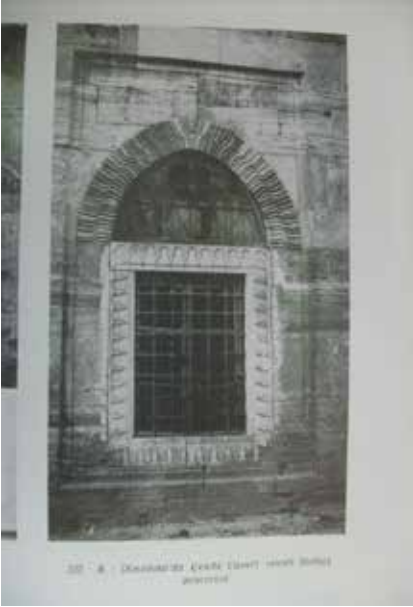


Image 5. Didymôteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, west facade, window (Ayverdi 1989)



Image 6. Didymôteicho Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, west portal



Image 7. Dimetoka Çelebi Mehmed Mosque, west facade, window (Ayverdi 1989)



Image 8. Edirne Eski Mosque, a look from north-east



Image 9. Edirne Eski Mosque,
south facade



Image 10. Edirne Eski Mosque,
north facade, window

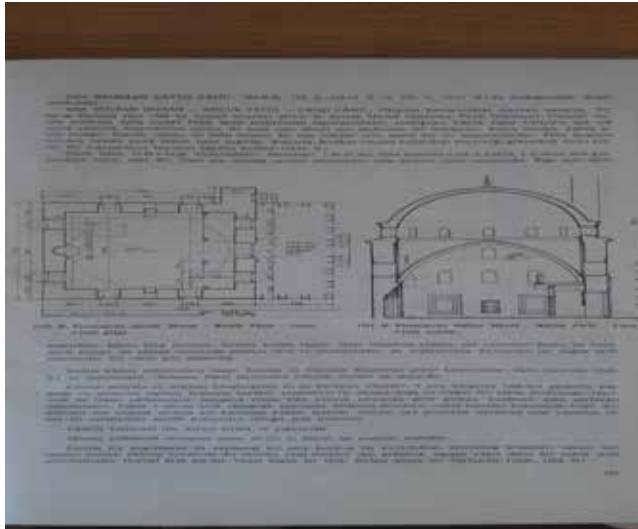


Image 11. Prishtine Murad II Mosque's Plan (Ayverdi 1981)



Image 12. Prishtine Murad II Mosque, sanctuary and pendantive passages (Ayverdi 1981)



Image 13. Prishtine Murad II Mosque, north façade



Image 14. Prishtine Murad II Mosque, south-west façade



Image 15. Piriştine Murad II Mosque, inscription (Ayverdi 1981)



Image 17. Piriştine Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque, south-west facade (Ayverdi 1981)

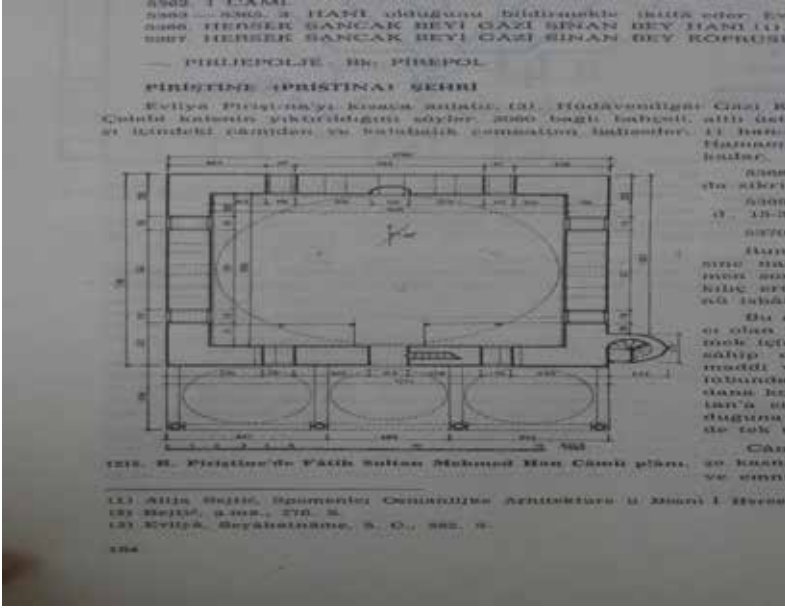


Image 18. Pristine Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque's plan (Ayverdi 1981)

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