

**THE SELAMLUK IN VRANJE (PART I):
ARCHITECTONIC FORM DEVELOPMENT BASED
ON HISTORICAL SOURCES**

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Aleksandra Mirić¹, Goran Jovanović², Nadja Kurtović Folić³

¹Institut de Recherche sur l'Architecture Antique, chercheur associée, France

²University of Niš, Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Serbia

³University of Novi Sad, Faculty of Technical Sciences, Serbia

Abstract. *Pašini konaci (Pasha's residence), Selamluk and Haremluk in Vranje, are typical representatives of Balkan Oriental architecture of 18th century. In spite of the buildings becoming very decrepit and prone to dilapidation due to their structural characteristics, in terms of their function and construction technique, they represent an evidence of the living standard of a social class and the social relationships of the historical age they belong to.*

With the aid of an analysis of historical data, the part 1 of this paper presented the results of the research of the origins and development of the Selamluk in Vranje and its surrounding area with an attempt to determine architectonic genesis from the original structure, through the destruction phases and reconstruction to the present day status. In addition to the information published in the relevant literature, the data were collected by analyzing old plans, photographs and documents archived in various cultural institutions.

In the part 2 of this paper, the structural and decorative elements of the Selamluk are discussed for the first time in literature.

Key words: *Balkan Oriental architecture, Pašini konaci, Selamluk, Vranje, post and pan construction, historical sources.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Dzinolis, wealthy Muslim family, came from Albania to Kosovo in 18th century. They had their estates in Priština, Gnjilane (Fig. 1) and Skopje, but also in Vranje and the vicinity. According to the secondary sources the *Pašini konaci*¹ complex in Vranje was built for Rauf-Bey Dzinoli [1] in the second half of 18th century, most likely in 1765. The land lot,

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Corresponding author: Aleksandra Mirić

Institut de Recherche sur l'Architecture Antique, chercheur associée, France

E-mail: aleksmiric@gmail.com

¹ A large house in Turkish architecture, usually official residence

comprising the spacious yard on both sides of the building, belonging to a single architectonic entity – the *Haremluk*² and *Selamluk*³, was for the first time recorded on the Vranje town Plan with regulation lines of 1881.⁴ This plan maintained the directions of main traffic lines, oriented south-north and east-west and planned for a square in the city center, exactly at the intersection of the traffic routes, in the vicinity of the *Pašini Konaci*. The central position of the pasha's residence served to emphasize his wealth and omnipresence as symbols of power.

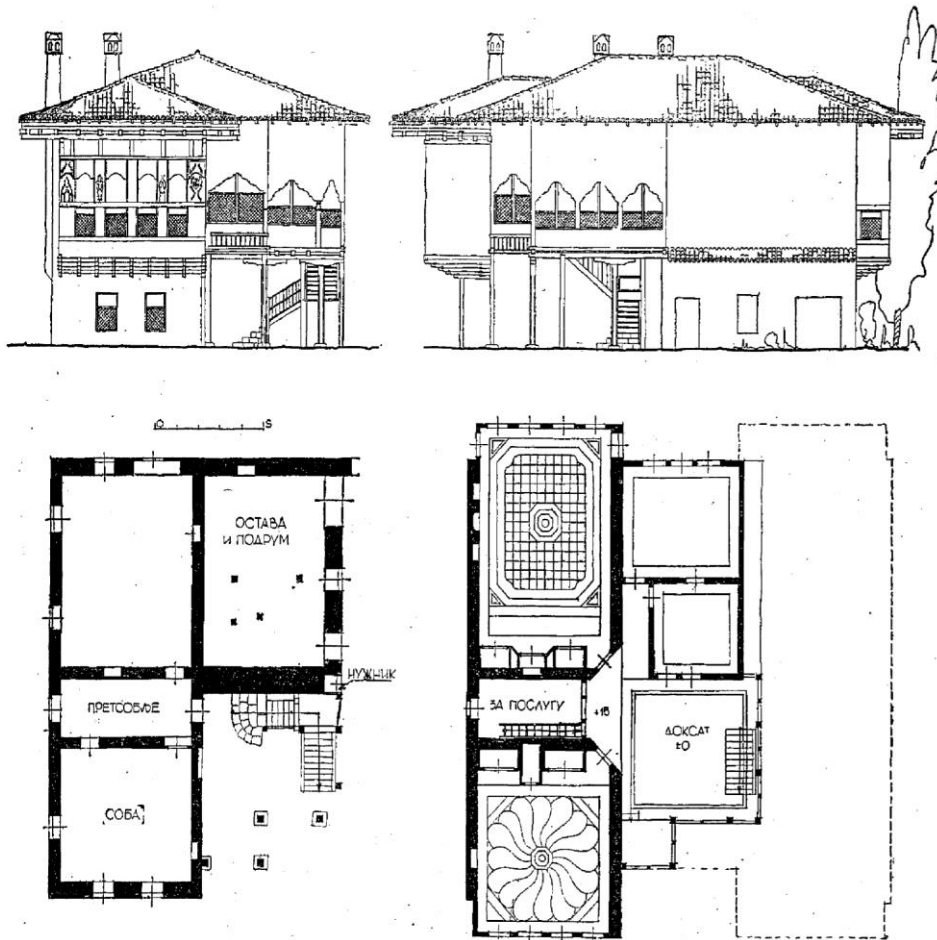


Fig. 1 Residence of the Dzinoli family in Gnjilane, asymmetrical, humbler than their home in Vranje, (B. Kojić, 1949, 85)

² A house or a section of a Turkish house reserved for women or private family life

³ A house or a portion of a Turkish house reserved for men

⁴ As Haremluk and Selamluk today exist as two independent buildings, they are named in capital letters.

There are no data on how the buildings were used from the moment of construction to the period of liberation from the Turks. In an analogy with established function of *Havzi-pasha's* residence in Bardovci, Macedonia, [2] it can be presumed that the complex had a residential function in the *Haremluk* part and residential-administrative in the *Selamluk* section. It is, also, the most common type of functional division in the Oriental residential architecture. [3, 4]

After the liberation from the Turks, in 1881, bishop *Pajsije* bought off the residence from the daughter of *Hussein Pasha*, so it survived unharmed the wrath of the people who destroyed numerous other Turkish buildings. The bishop then gave the building as a present to the municipality, which used the complex to accommodate educational institutions. In the following period, the residence housed one of the first grammar schools in Serbia. At the ground level of *Selamluk* at the beginning of 20th century housed the primary school *Vuk Karadžić*, and the floor housed the *Teacher's academy*.

The complex was used as municipal administrative building from 1932, when the grammar school was moved out of the building, until 1964 when the National Museum with its depots was moved into the *Selamluk*, and the Archives were moved into the *Haremluk*. At the end of 1993 the *Haremluk* building was given to the Simpo Company, and it was completely reconstructed, and it housed a representative business club until 2014. The *Selamluk* is nowadays one of the exhibition spaces of the National Museum, and accommodates for the administration of the institution and as small depot area. Both buildings of the former *Pašini konaci* in Vranje were, by the decree of the Institute of protection and scientific research of the cultural monuments of People's Republic of Serbia placed under protection of the state, by the beginning of February 1949. The buildings were proclaimed the cultural monuments of great significance in April 1979. [5]

2. ANALYSIS OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT BASED ON LITERATURE, OLD PLANS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Since the original design was not preserved, and that the texts of travelers who visited Vranje such as F. Kanitz, S. Jovanović, J. Krunić, mostly presented a general image of a Turkish provincial town, without any particular mention of the building constructed for Rauf-Bey Dzinoli, there is not much knowledge about the original architecture of the residence.

The oldest information about the building can be obtained by the analysis of the retouched photograph of the entry, southern façade of the *Selamluk* from the period before 1932, when the grammar school of Vranje was housed in it (Fig. 2) and by comparing it with the present day appearance of the building (Fig. 3).

The dominant impression is that the arrangement and relation of masses has been retained. The arrangement of three posts on the porch and the mutual relationship of dimensions of the arches coincide with the current situation, as well as existence and approximate position of the eyebrow dormer and chimney. Because of the poor quality of the old photograph, no clear conclusion can be drawn about the profiling of vertical corner decorative strips, nor about the horizontal cornice, but it is a fact that they existed by the beginning of the 20th century. What is different is the shape, materialization and height of the stairs, as there were three of them at the time when the grammar school used the *Selamluk*. They were made of dressed stone blocks [6]. Also different from the current appearance is the façade finish. Namely, the old photograph bears evidence of the pronounced plinth which does not exist nowadays. The stair landing was also positioned



Fig. 2, 3 View of the entry façade of the grammar school prior to its moving out, around 1930, archive photo and in 2012, photo Z. Radosavljevic Kiki

centrally in respect to the entrance door, but it was shorter, which formed the lateral niches. The noticeable difference in respect to the present day appearance is that there are fewer windows on the entrance façade and absence of small eaves made of wooden strips and boards over them. Considering analogy with other buildings of similar structure, we may assume that the building actually had groups of three windows at the ground floor, as well as on the both wings of the upper floor, and that the central section had four windows, and that for the needs of the grammar school, the middle ones having three openings and lateral ones having four opening were closed. There are no written records in the archive of the Niš Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments about the decision to re-open windows in the later revitalization campaigns. In the photograph, apart from the *Selamluk*, one can see the corner of the adjacent building which does not exist nowadays.

The oldest published floor plan of the *Selamluk* appeared in „Dokumenti narodnog stvaralaštva u prošlosti“ (Documents of vernacular creativity in the past) by the architect I. Zdravković [7] who in photographed it and described it in June 1948 (Fig.4, 5). These drawings were later published in the work of B. Kojić [8] and A. Deroko [9] as well as of other authors. By comparing these layouts with the technical documentation formed in 1974 by the team of the Niš Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments, it can be concluded that, even though the geometry of the building layout remained unchanged, in the period after the grammar school moved out from the *Selamluk*, there were considerable interventions in terms of partitioning of the rooms which in the previous period probably were used as classrooms.

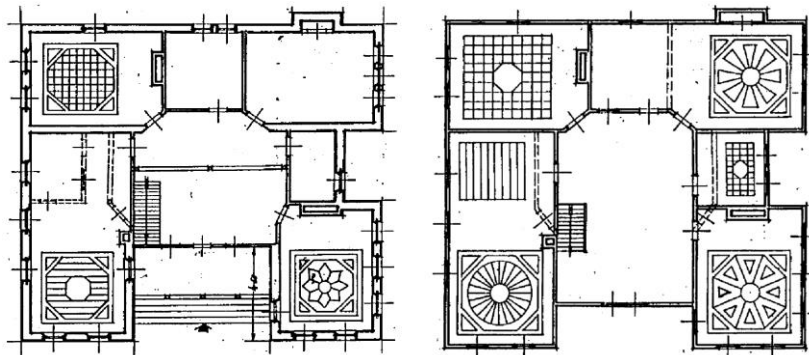


Fig. 4, 5 Floor plan of the *Selamluk* I. Zdravković (1948), 1990

The number and arrangement of the windows on the main façade on these drawings differs from the current status, and it coincides with the status documented on the mentioned photograph. The important difference in comparison to the field drawings of 1974 [10] is in the thickness of ground floor walls. The measuring of 2011 proved that the west façade wall is considerably thicker than the remaining walls, and that it becomes thinner at the upper floor level. It is possible that the inconsistency in the drawings is the error of the technician who realized them, considering that there is no information that the west wall was rebuilt. Also there is a significant inconsistency regarding the position of the chimney in the southwest room and absence of *dolap*⁵ with *amamdžik*⁶ and resess in a wall for stove on the drawing of I. Zdravković. [5] It is evident that in all three rooms, this element is subsequently reconstructed. The older drawing contains a schematic representation of a geometrical pattern on the ceilings and it coincides with the current status of these decorative elements, which corroborates the assertion N. Pešić-Maksimović that the *Pašini konaci* in Vranje are preserved in their original form [11]

Even though both I. Zdravković [7] and M. Vojinović [10] mentioned that both buildings, the *Selamluk* and *Haremluk*, which is situated north of the *Selamluk* and whose entrance is situated on the east side, were connected at the upper floor level via a bridge, and that the traces of the bridge were preserved in 1848, it is not marked on the drawings. The physical connection between the buildings is not visible in any of the post-war photographs belonging to the Vranje archives repository (Fig. 6-9).



Fig. 6 Pašini konaci, from the northeast



Fig. 7 Selamluk and Haremluk, from the west



Fig. 8 The Selamluk, photographed in 1974



Fig. 9 East façade of the Haremluk

⁵ Turkish closet or wardrobe

⁶ Turkish small home baths



Fig. 10 A part of the Selamluk south facade 1972.

Regarding that there is no technical documents on the specimen probing during the reconstruction interventions conducted on the *Selamluk* in the seventies, the photograph belonging to the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Niš displaying a part of the south façade of the structure is an important document which contributes to the understanding of the structural composition of the building. On the photograph, one can see the joint of the columns supporting timber cushion and the timber cap above (Fig.10). The appearance of the building completely coincides with its present day form.

A significant difference in the *Selamluk* facade finish can be noticed by comparing the color photograph dating back to the 80's of the 20th century and the present day appearance of the building (Fig. 11, 12). The traces of several shades of blue color, among which is the one observed in the photograph, are visible on the parts of the façade where, due to damp rising the stucco layer was severely damaged.



Fig. 11 The Selamluk south facade, archive photo



Fig. 12 A part of the west facade, March, 2011.

3. ARCHITECTONIC AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES OF THE *SELAMLUK* REGISTERED ON THE BASIS OF AVAILABLE DOCUMENTS

The first conservation-restoration interventions on the *Selamluk* were performed in 1954, [12] after passing of the decree which placed both buildings of the former *Pašini konaci* complex under the protection of the state in 1949. In this revitalization campaign, the post and pan and roof structure were partially rehabilitated, the walls between rooms and fireplaces were reconstructed both at the ground and upper level. The existing joinery was conserved, the closets and home baths and brick stoves were reconstructed. Then the access-way and peripheral pavement made of stone blocks were constructed. [13]

In 1964, the *Selamluk* accommodated the newly formed National Museum and as soon as in 1970 metal bars were fitted on 16 windows at the ground level of the building. Immediately after it was commissioned, by the beginning of 70's, and considering the partial dilapidation and vulnerability of the structures of both buildings – the *Selamluk* and *Haremluk*, the Niš Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments requested finances for realization of the most necessary remedial measures from the Cultural Community of the Republic, on the basis of the prepared analysis. In 1972, rehabilitation works of the post and pan system were executed – the rotten beams were replaced using oak wood timber and the fired broken clay filling was constructed where necessary, and the exterior and interior wall were plastered using a special mortar called *melez*. *Melez* mortar was made of mud and straw with the addition of lime and sand. The joinery was repaired, cleaned and painted on this occasion. [14] After torrential summer rains in 1975 the roof structure of both buildings became very dilapidated, and finances for emergency salvage intervention were granted. These interventions involved rehabilitation of the roof structure of the *Selamluk*. It was particularly endangered on the south side. The roof rafters were completely rotten and deformed and joists were broken, which caused sagging of the entire structure, leaking and consequential blistering of the wooden coffered ceiling of the upper floor hall. The dilapidated roof rafters were on this occasion replaced by two double hanging trusses, the dilapidated and broken joists were replaced and roof ties and struts were strengthened, roof insulation made of roofing paper and bituminous coating over the softwood boards was constructed, and the roof was covered by sealing the *ceramida*⁷ with a layer of mud mixed with straw. Valleys were covered and brick chimneys were repaired and plastered. The ceiling in the hall was repaired and the access to the building was constructed. Even though the design provided for the works, the damp rising in foundation wall could not be tackled. [15, 16]

The brick floor made of 30x30cm bricks laid over the sand bedding was constructed in the central hall of the ground level in 1979. The same year, stone block pavement was fitted on the outside of the building, on north, east and west sides. The following year, the brick floor was machine polished and surface coated. In the same period the dilapidated floors in the small central room on the upper floor was replaced, because the floorboards were deformed or broken. The stone block pavement on the south, access side was repaired. [17]

In the following years, the building structure did not undergo any large interventions.

In 1985, the works on removal of rotten and damp plaster off the façade were completed, and the façades were plastered in *compo*. On this occasion, the façade was painted in white. The wooden lining elements of the eaves as well as wooden façade linings which were dilapidated were replaced with new boards shaped according to the original ones.

In 1987, lightning rod installation was fitted. Two years later, in 1989, the most damaged window wings were replaced. Central heating was fitted in the building in 1990, and in 1994 a minimum of new necessary services was introduced, such as a toilet and a kitchenette at the ground floor of the *Selamluk*, adjacent to the western fireplace.

In 1996 the regulation plan of the „*Pašić konak*“ block in Vranje was issued, which formulated town planning-technical conditions for reconstruction of the *Haremluk* and *Selamluk* reconstruction. This document specified the town-planning and technical

⁷ Turkish type of clay roofing tile

conditions for construction of a fence wall around the complex, which was constructed at a later date. [18]

Among the latest interventions, it is important to mention an emergency rehabilitation of roof structure, which according to the design of the Niš Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments [13] realized in 2013.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As a legacy of the Ottoman architecture, realized in time when Vranje was ruled by the Turks, and having survived the destructive wrath of the liberated people, the building was for years being only minimally maintained, so that it would meet the minimum sanitary requirements for the conversion into an educational institution, whose function they served for the longest time [19]. Regarding the fact that in the long period of passionate dislike of the centuries spent under the Turkish yoke any memory of this period incited only a negative emotion, it is understandable that the need to find out more about this building, and to protect it valorize in a planned manner emerged for the first time around the mid 20th century. Apart from the valuable record of the architect I. Zdravković and contribution by M. Vojinović, the *Pašini konaci* were only sporadically mentioned in the works by other authors. For that reason, the understanding of the *Selamluk* is contributed by the analysis of written and technical documentation about the interventions on them performed so far, which is for the first time described in this paper.

Since the moment the building was converted, and since it housed administrative, research, storage and exhibition activities of the National Museum, the *Selamluk* was not only physically protected, but obtained, as well, an active role in the contemporary social and cultural development of the environment. In the course of time, changes were made with the goal of providing the necessary conditions for staying and working, in agreement with the contemporary standards and needs of the users, in a way which did not jeopardized architecture of the building and historical ambience, so the new museum function contributed to the presentation of monumental properties of the building.

Difficult material circumstances prevented large conservation interventions on the structure since the seventies of the 20th century, which lead to the unenviable condition of the building. The reason for neglecting of the regular rehabilitation of architectonic elements can be sought in the fact that a contemporary building was built in Vranje for the needs of exhibitions and other activities of the Museum. Until the final moving of the museum, which is being postponed for a long time, the *Selamluk* tacitly represents an emergency accommodation, so it is being treated accordingly, which is impermissible.

In the part 2 of this paper, the structural and decorative elements of the *Selamluk* will be discussed.

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SELAMLUK U VRANJU (DEO I): RAZVOJ ARHITEKTONSKOG OBLIKA NA OSNOVU ISTORIJSKIH IZVORA

Pašini konaci, Selamluk i Haremluk u Vranju, su tipični predstavnici balkanske arhitekture orijentalnog tipa iz 18. veka. Bez obzira što su zgrade, zbog drvenog konstruktivnog sklopa, vremenom postale veoma trošne i sklone su propadanju, one u specifičnosti svoje namene i tehnici građenja predstavljaju svedočanstvo o standardu života jednog društvenog sloja i socijalnim odnosima epohe kojoj pripadaju.

Kroz analizu istorijskih podataka u prvom delu rada su predstavljene rezultati istraživanja nastanka i razvoja Selamluka u Vranju i njegove okoline, sa pokušajem utvrđivanja arhitektonske geneze od izvornog sklopa, preko faza destrukcije i pregradnji do sadašnje situacije. Pored informacija publikovanih u relevantnoj literaturi, podaci su prikupljeni analizom starih planova, fotografija i dokumenata koji se čuvaju u raznim ustanovama kulture.

U drugom delu rada su, po prvi put u literaturi, detaljno analizirani konstruktivni i dekorativni elementi ovog jedinstvenog zdanja.

Ključne reči: *balkanska arhitektura orijentalnog tipa, Pašini konaci, Selamluk, Vranje, bondručna gradnja, istorijski izvori*