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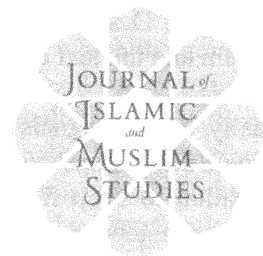
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History and Activism Combined: An Interview with Machiel Kiel on his Life-Long Efforts to Save Ottoman Monuments by Faruk Yaslıçimen

Machiel Kiel is a renowned professor of Ottoman history who has devoted his life to scholarly research. He has penned over 300 articles and seventeen books on the Ottoman Balkans and historical topography, especially the earlier periods. Thanks to his tireless efforts in conducting field research, Kiel documented many previously undocumented Ottoman monuments in the Balkans and published scholarly works on them. But this reflects only one side of his engagement with Ottoman history. Kiel also took an active role to save Ottoman monuments from immediate danger of collapse or demolition by local authorities. The cases in this interview detail his activism and show that Kiel did not simply leave the monuments to their fate but continued to follow each case individually turning them into important causes. Something he continues to do to this day with his efforts to protect the Imaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey, the second oldest Ottoman building of the Balkans, located in the town of Ihtiman, and situated on the Sophia-Plovdiv (Filibe) highway in central Bulgaria. This is where the idea of this interview was born. This interview was conducted in two sessions: the first in Sofia and the second in Istanbul. The draft was reviewed and detailed by Kiel himself, therefore, partly gaining a biographical interview feature. The interview focuses on Machiel Kiel's early career and how he encountered his first Ottoman monuments, as well as his endeavors and engagements with history and architecture. There are examples of how Kiel saved the mausoleum of Sarı Saltuk in Romania, the Süleymaniye Mosque on the island of Rhodes, the Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos in Komotini, the Mosque of Fatih Sultan Mehmed in the town of Kyustendil in Western Bulgaria, the bridge built by Mimar Sinan in Bolvadin, Western Anatolia, and the Caravanserai of Büyük Çekmece in Istanbul.

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Yaslıçimen: Professor Kiel, you are not the kind of historian who simply publishes books and articles or joins conferences, but you have also been very active on the ground, trying to save Ottoman monuments in different places which are in immediate danger of collapse, or are threatened with demolition by local authorities. Let us briefly talk about what you have done so far in this matter and what you are planning to do. But first of all, I would like to learn where your love and passion to save Ottoman monuments in danger came from.

Kiel: This started rather early. In my village, we had a primary school that gave perfect primary education. It was really excellent. I was a difficult pupil, good in some topics, but very bad in others. Some said I was the most stupid of the class! In Dutch grammar, in arithmetic, and in handwriting I was doing pretty badly. My handwriting was especially terrible. I was a left-hander, and I was not allowed to use my left-hand. The school teacher, an elderly lady, would immediately come and hit my left hand with a wooden ruler, which was pretty painful. A few years later the system changed. Left handers were now accepted!

Besides the bad notes, I received three nines on the school report of each year. Ten was the highest grade and almost never given. My good grades were from the courses on geography, architecture, and history. In our system, Dutch grammar and arithmetic are regarded to be the key subjects of a good education. Therefore, I was not admitted to middle school, and my parents did not have money to fund my education. When I was working as a mason I had no middle school degree. So, I could not go to university for a long while.

It was in the last years of primary school that I developed my first interest in buildings and their history. The teacher was explaining to us the difference between Romanesque and Gothic architecture and insisted that Romanesque buildings were very rare in the Netherlands. I happened to spend the whole summer in the remote north-east corner of my country, the province of Groningen where only few people had gone to. My father as well as my mother came from this province and could find work in Nord-Holland with its flourishing economy. My grandparents lived in the little harbor town of Delfzijl in Groningen. As a child of twelve years, I went on a bicycle to see the remote villages that all had a Romanesque church. Back in school, I told this to the teacher who encouraged me greatly to learn more about these buildings. This was the beginning. In the spring of 1959, I went with three friends by car to Athens and traversed all of Yugoslavia. On our route, we decided to spend a day in the city of Skopje/Üsküp. There I saw for the first time in my life beautiful mosques, giant hamams, and specious caravanserais, products of a totally different civilization, all in perfect shape. I immediately fell in love with them.

Another event, just after having seen Skopje took place in Florina, the first Greek town on our way, and a few times later also in Serres/Siroz and Thessaloniki. In these places, we also saw monumental Ottoman buildings, mosques and hamams, but all in a shocking state of disrepair and neglect. We could not understand why such valuable buildings were in such a miserable state. When we asked the people in English or French why this was so, several times we got the same reaction: "Oh, it is not important, these are the works of barbarians without any value."

In Yugoslavia, Skopje, Prilep, and Manastir, where we had come across the same sort of buildings that were well looked after and had text-boards on them writing that the object was protected by the State we received as answer: "Well, this is because there they have no culture of their own and therefore keep those Turkish things." We were really shocked by such arrogance and ignorance. Especially Serbia which has the most magnificent churches from the twelfth to the sixteenth century. Not big but full of refined decoration. I decided that I should read about these "barbarian" buildings but hardly found anything. Twenty years later, I published my first study about the unknown Turkish way of building. Now, I am almost eighty-three years old, published seventeen books and over 300 articles and small studies, the fire is still burning.

Yaslıçimen: So, you accidentally encounter a different architecture belonging to a different culture, however, you also observe a strong prejudice among people living around these buildings that considerably surprised you. We will come back to this point, to such deeply ingrained social prejudices, but before that you said you worked as a mason, right?

Kiel: Yes, I started working when I was fourteen years old and worked many years and did all kinds of work that was available. I worked a few years in a great printing house, and later in an oil factory. I was a cook for half a year on a sea-going ship, then worked half a year in England as a "cowboy," and was a dishwasher for a full year in a great hotel in Stockholm. Both countries, England and Sweden were prosperous and less affected from the Second World War. In Holland, it was the other way around: a large part of this little country was bombed out and almost all the trains (mostly electrified) and machinery from the factories, as well as heavy lorries for transporting were confiscated by the German Wehrmacht and transported to Germany. We never saw them return. After May 1945, Holland had to build itself up, helped by the Americans with the so-called Marshall Plan. In England and Sweden, I could save money enough to fund my family, to marry and have children. I worked eighteen years on the restoration of the big fourteenth–sixteenth-century Old Church in Amsterdam, which was near to my home village (twenty minutes

by train plus ten minutes' walk from the railway station to the church). There I learned construction work, "learning by doing." I became a good mason and stone cutter. Besides work on the main Gothic façades of the church, my greatest work was the reconstruction of the vaults of the main entrance room of the church. The room was covered by a late Gothic net-vault which was in a terrible situation. In less than a year, I reconstructed the entire vault with authentic old materials; cut the stones in the right form myself and placed them where they should be. This is now forty years ago. Meanwhile, I moved to Germany where I got a good job in Munich and later moved to Bonn. In 2016, I went back to Amsterdam to see the church again and examined my net-vault to see if something had gone wrong, but everything was still alright, perfect. My expertise as a mason has been so important for my later career because I combined this with the theory of arts, theory of history and a lot about architectural knowledge.

Yaslıçimen: Let's come to your initiative to save old monuments. The first one was in 1971 in Romania, the *türbe* of the famous Sarı Saltuk Dede in the town of Babadağ.

Kiel: Before this, I should tell something of vital importance that needs to be said. In my free time, I started to study on my own the history of architecture, Medieval West-European art, Byzantine art, and Islamic architecture, focusing on Ottoman architecture. Important friends helped me to enter the Royal Library and the University of Leiden, famous for its rich collection of books for "Oriental" Studies. Besides that, my father helped me to travel to the Balkans. This was in 1968. The next year, I got a scholarship from the Netherlands Organization for the Promotion of Science (Z.W.O.) in Den Haag. Within three months, I covered over 15,000 kilometers in Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece, assisted by Gehard de Vries, my dear colleague from the Old Church, and came back with vast documentation about the surviving Ottoman monuments and about Orthodox Christian churches from the Ottoman period. The people of Z.W.O. were very satisfied with the results of my research and in the following ten years I got the same scholarship and a Land Rover car was given to me to reach even the most remote places such as monasteries in mountainous areas.

The topic was Christian Art under Muslim Rule. Ottoman churches were totally neglected. The Balkan scholars focused on the monuments from the time before the Ottoman conquest and did not care about relics of their former masters. Only in Serbia things were better, but there are almost no monuments of the Ottoman period left over. In my free time, I wrote many small studies about what we had found and had a table full of them. The first published

article was on the Ottoman monuments of the town of Thessaloniki (Selanik in Turkish) printed in 1971, thirty pages full of information that for Greeks was totally unknown. In 1976, I was admitted to the University of Amsterdam because I had taught myself English and German, a bit of French, Bulgarian, and Serbian. I did modern Turkish and Ottoman Turkish at the University of Amsterdam to read for myself the vast documentation about the Balkans in the Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi) in Istanbul. I have been working there since 1983. I still visit the archive twice a year, together with my wife, Hedda, who is also an Ottomanist.

I did my Ph.D. in Amsterdam and in a big ceremony was awarded a "Literarum Doctorem," with a dissertation on "Bulgarian Ecclesiastical Architecture and Mural Painting," which in 1985 appeared in print as: *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period* (Maastricht-Assen: Van Gorcum Publishers, 1985).

There was an important congress on the Byzantine Empire in 1971. Beforehand, I had studied Byzantine history and art. At the time, I was living in Wormerveer, a village in northwest Holland, where I was born, grew up, and had my primary education. My father and I both decided to rent a Volkswagen and drive to Romania to join the congress. Before going to Bucharest, we went first to Babadağ to see the tomb of Sarı Saltuk. The little domed building was in a terrible state of ruin. Through the dome ran a deep crack from the top of the dome to the ground. It was so wide that one could push his arm in it. I was sure that it would not survive the next winter. Back in Bucharest at the congress I met the head of the organizing committee, Professor Mihai Berza. He was a very knowledgeable and nice person. He had an extensive knowledge on art, history, and politics. I told him about Babadağ and the mausoleum of Sarı Saltuk, a great Muslim saint and mystic leader with a great influence on people. It was he who had spread Islam in northern Dobrudja, where the population was mostly Turkic and partly Christian Bulgarians. Some had come to Dobrudja in the ninth century and accepted Christianity. The bulk of the Turkish people came in the mid-thirteenth century with the Seldjuk Prince İzzeddin Kaykavuz. Sarı Saltuk accompanied the group of settlers and made Babadağ as a base to spread Islam as far as he could. Sarı Saltuk died in 1298/79 and was buried in Babadağ. After his death, part of the followers of İzzeddin returned to Anatolia where they settled in the territory of the Beylik of Karasi. In this time, the Bulgarians living in the south of the Dobrudja and further away put heavy military pressure on the Muslims, who converted to Christianity and are since then known as Gagauz, "the People of Kaykavuz."

When in the early fifteenth century the Ottomans annexed the Dobrudja most of the Turkish settlers turned back to Islam. Others continued to be Gagauz. When Sultan Bayezid II went on a campaign to take the towns of

Kilia and Akkirman (1484) he visited the grave of Sarı Saltuk and ordered the construction of a *küllîye* containing a monumental *türbe*, *zaviye*, mosque, meres, *imaret*, caravanserai, hamam, and plastered main streets which existed until the late eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. This monumental complex was destroyed during the violent Russian wars against the Ottomans. After the Russo-Turkish War ended in 1828, the impoverished and diminished Muslims built a simple tomb over the grave, the building we see today. Sarı Saltuk, it should be added, is the person who converted the hitherto pagan Nogay Han and his people, the Nogay Turks.

I told this whole story to Mihai Berza and said that the tomb would be split and collapse if nothing was done. Berza listened patiently. When I had finished, he said “I will try to do something. I see the importance.”

Yaslıçimen: What happened then?

Kiel: After about half a year, I received via the post a nice photograph with greetings from Mihai Berza. The tomb was restored! By the way, Romanians were very good at restoration. I didn't understand how the Romanian decision-makers could act so quickly. Twenty years later, I sat on a table with a group of Romanian colleagues, who were experts in history and arts. I told them the story of Sarı Saltuk tomb and Mihai Berza and how he managed this in such a short time. They laughed at me and told me that Berza was the chief advisor of the Romanian dictator and President of the Republic of Romania Nicolae Ceaușescu. By luck, I had just met the right person. He most probably convinced Ceaușescu by saying that this is a great chance to make good propaganda for our country, an opportunity to say “Look! We also care for Muslim monuments.”¹

Yaslıçimen: What a wonderful coincidence! When was the last time you visited the tomb of Sarı Saltuk? Do you know anything about the current condition of the tomb?

Kiel: Difficult question ... It was seven or eight years ago, again on the occasion of another conference. A few years ago, Turkey wanted to renovate the tomb again. During winters the moisture gets icy and paintings on the outside wall deteriorate in a short time. But one thing was achieved: after my initiative and Berza's direct action, the tomb was saved, it survived for the next generations to come.

1. If the reader wants to know more about Sarı Saltuk the easiest source is the detailed article “Sarı Saltuk” in *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2009), 147–70, with a rich bibliography.

Yaslıçimen: Professor Kiel, you took up another cause on one of the Aegean Islands, Rhodes. Right?

Kiel: Yes, the story with Berza and Ceaușescu was only verbal. There is nothing written about it. About the Rhodes action there is a whole dossier of correspondence, which I keep in my private library. In the fortified town of Rhodes—very beautiful—there are numerous mosques. One was built during the time of Sultan Süleyman, whose construction started immediately after the conquest, which took place in the beginning of 1523. The building has a central dome, five beautiful small domes in front, guest rooms on both sides, and a big minaret.

In December 1987, it became internationally known that the minaret of the Mosque of Sultan Süleyman was in danger of collapsing. There are often heavy storms on the island which always blow from the same direction. The stone, of course, reacts to the water being continuously exposed to the same side. Over the years, the tower leaned dangerously over onto one side. Something had to be done. The Municipality of Rhodes wanted to take the building down. Indeed, in the last thirty years, this had happened many times. In the 1950s, the minaret of the great mosque of Sultan Mustafa III from 1764, and the minaret of the elegant Redžep Pasha Mosque were destroyed. In the 1970s, the minaret of the picturesque Ağa Camii was demolished and the exterior of the building was changed so much that the common man could not realize that it was a mosque. This happened in great contrast to the behavior of the Italians who had occupied Rhodes and the twelve islands of the archipelago (Dodekanesos/Dodecanese) between 1912 and 1943. Under their government not a single minaret fell. In 1948, after a period under English occupation, the islands were given back to the Greeks.

What the Italians had done was to make high quality plans, elevations and photographs of all the Ottoman monuments and publish them in an excellent book (Hermes Balducci, *Architettura Turca in Rodi* [Milano, 1932]). It was clear that behind the actions against the Süleyman Mosque was a plan to systematically remove first the minarets and then the mosque, whenever such things could be done without making much noise. As a reaction to the bad news about the Süleyman Mosque, I received letters of people from many countries if I knew more about it. In May 1987, I had the opportunity to go to Rhodes to talk to various people and to see the problems myself. The Netherlands organization Z.W.O. sponsored the travel costs. In December of 1987, the upper part of the minaret, including the two balconies (*şerefe*) had been demolished under the orders of the Rhodes Municipality. Back at home I contacted a number of historians from various universities and asked for their support. I wrote a letter to the municipality as diplomatically and carefully as possible because

I knew that Greeks in general are very sensitive about everything connected with Turks. It took a long time before I had all the signatures on the letter and the extra paper with names and signatures of the participating professors and an explanation of which university they worked for and what was their specialty. The answer came rapidly, written by the mayor himself. Everything was okay and the restoration would start as soon as the Greek state had given the approval. None of the scholars that had signed the letter believed it.

Yaslıçimen: How did the locals of Rhodes react to this?

Kiel: I think the first question to ask here is about how to approach the history of Rhodes, which has so many monuments going back to different time periods. There are monuments dating back to prehistory and to classical Greek culture. After Byzantium as a great power disappeared after the conquest of Constantinople by the Crusaders (1204) the Knights of Saint John came. They were warriors like the ghazis of Ottoman history, and like them they devoted their lives to protect their religion by sword. It is also known that these knights were terrible pirates who robbed Antalya and around the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea.

Rhodes is situated between Turkey's mainland and Egypt. When Yavuz Sultan Selim conquered Egypt, Rhodes ruled by the Knights of Saint John became a great danger to the contact between Istanbul and Egypt. The Knights could block all traffic between Turkey and Egypt. The Knights had kept the island for more than three centuries and had built many beautiful buildings such as the Palace of the Grand Master, an enormous Grand Church and many other churches and monasteries for the different orders. On the first day of January 1523 the Ottomans under the command of Sultan Süleyman himself captured the strongly fortified city of Rhodes and the whole island. The conquest of Rhodes cost many lives. Finally, the Ottomans got the island and ruled over it for almost four centuries. The town of Rhodes became largely a Muslim town. Within the city walls only Muslims and Jews were allowed to settle. Almost all the Greeks lived outside the city wall.

As for the current debate, there were two kinds of reactions from the Greek people of Rhodes with regards to the mosques. On the one hand, there were those who had a very biased view of Turks, Turkey, and the Turkish period in history. They thought that there were only three great periods in the history of Rhodes, Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Knights of Saint John. They were part of Rhodes' history. However, the Turks were not and their buildings should be removed whenever an opportunity appeared. This is the reason why they let the mosque fall into ruin by itself. The first step was the tearing down of the minaret, of course. But there was another group of Greek citizens of the

island. In my opinion, they were the more enlightened people. These were the ones who were going to win in the discussion: what to keep, and what to demolish. They supported the decision to restore and save Süleyman's mosque (See Appendix 1).

Yaslıçimen: What happened to the minaret of the Süleyman Mosque in Rhodes?

Kiel: The minaret was deliberately taken down. I had seen it in 1968 when it was still standing. It didn't collapse by itself. But they took it down before it collapsed by itself. Every passing minute had been a threat because people were passing by every day. Something really had to be done. That this was the prelude to the total disappearance of the building was only seen by a few people. I decided to use my network, wrote a very polite and diplomatic letter, translated in perfect Greek, and sent it to the Mayor of Rhodes, Savvas Karagiannis, and the Director of Historical Monuments Ilias Kollias on 14 November 1988. The letter was signed by fifteen professors from the Universities of Amsterdam, Berlin, Birmingham, Bonn, Leiden, Munich, Paris, Tübingen, and Utrecht (See Appendix 2). In February 1989, we received an answer from the mayor in person and the influential Éphoros Archaïotiton (Inspector General) of the Historical Monuments of Rhodos, Kollias (See Appendix 3). Shortly afterwards, I heard from a gentleman from Holland who lived on the island for years and had many contacts from among local people. He had learned what happened and told me that the letter had an enormous effect, like an exploding bomb. They had never thought that the world was watching them. The end result of the discussions among themselves was that the history of Rhodes in fact had four great periods in its history, Antiquity, Byzantium, the Knights of Saint John, and the Ottoman Empire. The result of the change was that the minaret of the Süleymaniye Mosque was restored, together with the entire building. At the same time, they restored the charming wooden Ağa Mosque on the main street of the city. The minaret of this mosque had previously been demolished and the shape of the building was changed so much so that un-trained people could not realize that there was a mosque. More plans about restorations were made, others were actually well restored. The financial crisis in Greece during the last years unfortunately brought an end to the renovations. I am proud to have contributed to the long process of bringing both Greece and Turkey nearer to each other.²

2. For a succinct but complete overview of the history of Rhodes, focusing on the Ottoman period, see *İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 35 (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2008), 155–58, with a rich bibliography.

Yaslıçimen: And there were other places which you did something for. For example, the Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos in Komotini ...

Kiel: This is true. In Komotini (Gümülcine in Turkish), the ruins of the Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos stood for many years in the middle of the old town center. The building is the oldest Ottoman monument in the entire Balkans. Although it had a prayer section, it was not a mosque but a *zaviye*. In Ottoman times (until 1912,) it gave shelter to travelers and served them food for three days. When I first saw it in 1968, as far as I remember, the building was in a miserable, terrible situation. The Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos was built around 1380. I had the opportunity to measure and photograph the building in 1971. It served as a power station generating electricity with large machines which worked on oil. The machines were oily and incredibly dirty. To place the machines into the building they had to open big holes in the walls that separated the two side rooms from the central hall. The municipality of Komotini decided to make a new power station outside the town and wanted to demolish this dirty old building. It was the property of the municipality and a law on the protection of ancient monuments did not exist yet in Greece.

During World War II, Greece had suffered very much. Following the end of the war and the departure of Bulgarian and German armed forces, a civil war broke out between 1945 and 1948. It was even crueler than the previous one. The country was very poor, like the Netherlands. It took almost half a century until the country got back on its feet again. They had a very limited budget to spend for culture. I wrote a study about the building and its great historical and artistic value and published it in the prestigious *Balkan Studies* appearing in 1972 in Thessaloniki. *Balkan Studies* was a very influential journal, as I said before. Its editor was an open-minded person, Vasilis Laourdas. He said, "OK we'll push this through and make a bit of noise about it." Later it was decided to restore the building. This they did. The dirty machines were removed and the broken-away walls were reconstructed and the whole building restored very carefully. The electric power station was removed to another location outside the town. The building has been serving as local museum for two decades now.

Yaslıçimen: It is great that through your efforts another historical monument was saved. Do you remember the title of this work, in which you have written about Ghazi Evrenos that eventually saved the *zaviye*?

Kiel: Yes, I wrote two articles on it. The first appeared in *Balkan Studies*, volume 11 in 1971, pp. 415–55 titled as "Observations on the History of Northern Greece during the Turkish Rule: Historical and Architectural Description of the

Turkish Monuments of Komotini and Serres, their Place in the Development of Ottoman Turkish Architecture." The second study was published in *Sanat Tarihi Yıllığı*, *Kunsthistorische Forschungen*, volume 12 in 1983, pp. 117–38 with the title: "The Oldest Monuments of Ottoman-Turkish Architecture in the Balkans: The Imaret and the Mosque of Ghazi Evrenos Bey in Gümülcine (Komotini) and the Evrenos Bey Han in the village of Ilıca/Loutra in Greek Thrace (1370–1390)." The first of these two studies had a great influence as they told me later.

The decision not to destroy the building was accepted with the arguments of "a specialist from the Netherlands," that was me! Years later, in Tunisia there was an international conference on Ottoman monuments and their problems. I was invited and gave a lecture about another object somewhere else. A group of specialists who were mostly Arabs said "You can do something to change the course and preserve the monument." A few colleagues from Saudi Arabia or from another Arab country, I don't remember precisely, laughed and said "If a rich guy comes and buys up the thing, he takes it down. One or two articles cannot stop it." At the conference, there was a great man from Greece, Charalambos Bakirtzis, who is now a pensioner and as old as I am, who was at the time of the Tunisian conference the Director of the Service of Historical Monuments in Northern Greece. I knew him from long ago. Bakirtzis stood up and said to these participants that what they were saying was definitely wrong. He said, "You can sometimes stop a bulldozer or breaking machine. If that person—he was pointing his finger at me—had not written the articles on the Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos that building would definitely have gone." This was the nicest compliment I have ever received in my career. Bakirtzis was a special person who knew the importance of the subject. He fought to make more and more restorations all over Northern Greece. But unfortunately, a few other Greeks made a very bad "Byzantine complot" against him and succeeded to push him out of his position. This was almost seven years ago. He said farewell to Thessaloniki (Selanik) and settled in self-exile on Cyprus. Politics is a dirty game.

Yaslıçimen: We are conducting this interview in Sophia and nowadays you have been busy with another "monument-rescue" attempt. Can you tell us about it?

Kiel: Sure. There is the Imaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in a town of Ihtiman, which is situated on the Sophia-Plovdiv (Filibe) highway in central Bulgaria. The former nearby center was Stiponye, an old place of Byzantine origin that was two kilometers outside of Ihtiman at the slope of a mountain. According to the Ottoman *tahrir defters*, the population

of Stiponye went down gradually. Al-Idrisi, the famous Arab geographer mentions the town around 1150. As the population of Stiponye went down, Ihtiman, founded by Mihaloğlu and situated on the great road Sofia-Plovdiv became the new town.

The Imaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey is the second oldest Ottoman building of the Balkans. It is to be dated around the 1390s. Originally it had no minaret and no *mihrab* because it was not a mosque but a *zaviye*. It is not oriented towards Mecca but towards the south. This is an old tradition of the Turkic people of Central Asia. Their yurts have always their doors facing south. The building is actually the remnant of a large complex. In the past it had a beautiful hamam, a big caravanserai, and a kitchen unit around it. All these buildings are gone, demolished long ago. The hamam, on the other hand, was excellently restored in the 1980s, in the last decade before the fall of the old communist dictatorship and now functions as an exhibition room. The *zaviye* still stands but the sixteenth-century minaret disappeared around the 1920s. As the building is not under protection, peasants and farmers who wanted to steal the window frames to sell the expensive black iron came with their oxen tied them to the window frames, and used them to pull the window frame out of the building. That is the way the building (and many others in the Balkans) got very nasty big holes in their walls. This happened to many Ottoman buildings. If you see such a big hole in the wall, you can be sure that the windows were stolen.

The Imaret of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in Ihtiman is a very old building with a central dome and adjoining domes on both sides and also with a prayer section inside. But there was no *mihrab*. Professor Semavi Eyice, whom I knew for forty years, liked my work. He had been in Ihtiman when Bulgaria was still under communist rule which strongly curtailed the movements of foreigners. Back home Eyice wrote an article about the Ihtiman building. Eyice had no compass with him to check the orientation of the building and could not see its interior. He took some photographs and had to go. One of his assistants, Yılmaz Önge (also a friend of mine), a well-known man who unfortunately died too early from a heart attack, prepared the plan of the building and situated a *mihrab* in the drawing, which is not there today. He also added the minaret as being connected with the building. This was also not correct. Minarets were constructed on a distance from the building. Because it was not originally a mosque. It was a *zaviye*, a guest house, an *imaret* for travelers and poor people. It is also the origin of the little town of Ihtiman. It grew because of the buildings which attracted travelers. A whole line of Western travelers describe the buildings, where they could sleep three days in succession and they, as well as their horses, were fed twice a day with food cooked in the special kitchen unit. For the Western travelers, such an institution was a great surprise because

in their homelands they did not exist. In the *imaret*, nobody was asked about his race or religion. “Neither Christians, nor Jews or idolaters were refused to enter the building and stay there,” wrote many travelers.

I had seen the building when it was still complete. During one of my visits, in 1970s, I saw that the *eyvan* and the central dome had collapsed, with the side rooms still standing. I could show this by a good photograph taken in 2013. The current damage is very dangerous for the building and still goes on. You can imagine what will happen to it in the coming years (See images in Appendix 4).

The function of *imarets* (guest house) changed in the early times of Sultan Süleyman. The space of the mosque was separated from other functional buildings. This, I believe, was a part of Süleyman’s Sunnization efforts. The chimneys were closed and not visible anymore since they were covered up with a plaster. After many years, the plaster fell off and they became visible again (See image in Appendix 4).

Yaslıçimen: What is the importance of this chimney more specifically?

Kiel: Well, it is a clear demonstration of how prayer space was just beside the living rooms. The chimneys were used for heating during winters and for cooking if people want to cook. The walls separating the adjoining rooms from the main building with a central dome were broken down in the time of Sultan Süleyman and thus extended the prayer room. They had to make an arch to buttress it, which was a very difficult job. Scholars have been puzzling very long over this so-called T-plan, about its function, purpose and so on. The *Zaviye* of Ihtiman is a nice piece of evidence where you can see that the walls were taken down and two arches on both sides were constructed to enlarge the main building.

The excessively high tambour of the hamam is a special feature for the Ottoman architecture. Architecturally this building is very close to the hamam of Yıldırım Bayazid in the little town of Mudurnu near Bolu. In later mosques, the tambour is much lower. The stones tell you the story and the date of the building. Perfectly done. The third building, however, a large khan disappeared in the early nineteenth century. Only the great Ottoman building inscription is preserved in the nearby Historical Museum of Ihtiman.

Yaslıçimen: Why did the Bulgarian authorities save this hamam but not the mosque?

Kiel: Because this building was a work in the service of people, the “mosque” was in the service of religion, which they don’t like. This beautiful hamam

blows off fresh wind into the town. Look at this sun symbol on the walls (See images in Appendix 4).

Yashçimen: Currently you are showing an effort to save it. Have you contacted the Turkish authorities and also the local municipality in Ihtiman?

Kiel: Yes, I contacted the Turkish local authorities. Two years ago, my wife and I went again to Ihtiman, this time to visit the municipality. I handed over my documents to the mayor. The documents were giving information about the current situation of the complex, what can be done and, more important, the budget. He looked at the documents and said: "It would be better to remove this whole thing." I said "No. This is the wrong way of doing. Don't you want to have a remarkable historical place in your town that would attract people to come here and spend money?" He was not interested in my words.

Yashçimen: What is the name of the person in charge in Ihtiman?

Kiel: His name is Kaloyan Iliev. Kaloyan means Good Johnny. But he was not a good man. I showed him the cost estimations for the restoration which was prepared by Istanbul Technical University (ITU) experts, whom I know from the time that I was teaching "Islamic Architecture outside Turkey" at the Taşkışla Campus of ITU. What is dramatic for the Ihtiman building is that the money was ready, \$330,000 made available by an important and energetic man with a high state position in Turkey. Having secured the mentioned budget, we went to Ihtiman again and talked to Mayor Kaloyan. I said "Look, we will take all the expenditures for the restoration and this will also create an opportunity to some of the many unemployed gypsies." Ihtiman is a miserable and run-down place. This money could bring about at least some prosperity to the town. But this mayor, representing and speaking in the name of the whole community of Ihtiman simply said: "We don't like Turks and we don't want any minarets in our town. It would be better if this building collapses by itself."

Yashçimen: So, what is going to happen to this building if not restored soon?

Kiel: To the worse, I see that there is a deliberate effort to break the building down. Normally, no one should be interested in a few of Ottoman bricks. But during my last visit I saw that some people are removing bits and pieces of stones of the building walls. It is still standing but difficult to estimate for how long this now fragile building will react to the weather conditions. The first thing that would happen is that the remaining part of the *eyvan* will collapse, following by the left-side guestroom.

Yashçimen: Isn't there any hope for the complex in Ihtiman?

Kiel: I will keep on visiting Ihtiman as much as I can. In Bulgaria, they decentralized the administration of historical monuments ten years ago. Before that, Sophia was deciding for the whole country. Now it is in the hands of municipalities. The Ihtiman municipality expects the building to collapse by itself. However, on the opposite street of the municipality, ironically, there is the local Museum of History where there are local people enthusiastic about our plans of restoration but they have very little money even to upkeep their museum.

Yashçimen: Haven't you received any outside assistance so far?

Kiel: What we need now is joint action from well-known scholars all over the world and sending a petition, not to the mayor, but to UNESCO. The Dutch Embassy in Ankara invited me two years ago and said, "We have good contact with UNESCO people, we have a special person who should do it. Just come and talk." But shortly afterwards the man was moved to another place, he is now ambassador in Beijing. So, the person in contact is gone. But the person who is in charge of contact with UNESCO is still there. I have to contact him, but first with the help of the Netherlands Consulate General in Istanbul. This will happen soon.

Yashçimen: These are very significant cases showing the perfect example of how a historian can be active in the field to save monuments. Are there other attempts initiated by you?

Kiel: Yes, there are two more projects. Briefly, the first one is the Mosque of Fatih Sultan Mehmed in the town of Kyustendil in Western Bulgaria, and the second one is the bridge of Mimar Sinan in Bolvadin, Western Anatolia, and the caravanserai of Büyük Çekmece, also a work of the great Sinan.

The Mosque of Mehmed the Conqueror in Kyustendil was built in 1461/62 by a rich tax collector Haraccı Kara Mehmed, who also built a *madrassa*, a caravanserai, and a water supply system. He succeeded in founding a *waqf* for the madrasa but did not have enough money to do the same for the mosque. In 1463, Fatih Sultan Mehmed spent some days in Kyustendil and admired the mosque with its rich brickwork decoration unique in the Balkans. Kara Mehmed then presented the mosque to the sultan who took care for its maintenance and salaries of the staff. This story is told in the Tahrir Defter MAD 170 from 1517, a source not used by anybody who wrote on the building and went astray.

The mosque was partly built on the foundations of the old Roman town walls, and partly on the soil of Kyustendil. In the second half of the twentieth century, movements in the earth changed the outlet of the mineral water which is so abundant in Kyustendil. The earth underneath the southern half of the mosque became wet, muddy, and weak causing a dangerous crack in the dome and the walls of the building. It would break in two pieces if nothing was done. Locally there was almost no money and the municipality of Kyustendil wanted to demolish the building, which stood at the main street of the town. I was warned by people of the service for Historical Monuments in Sofia and went to Kyustendil (only eighty km away from Sofia) talked with the people in charge, the museum director Iliya Prokopov and the architect Yulij Färgov. I contacted an Islamic institution in London and had them send \$10,000 to Kyustendil. A few months later I was invited to an international conference in Zaghuan, Tunisia in the Institute of Abusselam Temimi. With the help of my university, I could afford to fly to Tunisia. There, I was introduced to Sultan el-Kasimi, ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, one of the Gulf States. I explained the situation to him, and received some extra help from Professor Temimi, who has a great reputation in the Arab world. The sultan asked how much I would need for the work. I said 20,000. He gave 30,000 because he said you always get unexpected troubles. The money was sent to Kyustendil in order to be spent under the responsibility of Färgov and Prokopov.

With this money, now 40,000, the entire building was cleaned and solid metal rings were put around the dome. In this way, the mosque was saved from splitting in two pieces and total collapse. I called the lady in London and told her what was done and not done. She was satisfied and thought that the right thing was done. I also wrote to Sultan el-Kasimi and received a polite answer from his secretary. The building was not completely restored, but I don't know if rumors in the town are correct and if a nice chunk of money was embezzled. During my latest visit to Kyustendil seven years ago, I saw the mosque was still standing, the building was statically okay, but now the stones of the minaret were falling down. Let me quickly tell you the story of the Caravanserai of Büyük Çekmece.

Yaslıçimen: Sure Professor Kiel, go ahead ...

Kiel: Me and my wife make trips to Turkey twice a year. We heard and saw local village people who were bit-by-bit demolishing the bridge built by Mimar Sinan in Bolvadin. It was the same year the festivities around the heritage of Sinan were taking place. Shortly afterwards, we saw that the roof of the great caravanserai of Büyük Çekmece, also a Sinan building, had partially fallen down and the rest would follow soon. Later, in April 1990, I was in Paris for

a conference about the time of Sultan Süleyman. I took the opportunity to ask the colleagues assembled there if they wanted to sign a special letter (See Appendix 5). The letter was written in Turkish. Seventeen colleagues from eleven universities signed, most of them are very well-known scholars (Halil İnalçık, Semavi Eyice, Irène Melikoff, and others). I don't know the results, I never got an answer, but around the year 2000 the Caravanserai of Büyük Çekmece was very well restored and given a cultural function.

Yaslıçimen: Professor Kiel, thank you very much. I hope your efforts will not get lost and they will save the Imaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in Ihtiman as your efforts before have saved the mausoleum of Sarı Saltuk in Romania, the Süleymaniye Mosque on the island of Rhodes, and the Zaviye of Ghazi Evrenos in Komotini, and more.

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Appendix I

Bonn, 3.6.1988.

THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE MINARET OF THE MOSQUE OF SULTAN SÜLEYMAN I
IN THE OLD TOWN OF RHODOS - GREECE.

On May 19 of this year the undersigned, Dr. Machiel Kiel, Art Historian and Technical Collaborator of the Netherlands Service for Historical Monuments, member of the Standing Committee for Congresses of Turkish Art, visited the town of Rhodes and made the following observations:

The mosque was the most prominent Ottoman building on the islands of the Dodecanese (Eniki Adalar). It was installed immediately after the conquest of the island, in 1522 but in its present form it dates from a rebuilding in H. 1224 (A.D. 1809). Towards the end of the 19th century the minaret was rebuilt again and acquired the shape it had until December 1987. This was with two balconies.

I had the opportunity to speak with eight different spokesmen, Greeks and Turkish-Greek citizens of the town of Rhodes. Their story was similar: The minaret was leaning dangerously and reached the point of falling. The Turks maintained they wanted to repair it without taking it down entirely. The Greeks authorities wanted to take it down entirely and then to rebuild it. Turks and Greeks all said that something had to be done. In December 1987 the upper part of the minaret, including the two balconies, were demolished at the order of the Greek authorities. The Greek spokesmen (shopkeepers in the area close to the mosque) said that the Community of Rhodes had plans ready to rebuild the minaret in the autumn of 1988, after the busy tourist season is over. The mosque is situated in the busiest tourist area of the old town, on a hill near the Grand Master's Palace of the Chevalliers of Rhodes, the masters of the island until 1522. It is visible from kilometres away.

The members of the Muslim-Turkish community of Rhodes which I could speak included besides shopkeepers the keeper of the Ottoman Library (situated nearby), the person who until December 1987 had been the müezzin of the mosque, and the Imam of the Ibrahim Pasha Mosque. They said they did not exactly know what was going to happen but they were evidently careful not saying thing that could bring them in trouble.

We should bear in mind that in the time of the Italian domination of the Dodecanese (1912-1947) all the mosques of the town had their minarets. This changed noticeable after the Greeks had taken over the administration. The following observations can be made:

Rhodos, Süleymaniye 2)

- 1) The minaret of the Redjeb (Recep) Pasha Mosque from 996 H. (A.D. 1588) was damaged during the Allied bombardments of World War II. It was in bad shape, constituting a danger for those who live in the area. In 1957 it was demolished after pressure of the local Greek authorities and not rebuild afterwards.
- 2) In 1973 the minaret of the Sultan Mustafa III Mosque (from the 1770's) was demolished. There are said to be plans to rebuild it but this has not been done until the present day.
- 3) In 1974, as a reaction of the Turkish military operations on Cyprus, the Mosque of Receb Pasha was stormed by Greeks and plundered. At that even the mosque lost its entire wall decoration of Iznik tiles, tiles of the very best quality Ottoman art ever produced and almost unique in the former European parts of the Ottoman Empire. No trace of the very valuable tiles have been found since them. A few broken fragments remain in situ in the looted interior.
- 4) In the late 1970's (I could not find out the exact year) the elegant wooden minaret of the Ağa Camii in the main shopping street of Rhodes (the Odos Sokrates) was demolished. It was very conspicuous reminding, like the minaret of the Süleymaniye, every time of the presence of Islam in Rhodes.

The mentioned cases in Rhodes are not isolated. Everywhere in territories lost by the Turks and included in Christian states the minarets were the first to fall. The facts mentioned for the Rhodes case give the impression that there is a certain pattern behind these events, the Süleymaniye minaret being part of a sort of a program. Of course this is impossible to prove. When discussing the problem with several Greeks of the neighbourhood of the mosque I said that the disappearance of this minaret, with its high symbolical value, worked very negative for Greece and its image as an enlightened and tolerant European state. With restoring the building they would make excellent propagance for them selves at little expenditure.

In a recent book on the Ottoman monuments of Rhodes, written by Zeki Çelikkol (Rodos'taki Türk Eserleri ve Tarihçe, Ankara, TTK. 1986), it is written that the minaret of the Süleymaniye was in bad shape and that the Greek authorities wanted to demolish it and that one did not need to doubt that it would go the same way as in the cases of the other minarets demolished. There seems to be a mutual distrust between the Turkish and the Greek communities but I was unable to find out more about this.

We must not dramatize the matter but see it in a wider perspective and than find a manner to do something for the neglected building (as well as for the two others mentioned). Greeks point out repeatedly that during the

Rhodos, Süleymaniye 3)

Turkish military actions on Cyprus, 1974, numerous churches and monasteries were plundered and half destroyed. Valuable mosaics of the 6th century and frescos from the 11th to 16th century were cut to pieces. The heads of saints and other pieces could later be found in expensive Antiquity shops in Paris, London and New York. A whole book was published on the cultural losses of "1974" The theft of the Iznik tiles of the Receb Pasha Mosque in Rhodos in the same year is a similar thing but working the other way round. If Turks insist too much on the very bad care of the Ottoman monuments in Greece (of which the writer of these pages could give a long, long list of examples) the Greeks counter this with pointing to the miserable state of a number of Byzantine churches in Istanbul. For example the very large and monumental Pantokrator church, now Molla Zeyrek Camii, overlooking the Atatürk Bulevarı near the Bozdoğan Kemer, three churches in one, built by the emperors of the Comneni dynasty in the 12th century and in a shameful state of neglect. Emotionally their value is the same as that of the minaret of the Süleymaniye in Rhodos.

Thus, if something is being done for the neglected Turkish monuments in Rhodos (or in Serres (Siroz), Gümülçine-Evrenos Bey Imareti) or Yenice Vardar (now: Giannitsa, Mosque of the Evrenosogulları) etc. we should proceed carefully and only expressing our concern and expressing the hope that something can be done. At most we could try to offer help in the form of master builders.

In Greece the Archeological Services get very little money for restoration or maintenance of buildings from Byzantine times and even less for monuments of later periods, all funds being spend on the Antique Period. Something could be done by carefully sluicing some money into the funds of the local Services, money given by some of the richer Islamic states through the mediation of the Intern. Comm. for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage or by the Ağa Khan Foundation.

(ca. 3000 people) From the Muslim community of Rhodos little action can be expected. They lack inspired leadership. Sitting on one of the most visited tourist spots of the world they could make fortunes themselves by showing their mosques to the tourists and by selling a nicely illustrated book on the Islamic aspect of the history and the art of Rhodos and the Dodecanese. With the profits gained in some years they could repair all Islamic monuments from their own funds. In stead of taking this ready opportunity they close their mosques for the tourists and do every thing to keep them away.

For the Greeks there must also be a commercial interest in the restoration and exploitation of the Islamic monuments of Rhodos because the irresistible charme of the place rests on the combination of Byzantine, Frankish and Turkish cultures and their different way of expression.

Appendix II

SEMINAR FÜR ORIENTALISCHE SPRACHEN
DER UNIVERSITÄT BONN

D-5300 BONN 1,
ADENAUERALLEE 102
☎ (0228)

Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen - Adenauerallee 102
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Βόννη Οκτώβριος 1988

THE DIMARCHOS OF THE CITY OF RHODOS

Dimarchia, RHODOS Mr. Savvas Karagiannis

G R E E C E.

Αγαπητέ κύριε,

Ως ενεργά μέλη στη μελέτη και διδασκαλία ανατολικών γλωσσών, ιστορίας και τέχνης καθώς και στη μελέτη του Βυζαντινού πολιτισμού και της Νέας Ελληνικής θα θέλαμε να εκφράσουμε την ανησυχία μας σχετικά με ένα πρόσφατο γεγονός στην πόλη της Ρόδου.

Έγινε γνωστό ότι τον Δεκέμβρη του 1987 ο μιναρές του Τέμενου του Σουλτάνου Σουλεϊμάν καταδαφίστηκε μετά από διαταγή των ελληνικών αρχών. Η κακή του στατική κατάσταση είχε καταστήσει τη λήψη μέτρων πραγματικά αναγκαία. Υπάρχουν σχέδια ανοικοδόμησής του μόλις τελειώσει η τουριστική περίοδος. Ο μιναρές αυτού του τέμενου έχει μεγάλη συναισθηματική και συμβολική αξία για πολλούς ανθρώπους, περισσότερο από κάθε άλλο αντικείμενο ισλαμικής τέχνης στη Ρόδο.

Γνωρίζουμε ότι τα τελευταία 30 χρόνια μερικοί άλλοι μιναρέδες καταδαφίστηκαν στη Ρόδο για παρόμοιους λόγους: του Ρεντζέπ Πασά από το 1588 στη δεκαετία του '50, του Σουλτάνου Αβυστάφ Πάσά το 1764 στη δεκαετία του '70 και ο μιναρές του Τέμενου του Αγίου μερικά χρόνια αργότερα. Υπήρχαν σχέδια για την ανοικοδόμηση αυτών των μιναρέδων που όμως δεν πραγματοποιήθηκαν ποτέ. Είναι φοβεράς μίμης σφάλμα το έργο και ελπίδα την περίπτωση, αν δεν δοθεί η ιδιαίτερη προσοχή. Σε σας προσκαλούσαμε θερμά λοιπόν να πάρете την υπόθεση στα χέρια σας, έτσι ώστε να ανοικοδομηθεί ο μιναρές. Η ανοικοδόμηση αυτού του μιναρέδου του Σουλτάνου Μουσταφά Πάσά του Ρεντζέπ Πασά θα είναι ιδιαίτερα επιθυμητή να μπορούσε να γίνει. Ένα μέρος του μιναρέδου σαν τη Ρόδο δεν γίνεται να πάρει από έκτακτη προέλευση πόσων για την διακαταίωση τέτοιου είδους αρχαίων.

Σε άλλα μέρη της Ελλάδας, λιγώτερο τουριστικά (Ιωάννινα, Άρτα, Τρίκαλα, Σέρρες κλπ.) έχει διεκπεραιωθεί θαυμάσια δουλειά στην ανακάλυψη και διατήρηση κτιρίων της ισλαμικής περιόδου. Η ανακάλυψη της Αρχαίας Αγοράς (Μπεντεστέν) και του τεράστιου Χαμάμ του Σουλτάνου Μουράτ Β΄ στη Θεσσαλονίκη ανήκει στις καλύτερες ανακαυθήσεις ισλαμικών κτιρίων στη νοτιοανατολική Ευρώπη τα τελευταία 20 χρόνια. Γιατί λοιπόν να μη γίνει κάτι τέτοιο και στη Ρόδο, μια πόλη που χρωστά την ακαταμάχητη γοητεία της κατά το μεγαλύτερο ποσοστό στο συνδυασμό τριών πολιτισμών: Βυζαντινού, Φράγκικου και Ισλαμικού. Η ανακάλυψη των αναφερομένων κτιρίων θα δείξει κατά πρώτον την προοδευτικότητα της Ελλάδας και θα έχει κατά δεύτερον διεθνή απήχηση.

Αφού εκ μέρους της μικρής μουσουλμανικής κοινότητας της Ρόδου δεν υπάρχει ελπίδα ανάπτυξης δραστηριότητας, λόγω έλλειψης προσώπων για την ανάλογη καθοδήγηση, η υπόθεση μένει ολοκληρωτικά στα χέρια των ελληνικών αρχών, οι οποίες είναι οι μόνες που μπορούν να οδηγήσουν τα πράγματα στην ποθητή έκβαση.

Παρακολουθούμε την περαιτέρω ανάπτυξη των γεγονότων με πραγματικό ενδιαφέρον και σας ευχόμαστε καλή επιτυχία.

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Appendix III



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΠΟΛΙΤΙΣΜΟΥ & ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΩΝ
4η ΕΦΟΡΕΙΑ ΒΥΖΑΝΤΙΝΩΝ ΑΡΧΑΙΟΤΗΤΩΝ
ΑΘΕΝΑΝΗΣΟΥ,

Βαθμός Ασφάλειας

Ρόδος 28-2-1989

Αριθ. Πρωτ. 3453

Βαθμός Προτεραιότητας

Ταχ. Δ/ση : Πλ. Αργυροκάστρου

Πληροφορίες :

Τηλέφωνο :

ΠΡΟΣ :

Θ Ε Μ Α :

Αγαπητέ Δρ. Kiel.

Στο χράμμα σας που λάβαμε στις 14-11-88 (αρ. πρωτ. 3453 π.ε.) εκφράζετε την ανησυχία σας για την τύχη του μινάρε του τζαμιού του Σουλεϊμαν που πρόσφατα καθαιρέθηκε με ευθύνη του Δήμου Ρόδου, καθώς και των άλλων Ισλαμικών μνημείων στην πόλη. Ελπίζουμε ότι αυτό το χράμμα θα ξεκαθαρίσει την κατάσταση όπως έχει σήμερα και σχετικά με το μινάρε και όσον αφορά τα Ισλαμικά μνημεία γενικότερα μέσα στο ευρύτερο πλαίσιο της συντήρησης των κηρυγμένων μνημείων εδώ.

Η διατήρηση του ιδιοκτησιακού κατεστημένου των Ισλαμικών μνημείων αποτελεί πολιτική θέση του Ελληνικού κράτους. Ακόμα και οι πολυάριθμες Βυζαντινές εκκλησίες που μετατράπηκαν σε τζαμιά και μετζήτια μετά το 1522 παρέμειναν ιδιοκτησία του Βακούφ της Ρόδου μετά την ενσωμάτωση του νησιού με την Ελλάδα το 1947. Πρόσφατα, που οι διαχειριστές του Βακούφ αποφάσισαν να παραχωρήσουν αυτές τις εκκλησίες στο Ελληνικό κράτος για να εξασφαλιστεί η συντήρησή τους, η Αρχαιολογική Υπηρεσία τα έχει αναλάβει ως μνημεία χωρίς να τα επαναφέρει στην πρώτη τους θρησκευτική λειτουργία παρόλο που η παλιά πόλη υποφέρει από σοβαρή έλλειψη εκκλησιών (δύο μικρές εκκλησίες για πάνω από 4.000 Ορθόδοξους κατοίκους) και οικοπέδων για να χτιστούν καινούργιες.

Η υπόθεση του μινάρε του Σουλεϊμανιέ έχει ως εξής: προπολεμικά ξαναχτισμένο με σκελετό από τσιμεντό και σίδερο, παρόλο αυτά το κτίσμα είχε γίνει επικίνδυνο στα τέλη της δεκαετίας του '70. Η ανάγκη συντήρησης ήταν άμεση, αλλά το Σουλεϊμανιέ είναι ιδιοκτησία του Βακούφ και το κεντρικό εν ενεργεία τζαμί: η διοίκηση του Βακούφ διάταξε να δεχτεί βοήθεια από το δημόσιο τομέα. Τελικά η Αρχαιολογική Υπηρεσία βοήθησε στην επισκευή του τζαμιού του Ιμπραήμ Πασά, ώστε να χρησιμοποιηθεί αυτό σαν κεντρικό τζαμί κατά τη διάρκεια των εργασιών συντήρησης στο Σουλεϊμανιέ. Το κόστος της οποιασδήποτε επέμβασης στο μινάρε του Σουλεϊμανιέ θα βάραινε τον ετήσιο προϋπολογισμό των χρημάτων που διατίθενται για αναστηλώσεις στην παλιά πόλη.

Το Ίδρυμα Αγά Χάν εδείξε ενδιαφέρον για το έργο και έστειλε εκπρόσωπο για αυτοψία στο μινάρε. Κατόνισαν με το Βακούφ να αναθέσουν μία προκαταρκτική μελέτη για την κατασκευή του. Η μελέτη παραδόθηκε μετά τους πρόσφατους σεισμούς αλλά αποδείχτηκε παρωχημένη γιατί η κατάσταση του μινάρε είχε εν τω μεταξύ επιδεινωθεί σοβαρότατα. Άμεσα μέτρα έπρεπε να ληφθούν για να αποφευχθεί ζημιά στο τζαμί, και η καθαίρεση του μινάρε τελικά δόθηκε με εργολαβία σε ειδική ιδιωτική εταιρεία: το κόστος έφτασε τα 14 εκατομμύρια δραχμές. Ο μινάρες αποτυπώθηκε και φωτογραφήθηκε με λεπτομέρεια πριν την κατεδάφιση.

έτσι ώστε το μνημείο μετά την αναστήλωση να έχει την ίδια εμφάνιση με την προϋπάρχουσα κατασκευή. Έχουν κρατηθεί δείγματα λιθοδομής, και ειδικά διακοσμημένα κομμάτια, για να χρησιμοποιηθούν σαν υποδείγματα κατά την αναστήλωση.

Το Βακούφ έχει συμφωνήσει με το Ίδρυμα Αγά Χάν για την ανάθεση αναστηλωτικής μελέτης του μινάρε στον αρχιτέκτονα Τ. Τσιτρούλη. Σύμφωνα με τις πληροφορίες που έχουμε η μελέτη, που πρόκειται να υποβληθεί στο Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού σύντομα, θα κάνει χρήση προηγμένης τεχνολογίας που σ' αυτή την περίπτωση θεωρείται επιτρεπτή εφόσον και η προηγούμενη κατασκευή δεν ήταν καθαρά παραδοσιακή. Μετά την έγκρισή της η μελέτη θα χρησιμοποιηθεί για ανάθεση του έργου σε ιδιωτική εταιρεία.

Το Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού, υπεύθυνο για όλα τα ιστορικά μνημεία, στη Ρόδο εκπροσωπείται από την Αρχαιολογική Υπηρεσία Δωδεκανήσου (ΚΕ' Εφορεία Κλασικών και 4η Βυζαντινών και Μεταβυζαντινών Αρχαιοτήτων). Η Υπηρεσία, με ανεπαρκές προσωπικό και υπερβολικό φόρτο εργασίας, στις τελευταίες δύο δεκαετίες προσπαθεί απειλησμένα να παρακολουθήσει τη κορχή επέκταση της πόλης της Ρόδου και την εκρηκτική ανάπτυξη του Τουρισμού που φέρνει με χορδή ρυθμό το χαρακτήρα του οχυρωμένου ιστορικού κέντρου - της παλιάς πόλης.

Για κάμποσον καιρό έχει γίνει εμφανές στις αρχές ότι τα μέσα της Αρχαιολογικής Υπηρεσίας στη σημερινή της μορφή δεν επαρκούν για την αντιμετώπιση αυτής της επίθεσης. Ο Δήμος, ευαίσθητος στην κατάσταση των μνημείων (όλων των μνημείων, περιλαμβανομένων και 3,5 χιλιομέτρων οχύρωσης και μερικών δωδεκάδων μεσαιωνικών εκκλησιών) πρόσφερε το πλαίσιο για μία συνεργασία με το Υπουργείο Πολιτισμού. Έτσι πριν τρία χρόνια ιδρύθηκε ειδικό Γραφείο για την ανάληψη της αναστήλωσης και συντήρησης διατηρητέων κτιρίων στην παλιά πόλη. Αυτό το Γραφείο, που έχει επίσης αναλάβει την ευθύνη να επισκευάσει μεσαιωνικά σπίτια -κατοικημένα μόνοντι επικίνδυνα- αυτό τον καιρό απασχολείται με τη συντήρηση τριών Βυζαντινών εκκλησιών, ενός μεσαιωνικού ξενώνα και του τζαμιού του Ρετζέπ Πασά όπως επίσης και με επισκευές στις οχυρώσεις.

Όσο για τους άλλους πεσμένους μινάρδες, στο πρόβλημα της ιδιοκτησίας και του κόστους προστίθεται η έλλειψη επαρκούς τεκμηρίωσης που θα επιτρέψει στο μέλλον την αναστήλωση σύμφωνα με το χάρτη της Βενετίας. Προς το παρόν, τα τρία τζαμιά θεωρούνται ασφαλή από στατική άποψη (εκτός από το προστώο του τεμένους του Ρετζέπ, που αυτή τη στιγμή αντιμετωπίζεται) και άλλα μνημεία, σε πολύ χειρότερη κατάσταση συντήρησης, έχουν προτεραιότητα.

Πρέπει πάντως να τονιστεί ότι αυτή η θέση δεν αντικατοπτρίζει κάποια προκατάληψη απέναντι στα Ισλαμικά μνημεία. Ακόμα και πριν από τη σύσταση του Γραφείου της Μεσαιωνικής Πόλης γινόταν συντήρηση, σε μικρότερη κλίμακα, όπως στο ταξικό μνημείο του Ρινάτ Πασά -αρχηγού του πυροβολικού του Σουλεϊμαν του Μεγαλοπρεπή- και το νεκροταφείο του Μουράτ Ρεϊς. Η Αρχαιολογική Υπηρεσία κράτησε αρνητική στάση στην περίπτωση της κατεδάφισης του μινάρε του τζαμιού του Αγά, που παρόλα αυτά πραγματοποιήθηκε με πρωτοβουλία των διαχειριστών του Βακούφ.

Με εκτίμηση,

Ο προϊστάμενος της Εφορείας

Δρ. Ηλίας Κόλλιας

Κοινωνίον:

- ✓ 1] Prof. Dr. Werner Schmucker, Bonn, W. Germany
- 2] Prof. Dr. Stefan Wild, » »
- 3] Dr. Hanna Erdmann, » »
- 4] Prof. Dr. Maxwell, » »
- 5] Prof. Dr. Hans Eideneier, Köln, » »
- 6] Prof. Dr. Hans Georg Majer, München, » »
- 7] Prof. Dr. Heinz Halim, Tübingen » »
- 8] Prof. Dr. Michael Meinecke, Berlin, » »
- 9] Prof. Dr. Barbara Flemming, Leiden, The Netherlands »
- 10] Prof. Dr. Frederick De Jong, Utrecht, »
- 11] Dr. Arnold Fr. van Gemert, Amsterdam, »
- 12] Prof. Dr. W. F. Bakker, » »
- 13] Dr. Irène Beidiceanu, Paris, France
- 14] Dr. C. J. Heywood, London, U.K.

Dear Dr. Kiel,

In your letter received 14-11-88 you express your concern about the fate of the minaret of the Suleymaniye mosque recently dismantled at the responsibility of the municipal authorities on Rhodes as well as that of other Islamic monuments in the town. I trust that this letter will clarify the current situation regarding the minaret in question and Islamic monuments in general within the wider context of conserving listed monuments here.

It is a policy of the Greek State to preserve the status quo as regards the ownership of Islamic monuments in general. Even the numerous Byzantine churches converted into mosques and mesjids after 1522 remained the property of the Vakf of Rhode after the island became part of Greece in 1947; recently, when the Vakf administrators decided to cede those churches to the Greek State to ensure their conservation, the Archaeological Service has undertaken their maintenance as monuments without reversion to their original religious status, in spite of the fact that in the old town there is an acute lack of operating churches (two small churches for over 4,000 Orthodox inhabitants) or the space on which to erect new ones.

The affair of the Suleymaniye minaret is as follows: rebuilt before the last war with a concrete- and steel spine the structure nevertheless had become dangerous by the late 70s. Restoration became imperative, but the Suleymaniye is the property of the Vakf and the principal operating mosque; the administration of the Vakf hesitated to seek help from the public sector. Finally the Archaeological Service assisted in repairing the mosque of Ibrahim Pasha to serve as principal mosque while restoration of the Suleymaniye was carried out. The costs of any intervention to the Suleymaniye minaret would be borne out of the yearly budget of the restoration funds available for the old town.

The Aga Khan Foundation showed interest in the project and their representative was sent to inspect the minaret. They arranged with the Vakf to commission a preliminary study for its dismantling. This study was submitted after the recent earthquakes but proved obsolete because the condition of the minaret had meanwhile deteriorated seriously. Swift action had to be taken in order to avoid damage to the mosque, and the dismantling of the minaret was contracted out to a specialist private firm: the cost ran to 14 million drachmas. The minaret was drawn and photographed in detail before it was pulled down so that the appearance of the restored monument, when completed, will closely resemble the earlier structure. Samples of masonry, especially carved parts, were put aside to serve as models for the reconstruction.

The Vakf have arranged with the Aga Khan Foundation for the commission of the study for the minaret's restoration to the architect Mr. T. Tsitroulis. We understand that the study, due to be submitted for approval to the Ministry of Culture soon, will make use of modern technology, in this case thought permissible in view of the fact that the earlier structure was not itself constructed with traditional techniques. The study, after its approval, will be used in the contracting of the work to a private firm.

The Ministry of Culture, responsible for all historic buildings, is represented on Rhodes by the Archaeological Service of the Dodecanese (22nd Ephorate of Classical and 4th Ephorate of Byzantine & Post-Byzantine Antiquities). The Service, understaffed and overworked, in the last two decades has been desperately trying to keep pace with the rapid expansion of the town of Rhodes and the explosion of the tourist trade which is swiftly eroding the character of the fortified historic centre- the old town.

For some time it has become obvious to the authorities that the resources of the Service in its present form are inadequate in the face of this onslaught. The Municipality, concerned about the condition of monuments (all monuments, including 35 kilometres of fortifications and a few dozen medieval churches) has provided the framework for a collaboration with the Ministry of Culture. Thus, three years ago, an Office was set up to undertake the restoration and preservation of listed buildings in the old town. This Office, also entrusted with the responsibility of restoring medieval houses -still inhabited though unsafe- is currently employed in the restoration of three Byzantine churches, a medieval hospice and the mosque of Redjep Pasha as well as repairs on the fortifications.

As far as the other dismantled minarets are concerned the problem of private ownership and lack of available funds is compounded by gaps in the documentation necessary to serve as a guide for their

Appendix IV

eventual restoration. At present the three mosques are considered structurally safe (except for the portico of the mosque of Redjep Pasha, which is being attended to) and other monuments, in a much worse state of preservation, must take priority.

It should be stressed, however, that this in no way reflects a prejudice against Islamic monuments. Restoration work had been taking place on a smaller scale even before the inception of the office for the Medieval Town as, for example, on the funerary monument to Yinat Pasha -artillery master of Suleyman the Magnificent- and in the cemetery of Murad Reis. The Archaeological Service held a negative stand on the demolition of the Agha mosque minaret which took place regardless, at the initiative of the Vakf administration.

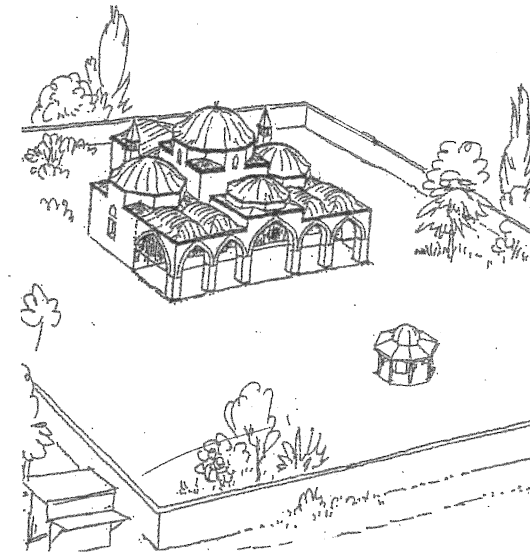
Yours faithfully,

The Director of the Ephoreia

Dr. Elias Kollias

The Imaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in the town
of Ihtiman on the Sofia-Plovdiv/Philippopolis
Highway in Central Bulgaria

The second oldest monument of Ottoman architecture
in the Balkans (1390s) on the verge of collapse



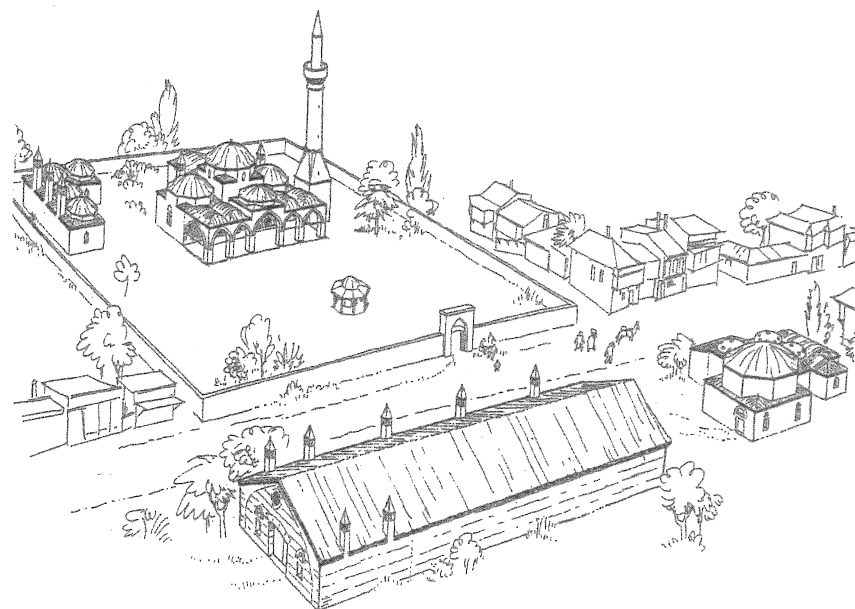
Prepared by Machiel Kiel (Prof.Dr. Dr. h.c. mult.) Former Advisor to
UNESCO, Honorary member of the Turkish Historical Society.

The İmaret-Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in the small Bulgarian town of İhtiman on the road between Filibe and Sofya, now a sad ruin, is the second oldest monument of Ottoman architecture of the entire Balkans. A decade or two older is the İmaret of Gazi Evrenos in Gümülcine/Komotini in Northern Greece. The so called Eski Cami in the Bulgarian town of Haskovo /Hasköy, held to be from the 1380s, is in fact the product from a total reconstruction in the late 18th century and the Ottoman inscription on the building is an 18th century fake.

The İhtiman building served a road station of the Istanbul-Edirne-Sofia-Belgrad road and is mentioned by many travelers who lodged there free of charge and received free meals. The staff of the building included several cooks, bakers, cleaners, a cellar master, and secretary etc. The salaries of the staff (in total 17 men) and the amounts of rice, wheat, meat, butter, oil, honey etc. are mentioned in detail in the Tahrir Defter of the District of Sofya dating from 1521. The income of the vakf derived from the yearly tax revenue of the little town of İhtiman and a group of Turkish colonist villages in the Plain of İhtiman. The original Vakuf-nâme has not (yet) been found.

Originally the building was not a mosque. It is NOT orientated to Mecca (here: south-east) but to the south, and there was no mihrab. In the 16th century a tall, but free-standing minaret was added to the building and the internal walls separating the guest rooms from the main hall were broken away. In order to prevent the building from collapsing special supporting arches were improvised, taking over the load of the domes. In one of the former guest rooms the original chimney to heat the room in the cold winter is still visible. After the mentioned changes the function of lodging visitors was taking over by a large *Han*, which once stood opposite the İmaret/Zaviye. The site of the *Han* is now built over by a great school building.

To the *zaviye* building once belonged a separate cooking house. This has disappeared long ago. Preserved, however, is the hamam belonging to the complex. It shows very ancient forms and is related to the great hamam of Yıldırım Bayezid in the little town of Mudurnu, Bolu District, built in 1383. In the 1970s the İhtiman hamam was very carefully restored by the Bulgarian Institute for Historical Monuments. The İmaret building was left to rot and is now at the verge of collapsing. Without rapid intervention it will collapse and gone forever. Its restoration and partial reconstruction will be a noble task.



Hypothetic reconstruction of the compound of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey in İhtiman as it must have been in the 16th century and later. In the 1530s a high and free standing minaret was added next to the main building but structurally disconnected. In 1921 the minaret was still standing and photographed by the Bulgarian historian of architecture Krăstyu Miyatev but was demolished shortly afterwards.

Of the entire compound only the imaret-zaviye and the hamam still exist. In the 1970s the hamam was superbly restored by the Bulgarian Institute for monuments of history. The imaret-zaviye was left to rot away until today.

(Reconstruction Machiel Kiel, drawing Gerd Schneider).



Ihtiman, West Bulgaria, Imaret/Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey.

The building seen from the North-East.

The north-eastern corner of the building was recently cut away by local fanatics. One does not need to be an expert in architecture to see that main dome of the guest room can collapse any time! Here direct action is urgently needed!

(Photo M.K. March 2013)



Ihtiman, Imaret/Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey, 1390s
as seen from the West, looking at the “best” preserved right guest room
and the eyvan.

Photo M.K. March 2013

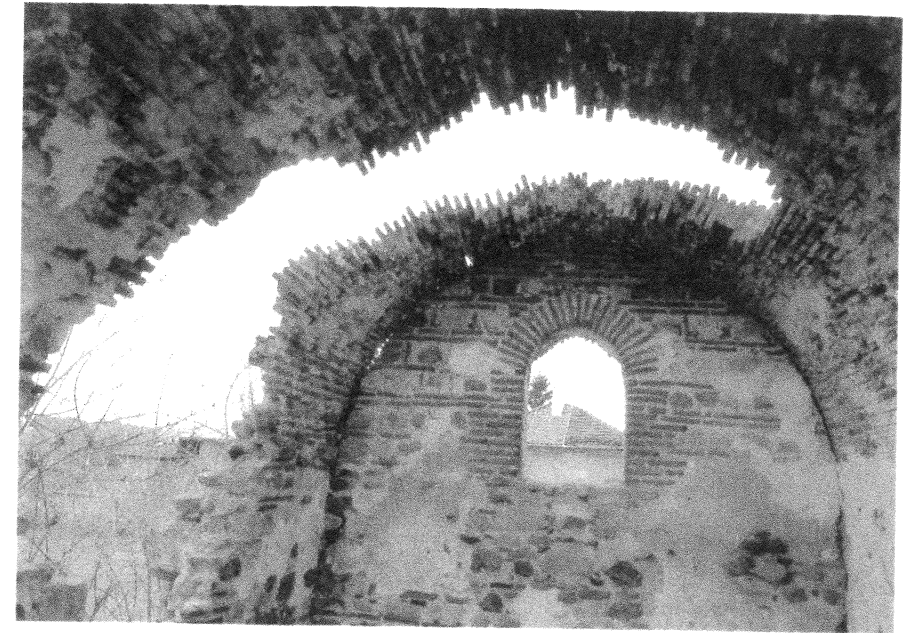


Ihtiman, kasaba on the road from Filibe to Sofya, ruin of the Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey, 1390s.

The Imaret/Zaviye of Mahmud Bey is the second oldest Ottoman building still standing in the Balkans (after the Imaret of Gazi Evrenos in Komotini/Gümülcine in Greek Thrace, dated in the 1380s and a decade ago beautifully restored by the Greek Service for Historical Monuments). From the point of view of History of Ottoman Art the Ihtiman building is of outstanding importance.

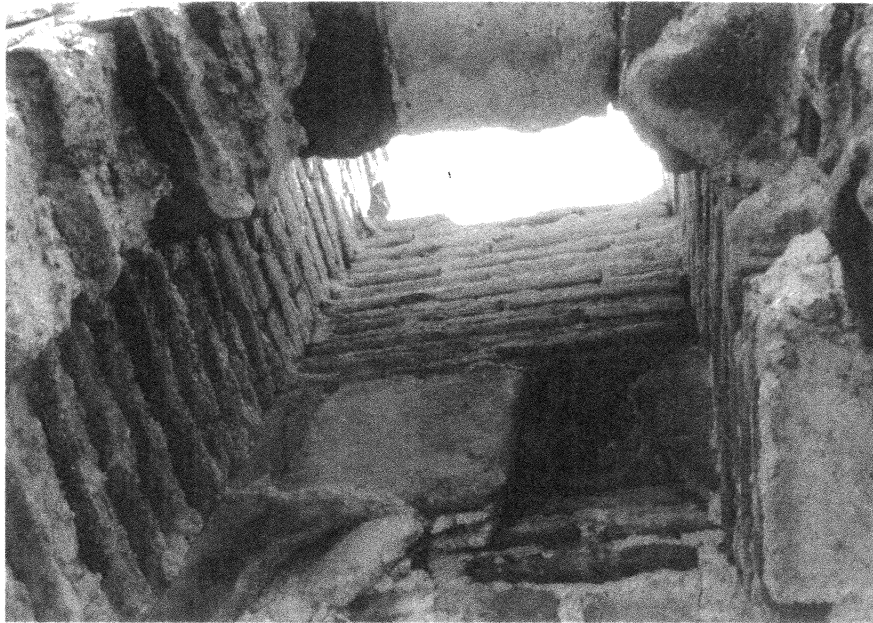
The photo (from March 2013) shows the building from the south-eastern direction. To the right is one of the former guest rooms, to the left the half destroyed barrel-vaulted eyvan.

(Photo M.K. 2013)

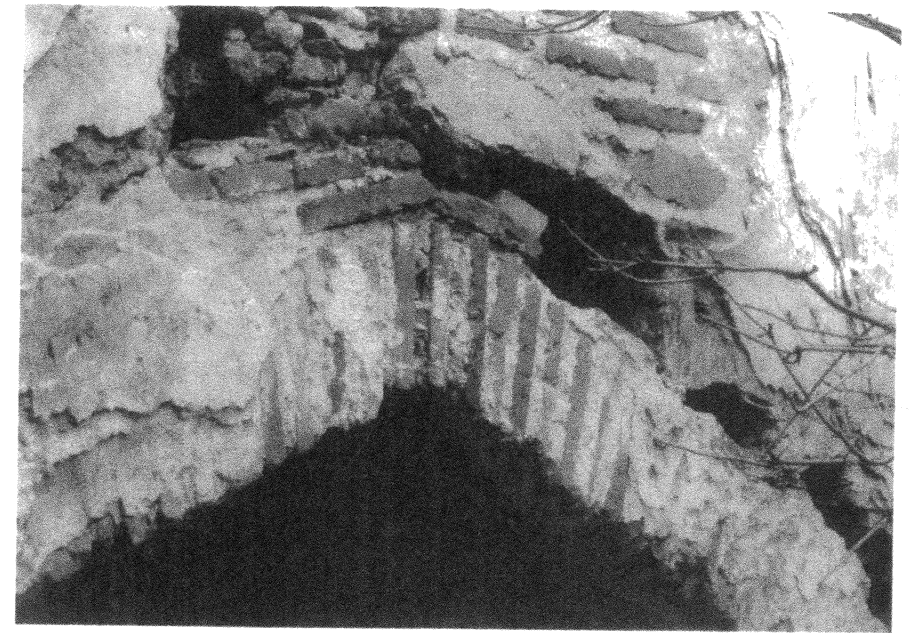


Ihtiman, Imaret/Zaviye of Mihaloğlu Mehmed Bey. Interior view in the eyvan room with half collapsed barrel vault, looking in southern direction. Note that there is no *mihrab* and the building is NOT orientated towards Mecca

(Photo M.K. March 2013).



Ihtiman, Zaviye/İmaret of Mihaloğlu Mehmed Bey, 1390s.
View in the remains of the chimney of the right guest room.

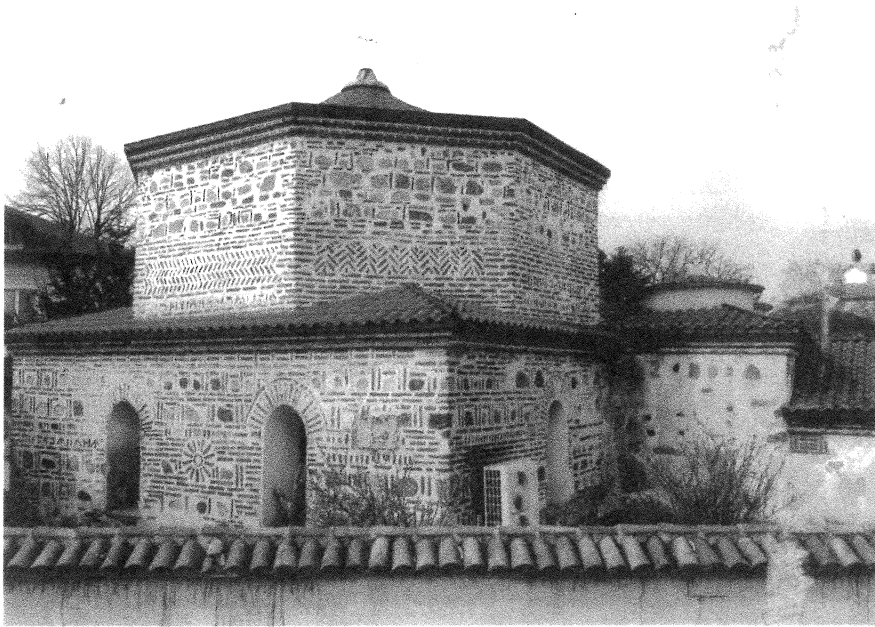


Ihtiman, Zaviye/Imaret of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey

Interior view showing the improvised arch, made after the walls separating the main hall and the guest rooms were demolished to add the space to the new function of the building: Friday Mosque. This improvisation became visible after the plaster and whitewash had recently fallen off.

The transformation from *imaret/zaviye* into mosque most likely took place in the early years of Süleyman the Magnificent, when many other zaviyes underwent the same transformation. In case of the Ihtiman Imaret a tall minaret was added to the building, staying apart from the mosque. It stood until the 1920s, when Kráštýu Miyatev published a photograph of it, as well as a short description (see: *Godišnik na Narodniya Arheologičeski Muzej*, III. Sofia 1921).

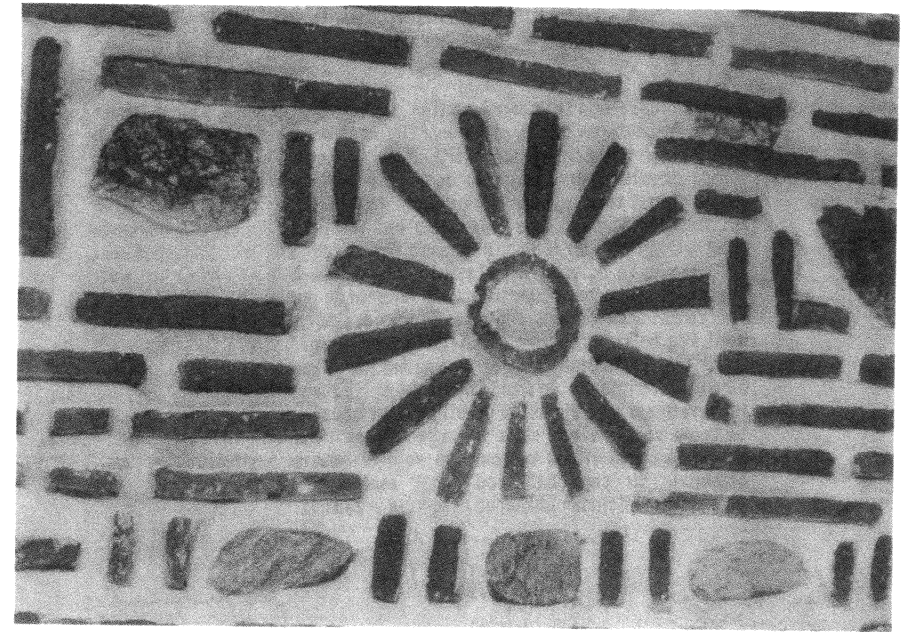
Photo: M.K. March 2013.



İhtiman, Hamam of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey, 1390s, the second building of the compound. The third building, a large han disappeared in the early 19th century. The excessively high tambour is a special feature of Early Ottoman architecture. Architecturally this building is closely related to the Hamam of Yıldırım Bayezid in the little town of Mudurnu near Bolu, built in 1383.

In the 1970s the Hamam of İhtiman was carefully restored and serves since then as Art Gallery.

(Photo M.K. March 2013)



İhtiman, Hamam of Mihaloğlu Mahmud Bey, 1390s.
Detail of masonry with sun symbol.

The two last pictures show what can be done with ruined buildings: they will become the jewel of an otherwise colourless town.

It is our collective duty to preserve and rehabilitate Monuments of such an architectural and historical importance as the İhtiman buildings!

(photo M.K., March 2013)

Appendix V

Paris, 10 Mart 1990

YAKIFLAR GENEL MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE
Ankara

Bu günlerde Paris'te Kanunî Sultan Süleyman çağından kalma sanat eserlerini gösteren bir sergi sürüyor. Bu nedenle Avrupa'dan, Türkiye'den ve ABD'den türkologlar, sanat tarihçileri ve tarihçiler bir araya gelip burada düzenlenen bir sempozyumda Osmanî sanatı ve mimarisinin çeşitli problemlerini tartışıyorlar. Tartışmalar sırasında Kanunî zamanına ait ve üstelik Koca Sinan'ın eseri olan bazı binaların şimdiki durumu hakkında ciddi kaygılar duyuldu. Bilhassa Trakya'da, Büyük Çekmece'deki kervansaray ve Bolvadin'deki taş köprüyü (ayrıca Bilecik'teki Orhan Gazi İmaretini) çok merak ediyoruz; çünkü ikisinin de durumu hiç iyi değil. Yeni kısa zaman önce kervansarayın çatısı yıkıldı; Bolvadin köprüsünün taşları yerli köy halkı tarafından kendi ihtiyaçları için alınıp götürülmektedir. Gayet tabii bunun gibi olaylar Avrupa'nın her ülkesinde oluyor. Genellikle bina sahipleriyle bu tür problemler çıkıyor; bazen de bu binalara yeni bir işlev vermesi ayrı bir sorun yaratıyor. Ümrümüzün en güzel yıllarını Türk tarih ve sanatına hasrettik ve doğal olarak bahsettiğimiz bu binaların kimliğine uygun olarak korunmasını ve onarılmasını bekliyoruz. Tecrübeli ekibinizin bir çare bulup bu sanat eserlerini gelecek kuşaklar için koruyacağı ümidinde olduğumuzu sevgiyle arz ederiz.

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