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## **SARAY OF PROVINCIAL OTTOMAN GOVERNORS: PLACE FOR LIVING, PLACE FOR GOVERNING**

### **САРАЯТ НА ПРОВИНЦИАЛНИТЕ ОСМАНСКИ УПРАВИТЕЛИ: МЯСТО ЗА ЖИВЕЕНЕ ИЛИ МЯСТО ЗА УПРАВЛЕНИЕ**

The article tries to examine the sarays of the Ottoman provincial governors from different perspectives by revealing their importance as cores of local provincial governing, but also as personal space of higher Ottoman officials. Although the data are very limited, it is possible to reveal some details of everyday life in the saray, their supply and maintenance. Various sources, such as Bitola and Sofia sicills, travelogues and diplomatic documents about Vidin, Salonica and some other Balkan towns, as well as researches on Anatolian provincial Sarays have been used. As a result, a dividing line between Tanzimat and pre-Tanzimat local centres of government was drawn. On the basis of the examined documents a thesis about the shifting character of those governing centres developed. It seems that the idea about government complexes consisted not only of sarays but also of numerous administrative buildings developed in the 19th c., precisely during the period of modernization. Then these governing nuclei became dominant in the cities' centres and represented, materially and symbolically, the Ottoman power in the provinces.

**Keywords:** Rumelia, Sofia, Bitola, Vidin, Ottoman provincial governor, sarays, konaks.

The saray of the Ottoman provincial governors was not part of common people's every-day life. It was a building beyond their every-day rhythm, but it was part of the life of Ottoman governors in the Balkans. Actually, if we analyze it strictly from an academic point of view, the functions of a governing centre prevail over its exotic image of place of everyday leisure.

It has to be pointed out that there are no enough studies on the saray of the Ottoman provincial governors (called also “konak”). Moreover, most of the studies concentrate on the Tanzimat period (1839–1878) when the traditional Ottoman governing system was reformed according to the European visions about the modern state governing and system's components substantially defer from the previous period.

Therefore, in this study I will concentrate on the period between the late 18th and the early 19th centuries with some parallels to the second half of the 19th century in order to present the space of governing in the (Balkan) Ottoman provinces. The essay is based mainly on data about the residences of Rumeli vali in Sofia and Bitola and that of the Vidin muhafiz.

### **The Saray as a Governing Center**

The saray of the Ottoman governors emulated in large extend the characteristics of the sultan's palace: there were two parts inner (haremlık) and outer (selâmlık). The inner part was private space of the Ottoman governor and his family, while the outer part was his of-

fice. The process of governing, i.e. initiating documents; sending couriers; receiving foreign diplomats; inspecting grievances; organizing councils, etc., took place in the selâmlık part<sup>1</sup>.

According to the description given by Michael Ursinus, the saraya of the Rumeli valis in Bitola<sup>2</sup> consisted of haremlık<sup>3</sup> (ТДМИ 1957: 37, №185) and an inner courtyard with official functions. This courtyard was called Bab-i ali (the Sublime Porte) as the centre of governing in the capital<sup>4</sup>. The term Bab-i ali appears also in the documents about Sofia but not so often (НБКМ S 309 bis 4, 1819 r.: 66). In Sofia case, as in Vidin, the office of the vali, the outer part of the saraya was called dayre (office) (НБКМ S 162: 96; S 24: 42, 43; S 29: 266; S 31: 18a), or dayre-i aliye (the high office) (Атанасов 2008: 107). It is interesting from a historical point of view that in 1819, the Ottoman scribes mentioned “the old saraya” (НБКМ S 309 bis 4: 66), which implies existence of a new building as well. This new saraya, however, remained unknown for us.

There is no detailed description of saraya’s interior, but some Sofia’s court registers mention names of some rooms (offices) in vali’s residence: reception hall (arz odası); room of the guard of the seal, i.e. the secretary (mühürdar effendi odası); room of the treasurer (hazinedar ağa odası) (НБКМ S 309 bis 4:66); room of the kethuda effendi<sup>5</sup>; room of the scribe (kâtib odası); room of the kaftan ağa<sup>6</sup>; room of the slaves (gulyam odası) (НБКМ S 309 bis 4:66); room of peşkir arkadaşı<sup>7</sup>. A list of new furniture bought for the saraya in Vidin includes the following rooms: arz oda and two rooms of the vali; rooms of kapı kethuda, of hazinedar, of mühürdar, divitdar (a secretary), kâtib-i divan (secretary of the divan), two kethudas, rooms of the çokadar of the harem (enderun çokadar), çauş of the harem (enderun çauş), of kaftan ağası, çokadar ağa. All together, they were 21 rooms, plus a bath in the saraya<sup>8</sup>.

This data are comparable with the detailed account of the vali konak in Konya, centre of Karaman eyalet in Anatolia, from 1845. According to the document, there were the following rooms at the konak: arz odası; room of the slaves (kul odası); room of the manager of the vali’s office (dayre-i müdür odası); room of the servants (uşak odası); room of the scribes (kâtib odası); room of the kethuda (kethüda beyefendi odası); room of the scribe of the vali’s council<sup>9</sup> (divan efendi odası); room of the manager of the expenses (vekil-i harc odası); smoking room (duhan odası); treasury (hazine odası); room of the treasurer (hazinedar odası); room of the divitdar efendi; room of the mühürdar; a space separating the inner and outer parts of the konak (mabeyn odası)<sup>10</sup>; room of the harem (harem odası); other room of the harem (diğer harem odası) and a room of the supervisor of the harem (harem kethüda odası) (Tuş 2001: 54-55).

The common features of saraya’s plans in the Balkans and Anatolia was a result of the fact that the provincial governing centres copied the Centre not only as a model of governing, but also as spatial organization<sup>11</sup>.

The comparison of the vali’s office structure shows that the key figures were the hazinedar; divitdar; mühürdar and the scribe of the divan, namely, those who were responsible for the finances and issuing documents. The main deputy of the vali – the kethüda, also had very important place in the provincial administration.

The number of the rooms and the distribution of the offices depended certainly on the size of a certain building and the extent of a certain local governing. Talking about size,

the sources give controversial information. According to Musa Çadırcı, the sarays of the Anatolian provincial governors were impressive buildings, which accommodated not only vali's family, but also part of his entourage (Çadırcı 1997: 20). On the other hand, according to a study on the Bosnian sarays in the 18th century, the vali's residency occupied a private house, remodelled according to its new aim (Kreševljaković 1955: 15). Later information corresponds with data about the sarays in the central Balkan areas. The registers of the local expenses (tevzi defters) of Bitola and Vidin include a sum for rent of the saray (ТДМИ 1955: 18-25; ТДМИ 1958: 34-38; Национален архив, Скопие, битолски сиджил № 103 от 1835 г.: 176; Атанасов 2008: 106). For Bitola the rent was 400 gurushes for six months, while the building of the kadi court had rent of 60 gurushes. Moreover, there is information for renting houses for the needs of the local administration in Anatolia as well (Çadırcı 1997: 20). These facts raise questions about the ownership of those buildings, as well as their planning – were they planned especially as public spaces or initially were private houses, remodelled later according to the needs of the administration.

The interpretation of the available facts leads us to some hypotheses about the character of the Ottoman governing system and its organization in the provinces. The perception about governing residences planned as centres of the cities and symbolic representations of the Ottoman power are challenged. Can we claim that before 1839 the residencies of the Ottoman governors were not especially planned and designed as governing centres, but were houses (konaks) of local notables rented by the Ottoman authorities? This hypothesis is supported by information given by a document in Bitola's sicills. It states that in 1832 a house in the centre of Bitola was bought for the needs of the authorities (ТИБИ 1977: 382). Felix Kanitz includes in his travel writings descriptions of the provincial centres in the Balkans in the 1840's and 1850's. Those accounts also differ substantially from the widespread perception for representative state buildings. According to F. Kanitz, even in the modern era some of the Ottoman konaks of the local administration did not differ from the surrounding buildings. For the town of Sliven he writes: "the konak of the mutasarrif [governor of a sancak], the saray, which does not differ architecturally from the facades of the older provincial buildings ..." (Каниц 1998: 42). For Lovech he writes: "In 1877, during my walk in Lovech I did not come across a building which architecturally differs from the common edifices in the town. There was no a sign of any solid constructions which designed to last centuries (Каниц 1997: 34).

The pre-modern state buildings differed from the Tanzimat sarays and konaks<sup>12</sup>, which were specially designed according their functions. The later dominated the urban topography, formed a space around which visually, functionally, and symbolically played role of urban center. F. Kanitz testifies for the towns of Ruse, Targovishte, Shumen, and Razgrad that the sarays (or konaks) were situated in the main town square (Каниц 1995: 166; Каниц 1998: 68, 74), close to the mosque (Каниц 1998: 321), and were planned as representative public buildings (Каниц 1998: 74-75)<sup>13</sup>. In many cases, they were built as complexes with various functions, formed by separated buildings and neighboured with prison, police department and other public institutions (Каниц 1995: 166)<sup>14</sup>. The traveller underlines that many of konaks were built after 1864 as a project of the governor of the Danubian vilayet – Midhad Pasha

(Каниц, 1995: 166; Каниц 1997: 35; Каниц 1998: 134, 321)<sup>15</sup> designed to represent the modernization of the Ottoman space according to the European models. Sometimes the traveller mentions columns, porticos, and other elements characteristic for the modern European architecture (Каниц 1995: 166; Каниц 1998: 68, 74-75). These specifics of the architecture can be traced in some descriptions of the saraya in Vidin from the 18th and 19th centuries. An Austrian military officer visited the town in 1740 and he mentions big wooden building, which he describes as “two-floor wooden hall with a big kiosk (köşk) where dwellers of the house walked and looked around”. The kiosk was protruded further in the yard and was supported by wooden columns (Щад 1986: 346-347). Captain Shad notifies the saraya of the muhafiz as “the most remarkable object among all edifices and in contrast with the common houses in Vidin it was painted in red” (Щад 1986: 346-347)<sup>16</sup>. In contrast with the above-mentioned description, E. Marinov describes a massive edifice: “elongated two-floor massive edifice ... parallel to the Danubian coast” (Маринов 2004: 234). According to his description, the saraya was a complex of several buildings, a bath, a flower garden, a tower, and a harem” (Маринов 2004: 234). It is interesting the note that the harem was situated in separate stone building with many rooms, which, according to D. Tzuhlev, was erected during Tsar Ivan Sratsimir’s rule in the 14th century and later it was used as a prison.

A short sentence in E. Marinov’s description leads us to the probable destiny of the pre-Tanzimat sarayas and konaks in the Ottoman provinces. At the end of his text, Maronov writes that all edifices in the pasha’s complex were destroyed (Маринов 2004: 234). This sentence summarizes the situation because there are no data available for the sarayas and konaks before 1839. It is not clear whether their “adaptability” and belonging to the private-house architecture led to their disappearance and abolishment from the city’s memory. On the other side, the modernization process caused corrections in the structure of the city, which erased a lot of its pre-modern features<sup>17</sup>. Those processes can be pointed out as reasons for disappearance of the early sarayas of valis and for the lack of evidences for their architecture and inner organization.

Another reason could be the specific of the Ottoman architectural tradition – the usage of wood and timber as main construction material<sup>18</sup>. As a result, many of the buildings were demolished by devastating fires in the cities (Faroqhi 2000: 128, 149)<sup>19</sup>. The wooden houses dominated the private-house Ottoman architecture<sup>20</sup> – even the large palaces of the Ottoman elite were built of wood<sup>21</sup>. This made them very vulnerable<sup>22</sup>. The documents testify that the vali saraya in Bitola burned several times during the first half of the 19th century (1802–3; 1814; 1827 г.)<sup>23</sup>. Its reconstruction after the fire in 1814 was massive and long lasting – expenses for repairs appear in local-expenses registers between 1816–1819 (ТДМИ 1957: 34-35, 35-37), and the amount of the spent money is impressive<sup>24</sup>.

When we use the province of Rumelia as an example of the provincial centers, we have to take into account the specifics of its governing. From the end of the 18th until 1836, the Rumeli vali maintained two governing centres – Sofia and Bitola<sup>25</sup>. Instead of moving from one place to another, he used simultaneously the two capitals and maintained two parallel administrative centres. Some documents about vali’s sarayas in Sofia and Bitola can be found in the archives. The saraya in Sofia was regularly supplied with timber and hay in the

persiod<sup>26</sup>. Meanwhile, regular renovations were made in Bitola saray<sup>27</sup>. The issued documents prove as well that the provincial governor was in a constant move between the two cities. Here is an order of the Rumeli vali in 1820:

Being governing centre [Bitola] of the Rumeli vali and high viziers ... We decided to leave Sofia and set out a journey to Bitola. Therefore, you – the above-mentioned [officers] to whom this order was sent, must insure subsistence of Our army which number out of 30 000 soldiers. Moreover, you must finish fast some repairs in the saray of the high viziers ... but, if the repairs requires long time and large expenses, find a konak ... In addition, you must prepare a konak for the inner and outer section of Our office, for the delils, ..., seymens, beys and agas ayans of Rumelia, which are part of Our entourage. You have to check the available konaks and hans in Bitola and how much they can be used, to complete a list and to send a copy to us (ТДМИ 1947: 47)<sup>28</sup>

The case illustrates the adaptation of the Ottoman administration. Ottoman officers were not attached firmly to a certain place or a certain building. The governor himself was very mobile as well due to his obligations and functions. High Ottoman administrators received positions in completely different parts of the empire. Moreover, the vali travelled a lot during his military campaigns and local inspections<sup>29</sup>. These specifics of the Ottoman provincial governing testify that the moving of the provincial centre was a widespread phenomenon.

### **The Saray as a Place of Living**

The private sector of the Ottoman elite was closed and rarely discussed. Even a detailed picture of the entourage of a pasha is missing. Therefore, the question for the household of the Ottoman high officials is very interesting and worth of investigating and the topic attracts many historians (Hathaway 2002; Idem 1999: 57-66; Findley 1980: 227-235; Abou-El-Haj 1972: 438-447).

The Ottoman documents do not provide detailed description of the inner part (harem) of pasha's residence, data about his family and suite, but provide information about the economic side of the household's living. The living expenses of the household were covered by the local population as part of the local expenses and, logically, were included in the registers of the local expenses (tevzi defters). The local population maintained the building (saray, konak) – its repairs and renovation; monthly supply of timber and hay (НБКМ S 309 bis 4, 1819 г.: 2a, 5a, 12б, 13a-б; ТДМИ 1955: 18-25; ТДМИ 1958: 34-38). There are also documents for supply of ice for the kitchen of the pasha (three villages around Bitola send “a load” every day) (НБКМ S 29, 1807-1809: 27б-28a; ТДМИ 1955: 46, № 1, 2 и 3; ТДМИ 1958: 21, 57). There are regular reports for saray guards' salaries (saraydars) (НБКМ S 162, 1789-1790 г.: 9б-10a; S 24, 1789-1803 г.: 42, 43; S 309 bis 4, 1819 г.: 6б-7a, 7б-8a; S 29 1807-1809: 26б-27a; 27б-28a; 28a-29б; ТДМИ 1955: 18-25; ТДМИ 1958: 34-38) – in Sofia there were two, while in Bitola – three or four guards. The transportation of hay, coal, timber was calculated as a separate expense and was regularly listed in the tevzi defters (Национален архив,

Скопие, Битолски сиджил № 103 от 1835 г.: л. 17а; НБКМ S 162, 1789-1790 г.: 96-10а; S 24, 1789-1803 г.: 42, 43; S 29, 1807-1809 г.: 286-29а). There are even listed expenses for transportation of the garbage of the saraya (НБКМ S 309 bis 4, 1819 г.: 66-7а, 76-8а).

Unfortunately, the available sources do not allow drawing a detailed picture of the building and its interior design. The recorded expenses for the renovations however reveal everyday life of the sarayas to some extent. In 1789-1803 the roof of Sofia saraya was renovated and 23 000 tiles were bought for it<sup>30</sup> (НБКМ S 24, 1789-1803 г.: 43). The carpenters (*dülgers*) were constantly present in the sarayas (НБКМ S 162, 1789-1790 г.: 96-10а; S 24, 1789-1803 г.: 43; S 31, 1813-1814 г.: 18-19). The repairs cost from 100 to 900 gurushes per year<sup>31</sup>.

The case of Bitola saraya, however, was quite different. After a fire, it was completely erected in 1814 (for 89 days). The expenses were so substantial that they keep appearing in the local expenses registers within the next five years. For six months in 1816–1817 the kaza of Bitola paid 20 548 gurushes for this reconstruction (ТДМИ 1957: 13-21); in 1819 Ahmed Bey – the supervisor of the reconstruction declared (total) expenses of 197 661 gurushes. The amount of the used materials is impressive: 8 940 okas of nails; 35 540 gurushes for boards (one board cost less than one gurush); 5 010 cars of timber; 74 098 okas of lime (whitening); 170 550 pairs of big tiles and 40 750 pairs of small tiles. Also: keys for the doors; catches for the doors and shutters; loops for the doors; glass for the windows; 20 copper vessels (for the harem); taps and a fountain for the saraya (ТДМИ 1957: 34-37). Not only construction materials but also household goods were bought in 1816–1817: 15 pieces of rags; pitchers and other copper pots; two carpets for 200 gurushes; towels and pots for the bath of the saraya; mattresses and quilts (ТДМИ 1957: 13-21). Obviously, it was a huge structure, which engaged many people and included new construction of some buildings in the saraya complex in Bitola. Some other buildings for the local Muslim notables (2000 gurushes in total) and a land plot around the saraya (5000 gurushes) were also bought. The saraya seems to be a complex composed from several buildings with different functions, some courtyards, a garden, a bath, etc. Such construction was made again in 1827–1829, according to the documents, again as a result of destructive fire. Some expenses made for the new building are listed in the *tevzi defters*: 27 867 gurushes in 1827–1828 (ТДМИ 1958: 34-38) and 32 000 gurushes in 1829 (ТДМИ 1958: 45-46).

### **Saraya through the Eyes of Foreigners**

The European travellers and diplomats give as more detailed picture of the everyday life of Ottoman governors in the Balkans. Main information is provided by G. Blanki about the saraya of Vidin in 1840s. According to Blanki (Бланки 2005: 85), the saraya was a nice place for living which was able to provide space not only for pasha's family but also for some guests. The fastidious Frenchman who was very critical to the Balkan inns<sup>32</sup> was pleased by "the apartment" in the saraya. He received excellent facilities and number of servants. Blanki talks more about food in the saraya: selected wines from Hungary; fine bread (which reminded him to the Austrian bread), and other foods – untypical for the region but imported from foreign countries. The governor had his own doctor, an Englishman, who took care for the

health of the whole family. Of course, the traveller was fascinated by the harem. The harem, if we rely on Blanki's words, however, was a golden cage rather than a place for never-ending pleasures<sup>33</sup>. In this particular case, the 68-year old Huseyn Pasha had 30 wives and slaves and only one son.

Unfortunately, this detailed description of governor's residence is an exception and we do not have more details about the life of the Ottoman governors in the Balkans. The British consuls in Salonica for example who maintain close interactions with the local governors provide detailed accounts of various discussions on political issues, but they do not report about Ottoman provincial elite's private life and residences<sup>34</sup>.

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Nevertheless, the insufficient character of the available information, some tendencies and specific features of the Rumelian sarays can be detected. The residences of provincial governors copied the model of organization of the sultan's palace in Istanbul but in smaller size<sup>35</sup>. Actually, those pashas emulated the way of life of the ruler and way of organization of his administration and formed miniature copies of the Centre in the provinces.

It is interesting to trace the fusion of private and public space in governors' sarays. In fact, this synthesis was manifested in various cases: mixture of (private) governors' suites with the imperial administration; blending of administrative and military functions, etc.<sup>36</sup> All these examples provoked a different viewpoint to the state offices. They could be viewed as private business without clear distinction between private and public. This phenomenon, however, was not specific for the Ottoman governing model. Similar features appeared among the European ruling systems in which the governors also treated ruling as a private business<sup>37</sup>.

Some documents raised the question about the material dimensions of imperial power in the provinces. Information about moving sarays and capitals from one city to another, buying private houses for the needs of administration, the rents paid for sarays challenged the links between the buildings and governing. It seems that in the Ottoman provinces the buildings used by the local administration were not specially designed for the needs of the state authorities but were modified and adapted to it.

Thus some questions about power and its situating in space appeared: can we examine in these buildings (residencies/offices) a sign of pre-modern governing; was this lack of symbolic representation of power especially in comparison with the modern period; can we study the pre-modern governing as emphasizing on person rather than on material representation (topoi); can we analyze the Ottoman governing system not only as flexible and adaptable to the local specifics but also as mobile – buildings and cities can be easily changed; what was the level of institutionalization and sacralization of space in the pre-modern Ottoman governing system?

This picture is in strong contrast with the rigid organization of the central public space and domination of the imperial power (representation of governing) typical for the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>38</sup>. The idea for planning the urban space and representational, symbolic function of the newly-erected public buildings and complexes was strongly represented in the later Tanzimat period (Желева-Мартинс 2002: 7-9). Thus, from its very beginning the

modernization caused changes in the place of governing seat within the whole urban structure. The pasha's konak was conceptualized as a dominating centre in the city space.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> As it has been mentioned, konak is an alternative term marking big houses in the Ottoman Empire. Usually it was associated with the residences of the governing elite and local notables. Here is a description given by C. Bertram: "Konak has been translated as mansion in most works, including my own, but it also encompasses a social system of extended family, including grandparents, grandchildren, brides, and sons-in-law, and an appropriate number of servants. A small konak might have ten rooms; a large konak could have over forty. Yet a konak is merely a wooden house on a grand scale and exhibits the full range of characteristics and architectural vocabulary of all Ottoman-Turkish wooden houses. Although other types of houses than the ones I have just described also existed, built from local materials and with different plans, most shared the same characteristics of space division and room furnishings and arrangements. But these spatial divisions and decorative schemes reached their fullest development in the capital of Istanbul, and then spread to the provinces along with the princes and wealthy officials who were sent there." (Bertram 2008: 31).

<sup>2</sup> The governor of province (eyalet) of Rumelia, which encompassed today's Western Bulgaria, Albania, Macedonia, parts of Serbia and Greece.

<sup>3</sup> This part – the private space of governor's family, is mentioned in a register of expenses made for construction of saray in 1819. According to the register, the harem was organized as a separate element within the constructed complex and actually occupied a private house bought from the local authorities for 2500 groshes.

<sup>4</sup> In Sofia, the seat of the vali administration was called "dayre-i devlet-i aliyeleri" – the High State Office.

<sup>5</sup> Kethüda, or kâhya – deputy, assistant. An official who fulfilled different tasks for the sultan or provincial governors, see: Redhouse Turkish/Ottoman-English Dictionary. Kapı kethüda was a very important post – he represented as a deputy valis, mutasarrıfs and other high provincial officials before the Sublime Porte.

<sup>6</sup> Kaftan ağası was servant of the sultan or a high Ottoman official who took care for his clothes but also realized many functions related to the protocol.

<sup>7</sup> There is no detailed description of the term in the dictionaries. Peşkir ağası was mentioned as a servant responsible for the napkins on the table.

<sup>8</sup> Thank you to Dr. Hristiyan Atanassov (Central State Archive) for giving me information about this description of the Vidin saray. The Bulgarian translation is available in his book (Атанасов 2008: 94-95) while the full text in Ottoman-Turkish can be found in the original document, dated on 2 July 1794, at the National library, Sofia – S 167, p. 66-7a.

<sup>9</sup> Vali's deputy, assistant.

<sup>10</sup> It was frequently used for official meetings.

<sup>11</sup> In his description of the imperial palace in Istanbul I. Uzunçarşılı does not describe its precise structure and space organization but lists the numerous courtyards and part of the buildings. The sultan's palace (Top Kapı) was separated into three parts: the first part with the outer courtyard, which was open for everybody – there was a garden and an old church; the second part with the inner courtyard – there the stables and barracks of soldiers and guards were situated, a bit further the offices of nişancı (a scribe who wrote the sultan's signature on the official documents) and that of the Imperial Divan took place; just before the third part, which was the private space of the sultan's family, was situated arz odası – the reception hall of the palace (Uzunçarşılı 1945: 16-17).

<sup>12</sup> The plans of later erected building, probably from the second half of the 19th century, display a wide two-floor building with numerous rooms. One of the wings was reserved for the harem while



the other one was used by the provincial administration. See the attached plans of Bosnian sarays (H Kreševljakovič, 1955, 17).

<sup>13</sup> Even though Kanitz was very sceptical/critical to the Turkish way of constructing buildings, he mentions that the konak in Shumen had remarkable size/proportions. There was also a square with a fountain and clock tower in front of it, and those elements attracted people's attention.

<sup>14</sup> Such a complex in Russe (Ruşuk) was described by F. Kanitz: "In its protruded wings and the buildings adjoined with the main city square were situated the offices, law-courts, the printing-press of the official provincial newspaper Tuna ... further the police office, post office and next to it – the prisons. ... from the left side was the orphanage – Islahhane, and in front of it – the wide infantry and cavalry barracks."

<sup>15</sup> These were the konaks of Russe, Lovech, Provadiya (Paravadi), and Razgrad (Hezargrad).

<sup>16</sup> Such large wooden houses from the 17th and 18th centuries, painted in red, belonged to the Ottoman aristocracy. Some of them still can be seen in Istanbul, see the illustrations.

<sup>17</sup> Mark Cohen traces in details the process of modernization in Bitola and the transformation in the city's vision in the middle of the 19th century (Cohen 2000: 4, 19-20). The modernization process and changes in the Bulgarian lands are described in: Гаврилова 1999: 39-40.

<sup>18</sup> Although there are many styles of Ottoman-period houses in Turkey, including those made of stone rather than wood, it was felt that the wooden house with this shape had the power of universal recognition, as the image that best represented a "Turkish house" and the Turkish domestic past in the collective imagination. (Bertram 2008: 17). Here is a description of the Ottoman urban environment original English text: "Light wooden construction with sun-dried bricks, later wooden boarding dominated in most of the cities. It is rare any sense of stableness, and may be it is impossible in the institutional and psychological context of the Ottoman society." (Cerasi 1998: 120). Descriptions of contemporaries can be found in: Хайров 1978: 68-69.

<sup>19</sup> The British consul Charles Blant describes a fire which destroyed big part of Salonica at the beginning of the 19th century: "I regret having to report to Your Excellency that the most valuable part of the town of Salonica was destroyed by fire on Sunday night last, the 8th Inst. The number of houses, shops and Magazines destroyed is not yet known, but the top, including the Custom-house full of goods, is estimated at 100 millions of Piastres. The fire broke out at half past seven on Sunday evening, and though indisposed I immediately went to the spot, where I found that the flames increased with dreadful and rapid fury, owing to the want of Engines, hatches, and fire poles, and want of order. At the fire, I found Izzet Mehmed Pasha the Kaimakam, and pointed out to him urgently as possible the necessity of pulling down a lot of sheds and empty shops, by which means the fire would have been checked. Izzet Pasha would do nothing; he was frightened, and what is worse, he had no people with him. The gates of the town were not allowed to be opened: that of the Marina, where sailors from the Vessels in the Port were demanding admission, on the one side, and the people, on the other, exit with their goods and effects, was kept firmly closed, and was opened only when too late; when all the frank quarter had been destroyed, and numbers of English and other families, which were rich at sunset found themselves before midnight houseless, penniless and in despair! I remained at the Consulate till the last moment, and escaped with my family with the Clothes we had on us, and I had only time to put a few things in the Chancery, which I am happy to say, with the Archives, how escaped. ... The fire, My Lord, was checked in the Frank quarter, at some sheds full of straw close to the British Consulate, which, tho' of stone, was destroyed. Where there were Turkish houses, the greatest, exertions were made, and the progress of the fire impeded; but when it was in the Frank quarter, plunder was the order of the day. Nearly all the Consulates with their archives have been destroyed." (Андонов-Полжански 1968: 297-299, № 106, 12 September 1839).

<sup>20</sup> William Leake presents Serres in the period in question and claims that "the typical Turkish houses with wooden second floor" dominated in the city" (Leake 1826: 200). Robert Walsh was fascinated by the way of constructing houses in the region. According to his description "All the persons I saw engaged were working in a manner opposite to our usage". He claims they were first formed an wooden frame which later was refined and filled with the rest of the material (Walsh 1831: 140).

<sup>21</sup> Beautiful examples of the Ottoman wooden konaks of the 18th and 19th centuries are preserved in Istanbul.

<sup>22</sup> The Ottoman architecture was considered instable by the foreigners. F. Kanitz writes about the town of Lovech: “Any sign of stable constructions was missing. Here, as in other Turkish towns, I had the feeling that a hurricane could take away all these unstable pictorial edifices” (Каниц 1997: 34).

<sup>23</sup> P. Dzhambazovski mentions the presence of documents for the fire, which were, however, not included in the tome. (ТДМИ 1957: 23-24, 34-35, 35-37). There are evidences for the burning down also of the Bosnian vali’s residence in 1687 (Kreševljakovič 1955: 14).

<sup>24</sup> That is why the saray’s expenses were covered by the population of the whole sancak.

<sup>25</sup> There were double centres (capitals) also in the sancaks of Skopje (Skopje and Tetovo), Chirmen (Chirmen and Edirne) and Silistra (Silistra and Özü). See more in: Георгиева 2004: 47-70. Moreover, Hristiyan Atanasov reports that the muhafiz of Vidin had three sarays – in Vidin, Lom and Archar. See: Атанасов 2008: 94. The possible explanation about the Rumelian case is that Bitola gradually turned to significant political and military centre because of the frequent military campaigns in the Albanian lands. Moreover, Sofia was very insecure in the late 18th c. because of the kircalis unrests. The city was attacked by the troops of Kara Feyzi (Ivanova 1997: 703) and Osman Pazvantoglu (Иванов 1928: 39). In this period, the vali of Rumelia was not able to reach his capital. Therefore, he resided in other cities or even in other vilayets – the preferred place was the second Ottoman capital – Edirne. From there the provincial army was send in military campaigns against the kircalis and local ayans (Мутафчиева 1993: 156, 162, 217).

<sup>26</sup> See for instance the documents for supplies for six months in 1819. Preserved in Sofia sicills: НБКМ S 309 bis 4: 2a, 5a, 12б, 13a-б.

<sup>27</sup> See below ‘The Saray as a Place of Living’.

<sup>28</sup> Buyruldu (vali order) from 14 April 1820.

<sup>29</sup> The provincial governor is responsible for the just governing of the vilayet and prevention of corruption and abuses of the population from the local authorities. Therefore, he regularly travelled in the province and even took part in the judging process of the local courts (Урсинус 1980: 182).

<sup>30</sup> If the number of the tiles is correct, they could cover a 10 000 square-meter building.

<sup>31</sup> The annual expenses for repairs in the saray of Vidin are described in H. Atanassov’s book: Атанасов 2008: 94, 122-123.

<sup>32</sup> He depicts the inns as dirty, miserable and bad-appointed.

<sup>33</sup> He claims that the lack of house duties, restricted moving and limited social contacts caused various illnesses to these women.

<sup>34</sup> There are numerous accounts of the local provincial governor and his discussions with foreign diplomats in the British consular reports in the late 18th – early 19th c. However, there is no an account of his konak (Андонов-Полјански 1968).

<sup>35</sup> According to Musa Çadırcı the konaks of the local governors copied the residency of the Grand vizier (Çadırcı 1997: 21).

<sup>36</sup> It is known that the documents of the provincial administration were considered as private archives of the pashas. That is why they disappeared together with their owners without clear traces.

<sup>37</sup> “From the examination of prints and layouts of the European capitals in the 17th and 18th c. becomes evident that there were no government quarters. Although the government headquarters were called residences and capitals, there were no other buildings than palaces, which give reminded for their functions. ... Regarding the aristocrats, they performed their duties in the palace or in their own homes. The official governmental decisions were not adjudicated in advisory collegiums but, as it was said in the 16th c., “to the lord”, i.e. in his own cabinet.” (Вундер 2002: 176).

<sup>38</sup> See the accounts of state konaks from the period of Midhat Pasha (Kanitz) and the modernization processes in city planning and architecture (Желева-Мартинс 2002).

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