The Earliest *Tekkes* in Bosnia

Some dervishes, thus, came to Bosnia with the Ottoman army as fighters, be it as irregular *ghazi* warriors or members of the Janissary corps. Some, however, did so purely in their religious-proselytising capacity, which is why they are not documented as soldiers and evidence of their presence has to be looked for elsewhere. At the same time, other Sufis, or patrons of Sufism, who came to Bosnia during and in the wake of the Ottoman conquest were important Ottoman officials whose activities are documented in a variety of sources and much more substantially than those of ordinary dervishes. In all of these cases, it is the Sufi religious-humanitarian institutions, the *tekkes* and other accompanying buildings – whether built by unknown dervish settlers or high-ranking Ottoman officials, and whether modest, one or two-room houses built by the road, or more substantial buildings with lodgings for young Sufi apprentices, *dhikr* and prayer rooms – that provide the most tangible and, in some cases, the only evidence of dervish activities in Bosnia in the early years of Ottoman rule.

In order, therefore, to gain a fuller picture of the overall presence of dervishes and influence of Sufism in Bosnia during and in the wake of the Ottoman conquest, an attempt will be made, in the following pages, to provide an account of all Bosnian *tekkes* which we know to have originated in the 15th or the first half of the 16th century.

One of the most important *tekkes* to have been built in Bosnia in the early period of Ottoman rule is Isa-bey’s1 *Tekke* in Sarajevo. Together with the Careva (Emperor’s) mosque built by Isa-bey around 1457,2 this *tekke*, which was built in 1462, and the properties which Isa-bey endowed for its maintenance, are considered as having laid the foundations of Sarajevo, Isa-bey thus being regarded as its founder. The information on this *tekke* is contained in Isa-bey’s *vakıfname* (pious endowment document) from 1462, which has been used by Bosnian historians as the main source for the history of Sarajevo of that time.3 According to

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1 Before he became the Sancak-bey of Bosnia (1463/64–1469/70), Isa-bey had been the governor (*voyvoda*) of the border province of Skopje (1439–1463). This is the region which in Bosnian is referred to as ‘Krajište’ (border province) of Isa-bey Ishaković. The areas it covered are listed in the 1455 *defter* of this region (see Chapter 1, footnote 5).


3 The original (in Arabic) of the *vakıfname* has been lost but several copies (in Arabic as well as in Ottoman translation) are preserved. One of them (in Arabic) was published with translation and comments by Hazim Šabanović in “Dvije najstarije vakufname u Bosni,” *POF*,...
the *vakıfname*, Isa-bey’s Tekke consisted of “three apartments/rooms (*buyūt*), one stable, one courtyard (*harem*) and everything else that was suitable for it... (see Fig. 13); the building was to be used as a *tekke* and an inn for poor Muslims, be they students, *sayyids*, *ghazis* or wayfarers (*abnā’ al-sabil*). Food (meat, rice, bread and broth) was to be cooked for the guests, who were allowed to stay there for up to three days; broth (*maraq*) was also to be provided for the workers of the *tekke* and the surplus was to be given out to the poor children of Sarajevo (*hadhihi-l-qasaba*). Together with this *tekke* Isa-bey also built a bridge over the river Miljacka, and for the maintenance of the two edifices he endowed several mills, a *hamam*, a number of shops, and a large number of cultivated fields, plantations, and gardens in the area. Isa-bey’s Tekke was closed in 1924 and demolished in 1957, when a petrol-station was built in its place. In recent years, the foundations of Isa-bey’s Tekke, which had been lying under a car park, have been uncovered and plans for a reconstruction of the *tekke* are currently under way (see Udruženje Obnova Isa-begove Tekije, *Isa-begova zavija, sadašnji i budući poslovi rekonstrukcije*, Sarajevo, 2000).

It should be mentioned here, albeit in passing, that although Isa-bey’s *vakıfname* has been available for some time now, and the *tekke* has been studied on various occasions, there are still a number of ambiguities and unresolved problems regarding the history of this edifice. Apart from an apparent misunderstanding of the text of the *vakıfname*, a number of problems also arise in the context of correctly identifying the sources which refer to the later history of the *tekke*.

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4 The word used in the text of the *vakıfname* is ‘*zaviye*’ (Ar. *zāwiya*).
5 The word used is ‘*sādāt*’ – plural of ‘*sayyid*’, and the only definition which Šabanović provides in his translation is ‘the title held by those who claim direct familial descent from the Prophet’. However, given the context in which the word is used here, it seems more plausible to take it to mean dervish ‘masters’, sheikhs, as in ‘*sādāt šūfiya*’.
6 Šabanović, *Dvije najstarije vakufname*, p. 9; Šabanović’s translation of this sentence is slightly different: he separated the sentence into two and took it that the guests too (like the workers and the children) were to be given broth only.
8 Šiljak, *Derviši i tekije*, p. 75.
9 Which seems to have led a number of researchers to believe that there were in fact two different buildings built by Isa-bey, one a *misafirhane* (inn), and the other the *tekke* (see, for instance, Mujezinović, Musafirhana i tekija, or Čehajić, *Derviški redovi*).