

BELGRADE: A MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM CULTURAL CENTRE (SIXTEENTH-SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES)

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It is almost certain that no historian would deny the great strategic, military, economic and trading importance of Belgrade both in the Middle Ages and during the period of Ottoman rule. After the Ottoman invasion in 1521, Belgrade became part of a system of Islamic urban civilisation. Unlike the cities which already had a developed urban Islamic civilisation when the Ottomans incorporated them into their state, in the Balkan cities this type of civilisation took a specific Ottoman form from the outset. This was a result of the Ottoman concept of the role of the city within a state and it was primarily reflected in the city structure itself.

This study deals with the first period of Ottoman rule, which lasted more than a century and a half – from the end of August 1521 to early September 1688. Belgrade slowly became more oriental in appearance as Muslims enriched its urban structure with their endowments – a fact often commented upon by Western travellers. In that period Belgrade was steadily built, enriched and demographically enlarged at a rapid pace. This material progress was beyond doubt accompanied by corresponding cultural progress. The continuity of progress was occasionally hampered – most often by epidemics (plague in 1579 and 1628) or large-scale fires (1572, 1672) – but it was not interrupted by the scourges of war. It was only during the war with the Holy League (1683-99) that Belgrade sustained repeated heavy bombardment which damaged it to such an extent that it took decades to rebuild, almost from the ground up.

While the Semendire/Smederevo *sancak* was a military border zone, Belgrade with its high ramparts played a strategic role. Wars left their marks on the development of Belgrade even when the borders were moved far to the north and west. Belgrade was bound to become the largest military and food-manufacturing centre of the European part of the Empire owing to its geographical position and its indisputable advantage as a convenient transport hub where the most important road and river routes intersected. In addition to storing arms and military supplies, Belgrade also developed manufacture (cannon foundry and gunpowder and hard biscuit baking). Supplies, grain, cattle, arms and all military provisions flowed from all parts of the Empire into Belgrade to be distributed to the western frontier. It was also safe winter quarters for the army on military campaign. The presence of the army for months at a time promoted crafts and trade.

Economic expansion was at its peak around the middle of the seventeenth century, precisely at the time when Evliya Çelebi studied and described it. Enchanted by its appearance and by the wealth of its citizens, he called Belgrade the “Cairo of Rumeli”. Belgrade did not remain simply an internal trading station connecting Buda and Timișoara with Dubrovnik, Thessalonica, Istanbul and farther on with Bursa, Izmir, Damascus and Aleppo. The goods from the Arab and Persian lands flowed through Belgrade to the metropolises of Austria, the Czech lands, German states, Poland and Sweden, and in the opposite direction, manufactured products from Europe were transported to markets in the Levant. The founding of the Austrian Oriental Company (*Societas Mercatorum Orientalis*) in 1667 provided a special stimulus. At that time Belgrade was considered to be its first and most important station in the European part of the Ottoman Empire.¹

People of various races, nationalities and confessions lived in Belgrade. Along with the Muslims, there were Orthodox as well as Catholic Christians of diverse origins. The Orthodox Christians were mostly Serbs, then Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians. The Catholic community was sharply divided into two groups: the colony of Dubrovnik merchants and the community of Catholics from Bosnia. Without much interest and often confusing national names, travellers seldom mention Croats, Dalmatians, Italians, or Hungarian Catholics, Calvinists and Lutherans. Apart from various Christian communities, there also were Jews and a considerable number of Gypsies (both Muslim and Christian). According to the imperial taxation registers, in fewer than forty years, from 247 households registered in 1536 (79 Muslim, 139 Christian and 29 Gypsy), Belgrade increased fourfold; in 1572 there already were 1,127 households registered (695 Muslim, 220 Christian, 192 Gypsy and 20 Jewish). An outside estimate for the second half of the sixteenth century is that Belgrade had a population of about 10,000 people, including the permanent garrison. The estimates for the seventeenth century, especially those made by travellers, are on the whole unreliable and imprecise, ranging from several tens of thousands to the most improbable 98,000 people (excluding garrison, notables and *ulema*), 21,000 of which, according to Evliya Çelebi, were liable to pay poll-tax! Evliya added that there were 17,000 Muslim houses. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that some of the reports of the Catholic bishops and travellers are very close to Evliya’s estimate [c. 2,000 households in 1620 (P. Mundy); 20,000 families in 1623/24 (Masarecho); 30,000 households in 1624 (L. Gédoyne); 8,000 households and 60,000 inhabitants in 1633 (Masarecho); 120,000 people in the first half of the

1. V. Čubrilović (ed.), *Историја Београда* [The History of Belgrade] (Belgrade 1974), I: 323-461 (chapters by H. Šabanović, R. Samardžić and R. Veselinović); R. Tričković, ‘Београд под турском влашћу 1521-1804. године’ [Belgrade Under Turkish Rule 1521-1804], in Z. Antoniћ (ed.), *Историја Београда* [The History of Belgrade] (Belgrade 1995), 89-142; H. Šabanović, ‘Урбани развитак Београда од 1521. до 1688. године’ [The Urban Development of Belgrade from 1521 to 1688], *Годишњак града Београда*, 17 (1970), 5-40; R. Samardžić, ‘Belgrade, centre économique de la Turquie du nord, au XVIe siècle’, in N. Todorov (ed.), *La ville balkanique, XV^e-XIX^e ss.* (*Studia Balcanica* 3) (Sofia 1970), 33-44.

seventeenth century (De Georgii); fewer than 40,000 in 1681 (Donado); again in 1681, 50,000 (Benetti)]. Such summary estimates do not correspond to the figures in the *cizye* records for 1627/28, 1640/41 and 1642/43, which show respectively 378, 346 and 381 *cizye* households liable to pay taxes in Belgrade city districts (whatever the number of persons in a *cizye* household may have been).²

A researcher not familiar with the history of Belgrade would probably look up the entries in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. The first was published as far back as 1960, while the second (from 1992) absolutely inexcusably fails to include valuable new findings or an updated bibliography. Except for the number of mosques and *medreses*, taken from Evliya Çelebi, neither entry mentions the cultural life of Belgrade.³ The second publication does not include the findings of a significant project, *The History of Belgrade*, the result of which was a monumental three-volume book of several thousand pages published in 1974.⁴ That was a particularly fruitful period as regards research into the past of Belgrade under Ottoman rule.

2. *Историја Београда*, I: 385-88; Tričković, 'Београд под турском влашћу', 97-100; B. Hrabak, 'Католичко становништво Србије 1460-1700' [The Catholic Population in Serbia 1460-1700], *Наша прошлост*, 2 (1987), 104-22; O. Zirojević, 'Рајнолд Лубенау о Београду и Србији 1587. године' [Reinhold Lubenau on Belgrade and Serbia in 1587], *Годишњак града Београда*, 18 (1966), 54; K. Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins Gesandtschaftsreise nach Konstantinopel. Ein Beitrag zum Frieden von Zsitvatorok* (1606) (Munich 1983), 109; H. Šabanović, *Турски извори за историју Београда. I, 1: Катастарски пописи Београда и околине 1476-1566* [Turkish Sources for the History of Belgrade. I, 1: Cadastral Records of Belgrade and its Environs 1476-1566] (Belgrade 1964), 269-83; *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi* (Istanbul 1315), V: 376; M. Jačov, *Списи Конгрегације за пропаганду вере у Риму о Србима 1622-1644* [The Acta of the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide at Rome on the Serbs 1622-1644] (Belgrade 1986), 14 (Masarecho), 174, 191-92, 197 (Masarecho); R. Samardžić, *Београд и Србија у списима француских савременика XVI-XVII век* [The City of Belgrade and Serbia of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries in the Writings of Contemporaneous Frenchmen] (Belgrade 1961), 182-83 (L. Gédouyn), 193-95; M. Jačov, *Списи Тајног ватиканског архива XVI-XVIII век* [Acta from the Secret Vatican Archive, Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries] (Belgrade 1983), 12 (De Georgii), 69-70; V. Kostić, *Културне везе између југословенских земаља и Енглеске до 1700. године* [Cultural Relations between Yugoslavia and England before 1700] (Belgrade 1972), 322 (Mundy); G. Stanojević, 'Два описа Београда из 1681. године' [Two Descriptions of Belgrade from 1681], *Историјски гласник*, 1-2 (1975), 136, 138 (Donado and Benetti); O. Zirojević, 'Попис цизје београдске области 1640/41. године' [The *Cizye* Records for the Belgrade Area for 1640/41], *Историјски часопис*, 44 (1997), 229, 233.
3. B. Djurdjev, *ЕП*, s.v. 'Belgrade'; D. Djurić-Zamolo, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*, s.v. 'Belgrad', 407-09.
4. V. Čubrilović (ed.), *Историја Београда*, 3 vols (Belgrade 1974). This project involved many years of research, including the study of Ottoman sources by H. Šabanović and R. Tričković. Unfortunately, this huge advantage was to a great extent rendered inoperative by the lack of the proper apparatus in the book.

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In this paper I intend to set up a methodological framework for researching the cultural life of Belgrade under Ottoman rule and provide basic information on the intellectual elite of the principal religious communities.

The definitions of the elite that take into account only its economic and political influence are not applicable to the intellectual elite. Their only common denominator may be their 'influence' on the social life of a community. The member of the intellectual elite could belong to the decision-making political or economic elite, but also could be a poor dervish or a simple monk. 'Influence', 'literacy' and 'creativity' are certainly the most important qualities of a sixteenth or seventeenth-century elite intellectual. But must all three requirements be fulfilled in order to consider a person an intellectual? Assuming that every literate person in the period under consideration is an intellectual, then every creative author, even a scribe, may be said to be a member of the intellectual elite in the broadest sense of the notion. If, however, elite membership is measured by 'influence' rather than by creativity, then even a 'reader' who left no work behind but did influence his environment, perhaps strongly, as some *müderrises* or Christian priests did, is a member of the elite. Furthermore, the question may be posed whether the intellectual elite also included illiterate but 'influential' persons who acquired their knowledge through listening, and, spreading it further by preaching, produced an enthusiastic public response (as in the case of a charismatic dervish). Conversely, an outstanding original author who did not influence the intellectual life of his environment in any way cannot, by this token, be considered a member of the elite of his epoch. And the fact that his work exerted a powerful influence on subsequent generations is not much help to him.

An intellectual could be recognised or contested by his contemporaries. Trouble began when the intellectual went beyond the accepted value system upheld by the authorities, if he was a Muslim subject, or by the church hierarchy, if he was a non-Muslim. At any rate, what made him an intellectual was not his adoption of officially recognised, mostly religious, values, but his influence on his contemporaries.

Sources give no hint of intellectual communication between Muslim and non-Muslim religious communities in the cultural life of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ottoman Balkan city. There was no institutional framework for such communication. On the contrary, the church hierarchy in the case of non-Muslims, and the *ulema*, military, administrative and judicial hierarchies in that of Muslims, did their best to discourage intellectual communication between the two communities in order to preserve the purity of their respective faiths. And it was the hierarchies who had the power of interpreting the law and tradition. "The religious communities should be separate", decided *şeyhülislam* Ebussuûd Efendi in one of his *fetvas*. Such views were based on religious affiliation as the crucial constituent of the identity of a community and were typical of a larger part of Ottoman rule both in the Balkans and in the Arab world, as shown by B. Masters. Then again, that does not mean that there were no contacts and exchange of opinions at all, only that they were sporadic and on individual initiative. The openness to intellectual communication of the *müfti* of Damascus Abdülğani el-Nabulusi (died 1731), and his

theological debate with the Patriarch of Antioch, even if resulting from his inclination to mysticism, is an extremely rare exception which proves the rule. Moreover, such contacts could have been a risky undertaking; if Muslim public opinion found them disturbing, both sides were liable to various punishments: conversion or death for non-Muslims, severe judgment and expulsion from the community for Muslims. On both sides ample literature and sermons were always there to remind one of the dangers of losing one's faith. R. Gradeva's analysis of folk epics, neo-martyrs' lives and other contemporary literary works related to the territory of present-day Bulgaria is fully applicable to the western Balkans, to the Serb-inhabited lands. The possible extent of influence exerted by neo-martyrs' biographies, especially by the Life of St George the 'New', whose martyrdom was consequent upon a falsely friendly conversation about the respective virtues of Christianity and Islam, is clearly shown by the rapid spread of his cult throughout the Balkans, and even beyond the Ottoman Empire. One of the very reliable sources, the detailed chronicle of Serres penned by Synadinos in the seventeenth century, also gives no hint of intellectual communication between different confessions.⁵

The restriction to their respective religious and cultural environments was not specific to the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. The relationship between the Catholics and Orthodox in the Ottoman Empire was burdened with the very same barriers, fears and intolerance. The lack of communication between Muslims and non-Muslims on the intellectual level, resulting from the fact that intellectual pursuits were mostly associated with religious matters, did not entail lack of communication and co-operation in everyday life. On the contrary, contacts on that level were common. Muslims and non-Muslims could be next-door neighbours, make friends, exchange gifts for major religious feasts, or work together in their guilds. The closest co-operation between the members of all communities, going as far as partnership, was realised in trade, even in those enterprises where the stakes were high and the scale international. But even this kind of co-operation was brought to a standstill in certain periods, as was characteristic of the Ragusan community in Belgrade. Institutionally, the statute of the *Society for Trade in the Levant* strictly forbade all co-operation, not just with Muslims, but also with Jews, or Christians from other communities, including Bosnian Catholics. Of course, the reasons were neither religious nor ideological, but solely the enfeebled Ragusan

5. B. Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge 2001), 26-39; R. Gradeva, 'Turks and Bulgarians, Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries', *Journal of Mediterranean Studies*, 5/2 (1995), 173-87; eadem, 'Apostasy in Rumeli in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century', *Arab Historical Review for Ottoman Studies*, 22 (2000), 29-73; D. Bogdanović, 'Житије Георгија Краговца' [The Life of St George of Kratovo], *Зборник историје књижевности [САНУ]*, 10 (1976), 203-67; G. Subotić, 'Најстарије представе светог Георгија Краговца' [The Earliest Representations of St George of Kratovo], *Зборник радова Византолошког института*, 32 (1993), 167-202; P. Odorico in collaboration with S. Asdrachas, T. Karanastassis, K. Kostis and S. Petmézas, *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serres en Macédoine (XVII^e siècle)* (Paris 1996).

community's economic interests. There is no simple way, then, to explain the relations between different religious communities. B. Masters' study of the life of non-Muslims in the Ottoman Arab world, and J. Strauss' analysis of the relations between the two communities in Synadinos' chronicle, come to similar conclusions. Masters infers that "while there were few rigid barriers separating individuals of different faiths from each other, there was concomitantly little to draw them together...". Speaking of the common people, of Muslims daily mingling with non-Muslims in the streets, of those, then, to whom a 'social exchange' came easily, he emphasises that there were no rules: the documents show "that their social acceptance of non-Muslims could vary almost as dramatically as could be found among the Muslim elites". J. Strauss remarks that "basic antagonism between 'Christians' ... and 'Turks' ... runs through the whole chronicle". The relations between the communities were described as "strained" and burdened "by mutual suspicion and aggressive outbursts". There is no doubt that the barriers of tradition and religion were coupled with a psychological one, without exception marked by latent intolerance and deep-seated collective memory of more or less frequent waves of uncontrolled violence. The experience of every single religious community corresponded exactly with Ebussuûd's stance cited above.⁶

The Muslim Intellectual Elite

The Muslim intellectual elite in Belgrade, as in other Ottoman cities, was not uniform; it was made up of individuals of different origin, education, economic and political power, in different ways included in the Ottoman political bodies and assembling in different places. As in other provincial towns in the Balkans, the elite in its most general sense was first of all made up of administrative and judicial authorities headed by a *kadı*, representatives of the *ulema*: a *müfti*, *müdürrises* and their students, teachers at *mektebs*, military authorities headed by a *sancakbeyi* along with individual *sipahis*, then the Muslim 'clergy' and lesser 'clergy' in mosques, *şeyhs* of different dervish orders and their adherents, scribes of all kinds and all who were in some way connected with books (transcribers, calligraphers, artists and others). The system of rotation, applied in the Muslim military-administrative and judicial bodies and to a lesser extent to the members of the *ulema*, hampered, if not prevented, the sustained existence of a hard core of any established cultural circle. When eminent individuals left, regardless of whether they were military officers, famed *kadis* or inspired *şeyhs*, their subordinates and adherents left with them.⁷

6. R. Samardžić, 'Дубровчани у Београду' [Ragusans in Belgrade], *Годишњак Музеја града Београда*, 2 (1955), 72-73, 77; Masters, *Christians and Jews*, 37-38; J. Strauss, 'Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on Some Local Greek Chronicles of the *Tourkokratia*', in F. Adanır and S. Faroqhi (eds), *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden-Boston-Cologne 2002), 205, 207.
7. Alexandre Popović has addressed the general methodological problems of researching the cultural life of Muslims in the Balkan cities. Other researchers have dealt with methodological issues, but only with those they came across in their work on certain

Given such a state system, the question is who constituted a local Muslim writer. Did all the writers with the *nisba* ‘Belgradî’ live and write in Belgrade? Obviously not. Many of them were simply born in Belgrade, attained fame in Istanbul, Cairo, Medina and elsewhere, and never returned to their birthplace. They should be studied as individuals who took part in shaping Ottoman civilisation, but they had no connection with the Belgrade intellectual elite. The local Muslim cultural circle was made up of those who lived and created in Belgrade, regardless of the place where they had been born, in the Balkans or in Anatolia or in the Arab provinces, and regardless of how long they stayed in Belgrade – a year or two or several decades. One of the paradoxes of Ottoman civilisation is precisely the fact that local Muslim cultural history was made, or influenced, by ‘newcomers’, people who were born elsewhere. The examples from Belgrade support this completely. Such people did not necessarily have to write a literary piece of work during their stay in Belgrade to be considered Belgrade intellectuals. They were part of the intellectual elite, or were very close to it, even when they wrote their books before or after their service in Belgrade.

The intellectual elite in Belgrade, first of all, gathered around educational institutions: *medreses*, *mektebs*, mosques, *darülkurras*, *tekkes*, as well as at the *sarays* of state officials (*beys*, *kadıs*), at the *mahkeme* (court), at the *müfti*’s, and in bazaars and coffee-houses.

It took time for such institutions to be established and consolidated in the recently conquered Belgrade. They mostly belonged to *vakıfs*, above all to large *vakıfs* which existed without interruption till the Austrian conquest of Belgrade in 1688. Leaving aside the sultans’ endowments, the biggest *vakıfs* were founded by the Semendire *sancakbeyis* and viziers: in the sixteenth century – by the Grand Vizier Piri Mehmed Paşa (early 1520s), Yahyapaşaoğlu (Yahyalı) Mehmed Paşa (1540s, till 1548/49), Semendire *sancakbeyi* Bayram Bey (1557-68), Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa (early 1570s), and in the seventeenth – by the *beylerbeyi* of Buda Musa Paşa (1632-43), and the Grand Vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Paşa (1661-67).⁸

The Belgrade intellectual elite, like those in other parts of the Empire, undoubtedly took an active part in gaining and spreading knowledge, doing it either as a job

aspects of cultural life. My work on the Muslim intellectual elite in Belgrade mostly follows Popović’s methodological concepts (A. Popović, ‘Un sujet méconnu: la vie culturelle des musulmans dans les villes balkaniques à l’époque ottomane (remarques méthodologiques)’, in *La culture urbaine des Balkans (XV^e-XIX^e siècles)*. 3: *La ville dans les Balkans depuis la fin du Moyen âge jusqu’au début du XX^e siècle* [Belgrade and Paris 1991], 165-75; idem, ‘La littérature ottomane des musulmans yougoslaves. Essai de bibliographie raisonnée’, *Journal Asiatique*, 259/3-4 [1971], 326). I wish to express my gratitude to Prof. Popović not only for his advice, but also for the data he brought to my notice.

8. Šabanović, ‘Урбани развитак’; *Историја Београда*, I: 376-421 (Šabanović); A. Fotić, ‘Yahyapaşa-oğlu Mehmed Pasha’s *Evkaf* in Belgrade’, *ActOrHung*, 54/4 (2001), 437-52.

or as an interest. The most important educational institutions, the 50-*akçe*-ranked Yahyalu Mehmed Paşa's and 25-*akçe*-ranked Bayram Bey's *medreses*, were built around the middle of the sixteenth century. This undoubtedly was a watershed in the cultural life of Belgrade. Cultural circles were formed around gifted professors who engaged in the study of various, mostly religious, topics, their interpretation, copying the works of eminent Muslim thinkers and in this way spreading the Muslim ideology. All this did not prevent their cultivating diverse literary genres.

Depending on the genre, as was usual at the time, they wrote in Arabic, Persian and more rarely in Turkish. A. Popović has already pointed out the problem of communication between such relatively closed circles and the vast majority of the illiterate public. The common people "could not even understand the language in which this culture and this civilisation manifested itself". Dervishes played an important role in conveying knowledge to the general public as they were in constant contact with the people; they spoke their language and were in the position to shape what is today called 'public opinion'. One of the most important tasks in the study of the dervish orders, both orthodox and heterodox, is undoubtedly ascertaining their role in the development of 'folk culture'.⁹

Yahyalu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese*, called also *İmaret medresesi*, was in some sixteenth-century sources referred to under the name of Mehmed's son Arslan Paşa. This should not throw us into any confusion. There was only one 50-*akçe*-ranked *medrese* in Belgrade, and it was Yahyapaşaoğlu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese*. It was attended by 40 students and 12-13 *danişmends* (higher level students). Its *müderises* were the second highest members of the Belgrade *ulema* after *kadı*s. Their importance was still greater because usually they concurrently were the *müftis* of Belgrade. Reference to the following *müderises* has survived: Mevlâna Mehmed (1580-?); Mahmud Efendi (?-1584); Fazlullah Efendi (1604/05-?); İbrahim, the son of İskender, much better known under his pen-name Münirî Belgradî (?-c.1620/25?); Fazıl Müfettiş Süleyman (1648-52), a noted scholar who made a particular study of the rhetoric of the Koran; and Kapudanzade Timur Efendi (1656-60). To the appointment of Fazlullah Efendi, a *kadı* and poet Ahmed Çelebi of Tuzla dedicated a *tarih* (chronogram). To judge by a verse, the *medrese* had been closed "for quite some time" before this appointment.¹⁰

9. Popović, 'Un sujet méconnu', 167-68, 171.

10. Fotić, 'Yahyapaşaoğlu Mehmed Paşa's *Evkaf*', 443; idem, 'Улога вакуфа у развоју оријенталног града: београдски вакуф Мехмед паше Јахјапашећа' [The Role of *Vakıf* in the Development of an Oriental City: The Yahyapaşaoğlu Mehmed Paşa's Belgrade *Vakıf*], in *Социјална структура српских градских насеља (XII-XVIII век)* [The Social Structure of Serbian Cities (Twelfth-Eighteenth Centuries)] (Smederevo and Belgrade 1992), 152-56; R. Tričković, 'Исламске школе у нашим земљама' [Islamic Schools in our Lands], in *Историја школа и образовања код Срба* [The History of Schools and Education with the Serbs] (Belgrade 1974), 253-54 (so far the best-documented presentation of this *medrese*, with clarifications concerning the use of the name Arslan Paşa); *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 377-78, 381; M. K. Özergin, 'Eski bir Rûznâme'ye göre İstanbul ve Rumeli Medreseleri', *TED*, 4-5 (1974), 268, 281; C. Baltacı, *XV-XVI. Asırlarda Osmanlı*

We know the names of three more Belgrade *müftis*: İbrahim, Mahmud and Ali Efendi el-İştibî, but it has not been ascertained when they lived or whether they were also *müderreses*. Ali Efendi wrote a book on the Islamic law on inheritance and glosses for Molla Hüsrev's works *Durar ve Gurar* and *es-Sireciyye*. It seems that he died in 1620 in Istanbul.¹¹

Münirî Belgradî was one of those well-known teachers and scholars who considerably influenced the cultural life of the Muslim population of Belgrade and all around it. Bearing in mind that he was a *müderres*, his literary production and the length of his stay in Belgrade, he was probably the most important intellectual figure in Belgrade between 1521 and 1688. We know that he was born in 1551 or 1552 in a family of Bosnian origin and that he spent a great part of his youth in Mitrofçe/Sremska Mitrovica. He built his career as an *âlim* in Belgrade and its surroundings; he was a *vaiz*, a *müzekkir*, then a *müderres* and a *müfti* till his death around 1620-25. He was also a *şeyh* of the Halvetis. He was a versatile man: in addition to his works of religious and moral character (*Tuhfat an-nasiha*, *Subul al-Huda*), there are many treatises (*risale*), scattered in numerous *mecmuas*, such as *Nisab al-intisab wa adab al-iktisab*, a study of the legal and moral framework of the activity of guild corporations, *Tetimme ül-kitab ül-Münirî el-merhum*, *Risale-i mühimme el-fazil el-Münirî*, as well as works on listening to music, on the imperfection of dance (*Naks-i raks*), and the works against the use of coffee, wine, opium and tobacco (*Nazm fi afat'l-kahva wa'l-hamr wa'l-afiyun wa'd-duhhan*). His *menakibname*, finished in 1603/04 and entitled *Silsilat al-mukarribin wa manakib al-muttakin*, contains more than 120 biographies, including a few dozen biographies of Balkan *şeyhs*, and constitutes an excellent source for studying the history of mystical brotherhoods in Rumeli in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Also, he was the author of a study on ancient geography finished c. 1581 (*Sab'ıyyat*). In his lively correspondence with eminent *şeyhs* of his times (Mahmud Hudayi, Hüseyin Lamekanî) he always defended the strict orthodox views of Sunni Islam. In addition to his original works, Münirî Belgradî copied several essays of the famous *şeyh* Ali Dede Sigetvarî Bosnevî (1615) as well as his *Muhadarat ul-awa'il*

Medreseleri: Teşkilât-Tarih (Istanbul 1976), 155-56, 504, 581 (in BOA, K. Kepeci, Ruûs Kalemi 238, p. 163, it is called Arslan Paşa's *medrese*); A. Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemâ in the Mid-17th Century: An Analysis of the Vakâ'i ül-Fuzalâ of Mehmed Şeyhî Ef.* (Berlin 1986), 315-16.

11. K. Dobrača, *Katalog arapskih, turskih i perzijskih rukopisa Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke u Sarajevu* [Catalogue of Arabic, Turkish and Persian Manuscripts at Gazi-Husrev Bey Library in Sarajevo] (Sarajevo 1979), II: 143; H. Hasandedić, 'Djela i kraći literarni sastavi Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine koji su napisani na orijentalnim jezicima i koji se nalaze u Arhivu Hercegovine u Mostaru' [The Works and Short Literary Pieces Written in the Oriental Languages by the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina from the Archive of Herzegovina in Mostar], *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke*, 4 (1976), 123; S. Trako, 'Duraru'l-ḥukkām sa marginalijama beogradskog muftije Ali-efendije' [*Duraru'l-ḥukkām* with the Marginalia by Ali Efendi, *Müfti* of Belgrade], *Anali Gazi Husrev-begove biblioteke*, 4 (1976), 131-32, 137-39.

wa musamarat ul-awahir, a kind of universal history, adding his own observations to the copy. According to Evliya Çelebi, his tomb became one of the respected and much frequented places in Belgrade.¹²

A few *müderreses* from Bayram Bey's *medrese* are known: appointed *müderres* and *müfti* of Belgrade in 1625/26, Budinî Mustafa Efendi was transferred to Sarajevo to the post of *kadı* in 1627/28; a certain Ali Efendi was appointed a *müderres* at the rank of 50 *akçes* in 1657; in 1679 Şeyh Ali Mısırlı was transferred from Bayram Bey's *medrese* to the post of professor at Fazıl Ahmed Paşa's *darülkurra*.¹³

Evliya Çelebi mentions six other *medreses* but does not give their names. As there is no corroboration of this information in other sources, this number may be explained by the fact that there were novice *müderreses* who taught at some of the major mosques. In 1630, Hasan Halife and Mehmed Efendi earned their livelihood as officials of the imperial mosque, funded from the revenues of the Belgrade ferry. At Sultan Süleyman's mosque, the *müderres* and *hoca* Salih was replaced in 1693 by Muharrem, the son of Ahmed, with the rank of *müderres* of 20 *akçes*.¹⁴

Evliya Çelebi claims that there were eight schools for the study of *hadis* (*darülhadis*) in Belgrade; the beginnings of teaching this holy Islamic tradition are associated with the arrival of the dismissed *şeyhülislam* Abdürrahim (in Belgrade from 1651 to 1656). He observes that there was no special school for the study of the Islamic tradition and for the correct reciting of the Koran (*darülkurra*). Such a school was erected between 1661 and 1667 by the Grand Vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmed Paşa within his *vakıf*. The *müderres* was assisted by three *halifes* and there were fourteen students. Except for Şeyh Ali Mısırlı, already mentioned, appointed in 1679, other professors are not known.¹⁵

The preface to a manuscript finished in 1642/43 mentions a *müderres* Ali, but there is no further reference as to where he taught. The author of the manuscript

12. N. Clayer, 'Münîri Belgrâdi. Un représentant de la 'ilmîyye dans la région de Belgrade, fin XVI^e—début XVII^e siècle', in S. Praetor and C. K. Neumann (eds), *Frauen, Bilder und Gelehrte. Studien zu Gesellschaft und Künsten im Osmanischen Reich = Arts, Women and Scholars: Studies in Ottoman Society and Culture. Festschrift Hans Georg Majer* (Istanbul 2002), 549-68; eadem, 'Quand l'hagiographie se fait l'écho des dérèglements socio-politiques: le *menâkıbnâme* de Münîri Belgrâdi', in G. Veinstein (ed.), *Syncretismes et hérésies dans l'Orient seldjoukide et ottoman (XIV^e—XVIII^e siècles). Actes du Colloque du Collège de France, octobre 2001* (Paris 2005), 363-81; eadem, 'L'œil d'un savant de Belgrade sur les Melâmis-Bayrâmis à la fin du XVI^e—début du XVII^e siècle', in N. Clayer, A. Popovic and T. Zarcone (eds), *Melâmis-Bayrâmis. Études sur trois mouvements mystiques musulmans* (Istanbul 1998), 153-76; H. Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana BiH na orijentalnim jezicima* [The Literature of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Oriental Languages] (Sarajevo 1973), 193-201; I. Bušatlić, 'Munîrî Bosnawî i njegova univerzalna geografija *Sab'ıyyât*' [Munîrî Bosnawî and his Universal Geography *Sab'ıyyât*], *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju*, 47-48 (1997-98), 85-99.

13. Clayer, 'Münîri Belgrâdi', 558; Tričković, 'Исламске школе', 254-55, 257.

14. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 378; Tričković, 'Исламске школе', 255.

15. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 378; Tričković, 'Исламске школе', 256-57.

spared no space in praising “the eminent *müderriş* ... who can tell justice from injustice and diligence from laziness, who judges people by their actions and not by their clothes, because a man’s worth is in his manner of statement...”.¹⁶

In addition to two *medreses*, Belgrade was covered with a network of religious primary schools, *mektebs*, beside the mosques to be found in almost every Muslim *mahalle*. There was another religious building important for Belgrade – a *musalla* (*namazgâh*), which belonged to Yahyalu Mehmed Paşa’s *wakıf*. By 1560 there were 16 mosques and *mescids* registered, in 1572 there were as many as 24 and at the end of the century, at least 29. In the seventeenth century, at least 29 mosques and 12 *mescids* were built, which would make about 70 mosques and *mescids* in all. Evliya Çelebi claims that there were 270 *mihrabs* (houses of worship) and as many *mektebs*, 33 mosques and 19 *mescids* included. The total number is undoubtedly exaggerated. According to H. Šabanović, in Evliya’s time (1660) or later there could not have been more than 80 mosques and *mescids*.¹⁷

The mysticism-orientated intellectual elite was connected with numerous dervish orders and the *şeyhs* who spread their tenets. There is no point in listing all orders, orthodox and heterodox, which existed in Belgrade as their number and influence varied from decade to decade. They gathered at *tekkes*; according to Evliya Çelebi, there were just 17 of them, but we should bear in mind that services could have been held in private houses. The biographies of some of the Belgrade *şeyhs* found their place in Münirî’s *menakıbnâme*: Nakşibendi *şeyh* Nasuh Belgradî (died 1573/74); Melami *şeyh* Musliheddin Dede, *halife* of Pir Abdülvehhab Elmali; Halveti-Uşşaki *şeyh* Muhammed Edirnevî (died 1601/02), the founder of a *tekke*; Sinani *şeyhs* Ali Dede Belgradî and Muhammed Dede Belgradî; Sünbülü *şeyhs* Sinan Efendi (died 1601/02) and Bali Dede (died 1602/03). Evliya Çelebi mentions just two *şeyhs*, Mehmed Horasanî, head of Yahyapaşaoğlu Mehmed Paşa’s *tekke*, and Halveti *şeyh* Kurucızade, *halife* of Üsküdarî Mahmud Efendi.¹⁸

One of the greatest mystical poets in Belgrade in the seventeenth century was Habibi, a Mevlevi *şeyh*. He was born in Bosnia, educated in Istanbul and spent most of his life in Belgrade, where he died in 1640 or 1643. He wrote two literary pieces, both lost: *Divan* and *Küçük Mesnevi*. All his life in Belgrade he taught and interpreted Rumi’s *Mesnevi* at the Mevlevi *tekke*.¹⁹ Another *şeyh*, head of the Gülşeni

16. O. Mušić, ‘En-nemliyye fi izhâri-l-qawâ’idi-s-sarfiyye we-n-nahwiyye’, *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom*, 6-7 (1956-57), 39-55.

17. Šabanović, ‘Урбани развитак’, 26-29; *Историја Београда*, I: 417-20 (Šabanović); Tričković, ‘Исламске школе’, 245-46; *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 377-78.

18. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 378, 380; Šabanović, ‘Урбани развитак’, 30-31; N. Clayer, *Mystiques, état et société. Les Halvetis dans l’aire balkanique de la fin du XVI^e siècle à nos jours* (Leiden 1994), 174-75, 178, 426, 434, 436; eadem, ‘L’œil d’un savant de Belgrade’, 155; eadem, ‘Les miracles des cheikhs et leurs fonctions dans les espaces frontières de la Roumélie du XVI^e siècle’, in D. Aigle (ed.), *Miracle et karâma. Hagiographies médiévales comparées 2* (Turnhout 2000), 447, 453; eadem, ‘Münirî Belgradî’, 560-61.

19. S. Bašagić, *Bošnjaci i Hercegovci u islamskoj književnosti. Prilog kulturnoj historiji*

order in Belgrade, Ahmed Müsellim, wrote a *Divan* in the seventeenth century.²⁰

Besides all those who worked within *vakıf* institutions, there were *kadı*s and members of the *askerî* who left their imprint on the cultural life of Belgrade. *Nakibüleşraf* Abdürrahim Efendi, ex-*şeyhülislam*, should be singled out as the most influential among them. He was Belgrade *kadı* and *müfti* from 1651 until his death in 1656. He was buried in Belgrade.²¹ *Kadıasker* Muid Ahmed Efendi (1638-40), later a *şeyhülislam*, was also *kadı* of Belgrade, his appointment being a punitive measure.²² Another distinguished *kadı* was Molla Habil Efendi bin Receb, a writer and diplomat (a participant in concluding the peace at Zsitva Torok in 1606), who lived in Belgrade from 1607 to 1612 and from 1614 to 1622.²³ In the seventeenth century, other learned jurists were appointed as *kadı*s in Belgrade: Merhabazade Ahmed Efendi (1640-43), a poet with the *mahlâs* Şeyhi, also noted as calligrapher and musician; Haşimizade Seyyid Mehmed Efendi (1643/44), who wrote verses in Turkish under the *mahlâs* Yetimi; Sarı Muid Mustafa Efendi (1645/46), author of the treatise on *feraiz* in verse, and probably of *Hilye-i Nebeviyye* in verse; Acem Mehmed Efendi (1649/50), poet with the *mahlâs* Razi; another poet, İbrahim Efendi (1664/65) with the *mahlâs* Şükri; Şami Abdüllatif Efendi (1667/68), who wrote *İstiarat*, a versification of the *Menar* with commentaries, and *kasides* in Arabic under the names el-Balı, el-Hanefi and Behai; Nisbeti Ali Efendi (1668/70), a poet.²⁴ About Mülterem Belgradî, *kadı* and poet, presumed to have lived in the seventeenth century, nothing is known except that he was born in Belgrade.²⁵

At least two of the Smederevo *sancakbeyis* had a proclivity for writing. One is Arslan Paşa Yahyapaşazade, head of the *sancak* from 1564 to 1565, later *beylerbeyi* of Buda. He wrote poems under the literary pseudonym Sinani. Partly brought up in Belgrade, where he lived with his father, he became *mütevelli* of his father's Belgrade endowment in 1548.²⁶ The other was the famous Feridun Bey, *sancakbeyi* from 1577 to 1579, well-known writer and historian, author of *Münşeât üs-selatin*, secretary to Sokollu Mehmed Paşa, and later a *nişancı*.²⁷

Bosne i Hercegovine [The Natives of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Islamic Literature. A Contribution to the Cultural History of Bosnia-Herzegovina] (Sarajevo 1986), 121-22.

20. *Историја Београда*, I: 417 (Šabanović).

21. M. Süreyya, *Sicill-i 'Osmani*, III: 330; *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 375, 378; *Naima Tarihi*, trans. Z. Danişman (Istanbul 1969), V: 2189; Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemā*, 176-78.

22. *Naima Tarihi*, III: 1374-76, 1482, 1550; Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemā*, 101.

23. *Историја Београда*, I: 411 (Šabanović); *Naima Tarihi*, I: 186, II: 734; L. Fekete (ed.), *Türkische Schriften aus dem Archive des Palatins Nikolaus Esterházy 1606-1645* (Budapest 1932), 18, 22, 27, 213, 225, 424.

24. Uğur, *The Ottoman 'Ulemā*, 204, 284, 302, 344, 358, 370, 475-76.

25. Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 669 [taken from J. von Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte der osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit* (Pest 1838), III: 495].

26. C. Römer, 'On Some Hass Estates Illegally Claimed by Arslan Pasha, Beglerbegi of Buda', in C. Heywood and C. Imber (eds), *Studies in Ottoman History in Honour of Professor V. L. Ménage* (Istanbul 1994), 297-98; Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte*, II: 239; Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 701.

27. F. Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları ve Eserleri*, trans. C. Üçok (Ankara 1982), 118-20.

There were also *sipahis* with broad interests. Hayreti, a poet, born in Yenice, lived beside the military border *bey*s Yahyalı and at the court of Gazi Hüsrev Bey till his death in 1534. Belgrade was the subject of several of his poems, the best known being *Belgrad Şehr-engizi*.²⁸ The poet Cenani died young in 1591, while Belgradî Nagmi Çelebi, author of an original mid-seventeenth-century literary piece (*Şah u geda*), wrote about many events and interesting details concerning Belgrade.²⁹ First a *zaim* (1678) and then an *alaybeyi* of Semendire *sancak* till his death in 1688, Ali Bey Paşazade, known as Vusleti, wrote an epic poem about the Battle at Chehrin (*Gazaname-i Çehrin*) and dedicated it to Kara Mustafa Paşa. He also left a few smaller pieces (chronograms, *gazels*, etc.).³⁰ Another important state official, *defterdar* of the province of Temeşvar, Belgradî Mustafa, the son of Ahmed, continued the famous Peçevi's history for the period from 1635 to 1651.³¹

It should be mentioned that the famous historian, mathematician, calligrapher and painter Nasuh Matrakçı lived in Belgrade for a while.³² In the sixteenth century the poets Nuri Belgradî, Valihi Belgradî and Sadık Belgradî (died 1594) were born and perhaps wrote in Belgrade.³³ Around the middle of the century a certain Zeyni was famed for his chronograms dedicated to important city buildings.³⁴ We should also mention Ahmed Çelebi of Tuzla, a writer of chronograms active at the beginning of the seventeenth century,³⁵ and Emiri Belgradî, a much better-known lyricist of the same century.³⁶

Among those whose extended stay in Belgrade has not been ascertained is the poet Hüseyin Paşa el-Belgradî, previously a *kadı* in Medina and subsequently serving in Cairo, where he died (Belgrade 1551-Cairo 1614).³⁷ There is also an unknown poet Abdi Efendi Belgradî, whose poems were found among the poetry works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries collected in one of the *mecmuas* preserved in Mostar.³⁸

28. M. Çavuşoğlu, 'Hayreti'nin Belgrad Şehr-engizi', *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2-3 (1973-74), 325-56.

29. *Историја Београда*, I: 417 (Šabanović).

30. Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları*, 248; Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 373-74.

31. Babinger, *Osmanlı Tarih Yazarları*, 213; Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 311.

32. *Историја Београда*, I: 416-17 (Šabanović).

33. Hammer-Purgstall, *Geschichte*, II: 549, III: 86; *Историја Београда*, I: 417 (Šabanović); Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 697; Kınalızade Hasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü'ş-Şuarâ*, ed. İ. Kutluk (Ankara 1978), I: 545-46, II: 1006-07; Latifi, *Teđkere-i şuarâ*, trans. O. Rescher (Tübingen 1950), 287, 291-92, 453, 457-58.

34. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 377.

35. Šabanović, *Književnost Muslimana*, 110-11; M. Handžić, 'Kadi Ahmed Çelebi (Kādī Aḥmad Čalabī) iz Tuzle' [Kādī Ahmed Çelebi (Kādī Aḥmad Čalabī) from Tuzla], *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice u Jugoslaviji*, 4 (1936), 194-200.

36. *Историја Београда*, I: 417 (Šabanović).

37. M. Handžić, 'Rad bosansko-hercegovačkih muslimana na književnom polju' [The Work of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Field of Literature], *Glasnik Islamske vjerske zajednice u Jugoslaviji*, 2/1 (1934), 32.

38. Hasandedić, 'Djela i kraći sastavi', 122.

We should also bear in mind that books in private ownership used to travel around the Ottoman Empire with their owners, staying in Belgrade for as long as the owners served there as soldiers, judges, professors, etc. After the owner's death they could have been put on the market as part of his belongings intended for sale. For example, a copy of *Cawahir ul-fikh* of 1638 from the things left on the death of a certain Belgradî Mustafa Çelebi was sold in 1679 at the *suk-ı sultanî* of Belgrade in the presence of representatives of the sharia court.³⁹ Books stayed in Belgrade if they were donated to an institution, but even then they sometimes changed owners. Şeyh Süleyman Efendi, *vaiz* in Buda's Great Mosque, donated his *Tefsir*, but it somehow found its way into the hands of Belgradî Mehmed Efendi, *ağa* of the janissaries of the Sublime Porte at the time. In 1636 he gave the book as a gift to Ahmed Mısrızade, a librarian at Niš. After a while the book changed hands once again, and returned to Belgrade.⁴⁰

In addition to original works created in Belgrade, the most important undoubtedly being those written by Münirî Belgradî, old manuscripts circulated; they were sold, re-sold, bequeathed, copied to order or for personal pleasure. Of about twenty manuscripts ascertained to have been copied in Belgrade in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, only four copies are noted as being made at Yahyalu Mehmed Paşa's *medrese*. It is reasonable to assume, however, that most of them stemmed from the cultural circle that formed round that most influential school. It cannot be said that religious works, including those on mysticism, predominate. Manuscripts in the fields of Islamic law, astronomy, general history, poetry, language, style and medicine were also copied. The scribes were mostly from the Balkans, above all from Bosnia: Hasan bin Mustafa Bosnevî (1591), Muhammed bin Kadı Hanefî (1601), Receb bin Kurd Ali Berkofçalı (1617), İbrahim bin Salih (1640), Muhammed bin Mustafa Çavuşzade from Yukarı Tuzla (1647), Kadı Muhammed (1654), Mesud bin Ahmed bin Hüseyin Kraguyevçalı (1656), Musa bin Muharrem (1657), Abdülvehhab bin Hacı Ramazan bin Hacı İbrahim (1664), Mustafa Budunî (1683), Hüseyin, Hasan bin Ahmed Banalukavî.⁴¹ We know about some ten scribes with the *nisba* Belgradî, but none of the books they copied contains information about the place where the copy was made.⁴²

The Non-Muslim Intellectual Elite

Non-Muslims, *zimmis*, were organised only within their religious and ethnic communities. The Christian intellectual elite was strictly divided into the members of the Orthodox Church and Catholics. On the one hand, their relations were bur-

39. Dobrača, *Katalog*, II: 375-76.

40. *Ibid.*, I: 142.

41. M. Ždralović, *Bosansko-hercegovački prepisivači djela u arabičkim rukopisima* [Bosnian-Herzegovian Transcribers of Arabic Manuscripts] (Sarajevo 1988), II: 34, 41-42, 60, 72, 74-75, 79, 95, 333 (no date), and in Mehmed Paşa's *medrese*: 29, 39, 68, 334 (no date).

42. *Ibid.*, 46, 52, 56, 58, 63, 68, 71, 74-75, 77, 341 (no date).

dened by the constant attempts of the Serbian higher clergy to impose taxes on Catholics, and, on the other, by the persistent missionary work of the Vatican (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*). The Catholic community in Belgrade was rife with friction and intolerance between groups which were different from each other only in their territorial origins, along with adherence to particular monastic orders (Catholics from Dubrovnik versus Bosnian Catholics).

The intellectual life of non-Muslims was under the auspices of their respective churches. A certain religious and intellectual circle of individuals with a propensity for books formed round the churches, both Orthodox and Catholic. The books were read, copied down and bound there; some original literary work was also created. Naturally, schools were also founded round churches. Printed books mostly came from Italian centres, not only the Orthodox Serbian religious books in Cyrillic, printed to order, but also Catholic religious and language books. Catholic centres also produced special Cyrillic books for the missionary purposes of converting people to the Catholic confession and to the Unia; the contents were changed, and the books bore no dates or the names of their printers.

*

The largest Christian community in Belgrade was that of the Serbian Orthodox. As for the sixteenth century, this fact is obvious from the names in the imperial taxation registers. Although Evliya Çelebi claims that the Serbs and Bulgarians lived in three *mahalles* (11 to 14 in the sixteenth century), the same number as the Greeks (*Rum*), a few pages below he states that all Belgrade *reaya ve beraya* are Serbs. There were several Orthodox churches in Belgrade, and some *mahalles* were named after them (*Papashane, Kilise, Orta Kilise*). They were under the care of the Metropolitan “of Belgrade and Srem”, as was his full title. As a shattering blow came the pulling down of three “Serbian churches” and one synagogue, shortly before 1567. According to the traveller Pigafetta, the order was given by Grand Vizier Sokollu Mehmed Paşa with the view to providing the building material for a new *bezistan*. The Western sources testify to the poverty of the Orthodox clergy; Gerlach claims (1578) that a Belgrade priest had to work as a dyer to earn a living. The travellers also testify to the inadequate level of literacy of the clergy.⁴³

43. Šabanović, *Kataстарски пописи*, 138-41, 271-83, 448-50; idem, ‘Урбани развитак’, 10-11, 16, 26; *Историја Београда*, I: 385-88, 408-09, 413 (Šabanović); A. Z. Hertz, ‘Muslims, Christians and Jews in Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Belgrade’, in A. Ascher, T. Halasi-Kun and B. K. Király (eds), *The Mutual Effects of the Islamic and Judeo-Christian Worlds: The East European Pattern* (Brooklyn, N.Y. 1979), 150-59 [Relying on an unclear methodology and similarities of nomenclature, the author identifies the majority of Belgrade’s Christians registered in the taxation records of 1572 (according to him, 1570) as ethnic Vlachs, and also concludes that most Gypsies bear Vlach names. The names of Vlach origin are incontestable (though, again, not as frequent as he asserts), but that fact is by no means a proof of ethnic identity, especially not in the latter half of the sixteenth century]; P. Matković, ‘Putovanja po balkanskom poluotoku XVI veka. X:

Some of the *knezes*, who represented the Belgrade *reaya* before the Ottoman authorities, were literate, as well as some great merchants whose business dealings reached Vienna around the middle of the seventeenth century.

Knez Radiša Dimitrović, of Serbian origin, founded the first printing press in Belgrade in 1552. From a section added at the end of the first book it is obvious that *knez* Radiša had invested his own money and conceived the printing works as his donation to churches. Not that his possible profit from the enterprise is to be considered negligible, books being in demand in the Balkans at the time. He died while the first book, a *Tetraevangelion*, was being printed. A barber from the Dubrovnik colony, Catholic Trojan Gundulić, continued his work, obviously for business purposes. The printing process itself was taken care of by an Orthodox priest-monk, Mardarije, clearly a man with previous experience, who was to print another two books at the Monastery of Mrkšina Crkva in 1562 and 1566 respectively. The first of the two bears his note giving the information that he himself “cast the types of iron, copper and other”. The *Tetraevangelion* was the first book ever printed in Belgrade. Doubts as to whether this was the only book printed before the nineteenth century are raised by an inventory of Gundulić’s estate (he died a little later, in 1554 or in 1555), which apart from several dozen *Tetraevangelions* lists several copies of various other books.⁴⁴

Trading in religious books, printed in Cyrillic and intended for the Orthodox must have been very lucrative. There is also some evidence for the importation

Putopis Marka Antuna Pigafette ili drugo putovanje Antuna Vrančića u Carigrad 1567. g.’ [Travels in the Balkan Peninsula in the Sixteenth Century. X: The Travel Accounts of Marco Antonio Pigafetta or the Second Journey of Antun Vrančić to Constantinople in 1567], *Rad JAZU*, 100 (1890), 183; R. Tričković, ‘Српска црква средином XVII века’ [The Serbian Church in the Mid-Seventeenth Century], *Глас, CCCXX, Одељење историјских наука [САНУ]*, 2 (1980), 125-27; *Evlīya Çelebi*, V: 376, 380, 382.

44. *Историја Београда*, I: 457-60 (R. Samardžić); Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 87-92; D. Medaković, *Графика српских штампаних књига XV-XVII века* [The Graphic Aspect of Serbian Printed Books of the Fifteenth-Seventeenth Centuries] (Belgrade 1958), 53-56, 164-69; F. Kesterčanek, ‘Inventar prvog beogradskog tiskara Trojana Gundulića’ [The Inventory of Belgrade’s First Printer Trojan Gundulić], *Anali Historijskog instituta u Dubrovniku*, 1/1 (1952), 197-205. From the property and a large sum of money Gundulić left behind, it is obvious that being a barber was not his only occupation, and that he probably was also engaged in trading. The founding of a printing press in Belgrade was not an isolated case. The same period saw the founding of several Serbian printing works in the territory of the Ottoman Empire, all of them short-lived (1-4 years) and with a poor output of two or three books each (Goražde 1519-23; Rujan Monastery at Užice 1529; Gračanica Monastery at Priština 1539; Mileševa Monastery at Prijepolje 1546, 1557; Mrkšina Crkva Monastery, near Montenegro 1562, 1566; Scutari/Shkodër 1563). By far the most productive was the printing works of Božidar Vuković in Venice (1519-46), active even after the founder’s death until 1597. Yet another printing press publishing Cyrillic books was started in Venice by Jerolim Zagurović from Kotor (1569-71). Taken over by the Italian Marco Ginami, it worked until 1638 (for an overview with the catalogue of Serbian printed books: Medaković, *Графика српских штампаних књига*).

of books from Italy. In 1554 a merchant from Dubrovnik and citizen of Belgrade, Luka Dimitrović, ordered from his business associate in Ancona 200 liturgical books bound in leather “*stampatos cum litteris et lingua serviana*” to be delivered in two months. The notary of Dubrovnik certified in 1560 a document stating that the Italian Ambrosio Corsi, through the agency of a Stjepan Peranović, forwarded to Belgrade two chests of books in “the Serbian language” to be sold in Serbia (“*ad partes Servie*”). And from a civil case tried in Dubrovnik in 1563 we learn that 75 *Triodions*, 100 *Missals* and 200 *Psalters*, all printed on the Serbian press of the Vuković family in Venice, had been sold in Belgrade, Vidin and Nikopol.⁴⁵

Belgrade’s spiritual life was closely connected with major monastic centres throughout the Metropolis of Belgrade and Srem: above all with the Srem monasteries of Krušedol and Hopovo, where the metropolitan frequently resided, and with Šišatovac. Under Ottoman rule these and other Srem monasteries played an exceptionally important part in the spiritual life of the Serbs, and decisively contributed to the cultivation of literacy and Belgrade’s cultural life. It is not possible, however, to dwell on the subject on this occasion. The nearby monasteries of Rakovica and Slance, south-east of Belgrade (today within city limits), should also be mentioned. Books copied at the monasteries were in circulation throughout the Metropolis. To the Belgrade *protopop* (the first of the city priests) Jefimije, the abbot and brotherhood of Šišatovac Monastery (Srem) gave (or lent?) a manuscript in 1636, and the brotherhood of Hopovo another one in 1639.⁴⁶

The inscriptions which scribes left in some of the books testify to the fact that books were copied in Belgrade, especially in the seventeenth century, usually to order by the donors, mostly Belgrade Metropolitans and other members of the higher clergy. The Metropolitan Hadji Ilarion (c. 1644-62) donated funds not only for several icons, many crosses, chalices and other religious objects, but also for copying and binding several books. Another distinguished metropolitan, Hadji Simeon (1680-90), also possessed many books and was a well-known *ktetor* (in the Monastery of Hilandar, Mount Athos, he had the Pyrgos of St Sava renovated and the small church of St John the Baptist built). The said metropolitans of Belgrade were not the only ones to have made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre; some of Belgrade priests did the same: monk Vasilije from the Monastery of Slance (1666), hadji *protopop* kyr Nikola (who withdrew to Mount Athos in 1690), and even ordinary people.⁴⁷

45. J. Tadić, *Дубровачка архивскај грађа о Београду I, 1521-1571* [Documents on Belgrade from the Archives of Dubrovnik I, 1521-1571] (Belgrade 1950), 66-67, 100-01; Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 87; Medaković, *Графика српских штампаних књига*, 34-37.

46. L. Stojanović, *Стари српски записи и натписи*, I [Ancient Serbian Notes and Inscriptions] (Belgrade 1902 [reprint: 1982]): No. 1,283; VI (Sr. Karlovci [reprint: Belgrade 1988]): No. 10,093.

47. *Ibid.*, I: 1,532, 1,533, 1,571, 1,584, 1,620, 1,727, 1,184; III (Belgrade 1905 [reprint: 1984]): 4,990; VI: 10,197.

There are no data about schools and teachers (*daskal*), but examples of contemporary towns give grounds to assume they did exist within parishes.

The Serbian merchant class, as well as the Armenian and Greek, gained considerably in strength owing to the advancement of international trade after the Treaty of Vasvar (1664) and a *ferman* allowing free trade (1665) with Habsburg lands. A telling illustration is the fact that 45 merchants travelled 82 times from Belgrade to Vienna between 1663 and 1668.⁴⁸ This financial elite must also have contributed to intellectual advancement. Rich citizens were also donors; they gave religious books as gifts to Belgrade churches and nearby monasteries, mostly for the repose of their dead relatives' souls. The old inscriptions mention Krana, Hadji Jani's wife from Belgrade, who donated gold for frescoing the narthex of the monastery church at Hopovo in 1654, or Marija, who in 1684 donated a book to the monastery at Rakovica on the initiative of kyr Jovan, a Belgrade *protopop*.⁴⁹

It is of some interest that in 1668, in Belgrade, ten merchants and tradesmen (goldsmiths, furriers, and tailors), Serbs from Sarajevo, had a Gospel bound with the intention of giving it as a gift to a church in Sarajevo.⁵⁰

This is the time at which Evliya remarks that "the Serbs are the people into whose language the Gospel has been translated and about whose ancient kings trustworthy historical books give evidence". Many data confirm a literary production by the Serbs that was not strictly religious. The most interesting to us, as they were to Evliya or some of his contemporaries, both friendly and hostile, are historiographical works.⁵¹ Genealogies and annals prevailed, of which *vitae* (the most important being the lives of the Serbian sovereigns) and chronicles were to evolve. Also noteworthy is orally transmitted folk poetry, characteristic of most of the Balkans; particularly popular and widely known were the epic cycles relating the events from the medieval or more recent past. Oral folk chronicles were essential

48. C. von Peec, 'Alte serbische Handelsbeziehungen zu Wien', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 36/3 (1915), 500-09; R. Veselinović, 'Продирање аустријске трговине у Београд у другој половини XVII века' [The Penetration of Austrian Trade into Belgrade in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century], in *Ослобођење градова у Србији од Турака 1862-1867. год.* [The Liberation of Towns in Serbia from the Turks 1862-1867] (Belgrade 1970), 163-70; idem, 'Развитак занатлијско-трговачког слоја српског друштва под страном влашћу у XVII и XVIII веку' [The Development of a Stratum of Craftsmen and Merchants in Serbian Society under Foreign Rule in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries], in *Градска култура на Балкану (XV-XIX век)* [Urban Culture in the Balkans (Fifteenth-Nineteenth Centuries)] (Belgrade 1984), 116.

49. Stojanović, *Стари српски записи*, I: 1,837; III: 4,990.

50. Ibid., I: 1,640.

51. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 382; M. Jačov, *Le missioni cattoliche nei Balcani durante la guerra di Candia (1649-1669)* (Vatican City 1992), II: 391-92; Andrea Bogdani, Archbishop of Skopje, emphasises in his *relatione* of 1663 the importance that the Serbs, otherwise "nostri capitalissimi nemici", attach to their historical books: "libri storici che molto in chiaro metono le antichità di questo Paese [Regno di Servia] che loro tengono come cosse pretiose ...".

for the development of historical thought and for sustaining the people's awareness of their own past.⁵²

There is no information on Bulgarians and Greeks, probably because of the fact that they fitted easily into the Orthodox Serbian community. Documents from Dubrovnik, and later those from Vienna too, mention a Greek name or two, but such references are insufficient to draw inferences about their community in Belgrade. It should be borne in mind that the contemporary travellers and Catholic bishops in their reports often mistook Serbs for Greeks because of their common confession, a fact which may cause difficulties for the modern researcher.⁵³

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The Catholic community in Belgrade began to grow in the 1530s. Their nucleus was an organised colony of merchants from Dubrovnik. They did not have a city district to themselves; their houses and shops were grouped in the commercial centre of the city, in Ferhad Paša *mahalle*, making it the so-called *Latinler çarşusu*. Almost all sources, including the Ottoman, refer to them as *Latins*. Although never very numerous – they constituted only one seventh or one eighth of the overall Catholic population in Belgrade – they were very influential because of their financial strength. All Catholics other than Ragusans are referred to exclusively as “*Christiani Bosnesi*” (and not as Croats) in the reports by Catholic bishops and other higher clergy. Some travellers, for example Lubenau (1587), or Prandsteter (1608), mention Croats and Dalmatians instead of Bosnians. In the Ottoman sources, the Catholics in general are referred to as “*Latinler*”, but also as “*Frenk keferesi*”, with many variations. If it was necessary to differentiate between Ragusans and Bosnians, as in Belgrade, the Ottoman authorities used the term “*Latin*” for a Ragusan, and the terms “*Şokça ve Boşnak*” or simply “*Boşnak*” for a Bosnian. Among other Catholics, only Hungarians are mentioned in few sources.⁵⁴

52. N. Radojčić, ‘Облик првих модерних српских историја’ [The Form of the First Modern Serbian Histories], *Зборник Матице српске, серија друштвених наука*, 2 (1951), 5-56; R. Samardžić, *Умена народна хроника* [Oral Folk Chronicles] (Novi Sad 1978); *Историја српског народа* [The History of the Serbian People] (Belgrade 1993), III-2: 105-327 (part 7: ‘Културна историја’ [Cultural History], chapters by P. Ivić and M. Pantić).
53. *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 380. Although Evliya speaks of both a Greek and a Bulgarian church, it is certain that neither the Patriarchate of Constantinople nor the Archbishopric of Ohrid had churches or priests in Belgrade. It is more likely that Evliya gave a share of churches to each of the ethnic communities who, according to what he heard, lived in Belgrade.
54. *Историја Београда*, I: 425-60 (Samardžić); Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 47-94; idem, *Београд и Србија*, 193 (Quiclet, 1658); Jačov, *Списи Конгрегације за пропаганду вере*, 14, 197; T. Popović, *Дубровачка архивска грађа о Београду III, 1593-1606* [Documents on Belgrade from the Archives of Dubrovnik III, 1593-1606] (Belgrade 1986), 42, 261, 313, 414, 417, 424; Zirojević, ‘Рајнолд Лубенау’, 54; Nehring, *Adam Freiherrn zu Herbersteins Gesandtschaftsreise*, 109; D. Војанић, ‘Султанска акта издата на захтев Дубровачке републике (1627-1647)’ [Sultan’s Orders Issued at the

An anonymous traveller escorting the French ambassador Des Hayes speaks of some 800 Catholics in Belgrade in 1621. According to a report for 1632/33, there were 30 Ragusan shops and 200 people in all, families and servants included. At the same time there were 130 families of Bosnian Catholics – about 1,500 people. A little later, in 1651, 31 Ragusan households, and 135 households of both Bosnians and Catholics “*di altra Nazione*” (166 Catholic households in all) were recorded in the Belgrade bishop’s papers. There were 90 Ragusans, 750 Bosnians, and about 100 “other” Catholics, 940 souls in all.⁵⁵

Formally, Belgrade belonged to the Bishopric of Smederevo, and it became a see only in the first half of the seventeenth century. Rivalries in the ranks of the Catholic higher clergy were additionally nourished by the agile Franciscans, intent on including Belgrade in their Bosnian diocese. Far fewer, but richer, the Ragusans, later in alliance with the Jesuits, were in a bitter conflict with the Bosnians, headed by the Franciscans, for control over the Belgrade church building (built by Ragusans) and appointing clergy, as well as over the community’s religious life. In one moment (1629) there were three chapels in Belgrade: a regular church run by the Ragusans, and the Franciscan and Jesuit chapels. The scale of the conflict is clearly evidenced by the fact that the Franciscan chapel was closed down as a result of Ragusan legal action with the Ottoman authorities and related evidence that it had been established without permission and without legal grounds (1632). On the other hand, the Franciscans had the Jesuit chapel closed down on the same grounds. This conflict serves here to show that a seemingly close-knit and firmly-structured religious community was not immune from discord. By the way, it should be emphasised that it was those who often strictly forbade their flock such contacts who used to turn to the Ottoman authorities, taking advantage of the Ottoman legal system. The conflict left its mark on the larger part of the seventeenth century, hampering to a large extent the development of the intellectual life and education of the Catholic population in Belgrade. The church which was the cause of all the conflict was destroyed by fire in 1672; it had not been rebuilt by the time of the fall of Belgrade in 1688, although the *ferman* for its restoration was issued in 1674.⁵⁶

Unlike the Bosnian Catholics, most Ragusan merchants, being of noble descent, not only were literate but often quite well-educated. Inventories of the community members’ estates often record a book or two, and the contracts drawn up in Belgrade bore personal signatures. Dubrovnik merchants had always supported a chaplain, who along with his religious tasks performed all notary work – from business correspondence and maintaining the accounts of the colony to wills and private letters.

Request of the City-Republic of Dubrovnik (1627-1647)], *Miscellaneous Мешовита грађа*, 10 (1982), 41, 52, 54, 70, 74, 79, 139, 141.

55. Samardžić, *Београд и Србија*, 165; Jačov, *Списи Конгрегације за пропаганду вере*, 197; idem, *Le missioni cattoliche*, I: 621.

56. Hrabak, ‘Католичко становништво’, 88-90, 104-22; Војанић, ‘Султанска акта’, 79; М. Vanino, ‘Isusovci u Beogradu u XVII. i XVIII. Stoljeću’ [Jesuits in Belgrade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries], *Vrela i Prinosi*, 4 (1934), 1-20.

In some periods he was also entrusted with teaching their children to read and write (1675: “*fu la scuola alla gioventù*”).⁵⁷

Significant steps forward in education were the arrival of the Jesuits in Belgrade and the founding of a secondary school in 1613. It had about thirty students but was closed down before 1623. Nevertheless, the Jesuits were providing a sort of primary education for the children of merchants at their ‘School of Christian Sciences’ until the intrigues of the jealous Franciscans got them banished from Belgrade in 1632. In 1614, several grammars by a Portuguese Emmanuel Alvares were ordered for the school, along with the works of Cicero, Ovid and Virgil.⁵⁸

In the sixteenth century, Dubrovnik merchants wrote most of their official papers, sometimes even testaments, in Cyrillic, and in Serbian when they wrote them personally (“*in carattere serviano*”, “*nella lingua nostra serviana*”). Only the letters written by chaplains were in the Roman alphabet and in Italian. It was only around the middle of the seventeenth century that the Dubrovnik people started writing their private letters in the Roman alphabet. An interesting Cyrillic copy of a prayer book, *Ortus Animae*, was made in Belgrade in 1567. A merchant, Mato Djora Božidarević, had an original which was in Slavic, being a Croatian version in *Ča*-dialect and *Kaj*-dialect (Chakavski and Kaikavski) and in the Roman alphabet, translated into *Što*-dialect (Shtokavski) and in Cyrillic, which he understood better. It was the popular language and script which the people of Dubrovnik still understood best.⁵⁹ On his visitation tour of the Balkans, Bartol Kašić, a learned Jesuit and grammarian, spent the years 1612/13 and 1618 in, as he put it, “*srbskom Biogradu*” (Serbian Belgrade), where he translated from Italian into Slavic (*lingua illyrica*) the book *Perivoy od dievstva illi životi od devica* (*Garden of maidenhood or the lives of maidens*, published 1628). Kašić was the author of several works of lasting value such as the translations into Slavic of *Rituale Romanum Urbani VIII* (1640) and the New Testament (which, however, was not printed because, although a vernacular version, it was in Latin script and therefore thought impossible to sell in the Orthodox Balkans accustomed to Cyrillic script).⁶⁰

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Jews made their appearance in Belgrade at the same period as the Ragusans, in the 1530s, when conditions for the city’s economic advancement and the development

57. Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 53, 58-59, 63-65, 79-82.

58. Vanino, ‘Isusovci u Beogradu’, 6-19; Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 84.

59. Tadić, *Дубровачка архивска грађа*, 132, 145; Popović, *Дубровачка архивска грађа*, 401; Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 74, 80-81, 86; F. Fancev, ‘Vatikanski hrvatski molitvenik i dubrovački psaltir’ [The Vatican Croatian Prayer Book and the Dubrovnik Psalter], *Djela JAZU*, 31 (1934), lxxxix-xciii.

60. M. Stojković, ‘Bartuo Kašić D. I. Pažanin’ [Bartol Kašić D. I. from Pag], *Rad JAZU*, 220 (1919), 185, 187, 192-93, 229; M. Vanino, *Autobiografija Bartola Kašića* [The Autobiography of Bartol Kašić] (Zagreb 1940); J. Radonić, *Штампарије и школе римске курије у Италији и јужнословенским земљама у XVII веку* [Print Shops and Schools of the Roman Curia in Italy and South-Slav Lands in the Seventeenth Century] (Belgrade 1949), 39-52, 55-57, 63.

of international trade allowed. From the middle of the sixteenth century, the Jewish merchants of Belgrade figure in all the significant travellers' accounts, and are often compared to the Ragusans. The Belgrade Jews are mentioned in the context of all major trade centres in the Balkans, but also in the West (mostly Venice and Ancona). Their presence is recorded in the imperial taxation registers after 1560 (1560: 5 households and 2 singles; 1572: 20 households; 1582: 22 households). Later the number increased: the Englishman P. Mundy mentions 60 to 70 households in 1620, and Baron Ottendorff as many as 800 souls in 1663. Although Evliya Çelebi makes no mention of a *mahalle* of their own, it is registered in the *cizye defters* of 1627/28-1642/43 and in a receipt of 1687. At any rate, in the seventeenth century most of the Jews were grouped in one street. Many of them lived communally in one large building. The community was not completely homogeneous, there being strong Ashkenazim and Sephardim groups. The former provided the rabbi of Belgrade up to the beginning of the seventeenth century, and the latter in the course of that century.⁶¹

The first mention of a synagogue in the sources dates from 1547. There may have been more in the seventeenth century. Pigafetta wrote in 1567 that Sokollu Mehmed Paşa had a synagogue pulled down to provide the stone for his *bezistan*. Under the guidance of educated rabbis, the Jewish community had an intensive cultural life. They promoted literacy and founded several schools. The German traveller Gerlach mentioned only one school in 1574. Among the most prominent rabbis are those who exerted a powerful influence on Jewish culture. Undoubtedly the best known are: Meir Angel, who published a work on ethics, poetics and the written word *Keshet Nehushali* (*Bow of Bronze*) in 1593 in Istanbul, *Masoret ha-Berit* (*Tradition of the Covenant*) in Krakow in 1619, and in Mantua in 1622, *Masoret ha-Berit ha-Gadoel*, commentaries on tradition and grammatical inaccuracies in the Bible; Judah Lerma – author of *Peletat Bet Yehudah*, printed in Venice in 1647 – the majority of his manuscripts were lost for ever in the fire of 1640; Simhah ben Gershon Kohen (c. 1622-69), who published in Venice (1657) his *Sefer Shemot*, a work on the orthography of Hebrew personal names as well as of the names of places and rivers in Asia and Europe; and Joseph ben Isaac Almosnino (1649-89), the halachic (Jewish law) authority and cabbalist. Almosnino's library and part of his writings were destroyed in a fire, probably that of 1672. His *Responsa*, preserved by chance and later rediscovered, was published by his sons in Istanbul in 1711 and 1713. All these educated rabbis conducted intensive correspondence with

61. B. Hrabak, 'Јевреји у Београду до краја XVII века' [Jews in Belgrade Until the End of the Seventeenth Century], *Годишњак града Београда*, 18 (1971), 21-51; Šabanović, *Kataстарски пописи*, 460; idem, 'Урбани развитак', 17, 22; Kostić, *Културне везе*, 322-23; *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 376; Zirojević, 'Попис цизје', 233; Biblioteca Universitaria di Bologna, MS 3574, 205; Samardžić, *Београд и Србија*, 193 (Quiclet, 1658), 203-05 (Pouillet, 1658); H. Egyed (ed.), *Budáról Belgrádba 1663-ban. Ottendorff Henrik képes útleírása* [From Buda to Belgrade in 1663: An Illustrated Travel Account by Henrik Ottendorff] (Tolna 1943), 99.

the greatest minds of Istanbul, Jerusalem and Thessalonica. Many came to Belgrade to solicit their opinions; Almosnino came to Belgrade to extend his knowledge and stayed for the rest of his life. Many prominent rabbis passed through Belgrade, or made a short stay there, often on their alms collection mission; for example, Eliezer ben Samuel Treves, a Polish scholar and author, passed through the city in 1648, when he gave a copy of his treatise on divorce to the Belgrade rabbi; Joseph Nazir ha-Levi in 1679, rabbi of Hebron and Cairo; and the same year, Zebi Ashkenazi, rabbi of Alt Ofen, Sarajevo, and Berlin. In this list of the learned inhabitants of Belgrade we should certainly include the Hebraist and Talmudist Joseph ibn Danon, who was born to an old Belgrade Sephardim family in 1620 and died in London towards the end of the same century. He was Rabbi Almosnino's personal secretary, wrote commentaries on other authors' works, but was himself the author of an original treatise *Sheloshah Sarigim (Three Branches)* on the basic principles of the world (Law, Faith and Charity).⁶²

Nor was Belgrade passed over by the Karaites (a non-rabbinical Jewish sect which rejected the Talmud). It was in Belgrade in the first half of the sixteenth century that the scholar and liturgical poet Judah ben Elijah Tishbi copied and completed the exegetical work of his grandfather Abraham ben Judah, and wrote many poems, several of which were included in the Karaite prayer-book (*Siddur ha-Keraim*).⁶³

The Jewish community was exiled from Belgrade after the Habsburg occupation of the city in 1688, but it started to grow again after the 1699 Treaty of Karlowitz.

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There is no adequate evidence about the intellectual life of certain communities in Belgrade, regardless of their size.

Although quite small until 1688, the Armenian community gained economic strength by the mid-seventeenth century, being engaged mostly in trade. The first mention of their church in 1632 was occasioned by the fact that the infuriated *kaymakam* of Buda's vizier had it levelled. It obviously was rebuilt, as several references to it have survived: by the Bishop of Belgrade Fra Mattheus Benlich in 1651, by Evliya Çelebi in 1660, by Henrik Ottendorff in 1663, as well as by an English traveller, Dr Browne, staying in a rich Armenian household in Belgrade in 1669. Evliya Çelebi also mentions one Armenian *mahalle*. Another piece of information

62. Hrabak, 'Јевреји у Београду', 44; Matković, 'Pigafetta', 183; *Evliya Çelebi*, V: 380; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, s.v. 'Almosnino, Joseph ben Isaac' and 'Belgrade'; *The Jewish Encyclopaedia* (1901-06), s.v. 'Angel, Meir ben Abraham', 'Simhah (Freudemann) Ephraim ben Gershon ben Simeon ben Isaiah ha-Kohen', 'Treves, Eliezer ben Samuel', 'Joseph Nazir ben Hayyim Moses ha-Levi', 'Ashkenazi, Zebi Hirsch (Hakam Zebi) b. Jacob', and 'Danon, Joseph ben Jacob ben Moses ibn'.

63. *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, s.v. 'Judah ben Elijah Tishbi'.

claims that they were doing nothing against the Catholics.⁶⁴ The church suggests the presence of priests. It may also be assumed that most Armenian merchants were literate. Unfortunately, other than that, there are no data about the life of the Armenian community in Belgrade before 1688; the sources are much more generous with information about the next century.

The community of Gypsies is also among the less known. They were present in Belgrade from the very beginning of Ottoman rule. They were both Muslims and Christians, and the latter, bearing Serbian names, almost certainly were for the most part Orthodox. Most contemporaries judged their religious feeling as quite superficial, which, in addition to racial differences, sufficed to prevent them from being fully admitted to the existing religious communities. The Ottoman imperial taxation registers always record them separately from others. They were divided into two groups (*cemaat*), according to their confession, and the majority lived in two, later three, *mahalles*, which is the state of affairs that continued into the seventeenth century. The privileged among them worked in smithies at the docks. According to the *tahrir defters*, there were: in 1536: 20 Christian and 9 Muslim households and 2 singles; in 1560: 33 Christian and 22 Muslim households; in 1572: 97 Christian and 95 Muslim households; and in 1582: 22 Christian and 100 Muslim households.⁶⁵

The data about the Protestant community are still fewer. The first mention of “*Ungari Eretici*” occurs as late as 1623. They had a church of their own for a while, and it was pulled down in 1632, just like that of the Armenians. Their exceptionally small number must have been the reason for a report of 1632 to the Holy See to comment that they “do not harass papal envoys as much as the Bosnian Franciscans”.⁶⁶

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There is no doubt that there was a cultural life in Belgrade in the first period of Ottoman rule (1521-1688), and that its course was set by the intellectual elites of each religious/ethnic community. The necessary prerequisite for a more accurate assessment of its intensity and importance, and consequently of the place of Belgrade in the cultural life of the Empire, is a full insight into the cultural life of most cities, at least of those in the Empire’s European part.

The main characteristic of the cultural life in Belgrade is the lack of intellectual communication between different religious communities. The cultural life of members of a community was limited exclusively to that community. But divisions

64. Samardžić, ‘Дубровчани у Београду’, 73; Veselinović, ‘Продирање аустријске трговине’, 173, 176-77; Jačov, *Списи Конгрегације за пропаганду вере*, 174; idem, *Списи Тајног ватиканског архива*, 69-70; idem, *Le missioni cattoliche*, I: 621; Kostić, *Културне везе*, 335 (Browne); *Evllya Çelebi*, V: 376, 380; Egyed (ed.), *Budáról Belgráduba*, 99; Samardžić, *Београд и Србија*, 193 (Quiclet, 1658), 203-07 (Pouillet, 1658).

65. Šabanović, *Катастарски пописи*, 275, 458-59; idem, ‘Урбани развитак’, 13, 17, 22; Hertz, ‘Muslims, Christians and Jews’, 154-55; *Evllya Çelebi*, V: 376, 380.

66. Jačov, *Списи Конгрегације за пропаганду вере*, 14, 174, 183-84.

within a single religious community were not uncommon. In the Catholic one, for example, there was a harsh and unbridgeable divide between two groups based on their different territories of origin and their sympathies for different, and competing, religious orders. Except to some extent for the shared participation of all communities in a city's general economic vigour, nothing, not even such a civilisation-shaping invention as the printing press, effected a change towards their joint cultural advance. Their cultural lives followed their own separate courses.

(University of Belgrade)

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