



## The historical bitola city in north macedonia

**Ahmet Hadrovic**

Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

\* Corresponding Author: **Ahmet Hadrovic**

---

---

### Article Info

**ISSN (online):** 2582-7138

**Impact Factor:** 5.307 (SJIF)

**Volume:** 04

**Issue:** 06

**November-December** 2023

**Received:** 09-09-2023;

**Accepted:** 10-10-2023

**Page No:** 381-393

### Abstract

The author's first visit to Macedonia took place during the study trip Serbia - Kosovo - Macedonia, in connection with the preparation of his doctoral dissertation on the topic of oriental-type townhouses in (then) Yugoslavia. The Author had already met most of these examples in the 'cabinet phase' of the dissertation work, so their in situ tour should complete the Author's image of them, through getting to know them in a real natural and social environment. A large number of drawings made by the Author on that occasion were included in the content of the dissertation (1988) and in the later published book „Architecture in Drawings and Pictures“ (2018). Three more visits to Macedonia followed. During the visit (2007), which was arranged as part of the cooperation of several architectural faculties through the „Tempus“ project, the author visited Skopje in detail, and during the visit (2008), which was arranged on the same occasion, the author visited several cities along the route Skopje - Tetovo - Gostivar – Ohrid - Lake Prespa – Resan – Bitola – Prilep – Veles – Skopje. The reason for the author's fourth visit to Macedonia was participation in the international scientific conference „Fourth International Congress on Islamic Civilization in the Balkans“ organized jointly by the OIC Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, (IRCICA, Istanbul), and the Macedonian Academy of Sciences and Arts (MANU, Skopje, October 13-17, 2010). During the conference, a tour of some Macedonian cities was arranged: Skopje - Veles - Prilep - Bitola - Resan - Ohrid - Gostivar - Tetovo - Skopje. The author experienced each new visit to Macedonia as a meeting with an 'old friend', that is, a meeting with himself.

**Keywords:** North Macedonia, Bitola, Architecture

---

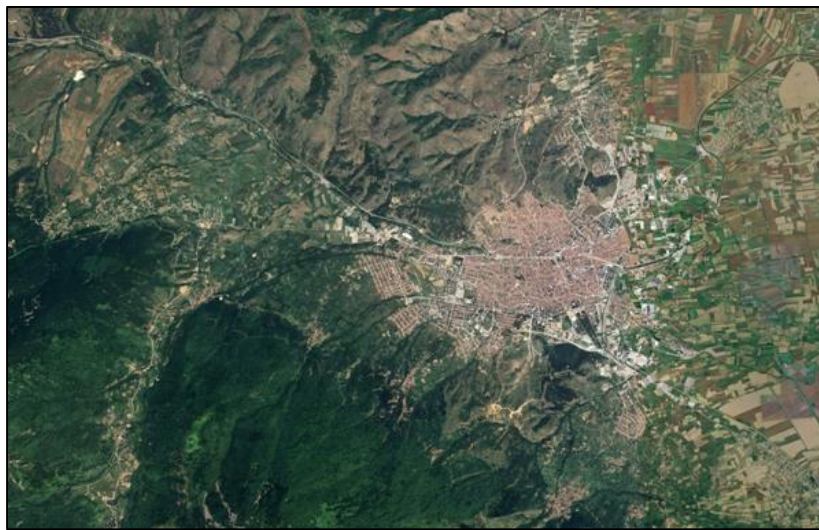
---

### Introduction

The city of Bitola (Greek: Μοναστήρι, Turkish: Monastir) is a city in the southern part of the Pelagonija valley in Macedonia (Geographic coordinates: 41°01'51.10"N, 21°20'04.99"E, Elevation: 610 m), (Figures 1,2). The name 'Bitola' comes from the Old Slavic word 'obitel' with the meaning 'monastery', or 'abbey'. Found remains of material culture testify to the presence of people in this area since prehistoric times. Near the present-day city of Bitola, in ancient times there was a prosperous settlement called Heraclea Lyncestis (Ἡράκλεια Λυγκηστίς), i.e. 'Heracles' city from the land of lynxes', whose founder was Philip II of Macedonia (382-336 BC). The Romans came (148 BC) into possession of this area, and the city began to develop intensively after the construction of the famous Via Egnatia road, which connected it to Durres on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. At this time, significant architectural buildings were built in Heraclea: thermal baths, an amphitheater, several basilicas (markets), a theater that could accommodate 3,000 spectators... During the Byzantine period, this name was Hellenized into the name Voutéliou (Βουτέλιον), i.e. Vitólia (Βιτώλια). Another Greek name for this city is Μοναστήρι, which is still used today. Traces of the presence of people and their dwellings date back to the 4th century BC. Even today, the remains of the Hellenistic settlement Heraclea Lyncestis (Greek: Ἡράκλεια Λυγκηστίς) with the meaning Heracles' city from the land of lynxes, whose founder (in the middle of the 4th century BC) was Philip II of Macedon (382 BC – 336 BC) <sup>[1]</sup>, are visible here. During the early Byzantine era (4th - 6th century), Heraclea was an important religious center, the seat of the bishopric.

After the city was destroyed (472 and 479) by the Ostrogoths led by Theodoric the Great, the city was rebuilt during the 5th and 6th centuries, and again attacked by new arrivals, the Slavs. In the 10th century, the city was ruled by the Bulgarian-Macedonian emperor Samuilo, who built a fort here. Bitola (Monastir) was part of the Ottoman Empire for a long period, from 1382 to 1912. In 1864, the city became the seat of the Monastir ejalet, which included the Sandžaks from today's Macedonia, Greece, and Albania: Debar, Servia, Elbasan, Gorica, and Monastir, as well as the cities of Prilep, Kičevo, Florina, Kastoria, and Gravena. In its 'golden age' (beginning of the 20th century), Bitola was called the consular city, since there were twelve consulates of European countries<sup>[2]</sup>. As soon as it was rebuilt, at the end of the 6th century, the city was attacked by Slavic tribes, before which its previous population retreated. The new residents renovated and added to the defensive walls of the city. In the period from the end of the 8th to the beginning of the 11th century, the city was in the possession of the Bulgarian Empire when Emperor Samuilo built a fortress. At this time, Christianity was gaining strength among the Slavic population, where its main missionaries were Clement of Ohrid and Saint Naum. Many churches and monasteries were built in the city at that time. After the battle (1015) between Byzantium (the reign of the Byzantine emperor Vasilij II, 958-1025) and the Bulgarian Empire (the reign of the emperor Ivan Vladislav, the second half of the 10th century - 1018), the city was once again in the possession of Byzantium. At the end of the 11th century, the city was (briefly) taken over by the Bulgarian Empire with Emperor

Kalojan (1170-1207) at the head, only to be reoccupied by Byzantium. At the end of the 13th century, Bitola was occupied by the Serbian emperor Stefan Dušan (1308-1355). For a long period of time (1382-1912), Bitola was part of the Ottoman Empire when it was called Monastir. According to Evlija Čelebija's travelogue, Monastir had 70 mosques, bezistans and around 900 shops around 1660<sup>[3]</sup>. Monastir became (1864) the center of the eyalet of Rumeli. Monastir was (1894) connected by railway with Thessaloniki (Thessalonica), when it was the second largest in the southern Balkans (behind Thessaloniki - Thessaloniki). In the period (1878-1913), Bitola (Monastir) was the destination of twelve consuls, which is why it got the epithet „city of consuls“. The Military Academy of the Ottoman Army, completed by Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk), worked in this city. It is important to note that a large number of Sephardic Jews from Spain moved to Monastir after 1492 (the Alhambra decree), since they were accepted by the Ottoman Empire led by Sultan Bayazit II (1447-1512). Most of these Jews became victims of the Holocaust when they were taken to the Treblinka camp in Poland during the Second World War. After the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), Bitola was conquered by Serbian forces, after which the previous population began to move out (mainly Ottomans and Bulgarians), and the city lost its importance. During the First World War, Bitola was on the front line, divided into occupation zones, French, Russian, Italian and Serbian. During World War II, the city was governed by Germans and Bulgarians, and from 1944 by Macedonian partisans.



**Source:** Google Earth. Accessed: November 5, 2023.

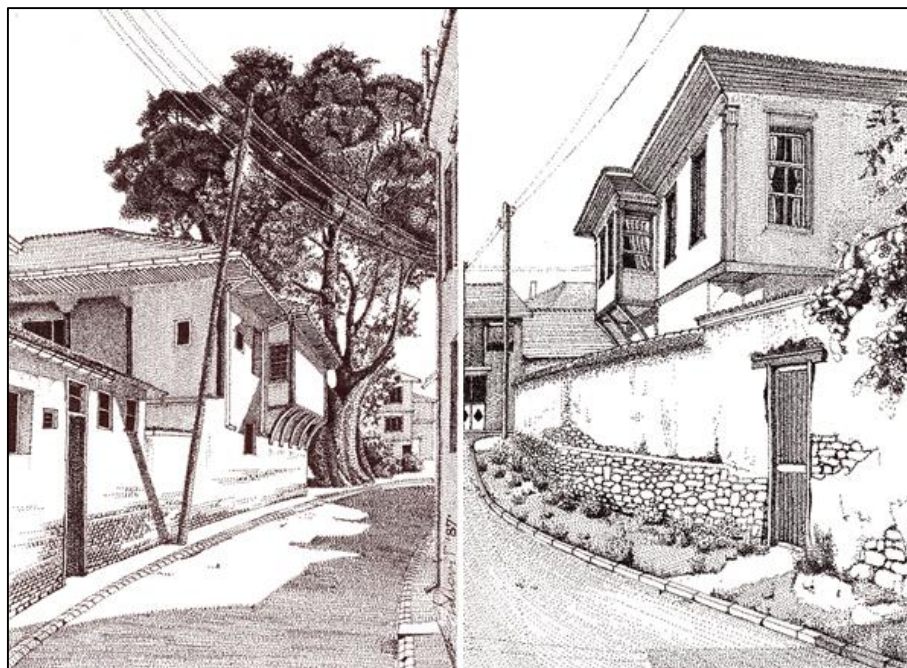
**Fig 1:** The Bitola city in North Macedonia. Location

The author, through a targeted study trip, visited Bitola, and discussed several examples of its residential architecture in his doctoral dissertation (1988), which was published in Bosnian (2004) and in English (2007) under the title

“Defining Architectural Space on examples of oriental type City House in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia”<sup>[4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]</sup> (Figure 3).



Fig 2: Map of North Macedonia. (The places the author visited are marked with red squares)



Source: Author (Drawing, 1987)

Fig 3: Houses in Bitola

## 2. Natural resources and monuments

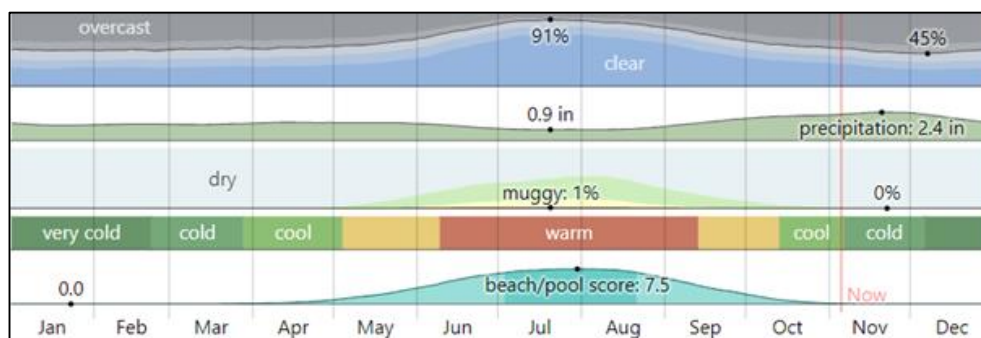
According to the Köppen climate classification, the climate in Bitola can be marked with CSW „ax“ - a specific variant of the ethetic climate with a dry and very hot summer and a rainy winter period, divided into a shorter cold and dry period, with the first rainfall maximum in autumn, and the second in Spring. This variant is called the Macedonian variant of the Etesian climate because it is typical for Macedonia, especially for areas at 500-600 meters above sea level. Bitola is a typical representative of this variety with dry and very hot summers, and winters and spring with abundant precipitation. This classification, applied in conditions such

as ours, is modified and marked with C1fSb, which means less precipitation and a greater degree of aridity in the summer period. It should be pointed out that the new residential construction of the city, especially in the western parts of the city, certainly affects the change in microclimatic conditions, bringing some new problems with ventilation, sunlight supply and ventilation. Whole city. The microclimate is influenced by air pollution caused by large pollutants (REK Bitola, city boilers, traffic, house chimneys and industrial zone) that emit gases that are one of the components of dense fogs that pass into industrial smog <sup>[11, 12]</sup>.

In Bitola, summers are warm, dry and mostly clear, and winters are very cold, snowy and partly cloudy. During the year, the temperature usually varies from  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $28^{\circ}\text{C}$  and is rarely below  $-9^{\circ}\text{C}$  or above  $32^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The warm season lasts for 3.3 months, from June 6 to September 14, with an average high daily temperature above  $24^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The warmest month of the year in Bitola is July, with an average highest temperature of  $28^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the lowest of  $14^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The cold season lasts 3.5 months, from November 24 to March 9, with an average daily temperature below  $9^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The coldest month of the year in Bitola is January, with the average lowest temperature of  $-3^{\circ}\text{C}$  and the highest of  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The wet season lasts 8.4 months, from September 29 to June 12, with a greater than 20% chance that a given day will be a rainy day. The month with the most rainy days in Bitola is November, with an average of 7.3 days with at least 1.00 millimeters of precipitation. The drier season lasts 3.6 months, from June 12 to September 29. The month with the fewest rainy days in Bitola is August, with an average of 4.5 days with at least 1.00 millimeter of precipitation. It rains in Bitola throughout the year. The month with the most rain in Bitola is November, with an average amount of precipitation of 58 millimeters. The month with the least rain in Bitola is July, with an average amount of precipitation of 24 millimeters. As with rain, we consider snowfall accumulated over a 31-day rolling period around each day of the year. Bitola experiences some seasonal variation in monthly snowfall. The snowy period of the year lasts for 4.6 months, from November 6 to March 24, with a

rolling 31-day snowfall of at least 25 millimeters. The month with the most snow in Bitola is December, with an average amount of snow of 89 millimeters. The snow-free period of the year lasts 7.4 months, from March 24 to November 6. The least snow falls around July 19, with an average total accumulation of 0 millimeters. The length of the day in Bitola varies significantly throughout the year. The average hourly wind speed in Bitola experiences mild seasonal variation over the course of the year. The windiest part of the year lasts for 5.6 months, from November 17 to May 5, with an average wind speed greater than 2.7 meters per second. The windiest month of the year in Bitola is March, with an average hourly wind speed of 3. meters per second. The quieter time of the year lasts 6.4 months, from May 5 to November 17. The calmest month of the year in Bitola is August, with an average hourly wind speed of 2.3 meters per second. Average daily shortwave solar energy has extreme seasonal variations throughout the year. The brighter period of the year lasts for 3.0 months, from May 19 to August 20, with an average daily incident shortwave energy per square meter above 6.6 kWh. The brightest month of the year in Bitola is July, with an average of 7.6 kWh.

The darker period of the year lasts 3.5 months, from October 30 to February 15, with the average daily incident shortwave energy per square meter below 3.0 kWh. The darkest month of the year in Bitola is December, with an average of 1.8 kWh<sup>[11, 12]</sup> (Figure 4).



**Source:** Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Bitola, Macedonia

<https://weatherspark.com/y/86830/Average-Weather-in-Bitola-Macedonia-Year-Round> Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 4:** Bitola weather by month

The most important natural resource of Bitola is the spacious and fertile plain of Pelagonija and the mild climate that enables farming, i.e. the cultivation of cereals (including rice)

and vegetables. Mount Baba (with Pelister as the highest peak) is a 'water collector' from precipitation, so there are many sources of drinking water there (Figures 5,6,7,8).



**Source:** <https://hr.advisor.travel/poi/Baba-Planina-Makedonija-5476>, Accessed: November 7, 2023.

**Fig 5:** Mount Baba near Bitola

**Source:**

<https://tourguide.com.mk/%D0%B6%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B0%D0%B2%D0%B8%D1%86%D0%B0-%D0%BF%D0%B5%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B8%D1%98%D0%B0/>, Accessed: November 7, 2023.

**Fig 6:** Pelagonia

**Source:** <https://dmwc.org.mk/2020/04/15/recreational-activities-on-mount-pelister/>, Accessed: November 7, 2023.

**Source:** <https://peakvisor.com/peak/pelister.html>, Accessed: November 7, 2023.

**Fig 7:** Water sources on Baba mountain

The Dragor river flows through Bitola (Figure 8). These resources have been attractive to people who have inhabited

this area continuously from prehistory to the present day.

**Source:**

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dragor\\_in\\_Bitola.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Dragor_in_Bitola.jpg), Accessed: November 7, 2023.

**Fig 8:** Dragor river in Bitola

### 3. Architectural cultural and historical heritage

Thanks to its rich resources, the area of Bitola has been inhabited by people from prehistoric times to the present day, as evidenced by many archaeological finds of material culture, among which architecture has an important place (Figures 9, 10). In the following, the most important architectural, cultural and historical monuments in Bitola will be presented. Heraclea Lyncestis (Ancient Greek: Ἡράκλεια Λυγκηστίς; Latin: Heraclea Lyncestis; Macedonian:

Herakleja Linkestis), was an ancient Greek city in Macedonia, which was later ruled by the Romans<sup>[13]</sup>. Its ruins are located 2 km south of the present-day city of Bitola, North Macedonia<sup>[14]</sup>. In the early Christian period, Heraclea was an important episcopal seat and an important point on the Via Egnatia road that once connected Byzantium with Rome via the Adriatic port of Dyrrachium. The city was gradually abandoned in the 6th century after earthquakes and Slavic invasions.



**Source:** <https://cineculture.online/en/archaeological-site-of-heraclea-lyncestis-bitola/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 9:** Remains of Heracles near Bitola

In the early Byzantine period (4th to 6th century), Heraclea was an important episcopal center. The small and large basilica, the bishop's residence, and the funeral basilica and necropolis are some of the remains from this period. The three naves in the Great Basilica are covered with mosaics of very rich floral and figurative iconography; these well-preserved mosaics are often considered excellent examples of the period of early Christian art. The city was sacked by Ostrogoth/Visigothic forces commanded by Theodoric the Great in 472 and, despite a large gift given to him by the city's

bishop, was sacked again in 479. It was rebuilt at the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th century. When an earthquake occurred in 518, the inhabitants of Heraclea gradually left the city. Subsequently, on the eve of the 7th century, the Dragovi, a Slavic tribe that was pushed from the north by the Avars, settled in this area. The last issue of coins dates from ca. 585, which suggests that the city was finally occupied by the Slavs. As a result, several huts were built on the site of the abandoned city theater<sup>[15]</sup>.



**Source:** Dimitrova, E. The Mosaic at the Entrance of the Episcopal Basilica in Heraclea Lyncestis: Its Didactical Sharge and Ritual Impact over the Congregation Socio-Cultural Essay, UDK 904:738.5(497.774)“04”

**Fig 10:** Mosaic at the entrance to the bishop's basilica in Heraclea Lyncestis

Ishak Çelebi Mosque is the largest mosque in Bitola. It is located along the northern bank of the river Dragor. This area was known as Bit-Pazar in the neighborhood of Emir Bey or Eyne Bey, also known as Ishak Çelebi mahalle<sup>[16]</sup>. Known as Ishakkiye, this mosque was named after its founder, Judge Ishak Çelebija, son of Isa Fakih, and was built in 1506 (Figure 11). The marble slab and the inscription are written in eight verses divided into eight equal fields. The date is given as a chronogram and is written in Nesih:  
„Help (comes) in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the

Compassionate.  
the old house was beautified by the chronogram  
His noble Ishak ibn Isa, may his happiness last,  
May His honor increase in Paradise  
He built the mosque, fortunately for us.  
By this he gained the grace of the All-Knowing.  
After that, inspired, he dictated the chronogram:  
He arrived in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the  
Compassionate“.



Source: Author (June 16, 2008)

**Fig 11:** Ishak Celebi mosque

Hadzi Mahmud-bey's mosque is located in the old Bitola bazaar, near the Dragor river (Figure 12). At the time when Evlija Celebija was in Bitola (1660), this part of the market belonged to turners (Çekrekçi) and tailors, near the Horse Market (At-pazar). The mosque was built in 1521-1522. year, and it was restored in 1873. The founder of the mosque and

its complex was Hacı Mahmud Bey, known in the city as Tomruk Aga (prison guard). He may have been one of the war heroes (Gazis) of Sultan Bayazıt Khan and because of this he was appointed governor of the city, which he ruled in a despotic manner.



Source: Author (June 16, 2008)

**Fig 12:** Hadzi-Mahmut-bey mosque

Kodza Kadi Mosque is located near the Upper Wooden Market (Odun Pazar) and Yeni Hammam. The mosque was

built in 1529 (Figure 13).



Source: <https://bitola.info/kodzha-kadi-mosque-in-bitola/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 13:** Koça Kadi Mosque

Üç Şeyhler or Hamza Bey Cami (also Three Sheikhs Mosque) is located in the western part of the city, towards Hamza-beg, between the Kuruderesi stream and the Zandan kulesi towers (Figure 14). This mosque (probably) dates back to the sixteenth century, before the year 1634. The only records of the mosque are the date (1798) painted on the tambour of the dome and a marble inscription that says the building was renovated in 1273 AH (1857-1858). The Üç Şeyhler or Hamza-bey mosque has no foundation plaque and

no archival data that could determine the date of its construction. There is a possible connection with Hamza Bey's mosque in Thessaloniki, which was built in 1468 by his daughter Hafsa and reconstructed in 1619. Hamza Bey was an important commander under Sultans Murat II (1421-1444, 1446-1451) and Mehmed II (1444- 1446, 1451-1481). He had his feudal estates in Thrace, and he built a zaviya in Edirne, which became the center of the Halveti dervish order that arrived in Europe under Sultan Bayazıt II (1481-1512) [17].



Source: Author (June 16, 2008)

Fig 14: Hamza Bey Mosque

The Gazi Hajdar Kadi mosque in Bitola was built by Hajdar-beg, the then begler-beg of Rumelia ejalet, the largest Ottoman administrative territory, with the Monastery (Bitola) as the regional center. According to an Arabic inscription on a stone slab above the door, the mosque was built in 969 A.H. (1561/1562). The mosque is a sub-domed building with massive walls about 1.4 meters thick. The builders were from a small village in the vicinity of the Monastery, but the project was most likely created by an unknown Islamic architect, influenced by the works of famous architects of the time, such as Kodza Mimar Sinan. In the description of Evlija Celebija's journey through the Balkans in the 17th century, this mosque is considered one of the most beautifully decorated. The study of the remains shows that the Haydar-Kadi mosque was the only mosque in Bitola with two minarets. Marble decorations decorate the mihrab and trompe in the shape of a triangle. A stone relief is visible on the portal, capitals and

pulpit. Colorful geometric motifs can be found around the windows, on the arches, as well as on the trumpets. The wood-carved doors are made in shallow relief. The most expressive motif is the stylized Arabic letter 'elif'. This type of carved door can be seen in Istanbul mosques. The mosque was repaired in 1890. We also know that all the mosques in the city were restored before the visit of Mehmed V in 1910, which is confirmed by some elements of the painted interior decoration of the time. After the end of the five hundred years of Ottoman rule in 1912, the mosque was abandoned. The lead from the dome was stolen and the dome was rebuilt only in 1967. It was later used as a packaging warehouse for a local distillery, then as a concert hall. In 2016, the mosque was completely renovated with funds from the General Directorate of Foundations (Turkey), which oversees the management of Islamic inalienable endowments (waqifs) dating back to the Ottoman era (Figure 15).



Source: <https://bitola.info/haydar-kadi-mosque-in-bitola/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

Source: <https://en.advisor.travel/poi/Gazi-Hajdar-Kadi-Mosque-30291>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

Fig 15: Gazi Hajdar Kadi Mosque

The Yeni Mosque in Bitola was built in 1558 by Kadi Mahmud-efendi. It is known for its exceptional decorations and stalactites, the only ones of their kind in the country. Today, this mosque houses an art gallery (Figure 16). According to local legends, the mosque was built on the site of a church dedicated to Saint George. This was confirmed in

archaeological research (2004-2010) under the leadership of Gordana Filipovska Lazarovska, which discovered the foundations of four basilicas and one older mosque on the basis of which the Yeni mosque was built [18]. The mosque was built (1558/1559) during the reign of Sultan Suleiman I (Suleiman the Magnificent, 1494-1566) by order of the judge



Mehmed Effendi. Its architecture resembles the architecture of the main Bitola mosque, the Ishak Celebi Mosque, and

represents a transitional phase between the early Ottoman style and the classical Ottoman style [18].



Source: <https://bitola.info/jeni-mosque/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 16:** The Yeni mosque

The old bazaar-bezistan in the city of Bitola was built in the 15th century. Its restoration began in 2014 as part of the activities of its inclusion on the UNESCO list of world cultural heritage (Figure 17). The surviving records from Bitola, which refer to the period from the 16th to the 19th century, mention many public buildings characteristic of Turkish architecture, including the covered bazaar „Bezisten

– Bedesten“ with its 86 shops. Built in the 15th century, this covered bazaar is a donation of Beglerbeg of Rumelia, grand vizier and famous donor Kodž Daut Pasha Uzunčaršili. Although often looted and burned, Bezisten served as a kind of vault, where the tax money of the Rumelia province was kept.



Source: <https://bitola.info/bezisten-bitola/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 17:** The old bazaar-bezistan in Bitola

Hamam Deboj was a public bath built in the Old Bazaar, in the city of Bitola, during the Ottoman Empire. It was built in the 15th-16th century. The hammam is located near the Hajdar-kadi mosque. This is how the Ottoman way of life of the hammam-mosque, which served local citizens next to the

bazaar, was connected. From the 15th century until 1912 (the First Balkan War), there were about ten hamams in Bitola, and only the Deboj hamam has been preserved. The hammam is separated into a women's and a men's part. Today, the hammam is a textile shop (Figure 18).



**Source:** <https://www.offexploring.com/departures1/albums/bitola-macedonia>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

**Fig 18:** Hamam Deboj in Bitola

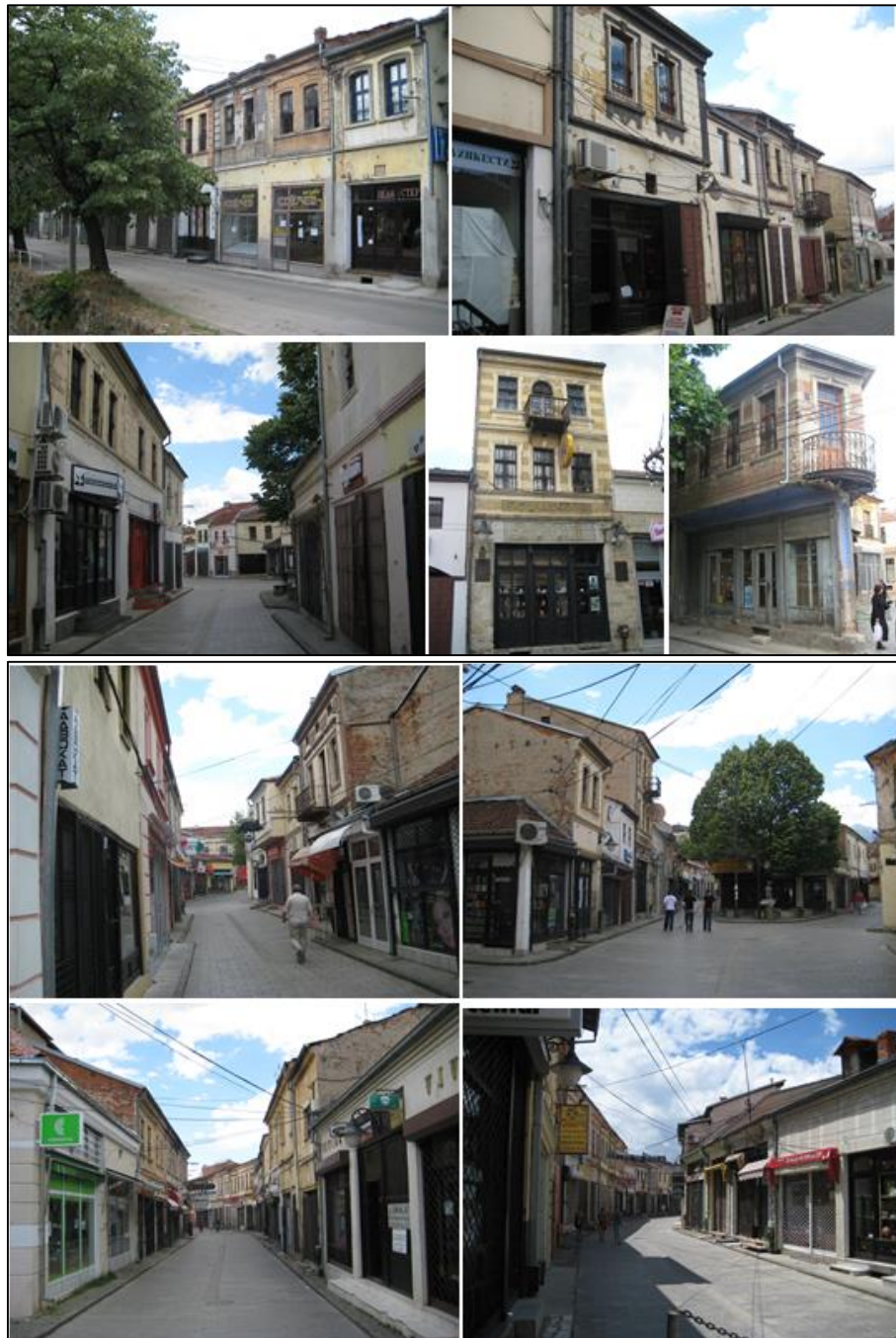
The Old Bazaar (Macedonian: Stara čaršija, romanized: Stara čaršija) is a bazaar located in Bitola, North Macedonia, located on the north bank of the Dragor River in the center of the city. The bazaar served as the center of trade activity for Bitola since the 15th century [19]. As the third most important European city in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-19th century after Istanbul and Thessaloniki, Bitola had over

2,000 shops with approximately 140 different trades and professions [20]. The most famous individual objects in the Old Bazaar in Bitola are: Bezisten (located opposite the Clock Tower across the Dragor river), Deboj Hamam, Gazi Hajdar Kadi Mosque, Ishak Çelebi Mosque, Kerim Bey Hamam (Figures 19, 20).



**Source:** Neran Rustempasic (June 16, 2008)

**Fig 19:** Author in the city of Bitola



Source: Author (June 16, 2008)

**Fig 20:** The old bazaar in Bitola. The bazaar is the business part of the city arranged according to the Oriental-Ottoman city scheme

The clock tower in the city of Bitola was first built by Mahmut Bey in 1664 when the city was part of the Ottoman Empire and known as Manastir. The Ottomans rebuilt the tower in the thirties of the 19th century, in the same period when the Orthodox Church of St. Dimitri was being built<sup>[21]</sup>. The tower is located in the center of Bitola, on the northern part of the main street Širok Sokak, not far from Magnolia Square, where there are numerous cultural and historical

monuments, as well as new buildings. The clock tower is 33 meters high, with sides of 5.8 m each<sup>[21]</sup>. On all four sides are carved special metal plates attached to arms inscribed with Roman numerals from one to twelve. During the Ottoman period, Eastern Arabic numerals were used. On the upper part there is a small dome (which is more recent, as well as the cross on its top) from which there is a panorama of the city and the surrounding area (Figure 21).



Source: Author (June 16, 2008)

Fig 21: Clock tower in Bitola

The Church of St. Dimitri in Bitola was built in 1830, on the site of the former burned chapel from 1726. Built with the special permission of the Ottoman authorities, the church was supposed to be a modest building, lower than the surrounding mosques. Therefore, it was dug into the ground and built in just four months with donations from Bitola Christians. The interior of the church is richly decorated with fascinating galleries on the second floor, a carved throne, a carved

iconostasis and a pulpit. The iconostasis originates from the middle of the 19th century and was made in shallow carving, later cast and gilded. The bell tower dates back to 1936 and is the work of architect Alexander Derok. Today, the church of St. Dimitrija central church in Bitola, where the largest number of weddings and baptisms take place and is the central place for all major Christian holidays (Figure 22).



Source: <https://cineculture.online/en/st-dimitrij-bitola-church/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.

Fig 22: Church of St. Dimitrija in Bitola

## Conclusion

A rich natural environment (Baba Mountain - a 'catcher' of precipitation, many sources of drinking water, the Dragor River, the fertile Pelagonija plain, a mild climate, for example), a favorable geopolitical position at the crossroads of great civilizations and cultures (ancient Greece, ancient Rome, Byzantium, Ottoman Empire) predestined the origin and development of the town of Bitola. Near the present-day city of Bitola, in ancient times there was a prosperous settlement called Heraclea Lyncestis (Ἡράκλεια Λυγκηστῆς), i.e. 'Heracles' city from the land of lynxes', whose founder was Philip II of Macedonia (382-336 BC). The Romans came (148 BC) into possession of this area, and the city began to develop intensively after the construction of the famous Via Egnatia road, which connected it to Durres on the coast of the Adriatic Sea. At this time, significant architectural buildings were built in Heraclea: thermal baths, an amphitheater, several basilicas (markets), a theater that could accommodate 3,000 spectators... Even today, the remains of the Hellenistic

settlement of Heraclea Lyncestis (Greek: Ἡράκλεια Λυγκηστῆς) with the meaning of Heracles can be seen here a city from the land of lynxes, whose founder (in the middle of the 4th century BC) was Philip II of Macedonia. During the early Byzantine era (4th-6th century), Heraclea was an important religious center, the seat of the bishopric. In the 10th century, the city was ruled by the Bulgarian-Macedonian emperor Samuilo, who built a fort here. Bitola (Monastir) was part of the Ottoman Empire for a long period, from 1382 to 1912. According to Evlija Celebije's travelogue, around 1660, Monastir had 70 mosques, bezistan and around 900 shops. Monastir became (1864) the center of the eyalet of Rumeli. Monastir was (1894) connected by railway with Thessalonika, when it was the second largest in the southern Balkans (behind Thessalonika). In the period (1878-1913), Bitola (Monastir) was the destination of twelve consuls, which is why it got the epithet 'city of consuls'. The Military Academy of the Ottoman Army, completed by Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Ataturk), worked in this city. After the Balkan

Wars (1912-1913), Bitola was conquered by Serbian forces, after which the previous population began to move out (mainly Ottomans and Bulgarians), and the city lost its importance. During the First World War, Bitola was on the front line, divided into occupation zones, French, Russian, Italian and Serbian. During World War II, the city was governed by Germans and Bulgarians, and from 1944 by Macedonian partisans.

In the synergy of the natural and social environment, human knowledge and skills are generated, which results in the creation, development and open perspectives of Bitola and the broader social community - the Republic of North Macedonia.

## References

1. Room A. Placenames of the world: origins and meanings of the names for 6,600 countries, cities, territories, natural features, and historic sites (2nd ed.), Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2006, 60.
2. Zaimov J, Lysaght TA. The Bitolya Inscription of the Bulgarian Autocrat Ivan Vladislav. *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*. 1970; 1015-18:1-15. 418.
3. Celebija E. (1611-1682). *Seyahatname, Fragments of Yugoslav lands*, H. Sabanovic Edition, Sarajevo 1967, 303-306 (in Bosnian)
4. Hadrovic A. *Defining Architectural Space on the Model of the Oriental Style CityHouse in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia*, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA. 2007, 14-26, 196, 212.
5. Hadrovic A. *Architecture in the travelogues of an architect. Book 1: Balkan*, Faculty of Architecture University in Sarajevo, Sarajevo, 2018, 901-915 (in Bosnian)
6. Hadrovic A. *Architecture in drawings and paintings*, Faculty of Architecture, University of Sarajevo, 2018, 122-123 (in Bosnian)
7. Ahmet Hadrovic. *Drawings by architect Ahmet Hadrovic*. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, ISSN (online): 2582-7138 Volume: 03 Issue: 04 July-August 2022
8. Krunic J. *Zbornik Arhitektonskog fakulteta u Beogradu, knjiga III, sveska 5*, Beograd, 1956, 86, 87, (in Serbian)
9. Cipan B. *Old Macedonian house, Values of cultural tradition*, Materials from the symposium „Old city architecture and urbanization of cities, Ohrid, 1964, 17.-21. 12., 1964. (in Macedonian)
10. Grabrijan D. *The Macedonian house and the transition from the old oriental to the modern European house*. Partisan Book, Scientific Press, Ljubljana, 1976.
11. Ahmet Hadrovic. *Graphic Design Cover Books by Professor Ahmet Hadrovic*, *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Publications (IJMRAP)*. 2022; 4(12):69-86.
12. *Climate of Bitola* <https://bitola.info/climate-in-bitola/>, Accessed: November 5, 2023.
13. *Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Bitola, Macedonia* <https://weatherspark.com/y/86830/Average-Weather-in-Bitola-Macedonia-Year-Round> Accessed: November 5, 2023.
14. Fergus M. *Rome, the Greek World, and the East: Volume 1: The Roman Republic and the Augustan Revolution*, The University of North Carolina Press, 2001, 225.
15. Hammond NGL. *A History of Macedonia, Volume I: Historical geography and prehistory*, Oxford:At the Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, 1972, 59.
16. Dimitrova E. *The Mosaic at the Entrance of the Episcopal Basilica in Heraclea Lyncestis: Its Didactical Sharge and Ritual Impact over the Congregation Socio-Cultural Essay*, UDK 904:738.5(497.774)“04”
17. Mihajlovski R. *The Sixteenth Century Mosques Of Bitola / Toli Manastir*, УДК. 726.71 (497.774)
18. Mihajlovski, R. *The seventeen-century Ottoman religious architecture of Bitola/Manastir*, УДК. 726.2.033.39(497.774)“16”
19. Mihajlovski R. *The yeni mosque in bitola in the light of the most recent archaeological information*. *Patrimonium.mk*. 2008-2009; 3-4(5-6):183-188.
20. Tasevski J. *Bitola. Nasa Kniga*, 1970, 77.
21. *Folklore macédonien*. 2002, 30:60-61.
22. Димовска Чоловик, Саат кулите во Република Македонија, УДК. 725.94(497.7)(049.3) (in Macedonian).