

# Journal of Balkan Studies

Balkan Çalışmaları  
Dergisi

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Revista për  
Studime Ballkanike

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Списание за  
Балкански Студии

Volume • **4** / 2024

Issue • **1**

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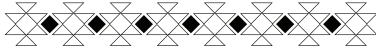
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Балкански Студии

Volume • **4** / 2024

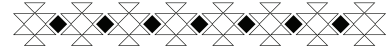
**IDEFE**  
PUBLICATIONS

Issue • **1**





# Journal of Balkan Studies



**Volume 4, Issue 1 - 2024**

**ISSN: 2671-3675**

**E-ISSN: 2671-3659**

*Journal of Balkan Studies is an international, academic and peer-reviewed refereed journal. It is published twice a year.*

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**Graphic Design**

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**Proofreading**

Proof Editing (English)

**Publication Type**

International Periodic

**Publication Period**

Published twice a year, January and July

**Print Date**

January, 2024

**Printed by**

Ajgraph - Skopje Citadel, 1000

**Correspondence**

Journal of Balkan Studies

Makedonsko Kosovska Brigada No:32 1A, Cair - Skopje, North Macedonia  
[www.balkanjournal.org](http://www.balkanjournal.org), [info@balkanjournal.org](mailto:info@balkanjournal.org)

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articles





# Mapping the *Tekkes* and *Türbes* in Western Thrace: A New Contribution to the Old Literature

Ioannis Mylonelis, Ziaka Angeliki, Tsironis Christos, Siskou Erifli, Karakitsos Efstratios

**Abstract:** Sufis, particularly the Alevi and Bektashi communities, tend to be overlooked within in Western Thrace, where Muslim identity is dominated by Orthodox Islam (i.e., Sunnism) for both cultural and political reasons. Consequently, the sacred places of groups that are perceived to be heterodox are, similar to these groups themselves, rendered invisible and many times deliberately left to obscurity. The present study combines bibliography and fieldwork to locate and derive information about Sufi *tekkes* [lodges], *türbes* [Muslim shrines], and *cemevis* [gathering places] in Western Thrace to broaden the future scope of research on the material culture and beliefs of those marginalized communities.

**Keywords:** Balkans, Western Thrace, Sufism, *tekkes*, *türbes*

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0009-0007-0471-3269



Balkan Studies Foundation  
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/A040>  
Journal of Balkan Studies, 4 (1), 2024  
[balkanjournal.org](http://balkanjournal.org)



Received: 27.10.2023  
Revision: 20.12.2023  
Accepted: 12.01.2024

## Introduction: Methodological Orientations

The advent, spread, and prolonged presence of Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Greece has left its traces in the present, along with a vibrant Muslim community living in the region of Western Thrace. On the occasion of my doctoral research, part of which was carried out within the framework of the Innovative Cultural Experience (ICE) Project,<sup>1</sup> I had the opportunity to investigate the region and search for the material and intangible cultural heritage of the Muslims of the region. My research resulted in the systematic recording of old and modern places of worship, which in turn led to a search for the various cultural and religious events that make up the mosaic of the Muslim community of Thrace. A “mosaic” (Demetriou, 2013, p. 61) which is composed of individual communities within the Muslim minority, who although share commonalities with each other of which the Muslim identity itself is the principal being, are also punctuated by differences. “Mystical Islam” is known in the literature as *Sufism* (Arabic: *tasawwuf*), and is one of these differences (Ernst, 1997, p. 17). Although the Alevi and Bektashi *tarikāt* (from the Arabic *tariqa*, meaning sect/community)<sup>2</sup> seems to be the most prominent in the region of Western Thrace, lesser sects have also evidently existed and held a measure of influence (Tsibiridou, 2015, p. 220).

The present article focuses mainly on the search for Sufi religious places and records and classifications regarding them. For this reason and based on Efstratios Zegkinis’s (1996) pioneering study of this period regarding Bektashism of Western Thrace, this research presents the *tekkes* [Sufi lodges], *türbes* [funerary shrines] and *cemevi* [gathering houses] of the region identified during the research. The methodology followed

1 The ICE project seeks to design and implement an innovative system to promote cultural heritage. More specifically, the ICE project proposes the creation of an innovative product called ICE for active and experiential tours, for the promotion of cultural and commercial products, and for developing a content aggregation mechanism to enrich the augmented reality material for the labelled cultural and commercial exhibit. The final ICE product will be targeted at an educational exhibition, as well as other venues, with the possibility of providing an integrated exhibitory presentation service with dynamic content adapted to users’ preferences, needs, and profile through a knowledge management system.

2 The choice of the terms community, but especially the Turkish term *tarikāt*, which is derived from the Arabic term *طريقة* and means the way or the road, is a legitimate way to refer either generally or specifically to a Sufi organization. A term which is widely used is the term *battalion*. Sufi orders as a term is a Western perception and understanding of this particular religious phenomenon. This term was originally used to describe the monastic orders of the Roman Catholic Church. However, a Sufi order is not the same as a monastic order, as a person’s membership in a monastic order of the Roman Catholic denomination requires compulsory submission to the order and observance of rules, such as the rule of celibacy, and these are regulations that are not required for one’s admission and membership in a Sufi *tarikāt* (Ζιάκας, 1983, p. 417).

in this research turns first to the study of literature and then to fieldwork. Regarding the literature, it can be seen to be divided into academic and non-academic parts. The references for the region of Western Thrace regarding the *tekkes*, *türbes*, and other religious places of the Sufi and non-Sufi *tariqa* are scattered and will be examined below. These references sometimes only include a name or a locale, and sometimes extend to just a handful of lines; these references can be found dispersed anywhere, from the earliest records of European and non-European travelers who wandered the geographical boundaries of the Ottoman Empire to the present-day local press.

In particular, the contemporary non-academic material, which seems to be larger in quantity, is usually written by philistors and folklorists who happen to be locals in most cases, either Greeks or Greek citizens who in terms of self-definition choose to describe themselves as Turks. Sometimes, these local intellectuals write with a specific purpose and for a specific audience. They either write about the cultural “other” or about themselves and the communities they want to represent. Researchers are invited to examine these texts with care, as their testimony combined with their locality encapsulates some of the “inner voices” of the communities (Grehan, 2014, p. 17), which present and highlight continuities and discontinuities and sometimes reveal attempts at self-definition, highlighting cultural hegemonic discourses and trends at the core of the communities themselves (Lowry, 2009, p. 22).<sup>3</sup>

Regarding the sacred places, after focusing first on the literature with Zegkinis’ (1996) reference work as a basis, I return to Western Thrace, physically. I identified new religious sites, recording them for the first time, and visited other sites that had already been recorded to examine their current status. This article briefly sets out details for each sacred site, recording names where possible, as well as locations and architectural types. I also briefly examine any materiality, attempting a first comprehensive description and classification for future research to use later on. Concerning the names, whether a proper name itself or a toponym, I have rendered these as the locals use them

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3 One such example of a local study is the work of the deposed religious leader (Dede) of the Alevi and Bektashi communities of Western Thrace, in particular of the communities living in the Northwestern Evros region (Koç, 2011). Another example of a local study with a thematic focus on Sufism, tekkes, and türbes of the region, especially the tekke of Seyyid Ali Sultan, is the work of local teacher Ahmet Kavak (2006) from the Vakos settlement in Rhodope. Both of the above works were written in Turkish, while the teacher Dimitris Vrachioglou (2000), also a local teacher, wrote a study in Greek that mainly examined the festivals of the Alevi and Bektashi communities in Evros.

in Greek and Turkish. Finally, I use color photographic material where necessary as evidence of the current state of the depicted monument.

## From the Pages of Yesterday to the Field of Today

From the period of the Ottoman Empire to the present day, the majority of Balkan Muslims have followed the Sunnite teachings of Islam, with the Hanafi school being the dominant of the four schools (*madhhab*) of law (Shaw 1976, pp. 135-138). At the same time, Sufi currents have left behind communities and sacred places such as *tekkes*, *türbes*, and *cemevis* in the region of Western Thrace that are still preserved today, demonstrating that Balkan Islam is distinguished both for its locality and for its variety of forms and expressions (Poulton, 1997, p. 2).

The premises and facilities of a Sufi community (*tarikāt, tariqa*) that constitute the base where all their worship and social events are held are called *tekkes* in Turkish (*zāwiyya* or *ribat* in Arabic, or *Khāniqa* in Persian). These terms denote the location where the followers of the various Sufi communities gather (Ernst, 1997, p. 125). *Tekkes* usually consist of a group of buildings and may have a particular architecture that varies from place to place (Grehan, 2014, pp. 48-49). *Tekkes* usually include halls for performing rituals, a mausoleum, a cemetery, a guest house, a kitchen, and meeting place, as well as a library that may be located within or outside the urban fabric. In a Sufi *tekke* complex, a *türbe* usually plays a very important role, whether indoors or outdoors. These *türbes* usually contain the body of the original founder of the Sufi community or some other prominent figure (Μακρής, 2004, p. 382).

Thus, a *türbe* is a very important element for the function and structure of a Sufi community and *tekke*, as it becomes a point of pilgrimage and place for offerings from believers of the surrounding area or even from distant regions. In some cases, when the interred person is particularly well known, he is described as a *walī* (i.e., “friend of God;” Grehan, 2014, p. 63), and a pilgrimage to his *türbe* may be a substitute for the sacred pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, the places where the Prophet lived and died (Μακρής, 2004, p. 382). The *türbe* may not be part of a building complex in many cases. Finally, another type of sacred place associated with Sufism and in particular with the Alevi branch, is the *cemevi* (Andersen & Gündüz, 2020, pp. 47-63). The *cemevi* of the Alevi have functional rooms, kitchens, libraries, and classrooms, in addition to the central prayer room in which the *cem* ritual is performed (Langer, 2010, p. 203).

Professor Efstratios Zegkinis<sup>4</sup> (1996) contribution has been extremely important for the Greek bibliography, as his work focused on the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, in particular on the Bektashi of the same region. Zegkinis' work focused on the Bektashi community of Western Thrace within the historical context before and after the advent and spread of this *tariqa* in Western Thrace. Specifically, he presented the characteristics of the community, such as some information about its founder and some basic rituals (Zegkinis, 1996, pp. 21–49). Zegkinis later provided information about the situation in Thrace before and after the arrival of the Ottomans and the Bektashis (1996, pp. 51–127), as well as information about the Bektashis' relations with the Sublime Porte (1996, pp. 129–154). Finally, his work concluded with references to the common folk customs of the Christians and the dervishes of the Bektashi (1996, pp. 232–243).

Zegkinis' work became more widely known even to the local populations due to his records on *tekkes* in the chapter titled *Tekkes, Chapels and Open-Air Tombs of Bektashi Saints*, “Τεκκέδες, παρεκκλήσια και υπαίθριοι τάφοι Μπεκτασιδών αγίων” (1996, pp. 175–230).<sup>5</sup> Zegkinis focused and dealt exclusively with the geographical area of Western Thrace, which at the time of his research was structured into three prefectures: Evros, Rhodope, and Xanthi. Currently, it is divided into three regional units with the

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4 Efstratios Zegkinis was an Islamologist-Turcologist who was born in Imbros in 1938 and passed away in 2020 at 82 in Thessaloniki. He was a professor for many years at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, specialized in the history and culture of Islam in the Balkan region. He had served in various professorial positions at the Special Pedagogical Academy of Thessaloniki, the Pedagogical School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in the city of Florina, as well as the Department of Pastoral and Social Theology of the Faculty of Theology of the same university since 2003. Efstratios Zegkinis was awarded a doctorate from the Department of Pastoral Theology in 1985, completing his thesis titled “Bektashism in Western Thrace: A Contribution to the History of the Propagation of Islam on Greek Territory” (Zegkinis, 1985). During his career, he published several works and articles, the most important of which is “Bektashism in Western Thrace: A Contribution to the History of the Propagation of Islam on Greek Territory” (Zegkinis, 1996, first edition 1988), “The Muslims of Thrace” (Zegkinis, 1994), “Genitsaris and Bektashism. Genesis of Balkan Islam” (Zegkinis, 2002), “The Abolition of the Sultanate and Caliphate in Turkey” (Zegkinis, 2002), and “Bektashis, Dervishes and the National Movement in Albania” (Zegkinis, 2005).

5 Thierry Zarcone' critique of Zegkinis' (1988) work is interesting: “En revanche, l'étude de Efstratios Zenginè porte plus spécialement sur l'histoire sociale et religieuse du Bektachisme dans une zone bien définie et très mal connue jusqu'à présent, la Thrace occidentale, comprenant le nomos de l'Ebre et ceux des Rhodopes et de Xanthès. En plus de son étude sur la pénétration de l'Islam et sur le rôle joué par les derviches colonisateurs en Thrace occidentale, Zenginè s'est interrogé sur les caractéristiques du dialogue islamo-chrétien. Mais il s'est aussi rendu sur le terrain et a publié dans le chapitre 6 de son livre les résultats d'une étude systématique et détaillée des bâtiments, tombeaux et cimetières liés à l'ordre des bektachis qui se trouvent de nos jours en Thrace occidentale,” retrieved 10/3/2023 from <https://oui.hypotheses.org/2765>

same names. Assessing his research concerning *tekkes*, focusing on the fact that Zegkinis recorded in his work sacred places without strictly classifying them is worthwhile, as he considered them predominantly as *tekkes*, and all but three of them belonging to the Bektashi community (1996, pp. 175–230). In this respect, Heath Lowry's view on the *türbe* of Kütüklü Baba (*Kütüklü Baba Türbesi*) at Selino in Xanthi, to which Zegkinis gave the designation of *tekke*, is of interest. According to Lowry (2009, p. 41), this characterization is incorrect, as no other evidence is found today other than the *türbe* itself. A *tekke* likely existed on the site before 1826, which Sultan Mahmud II had destroyed. Also regarding the recording and citation of the *tekkes* and *türbes*, Zegkinis drew his material very heavily from the works of Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi (2000) and Abdurrahim Dede (1977) and Thierry Zarccone's (1992) review regarding the archival material from the Ottoman documents of Constantinople and Ankara, omitting the Ottoman archives of Adrianople.<sup>6</sup>

Chapter 6 of Zegkinis' study (1996, pp. 179–230) records 87 *tekkes* and *türbes* in the region of Western Thrace under separate sections corresponding respectively to the three above-mentioned prefectures. The fact that one might extract from all of the author's own entries at the time of his research, as well as from fieldwork undertaken today, that only one place is a real *tekke* and is even in operation, while all the other entries and reports concern *türbes*, such as mausoleums or external funerary monuments, is worth emphasizing. I will return to this issue as regards the classification of terms and types. Finally, before examining the results of Zegkinis' research for each prefecture, worth is had in mentioning that, of the above total number of *tekkes* and *türbes*, 42 corresponded to actual places at the time of his research. At the same time,

6 Of great interest is one of the few reviews of Zegkinis' (1988) work, that of Thierry Zarccone, and in particular his commentary on the use of the Ottoman documents of the Vilayet of Adrianople.

*Salname-i Vilâyet-i Edirne*: "Précisons que outre ses travaux sur le terrain ou sur les sources grecques et turques imprimées, l'auteur a exploité certains dossiers des archives du Başvekâlet à Istanbul et du Tapu ve Kadastro à Ankara. Toutefois, une seule remarque, l'auteur ne semble pas avoir consulté les sâlnâme du vilâyet d'Edirne qui apportent, sur certains points, quelques précisions non négligeables. Pour donner un peu plus de richesse à ce résumé, nous indiquerons donc, lorsque l'intérêt se présentera, les informations complémentaires que nous donnent les sâlnâme de ce vilâyet," retrieved 10/3/2023 from: <https://oui.hypotheses.org/2765>. Also of great interest is how a similar criticism about the choice of sources in the same work was politicized and used in articles by the organization *Avrupa Batı Trakya Türk Federasyonu* [European Federation of Western Thrace Turks]. See: Poşpoş Tekkesi: Yok olan tarihi bir eser daha! Retrieved 10/3/2023 from <https://www.abttf.org/haberler-detay.php?id=605&kid=108>

the remaining 45 entries relate to sacred sites that no longer exist at the time the current article is being written; however, they have been identified in sources Zegkinis located.

Specifically, Zegkinis' (1996, pp. 179–207) work on the Evros region informs that, of the 39 *tekkes* in total, 14 belonged to the Bektashi community and existed at the time of his research and 15 had been destroyed as early 1826. Five *tekkes* in the town of Didymoteicho in particular, eight *tekkes* are located in Feres and two in Makri. For the region of Rhodope, Zegkinis mentioned a total of 18 *tekkes*, of which seven belonged to the Bektashis and had existed up to the time of his writing. Six *tekkes* were only mentioned in sources, and Zegkinis (1996, pp. 207–213) did not locate them in the field. Finally, five open-air graves also exist. For the region of Xanthi, a total of 30 *türbes* are mentioned, of which 12 are Bektashi, three are new cemeteries, four cemeteries no longer exist at the time of the current study's writing, two were non-Bektashi ones that belong to other communities and also no longer exist, and finally nine are open-air cemeteries for which no description is given (pp. 213–230). Particularly important in documenting the above sacred places are the monochrome photographic images of the 45 *tekkes* he identified, which he lists in the appendix of his work (pp. 279–313).

Efstratios Zegkinis' work, in particular his study focusing on the Bektashi community of Western Thrace, can be characterized as unique, pioneering, and as he himself indeed noted, quite difficult: "The undertaking was difficult if not daring, since those who belong to this mystical movement openly behave as if they are integrated into Sunnism and have an inviolable condition not to reveal their true beliefs. After persistent efforts, several obstacles were overcome, and I could point out the peculiar living conditions of these populations, whom the sources call the Bektashi" (1996, p. 15).

Research such as Zegkinis', which he carried out over a period of six years (1996, p. 15), was not only difficult because he claimed the members of the community did not publicly reveal their true religious beliefs and practices, mainly because of the political and social conditions that prevailed in the wider region of Western Thrace, as well as in other border regions of Greece. Until 1995,<sup>7</sup> these areas had already been considered

7 At the time when Efstratios Zegkinis was conducting his research, the control regime in the border region of Western Thrace was still in force: "Throughout the Cold War era (in fact since the time of the Metaxas dictatorship, in 1936) and up to the mid-1990s, the 'Pomak villages' (Pomakohórya) in the mountain ranges of Xanthi and Rhodope were enclosed within a restricted zone of military surveillance known as epitiróumeni zóni. The fear of a possible Pomak state emerging resulted in stricter surveil-



*Epitroumenes Zones* [Monitored Zones] by the Metaxas regime under Law 376/1936<sup>8</sup> on Amyntikes Perioxes [Defence Areas].<sup>9</sup> The historical circumstances and political decisions to draw borders within the borders and the subsequent political choices to maintain this peculiar regime left a particular imprint on local communities on multiple levels, which is still visible in the economic, political, and intrapersonal relations of the locals. The above post-civil war policies of the Greek state created an atypical regime of social, economic, and political isolationism and also left their mark on the monuments and sacred sites, especially in mountainous Western Thrace. As one woman told me during a meal with her Alevi family about the “barriers” in Northwestern Evros:

*Those barriers that we had, they were placed up for us Muslims, until the 90s or so, we had them, there is still the outpost on the river. Those bars protected us so we could keep our customs and places from the influence of the consulate in Komotini.*<sup>10</sup>

The above conditions would logically make producing academic discourse difficult. With the lifting of the blockades and the change of policy on the part of the Greek state after 1990 by putting to a certain extent earlier discriminatory tactics to one side, the way was somewhat opened for research to be conducted in the regions of Western Thrace, especially in the settlements of the mountainous areas of Rhodope and Evros. For the Alevi and Bektashi of the region and in particular for the *tekkes* and *türbes* of

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lance for Pomak villages. Thus, whereas ‘restricted areas’ governed by special military legislation were to be found along the whole length of the northern Greek border, the policy was especially enforced in Thrace” (Labrianidis 1997, p. 40; 1999, p. 82). When people in both Komotini and the mountains were asked about this period during fieldwork, they referred to the zone as a “border,” indistinguishable from a “national border (sınır).” Note that on the other side of the national border with Bulgaria, the closure that followed World War II separated villages that had previously intermarried (Tsibiridou 1994, p. 14) and might have been more relevant to daily life than the internal border within Greece. This restriction was in force until 1996, when following the collapse of communism, the zone disappeared, and villagers were allowed to move and settle freely elsewhere within Greece, with many moving to the urban centers of Komotini and Xanthi, as well as to the surrounding villages (Troubeta, 2001, p. 58; Imam & Tsakiride, 2003, p. 77). The relaxation of this legislation took place over a period of time and was differentially enforced in different areas. Thus, Lambrianidis showed that the mountain area of Xanthi had experienced differential development between the eastern region (inhabited by Pomaks) and the western (inhabited by Greeks; Lambrianidis, 1999, pp. 85–90; as cited in Demetriou, 2013, p. 100). See also “The Muslim Minority of Greek Thrace” (Aarbakke, 2000, pp. 564–565).

8 Necessary. Law no. 376/1936, Government Gazette A 546/18-12-1936. Available at <https://www.ndf.gr/el/law/loipa/finish/14--/242--3761936.html> (accessed: 03 October 2023).

9 For the historical context of the creation of Law 376/1936, but also for an understanding of the trends and dynamics of the period, see “The last Ottomans. The Muslim minority of Greece, 1940-49’ (Feathers-ton et. all 2011, pp. 65-69).

10 From my fieldnotes.

Western Thrace, no other specialized study has occurred in modern academic literature apart from Zegkinis', barring a few scattered references in various works and articles.

From the field research in the region of Western Thrace, we recorded a total of 116 sacred sites which are generally related to Sufism, i.e. *tekkes*, *türbes* and *cemevis*. Of the above 116 sites, some are active and others inactive; some have been converted into orthodox churches and mosques while others have only survived in the narratives of local people (Fig. 1). In Greece today, I could identify only two *tekkes* surviving as building complexes that retain many of the characteristics of a *tekke* being used for ritual purposes. One is the *tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan of Roussa,<sup>11</sup> which is still fully functional and is the administrative, congregational, and primary spiritual center of the Alevi and Bektashi communities in Greece (Markou, 2020, p. 787). The second is the historically significant *tekke* located in Asprogeia Farsala called *Durbalı Sultan* or *Ireni Tekke*, which also belongs to the Bektashi. In the past, some locals of Albanian origin had maintained the *tekke*. This is no longer true, however. The *tekke* is only occasionally operational on certain days of the year, with rituals being performed by Bektashi visiting from Albania or by their immigrant compatriots from Athens.

## **Tekkes, Türbes and Cemevis in Western Thrace**

As mentioned above, the only active *tekke* in the form of a building complex is the one in Roussa. It includes the central prayer room, a meeting place for the members of the 12-member committee of the administration of *Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı Tekkesi*, a slaughterhouse, a cookhouse, a cemetery, a separate *türbe* for Seyyid Ali Sultan, and a residence of Ottoman architecture in which the complex manager and his family reside (Zegkinis 1996, pp. 179–195). The *tekke* of Seyyid Ali in the Roussa area is one of the oldest and most important sites for the Bektashi. According to information derived from the inscription located at the entrance of the main prayer hall (i.e., Meydan Evi; Fig. 2), it was built in 804 AH/1402 CE and renovated in 1172 AH/1759 CE. These days, the region of Western Thrace does not have similar *tekkes*, only scattered burial monuments that the local Muslim Alevi and Bektashi populations, as they identify themselves, and the Sunnis call *türbes*. The *türbes* of Western Thrace are today the remnants of the Ottoman past of the region. The order in which I list the areas where *türbes* have

11 Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı - Tekkesi. Retrieved 10/3/2023 from: [https://www.facebook.com/seyyid.ali.sultan.dergahi?locale=el\\_GR](https://www.facebook.com/seyyid.ali.sultan.dergahi?locale=el_GR)

been found is the same as that followed by Efstratios Zegkinis in his work “Bektashism in Western Thrace:” first the ones in Evros, then the ones in Rhodope, and finally those in Xanthi (1996, pp. 179–230).

In particular, 40 religious places were identified in the Regional Unit of Evros (Fig. 3):

1) The *Tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan (also known as *Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı-Tekkesi* or *Kızıl Deli*), which I briefly mentioned above, is located three kilometers southwest of the settlement of Roussa (*Ruşenler*) in the Regional Unit of Evros.

2) The *Türbe Kato Tekkes (Aşağı Türbesi)* is located one kilometer west of the settlement of Mikro Dereio (*Küçük Derbent*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a burial monument within a single-room, stone-built, hexagonal-shaped building with a stone roof.

3) The *Türbe* of Mürsel Bali Baba (*Mürsel Bali Baba Türbesi*) is located southwest of the settlement of Roussa (*Ruşenler*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built external funerary monument with a stone wall. Burial tombstones are found in the surrounding area.

4) The *Türbe* of Gaziler Baba (*Gaziler Baba Türbesi*) is located south of the abandoned settlement of Spano (*Köseömer* or *Köse Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built burial monument surrounded by a stone wall with an entrance.

5) The *Türbe* of Çilingir Baba (*Çilingir Baba Türbesi*) is located northwest of the abandoned settlement of Chaldini (*Yılanlı Köy*) and also near the abandoned settlement of Spano (*Köseömer* or *Köse Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built external funerary monument with a stone wall. The surrounding area has many tombstones.

6) The *Türbe* of Hasan Baba (*Hasan Baba Türbesi*) is located northwest of the abandoned settlement of Chaldini (*Yılanlı Köy*) and near the also abandoned settlement of Spano (*Köseömer* or *Köse Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built burial monument surrounded by a stone wall with an entrance.

7) The *Türbe* of Kayıp Baba (*Kayıp Baba Türbesi*) is located northwest of the abandoned settlement of Chaldini (*Yılanlı Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built external funerary monument with a stone wall.

8) The *Türbe* of Sinan Baba (*Sinan Baba Türbesi*) is located northwest of the abandoned settlement of Chaldini (*Yılanlı Köy*) and near the also abandoned settlement of Spano

(*Köseömer* or *Köse Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built external funerary monument with a stone wall.

9) The *Türbe* of Mustafa Baba (*Mustafa Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Goniko (*Babalar Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built external funerary monument.

10) The *Türbe* of Gözcü Baba (*Gözcü Baba Türbesi*) is located a short distance west of the *Tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built funerary monument surrounded by a stone wall. A tree grows inside the monument.

11) The *Türbe* of Dolu Baba (*Dolu Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Mikrakio (*Kütüklü Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a funerary monument located within a stone building in the shape of a quadrilateral.

12) The *Türbe* of Gani Baba (*Gani Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Urania (*Karaören Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built funerary monument with a stone wall and an entrance located in the cemetery of the settlement.

13) The *Türbe* of Rusen Baba (*Ruşen* or *Ruşen Baba - Dede Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Roussa (*Ruşenler Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built funerary monument with a stone wall located in the cemetery of the settlement.

14) The *Türbe* of Pounari Baba (*Pounari* or *Pınarı Baba Türbesi*) is located a few meters from the *Tekke* of Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı (*Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı-Tekkesi*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built funerary monument with a stone wall through which trees grow and located opposite the well of the *tekke*.

15) The türbe known as *Saat Makamı Türbesi* is located between the settlements of Mikro Derbent (*Küçük Derbent*) and Ruşenler in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external stone-built funerary monument with a stone wall through which a tree grows (Fig. 4).

16) The *Türbe* of Garip Baba (*Garip Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Korymvos (*Hacıali/Kruşevo Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a recently renovated marble external funerary monument in the dimensions of a human body.

17) The *Türbe* of Gazi Hasan Baba (*Gazi Hasan Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Sidiro (*Demirören Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a funerary monument

located inside a renovated building with a rectangular roof in the shape of a parallelogram. In the past, the monument was external with no roof and just a perimeter wall.

18) The *Türbe* of İbrahim Baba (*İbrahim Baba Türbesi*) is located in the town of Feres (*Fere* or *Ferecik*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a stone-built building with a dome roof. The building currently has no burial monument inside.

19) The *Türbe* of Sancaktar Baba (*Sancaktar Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Makri (*Megri Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is a funerary monument located inside a four-sided building.

20) The *Türbe* of Oruç Paşa Baba (*Oruç Paşa Türbesi*) is located in the city of Didymoteicho (*Dimetoka*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external brick building which housed a burial monument.

21) The *Türbe* of Gazi Baba (*Gazi Baba Türbesi*) is located in the city of Didymoteicho (*Dimetoka*) in the Regional Unit of Evros. It is an external structure of small dimensions within which is a space for depositing objects (offerings) and serves for the worshippers to light and deposit candles. It has no funerary monument.

In Didymoteicho, two others similar *türbes* were found. The names of these two *türbes* could not be identified. Both are located within the city of Didymoteicho, south of the city's castle, at the location of the Tower of Vassilopoula and at the intersection of Aristotelous and Olympiados streets. The two *türbes* are similar to the *Gazi Babat Türbesi* with two external structures, small in dimension, constructed with modern materials (e.g., brick and mortar), located between Ottoman tombs, and serve for depositing objects.

Also, Alexandroupolis has seven *türbes* similar to those mentioned above from Didymoteicho and located within the settlement of Terma Avantos. Five of the *türbes* are located within private residences, either in courtyards or inside the residences. These are small buildings, usually low in height, which serves to allow worshippers to deposit objects (Fig. 5). Local reports also exist about the settlement of Terma Avantos concerning two small *türbes* whose use had been converted into Christian churches. An external *türbe* is also located in the settlement of Polia, (*Aksakal Köy*), but it is impossible to reach because of the dense vegetation. I have a report of the existence of a *türbe* in the settlement of Tauri (*Tekke Köy*) but it is impossible to locate at this stage of the

research. For the Regional Unit of Evros, locals report that *türbes* had been converted into Christian churches. These reports concern the *Işıklar Nefes Baba Türbesi* in the area of Traianoupolis, where the church of St. George is located today, which actually suffered extensive damage from the Evros fires in the summer of 2023, as well as the location of the current church of St. Athanasius west of the settlement of Terma Avantos.

Finally, six *cemevis* are located in the north-western Evros region. The *cemevis* are located in the settlements of Roussa (*Ruşenler Köy*), Megalo Dereio (*Buyuk Derbent Köy*), Goniko (*Babalar Köy*), Ourania (*Karaören Köy*), Mesimeri (*Mesimler Köy*), and Mikrakio (*Kütüklü Köy*). These are modern, single-story buildings with the characteristics of a common residence of the area. They generally consist of two or more interior spaces that are arranged in such a way as to serve the religious needs of each community (Fig. 6).

Similarly, 37 religious places have been identified in the Regional Unit of Rhodope (Fig. 7):

1) A *türbe* is located on a hill north of the town of Iasmos in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Yazıköy Türbesi*. It is a funerary monument within a one-room, stone-built building of quadrilateral shape with a four-sided tiled roof.

2) A *türbe* is located west of the settlement of Ambrosia in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Ortakçı Köy Türbesi*. It is a funerary monument within a one-room building of quadrilateral shape with a four-sided tiled roof.

3) The *Türbe* of Ak Baba (*Ak Baba Türbesi*) is located southeast of the settlement of Amaxades (*Arabacı Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Rhodope. It is a funerary monument within a rectangular-shaped building.

4) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Ergani in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Yardımlı Köy Türbesi*. It is an external funerary monument made of cement plaster in the shape of a parallelogram.

5) The *Türbe* of Timour Baba (*Demir Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Venna (*Demirbeyli Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Rhodope. It is a funerary monument within a two-room building of rectangular shape with a four-tiered tiled roof.

6) A *türbe* is located south of the settlement Mikro Doukato in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Küçük Doğançı Köy Türbesi*. It is an external stone-built burial monument covered by dense vegetation.

7) A türbe is located in the settlement of Asomati in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Bulatköy Türbesi*. It is a funerary monument within a rectangular-shaped building located in the settlement cemetery.

8) A türbe is located west of the settlement of Velkio in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Bekirköy Türbesi*. It is an external stone-built burial monument which is covered by dense vegetation.

9) A *Türbe* is located in the settlement of Koptero in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Yalımlı Köy Türbesi*. It is a small four-sided building with no burial monument.

10) A türbe is located west of the settlement of Atarni in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Hotolar Köy Türbesi*. It is an external stone-built burial monument covered by dense vegetation (Fig. 8).

11) A türbe is located in the town of Sapes in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Şapçı Türbesi*. It is an external funerary monument made of cement mortar and rectangular in shape (Fig. 9).

12) A türbe is located northwest of the town of Arriana in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Kozlu Kebir Köy Türbesi*. The *türbe* is in fact composed of two distinct external stone-built burial monuments in very close proximity to each other.

13) A türbe is located east of the settlement of Arsakeio in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Aşağıköy Türbesi*. It is an external funerary monument made of cement mortar and with a parallelogram shape.

14) A türbe is located in the settlement of Galini in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is known as *Yalınçalı Köy Türbesi*. It is an external funerary monument largely covered by cement mortar in the courtyard of the mosque of the settlement, which is known as *Yalınçalı Köy Camii*.

15) A türbe is located in the settlement of Velkio in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and goes by the name of *Bekirköy Türbesi*. It is a small monument that allows people to light and offer candles. It is located within the courtyard of a residence.

16) A türbe is located north of the settlement of Lampro in the Regional Unit of Rhodope and is called *Satiköy Türbesi*. It is an external stone-built burial monument surrounded by a stone wall.

17) The *Türbe* of Ali Baba (*Ali Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Ano Kambi (*Yukarı Kamberler Köyü*) in the Regional Unit of Rhodope. It is an external stone-built funerary monument.

18) The *Türbe* of Kanber Baba (*Kanber Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Kato Kambi (*Aşağı Kamberler Köyü*) in the Regional Unit of Rhodope. It is an external stone-built funerary monument surrounded by a stone wall with an entrance. Some trees are growing inside the monument.

The city of Komotini (*Gümülcine*), the capital of the Regional Unit of Rhodope, has 13 *türbes* and one *tekke*. The urban complex has five *türbes* and the demolished *Tekke* of Pos-pos (*Postinpûş Baba Tekkesi*), as well as five *türbes* in the settlement of Ifaistos (*Kalkanca*) and three more *türbes* in the settlement of *Alan Köyü*.

Also, reports are found from locals that a *tekke* or a *türbe* is located in the abandoned settlement of Mitriko (*Anaköy*). Last in the regional unit of Rhodope are three reports from locals about *türbes* that had been converted into Christian churches: the first in the area of Petrota (*Taşlık*) and called *ourbes ton Petroton* (*Taşlık Türbesi*), the second in the town of Sapes (*Şapçı*) where the Church of St. Nicholas is housed, and finally the church of St. Marina in the area of Imeros (*İmaret*).

Finally, 45 religious places were identified in the Regional Unit of Xanthi (Fig. 10):

1) The türbe known as the Tomb of the Bride (*Gelin Mezarı Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Sounion (*Sünnetçi Köyü*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument located within a single-room, recently renovated, stone building shaped like a parallelogram with a four-roofed tiled roof.

2) A türbe is located in the settlement of Polysito in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Kızılcaköy Türbesi*. It consists of three burial monuments next to one another and housed in a room adjoined to a house in a private courtyard.

3) The *Türbe* of Naide Elmanlı (*Naide Elmanlı Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Sidini (*Elmanlı Köyü*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It consists of five funerary



monuments housed inside a one-room building, four-sided in shape, with a gable roof (Fig. 11).

4) The *Türbe* of Kütüklü Baba (*Kütüklü Baba Türbesi*) is located northeast of the settlement of Selino (*Kereviz Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a stone-built funerary monument housed in a stone-built octagonal building with a domed roof.

5) The *Türbe* of Kottani (*Koşnalar Köy Türbesi*) is located west of the settlement of Kottani in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument located within a one-room building with a quadrilateral shape and a four-roofed tiled roof.

6) The *Türbe* of Budala Hodja (*Budala Hoca Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Thermes (*Ilıca Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It consists of three funerary monuments within a two-room building in the shape of a parallelogram with different entrances for each room and a four-tiered tiled roof. Great interest is drawn from the second room being internally designed as a *masjid*.

7) The *Türbe* of Dudu Baba (*Dudu Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Iliopetra (*Göynüklü Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within a one-room, recently renovated building with four sides and a four-tiered tiled roof.

8) The *Türbe* of Hasip Baba (*Hasip Baba Türbesi*) is located within the city of Xanthi (*İskeçe*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within a one-room, stone-built square building with a four-sided tiled roof.

9) The *Türbe* of Emir Baba (*Emir Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Palia Morsini/Old Morsini (*Buyuk Mursal Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within the ground floor of a two-story Ottoman house.

10) The *Türbe* of Ali Naime (*Ali Naime Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Iliopetra (*Göynüklü Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary within a square one-room building with a wooden roof.

11) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Iliopetra in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Göynüklü Köy Baba Türbesi*. It consists of two burial monuments within a one-room building of quadrilateral shape with a tiled roof (Fig. 12).

12) The *Türbe* of Yazı Baba (*Giazi or Gazi Baba Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Iliopetra (*Göynüklü Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a recently renovated one-room building with no burial monument.

13) The *Türbe* of Ayşegül or (*Ayşegül Türbesi*) is located south of the settlement of Giona (*Güneyler Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within a one-room stone building of rectangular shape with a four-roofed tiled roof (Fig. 13).

14) The *Türbe* of Ayşe Karaca (*Ayşe Karaca Türbesi*) is located in the small town of Echinon (*Şahin*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a tomb within a stone-built building of rectangular shape.

15) The *Türbe* of Karaca Ahmet (*Karaca Ahmet Türbesi*) is located in the small town of Echinon (*Şahin*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within the *Tekke Camii* Mosque of Echinon.

16) The *Türbe* of Nazire (*Nazire Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Myki (*Mustafça Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument inside a stone-built building.

17) The *Türbe* of Siaban (*Siaban Türbesi*) is located in the settlement of Rematia (*Ketenlik Köy*) in the Regional Unit of Xanthi. It is a funerary monument within a room of a private residence.

18) A *türbe* is located south of the settlement of Neo Erasmio in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Taraşmanlı Türbesi*. It is a funerary monument within a rectangular-shaped building with a gable roof.

19) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Kyrnos in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Kır Mahale Köy Türbesi*. These are two burial monuments within a single-room, recently renovated building (Fig. 14).

20) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Dekarcho in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Beyobası Köy Türbesi*. It is a small monument allows one to light and offer candles. It is located within the courtyard of a residence.

21) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Nea Amissos in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Alacakilise Köy Türbesi*. It is a small building with no funerary monument and allows one to deposit objects and light candles.

22) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Giona in the Regional Unit of Xanthi known as *Güneyler Köy Türbesi*. It is a small-sized monument that allows for the lighting and offering of candles and is located in the courtyard of a house.

23) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Zilotis in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is called *Sineli Köy Türbesi*. It is a funerary monument within a rectangular-shaped building with a gable roof.

24) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Drosero in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is known as *Serin Mahallesi Türbesi*. It is a small monument that serves for lighting and offering candles and is located within a residential courtyard.

25) A *türbe* is located in the settlement of Kentauros in the Regional Unit of Xanthi and is called *Ketenlik Köy Türbesi*. It is an external stone-built funerary monument surrounded by a stone wall with an entrance. A tree grows inside the monument.

The town of Genisea (*Yenice*) has 15 *türbes* found either in public areas such as squares and crossroads or in private areas such as courtyards and rooms of houses. Of these *türbes*, some have the form of a funerary monument, while others have the form of a small building used for depositing objects.

I have also received reports from locals about the existence of *türbes* in three other settlements. Eumiro had the *Emirler Köy Tekkesi* in the place where the Municipal Gymnasium is located today. Kidari (*Sarikler Köy*) had one at the location of the current mosque. Lastly in Xanthi, the location of what is today the Moufteia (*Müftülüğü*) allegedly used to have a *tekke*. Also, two reports refer to *türbes* that had been converted into temples. The first, called *Kırklar Türbesi*, was converted into a Temple of the Ascension in the settlement of Margariti, while the second, located in the settlement of Drimia, had been converted into a Temple of St. George.

## Conclusions

Based on the above data, the only active *tekke* today in the region of Western Thrace is clearly the *Tekke* of Roussa, as the locals refer to it and otherwise known as the *Tekke* of the Community of Seyyid Ali Sultan (*Seyyid Ali Sultan Dergâhı-Tekkesi*). With regard to the pioneering work of Zegkinis, the term *tekke* is used in a generalized way for all burial monuments (i.e., *türbes*), which he has recorded and listed. Concerning the number of *türbes* in Zegkinis' work with regard to the present article, in which I attempted to provide as complete a current record as possible, the extensive fieldwork has identified and recorded 77 more *türbes*. The *türbes* are categorized into public and private and are also divided into outdoor and indoor. External *türbes* are usually

stone-built and often surrounded by a stone wall. Indoor (i.e., roof-covered) *türbes* are usually made of other materials and are mainly located within single-room buildings. Monuments that are used to deposit votive objects and lighted candles are also found to be called *türbes*; these are small in size. My research points to the fact that *türbes* and *tekkes* being converted to mosques or temples have not occurred frequently. Finally, regarding the *cemevis* of the Alevi and Bektashi of Western Thrace, these are a type of religious site that has not been recorded or examined at all. My research has revealed the existence of an extremely new building in Megalo Derio (*Buyuk Derbent*), to which I will devote a special study.

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- The action has been implemented within the framework of the action RESEARCH - CREATE - INNOVATE and been co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) of the European Union and by national resources from the Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship & Innovation Programme (EPANEK). PROJECT CODE T2EDK-02564

# “The Spanish Adventurer”: Ottoman Surveillance of Aladro Kastrioti, the Pretender for the Albanian Throne


Atdhe Thaçi

**Abstract:** This article delves into the intriguing case of Juan Pedro Antonio Aladro, a Spanish individual whose claims of being rightful heir to the throne of Albania captivated European newspapers in 1902. Through an analysis of historical sources and contemporaneous newspaper articles, this paper explores Aladro’s background, his alleged aristocratic connections, and his self-proclaimed lineage as a descendant of George Kastrioti Skanderbeg. This work investigates the response from the Ottoman Empire, specifically the surveillance conducted by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry in light of Aladro’s claims, and highlights the dismissive view the ministry held towards Aladro’s ambitions, characterizing him as an adventurer driven by personal gain rather than as a credible contender for the Albanian throne. The Ottoman authorities closely monitored Aladro’s movements, from his travels to Corfu where he held meetings with associates to his subsequent journey to Naples, which created a state of uncertainty regarding his exact whereabouts. By examining historical records and newspaper accounts, this article attempts to shed light on the perception of Aladro and the broader context of the Albanian situation at the time. It also explores the intricate interplay between European diplomacy and Aladro’s quest for an independent Albania, as well as the skepticism foreign powers expressed towards his claims.

**Keywords:** Aladro Kastrioti, Albania, Ottoman, surveillance, espionage

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 Balkan Studies Foundation  
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/A041>  
Journal of Balkan Studies, 4 (1), 2024  
[balkanjournal.org](http://balkanjournal.org)



Received: 01.11.2023  
Accepted: 10.01.2024

## Introduction

The Lord is with us!

*"I have the honor of transmitting to Your Excellency that Spanish newspapers are repeating some malicious news..."* This is the beginning of a report sent on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1902 by the Ottoman Legate in Madrid to Tevfik Pasha, the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs in Istanbul. The subject of these newspapers was Don Juan Pedro Antonio Aladro from the Jerez region in Andalusia. According to the newspapers, Aladro was well-known in aristocratic circles in Madrid for his good looks, English style of dress, and ownership of large grape fields and wine company called Domecq. He was also a cultured person with significant wealth and had created a valuable museum in Jerez containing Medieval artifacts, exquisite carvings, and magnificent tapestries. Aladro had entered a diplomatic career and eventually became the Spanish *Charge d'Affaires* (Deputy to the ambassador) in Bucharest. However, what caught the attention of the Ottoman Legate in Madrid was not Aladro's lifestyle but the news he was spreading in Spanish newspapers (BOA. HR. SYS. 130-2/ 9).

The person to whom this report was sent was the Ottoman Foreign Minister, Ahmed Tevfik Pasha. Born in 1843, he began his career working in the *Tercüme Odası*, which served as a translation office for the Ottoman administration. Working in the translation office required knowledge of foreign languages, a skill that Tevfik had learned and found useful, as he eventually would go on to serve in various positions at the Ottoman embassies in Athens, St. Petersburg, Rome, and Vienna and as the Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin. With the experience he had gained, he was appointed as the Ottoman Foreign Minister in 1895. Tevfik Pasha became a so-called crisis manager for the empire, serving as the Grand Vizier for three short terms during chaotic periods of the empire: one term in 1909 during the crisis aroused by the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamid II, a second term in 1918 when the Ottoman Empire lost in WW1 with Tevfik Pasha thus leading the empire's delegation in the 1920 Peace Conference in Paris, and a third term when he became the last Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire, resigning in November 1922 after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished the sultanate and founded the new Turkish Republic (Beydilli, 1989, pp. 139–140).

The Spanish newspapers' headlines in March 1902 argued that Aladro was heir to the throne of Albania. As such, the news claimed that the Entente Powers and European

diplomacy were worried about the Albanian Question. Thus, European diplomacy had agreed to help, or at least not hinder, Aladro's attempts to establish an Albanian state independent of the Ottoman Empire, with him as the monarch of the Albanian state.

*The Jerez newspapers assure that the agreement that Russia, France, and Italy have adopted to solve the Albanian insurrection, has been to designate our compatriot Pedro Aladro to occupy the throne of Albania. (BOA. HR. SYS. 130-2/ 17)*

Aladro claimed to be a direct descendant of the medieval Albanian warrior George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, a historical figure known in Europe as a suppressor of the Ottoman advancement in the Balkans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Aladro had taken the name Giovanni Kastriota for himself, the same name as the son of George Kastrioti Skanderbeg. However, he did not become widely known by this self-chosen name but rather by the name Aladro Kastrioti. In *El Correo* newspaper of March 26, 1902, Aladro gave an interview, claiming the royal title for his family, who were said to be descended from Skanderbeg and to have lived abroad for centuries due to being banished from Albania during the Ottoman expansion in the Balkans. Although he and his family had been living far from Albania for centuries, Aladro assured readers that, as the son and heir of George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, he thought about Albania day and night, delivering an emotional message to Albanians that "Your pains are the pains of my soul, and your aspirations are my aspirations" (Ibid.). He argued that the Great Powers would allow the scenario to take place where Albania gain its independence with him serving as king of the independent state.

*European diplomacy will not fight us, because the work we are doing is a work of peace. We don't want to take anything away from anyone. We only want a homeland like all the peoples of the world have. Albanian brothers, our cry is: The Lord is with us! - The glorious name of Skanderbeg is our sacrosanct flag. With this, I cry on my lips, in the shadow of this flag, "Let us all unite, Muslims, Orthodox, and Catholics." I, humble servant of the Great Albanian Homeland, request the honor of fighting by your side in the holy battle. (Ibid.)*

While the newspaper claimed that the Albanian people had sided with their prince, it also provided information about Albanians. According to the newspaper, Albanians had preserved primitive customs and loved not only the independence of their country but also the independence of each individual, which caused a kind of anarchy and



resulted in many Albanian victims. Thus, observing all these primitive customs, the newspaper concluded, "Such is the country that our compatriot Juan Pedro Aladro from Jerez will rule" (Ibid.). Ironically, *El Correo* newspaper which interviewed him had placed the interview with Aladro next to stories on the Adventures of Agent Sherlock Holms (see Figure 1).

After the appearance of these newspaper articles, Aladro started coming under the surveillance of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. On April 8 just a few days after the Spanish newspapers published these articles, Tevfik Pasha received information from Madrid that Aladro had left Paris on April 7 and was heading to the island of Corfu (BOA. HR. SYS. 130-4). Corfu became an important place for Aladro, as it was close to mainland Albania, and he used to have meetings with his associates there.

On April 9, Tevfik Pasha received another report, this time from Paris, informing that *Le Français* newspaper had published news and an interview with Aladro similar to what the Spanish newspapers had published earlier. Thus, Aladro was attempting to internationalize his cause for becoming the King of Albania. Similar to the interview in the Spanish newspapers, the French newspaper repeated Aladro's call for the unity of Albanians despite the religion they venerate, but now he also claimed that the Ottoman Sultan had offered him to become the governor of the Ottoman provinces of Shkodra, Ioannina, and Skopje. However, being interviewed by the famous French journalist Henri des Houx who himself was a royalist, Aladro claimed to have refused this offer, for he truly believed that Macedonia would soon become an independent state, and this would lead to the Ottoman Empire losing its territorial link with the Albanian territory, ultimately leading to an independent Albanian state of which he would serve as monarch (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-5).

Tevfik Pasha had started to worry about the ideas that Aladro was propagating in European newspapers. In a letter exchange, Tevfik Pasha asked Munir Bey, the Ottoman ambassador to France, about how these ideas were being received. On April 12, Munir Bey replied to Tevfik Pasha, assuring the minister that "Aladro's candidacy for the throne of Albania is not taken seriously anywhere; it is even the object of general laughter". (Ibid.) Munir Bey continued by writing that Aladro was nothing more than an adventurer whose only ambition was economic gain. After this April 12th report, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry started referring to Aladro as "The Adventurer," often as "Adventurer Aladro," and more commonly as "The Spanish Adventurer."

On April 13, 1877, Tevfik Pasha sent a telegram to Rifat Bey, the Ottoman ambassador in Athens. In the message, Tevfik Pasha explained that Aladro was forbidden from entering Ottoman territories and instructed Rifat Bey to keep a close watch on him and keep Tevfik Pasha informed of his actions and movements (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-6). The next day, the Ottoman ambassador to France, Munir Bey, informed Tevfik Pasha that Aladro was not heading straight to Corfu as was initially expected, but would first be traveling to Naples. Thus, a confusing situation arose regarding the Ottoman surveillance, as where Aladro was heading was uncertain.

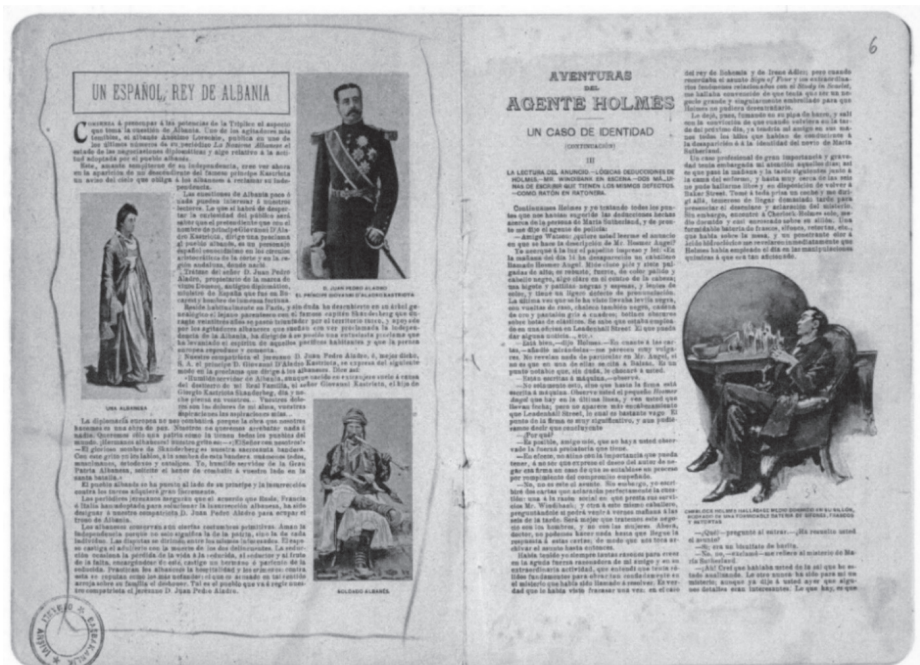


Figure 1. El Correo interview with Aladro on March 26, 1902, with the adjacent page showing the story of “The Adventures of Agent Holmes.”

Because of this insufficient information, Tevfik Pasha started to doubt whether Aladro was heading to Naples or Corfu, believing instead he might actually be heading to Athens. As the capital of Greece, which had won its independence nearly a century earlier in the Greek War of Independence, Athens served as a muse for nationalist revolutionaries. On April 20, Tevfik Pasha requested the Ottoman ambassador in Athens, Rifat Bey, to be vigilant and gather information or any clues that might relate to Aladro

being in Athens. Rifat Bey arranged a meeting with a Greek government official named Zaimis, and conducted what he referred to as a “kindly mannered interrogation.” Rifat Bey shared information that the adventurer Aladro was not in Greece, with all information leading him to believe that he was in Italy, and more specifically in the city of Brindisi staying at the National Hotel (most probably today’s Grande Albergo Internazionale Hotel). Zaimis promised Rifat Bey that if Aladro were to travel to Greece, the Hellenic Government would assist in thwarting Aladro’s attempts. While Rifat Bey kept a watch for any clue about Aladro’s movements in Greece, he reported to Istanbul that another Albanian nationalist by the name of Nuri Frasherri had come to Athens. Even though Rifat Bey’s April reports accepted Nuri as not being a dangerous person, Nuri would eventually come to be known as the person closest to Aladro Kastrioti (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-8).



Figure 2. Spanish newspaper calling Aladro the king of Albania.

Another person linked with Aladro had a tough experience when he traveled to the island of Corfu in May 1902. Traveling under the identity of Victor Benardo and presenting himself as an Italian pharmacist traveling to Corfu from Brindisi, upon arriving on the island, this man went to the post office and asked if any mail had arrived addressed to Aladro Kastrioti. When asked for his identity, the man refused to give it, so the postmaster viewed him as a suspicious person and refused to give any information about Aladro's correspondences. However, the man still retained his anonymity and insisted on receiving the correspondence, so the postmaster called the island's authorities. The Prefect of Corfu came to the scene, and after investigating, started threatening him with jail if the man failed to comply with his orders and continued to not reveal his true identity. After being threatened, the person admitted that he was Viski Babatasi.

Babatasi was not Italian but an Albanian from Konitsa. He was interrogated by the authorities and upon showing his identity, admitted to being the secretary of Aladro Kastrioti. Facing pressure during the interrogation, he gave intel that Aladro Kastrioti had given on the recommendation of Nuri Frasheri 15,000 Francs to Melik Bey Frasheri, to a person called Hayreddin, and to another person called Yahya Agha. This sum of money was intended for purchasing guns. This therefore became crucial information for Ottoman intelligence, as it offered intel that Aladro was preparing for armed operations against the Empire. As such, he posed a real problem. Nuri and Melik Bey Frasheri were relatives of a known nationalist Albanian family. Meanwhile, Babatasi was set free after giving such valuable information and headed to Athens to attend a meeting with Nuri Frasheri (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-11), most probably while promising Ottoman officials that he would continue to give information on Aladro and his associates.

## **The Postcards and the Flag**

The propaganda that Aladro used for the goal of empowering him as a pretendant to the Albanian throne was not only limited to European newspapers or within the Albanian circles in Europe. Aladro also started attempting to acquaint himself with the common Albanian population living in Albania. Aladro became known for his printed postcards, which contained a picture of him together with a two-headed eagle heraldic. This heraldic is believed to have been the symbol of the Kastrioti family and had served as the flag of George Skanderbeg in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These postcards used to be shipped from

Paris to the island of Corfu and from there were illegally sent to Ottoman Empire territories in Albania. The person responsible for distributing these postcards was Nuri Frasheri. One day as Nuri was departing for Athens, some of his mail that had been sent to Corfu was intercepted (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-14). His mail contained postcards with pictures of Aladro Kastrioti (see Figure 3), as well as a calendar written in the Albanian language. These were shipped to Istanbul as evidence (BEO. 1879-140894).

A decade later in November 1912, Ismail Qemali (Ismail Kemal Bey), who would be the one to read the Albanian Declaration of Independence and become the first Prime Minister of the Albanian state, made the official Albanian flag, similar to the one Aladro used in his postcards. The nephew of Ismail Bey, Ekrem Vlora, wrote in his memoirs that during a 1909 meeting with Aladro in Paris, Aladro had given Ismail Bey a flag, and this flag would become the official flag of the newly founded Albanian state upon his acceptance as Prime Minister (Vlora, 2003, p. 215). The same flag has continuously been used as the official flag of Albania even to this day.

In June 1902, intel started arriving in Istanbul. Ottoman informers had acquired the exact address of where Aladro was living. The reports informed that Aladro was residing in Paris, more precisely he was living in a luxurious house in Square Lamartine. However, the bad news in the report for Tevfik Pasha was that Aladro had started to correspond with Boros Sarafov (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-17). Sarafov was one of the leaders of a secret society known as the *Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization*, better known by the acronym VMRO, which had claimed an independent Macedonian state. Sarafov was also one of the leaders of the 1903 *Ilinden* uprising against the Ottoman Empire.

The calls Aladro insistently made to Albanians convinced some of them. In March 1902, a committee of Albanians in Shkodra claiming to represent all Albanian leaders without distinction of religion and to represent all Albanian societies and leagues existing at home and abroad agreed to make a supplication to Sultan Abdulhamid II. This plea addressed the sultan, complaining about the condition of the national schools and the lack of permission to use the Albanian language. This supplication also pleaded for the unification of four vilayets (Kosova, Shkodra, Thessaloniki, and Ioannina) into one single vilayet, with this unified vilayet having autonomy inside the Ottoman Empire. The unified vilayet would have one single leader, and this committee believed the best leader for Albanians would be Aladro Kastrioti, whom they called the Supreme Head



During this period, Aladro started befriending another Albanian nationalist, Ismail Qemali. Ismail Qemali had served as an Ottoman official for four decades in different important positions. In 1900, he had clashed with Sultan Abdulhamid II and, with the help of the British embassy, left Istanbul and started living in different European countries. First, he joined the Young Turk movement and eventually went against them. His role became crucial during the Balkan War in 1912, when in November he became the first prime minister of the Albanian state. In 1919, he wrote his memoirs in English, informing about his life and emphasizing his career as an official of the Ottoman Empire (Kemali, 1919). Even though he was not able to finish his memoirs because of his sudden death, his memoirs remain a good example of Albanian ego documents related to the Ottoman past.

Aladro met with Ismail Qemali and at the beginning of 1903 and agreed to cowrite a proclamation. The main text of the proclamation was written by Aladro, with Ismail writing the preface. The intention of the proclamation was to have it be sent to the high circles of European countries, but the Ottomans became aware of it when it was sent for printing. The Ottoman ambassador to Paris, Nebi Bey, took the matter into his hands and went to meet officials from the French Foreign Ministry. Nebi Bey requested that the French authorities forbid the printing of the proclamation, but the French authorities replied harshly to the ambassador, referring to an 1881 law that had been established in France on the freedom of printing in France. Some of the articles of this law made prosecutions inapplicable if the writings contained no public offense against a head of state or any ambassador residing in France. As such, the French Foreign Ministry did not view Aladro and Ismail Qemali's proclamation as anything illegal. However, the diplomatic pressure coming from Nebi Bey seemed to have convinced French authorities to recognize this proclamation as something offensive, who then prohibited the publication and its circulation (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-22).

The friendship between Aladro Kastrioti and Ismail Qemali was under investigation by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. While investigating their friendship, another person was found to be close to Aladro. In a report written by Tevfik Pasha himself, Dervish Hima was portrayed as a person close to Aladro. Hima, an Albanian nationalist with a royalist ideology, supported the idea of Albania becoming an independent country ruled by a monarch. Hima initially was also part of the Young Turk movement and

had been reported to be someone close to Ismail Qemali and other Young Turk leaders (Hanioglu, 2001, p. 32).

Meanwhile, Nebi Bey, the Ottoman ambassador in Paris, arranged a meeting with the Spanish ambassador, Fernando Leon y Castillo. Leon had previously served as the Interior Minister of Spain and was considered a high member of the Spanish aristocracy. During the meeting with Nebi Bey when the name of Aladro came up, Leon y Castillo considered him to be a person of low intelligence who made himself look ridiculous by pretending to be the future King of Albania. While talking about the friendship between Aladro and his Albanian friends, including Ismail, Leon claimed that they had no reason to help him with his claim over the Albanian throne; however, because Aladro was presumed to be a wealthy man, their only purpose was to extract money from him and to "...satisfy their personal demands." Even though Leon and Aladro were compatriots, Leon offered his help to Nebi Bey with regard to surveying and suppressing Aladro's attempts at the throne (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-24). The Spanish took the claims of Aladro seriously, as the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent instructions to their embassy in Paris in April to invite Aladro to a meeting and to request him to stop his actions and "...listen to reason" (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-25).

### **The 4<sup>th</sup> Albanian Congress in Naples**

Italy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had a large Albanian diaspora. The migration of Albanians to Italy started at the same time as the Ottoman invasion of the Balkans, particularly at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and through the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In Italy, they became known as the Arbëreshë, while in the Ottoman Empire, the Albanians were known as *Arnavut*. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a big part of the Arbëreshë community in Italy helped with the efforts of Italian unification. After the Italian unification in 1870, members of this community achieved high administrative positions in Italy, such as Francesco Crispi, who became the Prime Minister of Italy in 1893. Members of this community including Crispi would urge Albanians regarding their national efforts while keeping in touch with nationalist leaders like Ismail Qemali. Crispi used to hold audience with them at Hotel de l'Europe in Rome, with the language of communication being Albanian (Kemali, p. 300).

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, three congresses occurred that were organized by the Arbëreshë community in Italy. The themes of these congresses mainly involved



deciding how Albanians should obtain cultural autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, with these congresses mostly ending by sending requests to the Ottoman Sultan to allow Albanian to be taught in schools in the Albanian-inhabited territories of the Ottoman Balkans. In 1903, a call for the 4<sup>th</sup> Albanian Congress was made. The congress would take place in the city of Naples, and an invitation to attend was sent also to Aladro Kastrioti, which he happily accepted. The 4<sup>th</sup> Congress would raise strong curiosity for the Ottoman state and Ottoman intelligence of the Foreign Ministry.

Almost a year had passed before the congress was to meet when Ottoman intelligence found information about the attempts being made to organize an Albanian Congress. A report from July 1902 raised suspicions that something was being organized by the members of the Albanian Committee of Naples. In particular, the name that appeared among the Ottoman intelligence was Luigj Gurakuqi. At that time, Gurakuqi was a student of medicine at the University of Naples, and his brother appeared to have been a teacher at the Italian school of Shkodra (BOA. HR.SYS. 125-50). Later in 1912, Gurakuqi would become the first vice-prime minister of Albania under the government of Ismail Qemali.

Following the information that the congress was to take place in Naples, the Ottoman diplomats in Rome started lobbying against it. Their chosen strategy was to convince the members of the Italian parliament to oppose the congress in Parliament, which eventually would lead to a demonization of their work. In the meanwhile, Ottoman Ambassador Reshid Pasha asked for a meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister Giulio Prinetti. During the meeting, Prinetti promised Reshid Pasha to do all that is "...legally possible to satisfy his request" (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-26). However, the Ottoman requests to stop the 4<sup>th</sup> Albanian Congress in Naples became irrelevant when a very powerful person vouched for the congress. This person was Ricciotti Garibaldi, the son of the famous Giuseppe Garibaldi.

The congress started on June 15, and now the main concern of Tefvik Pasha and other Ottoman officials became the question of suppressing and preventing news about the congress, which could be used as a means of propaganda by Albanian nationalists. While the meeting was adjured, the Ottoman Ambassador to Rome, Reshid Bey, invited some journalists to a meeting, and they agreed that the news coming out from the Albanian congress would not appear in their journals. However, this was not a very

honorable agreement between them. At least in one case, Reshid Pasha bribed a journalist with 1,000 Francs to not report on the 4<sup>th</sup> Albanian Congress in Naples (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-27). Meanwhile, Reshid Bey proudly reported to Istanbul that only one Muslim had taken part in the congress, Dervish Hima. Meanwhile, he was also investigating whether a Muslim woman had also taken part in the congress (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-28). The efforts by the Ottoman Embassy in Rome to stop the media from reporting on the congress may very well be the reason why finding Italian reports on the congress is so hard and why the 4<sup>th</sup> Albanian Congress in Naples cannot be found in the mainstream historiography.

Meanwhile, Ottoman agents were able to infiltrate the congress, and a report Reshid Bey sent to Istanbul on April 22 gives detailed information about what happened during the three days of the Albanian Congress in Naples. On the first day of the congress, June 15, 1903, the members agreed to make attempts to establish a league among the Albanian committees sitting in Italy, Romania, Greece, and Egypt. A strong emphasis was placed on past relations between Italians and Albanians by referring to a previous agreement years before between King Victor Emanuel II (d.1878) and Giuseppe Garibaldi (d.1882) to support an uprising in the Balkans against Ottoman rule. As such, they agreed on the first day of the congress to send a telegram to the King of Italy Victor Emanuel III, testifying about the devotion of the members of Congress toward the Majesty and the House of Savoy. The telegram sent to the king mentioned:

*The 4th Albanian Congress aspires to unite the forces of all the Italo-Albanians dispersed in Italy, and thereby to come to the aid of the motherland, one and indivisible, as at the time of Georges Castriota. We beg Your Majesty to accept our most devoted homage.* (BOA. HR.SYS. 125–53)

On June 16<sup>th</sup>, the second day of the congress, the members voted on the idea of lobbying for an independent Albanian state. However, they agreed that if this independence would anyhow lead to the risk of Albania's dismemberment, they would prefer to remain under Ottoman rule. The congress agreed to establish a journal that would be published in the city of Naples and be in Italian, French, and Albanian. On the same day, they worked on the administrative structure of the league, which would contain three presidents and various committees and sub-committees; however, the organizational details remain unclear.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, happy news arrived at the congress: the response telegram written by the First aide-de-camp in the name of His Majesty the King Victor Emanuel. The telegram stated, "The Majesty the King instructs me to thank you for the tributes which you express in your last telegram and which was the object of high royal satisfaction." The reading of the telegram was greeted with cries of "Long live the King!" Before the congress dissolved, the members agreed to send another telegram to the Italian government expressing the wishes for the government to intervene in the liberation of Albanians who were exiled or prisoners in the Ottoman Empire.

While Aladro's role within the congress remains unclear, one can assume that his presence in the congress played a role in the morale of those who were present. His presence was symbolic also, especially on the first day when emphasis was placed on George Kastrioti and his relations with Italy. Also, the journal that was to be published as agreed upon in the congress was understood six months later to have been assisted financially by Aladro Kastrioti (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-31).

The spies of the Ottoman state were not the only ones working on gathering information about Albanian nationalists and their organizations. Two months after the congress in Naples, an Albanian who was himself part of a nationalist organization in Bucharest called *Shpresa* went and gave information to the officials of the Ottoman embassy there. The person's information gave up the names of the leading figures of the *Shpresa* organization: Pandeli Durmishi as the head of the organization and Kristaq Daka, who served as the secretary of the organization (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-29). Daka later would attend the 1919 Peace Conference in Paris and also meet with USA President Wilson; in 1921, he would also be appointed as the Minister of Education in Albania (Dervishi, 2012, pp. 107–108). Still, what interested Ottoman officials more was that this same Albanian had also provided information about how these two leading figures of the *Shpresa* organization had arranged a meeting with Aladro, with the meeting about to take place in the city of Pest. The Ottoman officials immediately started taking measures and sent telegrams to Vienna to prevent the meeting. The meeting among Aladro, Durmishi, and Daka was set to be held between July 9-10, 1903. The efforts of the Ottoman officials appear to have likely been successful, for on July 10, a telegram was sent to Tevfik Pasha in Istanbul stating, "The necessary measures have been taken concerning the individuals mentioned therein" (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-30).

After this telegram, no more information or telegrams were found to have been sent to Istanbul in this regard.

At the beginning of 1904, Tevfik Pasha sent telegrams to the Ottoman embassies in Paris, Rome, Madrid, and Vienna, requesting that the embassies send all the information they have on Aladro and construct a profile of him. The answers Pasha received from the embassies mainly repeated the information that had been sent since 1902. The reports included such information on Aladro as his living in Paris, his vineyard ownership, and his claims of being a descendant of George Kastrioti. However, what seems interesting in these reports is the one sent from Vienna. The Vienna report mentioned that Aladro had been having a personal intimate relationship with a woman. Meanwhile, the Ottoman intelligence in Vienna had succeeded in recruiting her to work for the Ottomans, so she would inform them of all of Aladro's movements (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-32).

After these reports sent in 1904, no more telegrams arrived for Tevfik Pasha regarding the Aladro case for the rest of the year. In 1905, however, Aladro Kastrioti was reported to be traveling to many places and meeting Albanian nationalists. In September 1905, Aladro had traveled from Paris and went to a meeting in Kotor, very near the Ottoman borders. From Kotor, Aladro had traveled to Dubrovnik, and on September 25 took Lloyd's ship traveling to Zara and Trieste. He was accompanied by a certain Albanian priest named Don Nikola. In his travels, Aladro was also accompanied by another person who was claiming to be the future King of Albania, Albert Gjika (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-34).

### **The Curious Case of Gjin Mati and Aladro's Followers**

In June 1906, the Turkish Foreign Ministry received initial reports from Vienna. A 35-year-old Albanian named Gjin Mati Koka had been arrested in Trieste on June 5. Gjin had been wanted by the Ottoman government for many years on the charges that he had led an attack on an Ottoman military barracks near the town of Shkodra. Seven Ottoman soldiers had been killed in the attack led by him. After the attack, he was identified by Ottoman authorities, and a bounty was placed on his head. European countries were also informed that Gjin was wanted by the Ottoman state. In the meantime, Gjin had managed to cross the Montenegrin-Ottoman border and started living abroad. The Ottomans were informed that Gjin had even started working for Boris

Sarafov, the Bulgarian guerrilla fighter. The work he did for Sarafov was most likely that of a paid assassin. In the meantime, Gjin had also met Aladro Kastrioti and became an ardent supporter of him. In 1904, Gjin arranged a meeting between Aladro and 15 Albanians who were probably mountaineers from North Albania. The meeting occurred in the city of Trieste. While in the city of Kotor in March 1906, Gjin met a woman named Therese Asta, who had just divorced her husband. A romance soon developed between Gjin and Therese, and they decided to move to Trieste together and live there. Gjin now planned to become a family man and leave his past behind. Thereupon, he found employment in a railroad construction company and at the same time started a small rental business in Trieste. However, his past began to haunt him when, on June 5, 1906, he was arrested in Trieste. Three days later, on June 8, Theresa was also arrested (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-39).

Upon being informed of the arrest of Gjin Mati, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry immediately started working to find a way to deport him. Their urgency to deport him was not all due to Gjin's attack on the Ottoman garrison; the Ottoman officials also believed that he had good information on Boris Sarafov and his actions, as well as on Aladro's actions, in which they believed Gjin was greatly implicated. For the Ottomans, having Gjin in their possession could become a good tool for trying to implicate Aladro in the alleged assassinations Gjin Mati had done. The Ottoman ambassador in Vienna, Mustafa Nedim Pasha, was known for his beautiful mansion on the shores of the Bosphorus in Istanbul and took the matter into his own hands. Mustafa met with the Austrian member of the Foreign Ministry, Kajetan von Mery, who later would be appointed Austrian ambassador to Vienna and eventually be part of the delegation that was sent to sign the armistice with Russia in 1917. At the meeting, they agreed to start the extradition procedures for Gjin Mati. The meeting was followed by a formal request from the Ottoman government for the extradition of Gjin (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-39). Even though Ottoman officials took Gjin's case very seriously, he was never extradited due to the Ottoman Empire apparently never having signed an official agreement with Austro-Hungary that would allow such an act. At the same time, the Court of Trieste didn't accept the evidence that had been presented. Gjin was released on September 29, 1906, almost four months after his arrest. Again, Aladro was lucky.

In August 1906, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry constructed a list of the names on whom they had information about working with Aladro who they also considered to

be his associates and in his close circle (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-40/15). The list of 33 names was sent to many Ottoman embassies in Europe. However, the Albanian names in the list, such as Anton and Gaspar, appeared to be very hard to comprehend for the Ottoman officials. As such, Mustafa Nedim Pasha, the ambassador to Vienna, replied to Tevfik Pasha and asked him for the names to be rewritten in Latin script, because he was unable to comprehend them as written in Ottoman script (BOA. HR.SYS. 130-40/18). His request was most likely never delivered, or at least I was unable to find the Latin equivalent of this list in the archives. The list has the name of Luigj Gurakuqi, as well as a devoted follower of Aladro called Küçük Zef (Alb. Zefi i Vogël). He would become a resistance man during WW1, and later would be shot and killed in 1924 after an argument with another nationalistic leader, Azem Galica.

After 1906, Aladro no longer appeared much in the reports of the Ottoman Foreign Ministry. In 1911, he was reported to have finally visited Albania after 9 years of being banned from entering Ottoman territories. In June 1912, he was reported to have financed a famous Albanian mountaineer, Prenk Bib Doda, influencing him to lead a revolt (BOA. HR.SYS. 151-20). The reasons why the Ottoman Foreign Ministry suddenly stopped monitoring him remain unclear. When the Young Turk Revolution happened in July 1908, Tevfik Pasha, who as the Minister of Foreign Affairs used to lead the surveillance on Aladro, became the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire. As such, upon leaving office, his successor was probably busy dealing with the effects of the revolution. Another reason could be that, during this time just before Tevfik Pasha became a Grand Vizier, the Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire had been Mehmet Ferid Pasha, who was first cousin to the Albanian Ismail Qemali, and he may have in some way influenced foreign politics and foreign ministry in this regard. Another convincing reason could very well be that, after the Young Turk Revolution, one of the first measures the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) took was the abolishment of espionage (Arda Akıncı, 2022, pp. 231–253). As such, this would also have impacted Aladro's case. Or, they might very well have just not considered him a threat anymore.

After Albania's independence in November 1912 and its international recognition in 1913, the debate on having a king or a prince as leader of the Albanian state again was discussed among the European powers. The name of Aladro Kastrioti was also mentioned as a potential candidate for the throne, but Aladro's decade-long attempts at the Albanian throne had also led the European leadership to be discontented with him.

Thus, Wilhelm Wied was chosen in November 1913 to be the Prince of Albania. After this, all of Aladro's attempts at and expenditures on the Albanian throne had been in vain. As such, Aladro continued living in Paris and started dealing in the railway business. Just a few months later in February 1914, however, he died in a hotel (Elsie, 2013, p. 7). In March, Prince Wied arrived in Albania and sat on the throne to which Aladro had inspired

## Conclusion

The story of Aladro Kastrioti sheds light on the challenges Albanian nationalists had faced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the complex political landscape of the time. Aladro's unwavering commitment to establishing an Albanian monarchy and involvement in nationalist movements made him a target of the Ottoman Empire, which sought to suppress nationalist sentiments. The Ottoman Empire's attempts to capture and extradite Aladro also reveal their recognition of his influential role in the nationalist movement.

The decrease in surveillance on Aladro by the Ottoman Foreign Ministry after 1906 can be attributed to such factors as the Young Turk Revolution and changes in government leadership. The revolution had led to the abolishment of espionage, shifting the priorities of the Ottoman Empire and reducing its focus on monitoring individuals like Aladro. Although European powers had considered Aladro's aspirations for the Albanian throne, they ultimately chose another candidate, Prince Wilhelm Wied. This marked the end of Aladro's hopes and investments, leaving him disillusioned and marginalized in his pursuit of leadership, despite Wied himself going on to govern with Aladro's red and black flag.

Aladro's story reflects the determination and resilience of Albanian nationalists during this period and also highlights the broader political dynamics and power struggles that shaped the Balkans at the time. By examining Aladro's experiences, one can gain a deeper understanding of the complex web of alliances, rivalries, and negotiations that had influenced the path to Albanian independence. Aladro Kastrioti's life provides valuable insights into the struggle for Albanian independence and the political forces at play during this transformative period.

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# An Investigation Into How Contact and Turkish Tv Series Shape Serbs' Attitudes Toward Turks

Fatih Çarkçı

**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the attitudes of individuals living in Serbia toward Turks by looking at how contact with Turkish individuals and watching Turkish TV series have affected Serbian individuals' stereotyping. Furthermore, the study examines Serbians' tendency to donate 2,000 Serbian Dinars in an imaginary scenario. The sample consists of 492 adults living in Serbia, and the findings show watching Turkish TV series to be related to more positive feelings toward Turks, higher levels of feeling pleasant about contact, and willingness to have a Turkish friend, colleague, and neighbor. Moreover, having contact with Turks and the frequency of contact are related to having more positive feelings toward Turks. Surprisingly, the Serbs who are more populous and have more frequent contact with Turks were found to feel less pleasant and respected and more nervous and looked down upon. In general, while watching Turkish TV series might have positive associations with Serbs' positive feelings toward Turks, their contact with Turks seems to relate to more ambivalent feelings. Moreover, when participants were asked to donate money between Bosnians and Turks, most participants divided the money equally while donating the most money to their in-group when it was added. The study also discusses the findings and their implications.

**Keywords:** Serbs, Turks, contact hypothesis, stereotypes, TV series

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📄 Balkan Studies Foundation  
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/A042>  
Journal of Balkan Studies, 4 (1), 2024  
[balkanjournal.org](http://balkanjournal.org)

📅 Received: 28.09.2023  
Accepted: 12.11.2023

## Introduction

The Ottoman Empire's rule over Serbia began in 1459 (Cox, 2002). Afterward, contact between Serbian and Turkish individuals increased, with interactions occurring in various fields such as language, food, dress, architecture, culture, and more (Cox, 2002; Marinković, 2012, 2018). Serbs, who are predominantly Orthodox Christians, have long coexisted with Turks, who are predominantly Muslims. As a result, Turkish phrases and Muslim rituals began to appear in Serbian daily life, and Serbian-Turkish vocabulary and notions relating to Islam can be found in the Serbian literature (Marinković, 2018).

Although the Ottoman Empire had dominated the country for many years, the Ottomans withdrew from Serbia in 1878. However, individuals in Serbia today still meet and interact with Turks in various ways in their daily lives (i.e., being friends, neighbors, and colleagues). Furthermore, Serbs come in contact with both Turks and Turkish culture through Turkish TV programs, and Serbian individuals' perceptions toward Turks are shaped as a result of these connections (Özalpman & Özmen, 2023).

Previous research has revealed that having direct contact (i.e., being friends) with out-group members (i.e., minorities) can help cultivate positive attitudes toward them (Vonofakou et al., 2007). Recent years have seen an increased interest in Turkish TV series around the Balkan region. Some previous literature has also suggested that exposure to mass media concerning minority or out-group members is able to influence the feelings and attitudes of individuals of the dominant culture (Atwell Seate & Mastro, 2015). Therefore, the current study examines how direct contact with Turks and contact through mass media (e.g., TV shows) affects Serbs' feelings and the quality of their relationships with Turks.

## History of Serbian–Turkish Relations

Interactions and connections between Serbian and Turkish individuals have been mostly positive over the years, though at times also negative. Turks had lived in the cities where the Ottoman Empire ruled in today's Serbian region, while Serbian Christians lived in villages (Leovac, 2019). Later, once the Ottoman Empire lost control and Serbians gained dominance, the locals stopped welcoming Turks into the villages, thus reducing interactions between the two sides.

The relationship between Serbs and Turks became hostile, especially with the First and Second Serbian Uprisings that took place between 1804-1815, (Leovac, 2019). During these uprisings, Serbians began to protest Ottoman authority and its restrictions and nationalist ideology. The term nationalism refers to the general sense of identity that a group of people has due to common characteristics including language, culture, customs, and historical legacy (Cox, 2002). When this sense of belonging becomes politicized, nationalism emerges as an ideology. Serbians have experienced two sorts of nationalism throughout their history: civic and ethnic. The nation is viewed as a political population with regard to civic nationalism, with shared values such as the economy and politics being considered. Secondly, ethnic nationalists understand the country as a cultural or ethnic entity. Ethnic nationalism considers commonalities in blood, language, religion, customs, and genetics. Cox (2002) also noted that nationalism leads to feelings of aggression and xenophobia toward a group, such as Serbian individuals having hostile attitudes toward Turks throughout history (Leovac, 2019).

Meanwhile, this sense of nationalism aimed for a Great Serbia, one where Serbians could unite all Serbs in the same territory. Serbian soldiers killed many individuals in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992-1995 with this same intention (Mesic et al., 2018). Moreover, Some Balkan nationalists perceive the Bosnians as Islamized Slavic Christians who chose the faith of the Ottoman state, which they view as invaders, thus making them more enraged with Balkan Muslims than with Turks. Even the widespread use of the word Turk refers to all Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Muhasilovic, 2015). In other words, Bosnians are seen by some as Slavs and called Turks because they are Muslims, and this group may face more negative feelings from some Balkan nationalists than what Turks alone face.

### **Attitudes Toward Out-Group Members Through Direct and Indirect Contact**

Stereotypes, discrimination, attitudes, and prejudices depend on experiences. Individual experiences and societal events may lead to these emotions and thoughts about an out-group (Ültanır et al., 2016). Ültanır et al. categorized stereotypes into two types: First are heterogenous stereotypes that concern other groups and their members and refer to having limitations with foreign cultures. Second are auto-stereotypes, which concern someone's group and its members. Stereotypical attitudes are also defined as

an inflexible and faulty generalization about a group or a person in a specific group (Allport, 1954). Due to Serbian-Turkish individuals' interactions over the years, these two societies started gaining stereotypes about each other, which has affected their attitudes toward each other. Upon considering the historical background of these two cultures, the current study aims to investigate Serbs' attitudes toward Turks following their in-person and indirect contact through Turkish TV series.

Although not like in Ottoman times, Turks are still living in Serbia today as a minority group (Cox, 2002). Previous literature has shown majority group members to tend to think more negatively about minority groups (Carter, 2018), and even negative thoughts could be seen to be approximately twice as negative than reality (Hamilton & Gifford, 1976). This disparity highlights that stereotypes and cognitive biases can skew the majority's perceptions of the Turkish minority in Serbia. In light of this, it is crucial to consider the possibility that popular perceptions of the socio-cultural dynamics may be overly biased, understanding that this may not necessarily reflect the actual situations and efforts made by the Turkish minority in today's Serbian setting.

Some studies have suggested that direct contact with an out-group reduces bias against out-group members and positively modifies attitudes toward them. For example, a study conducted in Indonesia and the Philippines found friendships with persons of other religious affiliations to reduce unfavorable sentiments toward out-group members who do not have the same religious affiliation (Kanas et al., 2017). Moreover, according to a study conducted with participants from Serbia, Croatia, and Cyprus, online friendships effectively diminish bias in the same way face-to-face contact does (Zezelj et al., 2017). Yet another study found personal contact to positively influence Korean individuals' attitudes toward Americans. However, in addition to this conclusion, the same study found a negative link between the frequency of personal interaction and intergroup attitudes (Shim et al., 2012). Bosnian Muslims who are in contact with Serbian individuals were also seen to have a higher sense of trust and forgiveness about the past toward Serbians than those who are not in contact with Serbian individuals (Cakal & Petrović, 2017). Therefore, direct contact with out-group members can cause variations in individuals' attitudes, though the relevant literature does yield inconclusive results.

Some limitations in Allport's (1954) contact theory can explain the inconsistency of findings relating to direct contact and attitudes toward out-group members. According to Herek (1997), even when individuals' attitudes change positively due to contact, they may only generalize this shift to certain out-group members. Depending on the circumstances, out-group members may still be viewed as a threat to in-group members.

On the other hand, the media unquestionably influences individuals' attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs about specific groups, whether out-group or in-group members (Mastro et al., 2008). However, both the amount and type of virtual exposure substantially impact individuals' attitudes about others (Lee et al., 2006). According to Shim et al. (2012), Koreans who watch American dramas have favorable opinions of intergroup relations with them. Another study conducted in Russia also found students' perceptions of elderly individuals to be influenced by the movies they watch (Kubrak, 2020). However, the content of shows also affects attitudes. For instance, those who watch youth shows are more likely to adopt unfavorable assumptions about female friendships and gender norms (Behm-Morawitz & Mastro, 2008).

## Current Study

Along with what has transpired throughout history, an extended interaction has occurred between Serbian and Turkish individuals. Although this relationship has at times been beneficial to these groups, other times it has affected their relationship negatively. Because of their experiences, both countries have formed prejudices and negative attitudes toward each other (Jovanović, 2017). Turkish culture and its influence in Serbia persist today, although this is not as prevalent as it had been during the Ottoman period. Despite being a minority, Turks continue to live in Serbia or visit the country as tourists. Moreover, from the perspective of Serbians, a religious divide and a history of oppression occurred due to the Ottoman Empire. Although Turks may constitute a realistic as well as symbolic threat to Serbs, the contact hypothesis predicts that Serbs' biases will shift positively if they become more familiar with Turks and Turkish culture.

In today's technological age, this contact can be direct or indirect. Turkish TV shows, in particular soap operas, have attracted more and more viewers in 76 different nations over the past decade (Gündüz, 2020). According to studies, television series have

positively impacted Türkiye's citizens overseas (Bilgin & Danis, 2016). Turkish TV shows are watched in various parts of the world, and these shows ethnically and culturally portray Türkiye and Turkish culture to the viewers (Aburaddi, 2022). Furthermore, Aburaddi claimed that foreigners watch these Turkish shows, which center on the concept of history and Islam. Furthermore, Arab viewers who watch Turkish television programs believe a cultural similarity exists between Turkish and Arab culture (Berg, 2017).

Nowadays, Turkish TV series are very popular in Balkan countries (Gündüz, 2020). As a result of Turkish TV series being viewed with interest in Balkan nations, these TV series began to be broadcast in these countries with subtitles (Özalpman & Özmen, 2023). A few Turkish TV shows have started airing on Balkan channels and received high ratings. In fact, individuals have started bringing up the Turkish productions they've watched in ordinary conversations throughout Balkan countries (Mihalakopoulos, 2011). According to Akgün and Gündoğar (2012), Turkish TV shows are actually quite popular, even in Serbia and Greece where more animosity exists toward Türkiye than in other Balkan nations. According to Bilgin and Danis (2016), some viewers of Turkish TV series have begun learning Turkish to comprehend these shows better. Aside from that, tourism from Balkan countries to Türkiye has started to rise due to these series (Aydos, 2017).

In summary, Turkish TV programs portray Türkiye and Turkish culture to foreigners and may help reduce prejudiced views toward Turks and Turkish culture. As such, individuals can develop indirect contact with others through the media. This study considers participants' watching of Turkish TV series to count as indirectly interacting with Turkish individuals.

This study also employs an author-created donation measure to determine whether Serbs distinguish between Turks and Bosnians, both of whom they refer to as Turks due to their shared religious beliefs. Along with this differentiation, the study applies an author-created donation measure to the participants with regard to a scenario where they can donate to Serbs, Turks, and Bosnians in order to see if they will act in a nationalist manner. In addition to the donation measure, the study also separately examines participants' attitudes toward Turks and Muslims to see whether the hostility toward Turks primarily stems from the difference in religion.

This study aims to add a significant contribution to the scarce literature on Serbian-Turkish relations. Given the various historical instances such as Bosnians being killed by Serbs (Suljagić, 2021), the research on the impact of this event on Turkish-Serbian relations has been insufficient (Ekinci Sarier, 2016). Furthermore, as technology has advanced, contact among individuals, nations, and countries has risen considerably. One example is the global transmission of Turkish TV programs and series, which are becoming increasingly popular in Serbia (Özalpman & Özmen, 2023). Therefore, another purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between Turks and Serbs through the viewing of Turkish TV shows to examine the following research hypotheses:

*H1:* A positive relationship exists between Serbs' watching Turkish TV series (number and frequency) and their feelings toward Turks (measured by the Contact Quality Scale).

*H2:* A positive relationship exists between Serbs' watching Turkish TV series (number and frequency) and their feelings toward Turkish individuals (measured with the Feeling Thermometer Scale; Haddock et al., 1993; Branković et al., 2016).

*H3:* A positive relationship exists between Serbs' watching Turkish TV series (number and frequency) and their willingness to engage with Turkish individuals (measured by the Social Distance Scale; Levy et al., 2019).

*H4:* A relationship exists between Serbs' contact with Turks (number and the frequency) and their different feeling states toward Turks (measured by the Contact Quality Scale; Stephan et al., 1999).

*H5:* A positive relationship exists between Serbs' contact with Turks (number and frequency) and their feelings towards Turkish individuals (measured by the Feeling Thermometer; Haddock et al., 1993; Branković et al., 2016).

*H6:* A relationship exists between Serbs' contact with Turks (number and frequency) and their willingness to engage with Turkish individuals (measured by the Social Distance Scale; Levy et al., 2019).

*H7:* Participants distinguish between Turks and Bosnians by donating differently to each of them.

*H8:* Participants will donate the most to Serbians when given the choice among Turks, Bosnians, and Serbs.



## Method

### Participants

In total, 492 individuals participated in the study. The data were collected from individuals 18 years of age or older who live in Serbia and were able to participate in the study online. Of the participants, 386 described their gender as female (78.4%), 105 as male (21.3%), and 1 as “other” (0.2%). Participants’ ages range between 18-56 ( $M = 23.39$ ).

While 463 of the participants (94.1%) describe their ethnicity as Serbian, two (0.4%) describe themselves as Bosnian and 15 (3.0%) as “Other;” 12 (2.4%) did not want to answer. Moreover, 369 of the participants (75%) described their religious affiliation as Orthodox Christian, three (0.6%) as Muslim, one (0.2%) as Catholic, six (1.2%) as “Other,” and 113 (23%) as non-religious.

Also, two of the participants (0.4%) mentioned their educational background as elementary school, 81 (16.5%) as high school, 337 (68.5%) as college, 68 (13.8%) as master’s degree, and four (0.8%) as doctorate level. Moreover, 308 participants (62.6%) mentioned the place they in which lived most was a metropolis, 106 (21.5%) as a city, four (0.8%) as a county/district, 38 (7.7%) as a small town, and 36 (7.3%) as a village.

### Data Collection Procedure

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee of the researcher’s undergraduate university. Google Forms was used for the data collection process. The study used the snowball technique to collect data. The researcher first informed the participants about the purpose of the study and the participation criteria (i.e., being voluntary and being at least 18 years old), then obtained their consent and took their surveys. Participants were asked to fill in the survey anonymously. On the first page, the participants were informed that they could leave the study any time. Completing the form was expected to take approximately 10-15 minutes. Participants did not receive any compensation for completing the survey.

## Data Collection Instruments

### Demographic Form

The researcher prepared this form in the Serbian language, which is used to collect information about the participants' gender, age, ethnicity, religion, most lived place, income, education history, and family information.

### Donation Form

The researcher designed this form containing two different donation questionnaires to be given to the participants. The first question asks the participants to hypothetically donate 2,000 Dinars between a Turk and a Bosnian. The participants' responses are categorized based on the following distributions: "I would donate equally," "I would donate more to Bosnians," "I would donate more to Turks," "I would not donate," and "I would donate to whoever's situation was more urgent."

The second questionnaire asks the participants to donate 2,000 Dinars among a Turk, a Bosnian, and a Serb. The participants' responses are categorized as "I would donate equally," "I would donate more to Bosnians," "I would donate more to Serbs," "I would donate more to Turks," "I would donate more to Bosnians and Serbs and less to Turks," "I would donate more to Serbs and Turks and less to Bosnians," "I would donate more to Bosnians and Turks and less to Serbs," "I would donate to whoever's situation was more urgent," and "I would not donate."

### Social Distance Scale

The study utilizes the Social Distance Scale (Levy et al., 2019) to gauge Serbs' feelings about facing some possibilities such as having a Turkish neighbor, a Turkish colleague, a Turkish friend, or marrying/dating a Turk. The aim is to understand whether Serbs saw a difference between Turks (*I would not mind living in the same neighborhood with Turks*) and if they had a bias toward Turks. A 5-point Likert scale is used in the study. Four questions are asked to assess Serbian's feelings toward these groups. The four items consist of a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes toward the group. The Serbian-adaptation's internal consistency values range between .78 and .89, with Cronbach's alpha for this study being .74.

### **Feeling Thermometer**

The Feeling Thermometer Scale (Haddock et al., 1993) assesses whether Serbian individuals think positively or negatively toward Turkish individuals and Muslims. The degrees range from 0 (very unfavorable) to 100 (very positive), with 50 meaning no positive or negative feelings toward a group. The study uses the Serbian adaptation of the scale (Branković et al., 2016) for the participants in Serbia.

### **Contact Quantity Scale**

The study uses the Contact Quantity Scale (Barlow et al., 2012) to see Serbian individuals' contact levels with Turkish individuals by asking the Serbian participants how many Turkish individuals they know personally and how often they are in contact with them (*How many Turks do you know personally?*). The scale's internal consistency values range between .71 to .90, with Cronbach's alpha being .52 in this study. In addition, the Serbian individuals were asked if they follow Turkish TV series, and if so, how many (*How many Turkish TV series/films do you watch?*) to see these series' impact on the participants.

### **Contact Quality Scale**

The Contact Quality Scale (Stephan et al., 1999) measures participants' feelings toward contact with other groups. The scale has four items and uses a 5-point Likert scale. The participants are asked if they feel pleasant, nervous, respected, or looked down upon (*When you interact with [Turkish], how often does something of the following happen to you?*) when they are in contact with Turkish individuals. A positive correlation exists between higher scores (maximum of 5) and the emotion felt. This study calculated Cronbach's alpha as .86.

### **Data Analysis**

First, the study examines the demographic variables utilizing a t-test and one-way ANOVA by checking the assumptions of the analyses, including normality, sample independence, and equal variances. The study then uses the Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to determine the relationship among participants' attitudes toward Turks, their contact levels with Turks, and the amount of exposure to Turkish TV series.

## Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics regarding the scales the study uses. A glance into the study's descriptive statistics shows the participants' scores on the Social Distance Scale for willingness to marry or date Turks to be relatively lower than in other scenarios. Also, according to the mean scores on the Feeling Thermometer, the participants were observed to indicate relatively higher positive feelings toward Turks compared to Muslims.

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables (N = 492)*

Variable	M	SD
Social Distance Scale		
Neighbor	4.69	.78
Colleague/Classmate	4.83	.60
Close Friend	4.72	.80
Marrying/Dating	3.33	1.49
Feeling Thermometer (Turks)	7.36	2.31
Feeling Thermometer (Muslims)	6.86	2.25
Contact Quality Scale		
Pleasant	3.59	1.43
Nervous	2.08	2.07
Respected	3.68	1.35
Looked down upon	1.89	2.21

Next, the study examines the possible demographical group differences using the t-test and one-way ANOVA. Only group differences appeared concerning the educational levels of the participants. Two groups (elementary and doctoral education) were excluded from the analysis due to the smaller number of participants in these categories. Thus, the high school-, college-, and master-level participants were compared.

Participants' education levels are seen to affect their feelings toward Turks ( $F_{(2, 483)} = 3.551, p = .029$ ), where participants with high school education feel more respected when they come in contact with Turks ( $M = 4.00$ ), compared to participants with a master's level of education ( $M = 3.43$ ). Also, participants who defined themselves as having a college-level of education felt more respected when they come in contact with Turks ( $M = 3.67$ ) than participants with master's degrees ( $M = 3.43$ ).

The intercorrelations among the number of Turkish TV series participants watch, the frequency with which they watch these Turkish TV series, and these factors' relationships with the participants' attitudes toward Turks are provided in the correlation matrix (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Intercorrelations among Study Variables (N = 492)*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Number of Turkish TV Series	1										
2. Frequency of Watched Turkish TV Series	.73**	1									
3. Felt Pleasant	.11*	.09	1								
4. Felt Nervous	.03	.06	.57**	1							
5. Felt Respected	.04	.06	.75**	.52**	1						
6. Felt Looked Down Upon	.00	.04	.54**	.93**	.51**	1					
7. Feeling Thermometer	.24**	.24**	.13*	-.020**	.19**	-.022**	1				
8. Turkish Neighbor	.08	.11*	.17**	-.07	.25**	-.011*	.53**	1			
9. Turkish College/Classmate	.12*	.11*	.22**	-.02	.31**	-.08	.46**	.74**	1		

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
10. Turkish Close Friend	.07	.12**	.19**	-0.09	.28**	-0.12**	.53**	.77**	.82**	1	
11. Turkish Husband/Wife	.07	.07	.04	-0.14**	.12**	-0.16**	.50**	.39**	.30**	.40**	1

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

The correlation matrix examines the number of and frequency with which participants watch Turkish TV series, as well as their feelings (i.e., nervous, pleasant) toward Turks. The results show a high correlation between the number of Turkish TV series participants watched and the frequency of these series ( $r = .73, p < .001$ ). According to the matrix, a significant positive relationship exists between feeling pleased about Turks and watching Turkish TV series ( $r = .11, p = .019$ ; see Table 2).

A glance into the relationship between Turkish TV series and participants' ratings on the Feeling Thermometer Scale regarding their feelings toward Turks shows a weak but positive relationship, indicating that as Serbs' feelings toward Turks (on the Feeling Thermometer Scale) increase, the number of ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) and frequency with which ( $r = .24, p < .001$ ) they watch Turkish TV series increases as well.

The study also examines the correlation matrix in Table 2 in terms of the relationships between watching Turkish TV series and participants' attitudes toward willingness to engage with having a neighbor, colleague/university friend, close friend, or spouse who is Turk. The results table shows a weak but significantly positive relationship to exist between the number of series watched and willingness to have a Turkish colleague/classmate ( $r = .12, p = .011$ ). Remarkably, significant positive relationships were found between the frequency of watching series and agreeing with having a Turkish neighbor ( $r = .11, p = .019$ ), Turkish colleague/classmate ( $r = .11, p = .014$ ), and a Turkish close friend ( $r = .12, p = .008$ ; see Table 2).

The intercorrelations among the number of Turkish individuals the participants know, their frequency of contact with them, and their relationship regarding the participants' attitudes toward Turks is also provided in the correlation matrix (see Table 3).

**Table 3***Intercorrelations among Study Variables (N = 492)*\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ 

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Number of Turkish People Known	1										
2. Frequency of Contact with Turkish People	.48**	1									
3. Felt Pleasant	-0.18**	-0.17**	1								
4. Felt Nervous	-0.35**	-0.35**	.57**	1							
5. Felt Respected	-0.20**	-0.18**	.75**	.52**	1						
6. Felt Looked Down Upon	-0.37**	-0.36**	.54**	.93**	.51**	1					
7. Feeling Thermometer (Turks)	.20**	.15**	.13*	-0.20**	.19**	-0.22**	1				
8. Turkish Neighbor	.06	-0.01	.17**	-0.07	.25**	-0.11*	.53**	1			
9. Turkish College/Classmate	.04	-0.05	.22**	-0.02	.31**	-0.08	.46**	.74**	1		
10. Turkish Close Friend	.09	.03	.19**	-0.09	.28**	-0.12**	.53**	.77**	.82**	1	
11. Turkish Husband/Wife	.12**	.06	.04	-0.14**	.12**	-0.16**	.50**	.39**	.30**	.40**	1

A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to see the relationship between the number of Turkish individuals known and the frequency of contact with them with regard to different feeling states. According to the results, a significant negative correlation exists between having contact with Turks and feeling pleasant toward Turks ( $r = -0.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and feeling respected ( $r = -0.20$ ,  $p < .001$ ), while a significant negative relationship exists between Serbian participants being in contact with a Turkish

individual and feeling nervous ( $r = -0.35, p < .001$ ) and feeling looked down upon ( $r = -0.37, p < .001$ ).

Moreover, a significant positive correlation is found between participants from Serbia having contact with Turkish individuals and having positive feelings toward them ( $r = .20, p < .001$ ). This result indicates that having more contact with Turks also increases the positive feelings toward them. Additionally, the results show that the relationship between the participants' frequency of contact with Turks and their attitudes toward Turks to have a significant positive correlation ( $r = .15, p < .001$ ; see Table 3).

Table 3 also shows the relationship between the number of Turkish individuals whom the participants are in contact with and their willingness to engage in different scenarios with Turks. A significant positive relationship exists between the number of Turkish individuals known and willingness to have a Turkish spouse ( $r = .12, p = .008$ ).

Furthermore, a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the extent to which the amount of contact with Turkish individuals predicts feeling pleasant about Turks. The first step examines the predictive role of the number of Turkish TV series watched. The results show that the number of Turkish TV series watched significantly predicts feelings of pleasantness in the participants ( $R^2 = .01, F_{(1, 490)} = 5.56, p = .019$ ) and accounts for 1.1 % of the variance in the outcome variable. After controlling for the number of Turkish TV series, the second model is seen to be significant ( $R^2 = .05, F_{(2, 489)} = 11.87, p < .001$ ). The number of Turkish individuals known explains an additional 3.5% of the variance in the outcome variable.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Feeling Pleasant*

Variable	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	$R^2$	$\Delta F$
Model 1	.04	.08	.11	2.36*	.01	5.56*
Number of Turkish TV series watched						
Model 2	-0.10	.02	-0.18	-4.24**	.05	11.87**
Number of Turkish people known						

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$



Furthermore, when participants were asked to donate 2,000 Dinars between a Turk and a Bosnian, 401 participants (81.5%) would donate the money equally between a Bosnian and a Turk. Also, while 60 participants (12.2%) mentioned that they would donate more to the Bosnian, only five (1%) said they would donate more to the Turk.

When adding a Serb as a third donation option, 267 participants (54.3%) this time mentioned that they would donate equally, while 157 (31.9%) would donate more to the Serb. Additionally, while 28 (5.7%) would donate more to the Bosnian and Serb and less to the Turk, 10 (2%) would donate more to the Bosnian. Remarkably, only some participants would donate more to the Turk.

While the participants chose to share the money equally between the Turk and the Bosnian, they donated more money to the Serb than the Turk and Bosnian when a Serb was added to the scenario. Also, when including the Serb in the donation story, participants' tendency to distribute the 2,000 Dinar equally showed a decline.

## Discussion

This study has sought to determine how watching Turkish TV series (indirect contact) and communicating with people from Türkiye (direct contact) contribute to Serbians' sentiments regarding Turks. The first aim of this study was to determine the relationship between Serbs' watching Turkish TV series (number and frequency) and their different feelings toward Turks. The results show that, as the participants' number of Turkish TV series watched increases, they found the out-group more pleasant. Moreover, and as expected, a positive relationship was found between watching Turkish TV series and feeling more positive toward Turks. As Bilgin and Danis (2016) mentioned, Turkish TV series positively impact foreign viewers. Additionally, one study stated that Turkish TV series are getting more and more popular in Balkan countries (Balaban, 2015). The type of TV series watched may also be important in shaping attitudes. For example, although the Serbs who watched TV series such as the *Magnificent Century*, which is about the Ottoman Empire and Suleiman the Magnificent, commented positively about the series, they also made negative comments about the Ottoman Empire and its attitude toward Serbia (Aydos, 2017). In this regard, the importance of culture and cultural distance can also be emphasized. According to studies, many of the TV series are liked by Arab viewers, and Arab viewers were noted to have significant

positive attitudes about Türkiye (Kaya, 2015; Öztürk, 2018; Yıldırım, 2016). Similarly, Aydos (2017) in a study conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that Bosniaks who identified themselves more with Turks compared to Serbs gave more positive reactions to Turkish TV series.

When examining the relationship between the amount and frequency of Turkish TV series watched and the willingness to engage with Turkish individuals, only a positive relationship was found between number of Turkish TV series watched and the desire to have a Turkish college/classmate. A significant positive relationship was also found between the frequency of watching Turkish TV series and the willingness to have a Turkish neighbor, college/classmate, and close friend. Previous literature has shown the genre of television viewing to perhaps relate to prejudices regarding out-groups (Gattino & Tartaglia, 2015). Among other possibilities, the subjects of the viewed TV shows may be connected to the willingness of those who watch more TV series to have exclusively Turkish college or classmates. Additionally, even while participants enjoy Turkish TV shows, they might not wish to envision themselves in a more intimate connection with someone from a culture other than their own in their daily lives. The fact that individuals who watch Turkish TV series more frequently are willing to choose options other than a Turkish spouse can be explained by Allport's (1954) contact theory. As individuals are more frequently exposed to individuals from Türkiye and productions about Türkiye, their prejudices about Turks and Türkiye may decrease, and they may be able to imagine themselves with Turks in different roles. Interestingly, the lack of a significant relationship for number and frequency of watching Turkish TV series with willingness to have a Turkish spouse may be related to the cultural difference between individuals in such an intimate relationship and the stereotypes between the two societies. The significance of shared understanding and emotional ties to particular cultural stereotypes in every country was underlined by Lukšik et al. (2023).

The study has also examined the relationship between contact with Turkish individuals (number and frequency) and Serbs' different feeling states. The results have shown that both being in contact with Turks and the frequency of the contact to be negatively related to feeling pleasant, and to be positively related to feeling nervous, looked down upon, and disrespected. In other words, Serbs who interact with Turks more frequently and in greater numbers exhibit both positive and negative sentiments. Interestingly, when controlling for the effects of the number of Turkish TV series watched, contact

with the number of Turkish individuals predicts less pleasant feelings. This shows that, although the participants make contact with Turks while watching Turkish TV series, this contact is established indirectly, and the viewer does not make any special effort during the contact. During this indirect contact, individuals receive various information from what they are exposed to (Ross, 2019).

The relationship between being in contact with Turks and participants' feelings toward Turks revealed a positive relationship between being in contact with Turks (more Turks and higher frequency) and feeling positively toward Turks. Hence, participants in more frequent contact with Turks have more positive feelings about Turks. Previous literature supports these ambivalent attitudes of participants toward Turks. As mentioned, the situation of contact is essential, and even if an in-group member's opinion changes positively toward an out-group member, this person may only generalize these changes to only certain out-group members (Herek, 1997). However, when Serbs interact with Turks in real life, they have to be directly in contact, and the individual's past experiences (Emerson et al., 2002), such as the environment in which the communication occurred, the level of happiness experienced as a result of the communication, and the individuals with whom they interacted (Laar et al., 2005), as well as prejudices and stereotypes about the Turkish individuals and culture, may also play a role. Nevertheless, the fact that better understanding of a different culture does not inevitably result in lessening prejudices or bias against that society is important to remember (Zuma, 2014).

Moreover, a positive relationship was found between being in contact more with Turkish individuals and feeling positive about having a Turkish spouse. Except for this relationship, no significant relationship being found between being in contact with Turks (both number and frequency) and accepting having a Turkish neighbor, college/classmate, and close friend is also noteworthy, as well as the relationship between being in more frequent contact with Turks and feeling more positive about having a Turkish spouse, which is in contrast to results regarding the number of Turkish TV series watched. Individuals may become more aware of similarities rather than differences as they interact directly with individuals from other cultures and as they learn more about their lives, environments, and civilizations (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). This finding may explain the importance of direct contact with an out-group member. According to the literature, direct contact may be more potent than indirect forms (Brown & Paterson, 2016).

Remarkably, the Serbian participants who watch more Turkish TV series were found to have more positive feelings about Turks. In contrast, the participants with more one-on-one contact with Turks numerically have more negative attitudes about Turks. As mentioned above, different factors may play a role in these results, such as the topics of the series people watch and the frequency with which they watch these series, the participants' previous experiences with Turks and their satisfaction with this experience, and the context in which communication was established. A previous study found individuals' prejudices to decrease as a result of indirect contact. Moreover, indirect contact occurring before entering one-on-one contact was observed to be effective regarding the one-on-one contact (Wölfer et al., 2019). In other words, watching Turkish TV series before having one-on-one contact with Turks can positively affect individuals' attitudes toward Turks regarding future communications. From a different angle, individuals can respond negatively when they come in contact with Turks in real life, even though they may believe a show is a play and have been influenced by its various components.

The findings related to the participant demographics in this study have shown that participants' positive attitudes toward Turks for both direct and indirect contact decrease as the participants' education level increases. Specifically, those participants with master's levels had fewer positive attitudes toward Turks than the high school and college groups. The finding that negative attitudes toward Turks rise with Serbs' education levels may be affected by a number of reasons. Previous hostilities between the two countries may be emphasized in the educational curriculum, which could reinforce preconceived notions as students continue their studies. Higher education can also expose people to intricate geopolitical conflicts, patriotic narratives, social factors, and media representations, potentially forming a more skeptical attitude toward Turks throughout the educated population. The distribution of educational levels among the study's participants should be underlined to differ in addition to the previously indicated possibilities. Moreover, this study is correlational, meaning correlation does not imply causation. The link between bias and education is impossible to ignore. Previous literature has shown mixed results when considering the relationship between attitudes toward out-group members and education level (Hello et al., 2002; Wagner & Zick, 1995). Furthermore, divergent perspectives on the Ottoman occupation of the Balkans have long existed in Serbia. This understanding, which is primarily unfavorable

in Serbia, is frequently presented in educational materials as 500 years spent under the Turkish yoke. This also signifies an inability to distinguish between the current Turkish government and the Ottoman Empire. When addressing academic debate and popular culture, both are frequently viewed as one (Jovanović, 2017).

In addition to education level, the course curricula students have taken during their education can have substantial effects on their attitudes toward the outgroup. Despite the fact each education level had unequal numbers of participants, these mentioned factors should be considered. For example, when Bosnia and Herzegovina separated from Yugoslavia and declared its independence, each nation living in the country continued education in its own language, and books were published in three different languages: Bosnian, Serbian, and Croatian. The negative words used in Serbian books about the Ottoman Empire have been examined, such as the period of oppression and persecution (Aydos, 2017), invader (Muhasilović, 2015), and Serbs not identifying themselves as having been part of the Ottoman Empire when these written books (Alibašić, 2007). Individuals who are exposed to such content during their education can be predicted to have more prejudices about Turks.

This study has also investigated whether participants would distinguish between Bosnians and Turks. In order to understand this, when participants were asked to divide 2,000 Serbian Dinars between a Bosnian and a Turk, the majority of the participants chose to donate the money equally between the two. Although no significant difference was found, the second most preferred type was to donate more to a Bosnian than a Turk. Unsurprisingly though, participants gave the most to Serbians (i.e., their in-group) once a Serb was added as a third group.

The participants were asked the donation question as a classic question, and answers were categorized during the analysis. Despite this, some of the participants verbally stated that race is not essential and that they would donate money equally according to need. The reasons for donating more to the Bosnian individual in the first scenario were collected under similar topics, such as Bosnians sharing a similar culture with individuals living in Serbia, the country being in the same geographical region, having relatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and wanting to donate more to the Bosnian because Serbs live in Bosnia. In the second scenario, answers were also found to explain the reason for donating more money to the Serbian person based on ethnic origin.

Even one of the participants who donated all their money to the Bosnian in the first question had said, "One of the participants explained the donation reasons as '0-2000-0 (0 Turkish, 2000 Serb, and 0 Bosnian (in the previous idea I gave the Bosnian 2000, a lot for me).'" Other such answers were found, and these findings are consistent with the previous literature. Such answers may be consistent with political and ethnic nationalist ideologies (Cox, 2002). In other words, participants might behave as a nationalist during the process.

One of the possible mediators for Serbs' negative feelings after having contact with Turks could be their level of perceived threat. Studies have shown out-group members to be seen as a realistic threat because of competition for such scarce resources as land, money, and jobs (Belán & Popper, 2021; Obaidi et al., 2018; Schneider, 2007). Serbian individuals may see Turks as a threat because they had lived for a long time in their lands during the Ottoman Empire's rule. Also, Turks still live in Serbia who work in jobs and live in homes that otherwise could be occupied by Serbs (Bizman & Yinon, 2001; Cox, 2002). In addition, the symbolic threat is related to the values, traditions, and customs of the in-group, with out-group members being seen as threatening to change the majority's (in-group's) way of life (Bizman & Yinon, 2001). As mentioned, the Serbian language and Serbian traditions have been affected by the Turkish language and culture of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, in-group members may have concerns about adverse outcomes or threats to their group esteem, such as embarrassment or rejection if they maintain contact with out-group members. Lastly, the similarities between different groups are considered distinctiveness threats because these similarities may cause competition (Bizman & Yinon, 2001). As an out-group, although Turks do not have many similarities with Serbs, Bosnians share the same ethnicity, culture, language, and history as Serbs, as both were part of former Yugoslavia. The most important difference between them is religion (Mrduljaš, 2018). Additionally, two participants emphasized that the terms Bosnian and Bosniak are different. In the literature, while Bosnian Serbs are defined as Bosnian, Bosnian Muslims are defined as Bosniaks (Pavasović-Trošt, 2013). In summary, future studies need to measure these different types of threats in mediating the relationship between Serbian- Turk contact and negative attitudes.

One possible limitation of this study is the age range of participants, which was between 18-56 ( $M = 23.39$ ). When considering historical events such as the 1992-1995

genocide, the inclusion of participants from older ages might give different results. Therefore, future studies might consider reaching different age groups. Also, most of the participants were female, and as previously stated, women might have less of a kinship ideology than men in Serbia (Hammel & Yarbrough, 1974). Future studies should include an equal number of male and female participants in order to eliminate the domination of one group and get more representative results.

Apart from these, some education groups had to be excluded from the analyses due to the number of participants in those groups. The results of this study have shown that education is an essential factor regarding differences in attitudes toward out-group members. Therefore, including individuals from different education groups in future studies can give a clearer picture regarding the role of education on attitudes toward out-group members. Additionally, the education curriculum in Serbia was not studied or discussed here, as this is outside the scope of the current study. Future studies might examine the education curricula in Serbia to show the relationship between education and attitudes toward out-group members.

In addition to all these, the participants who encountered various questions from Turks throughout the study may have been affected by the fact that the researcher is Turk. Therefore, either positively or negatively, the participants may not have been objective. On the other hand, through the social desirability effect, the participants may not have been objective throughout the study. Accordingly, future studies might yield covert ways to measure attitudes toward out-group members to eliminate the effect of social desirability bias or might obtain participants' social desirability levels for use in analyses as a control variable. As another limitation, the participants were not asked which Turkish TV series they watched. Because the previous literature has stated the TV series that was watched to have affect participants' prejudices (Gattino & Tartaglia, 2015), this question can be added to future studies.

Lastly and in line with the explanatory nature of this study, correlational analyses were conducted to explore the relationships among variables. Therefore, no cause-effect relationships can be inferred from the results. Future studies might utilize different ways to study the relationship among variables, such as through experimental methods to obtain cause-effect relationships. In addition, as understood from the participants' answers, words that may confuse them (such as Bosnian and Bosniak) should be explained more appropriately to the participants to get more accurate answers.

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# The Memoirs of Arbih Generals: The Scope of Memoir Literature for Understanding the Military History of Sarajevo Between 1992-1995


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**Abstract:** This article delves into the abundant war memoir literature originating from the countries of former Yugoslavia, which has been driven by various wars and the inclination of soldiers, officers, and generals to extol their wartime accomplishments. The prevalence of this literature is especially noteworthy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the most represented memoirs hailing from World War II, followed closely by those concerning the Yugoslav Wars. These memoirs offer diverse perspectives, reflecting the authors' personal experiences and thoughts during war. While these memoirs do provide rich insights, a critical approach is essential given the inherently political nature of these works. As a valuable source for understanding military history, memoirs play a crucial role in shaping the comprehension of the past. The article underscores that, despite potential biases, the memoir literature presents opportunities for further research and for expanding knowledge about the war in Sarajevo, particularly when complemented by other military sources and archives.

**Keywords:** Bosnian war, memoirs, Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Army of the Republic Srpska, Siege of Sarajevo, generals

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 0009-0003-0827-9624

 Balkan Studies Foundation  
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/A043>  
Journal of Balkan Studies, 4 (1), 2024  
[balkanjournal.org](http://balkanjournal.org)

 Received:18.10.2023  
Revision: 18.12.2023  
Accepted:16.01.2024

## Introduction

The countries of former Yugoslavia abound with many works of the memories of war, certainly because of the various wars but also because of the tendency of soldiers, officers, and generals to glorify their own war achievements. That is not unusual, especially when taking the Balkan tradition of handing down heroic epic poems from generation to generation into account. Over time, the genre of memoirs has crystallized differently. Epic folk songs and poems glorify heroes, equating them with mythological demigods, while contemporary memoirs are more abundant in factual data. The lyrical additions and various epithets are obviously unnecessary for describing bloody battles. Memoirs from the period of World War II are the most represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the memoirs from the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001) come in second place. The reason is simple: Far fewer actors were involved in the war that was limited to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, and, to a much lesser extent, Slovenia.

So far, several generals of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) have published memoirs: General Hasan Efendić, the first commander of the Territorial Defense of the RBiH; General Sefer Halilović, the first general of the ARBiH; General Rasim Delić, who replaced Halilović after his dismissal; General Fikret Muslimović, who held several security, intelligence, and counter-intelligence functions; General Hamid Bahto, who also held several different functions, and lastly General Mehmed Alagić, Commander of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Corps of the ARBiH. All of them gave their literary contribution to the study of the military history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically in this case, the siege and defense of Sarajevo. The fact that the memoirs of these generals of the ARBiH are politically colored in some places, except in the case of General Alagić, whose memoirs are focused on the military operations of the Third and Seventh Corps of the ARBiH, needs to be understood.

That this paper will not take into consideration the diaries of ARBiH generals is important to note, and the reasons are purely methodological. Different conclusions can be drawn from the study of texts that were written fresh after certain events compared to those that represent the author's self-reflection on events from the past. One of the issues in this paper is the question of memory and how it can be treated as a field of literature for the study of military history. Ultimately, the study will not subject to

analysis the war diaries of General Stjepan Šiber, General Jovan Divjak, Colonel Mirsad Ćatić and others.

The issues of the defense and siege of Sarajevo are often debated in the memoir literature of these aforementioned authors, because that was certainly the most important battlefield in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The army headquarters, the Presidency, and all vital institutions were located in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had remained under siege throughout the war. In this essay, the main things I will attempt to answer are in what kind of scope the memoir literature can be discussed and whether the authors of memoirs provided some new explanations, as well as to ask some important questions regarding the war in Sarajevo, all using the literature of the mentioned authors.

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered to have begun in April 1992, but the first activities of the reservists and active military personnel of the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) date back to September 1991. Large movements of the JNA from Serbia and Montenegro were noticeable in the areas of eastern Bosnia and eastern Herzegovina. The first victims of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina probably fell during that period. At the end of 1991 in eastern Bosnia, the savagery of the JNA was a daily occurrence. In the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the situation was peaceful, even the war in Slovenia and Croatia had not received sufficient warning. Without any resistance, the JNA occupied large parts of eastern Bosnia and eastern Herzegovina (Tucaković, 2017).

The first attacks and crimes in Sarajevo were characterized as terrorist acts. The blockade of Sarajevo by the JNA and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) paramilitary formations were not enough to declare a state of war. Unfortunately for the people of Sarajevo, the war began in April. Hasan Efendić argues authoritatively about the negligence and incompetence of the largest state bodies, for on the Bosnian side, the war had been started legally and formally by reluctant decision making. No orders or calls for mobilization occurred, nor any declaration of martial law (Efendić, 1998). Chronologically speaking, General Efendić was the first commander of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (R BiH) armed forces, and his testimonies best describe the state of affairs on the ground, especially when discussing the city of Sarajevo. Very little afterthought occurs in Hasan Efendić's writing, but at the end of his book and unlike many



others, he admits his mistakes and omissions during his short command. During the first days of the war in Sarajevo, Efendić states that the disarmed Territorial Defense, part of the disbanded units of the Ministry of the Interior (MUP), the professional fire brigade of Sarajevo, a company of prison guards in the Central Prison, and less than 200 poorly armed citizens, were almost all that could oppose the JNA forces.

Efendić is also one of the rare critics of paramilitary formations such as the Patriotic League and the Green Berets. He argues his view, stating, "The Patriotic League referred to 120,000 members who existed only on paper or in someone's imagination" (Efendić, 1998, p.129). Taking into account that the forces of the Patriotic League in the wider area of Bosnia and Herzegovina had very few weapons at their disposal, this statement can be taken as a reference. In military terms, Efendić believes that the forces of the Patriotic League and the Green Berets would have been effective at guarding one building. In his criticism, Efendić asks an interesting question, "Why were the Institutions of the RBiH allow the Patriotic League units, insufficiently organized, untrained, partially armed with hunting weapons, and without military-trained senior staff, allowed to fight armed with the aggressors at the beginning of the aggression without the use of legal forces? Because that's what they had been organized for over four decades?" (Efendić, 2018, p. 189).

The topic of this paper is not an answer to Efendić's question, but it is useful for understanding the memoirs. Therefore, Efendić is the only author as well as member of the Main Staff to ask this and a number of other important questions that can help in understanding the various filigreed phenomena in the war which had a strong influence on how the situation developed. In his memoirs, Hasan Efendić criticizes everything that is not military-conceived, and even though his command was short-lived, it left quite a mark. His two books provide a lot of interesting military information from the field, and he is one of the better experts on the history and concept of Territorial Defense. General Efendić is one of the most representative examples of post-war memoirs in BiH, as in his books he presents numerous authentic reports, dispatches, and orders, as well as a lot of original material from the military province.

After a short period of command, Efendić was dismissed,<sup>1</sup> and Major Sefer Halilović, who had been head of the Operations Center until then, took his place (Čekić, 2017).

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1 The proposal to the Presidency of the RBiH for the dismissal of the first commander of the TORBIH hea-

Halilović was born in Prijepolje on January 6, 1952. He graduated from the military academy in Belgrade and served as a soldier in Vinkovci, Đakovo, and Mostar. As one of the founders of the Patriotic League, he was appointed commander of the ARBiH on May 25, 1992 (Halilović, 1997). Sefer Halilović published his memoirs in 1997. At first glance, they do not appear to be typical memoirs of a commander, as they have no detailed descriptions of battles, military operations, or the like. Halilović decided to write about more political topics and less about Sarajevo as a battlefield in his writings. He doesn't even overtly describe *Operation Neretva 93*, which he personally led. Halilović's focus of interest includes the Counter-Intelligence Service (KOS), State Security Service (SDB), and other similar intelligence and counter-intelligence structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. According to Halilović, as early as 1991, KOS had been largely subversive against the legal authorities of the MUP. In many places, the representative of the legal authority of the RBiH was brought into contact with the KOS and SDB. Despite the fact that his memoirs have many interesting contributions, not all of them have been published. Some were published in the book from Halilović's son, Semir Halilović, under the sensational title *State Secret*. Despite the fact that Sefer Halilović's memoirs do not provide sarcastic testimonies and observations regarding military operations, the siege of Sarajevo, or the construction of the Dobrinja-Butmir (DB) tunnel, he does offer his own judgment about the Patriotic League and many interesting situations behind military and political events. In the context of intelligence and counterintelligence work and political turmoil during the war, this book can serve as a unique starting point. While many polemics act like conspiracy theories in some places, Sefer Halilović's book presents his own view of political developments against the background of the war's events and bloody everyday life. He is very authoritative and gives many answers to various questions about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sefer Halilović's command ended after the various vicissitudes that had happened during *Operation Neretva 93* and the problems on Mount Igman. He was replaced by

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dquarters, Hasan Efendić, was submitted by Jerko Doko, the Minister of Defense. In the explanation for the requested dismissal, Doko cited the Decree with legal force OS RBiH, which was adopted by the Presidency on May 20, 1992. Izetbegović announced his dismissal, because of calls that people were looking for a younger commander. The second reason was that Efendić had 44 years and 11 months of service and that he met all the requirements for a pension. These were just reasons for dismissal, though, as Efendić did not meet any conditions for retirement (see Smail Čekić, Vahid Karavelić, Nedžad Ajnadžić, Selmo Cikotić, Šefko Hodžić, Muhamed Smajić, Mesud Šadinlija, *First Corps of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law of the University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, 2017, p. 83).

Rasim Delić, who'd become an army general. Delić wrote several books about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ARBIH. Due to the fact that Delić had held several different positions during the war, his book is also richer in content. His views regarding the attempts to unblock Sarajevo are interesting. Namely, he believes that the command had invested too little time (only 15-20 days) in preparing the unit for such a feat. That was not even enough time to pull the planned units out of the battle and bring them to the area of use, let alone enough time for them to get their needed rest.

Like most foreign and domestic authors, Delić regularly states that the ARBIH had constant problems with the lack of ammo, especially a lack of adequate artillery tools, cannons, howitzers, self-propelled guns, and mortars. This situation was especially effective in the besieged Sarajevo, where the artillery of the ARBIH First Corps could not match the strength and capabilities of the artillery of the Sarajevo-Romanian Army of Republica Srpska (VRS) Corps, which held the capital in a ring. Delić describes in detail the preparations and execution of each serious attempt to unblock Sarajevo, especially the last attempt, Operation T (*Tekbir*). In his final assessment, General Delić believed that the army was not ready even in 1995 to carry out such a complex operation (Delić, p.440 2005). When considering how Halilović and Delić had been in a silent conflict, this can also be noticed in Delić's writing. Halilović was the one who'd mentioned Operation *Trebević 2* in a negative context, namely when the military turmoil had occurred in Sarajevo and the army had broken the will of the commanders of the 9th and 10th Mountain Brigades. Ramiz Delalić-Ćelo and Mušan Topalović-Caco were the main antagonists of this operation. Delić remained at the ARBIH Staff until his retirement in 2000. After the war, he was sentenced to three years in prison for failing to take the necessary and reasonable measures to prevent and punish the perpetrators who were under the responsibility of his command for the district-level crimes from the *El Mujahid* detachment (United Nations, 2008).

Major General Firkret Muslimović is one of the most important senior officers of the ARBIH in the field of security, intelligence, and counter-intelligence work. He is the author of numerous books and articles related to the war in BiH and to safety, security, and geopolitics. Just like Halilović, Muslimović is not inclined in his memoirs to describe the preparations and execution of military operations within the First Corps, instead writing about military-political events far behind the front line. The political turmoil and conflict with Halilović are also represented in his memoirs. As for Sarajevo

during the siege, Muslimović's works are mostly focused on the tasks of the State Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. For anyone familiar with wartime conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, conflicts between the high-ranking officials of these institutions are nothing new. Muslimović was always a witness and even a participant in this turmoil.

In his memoirs, Major General Muslimović presents his plan and vision for the possible unblocking of the capital. Interestingly and unlike most generals who had operations at the operational or proposed level against almost every blockade, Muslimović had proposed a multi-composite, combined tactical operation, where a larger number of smaller strike groups would act in a partisan manner against the blockade.<sup>2</sup>

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Hamid Bahto spent most of his time in the area of the besieged Sarajevo, in the ARBIH command in Kakanj, and in the besieged Goražde. He led the first military operations under the banner of the Patriotic League and was one of its first organizers. He was one of the participants in the illegal delivery of weapons in Sarajevo and Rogatica. However, he devotes much more space in his memoirs to the defense of the city of Goražde and provides a lot of interesting information on the ground. His memoirs can be used as a significant source in the study of the original structures of Territorial Defence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (TORBiH).

Hamid Bahto presents the structure, appearance, and commanders for almost all of the units in Sarajevo in his book. Although he was a member of the Patriotic League, he quickly realized that war can only be waged by respecting the legal institutions of defense. He also mentions the problem of disrespecting the handling and command system in his book, stating that in addition to the lack of infantry weapons, materials and technical means, and heavy artillery, the most complex problem involved placing all armed groups, units, and individuals under the single command of the General Command. The most stubborn were the Green Berets, whose leaders had minimized,

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2 The original idea of Major-General Muslimović was to form a battalion-level unit that would be made up of 600 selected fighters who were young and mentally strong; among them would be enough of those who knew the infrastructure and geographical objects, trails and roads in the area of Višegrad, Rogatica, Sokoca, Gorazde, Foče, and Gacka. Furthermore, from the formed battalion, the personnel should be divided into 30 to 40 divisions of 15 to 20 fighters each. For more information, see Fikret Muslimović, Fikret Muslimović, *Argumenti i sjećanja o ratu, Knjiga prva 1990-1993.*, Udruženje za zaštitu tekovina borbe za Bosnu i Hercegovinu, Sarajevo, 2006, 253-255.

obstructed, and ignored the significant power of operation of the Municipal headquarters of the Territorial Defense (OpŠTO) in uniting all armed formations. The Green Berets insisted on the independence and autonomy of their own headquarters, which meant parallelism in military command. Such a policy, could only mean greater complications in command in the long run that would be reflected in human casualties and irreparable military losses on the ground (Bahto, 2008).

General Mehmed Alagić is one of the most famous ARBIH generals. He is known for being the commander of the Third and Seventh Corps of the ARBIH. His military skills were best reflected in the operations in central Bosnia, especially in the liberation of Kupres and Mount Vlašić. Alagić's presented his memoirs somewhat differently than most, giving them in the form of short interviews where Alagić provides details about military operations and everyday war situations in central Bosnia. In his memoirs, General Alagić testifies mostly about the war events in central Bosnia while giving no less importance to the operation to unblock Sarajevo.

As is known, Sarajevo was not militarily liberated; the ARBIH had failed to break through the encirclement of the Sarajevo-Romania VRS Corps after several attempts to unblock it. Alagić states that the main cause of the failure had been poor preparation and secrecy. VRS had learned very quickly about the plans to unblock the capital, and even journalists had been regularly writing about it. Some media reports were more in line with the actual plans and estimates; moreover, these had only delayed the execution of the same operations. For the Sarajevo-Romania Corps VRS, media openness had been beneficial in the besieged Sarajevo. The reports and reportages provided enough time and instructions for the Main Staff of the Sarajevo-Romania Corps to prepare as much as possible for the upcoming operation to unblock the capital. Alagić believes the mistake to have been the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Corps of the ARBIH failure to attack from the flanks, in addition to the lack of a modern agreed-upon attack and the big delay with the preparations. In the end, Alagić attributes part of the blame to the Croatian Council of Defence (HVO) in Kiseljak (Latić, i dr., 1997). I believe that for Alagić, the operation to unblock Sarajevo had been a failure because he had aspired to direct all the military capacities of the Seventh Corps in one moment from Central Bosnia toward the Bosnian Krajina.

Memoirs can be a significant source for understanding military history. This type of material contains the personal emotions and thoughts of the author. Using detailed descriptions and vivid explanations with enough subjective expressions, memoirs are able to allow people to experience a part of the past with a precise understanding of certain topics, and based on the memoirs of an author whose works are the main topic of this study, one can notice the personal justification in many places and faith in their correct behavior. Such dimensions of the discussion of military issues cannot be found in military archives. Documents describing military arrangements are brief, clear, and concise and have no excessive explanations. Memoir materials are incomparably wider and often serve as an interpreter of various issues. All the authors mentioned herein have set themselves as the main characters of the war, often ignoring the situations in which they did not participate; still, they try to present their view of the war. No need exists to describe in more detail what kind of risk a literal understanding of memoirs can pose, and memoirs need to be understood to leave little space for polyvalence. A critical approach is indispensable, given that these are highly politically colored works. The memoirs of Fikret Muslimović and Sefer Halilović lead in this and present two conflicting narratives with much dynamism.

The authors deal almost in a pattern-like manner with similar issues; however, they provide new explanations and ideas in some places that do not fit into everyday public discourse. The true scope of memoir literature occupies a wide space in the discussion and understanding of the military history of Sarajevo. With such a perspective on understanding the memoir literature that is at least in some way related to the war events in Sarajevo, these memoirs have the potential for further research, despite the temporary lack of military sources. Numerous memoirs, or at least some issues that the authors have touched on, was stated earlier to be able to form a starting point for further questioning. The scope of the memoir literature is not constant and always tends to expand. By opening the closed archives, many questions that former officers have asked and debated can be denied or affirmed.

All memoirs share common features; they are limited in scope within historiography by focusing on specific aspects of the author's activities. Often, memoirs do not portray the entire spectrum of the author's experiences. Most importantly, memoirs are inherently subjective, representing the author's memories and interpretations of events. In the case of a memoirs, the authors often position themselves at the center of events,

emphasizing the key importance of their actions. Selective memory is undoubtedly one of the drawbacks of this genre. Keeping in mind that people tend to forget is crucial when analyzing any memoir.

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# МАРИЈА АНДРЕЕВА, ВЛИЈАНИЕТО НА ПОЛИТИЧКИОТ ДИЈАЛОГ ВРЗ ПОЛИТИЧКАТА КУЛТУРА: СТУДИЈА НА МАКЕДОНСКИОТ СЛУЧАЈ Скопје, Антолог, 2023, с.208


Reviewer: Фатима Салифоска

Во текот на 2023 година во издание на Антолог во Скопје на македонски јазик на вкупно 208 страници излезе од печат книгата *Влијанието на политичкиот дијалог врз политичката култура: студија на македонскиот случај* од авторката Д-р Марија Андреева.

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 0009-0000-6989-4362

 Balkan Studies Foundation  
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.51331/B012>  
Journal of Balkan Studies, 4 (1), 2024  
[balkanjournal.org](http://balkanjournal.org)

е во Програмската канцеларија на Советот на Европа во Скопје. Таа е авторка на неколку научни трудови и публикации од различни области. Посебен фокус на нејзиното делување се активности посветени на борбата против говор на омраза и дискриминацијата.

Книгата е составена од вовед, пет поглавја и заклучок и истата претставува обемен научен труд кој дава темелна анализа на клучните теоретски дефиниции, концепти и облици на политичкиот дијалог и политичката култура. Авторката го структурирала трудот на пет тематски поглавја со следните наслови: „Теоретска рамка”, „Различни практики во развојот на политичкиот дијалог и политичката култура”, „Развојот на политичката култура во македонското општество”, „Политичкиот дијалог во македонското општество: Подеми и падови” и „Сегашност и иднина”.

Во првата глава на книгата се анализирани главните теоретски концепти на политичката култура и политичкиот дијалог, но и нивното меѓусебно влијание. Авторката ги разгледува овие теоретски концепти во три различни точки и за секоја од нив прави теоретски преглед на достапната литература со најважните концепти во поглед на политичката култура, политичкиот дијалог и нивната поврзаност. Првата точка во теоретската рамка се осврнува на стручната литература и основните концепти на политичката култура како феномен, втората точка прави анализа и ги изложува главните дефиниции и поделби на политичкиот дијалог, додека третата точка ја истражува поврзаноста на овие два концепта.

Во вториот дел авторката анализира два примера и прави куса анализа на студија на два различни случаи со цел да воспостави основа за подоцнежна анализа. Во оваа глава се разгледува една позитивна и една негативна практика во однос на развојот на политичкиот дијалог и политичката култура, со цел да се извлечат генерални заклучоци од позитивните и негативните практики при градење на политичкиот дијалог и култура. Како студија на случај, авторката во оваа глава ги земала државите Тунис и Јемен и случувањата за време на „арапската пролет“.

Третата глава од книгата е поделена во три точки и секоја од нив се посветува на различни периоди во развојот на политичката култура во државата. Првата точка дава поширок историски контекст и општи карактеристики на политичката култура, вториот дел дава осврт на влијанието на социјалистичкиот и еднопартиски систем во СФРЈ врз обликување на политичката култура, додека последната точка ја

анализира политичката култура и нејзиниот развој од осамостојувањето до денес, вклучувајќи ги и предизвиците со кои се соочувало македонското општество во поглед на политичката култура.

Четвртата глава од оваа книга има вкупно шест посебни целини, и секоја од нив опфаќа различен период од развојот на политичкиот дијалог во државата, при што истата содржи анализа на најважните и најклучните периоди на развојот на политичкиот дијалог и политичките околности. Првата точка го опфаќа периодот на 90-тите години на 20 век, втората точка го опфаќа периодот од 2001 до 2005 година, а третата точка го опфаќа периодот од 2006 до 2016 година. Третата точка содржи четири потточки, при што секоја од нив опфаќа определен временски периоди и настани кои се клучни за периодот од 2006 до 2016 година, односно: Мајскиот договор, Самитот на НАТО во Букурешт, „Црниот понеделник“ (настаните од 24 декември 2012 година и подоцнежните последици и случувања), Шарената револуција и Договорот од Пржино. Поради обемноста на случувањата, потточката „Шарената револуција и Договорот од Пржино“ е поделена на уште четири потточки, со цел да се даде подетален осврт и анализа на целиот период. Овие потточки ги опфаќаат случувањата околу создавањето на Шарената револуција, Договорот од Пржино, случувањата околу Шарената револуција и Граѓанското движење за одбрана на Македонија и изборите во 2016 година. Четвртата точка од оваа глава се фокусира на упадот во Собранието на 27 април 2017 година и последиците од него. Петтата точка дава осврт на важноста и влијанието на политичкиот дијалог и евроинтеграциите на државата. Во шестата точка во ова поглавје кандидатката дава кус осврт на пресвртните и најзначајни моменти во политичкиот дијалог во државата и ги извлекува главните заклучоци од настаните и случувањата опишани во претходните точки од оваа глава.

На почетокот на петтата глава авторката се фокусира на испреплетеноста на политичкиот дијалог и политичката култура во македонското општество, начинот на кој меѓусебно се поврзани и какво меѓусебно влијание имаат. Во продолжение ги анализира главните особености на политичкиот дијалог и нивното влијание врз политичката култура. На крај, авторката се обидува врз основа на изнесената анализа да направи можна проекција за иднината на развојот на политичката култура и политичкиот дијалог.

По тематските поглавја авторката дава опширен заклучок на целокупниот труд, притоа потенцирајќи дека промените во политичкиот дијалог создаваат промени во политичката култура, особено во политички поларизирани општества како македонското, но и дека промените во политичката култура создаваат промени во политичкиот дијалог, односно дека овие два процеси меѓусебно си влијаат еден на друг. Авторката акцентира дека да се создадат долгорочни промени во позитивна насока, односно создавање силна, демократска и парципативна политичка култура, потребна е политичка волја за создавање политички дијалог во кој ќе бидат вклучени различни општествени и политички чинители што ќе ги опфати сите нивоа во општеството, а не само лидерството во политичките партии. Политичкиот дијалог мора истовремено да се одвива внатре во институциите, особено во Собранието, но и да се негува со редовни консултации и дискусии помеѓу политичките партии, и во тие дискусии да се вклучуваат и политичките подмладоци, како идни носители на одлуки што треба да ги продолжат започнатите процеси, особено во поглед на политичкиот дијалог.

Книгата завршува сох листа на целокупната користена литература.

*Делото Влијанието на политичкиот дијалог врз политичката култура: студија на македонскиот случај* е уникатно и единствено заради научниот пристап кон темата која ја обработува. Обемната научна литература што авторката ја користи во книгата овозможува споредување податоци од најразлични извори и тоа е значајна придобивка на овој научен труд. Дополнително, оваа книга дава осврт на клучните периоди на развој на политичката култура и политичкиот дијалог во македонското општество со цел да ја покаже нивната меѓусебна поврзаност и влијание како едни од најважните концепти кои се клучни за развојот на државата и концепти кои во досегашниот тек поминаа низ повеќе турбулентни периоди. Токму затоа, овој труд претставува значајно дело кое дава еден хронолошки преглед на клучните точки и предизвици кои се појавуваа во текот на годините и нуди можни проекции кои се од значаен придонес кон подобрување на општата состојба во поглед на политичката култура и дијалог во иднина.