

**8<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON  
BALKAN HISTORY STUDIES**

*Culture, Architecture and art in the Balkans  
(September 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Istanbul/Türkiye)*

**PROCEEDING BOOK-V.1**

**VIII. ULUSLARARASI  
BALKAN TARİHİ ARAŞTIRMALARI  
SEMPOZYUMU**

*Balkanlar'da Kültür, Mimari ve Sanat  
(1-4 Eylül 2022, İstanbul/Türkiye)*

**TAM METİN BİLDİRİ KİTABI-C.1**

**Editor**

Prof. Dr. Abidin TEMİZER



LIVRE DE LYON  
Lyon 2022

**8<sup>th</sup> INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON BALKAN HISTORY  
STUDIES Culture, Architecture and art in the Balkans  
(September 1st-4th, 2022, Istanbul/Türkiye) PROCEEDING  
BOOK -V.1**

**Editor** • Prof. Dr. Abidin Temizer • Orcid: 0000-0001-5708-3132

**Cover Design** • Motion Graphics

**Book Layout** • Mirajul Kayal

**First Published** • December 2022, Lyon

**ISBN:** 978-2-38236-474-1

**copyright** © 2022 by **Livre de Lyon**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission from the Publisher.

**Publisher** • Livre de Lyon

**Address** • 37 rue marietton, 69009, Lyon France

**website** • <http://www.livredelyon.com>

**e-mail** • [livredelyon@gmail.com](mailto:livredelyon@gmail.com)



LIVRE DE LYON

# THE OLD MOSQUE IN PETNJICA-GORNJI BIHOR (SANDJAK) – ARCHITECTURAL-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS AND RELIGIOUS-EDUCATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Izet ŠABOTIĆ\*

**Abstract:** The area of Bihor is located in the southeastern part of Sanjak, between the municipalities of Bijelo Polje, Berane, Rozaje and Tutin. This area has a turbulent and rich past. It is named after the eponymous medieval town of Bihor, which was founded in the XIV century. The Ottomans incorporated this area in 1455, and from then until the retreat of the Ottomans in 1912, this area was strongly influenced by Ottoman-Oriental culture and civilization. In this regard, a significant number of Oriental-Islamic buildings were built in this area, which played a crucial role in the spread of Islam and Oriental-Islamic culture and civilization. However, certainly the most important Oriental Islamic building and institution in this area is the old mosque in Petnjica. It is in many ways characteristic and significant. According to available historical sources, it was built in the first half of the 17th century and was the central religious building in Bihor kaza (district), all under Ottoman rule. The construction and architectural parameters of the mosque are impressive. Its ground plan is 15.80 m x 13.20 m and belongs to a rare type of three-storey mosque. The stone walls on the first two floors are 80 cm thick, and on the third floor 50 cm. The roof is four-pitched and covered with a wooden roof. The minaret is placed on a round stone pedestal and reaches to the top of the mosque wall. The mosque has a total of 35 windows set on all four sides of the mosque. The interior of the mosque is especially interesting from the architectural and ornamental aspect. It is mainly a wooden structure with pillars, rafters,

---

\*(Prof. Dr.), University of Tuzla, Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, e-mail: sabota\_tuzla@hotmail.com

stairs, fences and mails leaning on twenty beams. In the middle of the front wall of the mosque there is a mihrab, built of hewn stone, and a pulpit leaning against the front wall of the mosque. All this contributed to the fact that the interior of the mosque represents an excellent and very suitable oriental-architectural and ornamental ambience. In the courtyard of the mosque there is a fountain, built of stone, with a faucet, which all together with the courtyard greenery fits into the architectural design of the mosque.

The mosque has been around for centuries, and even today it is the central mosque of the Bihor region. For centuries, it has been a pivotal (main) institution in the process of spreading Islam and Oriental Islamic culture of this region. Apart from serving the religious purpose, it also served the educational purpose, because in the mosque, mekteb (mektep) classes were held throughout its existence, through which many generations of young people passed, who acquired their first knowledge of the religion in it. A significant number of mekteb graduates continued their education in the predominant madrassas of the Ottoman Empire from Sarajevo, Skopje, Sarajevo, Gjakova, Novi Pazar, to Istanbul. The mekteb attendees of this mosque, in addition to becoming prominent representatives of the ulema, also became intellectuals. The first imam of the mosque is a certain Salih Havadža, who was a servant of the Ottoman army. After him, the imam service was performed by several imams from the same family, who received the surname Hodžić. In addition to them, the imam's service over the centuries has been performed by eminent representatives of the ulema who have left an indelible mark, not only in the religious but also in the overall development of this area. In religious, cultural, educational, historical and every other respect, the old mosque in Petnjica is the most important building in this area. It left an indelible mark, and was a stimulating factor for development and positive aspirations in this area.

**Key words:** Bihor, old mosque, Petnjica, Sanjak, Balkans, Ottoman Empire, culture, heritage.

## **Introduction**

During the time of the Ottoman administration, numerous religious buildings were built on the territory of today's Montenegro.

The most significant are definitely the mosques. Their role was multifaceted, of religious, educational and cultural character and importance. After the suppression of the Ottoman Empire from this area, a significant number of mosques, as well as other sacred buildings of Islamic provenance in the territory of Montenegro, suffered, some due to collapse due to human negligence, some due to dilapidation and the ravages of time. Although the international treaty after the Berlin Congress in 1878 guaranteed religious rights to members of Islam, who remained living in countries freed from Ottoman rule, the Balkan countries, after the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Balkans, pursued a policy of reducing the Islamic-Oriental influence on their territory. In such circumstances, in the struggle to preserve religion and Oriental-Islamic culture, the Islamic community played a significant role. Sometimes it acted independently by being tied to a certain space, and sometimes integratively (during the monarchical and socialist Yugoslavia). In such circumstances, there was a frantic struggle to preserve the integrity of the Islamic community and the Oriental-Islamic cultural heritage. Immediately after the Second World War and the establishment of the communist government, religious institutions will come under attack, including the Islamic community. Then, in the territory of Montenegro, many mosques will be demolished, and a number of them will be prohibited from operating. Thanks to the persistence and dedicated work of religious officials, imams in the socialist period, mosques will be preserved as the most important institutions of Islam, as well as Islamic culture and traditions. Mosques remained the most faithful guardians of faith and Oriental-Islamic culture and tradition in these areas.



*The old mosque in Petnjica - appearance in the first half of the 20th century.*

The first religious buildings, schools and mosques in the territory of today's Montenegro, were created during the Ottoman administration. Like all other religious institutions, the work and operation of mosques was under the direction of the sultan, as the supreme imperial and spiritual head-caliph. He transferred his authority to lower levels through shaykhs, muftis and other religious officials. At the Congress of Berlin, Montenegro established its rule on a significant part of the former Ottoman Empire, and in 1912, after the First Balkan War, on other territories that are now part of Montenegro. Article 30 of the Congress of Berlin from 1878, as well as a special agreement between the Ottoman Empire and Montenegro, gave Muslims the right to form their own religious community-institution and independently manage religious affairs and property. Immediately after that, the first mufti of the Muslims of Montenegro was elected, who was appointed by King Nikola in 1878 with the consent of the Shaykhulislam from Istanbul. In addition to the mufti, three kadiluks were established with headquarters in Ulcinj, Bar and Podgorica.

The issue of the relationship between religious communities and the state was resolved by Article 40 of the Constitution from 1905, which established that the state religion in Montenegro is Eastern Orthodox. The Montenegrin Church is autocephalous, and all other religions in Montenegro are free. The Constitution emphasizes that “the internal administration of Muhammad’s religion belongs to the Mufti of Montenegro” and the Mufti is an established member of the National Assembly of Montenegro. Until 1912, the mufti of Bjelopolje had religious jurisdiction over the areas that were annexed to Montenegro in 1912. After the occupation of this area in 1912, it was subordinated to the Sharia administration in Podgorica.<sup>1</sup>

With the formation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1919, the Ministry of Religions was established in Belgrade, under whose authority the Sharia Administration for Montenegro also fell. The institution of the Chief Mufti was established for Montenegro, which existed until 1922, when the Supreme Muftiship in Belgrade, which had supreme Islamic authority for Serbia and Montenegro, took over. The Ministry of Religion was abolished in 1929, and the Ministry of Justice took over the tasks of this ministry. At that time, two Islamic communities existed in parallel in the Monarchy, one in: Serbia together with Kosovo and Mtohija and Montenegro and the other for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Dalmatia headed by the religious leader Res-ul-ulem in Sarajevo. According to the Law on the Islamic Religious Community from 1930, Muslims in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia formed a single community with the Supreme Eldership of the Islamic Community and the Reis ul-ulema at the head, with headquarters in Belgrade. In the administrative aspect, the Islamic Community was divided into two Ulema Majlis with headquarters in Sarajevo and Skopje. The

---

1 B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, pg. 10.

area of Montenegro was subordinated to the Ulema Majlis in Skopje with the Mufti in Pljevlje.<sup>2</sup>

Preserving Islamic community, religion, Oriental-Islamic culture and tradition in these areas was not an easy task at all. Imams are those who were the bearers of all not only religious, but also other numerous activities. They were the first to react to all changes, resisting various pressures in order to preserve the independence-autonomy of the Islamic community. In very sensitive moments, imams represented leaders, such as the resistance against the threat to the security of Muslim places by the Chetniks in the Second World War, when imams such as: Jakub Kardović from Rožaj, Junuz Idrizović and Mustafa Zejnelović from Bijelo Polje, Adem Begović from Gusinje, Osman Rastoder from Gornji Bihor, Sulejman Pačariz and Husein Rovčanin from the area of Prijepolje and Brodarevo, took the lead in defending not only religion and faith, but also the life and survival of the Muslim population in these areas. A significant number of imams joined the NOP. A number of imams became involved in public, political and cultural life after the establishment of the communist government. According to the available data, there were 99 imams in the imam service in Montenegro in 1948 as civil servants. At that time, according to available data, about 70,000 Muslims lived in Montenegro. During this time, other institutions of the Islamic community in Montenegro were also established (Waqf Council and Parliamentary Committee and Islamic Eldership of Montenegro from 1947, congregational committees, etc.). Later, through various transformations, the Eldership of the Islamic Community became responsible for managing the religious and educational affairs of Muslims in Montenegro. The aforementioned institutions, together with the imams, contributed to the preservation of the Islamic community, to the mosques having their purposeful role and importance. Some of

---

2 B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, pg.12.

them were more than religious institutions, such as the old mosque in Petnjica, which will be discussed in more detail in the following pages.

### **Mosque in Petnjica**

It is not known exactly when the mosque in Petnjica was built. Some oral narratives that indicate that it was created even in the second half of the 15th or the beginning of the 16th century, as a small mosque, only to be expanded later and acquire the current construction dimensions, have not found a scientific basis. However, it is more likely that the mosque was built at the end of the 17th, or at the beginning of the 18th century. when major changes took place in the European part of the Ottoman Empire, which were a reflection of the Ottoman defeat in the Great Vienna War (1683-1699) and the withdrawal of the Ottomans from the vast area of Central and Southeastern Europe. At that time, numerous territorial-administrative and demographic changes took place in the area of Bihar, with the migration of the exiled Muslim population from the area lost by the Ottomans to this area. It is assumed that the mosque in Petnjica was built at that time, which makes sense, although we have not yet come across an official document on the construction of the mosque. Petnjica mosque is characteristic in many ways. For a long time, it was the only mosque in the area of Gornji Bihar, today it is the central and largest mosque in this area.



*View of the mosque from the west side after the renovation in 2005.*

The mosque is also characteristic because of its location - the place where it was built, and especially because of its construction and architectural characteristics. It is about a mosque which, from an architectural point of view, is the largest and most valuable mosque, not only in Gornji Bihor, but also beyond.

The mosque is located in the southeastern part of the Petnjica settlement, right next to the road - the road that led down the Popča river valley to Bioča and thus joined the main road that led to Gusinje and further to Shkodër. From Petnjica, in the Ottoman period, this road went over the mountainous part of Gornji Bihor towards Novi Pazar and thus connected the area of Gornji Bihor with the center of the Novi Pazar sandjak. The very location of the mosque indicates that, in addition to being intended for the religious needs of the local population, it was also intended for intending travelers who passed through the said road with their caravans. We could not determine whether there were inns and caravanserais in this place, but we know for sure that the place was the center of Gornji Bihor at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th century. All these characteristics indicate that a mosque of this size was built in this place for several reasons. The floor plan dimensions of the mosque are significant and amount to 15.80 m in length and 13.20 m in width. It is built with semi-finished stone, in such a way that the walls on the first two floors are 80 cm wide, while the width of the walls on the third floor is 50 cm. It is one of the rare tricolor mosques, not only in this area, but also in the wider Balkan area. It is covered with a four-gable wooden roof (tahto). From the roof of the mosque, a wooden minaret with one sheref was erected, which is completely closed.



*Today, the Petnjica mosque is attractive to many visitors*

What is known is that the Petnjica mosque was renovated on several occasions. A significant renovation took place in 1903, which is confirmed by the preserved history of that, when the mosque was significantly expanded, and it remained in today's spatial dimensions. The mosque was also renovated during the socialist period. But despite that, towards the end of the 20th century. the mosque was in a very bad state, with cracked walls that threatened to collapse. The roof of the mosque was also in bad shape, leaking.

The minaret was also damaged, and the interior of the mosque was also significantly damaged. For these reasons, it was necessary to carry out a significant reconstruction of the mosque. It was built thanks to the investment of large financial resources by Mustafa Mujko Šabotić and his family, who independently financed its reconstruction. The reconstruction project was supervised by Rifat Alihodžić, and the work was carried out by the company of Zena Muhović from Trpeza. The reconstruction lasted several years and was finally completed in 2005, when the official opening of this magnificent mosque took place. This renovation, carried out according to the most modern architectural principles, not only gave the mosque architectural and architectural security, but also beautiful beauty and appearance, so that the mosque in Petnjica, due to its architectural elegance and aesthetic appearance, is one of the most beautiful mosques in the wider area of Montenegro and Sandjak. Since that year, the mosque has been placed under the protection of the state of Montenegro as an important cultural and historical monument. From the building and architectural aspect, the mosque is specific in many ways. The windows in the mosque, of which there are a total of 35, represent a special building-architectural whole. They are made of wood, protruding on the outermost contours of the walls. There are a total of 8 windows on the entrance side and 9 windows each on the remaining three sides of the mosque. These are double-hung windows with a slightly arched vault on the upper side. The height of the window is 112 cm, and the width is 75 cm. The windows have a very small parapet, and the window openings in the wall expand towards the interior of the building.<sup>3</sup>

---

3 M. Hadrović, *Vakufi u Beranama*, 45, *Revija Forum* br. 17, januara 2011. Godina VI/ a suitable text about the mosque was given by Irfan Ramčilović, dipl. ing. arh., 47.



*The north side of the mosque with a prominent stone wall and windows*

The external appearance of the mosque, in addition to the windows and grandiose stone walls, is completed by a beautiful minaret, leaning against the western wall of the mosque. The minaret is placed on a round pedestal (cup) made of stone, which reaches to the top of the mosque wall. The minaret is climbed from the nahvil. Sherefa has the form of a wide belt at the end of the minaret. Sherefa is covered with a conical roof made of wood. On the top of the minaret there is a lamp with one ball. The minaret itself, with its architectural and constructional characteristics, fits into the overall ambience of the mosque.

The interior of the Petnjica mosque is particularly interesting. Its interior, in addition to the stone and plastered walls, is mostly made of wooden construction. Along the entire central ground-floor room for load-bearing and safety reasons, iron columns have been

placed, which are covered with boards, which are covered with colorless varnish, which fits into the overall interior ambience of the mosque. The mahfils, of which there are two, rest on wooden pillars, some of which are carved with interesting ornamental details. The mahfils of the mosque, one above the other, are placed along the exit wall in the main area intended for performing prayers, opposite the mihrab. The mahvil occupies the mosque proctor with an opening in the middle of the front part of the mosque, so that there is an open visual and sound communication with the minbar and mihrab, as well as with the central front part of the mosque area.<sup>4</sup>



*Detail of the interior of the mosque, taken in August 2022.*

The mahfils rest on twenty interior mosque beams. The first mahfil is supported by 12 wooden columns, six on each side. For these purposes, four old pillars were restored, while the remaining new pillars are in the shape of a rectangle, with a total length of about 217 cm. The mahfili on the second floor follow those on the ground floor and lean against the mosque walls and ten wooden

4 I. Skenderović, *Vakufi i džamije*, 56-57

pillars whose height is 198 cm. There are two old, hand-carved and restored pillars with a significant number of ornamental motifs. A total of 8 rectangular columns extend from the second mahfil to the ceiling itself. On the first and second mahfil there is a rectangular projection for the muezzin towards the mihrab, the dimensions of which are 80x92 cm. From the entrance door on one and the other side along the wall, wooden steps are provided that ascend to the first mahfil, and in the same way to the second mahfil. On the front side there is a wooden protective fence made of richly constructed wooden posts. Wooden stairs lead to the mahfil on both sides, which are located near the wooden entrance door. In the middle of the front wall there is a mihrab, built of hewn stone. The inner semi-cylindrical part of the mihrab is recessed in the wall and ends in a semicircle at the top, it has beautiful harmoniously designed and designed proportions.

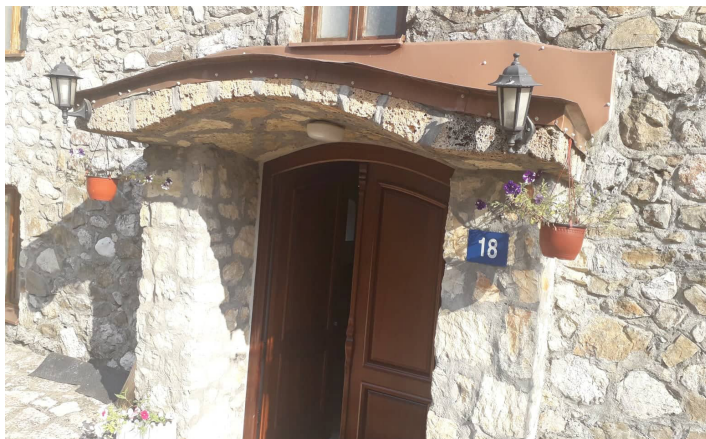


*Mimber of the mosque*

The mimber occupies the space between the mihrab and the right wall of the mosque, so that its front part leans against the front wall of the mosque. It is built from solid wood with some machine and hand decoration. The minbar is ascended by wooden steps facing the qibla. The stair railing is made of posts and protective boards on one and the other side. The space under the stairs is closed

with a board. At the top of the minbar is a square platform on which rests a dome with a wooden alem. During the restoration of the mosque, the old Ęurs was removed due to dilapidation and a new one was installed.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to point out that the mosque has about 500 m<sup>2</sup> for worship on all three floors, which according to estimates can accommodate about 1,000 worshippers. All three floors of the mosque are covered with beautiful Bihor carpets and serjads. These are products of local Bihor craftsmanship, which represent a special value in terms of production, as well as artistically and in every other respect, and capture the attention of the congregation with their beauty. Carpets are made of variously colored yarns made from local wool, with countless exquisite patterns decorated with numerous motifs of an artistic oriental character, which were woven by diligent Bihor weavers. Due to its production provenance and artistic uniqueness, the process of branding this originally Bihor product and placing it on the list of cultural monuments has been initiated. For now, Bihor carpets adorn the premises of the mosque in Petnjica, giving it a special interior ambience and coziness.



*Entrance ground door of the mosque*

5 I. Skenderović, *Vakufi i džamije*, 58.

The entrance porch, despite its simple architectural design, is interesting in many ways. It is covered with one hemispherical dome. Along the front wall on the entrance side, there are wooden racks for shoes. A single-winged wooden door was installed at the entrance to the mosque. “La iiiiah Muhammedun rasullah” was written on the entrance tarikh above the door of the mosque. Mutevelija from Trpeza, Cikotić Hasan (Huso) Bejtov and Tahir Abdurahmanov Kršić from Radmanac, head master from Herzegovina, settled in Berane Ajdin Korjenić, imam Mullah Šaćir Hodžić, year 1321 H” (1903). The mentioned date confirms the renovation of the mosque in the mentioned year.

### **Imams of the mosque in Petnjica**

The imams, muezzins and muteveli who took care of the mosque are most responsible for the existence and sustainability of this mosque. We do not have original documents that would confirm who was the first imam and the first muezzin in the Petnjica Mosque. What is known and transmitted among the people as an oral tradition is that the first imam of this mosque was Salih ef. Hawaii. Allegedly, it is about a demobilized imam of the Ottoman army, who lived in the village of Paljuh, 2.5 km from the center of Petnjica, downstream of the Popča river. Members of the surname Hodžić live in this place today, who are considered descendants of Salih ef. Hawaii. In this place there is a turbe, which is connected to the Havade family, and which allegedly originates from the second half of the 15th century. In any case, the first imams of the mosque in Petnjica should be sought among the mentioned Havade ef. Namely, that family, whose last name was Hodžić later and still today, gave several imams and respected alims who performed the religious duties of imams and the Petnjica Mosque.<sup>6</sup>

---

6 It is said that the imams in this mosque from this family were performed by: Mehmed Havadže, Salih’s brother, Nuradin-Nurko Havadže, Muhamed’s brother, Ahmed Havadže, Ilijas Havadže, son of Ahmed, Šaćir Hodžić, Ilijas’s brother, who



*Turbe in Paljuh, dedicated to the brothers Salih and Mehmed Havađa*

After Salih ef Havađa, several imams are mentioned from this family, among them: Mullah Šaćir Hodžić, Rašid Hodžić and Dželadin Hodžić. And at the time of the 20th century several imams from this family served as imams in the Petnjica Mosque.<sup>7</sup> Here we are talking about blood relatives, who were passed down from generation to generation and performed the imam service in the Petnička mosque. After them, it is known that Hašin Abdul-Gani Kočan from the village of Godečelja performed the imam service.<sup>8</sup>

---

served as imam during the construction period. mosque in 1903, and finally Rašid Hodžić. We have this knowledge according to the narration of mullah Abdulah Hodžić, once the imam of the mosque in Petnjica, and the narration was passed on to us by Bajro ef. Agović, in his book: *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 361,

7 Dželadin Hodžić, father Rašid, born in 1867 in Trpezi, where he finished school, then madrasa in Peja and Đakovica. He served in the Sibian school in Trpezi before 1908. He was appointed imam by the Decision of the Ministry of Religion in Belgrade in 1921, and previously he was appointed imam by the Sharia Court in Rožaje in 1908. He died in 1932, B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 358.

8 Hashim Abdul Gani Kočan, born in 1878 in the Bihor village of Godočelje. He completed 10 years of Madrasa in Đakovica. From 1907 to 1928, he served

We are talking about a good alim and serviceman who made a significant contribution to the strengthening of Islam and the spread of oriental-Islamic culture and civilization not only in the area of Bihor, but also beyond. During his imam service, school teaching will be intensified, both in the mosque in Petnjica and in other places: Trpezi, Vrbica, Godočelje, Tucanje, Vrševo, Kalica and other places in Bihor. For many years, Hashim Abdul Gani Kočan taught in the school in the town of Godočelje, educating numerous generations, both from this and neighboring villages. This contributed to better religious education in this area. After Hashim Abdul Gani Kočan, another virtuous Islamic scholar, Mullah Umer Hajdarpašić, performed the imam service in the Petnjica Mosque,<sup>9</sup> a descendant of the famous Hajdarpašić Bey family from Bihor. Mullah Uma ref. In addition to basic religious education, Hajdarpašić completed high religious schools in Istanbul, after which he returned

---

as a religious teacher, as well as imam in Penjica. In the school in Godečelje, he served as a religious teacher until 1945, when the school was abolished. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 359.

9 Umer ef Hajdarpašić was born in 1870 in the village of Vrševo-Petnjica. He finished school in his native village, after which he continued his education in the madrasa in Đakovica, and then in the Great Madrasa of Mehmed Pasha Sokolović in Istanbul, which he finished in the middle of the last decade of the 19th century. In addition to his duties as imam of the mosque in Petnjica, he was the mualim of the school in Vrševo. In the mekteb, he transferred his knowledge to the students and thus directed the education of several worthy madrasas in the madrasa in Đakovica, such as: Ibrahim Šabotić, Adil Babačić, Emin Šabotić and Rešid Babačić. Umer ef. Hajdarpašić propagated coexistence in the congregation, based on friendship, trust and mutual respect, and tolerance of diversity among people and neighbors, regardless of religion and nation. With his Orthodox neighbors, from the neighboring village of Hazana, he maintained friendly and godfather relations. He married twice. His first marriage was with the sister of Murat Ličina from Radmanac, with whom he had a son, Dan, who moved with his family to Turkey in 1936, and none of that family ever returned to their birthplace. Mullah Umer Hajdarpašić's second marriage was with Raba Kršić, daughter of Tahir Kršić and sister of Galjana Kršić, who was later a deputy in the Parliament of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In that marriage, they had five sons and one daughter. Mullah Umer ef. Hajdarpašić died in 1948 and was buried in the village cemetery, not far from the newly built mosque in Vrševo. Šato Ajdarpašić, *Školstvo Gornjeg Bihora – 110 godina škole u Petnjici (1904-2014)*, Petnjica 2014, 54-55.

to his homeland to contribute to the preservation of religion, religion and faith and the spread of Oriental-Islamic culture and civilization. The available information indicates that during his work as an imam of the Petnjica Mosque, he worked devotedly, dedicated to his work and worked as a missionary among the wider masses. It had a strong influence on many other life issues as well. After his service, two more imams from the Hodžić family from Trpezi and Vrbica took the place of imam in the Petnjica mosque. It is about Halit ef. Hodžić<sup>10</sup> and Abdullah ef. Hodžić. Both mentioned imams left a significant mark and contributed to the work of the Petnjica Mosque. Somehow at the same time as imam and religious teacher in this area on two occasions was Osman ef. Rastoder. The first time before he and his family went to Turkey, sometime in 1915, and then after he returned from Turkey.<sup>11</sup> Abdullah ef. Hodžić<sup>12</sup> served in the time

10 Halit (Nailov) Hodžić, born in 1886 in Vrbica. After acquiring basic knowledge in his place, in 1903 he continued his education at the Higher Madrasa (Muradija) in Đakovica under the famous muderis Sait Efendije Đakovica. After eight years of schooling, he returned to Vrbica as an imam (hatiba) in the mosque in Petnjica. In addition to his regular duties as imam, he was appointed as a religious teacher at the elementary school in Vrbica from 1921. From 1930 to 1940, he was a teacher at the Siban school in Trpezi. Immediately after the end of the Second World War in 1945, he was promoted to the ranks of the religious officials of the Islamic Community until 1961, and in the same year he received a decision to be appointed imam of the Petnjica congregation. Death caught him on this duty. He died on August 14, 1961. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 358-359.

11 Osman ef. Rastoder, father Abdullah, born in 1882 in Radmanci-Petnjica. He completed six classes of madrasa in Đakovica, three classes in Novi Pazar and three classes in Istanbul. He served in elementary and folk schools as a religious teacher in Petnjica, Tujanje and Savin Bor since 1926, and he has been a registrar in Petnjica since 1929. He was the president of the Jamaat Majlis. By the decree of the Ulema Majlis from Skopje, he was appointed imam of the registrar in Petnjica, although he had performed this duty before. Before him, Fehim Hajdarpašić performed this service in Penjica.. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 358.

12 Abdullah ef. Hodžić, father of Dželadin, born in 1909 in Trpezi-Petnjica. Finished school in Trpezi, then madrasa in Đakovica for 8 years. Before entering the service, he helped his father Jeladin in the performance of the imam's office. He was appointed by decree of Ulema Majlis from Skopje in July 1933 as the state registrar imam. On June 21, 1928, the Ministry of Religion of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes appointed him imam. In 1944, he was a member of the religious commission at CASNO Montenegro and Boka and a member of the main

of monarchist Yugoslavia, when the Islamic community experienced numerous turbulences, when it fought frantically for its independence and autonomy. At that time, and after the Decree on Amendments and Amendments to the Law on the Islamic Religious Community of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia was passed on February 28, 1936, with legal force on the Amendments and Amendments to the Law on the Islamic Religious Community of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia,<sup>13</sup> the religious education program and the number of students in schools in Gornji Bihor. Thus, in 1940, in the area of Gornji Bihor, a total of 205 students attended classes in 9 schools, namely: Donja Vrbica, 15 students, mualim Nazif Hadrović, Laze, 17 students, mualim Mehmed Hadrović, Tucanje, 42 students, mualim Ibrahim Šabotić, Godečelje, mualim Mehmed Meljko Latić.<sup>14</sup> In addition, it is evident that during that time a slightly larger number of madrasas from the Gornji Bihor area were educated in madrasas in Đakovica, Pec, Novi Pazar, as well as in the Velika Madrasa in Skopje.<sup>15</sup> All of them started their first religious steps precisely in the Petnjica mosque, as well as in schools in the area of Gornji Bihor, and later contributed to its work, as well as to the work of numerous schools in this area. In any case, Abdullah ef contributed to the rise of faith in the mentioned period. Hodžić and Osman ef. Rastoder, as well as other imams from the area of Gornji Bihor. At the same time, and

---

front of Montenegro and Boka. He is a member of NOR. In 1954, he moved out of his hometown and settled in Vitimirica near Peć. He worked as a part-time imam in the Hadrovića Mosque in Niš in 1966/1967. years. He actively advocated for the construction of a mosque in Vitimirica. Thanks to him, this idea came to fruition. He moved from Vitimirica to Sarajevo in 1989. The war found him in Sarajevo and in 1992 he left this city and came to Plav with his son-in-law Ismet Redžepagić and his daughter Ferida and Šabović Hatidža. The loss of his son Ferid in wartime Sarajevo, his parting with his family, going to Muhaderluk in old age, damaged his health. He died in Plav on October 4, 1994. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 359. 13 *Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, br. 52, Beograd 5. mart. 1936. godine. 14 Bajro Agović, *Od mekteba do medrese*, Podgorica 2012, str. 25-26, Arhiv Jugoslavije, k-K. Br. 11742, Spisak sibijan mekteba u srezu beranskom, Berane, 20. IX. 1940.

15 Among others from the area of Gornji Bihor, Mahmud Hadrović and Džeko Hodžić attended the large madrasa in Skopje during this time.

somewhat later during the Second World War, Osman ef worked as an imam in the Petnjica Mosque. Rastoder was an educated and wise imam, who served as an imam in very complex times, when decisions were being made about the survival of the Bosniak people in these areas. In this respect, as imam Osman ef. Rastoder, and at the insistence of the people, became the head of a military formation (Muslim militia) whose goal was to defend the town, population and property of Gornji Bihor from constant Chetnik attacks. Thanks to him and such a military organization, Gornji Bihor was saved and did not suffer the fate of Donji Bihor and other Polim and Podrinje areas when thousands of innocent civilians died as a result of Chetnik crimes.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately, after the Second World War, due to his role in January 1946, OZNA liquidated Osman ef. Rastoder. A little later, after his murder, the War Crimes Investigation Commission declared him a war criminal without valid facts and arguments.<sup>17</sup> But, despite that, he enjoyed it in the eyes of the people of Gornji Bihor and beyond, and even today he enjoys great respect and was and remains a symbol of resistance and defense of Gornji Bihor in the constant Chetnik attacks on this place during the Second World War. Mehmed Meljko Latić was one of the imams of the Petnjica mosque,<sup>18</sup> from Lagator, a distinguished scholar and

---

16 According to the available historical facts, only in the period from January 6 to February 25, 1943, in the area of Foča, Čakniče, Priboj, Pljevlja and Bijelo Polje counties, about 20,000 Bosniak civilians were killed, of which in the area of Bijelopska county (Donji Bihor) more 3,700 civilians. See more in: Fehim Džogović, *Bijela knjiga žrtava Sandžaka: 1941-1945* "Bijelopoljski srez, Podgorica 2021; *Bijela knjiga žrtava Sandžaka: 1941-1945* "-Dokumenti, Podgorica 2021, *Bijela knjiga žrtava Sandžaka: 1941-1945* ", *Opština Petnjica*, Podgorica 2021, Vladimir Dedijer, Antun Miletić, *Genocid nad Muslimanima 1941-1945*, *Zbornik dokumenata i svjedočenja*, Svjetlost-Sarajevo 1990, Milutin Živković, *Sandžak 1941-1943*, doctoral dissertation defended at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Belgrade in 2017.

17 See more in: Zumber Muratović, *Sandžački gazija Osman ef. Rastoder*, Sarajevo 2001.

18 Mehmed Meljko (Hasko) Latić, born in 1885 in Lagatori-Petnjica. Completed ten years of madrasa in Đakovica. He was a religious teacher from 1913 to 1929, a mualim from 1934 to 1941, then an imam of the Petnjica congregation from

devoted believer, who devoted his entire life to religion and faith, working diligently to teach numerous generations of young Bihors the faith over a long period of time from 1913 to 1952. Jaho ef. Osmanović<sup>19</sup> from Kalica, was also the imam of the Petnjica mosque and one of those representatives of the ulema who dedicated their whole lives to religion, and had a missionary effect on the people at a time when religion was consciously pushed to the margins of events, because it was considered a nuisance and an enemy of the state and a system whose existence was conceptualized without the significant influence and presence of religion in society. In such circumstances, it was difficult to preserve the faith, Islamic community and its institutions, why it needed great persistence and courage, which Jaho ef. Osmanović was the imam of the mosque in Petnjica, which resulted in the preservation of faith in the area of Gornji Bihor. Jusuf Kovačević also served as an imam of the Petnjica Mosque during the time of socialism. Unfortunately, apart from the fact that the people of Gornji Bihor have fond memories of this alim, we were not able to obtain more detailed biographical information for this occasion. According to available information, he did not remain imam for long, and for these reasons we do not

---

1941 to 1952. In addition to his mother tongue, he also spoke Turkish, Arabic and Albanian. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 358.

19 Mula Jaho Osmanović was born in 1915 in the village of Kalica-Petnjica, Southern Sandžak. From father Feka and mother Ajkuna, born Ahmetović from the village of Đerekare in Pešter. As a child, he remains an orphan and grows up with a mother's care and love. A mother suffering in very difficult living conditions, who, since she was left a widow, was kept for her brother-in-law Elmaz, who in the meantime remained a widower, with whom she gave birth to another son, Faik, and a daughter, Malka. Painstakingly, in addition to all other obligations, he sends his son Jah to study at a madrasa in Đakovica, where he acquires useful knowledge that elevates him to a high level among the more learned and respected people of that time. After finishing the madrasa and graduating from the Isabeg madrasa in Novi Paszar, he was appointed as a religious teacher in the elementary school in Trpezi, where he educated and raised a large number of children, among whom one of them was the famous and one of the well-known alims of the former SFRY, Dr. Acif Skenderovic. For a short period of time, he was the imam of the Petnjica mosque. Taken from the website: Bihor-Petnjica pres.

know more details about his work as imam of the Petnjica mosque. A great contribution to the work of the mosque in Petnjica and to the preservation of the dignity of Islamic community and religion in the area of Gornji Bihor was made by two imams and alims from Bihor, Bajro ef Agović and Husein ef. Ramčilović. Bajro ef Agović<sup>20</sup> is from the Bihor village of Gornja Vrbica, who used to come to the imam's service in Petnjica in the 70s of the 20th century. and remains for about ten years. This is the time when one begins to approach religion more freely, without too much restraint and fear on the part of believers, which Bajro ef Agović felt, so he wisely and skilfully led the congregation of the Petnjica Mosque, strengthening mutual trust between believers and Islamic community. In addition to continuous work on strengthening the congregation, he worked on the restoration of the rather dilapidated old mosque in Petnjica. What is noticeable then is that Islamic community saw the intensity of work through the implementation of numerous religious events, such as mevlud, clapping of hats, Eid festivities, etc. This had the effect of creating a different, more objective image of religion, its importance and role in society among the people of Gornji Bihor. The work of school teaching was also intensified, which resulted in the fact that a number of participants later focused on attending and completing madrasas. The diligent work of Bajra ef. Agović was noticed by the higher authorities of the Islamic community in

---

20 Bajro Agović was born on July 19, 1947. in Vrbica in Gornji Bihor. He received his primary education in his hometown, and in 1964 he entered the five-year "Gazi Husrevbeg Madrasah" in Sarajevo. In 1971, he was appointed imam in the "Sharanpov" congregation in Prijepolje. At the request of the then president of the elders of the Islamic Community of Montenegro, Hadji Šukrija Bakalović, he was transferred as an imam in the Petnjica congregation. In 1984, he moved to Titograd, to the position of secretary of the Elders of the Islamic Community of Montenegro, where he remained until his retirement. During his service, he held the highest positions in the Islamic community in Montenegro and the former Yugoslavia. He made a significant contribution to the study of the Islamic community of Montenegro, where he wrote several books and several professional and scientific works. His book attracted great interest from the scientific and professional public: „Džamije u Crnoj Gori“.

Montenegro, and in 1984 he was removed from the position of imam in the mosque in Petnjica, to the position of secretary of the Eldership of the Islamic community of Montenegro, where he made an immeasurable contribution to the institutional building and strengthening of the Islamic community in Montenegro. As secretary of the Eldership from Montenegro Bajro ef. Agović made a great contribution to the implementation of a significant number of important projects that strengthened the Islamic community in Montenegro. Significant contribution of Bajro ef. Agović also contributed as a passionate researcher of the past Islamic Community of Montenegro.



### *Existing history at the entrance of the mosque*

In 1984, Imam Bajra ef. Agović was replaced by the then young and agile imam Husein ef. Ramčilović.<sup>21</sup> Almost 40 years of service

<sup>21</sup> Husein ef. Ramčilović was born in 1957 in the village of Lagatore-Petnjica. After finishing elementary school in Petnjica, he entered and successfully completed the “Alaudin” madrasa in Priština. He graduated from the Higher Pedagogical School in Prizren, and for some time worked as a teacher in Petnjica Elementary School, Ponor district. In 1982, based on his request, he was appointed imam of the mosque in Bistrica near Bajjelo Polje. In 1984, he was appointed imam in Petnjica, where he still performs imam duties today. He was a member of the Parliament of the Islamic Community of Montenegro. He made an immeasurable contribution to the

Husein ef. Ramčilović left a big mark, not only on the religious, but also on the overall conditions in Gornji Bihor in a turbulent time, such as the time of his service. With selfless work around the clock, Husein ef. Ramčilović dedicatedly worked to restore the place of religion in Gornji Bihor. It was not an easy job at all, in a time when the official authorities were working on the atheism of society, when devotion to religion and the practice of religion were considered backward and socially unacceptable, in such circumstances it was necessary to lead the congregation and reach the hearts of believers, which was not at all easy work. But Husein ef. Ramčilović did not give up, he was aware that only well-designed and persistent work can produce results. And so it was. After strengthening and strengthening the congregation, including in the same congregation members from all places in Bihor, he worked as a missionary on the realization of the most important projects that were of exceptional importance for the Islamic community in Gornji Bihor. The building of the old mosque was giving in more and more to the test of time, it was necessary to carry out its reconstruction as a priority, because Islamic community did not have the funds, and the state did not care about such an undertaking. In such circumstances, the only possibility was to find a wakif or several of them willing to help the reconstruction and restoration of the mosque. Thanks, among other things, to the trust that was placed in Husein ef. After Ramčilović as imam, Mujko Mustafa Šabotić, who together with his family invested significant financial resources in the reconstruction of the Petnjica mosque, found himself. The reconstruction of the mosque lasted several years, and was done in accordance with the requirements of the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro and the Ministry of Culture of Montenegro. In addition to the reconstruction of the mosque, Mujko Mustafa Šabotić also built a fountain inside the courtyard of the mosque, which is built of stone and covered with a wooden

---

preservation of religion, but also of slum culture and tradition in the area of Gornji Bihor.. B. Agović, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, 360.

structure, and blends into the existing architectural design. In addition to the fountain, benefactor Mustafa Mujko Šabotić made the outer wall-fence, on which the fountain was restored, which has a public and religious character, as it can be used by believers and all other citizens. This was a significant project, which restored the identical earlier form of the Petnjica Mosque. In this way, far better conditions were created for practicing religious life in these areas. Along with the renovation-reconstruction of the Petnjica mosque, the Majlis from Petnjica headed by Husein ef. In Ramčilović, he worked to strengthen religious life in all other settlements in Bihor. Thus, in the time up to the present day, around 30 religious buildings worth around 5 million Euros have been built in the area of Gornji Bihor. Among others, mosques were built in the villages: Trpezi, Savin Bor, Bor, Murovac, Tucanje, Vrševo, Vrbica, Dobrodole and Kalica, schools in the villages of Godočelje and Radmance, and gasulhans: Petnjica, Tucanje, Vrševo, Radmance, Godečelje and Vrbica. The imam's house with the premises of the Majlis from Petnjice was also completed, as well as the imam's house in Vrševo. Thanks to this infrastructure of religious buildings, faith has significantly strengthened in the area of Gornji Bihor. The mosque in Vrševo has its own congregation and permanent work, and achieved notable results with the agile imam Enis Kliment, while other mosques have activities during Ramadan, Eid and during funerals.



*Shardvan in front of Petnjica mosque*

For the strengthening of faith in the area of Gornji Bihor in the turbulent transition and post-transition times, the most credit goes to the tireless Husein ef Ramčilović, who has woven almost 40 years of his diligent work into really visible results. Thanks to this, a new generation of young people has grown up in Gornji Bihor today, which bases its worldview on religious Islamic values and principles, without diminishing respect for universal values and principles. In the Petnjica mosque, there are more and more young worshippers, people who have graduated from madrassas, who have performed the Hajj and firmly nurture and promote Islamic-Oriental culture and civilization. All this created a better and stronger image of religious life in the area of Gornej Bihor. However, in addition to the imams who were the bearers of positive efforts and strengthening of the Islamic community in the area of Gornji Bihor, in any case significant contributions were also made by the presidents of the majlis, as well as muezzins: Neko Muhović, Zaim Škrijelj, Emin Šabotić, Amir Hadrović. All of them wove a

part of themselves in the strengthening of religion and faith in this area and are responsible for the fact that religious life in the area of Gornji Bihor survived and was a guide and an important measure of the overall life trends in this area.

### **Instead of a conclusion**

The arrival of the Ottomans in the wider areas of the Balkans led to the spread of Islam, Islamic-Oriental culture and civilization. Mosques especially contributed to this. This was also the case in the area of Gornji Bihor. The old Petnjica mosque was a fundamental pillar in the spread and survival of Islam and Islamic culture and tradition in this area. It is, from an architectural and construction point of view, an unusual one, one of the rare tricolor mosques in the wider Balkan areas. We do not have reliable data about the origin of the mosque, but it is known with certainty that the mosque existed in the 18th century. The mosque has an attractive and notable external appearance, where the imposing stone walls, decorated with a total of 35 architecturally oriental windows and a slender wooden minaret leaning on the western side of the mosque wall, come to the fore. The interior of the mosque is particularly interesting due to the large number of cultural-artistic Oriental-Islamic details and features. Mafili, mihrab, minder and minder stairs, wooden supporting columns are with numerous ornamental oriental artistic expressions, which give a special oriental ambience to the interior of the building. That valuable oriental interior ambience is reinforced by Bihor carpets spread on all three floors, decorated with beautiful patterns and colors that are the result of local Bihor craftsmanship and the long tradition of weaving in Bihor. In every way, the interior of the Petnjica Mosque gives an extraordinary and pleasant scene of an Islamic-oriental ambience, with lots of ornamental details and values.

Its imams and muezzins contributed the most to the survival and existence of the mosque in Petnjica for several centuries. Available historical sources indicate that each of the imams had an important role in maintaining the mosque, creating congregations and fostering the values of Islam, Islamic culture and civilization. From the first known Imam Salih ef. Hawaje to the present Husein ef. Ramčilović, all of them in their own way left traces, which indicate that they wove a part of themselves, their knowledge and skills, with the aim of preserving faith and nurturing other values related to Islam, Islamic culture and tradition in these areas. The role of imams was more than religious, very often they were the bearers of overall social movements in this place. Not infrequently, the influence of the Imam of the Petnjica Mosque was decisive for important events from the past, which were a turning point for the survival of Bosniaks, Islam and Islamic culture and traditions in these areas. It is obvious that the Petnjica mosque was the center of all events in this area in the past few centuries. It is still today. It is more than a religious building, it is the most significant, recognizable and representative cultural-historical monument, which gives the strongest and most significant characteristics to the entire Gornji Bihor.

### **Bibliography**

- Arhiv Jugoslavije, k-K. Br. 11742 Spisak sibijan mekteba u srezu beranskom, Berane, 20. IX. 1940.
- Agović, Bajro, *Džamije u Crnoj Gori*, Almanah, Podgorica 2001.
- Agović, Bajro, *Od Mekteba do Medrese*, Almanah, Podgorica 2012.
- Ajdarpašić, Šato, *Školstvo Gornjeg Bihora – 110 godina škole u Petnjici (1904-2014)*, Petnjica 2014i
- Dedijer, Vladimir; Antun Miletić, *Genocid nad Muslimanima 1941-1945, Zbornik dokumenata i svjedočenja*, Svjetlost-Sarajevo 1990.

- Džogović, Fehim, *Bijela knjiga žrtava Sandžaka:1941-1945“*  
*Bijelopoljski srez*, Podgorica 2021; *Bijela knjiga žrtava*  
*Sandžaka: 1941-1945“-Dokumenti*, Podgorica 2021, *Bijela*  
*knjiga žrtava Sandžaka: 1941-1945“*, *Opština Petnjica*,  
Podgorica 2021,
- Hadrović, Mirsad, *Vakufi u Beranama*, ošnjačko društvo kulture  
Avlija, Rožaje 2013
- Muratović, Zumber, *Sandžački gazija Osman ef. Rastoder*, Sarajevo  
2001.
- Skenderović, Isat, *Vakifi i džamije Gornjeg Bihora*, slamska  
zajednica u Crnoj gori JU Centar za kulturu Petnjica, Petnjica,  
2017
- Službene novine Kraljevine Jugoslavije*, br. 52, Beograd 5. mart.  
1936. godine.
- Živković, Milutin, *Sandžak 1941-1943*, doctoral dissertation  
defended at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of  
Belgrade in 2017.