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Some Similarities between the Creation of Sarajevo and Prophet Muhammad's Development of Madinah

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Abstract: This article explores how the creation of Sarajevo was influenced by Prophet Muhammad's planning and development of the city of Madinah. The article concludes that despite being over eight centuries apart, the foundational histories of these two cities share more than a few similarities. This is because the Prophet's urbanisation efforts in Madinah are considered part of his Sunnah, which Muslims are encouraged to follow. The parallels between the two cities focus on three main aspects: the priority of building a central mosque, which acted as a catalyst for growth; the strategic location of the mosque, neither away from nor in the midst of existing settlements, with the intention of promoting justice and social cohesion; and the interconnectedness of the mosque with other social institutions, emphasising the importance of the ideological institutional harmony for progress. The research methodology combined descriptive, interpretative, and analytical historical approaches.

Keywords: Sarajevo, Madinah, Prophet's Mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija), Institutions

Introduction

Islam is often perceived as a profoundly urban religion, or faith, conforming essentially to urban life. Joel Kotkin (n.d.), for one, observed that from its origins in the 7th century, Islam has consistently been linked to cities. The need to gather a community of believers required a settlement of some size for the full performance of one's duties as a Muslim. Prophet Muhammad (henceforth "Prophet") did not want his people to return to the desert and its clan-oriented value system. Islam virtually demanded cities to serve as places where people could pray together five times a day, socialise, and build an organic body of the Muslim community (*ummah*) rooted in brotherhood, love, unity, and cooperation. This urban orientation came naturally for a religion that first sprang to life in a city of successful merchants (Kotkin, n.d.).

In the same vein, Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406) (1967) deduced that only royal authority, representing a complex system of thought and beliefs, calls for urban settlement, and that only a strong royal authority is able to construct large cities and high monuments. Thus, being the sole truth integrated into a complete way of life for individuals, families, and communities, Islam by definition necessitated the presence of a sovereign authority. This, in turn, required well-developed urban environments—the highest level in the hierarchy of social structures and environments—to uphold both the Islamic faith and its governing authority. Ibn Khaldun (1967) encapsulated this reality by stating that dynasties precede towns and cities; towns and cities are the ultimate products or effects of the functioning of royal authority.

In their capacity as the custodians of Islam and Islamic civilisation, the Ottomans exemplified the above attitude. Their cities were not just urban socioeconomic hubs, but also focal points of Islamic culture and faith. Faith and power were closely intertwined, mutually

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reinforcing each other. Faith acted as a guiding light, illuminating the path for power to follow, while power stood as a stalwart guardian, shielding faith from any threats that may seek to dim its brilliance. That is why the Ottomans were desperate to seize control of Constantinople (later Istanbul) so as to match their grand ambitions. The city held significant allure for those in pursuit of power. It was the coveted holy grail of any imperial success.

This is in agreement with a tradition that is sometimes thought to be from the Prophet: "Indeed, Allah curbs with (earthly) authority, or power (sultan), what cannot be curbed by the Qur'an (faith) alone" (Ibn Kathir, n.d.). Even the Prophet, in addition to the truth, needed power and authority to quell those who opposed and resisted him. This necessity ultimately led to the migration (*hijrah*) from Makkah and the establishment of the city-state of Madinah.

No sooner had the Ottomans arrived in Bosnia and introduced Islam, the inclination towards urban life became evident in both the Ottomans and Islam. The simultaneous processes of peaceful Islamisation and lively urbanisation provided a backdrop for the creation of the city of Sarajevo (Malcolm, 1994; Haveric, 2008). Indeed, the city originated from a unique fusion of Islam's spirituality and the Ottomans' corporeality, giving it its distinct character and generating a rich cultural heritage.

This article examines how closely the then-new Ottoman city of Sarajevo, especially at the outset, followed the urban planning principles inspired by the Prophet's experiences, drawing several parallels between the urbanisation, architecture, and general development of Sarajevo and those of the Prophet's city of Madinah. The article has seven sections, namely: "Linguistic and geographical origins of Sarajevo"; "The gradual but steady growth of Sarajevo"; "The relationship between the new and old settlements"; "Following a pattern implemented by the Prophet"; "The impact of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre"; "The case of Sarajevo's first mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija)"; and "The importance of residential architecture."

Linguistic and geographical origins of Sarajevo

The city of Sarajevo gets its name from the Turkish and Persian word *saray*, which translates to "palace," "court," "mansion," or simply "house or dwelling place" (Škaljić, 1966). This word is also found in the term "caravanserai" or "caravansary" (caravan-*saray*), referring to a lodging or dwelling place for caravans and travellers in general (Kiani & Kleiss, n.d.). *Saray* (court or palace) was among the first buildings constructed in Sarajevo, playing the role of the new government's headquarters.

There are two interpretations of the suffix *evo* added to the word *saray* (in Bosnian, *saraj*). Both interpretations are widely accepted and used as much in academic as everyday discourses. Due to the ongoing uncertainties regarding the early history and historical accounts of Sarajevo, neither interpretation holds a clear advantage over the other.

One perspective suggests that the *evo* suffix functions as a possessive noun, making the name Sarajevo mean "city of the court or palace." This explanation links the etymology of "Sarajevo" to the names of various other cities and locations in the Balkans, such as Smederevo, Kraljevo, Popovo, Mirijijevo, Trnovo, and others. The governmental *saray* was built by Sarajevo's founder, Isa-beg Ishaković (d. 1470), on the left bank of the Miljacka river. The structure existed until 1853.

Another perspective suggests that *evo* originated from *ovasi* (field), which was a component of the Turkish term *Saray-ovasi* (the field of Sarajevo). Parenthetically, in the

earliest Ottoman archives, Sarajevo was referred to as *Saray-Bosna* and *Saray-ovasi*. It is believed that the latter name evolved into *Sarajevo* (Škaljić, 1966).

Despite the absence of solid evidence,[2] it is reasonable to posit that there was no city at the site where Sarajevo was established. A Bosnian historian named Behija Zlatar (1996), acting as the spokesperson, as it were, for a community of historians, stated that there was no significant market or square, let alone a decent urban settlement at the place. Even though there were some scattered and barely interrelated small villages around the valley in which the city eventually emerged, these villages were sparsely populated, with some completely deserted due to local conflicts before the arrival of the Ottomans.

It is occasionally thought, albeit inaccurately, that in the central medieval region of Bosnia, known as Vrhbosna, there existed a town named either Vrhbosna, after the entire region, or Vrhbosanje. This town was situated in the area where the city of Sarajevo was later created, becoming not only the latter's precursor, but also an integral part thereof. However, this belief is also refuted since historically, there was no city named Vrhbosna at all, raising questions of how such a city could predate Sarajevo. Positively, there was neither Vrhbosna (Vrhbosanje) nor any other city at the location of Sarajevo. Instead, Sarajevo was conceived and systematically developed by the Ottomans in conjunction with their advent and subsequent governance in Bosnia.

What was there prior to the Ottomans was some geographical entity named Vrhbosna, though in a more modest manifestation as a minor market or square attached to a small neighbourhood. The neighbourhood was one of those tiny and dispersed villages in the locale. This market (*trg*) was documented in 1436 and 1439, but by 1462, it was described as an old and possibly defunct settlement. In 1468, it was referred to as an old marketplace. This indicates that there was no city before Sarajevo in that area, and Vrhbosna was not a city but a marketplace with a minor community nearby (Šabanović, 1982). The use of the adjective "old" before the nouns "marketplace" and "settlement" suggests that there later arose newer versions of both the marketplace and settlement, that is, the city of Sarajevo (Salihspahić, n.d.).

In passing, in the entire Vrhbosna region, which encompassed the Sarajevo valley and numerous surrounding mountain areas, there was merely one fortified city called Hodidjed. Positioned east of Sarajevo in the Miljacka river valley, this relatively small city was first mentioned in historical records in 1434 after being captured by the Ottomans. The city was defended by a fortress commander, known as a *dizdar*, and a small crew of 23 soldiers (Zlatar, 1996). This city should not be confused with a village also named Hodidjed, which was located next to the city itself and had 36 households in 1455 (Šabanović, 1964).

For the record, the initial significant Ottoman incursion into Bosnian land may have occurred as early as 1396 or 1386 when the first attacks on the Kingdom of Bosnia came to pass. However, some sources indicate that certain Ottoman military units were engaged in military activities in Bosnia as far back as 1384 (Salihspahić, n.d.). In the aftermath, there was a substantial growth in Ottoman political and military interventions in Bosnian affairs, ultimately resulting in the demise of the Bosnian Kingdom in 1463.

1462 is commonly considered as the founding year of Sarajevo. The city was established by Isa-beg Ishaković, an Ottoman Bosnian commander and administrator, who later became the governor of the Sanjak of Bosnia when it was formed in 1463 (Šabanović, 1982). The precise length of time he spent in the position of *sanjak-beg* is up for debate (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998). It is suggested that he may have briefly held the position in 1463 as an

[2] According to Mihovil Mandić (n.d.), representing the majority of historians, the questions of when and how exactly Sarajevo was established, and what existed before, are but some historical inquiries about Bosnia with very little reliable evidence available.

extension of his rule over the Bosnian Krajište or Frontier, which he took on in 1455, and then from 1464 to 1470, the year in which he likely passed away. It is no surprise then that since its inception, Sarajevo was designated as the seat of the newly formed Sanjak.

The gradual but steady growth of Sarajevo

The growth of Sarajevo was gradual and influenced by the socio-economic, religious, and military conditions in Bosnia. Initially, the growth was slow but started to accelerate in line with improvements in both internal and external circumstances (Fine, 1996; Šabanović, n.d.). In their article titled "Development of Urban Residential Zones of Sarajevo During the Ottoman Period from 1455-1604," Lejla Šabić and Lejla Kahrović Handžić (2022) from Sarajevo University summarised the early urban residential evolution in Sarajevo as follows:

> While the development of Sarajevo occurred more slowly in the period between 1455 and 1485, the register from 1489 shows 40 more households than in 1485. The next register from 1516 shows 1063 households in 15 mahalas (mahalas are traditional urban, predominantly residential, zones of Ottoman origin), in Varoš mahala and community of Dubrovnik merchants, in contrast to the register from 1489 when 92 Muslim households, 95 Christian households and 7 households of Dubrovnik community were recorded. This represents an annual increase of 32.2 households in 27 years, but it is assumed that the increase in population becomes more noticeable from the beginning of 16th century. The register shows significant developmental leap and transformation from small town to an oriental type of urban centre and the biggest city of Sanjak of Bosnia. (p. 3)

Accordingly, upon its establishment, Sarajevo was initially referred to as *kasaba*, indicating an unfortified settlement larger than a village but lacking the characteristics of a city. It was not until the early 16th century that the Ottoman authorities officially recognised Sarajevo as a city (*šeher*) (Donia, 2006). The demographic composition of the city was originally heterogeneous, with a higher proportion of non-Muslims than Muslims. However, as the city developed and Islam gained traction, the demographic balance quickly tilted in favour of Muslims.

The above pattern observed in Sarajevo was consistent with a larger pattern seen throughout Bosnia. Mustafa Imamović (1997) put forth that the conversion of people to Islam in Bosnia was a gradual but steady process, especially during the 15th and early 16th centuries. The conversion rate increased significantly throughout the 16th century, particularly following the Ottoman victory at the Battle of Mohács in 1526 against the Kingdom of Hungary and its allies. In total, the conversion to Islam among the Bosnian population took 250 years.

It is conceivable that Isa-beg Ishaković commenced the establishment of Sarajevo as far back as 1455, as the Ottoman influence in Bosnia grew and their plans for the country became more defined. Despite the presence of various small and randomly located villages in the area, the formation of Sarajevo was unique and independent, unrelated to any previous settlements. The city represented a remarkable example of urban planning and development in the Balkan region. According to Robert J. Donia (2006), it embodied the Ottoman urbanisation philosophy, where urbanisation was viewed as integral to the Islamisation and civilisation efforts in newly acquired lands.

Sarajevo was envisaged, planned, and built to mirror the vibrant Islamic civilisation of the Ottomans, acting as a driving force in the north-western geopolitical domain. There was nothing arbitrary in the entire scheme. All decisions and actions were meticulously chosen and carried out. Several criteria had to be met for a grand vision to come to fruition and become a reality, and for Sarajevo to stand as a bastion for the locals and a guiding light for others.

Sarajevo was a small part of an urban development blueprint amidst a huge and multifaceted existential mosaic. The founding of the city was more than just a segment—it was also a mirror image and even a miniature version of the founding of an empire and its civilisational proclivity. Careful coordination of the timing and positioning, as well as the characteristics and functions of buildings, in Sarajevo was essential for the development of a cosmopolitan city (*šeher*). If one posits that Sarajevo experienced an urban and architectural evolution, it ought to be kept in mind that the evolution was not random and inconsistent, but rather systematic and visionary. Nothing fundamental was left to chance. The development trajectory of the city was set in stone and there was nothing that could thwart it.

The relationship between the new and old settlements

In accordance with the Ottoman urbanisation philosophy, the new urban marvel called Sarajevo was positioned neither in the midst nor away from the existing settlements and villages. It stood somewhere in between them, yet adjoining some. Džemal Salihspahić (n.d.) concluded that it was an Ottoman standard operating procedure to let a novel urban initiative unfold in the vicinity of existing settlements, rather than away from them or right in the middle of them, in which case the new initiative would effectively superimpose itself over and replace those settlements. For the same author, in terms of geography, military strategy, and economic considerations, Isa-beg Ishaković demonstrated substantial acumen in selecting the site for the development of the new city of Sarajevo. He truly lived up to the Ottoman proficiency.

The first urban planning and development activities in Sarajevo took place on agricultural land that belonged to a medieval village called Brodac. The land was acquired in a manner that was satisfactory to all parties. Since it belonged to some non-Muslims, in order to make up for the land they lost, Isa-beg Ishaković provided a new area called Vrančić for them. In Isa-beg Ishaković's *vakufnama* (a document outlining the purpose and upkeep of an endowment), Brodac village and the territory of Sarajevo were explicitly mentioned, with the latter including the former. This means that the agricultural part of Brodac was the nucleus where a Muslim district was first formed, paving the way for the creation of Sarajevo, which then integrated both the new and old residential areas (Šabanović, n.d.).

Through this approach, the Sarajevo development strategy prevented the promotion of exclusivity by not distancing itself from existing elements, and avoided favouritism by not prioritising specific settlements or their inhabitants. The message intended to be conveyed was to the effect that the city of Sarajevo was a city of the future and was open to all. Everybody's roles were welcome, implying what could be termed a brand of urbanisation democracy.

The city was a revolutionary and groundbreaking undertaking, after which the whole region was set never to be the same again. This project marked a transition from a stagnant historical phase to one filled with dynamism and confidence, and from a life paradigm losing direction to one brimming with potential and poise. Moreover, the city project exuded anticipation and excitement, with hope and belief prevailing. The establishment of the city felt like a harbinger of the imminent future and the realisation of ambitions.

However, the new city, despite its forward-looking vision, aimed to stay connected to the past while embracing all that the present circumstances had to offer to enhance the new urbanisation model. There was a conscious effort to ensure fairness by not showing favouritism towards any particular aspect of the circumstances or any specific population group. Each person was considered valuable and capable of contributing, as the future could not thrive on prejudice and discrimination. The decision to plan and develop Sarajevo near existing settlements, instead of isolating or displacing them, demonstrated a balanced approach rooted

in justice and equality. Everyone was included: Muslims and non-Muslims, local and immigrants.

Sarajevo offered a warm reception to all, ensuring everyone had a home and opportunity. This idea is captured in an aphorism that states whoever visits Sarajevo and drinks water from the spout near Gazi Husrev Beg's mosque will either have to come back to the city one day or choose to stay there. This means that Sarajevo possessed an inexplicable charm and its potential was limitless. The charm was both God-given and man-generated.

Despite undergoing a process of Islamisation, the residents of Sarajevo and Bosnia were still free to adopt and follow their preferred religion. There was neither force nor coercion in this matter. Islam and Muslims were not seen as conquerors or oppressors, but rather as "openers," enlighteners, and liberators of minds and souls, following a higher ontological order. Islam and its civilisation rejected compulsion and oppression, as highlighted by Bakir Tanović, who emphasised that there was no pressure to convert to Islam in Bosnia. The rapid spread of Islam in the region was due to similarities between the Bosnian Church[3] and Islam, as well as the Qur'anic principle of no compulsion in religion. The tolerant nature of Islam attracted people seeking a refreshing alternative to the prevailing hostilities of medieval times. Needless to say that the way Sarajevo was created and then operated prominently reflected Islamic values. Such was a highly effective channel for promoting the beauty and tolerance of the Islamic message (Tanović, 2010; Bašagić, 1900; Handžić, 1940).

Following a pattern implemented by the Prophet

The Ottomans' blueprint of Sarajevo is evocative of a pattern adopted by the Prophet while creating the city of Madinah by transforming it from Yathrib as an area with some insignificant and faintly interconnected settlements to a vibrant and progressive capital of Islam and its polity. Since Madinah was a prototype Islamic city and its sustainable development a segment of the Prophet's Sunnah (life example)—which Muslims are bidden to follow as much as possible, serving as an indicator of their religious observance and piety—it cannot be ruled out that the way Sarajevo was planned and developed was meant to be part of the Prophet's Madinah experience.[4] This becomes plausible when reflecting on the religious fervour displayed

[3] As heretics in the eyes of the Christian two-pronged "orthodoxy" (the Catholic and Orthodox Churches), the Bosniaks were given several pejorative names, namely "Bogomili" (or "Bogumili", Bogomils, which means, sarcastically, those dear to God), "Babuni" (perhaps superstitious ones, or followers of an ungodly idea), "Patareni" (deviants or fools), and members of the Bosnian (heretical) Church. The last one, perhaps, was the mildest one, in that, as Christians, the Bosniaks were indeed united as a community, a body, or an organisation of believers. Such was not a slur, but merely stating the obvious. At any rate, it appears as though the "Bogomili" tag was the intended affront and that the names of "Babuni" and "Patareni" were its synonyms. The three were used interchangeably, which may also suggest that the Bosnian heresy fluctuated in practice and intensity, taking on varying interpretations and being construed differently across different historical periods and locations. That is why the Bosniaks are sometimes called "Bogomili" and sometimes "Babuni" and "Patareni." At other times, the whole system is dubbed simply as the heresy of the Bosnian Church. Thus, inferring for instance that the Bosniaks were neither Bogomili, nor Babuni, nor Patareni purely because the three classifications were not used widely and consistently, is not appropriate. As said before, those were synonyms that complemented each other, and were used interchangeably, especially by the antagonists of Bosnia. Indeed, the Bosnian Christians were different, associating themselves with neither of the branches or sects of Christianity, but with Christianity itself. They were Christians ("christianus" or "krstjani"), first and foremost, the followers of a religion rather than any of its derivatives (See Yanich & Hankey, 1921; Spinka, 1968; Lavrin, 1929; Obolensky, 1972).

[4] There are so many misconceptions invented or misjudgments inflated about the Ottomans. This is the case because they were eventually defeated and dethroned as the world's leading superpower, and consistent with the canon that victors' narratives dictate the terms of historiography. However, the Ottomans were neither innocent nor perfect. It is a fact that all the principles of Islam were theoretically accepted and applied throughout Ottoman history. However, it is also a fact that there were those who opposed such principles in practice. It is impossible to deny both: "As in everything, the Ottoman State

especially by Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih (d. 1481), the conqueror of Bosnia (who opened Bosnia to Islam, which is the true meaning of al-Fatih), and by the majority of his officials.

The religious devotion of Isa-beg Ishaković, the founder of Sarajevo, is evident through his renowned actions and legacy. His *vakufnama* reflects his deep commitment and affection for Islam, demonstrated through his efforts to enhance the welfare of Sarajevo and its residents. Undoubtedly, Sarajevo held a special place in his heart, representing the pinnacle of his contributions to the Ottoman Empire and its official religion, Islam. Distinguished by his jihad efforts and plentiful successes in battle, Sarajevo truly remained the most critical battleground for Isa-beg Ishaković. Certainly, it was not a coincidence that the mentioned *vakufnama*, the oldest and most authentic document about Sarajevo's history, emphasises that Islam is the true religion and guidance meant to prevail over all religions, despite the disapproval of idolaters. In essence, Sarajevo was intended to embody and reflect the fundamental principles of Islam. The city's founder expectedly wanted to be a main protagonist.

Setting an example that would be followed about eight and a half centuries later in Sarajevo, the Prophet initiated the development of Madinah by designing and constructing his mosque (Al-Samahudi, 1997; Uthman, 1999). This mosque served as a community development centre located between existing settlements, instead of being too distant or within the boundaries of any specific settlement. In doing so, the Prophet created various new development prospects for all. Some previously uncultivated lands became cultivated, while neglected areas were revitalised. Communication networks between the old settlements were enhanced and expanded to include new ones.

Expectedly, the migrants from Makkah and other places played a part in the positive developments of Madinah. They settled in a fertile area near the Prophet's Mosque, which was a central location in the city. They were rewarded for their past contributions to the Islamic cause in Makkah. This recognition motivated them to work diligently, become self-sufficient, and establish their own lives promptly. The resulting transformation made them valuable members of the growing and young community, rendering them as assets and not liabilities.

If the Prophet's Mosque had been built within an existing settlement, it would have marginalised many migrants, making their situation more challenging and hindering their integration. They would have had to stay longer with the helpers (*ansar*) as the natives of Madinah, delaying their self-sufficiency and ability to contribute to the city's socio-political and economic needs. Being unnecessarily reliant on the people of Madinah was the migrants' least desired outcome.

The helpers were never disrespected when the site for the Prophet's Mosque and the future city centre was chosen in a location where the migrating people were soon to become the majority (al-Samahudi, 1997). The introduction of Islam and the Prophet in Madinah meant that all possibilities of reigniting the long-standing rivalry between the two main Arab tribes in the area, the 'Aws and Khazraj, had to be eliminated. Displaying partiality towards the helpers from either the 'Aws or Khazraj, while ignoring other groups, could have rekindled this rivalry, especially since most of the helpers had recently converted to the new religion.

Besides that, while some people hesitated to embrace Islam until after the Prophet's arrival, there were still helpers who, even later, needed time to adjust to the new way of life and eventually accept the truth. Moreover, a significant number of hypocrites were actively trying

included both pious deeds as well as errors. Nevertheless, it is because their good acts outnumbered their bad for 600 years that divine destiny granted them the favor of being the standard-bearer of Islam for such a long time. And when their evil deeds outweighed their good, divine destiny took away that honourable role. Millions of archival documents demonstrate that even during their worst times the Ottomans did their best to conform to the Islamic law (sharia)" (See Akgunduz and Ozturk, 2011; Maksudoglu, 1999).

to sow discord and confusion in Madinah, aiming to revert the city to its previous state of turmoil. A bias demonstration towards either the 'Aws or Khazraj tribe would have been exploited by these negative forces. The Prophet's Mosque and central housing areas were crucial for resolving old conflicts and disparities among the tribes, taking essential steps towards lasting peace and unity. Therefore, the decision not to align the Prophet's Mosque and Madinah's core with either the 'Aws or Khazraj was a highly effective move, given the circumstances.

The impact of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre

When completed, the form of the Prophet's Mosque as a community development centre was extremely simple (Ibn Hisham, 2013). This simplicity stemmed from the basic tasks the mosque initially served, reflecting the early stages of the Muslim community in Madinah as it slowly grew and expanded its activities. In architecture, three elements—people's needs, function, and form—are closely connected and mutually dependent. As such, as a community becomes more involved and their needs expand, a mosque's functions multiply, prompting significant enhancements to its original simple design and structure.

Thus, during the Prophet's time, his mosque evolved from a simple roofless and plain enclosure to a complex multi-tiered institution that featured, among other factors, a roofed section, a pavement outside one of its entrances, a *minbar* (pulpit) with a *dakkah* or *dukkan* (seat, bench) for communication purposes, lamps as a means for lighting up the mosque, several compartments that facilitated the various social functions of the mosque, and a person or persons as the mosque caretaker(s).

Inasmuch as the Prophet's Mosque was the centre of gravity in the wide-ranging affairs of the ever-expanding Muslim community in Madinah, its strength and stature epitomised the strength and stature of Islam and Muslims. The mosque seemed to be accommodative of every beneficial activity concerning worship (*'ibadah*), education, politics, security, and social relations, and was able to help the nascent and ambitious society make a remarkable civilisational headway.

The Prophet's Mosque's diverse activities soon evolved into independent institutions, some of which were physically connected to the mosque, while others moved away physically yet remained spiritually linked. In Islamic civilisation, this strong and mutually complementing affiliation between the mosque as the mother of all Islamic institutions and institutions themselves is known as the ideological institutional harmony. Despite being structurally distinct, all institutions share the same vision and mission, working towards common goals inspired by Islamic spirituality. This contrasts with the ideological institutional dichotomy, which is on the completely opposite end of the spectrum.

The Prophet's Mosque was a reflection of the Muslim society in Madinah and its challenges. Therefore, discussing the mosque during the Prophet's time means discussing the people who established and utilised it. Similarly, exploring the development of the mosque during the Prophet's mission in Madinah is essentially a discussion about the evolution of the Muslim community, along with its mind-set and spiritual growth. Indeed, the notions of Islam, Muslims, Islamic society, and the mosque as an idea and physical spectacle, are inseparable (Ibn Hisham, 2013; al-Umari, 1995).

While showcasing the strength and importance of Islam and Muslims, the development of the Prophet's Mosque also highlighted the Prophet's impact on Islamic architecture. The foundation of key principles in Islamic architecture can be attributed to the Prophet's efforts in transforming his mosque in Madinah from a basic structure to a versatile

community development centre. These principles, which are fundamental in Islamic architecture, include a close relationship between function and form, consideration for the environment, emphasis on cleanliness, comprehensive excellence, promotion of fair social interactions, adherence to the Prophet's principle of avoiding harm (*la darar wa la dirar*, meaning "there is no inflicting or returning of harm"), a balance between local and foreign influences, and attention to aesthetics (Omer, 2004).

The case of Sarajevo's first mosque, Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija)

Correspondingly, a cluster of institutions was established around the time the city of Sarajevo was founded, with some even predating its establishment. One of the most prominent institutions was a mosque, constructed first by Isa-beg Ishaković in 1457. This mosque was a modest and compact building with a wooden minaret. It also featured a wooden roof and a stone wall surrounding it. This design was preliminary, so to speak, due to the limited number of Muslims residing in the newly formed area, which would eventually become the city of Sarajevo.

The mosque initially had limited and simple functions, reflecting its modest form. However, with the city's official establishment and the growth of its Muslim community, the mosque's functions expanded, leading to the construction of a more substantial mosque in 1565. This new mosque was constructed in the classical Ottoman style to accommodate the increasing demands resulting from Sarajevo's rapid growth. This occurred during the reign of Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent (d. 1566) when Mimar Sinan (d. 1588), a renowned architect and engineer, served as the chief Ottoman architect. This has led to speculation that either Mimar Sinan himself or someone associated with him, such as one of his apprentices, might have had a say in the mosque's design and construction. There were no further expansions of the mosque until 1847 (Salihspahić, n.d.).

The mosque of Isa-beg Ishaković's construction is attributed to either Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih's request or Isa-beg Ishaković's initiative as a visionary leader. While Robert J. Donia (2006) supports the former theory, according to Salih Sidki Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović (1998), the construction of the mosque was initiated by Isa-beg Ishaković himself. Later when Sultan Mehmed II al-Fatih personally arrived in Sarajevo, in conjunction with his successful conquest of Bosnia, Isa-beg Ishaković gifted the mosque to him. That is why the mosque was and is still called the Sultan's Mosque (Careva džamija).

Regardless, the mosque served more as a socio-political symbol and statement of intent than a remarkable architectural feat or a purely religious site. Similar to the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, this mosque aimed to stimulate urban growth, socio-political progress, and community cohesion, besides the facilitation of standard religious practices. Despite the establishment of numerous other mosques in Sarajevo, the Sultan's Mosque retained its prominence and influence. Its symbolic meaning was more important than both its physical appearance and intended use. It denoted the royal seal of approval and assistance for Sarajevo's venture. It functioned as the cause, not the outcome.

Careva džamija, or Sultan's Mosque, was erected in the 15th century, exactly 834 years after the building of the Prophet's Mosque. If the Prophet's Mosque was created as a community development centre with a plethora of functions representing the centre of gravity in the urbanisation scheme of Madinah, the Sultan's Mosque in Sarajevo was the heart and prime mover of a plethora of institutions that were built separately yet functioned independently. Dotting the designated landscape of a new city, these institutions denoted the ultimate limbs around which the city's substance was later gradually formed, and through which its vivacity flew, sustaining the city and giving it its discernible Islamic identity.

The way these institutions were conceived, built, and operated signified the climax of the institutionalisation process in Islamic civilisation whose embryonic phase could be traced back to Madinah and the Prophet's Mosque. Indeed, the multiple functions of the Prophet's Mosque conducted under its roof eventually evolved into independent sophisticated institutions that were handled differently by different Islamic polities. However, since the Ottoman state was delicately—sometimes even rigidly—organised and administered, the notion of state-owned institutionalisation was more readily pronounced.

In the spectrum of the existing institutions, the mosque institution played the leading role. The remaining institutions derived their purpose and legitimacy from nowhere else but the extent of their affiliation with the quintessence of the mosque. The more intimately they were conceptually and functionally connected to the mosque, the better and more fulfilling they were. The idea of the ideological institutional congruence was required, something that was also suggested and the first seeds of which were planted during the Prophet's development of Madinah. Such happened from within the architecturally limited and spiritually open-ended parameters of the Prophet's Mosque.

It follows that the Ottoman centralised institutionalisation of development, and their institutionalised centralisation of power, connoted a fine example of what the Prophet's Madinah—and the exemplar of the Prophet' mosque as the city's equilibrium point—subtly entailed. All Ottoman cities tried to embrace the spirit of Madinah, and succeeded in varying degrees. Hence, Sarajevo was not an exception. It goes without saying that the urban and architectural sides of Madinah stood for some of the most critical aspects of the Prophet's behavioural model that needed to be adhered to.

In addition to the Sultan's Mosque in Sarajevo—which functioned as the primary focus of religious and socio-political life in the city, owing to its nigh on central position within the city's budding configuration—Isa-beg Ishaković also built the following urban institutions: a caravanserai surrounded by a series of *bezistan* (covered markets), some of whose original walls are still visible today; a number of commercial arteries or souks that branched off from the caravanserai and its *bezistan*; a palace or court as governmental headquarters (*saray*); an inn or guest house (*musafirhana*) for destitute travellers, which had four or five rooms; nine watermills, or a single huge watermill with nine waterwheels, over the Miljacka river whose income was used for running the *musafirhana*; a public bath (*hammam*), which adjoined the mosque; an *imaret* or public soup kitchen where food was given free of charge to specific types of people and unfortunate individuals; bridges across the Miljacka river in order to link the developing new city's core on both sides of the river and to ease the flow of people and goods; and a *tekke* (*khankah* or *zawiyah*) as a monastery for Sufis or dervishes that functioned as both a religious and educational establishment, complementing the similar functions of the Sultan's Mosque (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998).

From the list of the newly established institutions, a madrasah (school) is conspicuously missing. Nonetheless, such was neither deliberate nor a sign of neglect. Schools were uniquely advanced institutions and for their existence compatibly advanced conditions were needed. Sarajevo at the time was in its infancy and its people at the rudimentary stage of religious and intellectual development. The basic educational services provided by the mosque institution, and the *tekke*, were considered adequate.

Schools were established as soon as the prevailing conditions warranted it, and what Isa-beg Ishaković did was to pave the way for the purpose. True enough, in 1495/96, the first madrasah was established in Sarajevo. The founder was Firuz-beg, the ruler of the Bosnian Sanjak. The school was described as tall and beautiful. The income from a *hammam* and a series of shops, watermills, and gardens was dedicated to supporting the school. The establishment of the school was so significant that the residential district (*mahala*) in which it was located

became known as the Mahala of madrasah. A second school was built in 1520 by Gazi Mehmed-beg Isabegović, the son of Isa-beg Ishaković (Zlatar, 2006). The next two schools were built by the illustrious Gazi Husrev Beg in 1531 and 1537 respectively (Zlatar, 1996).

Intermediaries between mosques and schools were called *maktab*, which provided elementary facilities where the basic level of religious education could be obtained. *Maktab* were either integrated within mosques or located close by in separate buildings. Ajas-beg and Skender-beg, who were in charge of the Bosnian Sanjak, are believed to have founded the first and second *maktab* in Sarajevo in 1470/71 and 1478/79 respectively (Mehmedović, 2005).

Historically speaking, schools or madrasah as independent educational institutions were established much later than other institutions. Prior to that, mosques, homes, and subsequently *maktab* served as educational centres to meet the needs of the community. The Prophet's Mosque in Madinah was a notable example of one of the most outstanding and influential educational institutions ever. Its alumnae, known as the *sahabah* or companions of the Prophet, were considered the most exemplary generation to have lived. This is why some of the oldest Islamic universities, such as the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco (founded in 857-859) and al-Azhar University in Cairo (founded in 970 or 972), initially began as mosques.

The importance of residential architecture

Historical accounts normally do not reveal about the intensity and scope of the first residential architecture in Sarajevo. This suggests that, though built on a relatively large scale, the houses in terms of prominence and reporting at that stage assumed a subsidiary role to the other socio-political, religious, and economic foundations. Rounding up the Sarajevo urbanisation scheme, private domestic architecture played second fiddle to its institutional and public counterpart.

For example, when discussing about the abovementioned caravanserai, Salih Sidki Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović highlighted that the structure was the biggest, tallest, and most impressive in the city. It was a compact complex in its own right, featuring giant walls and arcades adorned with archways. The city itself was small and its houses modest. When contrasted with each other, the massive caravanserai further dwarfed the tiny houses, and the houses, in turn, augmented the caravanserai. Other people were yet compelled to reason that this caravanserai (caravan-*saray*)—rather than the governmental *saray* (court or palace) mentioned earlier—might have been the reason why Sarajevo is called as such (Muvekkit-Hadžihuseinović, 1998).

However, one should not be deceived by this turn of events, that is, believing the houses were not as important. They surely were equally, if not even more, important, than the highlighted facets of the institutionalised and public architecture, but such were the circumstances in the city that development concerns and transformative priorities had to be judiciously planned and executed, optimising their effects. The matter of fact was not about what was more and what less important, but about what was more exigent and essential. Ensuring the correct prioritisation, effective channelling of efforts, and prudent resource allocation became necessary. Gradation, quality, fluidity, comprehensiveness, and strategising were the key.

The immediate objective was to generate frameworks for building (creating) people as the fundamental units upon whose strengths each and every aspect of the society- and civilisation-building processes will depend. Before asking people to do, contribute, and give, they were supposed to be given, done for, and contributed towards. In short, people's needs and welfare had to be taken care of first, before they were asked to take care of themselves, their families, other people, and their country. It was imperative for all institutions to cooperate

seamlessly, coordinating their actions in sync, in order to achieve personal and national aspirations. Since all focus was on the limited human resources, developing and nurturing them in unity, instead of causing confusion and ruin by pulling them apart, was the only way forward.

In the process of this mutual cooperation between authorities and people, whereby both of them were set to mature and grow from strength to strength, addressing the subject of housing progressively became the object of collective interest. Thus, cultivated and spiritually recalibrated, everyone was set to embark on a path of converting the idea and marvel of the house into a family development centre, a family sanctuary, a paradise on earth, and a private religious-cum-educational pivot (a domestic mosque and school). Put differently, physical houses were to be transformed into spiritual, ethical, and enlightening homes.

This indeed was the most challenging task and was predicated on the successes of other tasks. Accordingly, houses were not neglected, but cleverly treasured and painstakingly attended to at every level of Islam's religious and civilisational presence. Just as the future of ethno-symbolism and socioeconomic transformation in Sarajevo and Bosnia as a whole[5] was contingent on human resources as the outcome of human development, the urban and architectural development of Sarajevo and Bosnia was contingent on the Islamically urban as well as architectural disposition of houses.

Indeed, Islamic domestic architecture signify a barometer of other architectural expressions in Islamic societies. For the same reason, the Prophet, upon arriving in Madinah, prioritised building his mosque before anything else (al-'Umari, 1995). Building houses for migrants was put on hold until the completion of the mosque. While the mosque was built, the migrants stayed with their brethren in Madinah, sharing everything they had.

This way, with building the mosque and simultaneously delaying the building of physical houses for migrants, people and their characters were also "built," unity and brotherhood established, commitments fortified, sacrifices warranted, and the future facilitated as well as ensured. Both the migrants and natives of Madinah (*ansar*) were primed to convert their houses into "homes" and "sanctuaries," functioning as a launchpad for taking on the world.

Having said that, if Madinah was a sanctuary (a holy city), so were the houses of its people wherein the city's most precious gems were kept and the most valued assets cherished. While it is true that Sarajevo was neither a holy city nor a sanctuary, it nevertheless managed to blossom into a magnificent, prosperous, and beautiful city, serving as the capital of the Bosnian Eyalet, which in turn formed a crucial component of a powerful empire that ranks among the most remarkable in history. Owing its sophisticatedly refined existence to the Islamic worldview and life values championed by the Ottomans, Sarajevo's ongoing and seemingly perpetual advancement was also a result of these same beliefs and standards, irrespective of the administrations and leaders in power. Clearly, the essence of Sarajevo eclipsed them all.

According to the legendary Ottoman traveller and explorer Evlija Celebi (d. 1682), who visited Sarajevo in 1660, Sarajevo ranked first among the 173 large cities in the Bosnian Eyalet. Dotted with myriads of religious and temporal buildings, the city was an urban sight to behold. However, what is conspicuous is that when Evlija Celebi arrived in Sarajevo, its development activities were no longer stages in evolution, but manifestations of an urban and architectural fruition. Thus, while dwelling on those institutional and otherwise buildings, Evlija Celebi paid special tribute to the houses of Sarajevo. Seeing them as echeloned through estates and gardens

[5] Bosnia as Bosnian Krajište or Frontier first, then Bosnian Sanjak as part of the Bosnian Eyalet.

in an amphitheatrical fashion, the amazed visitor described the houses as beautiful, charming, well built, and functional. He tallied them up to 17,000 houses (Celebi, 1967).

Similarly, an Irish traveller in Bosnia in the 19th century was amazed by the beauty, diversity, and liveliness of the "Oriental" housing type, which was entirely distinct from the ethos of Western residential architecture. He remarked: "The great bulk of the houses here are not like those in Europe, governed by circle and line, after the Western school; Oriental freedom reigns, intolerant of all monotony: everything is lively, and adds to the endless variety" (Berber, 2010, p. 60).

As per the soul of Islamic architecture in general and Islamic residential architecture in particular, the housing of Sarajevo signified the urbanisation apex. They embodied a vision that had been transformed into reality and stood as the defining feature of the city, remaining its invaluable treasure.

Conclusion

As with other Islamic cities that drew inspiration from the Prophet's urbanisation scheme in Madinah, Sarajevo was developed based on a clear and advanced philosophy. It is safe to say that it adhered to the general practices of the Prophet as much as the predominant circumstances so permitted. Practically, the city followed the principle of distinct purposes for different urban areas: the bazaar, serving as the hub for crafts and trade, and acting as the economic centre of the city; and the residential area made up of smaller streets and alleys. This residential part was divided into smaller sections called *mahala*. In each *mahala*, houses were surrounded by both large or small gardens and estates, interconnected by narrow winding roads.

The main mosque was strategically positioned at the heart of the city. It dominated the events and the cityscape, suggesting that mosques and the values they represent were central to people's lives, serving as the most authoritative, reliable, guiding, and overseeing influence. As public spaces, other religious, social, and educational institutions were also located in the central core of the city. Their belonging to the public emphasised the importance of their availability, accessibility, and functionality.

Moving outward from this central area, each neighbourhood had its own mosque typically situated at its centre. Public facilities and services in these areas were organised around the mosque, creating the focal point of each neighbourhood. In this sense, Sarajevo distinguished itself by achieving a level of near-perfection in the seamless integration of its religious and urban elements, demonstrating a meticulous approach that resulted in a highly harmonious and well-organised cityscape.

Inspired mainly by the worldview and teachings of Islam, Sarajevo and other Islamic cities were organic in nature. They were rich, healthy, efficient, and conducive, resembling a healthy and perfectly functioning body. Except for rare cases, the trends of imbalances and inconsistencies were not endorsed. The cities were mainly focused on function and services, meaning that the idea of aesthetics for aesthetics' sake was not a priority. Therefore, in architecture, function took precedence over form. Structures were designed for practicality, and their artistic appearance was only significant if it contributed to their overall usefulness and purpose.

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