



BIROn - Birkbeck Institutional Research Online

Maniura, Robert (2024) The challenge of Kosovo. *Art History* , ISSN 0141-6790. (In Press)

Downloaded from: <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/id/eprint/53906/>

Usage Guidelines:

Please refer to usage guidelines at <https://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/policies.html>
contact lib-eprints@bbk.ac.uk.

or alternatively

The Challenge of Kosovo

Robert Maniura

The monastery of Visoki Dečani was founded by Stefan Uroš III, king of Serbia (1321-1331).¹ The ruler, who has come to be known as Stefan Dečanski, is buried in the church of Christ Pantocrator (*plate 1*) at the heart of the complex. According to an inscription surviving above the south portal, the church was built by Fra Vita, a Franciscan from Kotor on the Adriatic coast, and completed in 1334-1335 in the reign of Stefan Dečanski's son and successor Stefan Dušan.² The splendours of the monastery, which include a spectacularly rich scheme of wall paintings dating from the years immediately following the church's construction (*plate 2*), prompted its inscription in the World Heritage List of UNESCO in 2004.³ In 2006 it gained the more unsettling distinction of inscription on the organization's List of World Heritage in Danger, a status reconfirmed most recently in 2023.⁴ The perception of danger is manifest in the arrangements for the site's protection: the monastery's walls are supplemented by barbed wire, road blocks and guard posts (*plate 3*), and to this day the site is manned by United Nations troops. The stated danger is 'political instability'.⁵

This arrangement has its roots in the conflicts attendant upon the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, but, as those conflicts fade from international memory, this continuing phenomenon attracts little attention. Yet we are faced in twenty-first century Europe by the spectacle of a medieval monastery which is understood to require armed guard. This is but one manifestation of unresolved tensions in the region which remain a matter of diplomatic dispute and continue to give rise to episodes of violence. The concerns of art history might seem marginal in this context, but the entanglement of the visual arts in the

contested histories which underlie this tension raises the issue of the discipline's contribution and challenges its motivations, methods and scope.

My own first, somewhat distanced, encounter with Dečani came in 1993 when I was studying for my MA, and my point of reference in the literature was Richard Hamann-MacLean and Horst Hallensleben's *Monumental Painting in Serbia and Macedonia*.⁶ It is only more recently that I realised that this and other prominent related monuments are located in a profoundly contested region: Dečani is in Kosovo, and the tensions involved are manifest in the territory's unilateral declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008.⁷ In the blunt ethno-nationalist terms which have come to characterise the dispute, although the region is claimed as an integral part of Serbia, twentieth-century censuses reveal that in recent times the majority of the population of Kosovo has identified as Albanian.⁸ The discipline I was learning in the 1990s did little to draw my attention to, or help me engage with, the wider cultural and political issues, and on returning to this material thirty years later, I find that it continues to have little to say to help me think about them. I find this troubling, and this essay is part of my response to that concern. How did this state of affairs come about? The question has two parts. First, how is it that a building of a type that I have spent my academic career studying – a medieval Christian monastery in Europe – has come to be understood to need such protection? And second, how is it that my discipline seems so incurious about this?

Art history has by no means failed to engage with the war in Kosovo. The involvement of material culture, and architecture in particular, in the war of 1998-1999 is well acknowledged. Conflict inevitably leads to widespread damage and destruction, but it is clear that violence of a quite targeted kind has also been directed at the cultural heritage of the region – that is, a form of deliberate iconoclasm beyond the collateral effects of fighting or bombardment. The awareness of this aspect of the conflict lies behind the regime protecting Dečani, and I will come back to this. The phenomenon gave rise to an urge to catalogue that

damage on the part of those involved in the conflict and the agencies of the international effort responding to it. As Slobodan Ćurčić observed in 2000, ‘a “statistical syndrome”, intent on counting and recording the victimized monuments, has emerged as the only viable means of dealing with such unabashed vandalism’: art history as quantitative witness.⁹ Andrew Herscher, who was involved in this effort as part of a project undertaken for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, has gone beyond the lists in proposing the war in Kosovo as not just a ‘war *on* architecture’ but a ‘war *by* architecture’.¹⁰ For Herscher the destruction is itself a form of cultural production in which architecture ‘becomes representational’.¹¹ The idea of art and architecture exploited to generate new meanings is something to which I will return, but in focusing on the moment of damage or destruction, these approaches largely overlook the specificity of the individual monuments and their particular histories: precisely the features that the type of art history that I was trained in – focused on objects and deeply contextualised – tends to privilege. Does the wider discipline have anything to say in the face of the regime at Dečani, which stands undamaged but marked out by its prominent augmented defences? My concern is that the established ways in which art history chooses its subjects and frames its questions tend to overlook such issues, and I propose that this is to its detriment. The security of a monastery is perhaps not conventionally an art-historical problem, but I argue here that if the discipline is effectively to interrogate the significance of the visual arts it must engage more systematically with questions arising outside its conventional frames of reference. In exploring the position of the pre-modern monuments of Kosovo, I make no claim to explain nuances of their appearance, but rather to propose that art history should have something to say when monuments of visual art are manipulated as instruments of social division and discuss how the discipline might make a contribution.

State Building

The answer to the question of why Dečani needs, or is thought to need, such protection requires engagement with the region's political and cultural history. This is rich and complex, and any attempt at a summary risks over-simplification, but the following outline endeavours to establish a framework which acknowledges the elements of controversy. At its foundation Dečani was part of a Serbian kingdom which reached well beyond the boundaries of the modern Republic of Serbia, incorporating present-day Montenegro and reaching into Albania and what is now North Macedonia.¹² The region that we know as Kosovo had been absorbed by the expanding territories of Stefan Nemanja in the late twelfth century, and it remained part of what consolidated as the kingdom of Serbia under the dynasty that he established for the next two centuries.¹³ The region's early medieval fortunes had been linked to the fluctuating fringes of the late Roman, or Byzantine, Empire and it was probably Christianised by the ninth century when it lay in Bulgar territory.¹⁴

The Balkans in the Middle Ages were a site of encounter and contest between western and eastern centres of Christian authority, and the interplay between them was a key element of regional diplomacy and culture. The expanding Serbian territories of the later Middle Ages engaged with both traditions. The royal dignity of the ruler, for example, was bestowed on Stefan II, second son of Nemanja, in 1217 by a papal legate, but his brother, Sava, a monk of Mount Athos, successfully negotiated consecration as archbishop of Serbia in 1219 by the patriarch of Nicaea.¹⁵ This ecclesiastical orientation drew the emerging state into the Byzantine sphere of influence, but it long maintained its exchange and engagement with Latin culture, as the architecture of Dečani itself bears testimony. The church combines elements of what are, in conventional art-historical terms, several visual traditions (*see plate I*). The arched corbel table, pilasters and portals with tympana are characteristically 'Romanesque', the pointed arches of the windows of the naos and the drum of the dome are

‘Gothic’, whilst the overall form of a domed Greek cross follows Byzantine architectural conventions.¹⁶ The medieval Serbian kingdom was not a monocultural entity.¹⁷ The state attained its greatest territorial extent in the reign of Stefan Dečanski’s son, Stefan Dušan, in the mid fourteenth century, expanding at the expense of a Byzantine Empire weakened by civil war and plague to incorporate Thessaly and Epirus in what is now northern Greece.¹⁸ The title that Dušan adopted from 1345 – ‘Emperor and Autocrat of the Serbs and Romans’ – makes clear that the conscious emulation of, and rivalry with, Byzantium became an important component of the political culture.¹⁹

The development and aspirations of the state are traceable in art and architecture. The Serbian kings were notable builders, and a number of important royal foundations are located in Kosovo. To Dečani must be added the church of the Bogorodica Ljeviška in Prizren (*plate 4*), and the monastery at Gračanica (*plate 5*), respectively rebuilt and founded by Stefan Dečanski’s father, Stefan Uroš II Milutin (reigned 1282-1321).²⁰ Along with the Patriarchate at Peć (*plate 6*), whose status will be explored below, these four sites now comprise the expanded UNESCO World Heritage site ‘Medieval Monuments in Kosovo’, collectively on the list of heritage in danger.²¹ They have long had a prominent place in the study of later Byzantine art. In the words of Ćurčić, highlighting Gračanica: ‘it would not be inaccurate to state that the best achievements in Byzantine architecture and monumental painting between 1300 and 1321, on the basis of what has survived, were accomplished under the auspices of the Serbian monarch’.²²

From the late fourteenth century onwards the kingdom of Serbia was challenged by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire. First obtaining a foothold on the European side of the Dardanelles at Gallipoli in 1354, the Ottomans extended their control rapidly in Thrace with Adrianople, present-day Edirne, taken in the 1360s.²³ The advance continued northwards and westwards in the following decades with Bulgaria becoming a vassal in the 1370s.²⁴ The

name of Kosovo looms large in the history of this advance because of the battle of the field of Kosovo – Kosovo Polje – in 1389, fought on a site a little to the north west of Pristina. Just how decisive the battle was is a matter of debate, but it left the Ottomans dominant in the region with Serbia as a vassal, and it came to occupy a central place in Serbian historiography and mythography, as will be discussed below.²⁵ Ottoman expansion was checked for a time by Timur's invasion of Anatolia in the early years of the fifteenth century, and the assertion of Ottoman control over the former Serbian possessions was an extended process not finally consolidated until the 1450s when Mehmet II, conqueror of Constantinople, incorporated former Serbian territory in directly administered military districts.²⁶ For the next four hundred years the region was part of the Ottoman Empire.

With the Ottoman occupation, the region came under the control of a Muslim ruling class and underwent a process of Islamisation. The Ottomans did not, at least initially, pursue a policy of forced conversion, but the privileged position of Muslims in the state made conversion advantageous and Islam spread among the subject population.²⁷ The spread was by no means uniform, with different social groups adopting the new faith in response to differing circumstances, and the way that those groups are understood to relate to current notions of national or ethnic identity contributes to current tensions.

The process of Islamisation is inscribed in the art and architecture of the region: Kosovo is rich in Ottoman monuments which centre on the rituals of Islam, and the result is a culturally mixed architectural landscape characteristic of the Balkans. The cityscape of Prizren serves as an apt example (*plate 7*): the minaret and dome of the seventeenth-century Sinan Pasha Mosque dominate the centre of the town by the banks of the river Bistrica, but above it looms the bulk of a Byzantine fortress and, on the wooded slopes, are the fourteenth-century churches of the Saviour on the right and Svete Nedelje on the left.

The church of the Bogoridica Ljeviška in Prizren exemplifies one aspect of the impact of the new regime (see *plate 4*). It is the only one of the churches on the UNESCO list that was ever converted into a mosque. It seems to have been a standard Ottoman strategy to turn the largest or most prominent church in newly occupied towns over to serve as the Friday Mosque, both to provide a place of worship for Muslims and to signal the triumph of Islam.²⁸ The Bogoridica Ljeviška is recorded in use as a mosque by 1517, and was probably converted shortly after the Ottomans took control of the city in 1455.²⁹

The urban space began to change around the converted church.³⁰ A key element of the transformation is implicit in *plate 4*, which is a view of the church from the nineteenth-century watch tower built into the late fifteenth-century hamam which survives one block to the east (*plate 8*). One of the oldest surviving Ottoman monuments in Prizren, the bath complex, traditionally associated with Shemsedin Ahmet Bey, was recently restored and reopened as the city's archaeological museum (*plate 9*).³¹ The construction of a hamam, essential for the ablutions central to Islamic ritual, was another common early intervention in newly occupied towns.³² The Prizren hamam is a relatively well-preserved example, with its separate sequences of domed rooms for men and women in a format familiar in the Ottoman world.³³

A significant number of newly built mosques survive from the earliest decades of Ottoman rule. Those in Pristina, including the Fatih mosque, named for its founder, Sultan Mehmed II and established in 1460-1461, and the nearby Çarshi mosque, which once stood at the heart of a bazaar originally laid out in the fifteenth century, remain as isolated monuments, stranded by the modernisation of the city by the socialist authorities in 1947.³⁴ The town of Peć, the urban centre near the Orthodox Patriarchate, offers a fuller context for an early Ottoman mosque. Here the Bayrakli mosque, dating from the late fifteenth century, still stands at the centre of a bustling commercial area (*plate 10* and *plate 11*).³⁵ Like the

mosques in Pristina, this is an example of what Aptullah Kuran called single-unit mosques with a dome rising over a square prayer room with a porch and single minaret.³⁶

One challenge for art history is that, unlike the medieval Christian churches, which include buildings with a place in the scholarly canon and highlighted by UNESCO listing, the Ottoman monuments of Kosovo are little studied and very little known. The art of the Ottoman Balkans in general has been neglected to a surprising degree. Standard surveys of 'Islamic art' omit it altogether, and even surveys of Ottoman art are often confined to the current European borders of Turkey.³⁷ The great pioneer of the study of the Ottoman art and architecture of the Balkans is Machiel Kiel, but one individual's work cannot cover so broad an area comprehensively, and even his prodigious output has comparatively little to say about Kosovo.³⁸ A fuller exploration of the architecture of the early Ottoman Balkans is underway, but Kosovo as yet remains largely unexplored.³⁹ Such literature as exists on the fifteenth-century Ottoman material is the work of Turkish or local Kosovan scholars and has achieved little diffusion.⁴⁰ This is material with a very marginal place in any history of art. My purpose here, however, is not to attempt to redress this imbalance, but to begin to explore the implications of the changed audiences and viewing practices bound up with these shifting circumstances. This involves confronting the yet more serious distorting effects of conflict.

Violence and Identity

The Ottoman bazaar in Peć invoked above is a reconstruction. The town was very badly damaged in the war of 1998-1999 and the mosque itself was burned.⁴¹ The destruction seems to have followed a pattern evident elsewhere in the conflict in that the damage to the mosque was not a result of fighting or bombardment but of arson, and the building was not wholly obliterated but marked by its damage.⁴²

In their post-war report on 'Architectural Heritage in Kosovo' of September 2000, Andrew Herscher and András Riedlmayer noted that of the 607 mosques recorded in Kosovo before the outbreak of hostilities, more than 200 were damaged or destroyed in the war.⁴³ They found 'no evidence that any Orthodox sites had suffered serious damage during the war – either from NATO bombs or at the hands of Albanian rebels', but the formal end of hostilities in June 1999 did not bring an end to the violence. A wave of attacks began against Kosovar Serbs and their property with places of worship an apparent focus of attention.⁴⁴ The attacks were explicitly retributive. As a press release of the Kosovapress news agency put it in July 1999: 'These churches are being destroyed by Albanians who lost children, wives, brothers and husbands to an ideology of hatred.'⁴⁵ The Kosovo Force of the UN was deployed, initially to protect 151 sites, but only a limited number were guarded round the clock, and by 2002 the avowed policy became to protect only sites in active use or of 'historical or artistic value'.⁴⁶ The events of 17 to 19 March 2004, however, overwhelmed even this principle when widespread violence erupted in which nineteen people lost their lives, several thousand Serbs fled their homes and thirty six Orthodox churches were attacked, including the medieval churches of Prizren, the Bogorodica Ljeviška among them.⁴⁷ A study of 2007 claims that 'since 1999 in this region a total of 143 churches and monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church were subjected to destruction'.⁴⁸ The continuing challenges can be traced in the regular reports of the Secretary General of the UN on the Mission in Kosovo.⁴⁹

The violence presents two apparently polarised and mutually hostile communities. One aspect of their confrontation is the contestation of the historical demography of the region. Attempts have been made to claim a preponderance among the historic population for groups conceived according to modern ethnic distinctions: current divisions are mapped back into history. The maximal Serbian claim is that the Kosovo of the medieval Serbian kingdom was

an ethnically homogeneous Serbian land.⁵⁰ The predominantly non-Serbian population of the present day is argued to result from successive waves of emigration, beginning in the immediate aftermath of the Ottoman conquest and reaching a peak in the wake of the Ottoman-Habsburg wars of the late seventeenth century.⁵¹ The latter gave rise to what has been termed the ‘Great Migration’ in which large numbers of Serbs are said to have fled north with the retreating Habsburg armies, opening up the territory to a compensating Albanian immigration.⁵² The Albanian counter-claim is that even before the Ottoman conquest Albanians formed a majority in the region with Serbs a minority ruling class.⁵³

These polarised claims have come to dominate regional politics, but they disguise a more complex reality. Ger Duijzings proposes characterising the region as an ‘ethnic shatter zone’ comprising a rich variety of ethnic groups of whom the Albanians and Serbs are only the most numerous.⁵⁴ Demographic shifts have clearly taken place over the centuries, but their timing and extent are difficult to determine, and it is prudent to regard any claims of ethnic homogeneity in any period with caution.⁵⁵ In this study I do not aim to explore or resolve these competing claims, but to acknowledge them and consider their potentially damaging impact on the writing of cultural history.

It is important to recognise that violence is itself constitutive, contributing to the formation of the community identities that it claims to articulate.⁵⁶ Current ethnic divisions arguably coalesced and became a focus of conflict in the context of the formation of ideas of nationhood and the fixing of modern state borders. Serbia began to regain some autonomy in the early nineteenth century after a series of uprisings against Ottoman rule, and emerged into internationally recognised statehood in 1878.⁵⁷ That state was conceived of along national lines, and the late medieval kingdom was a key point of reference in the building of a Serbian identity.⁵⁸ The Serbia of 1878 incorporated territory from Belgrade in the north to Niš in the south, but there were aspirations to expansion and the self-styled empire of Stefan Dušan was

an avowed benchmark.⁵⁹ The new border, emerging from the disorder of the late Ottoman Empire, raised the issue of belonging, and there was significant movement of populations across the frontier and widespread violence.⁶⁰ In the Balkan Wars of 1912 to 1913 Serbia extended its control southwards incorporating much of Kosovo and pushing into North Macedonia.⁶¹ The settlements at the end of the Balkan Wars gave rise for the first time to an independent Albania, but Serbia retained its territorial gains.⁶² After the First World War this position was consolidated with the incorporation of Kosovo in the new Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, subsequently renamed Yugoslavia.⁶³ The designation of Kosovo as an autonomous region of the Republic of Serbia in 1945 acknowledged its cultural complexity, but the revocation of that autonomous status in a new constitution of 1989 was a major stimulus to growing unrest.⁶⁴

Serbian Identification

In the medieval Serbian kingdom, Kosovo was unambiguously a key component – geographically central, crossed by important trade routes, and with notable mineral wealth.⁶⁵ The region is, however, also closely associated with a number of factors which became central to emerging Serbian national identity and which have been exploited to argue that Kosovo was not just a historical part of the medieval Serbian kingdom but *is* the very heart of the Serbian nation. The key factor is arguably the tradition which accrued around the battle of 1389. By this date, Dušan's empire had fragmented, and the titular king of Serbia was Tvrtko, the ruler of Bosnia.⁶⁶ The leader of the forces opposing the Ottomans at Kosovo Polje was Prince Lazar, the most prominent among the Serbian nobles. In the oral tradition, drawn on by Vuk Karadžić in the early nineteenth century and published as 'The Downfall of the Serbian Empire', the prince was presented with a message from the Virgin Mary offering him a choice between victory in battle and a worldly empire or defeat and a heavenly one. Lazar

chose the heavenly.⁶⁷ Quite when this formulation developed is unclear, but the idea of a moral victory salvaged from military defeat is already embedded in early eulogies of the prince. Patriarch Danilo III's 'Narration about Prince Lazar' of 1392-1393 has the prince address his troops in these terms: 'We have lived a long time for the world; in the end we seek to accept the martyr's struggle and to live forever in heaven.'⁶⁸ The plain of Kosovo is presented as a site hallowed by the sacrifice of martyrs.

The potentially formative role of religion among the cultural factors fostering ideas of community identity is widely acknowledged, and in the case of Serbia this has an important institutional component.⁶⁹ The archbishopric established by Sava in the thirteenth century was from the outset 'autocephalous' – 'self-headed', that is, with a degree of autonomy – and had been raised to an independent Patriarchate in 1346 by Stefan Dušan.⁷⁰ Although it seems to have lapsed in the initial period of Ottoman rule, it was reinstated in 1557.⁷¹ Under the principle of what has come to be called the *millet*, the authorities of non-Muslim religions came to play a role in the administration of justice for their communities.⁷² The church, with its Slavonic liturgy, contributed to the mediation of the Ottoman judicial system for the Orthodox faithful and, though the Patriarchate was eventually suppressed in 1766, for a long period it provided an important element of institutional and cultural continuity for Orthodox Christians.⁷³

This institution was based in Kosovo and also has a notable material continuity. Sava's archbishopric was initially located at Žiča, but later in the thirteenth century its seat was transferred to Peć in what is now the north west of Kosovo, evidently in response to the threat of marauding Cumans and Tatars (see *plate 6*).⁷⁴ The core of the surviving architectural complex is the church of the Holy Apostles, by tradition begun by Sava, evidently on the site of an earlier thirteenth century church, but perhaps substantially undertaken by Sava's successor as archbishop, Arsenije, who is named in an inscription in the paintings of the main

apse.⁷⁵ The site's choice as the seat of the archbishopric prompted its further development, and the complex now comprises three contiguous churches. The church of St Demetrios, added by archbishop Nikodem in the 1320s, flanks the Holy Apostles to the north and the church of the Virgin Hodegetria (*plate 12*), founded by archbishop Danilo II in the 1330s, abuts it to the south, the three linked by a narthex added at this date.⁷⁶

The status of Peć is resonant, but this is only one aspect of the charge of the medieval architectural heritage of Kosovo. The church played a key role in perpetuating an awareness of the medieval Serbian state through the memorialisation of its kings, many of whom came to be venerated as saints.⁷⁷ The promotion of sacral kingship was a common feature of late medieval monarchy across Europe, but the concentration of saintly Serbian kings is striking.⁷⁸ The royal saints were remembered in the liturgy of the church and in visualisations of the sainted genealogy of the Nemanja dynasty, such as that in Danilo's narthex at Peć (*plate 13*).⁷⁹ They were also manifest in the landscape through their church foundations and shrines.

Milutin, depicted at the centre of the top register in the wall painting at Peć, and his son, Stefan Dečanski, depicted to his right, are both venerated as saints. Milutin was originally buried in his foundation at Banjska, also in Kosovo a little to the north-west of Mitrovica, but his remains are now venerated in Sofia where they have been since the fifteenth century.⁸⁰ Dečanski, considered a martyr after his assassination, probably by associates of his own son, was recognised as a saint by 1343 when Dušan commemorated his visionary appearances in a charter.⁸¹ His body is venerated in a shrine on the right side of the naos of the church of his foundation (see *plate 2*, centre right).⁸² In the words of the guidebook published by the monastery: 'even today the saintly body of the Holy King rests intact before the iconostasis of the church of Dečani and is the source of miracles.'⁸³

These are the principal elements of the Serbian identification with Kosovo. I do not wish to imply that they indicate an already existing national consciousness which they helped to sustain, but rather to acknowledge that they constitute a rich symbolic resource.⁸⁴ They have been used to evoke, to quote the title of one of the few English-language books dedicated to the art and architecture of the region, a *Sacred Land*.⁸⁵ In the 1980s they began to be exploited in a strident discourse of national identification. In the words of an open letter written by a group of priests, monks and nuns to the Serbian Patriarch in 1982: ‘With its 700-year duration, Kosovo is really present in our present and future, with the Patriarchate of Peć, with the monasteries at Dechani and Grachanitsa, the martyrs of Kosovo and the Serbian decision and testament of Kosovo; Kosovo is our memory, our hearth, the focal point of our existence.’⁸⁶ The discourse, at odds with the ethos of socialist Yugoslavia, began to permeate Serbian political life and was embraced and developed by Slobodan Milošević who became president of Serbia in 1989, revoking the autonomous status of Kosovo that year.⁸⁷ In the context of contests over statehood and state boundaries these monuments were explicitly articulated as markers of belonging. Their location in a region now occupied by people who largely profess a different faith, and whose identity, as we shall see, has been constructed in different ways, is presented as anomalous. So pervasive has this idea become that it colours international discourse. In the words of Tim Judah in his history of *The Serbs*: ‘today Gračanica, like the other Serbian monasteries of Kosovo, stands like a small Serbian island in an Albanian sea.’⁸⁸ This apparently poignant metaphor articulates, however, an assumption of isolation arising from the meeting of implicitly immiscible and mutually incompatible elements. The violence of the 1998-1999 war and its aftermath performs this apparently irreconcilable division.

The Challenge

This outline offers a framework for understanding why the continuing protection of Dečani by KFOR troops, and of the other UNESCO listed buildings by the Kosovan police, is deemed necessary. It also clarifies the nature of the perceived threat: these churches are held to be at risk from the actions of the local population. This brings me to the second part of my question: why is art history so apparently reticent about this? Is not the discipline duty bound to respond in the face of this openly partisan mobilisation of medieval art? The use of the past in nation building is, as noted above, well acknowledged, and the appeal to the Middle Ages in European politics has attracted growing attention.⁸⁹ But I am not aware of discussion of the implications of this contentious case for art history.

One aspect of the challenge for the discipline is the very directness of the claims made. Art history ponders nuanced interpretations of material with often historically distant origins, struggling to generate meanings for the objects with which it deals.⁹⁰ In Kosovo the medieval monuments are claimed not to be remote objects with only tenuously recoverable historical significance but clear signs: in the words of a current page of the website of the Republic of Serbia aimed at the ‘foreign public’, the churches and monasteries of Kosovo are ‘symbols of the centuries-old presence of the Serbian people in this territory’.⁹¹ The irony is that art history does not have to labour in Kosovo to argue for the continued significance of these medieval sites: they have been accorded a vital and immediate significance – but it is a divisive sectarian one.

The standard tools of art history run the risk of failing to critique this reductive presentation. The discipline encourages wide-ranging contextual analyses, and it accommodates varied approaches, but it has a strong tendency to explore objects in the context of the time of their original production.⁹² Michael Ann Holly has characterised as melancholic this compulsion to push its present objects away into an irrecoverable past.⁹³ The Kosovan case reveals the limitations of this tendency. There is an unforced sense in which

these foundations can indeed be seen as ‘Serbian’ and ‘Christian’: founded by Serbian monarchs and patriarchs in territory under their control in the service of Christian cult. But a concentration on making, patronage and original or intended audience offers little critical purchase on the use of objects and monuments to support partisan claims of exclusivity. The effort to recover a past origin, however nuanced and however subtle, risks remaining congruent with an essentialist nationalist reading, appearing to validate the attempt to make a medieval monastery a sign of inalienable Serbian-ness. Combined with the imbalance of scholarly attention on the monuments of the region and the emphasis provided by UNESCO listing, the discipline can be seen to make the case for exclusive Serbian identification seem natural. The challenge, then, is to explore the possibility of a more open address of these monuments.

Audiences

A richer significance was once in plain sight. Before the wars of the 1990s, Yugoslavia was the arena for a cultural interplay which problematises the ethnic and religious categories which are used to articulate current tensions. This has attracted anthropological study, but it was also a matter of popular report.⁹⁴ In the Kosovan context an important commentator on these phenomena is Ger Duijzings. One of Duijzings’ case studies in his exploration of religion and identity in Kosovo dealt with the pilgrimage to the monastery at Gračanica.⁹⁵ As noted above, Gračanica is a key monument in this contested area. It is the focus of an annual pilgrimage on the feast of the Dormition of the Virgin. Until the early 1990s it attracted a diverse range of devotees. Duijzings offers this account:

A great number of Muslim Gypsies from all over Kosovo take possession of the monastery grounds and celebrate this holy day together with the Serb pilgrims. Most

arrive the day before and bivouac in the *porta*, the large walled garden around the magnificent monastic church. The Gypsy pilgrims include people who are ill and women who are either barren or pregnant, who usually come with their relatives. They believe that an overnight stay will hasten their recovery or promote a pregnancy or an easy delivery. [...] As far as I could judge in the years when I witnessed the event, Muslim Gypsies do not attend the lengthy church ceremonies on the eve of the holy day or on the day itself. This is mainly a Serbian affair. Nevertheless Gypsies, in particular women and children, enter the church to kiss the icons, light candles and leave small gifts, in money or in kind. After vespers barren Gypsy women circle the church three times with long coloured ribbons, which remain tied round the building overnight. These are taken home and a belt is made out of them for a woman and sometimes her husband to wear.⁹⁶

This short passage presents members of one of Kosovo's many ethnic communities engaging with the nominally Serbian Christian site. There is no suggestion that this shared veneration exemplifies an ideal community of the kind envisaged by Victor Turner as the goal of pilgrimage in which the structured social self is left behind.⁹⁷ Duijzings is clear that although these two communities congregated jointly, they did not intermingle either socially or in ritual activity. There were signs that the Serbian pilgrims and attendants regarded the Gypsies with distrust, and their actions as improper.⁹⁸ The Serbian interaction with the site was explicitly normative and all activity was managed by the shrine's authorities.⁹⁹ This was an unequal sharing, but what is significant in the context of the study of the visual arts is that the material focus of the actions of the two groups of pilgrims was the same: the Gypsy pilgrims entered the church, kissed the icons, and encircled the church with ribbons.

It is not clear when the Muslim Gypsy pilgrimage to Gračanica began. The participants claimed a centuries-long tradition, but one study insists that it only began in the 1950s.¹⁰⁰ Duijzings acknowledges that this particular pilgrimage may itself be a product of recent tensions in the region, with the Roma community identifying with the Serbian minority in Kosovo in the face of perceived domination by the majority Albanian population.¹⁰¹ It is, however, by no means a special case for there is evidence of a wider engagement with these monuments. Duijzings notes briefly that ‘there are other examples of Christian shrines which have always attracted Muslim pilgrims, like the Serbian Orthodox monasteries of Devič and Visoki Dečani’, but he offers no account based on his observation.¹⁰² Detailed accounts are indeed rare, but there is striking testimony from Dečani, the site with which I began, from an earlier generation in a canonical work of English literature: Rebecca West’s account of her travels through Yugoslavia in 1936-1938.¹⁰³

West offers the following version of an event during her visit to the monastery at Dečani. Her guide, Constantine, drew attention to a group entering the church:

There were two men, three women, one holding a baby in a wicker cradle, two little boys. They were Albanian Moslems. [...] ‘It is their Friday’, whispered Constantine, ‘that is the Moslem’s holy day, it is to them as Sunday is to us. And they bring their sick to be cured by our Christian saints. See what they do.’ They made their way to the tomb of Stephen Dechanski and stood there in a hushed fluttered group, summoning up their intention. The priest withdrew from them and came over to us, murmuring with a smile, ‘They have worked out this ritual themselves; it is entirely their own idea, we have nothing to do with it.’ First the cradle was set down on the floor and the child taken out of it; its cry expressed the accumulated griefs and the final weakness of a nonagenarian; its mother pressed its face against the coffin-lid and then knelt down

beside the tomb while one of the men knelt at the end. Trembling, she held the wailing baby under the tomb and the man took it from her and passed it round the end back to her. Three times the baby was passed under the tomb and back again. By this tenuous contact with the man whose father had burnt out his eyes, who had killed his brother and who had been killed by his son, it was presumed that the baby would now enjoy physical health. Then it was put back in its cradle, and one of the little boys kissed the tomb and crawled under it three times. After that the woman with the livid skin and the stare slowly performed the ritual, so stiffly and mechanically that it was as if her own malady were hypnotizing her from within. The third time she could not pass under the tomb by her own volition. She had to be dragged out by the two men. [...] The two men got her on to her feet, and they became again a huddled, over-awed group. Softly they padded across the church towards the porch. One of the women and two of the men looked up at the frescoes with the conscious calm of tourists who in a tropical island see the natives practising what in their country of origin would be considered indecent exposure: Islam forbids the representation of living creatures. We followed them to the archway and watched them in the sunshine among the trenches and the rubble-heaps, reassuming their veils and their skullcaps.¹⁰⁴

A group of Albanian Muslims venerates the shrine of Stefan Dečanski in the naos of the monastery church. West's tone, in line with that of her clerical character, is patronising, and, as will be discussed below, in further remarks becomes openly dismissive: the account articulates a hierarchy of use which privileges the guardians of the site and presents these devotees as anomalous outsiders. That the testimony comes from an avowedly unsympathetic observer, however, arguably makes it all the more significant.

The nominal focus of the ritual described by West is the healing body of the saintly king. The body, however, is not encountered directly and is not experienced in a vacuum, but in a richly articulated spatial and pictorial environment (see *plate 2*). What the pilgrims interact with directly is the tomb structure and, significantly, West has members of the group look up at the wall paintings on their way out of the church. She goes on to question, though, what ‘these people got from a visit to a church which on its walls bore such strong and subtle evidence of the support that Christianity can give to the tortured human animal. [...] But there seemed to be no force working in the life of the monastery which would make these conceptions clear to those who were not prepared for them by their own tradition.’¹⁰⁵ The comment reveals a perception of abruptly distinct visual and devotional cultures, and questions the significance of the observed behaviour. The formulation helps to highlight my interest in the material. I argue that, on the contrary, this behaviour needs to be taken seriously as a critical part of the history of response to the site with important implications for the study of it as a complex of visual material.

One important consideration is the familiarity of what is described. The priest in West’s account insists that the Albanian pilgrims ‘have worked out this ritual themselves’, but this is not obviously true. This kind of activity is familiar from Christian shrines over a long period.¹⁰⁶ Analogous behaviour is visualised, for example, by Gentile da Fabriano in a famous predella panel from the *Quaratesi Altarpiece*, now in Washington, showing the crippled and sick healed at the tomb of Saint Nicholas (*plate 14*).¹⁰⁷ The Albanians in West’s account, like the infirm in Gentile’s image, circulate beneath and around the raised sarcophagus. This is unlikely to be coincidence. It is much more likely to be evidence of learned behaviour, shared by mutually familiar communities: this is what one does at such a shrine. Moreover, the very design of the shrine, raised up with space below, arguably invites this kind of behaviour: it is an ‘embodied object’ – ‘a physical, spatially situated entity which

invites interaction with other bodies'.¹⁰⁸ The actions of the Albanian pilgrims described by West were not eccentric improvisations.

The phenomenon of places considered holy and honoured by what are usually considered distinct religious or confessional groups is by no means unfamiliar, especially to students of eastern Mediterranean culture. It is well known in the study of Palestine, but as far as I am aware its implications have not been systematically brought to bear in the study of the visual arts.¹⁰⁹ The pioneering study of the phenomenon in the former Ottoman lands was made by Frederick William Hasluck based on fieldwork conducted in the wake of the Balkan Wars in 1913-1916.¹¹⁰ Hasluck's main interest was in Christian sites taken over as Islamic holy places, what he called 'transference', but he also noted a few cases of 'Christian sanctuaries frequented by Muslims'.¹¹¹ His introductory remarks in this section are notable: 'Frequentation of Christian healing shrines by Turks is so common a phenomenon at present that it would deserve no more than a passing mention here but for the fact that it may have been an important stage in the transference of many holy places from Christianity to Islam.'¹¹² I am less interested in the ultimate takeover of one faith's sites by another than in this evidently widespread shared veneration, a phenomenon apparently so common at the start of the twentieth century in the Balkans that Hasluck judged it scarcely worthy of mention, let alone study. Hasluck offers no direct testimony for any sites in Kosovo, but his examples are intended to show that 'the practice was of early date and common to the whole Turkish area from Bosnia to Trebizond and Egypt'.¹¹³

The phenomenon clearly pre-dated the twentieth century in Ottoman lands. A Swiss pilgrim, Peter Villinger, travelling in the 1560s, reported that 'the Turks allow all kinds of Christians to live under them according to their own faith and don't prevent them from either fasting and praying or worshipping saints and images. On the contrary, they themselves worship, by fasting and praying, our own saints.'¹¹⁴ The spirituality characteristic of Ottoman

frontier society may indeed have fostered such practices from the outset. An important role has been argued for dervish orders such as the Bektashi which flourished in the Balkans, and whose ‘unorthodox’ practices included the veneration of Christian holy sites. It has been proposed that such orders played a significant role in the spread of Islam among the Christian population of the Balkans by blurring or de-emphasising distinctions of religious practice.¹¹⁵ Tijana Krstić has cautioned that this model is too simple and overlooks the evidence that Bektashi strategies often sought to underscore rather than elide religious differences whilst attitudes to religious boundaries more generally shifted in response to power struggles between groups in Ottoman society.¹¹⁶ But shared use remains significant even if it could be a source of tension rather than conciliation. Jointly venerated shrines understood as what Krstić has called ‘sites of intense inter-religious negotiation’ were an important feature of the early Ottoman Balkans.¹¹⁷ Though we have no direct evidence of it before the twentieth century, the veneration of the Christian sites of Kosovo by Muslims may have been long established.

Mediating the Sacred

We have no direct access to this behaviour but a manuscript painting in an album in the Topkapı Palace Museum in Istanbul (*plate 15*), noted by Michele Bacci in a discussion of ‘mixed shrines’, can, with care, act as a focus for a discussion of the implications on the level of visual experience.¹¹⁸ The image’s preservation as a detached miniature in an album, which has itself been extensively reworked over the years, means that its original context is lost, but there is a broad consensus that it is from Central Asia, probably Persia/Iran, that it dates from the fifteenth century, and that it depicts a Christian monastery.¹¹⁹

The miniature shows a domed structure occupied by a diverse group of people. A Christian frame of reference is established by a number of features. The Persian inscription

on a blue ground running around the topmost cornice of the central building beneath the dome reads: ‘In that monastery where they gave us the wine-cup / They granted us what we sought from Jesus and Mary / There is an inscription by the Messiah on this old monastery / Which reads: “Do not give up hope for the outcome is good”’.¹²⁰ The prominent motif of bells hung on a rope running across the top of the image, and pulled by a bearded figure in the middle register on the left, also suggests a Christian identification, whilst the studious seated bearded figures, depicted reading and writing, use iconographic conventions and colours, notably blue, associated with Christians.¹²¹ The group also includes women, including one in the gallery, centre right, who is nursing a child. This is not a straightforward ‘view’ of a Christian religious house. It seems likely that, rather than attempting to depict a specific institution, the miniature represents an amalgamation of motifs derived from diverse pictorial conventions, and that it is best understood as an example of how a Christian monastery could be imagined in a Muslim context.¹²²

Two features of the scene are especially thought provoking in the present discussion. The first is the ethnic and religious range suggested by the figures depicted. The black figure with bare torso and legs immediately below the nursing woman, to the left of the gate and clearly to be understood as within the monastery precincts, is of particular interest. Various identifications have been suggested. The figure matches the depictions of itinerant dervishes in other fourteenth and fifteenth-century manuscript paintings, but black is closely associated with the depiction of Indians in Persian painting and he could represent a Hindu *sadhu*.¹²³

Second, the depicted building is shown as full of wall paintings, some of which have legible Christian iconography. In the bay of the loggia behind the seated figure in brown and yellow in the centre-right foreground is what seems to be Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem. Two bays to the left, the scene of a male and female figure flanking a portal could be Joachim and Anna at the Golden Gate and, two storeys above this, are scenes which could be Christ

among his apostles.¹²⁴ This feature further supports the identification of the depicted structure as a Christian institution, but it also strongly suggests a perception of such imagistic richness as a defining characteristic of such places: Christian complexes were known to be full of figurative paintings.

Referencing the semi-naked black figure understood as a dervish, Bacci has suggested that ‘this image may witness that Muslim holy men were thought to be at home within Christian monasteries’.¹²⁵ This observation is advantageous for my argument but, in the light of alternative identifications of the figure, a more guarded proposal is appropriate and may ultimately be more valuable. The miniature visualises a Christian monastery as a productive place, permeable by those beyond its nominal community. With its door conspicuously open and its wall paintings exposed to the viewer’s gaze, it articulates both physical and visual accessibility to a diverse audience and invites visual engagement. It amounts to a visualisation of Krstić’s ‘sites of intense inter-religious negotiation’, and helps to show how visual experience could be involved in that negotiation.

The possible patronal context is much debated. James White has located the miniature at a moment of particular receptivity to unorthodox conceptions of religious authority in the turbulence after the death of Timur in 1405. He proposes the investiture of Pīr Budaq as sultan by his father Qara Yūsuf in 1407-1408, after the latter’s seizure of Tabriz from Timurid control, as the possible occasion of its production.¹²⁶ The miniature is not a product of Ottoman culture, so we cannot use it directly as a proxy for a local Islamic view of a Christian monastery, but this reconstruction of its possible origins helps to give a sense of the circumstances in which Christian monasteries could become productive places in an Islamic polity. It is a product of the long-standing familiarity between what are usually understood as discrete faith communities, probably in a neighbouring Islamic state. In visualising a

Christian foundation, it engages with diverse beliefs and practices in ways which resonate with the contemporary religious culture of the early Ottoman Balkans.

I do not wish to propose any particular aptitude in reading Christian iconography on the part of Muslim pilgrims to Christian sites at any period, but I do want to suggest that the long history of the frequentation of Christian sites by Muslims means that the rich articulation of the spaces was both an expected and impactful part of the experience of them. Just as Gentile da Fabriano's visualisation implies, with its pilgrims circulating in an ordered architectural space with rich pictorial articulation (see *plate 14*), at a site like Dečani (see *plate 2*) the sacred is mediated by art and architecture and this necessarily applies as much to Muslim as to Christian pilgrims. West's Albanian pilgrims are described as forming an 'over-awed group' in the church. That awe was not prompted by an unmediated experience of Stefan Dečanski's sanctity.

Frames of Reference

The veneration of the prestigious 'Serbian Orthodox' foundations of Kosovo by Albanian and Roma Muslims made evident by West's and Duijzings' accounts, shows that even though these institutions were plausibly originally directed at a Christian audience in a Serbian polity they developed a richer and more complex following. That veneration may have a long history, but, even if it is a more recent development, it is still significant: these sites demonstrably came to act as ritual and visual foci for broad swathes of the population in the region. The polarisation implicit in the violence against architecture described above is not the result of immemorial hostility but is itself an innovation. Art history has a duty to explore this discontinuity.

Above, I explored some of the features which have made Kosovo so important to constructions of Serbian identity, including the great medieval churches. Having outlined the

evidence for the readiness of Albanians to engage with these monuments in constructive ways, rather than the destructive ways brought to the fore by recent conflict, it is appropriate to consider the elements of Albanian identity. The current apparent polarisation of interests might lead us to expect that if Serbian identity in part revolves around the medieval Christian churches, Albanian identity might naturally exploit the Muslim Ottoman monuments, but the matter is much more complex.

An Albanian national movement was relatively slow to develop. In contrast to the Serbian case, religion played an ambivalent role. The majority of Albanians across the Balkans are now Muslim, the proportion being particularly high in Kosovo, but there are significant numbers of Christians, both Catholic and Orthodox. The Jewish population of the Balkans stands in an ambiguous relationship to notions of national identity with continuing communities of Serbian and Albanian speakers.¹²⁷ The Albanians seem to have been Islamised substantially in the seventeenth century with the intensification of conflict between the Ottomans and Habsburgs, and with the Catholic church, identified with the Habsburg enemy, in a weak position.¹²⁸ However, religion remained a potential source of division, and ultimately language emerged as the main instrument of cultural cohesion.¹²⁹ In the earlier part of the nineteenth century Albanians seem to have largely identified with the interests of the Ottoman state. The emergence of independent Slav states in 1878 prompted moves towards concerted Albanian action in the form of the League of Prizren which worked initially for Albanian autonomy within a preserved Ottoman Empire.¹³⁰ The outbreak of the Balkan Wars forced the issue with the threat of partition between expanding Slav states, and independence became an objective.¹³¹ Albanian identity thus came to be defined against Ottoman rule, and a previous leader of resistance to the Ottomans in the fifteenth century, Skenderbeg, became a major point of identification.¹³² Skenderbeg exemplifies the ambivalence of religion in the Albanian case: he was nominally raised a Muslim, holding a fief in Ottoman territory in the

early part of his career, but rebelled with papal support and was hailed for his exploits in the defence of Christendom.¹³³ Albanians do not stand in the same relationship to the Ottoman monuments of Kosovo as the Serbs do to the medieval Christian monuments. Identification with the Christian monuments need come as no surprise.

The Christian churches and monasteries of Kosovo are key examples of what Eric Hobsbawm called ‘the holy icons’ of nationalism – ‘the symbols and rituals or common practices which alone give a palpable reality to otherwise imaginary community’.¹³⁴ They have long been exploited as key elements of Serbian identity, and have been mobilised more recently in support of a narrowly-defined and exclusive version of it. But the irony is that these foundations until recently had a focal significance for a much more diverse community in the region. They could have served as a productive focus for a different and more inclusive ethnic or national identity. But the rhetoric of the 1980s and the violence of the 1990s has imposed on them the reductive meaning exploited by wilfully divisive ideologues.

Art history deals in the significance of visual material, but it is perhaps understandable that it has failed to engage in detail with the issues discussed here. I have cited accounts from anthropology and what might be broadly termed travel literature which focus on human behaviour. Above, I stressed the focus of art history on the time of creation, but the discipline’s most fundamental starting point is the present art object. It has become increasingly common to study the so-called afterlives of artworks, but this usually accommodates the discipline’s focus on the materiality of the object in studying, for example, the physical modification, manipulation and movement of artefacts, as in the history of collecting, or their impact on further production through their rediscovery or reassessment. This approach can certainly be applied to the study of the relationship between the culture of the Ottoman Empire and the cultures of the lands that it occupied. There is, for example, a growing body of study on the reworking of prominent Christian churches as mosques.¹³⁵ The

Bogoridica Ljeviška in Prizren can be studied in this way, though the scholarship so far is limited.¹³⁶ However, Dečani and Gračanica were never converted into mosques and frequentation by Muslims seems not to have led to substantial material interventions. Unlike some well-known sites in Palestine, for example, separate zones did not develop to cater for different faiths or sects in a history of rebuilding.¹³⁷ The sites were developed during the period of Ottoman rule – there are notable sixteenth-century additions and modifications at Gračanica and the Patriarchate at Peć – but there are no specific features intended to appeal to Muslim pilgrims. There were apparently proposals to build a small mosque for the Muslim pilgrims to Gračanica, but these were resisted by the local authorities.¹³⁸ Had that gone ahead the use of these sites by different religious groups might have been more readily acknowledged by art history.

One important way that pilgrims can modify a shrine materially is through the accumulation of votive offerings.¹³⁹ Votive giving is a feature of devotion in Islam as well as Orthodox Christianity, and Duijzings' account of the pilgrimage at Gračanica mentions 'small gifts in money or in kind', while older accounts refer to gifts of clothing and cloth.¹⁴⁰ Neither Gračanica nor Dečani is now characterised by an accumulation of votive offerings and I am not aware of any study of votive practice at either site. Duijzings' account also implies the existence in principle of objects taken away from Gračanica by Muslim pilgrims: it may well be that fragments of the ribbons used to encircle the church are still jealously preserved in some families.¹⁴¹ There is ample scope here for further work. However, with the current state of research, there is no evident visual material for the art historian to engage with which draws attention to these practices. What one sees is Serbian Orthodox churches which affirm their own continuity with their point of origin.

Furthermore, the study of pre- and early modern art favours an approach, exemplified by Michael Baxandall's 'period eye', based around a nuanced exploration of contextual

material – often through textual traces – from the culture which produced the work.¹⁴²

Revolving again around production, the approach arguably works best in exploring a set of values and skills shared between maker, patron (or client, to use Baxandall's terminology) and viewer. Analogous approaches have been developed to argue for distinctive ways of seeing in Islamic societies.¹⁴³ However, in this pilgrimage activity in Kosovo, we are dealing with monuments and viewers from communities with shared experiences but divergent cultural formations and religious ideologies. Pilgrimage is a challenging phenomenon to study even within a given tradition.¹⁴⁴ It is, as I have argued, constituted primarily by human action, and need not become articulated in textual records.¹⁴⁵ When the activity strays beyond the nominal bounds of a given tradition, it becomes still harder to trace: there was no rubric for the Muslim pilgrims to Dečani or Gračanica. This is material that is all too easy to overlook.

The final challenge is that this behaviour has itself ceased. In a postscript to the preface of his book on Kosovo, completed in 1999, Duijzings wrote: 'It is sad that this book now bears testimony to a world that may have ceased to exist.'¹⁴⁶ More than twenty years on, we can be sure that it has. A set of cultural meanings manifest primarily in human activity has ceased to be observable and threatens to slip into obscurity. This rich network of behaviour cannot be recreated, but it is vital to highlight that it happened and to acknowledge that it was meaningful to those who participated in it.

Art history has so far not been prominent in addressing in detail the conflicted position of the Serbian Orthodox churches of Kosovo, but it has a contribution to make. I do not mean to suggest that art history can help 'solve' the manifest social and political problems in the area, but, in reflecting on what the discipline does, and the kinds of issues that it involves itself in, instead to argue that it has the capacity to help to shift the discourse. Art history deals in the nuances of cultural history and the complexity and malleability of visual meaning

which are crucial to any approach to the conflicts discussed here. The art and architecture of Kosovo have been manipulated to serve sectarian interests, but they have also manifestly been exploited by people to generate meaning as an element of lived experience on a personal and local level. This is legitimately a fit subject for the deeply contextualised, object-focused study which is characteristic of the discipline, and art history can help draw attention to these issues and explore them. But to do so it needs to be aware of them. The discipline too readily explores topics within its existing reach, and it would strengthen its position if it were to adopt a broader frame of reference. There is, of course, a very prominent current critique encouraging a broadening of scope which points to the notably Eurocentric nature of much traditional art history, and urges the consideration of a wider range of production from around the world. But the case of Kosovo highlights the risk of a concentration on cultural range understood in a primarily geographic sense, namely the continued neglect of areas already overlooked as 'marginal'. There is another vital dimension of range: rather than concentrating on art that needs explaining, the discipline might more systematically explore the art of places that need explaining. Kosovo is one of those.

Kosovo is by no means unique as a place in which works of art are enmeshed in contests over ethnic or religious identity and national belonging, but I make no attempt here to draw more general lessons beyond the desirability of a willingness to extend the range of questions. The discipline's long established contextual sensitivity urges caution. Art history has been notable in recent years for questioning its methods and its objectives, and this critical sense of its own underpinnings may be what it has most to contribute. The medieval churches and early Ottoman monuments of Kosovo are but one aspect of an elusive pre-modern past, but the measured study of that material heritage could contribute to a constructive reconsideration of a wider range of issues, including the self-image of the people who made them and have encountered them over the centuries. The struggle to understand

richly articulated visual material, which so readily draws attention to itself and invites engagement and sometimes passionate attachment, can help to foster humility in the face of a complex past.

Notes

<Acknowledgements>. The research on which this essay is based was supported by a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship.

¹ The foundation charter dates from 1330. Milica Grković, ed., *The First Charter of the Dečani Monastery*, Belgrade, 2004.

² Branislav Todić and Milka Čanak Medić, *The Dečani Monastery*, Belgrade, 2013, 22.

³ For a comprehensive photographic survey of the paintings see <https://www.blagofund.org/Archives/Decani/> <Accessed 3 June 2024>. The site was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the 28th session of the UNESCO World Heritage Commission: WHC-04/28.COM/26, Decision 14B.47, 43-4.

<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2004/whc04-28com-26e.pdf> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.

⁴ The extended site, expanded to include three other foundations, was placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger at the Commission's 30th session: WHC-06/30.COM/19, Decision 30 COM 8B.54, 157-8.

<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2006/whc06-30com-19e.pdf> <Accessed 3 June 2024>. Confirmed at the 45th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2023. WHC/23/45.COM/19, Decision 45 COM 8C.2, 487.

<https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2023/whc23-45com-19-en.pdf> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.

⁵ Decision 30 COM 8B.54, 157. See note 4 above.

⁶ Richard Hamann-MacLean and Horst Hallensleben, *Die Monumentalmalerei in Serbien und Makedonien: vom 11. bis zum frühen 14. Jahrhundert*, 3 vols, Giessen, 1963.

⁷ Edward Newman and Gëzim Visoka, 'The Foreign Policy of State Recognition: Kosovo's Diplomatic Strategy to Join International Society', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, 14: 3, 2018, 367–387.

⁸ Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*, London, 2000, 9, n. 11.

⁹ Slobodan Ćurčić, 'Destruction of Serbian Cultural Patrimony in Kosovo: A World-Wide Precedent?', *Bulletin of British Byzantine Studies*, 26, 2000, 101.

¹⁰ Andrew Herscher, *Violence Taking Place: the Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict*, Stanford, 2010, 83.

- ¹¹ Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 15–19.
- ¹² Alain Ducellier, ‘Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria’, in David Abulafia, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 5, Cambridge, 1999, 794–5; John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, Ann Arbor, 1987, 217–24.
- ¹³ Martin Dimnik, ‘Kievan Rus’, the Bulgars and the southern Slavs, c. 1020 – c. 1200’, in David Luscombe and Jonathan Riley-Smith, eds., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 4, Cambridge, 2004, 269–70; Sima M. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, Oxford, 2004, xxiii, 32; Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 7; Dejan Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, Cambridge, 2023, 88.
- ¹⁴ Jonathan Shepard, ‘Slavs and Bulgars’, in Rosamond McKitterick, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 2, Cambridge, 1995, 239–48; Sima M. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, Oxford, 2004, 15–20; Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, 74–78.
- ¹⁵ Ducellier, ‘Albania, Serbia and Bulgaria’, 784. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 38 and 42–3.
- ¹⁶ Eric Fernie, *Romanesque Architecture: The First Style of the European Age*, New Haven, 2014, 201–2; Bratislav Pantelić, *The Architecture of Dečani and the Role of Archbishop Danilo II*, Wiesbaden, 2002. The UNESCO World Heritage listing notes its ‘exceptional synthesis of Byzantine and Western medieval traditions.’ WHC-04/28.COM/26, Decision 14B.47, 43. See note 3 above.
- ¹⁷ Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, 102.
- ¹⁸ Donald M. Nicol, *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261-1453*, Cambridge, 1993, 185–208; Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 320–1.
- ¹⁹ Angeliki Laiou, ‘The Byzantine Empire in the Fourteenth Century’, in Michael Jones, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 6, Cambridge, 2000, 817.
- ²⁰ Draga Panić and Gordana Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, Belgrade, 1975; Slobodan Ćurčić, *Gračanica: King Milutin’s Church and its Place in Late Byzantine Architecture*, University Park, 1979.
- ²¹ Peć, Gračanica and the Bogorodica Ljeviška are guarded by the Kosovan police force. See note 4 above.
- ²² Slobodan Ćurčić, ‘Religious Settings of the Late Byzantine Sphere’, in Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, New Haven, 2004, 71.
- ²³ Metin Kunt, ‘The Rise of the Ottomans’, in Michael Jones, ed., *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, 6, Cambridge, 2000, 849–50; Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 377–8.
- ²⁴ Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 407.

- ²⁵ Stephen Reinert, 'From Niš to Kosovo Polje: Reflections on Murād I's Final Years', in Elizabeth Zachariadou, ed., *The Ottoman Emirate (1300-1389)*, Rethymnon, 1993, 169. For a review of early sources for the battle see Thomas Allan Emmert, *Serbian Golgotha: Kosovo, 1389*, New York, 1990. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 408–14 and 425–7.
- ²⁶ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 105–110; Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 568–77.
- ²⁷ Alexander Lopašić, 'Islamization of The Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 5: 2, 1994, 163–186. For Ottoman policy in the fifteenth century see Halil İnalçık, 'Od Stefana Dušana do Osmanskog Carstva. Hrišćanske spahije u Rumeliji u XV vijeku i njihovo porijeklo', *Prilozi za orijentalnu filologiju i istoriju jugoslovenskih naroda pod turskom vladavinom*, 3–4, 1953, 26. For the non-Muslim poll-tax see Halil İnalçık, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire. 1: 1300 - 1600*, Cambridge, 1994, 66–9.
- ²⁸ Grigor Boykov, 'The Borders of the Cities: Revisiting Early Ottoman Urban Morphology in Southeastern Europe', in Maria Baramova, Grigor Boykov, and Ivan Parvev, eds., *Bordering Early Modern Europe*, Wiesbaden, 2015, 249.
- ²⁹ Raif Virmića, *Kosova 'da Fatih Devri Eserleri - Kosova Efsaneleri*, Prizren, 2009, 52; Aleksandra Davidov Temerinski, *Church of the Holy Virgin Ljeviška in Prizren*, Belgrade, 2017, 14; Panić and Babić, *Bogorodica Ljeviška*, 106.
- ³⁰ For a review of the literature on Ottoman cities see Boykov, 'The Borders of the Cities', 244–7.
- ³¹ Raif Virmića, *Kosova hamamları*, Ankara, 2002, 19–22.
- ³² Boykov, 'The Borders of the Cities', 249.
- ³³ Machiel Kiel, 'The Ottoman Hamam in the Balkans', *Art and Archaeology Research Papers*, 9, 1976, 87–97.
- ³⁴ Virmića, *Kosova 'da Fatih Devri Eserleri*, 64–5. Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 23–43.
- ³⁵ Carlo Bertelli, 'The Mosque of the Flags (Bayrakli Câmi)', in Carlo Bertelli, ed., *Middle Ages and Renaissance in Kosovo: Orthodox and Ottoman monuments on the Banks of the River Bistrica*, Milan, 2001, 140–146.
- ³⁶ Aptullah Kuran, *The Mosque in Early Ottoman Architecture*, Chicago, 1968, 30–46.
- ³⁷ For example Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, and Richard Ettinghausen, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250-1800*, New Haven, 1994, vii. Godfrey Goodwin, *A History of Ottoman Architecture*, London, 1971. Kuran, *The Mosque*, vii. For an historiographic overview, see Sibel Bozdoğan and Gülru Necipoğlu, 'Preface:

Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the “Lands of Rum”, *Muqarnas*, 24, 2007, 1–6.

³⁸ A brief overview of Kosovan monuments is offered in Machiel Kiel, ‘Un héritage non désiré: le patrimoine architectural islamique ottoman dans l’Europe du Sud-Est, 1370–1912’, *Études balkaniques*, 12, 2005.

³⁹ For example Maximilian Hartmuth, ed., *Centres and Peripheries in Ottoman Architecture: Rediscovering a Balkan Heritage*, Stockholm/Sarajevo, 2010.

⁴⁰ Ekrem Hakkı Ayverdi, Aydın Yüksel, and Gürbüz Ertürk, *Avrupa’da Osmanlı mimârî eserleri*, 3, Book 3, Istanbul, 1981; Raif Vırmiça, *Kosova’da Osmanlı mimari eserleri*, Ankara, 1999.

⁴¹ Bertelli, ‘The Mosque of the Flags (Bayrakli Câmi)’, 140.

⁴² Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 83–7.

⁴³ Andrew Herscher and András Riedlmayer ‘Architectural Heritage in Kosovo: A Post-War Report’, September 2000. <http://cool.conservation-us.org/byform/mailling-lists/cdl/2000/1124.html> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.

⁴⁴ Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 127–31.

⁴⁵ Cited in Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 131.

⁴⁶ Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 136–8.

⁴⁷ See the report of the UN Security Council of 30 April 2004: <https://unmik.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/s-2004-348.pdf> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.

⁴⁸ Alexei Lidov, ‘Preface’, in Alexei Lidov, ed., *Kosovo. Orthodox Heritage and Contemporary Catastrophe*, Moscow, 2007, 7.

⁴⁹ <https://unmik.unmissions.org/sg-reports> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Dimitrije Bogdanović, ‘La question du Kosovo hier et aujourd’hui’, *Revue des études slaves*, 56: 3, 1984, 388.

⁵¹ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 115–20, 143–7 and 154.

⁵² Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, 178–191; Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History*, London, 1998, 139–62; Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics*, Ithaca, 1991, 46. Fred Anscombe has shown that the Ottoman sources reveal no evidence of large scale demographic shifts in Kosovo in the period. Frederick F. Anscombe, ‘The Ottoman Empire in Recent International Politics-II: The Case of Kosovo’, *The International History Review*, 28: 4, 2006, 767–93.

⁵³ Selami Pulaha, ‘The Scientific Truth about the Autochtony of the Albanians in Kosova’, *New Albania*, 4, 1982, 20; cited in Banac, *The National Question*, 294, n. 9.

- ⁵⁴ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 9–10.
- ⁵⁵ Anscombe, 'The Ottoman Empire in Recent International Politics-II', 783.
- ⁵⁶ Herscher, *Violence Taking Place*, 81–2, 91.
- ⁵⁷ Charles Jelavich and Barbara Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States, 1804-1920*, Seattle, 1977, 26–37, 53–67 and 141–57. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 190–6 and 204–226.
- ⁵⁸ E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 1992, 73–7.
- ⁵⁹ Notably in the Načertanije of Ilija Garašanin, written in 1844 but first published in 1906. English translation in Paul N. Hehn, 'The Origins of Modern Pan-Serbism: The 1844 Nacertanije of Ilija Garasanin', *East European Quarterly*, 9: 2, Summer 1975, 153–171. Reference to Dušan, 159.
- ⁶⁰ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 7–8. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 244. Robert Elsie and Bejtullah D. Destani, eds., *Kosovo, A Documentary History: From the Balkan Wars to World War II*, London, 2019.
- ⁶¹ The extreme west of the area around Peć was initially taken by Montenegro. Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 216–21. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 243–5.
- ⁶² Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 222–34.
- ⁶³ Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 300–5.
- ⁶⁴ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 274.
- ⁶⁵ Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 50–3; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 54.
- ⁶⁶ Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, 118–125; Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 75–82; Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 345–66 and 373–89.
- ⁶⁷ Widely quoted eg. Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 185–6; Dejan Djokić, 'Whose Myth? Which Nation? The Serbian Kosovo Myth Revisited', in Janos M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut, Pierre Monnet, and Bernd Schneidmueller, eds., *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters*, Munich, 2009, 215. For Karadžić's collecting, see Aleksandar Pavlović and Srđan Atanasovski, 'From Myth to Territory: Vuk Karadžić, Kosovo Epics and the Role of Nineteenth-Century Intellectuals in Establishing National Narratives', *The Hungarian Historical Review*, 5: 2, 2016, 357–376.
- ⁶⁸ Cited in Thomas Allan Emmert, 'The Battle of Kosovo: Early Reports of Victory and Defeat', in Wayne S. Vucinich and Thomas Allan Emmert, eds., *Kosovo: Legacy of a Medieval Battle*, Minneapolis, 1991, 24.
- ⁶⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity*, Reno, 1991, 23–8 and 34–5; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 49–51 and 67–71; Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: a Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations*, New York, 2000, 142.

⁷⁰ Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 309. Crucially the archbishops could be elected by a local synod. Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 40–6.

⁷¹ Ćirković, *The Serbs*, 134–7.

⁷² Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 4; Banac, *The National Question*, 65–8; Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 27–32; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 67–71; Smith, *National Identity*, 34–5. Benjamin Braude, 'Foundation Myths of the Millet System', in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, New York, 1982, 69–88. For the stricter sense of the *millet*, see İnalcık, *An Economic and Social History*, 190–1.

⁷³ For sacred languages see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London, 2006, 13–16.

⁷⁴ István Vásáry, *Cumans and Tatars: Oriental Military in the Pre-Ottoman Balkans, 1185–1365*, Cambridge, 2005, 100–1; Jovanka Kalic, 'The first coronation churches of medieval Serbia', *Balkanica*, 48, 2017, 7–18.

⁷⁵ Gojko Subotić, *The Sacred Land: Art of Kosovo*, New York, 1999, 28.

⁷⁶ Subotić, *The Sacred Land*, 198–203.

⁷⁷ Banac, *The National Question*, 67–8; Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 76.

⁷⁸ Boris Todorov, 'Holy Rulers and the Integration of the Medieval Serbian Space', *CAS Sofia Working Paper Series*, 5, 2013, 1–21.

⁷⁹ Carlo Bertelli, ed., *Middle Ages and Renaissance in Kosovo: Orthodox and Ottoman monuments on the Banks of the River Bistrica*, Milan, 2001, 40; Dragan Vojvodić, 'From the Horizontal to the Vertical Genealogical Image of the Nemanjić Dynasty', *Zbornik radova Vizantološkog instituta*, 44: 1, 2007, 311–12.

⁸⁰ Subotić, *The Sacred Land*, 54–62. Axinia Džurova and Vasia Velinova, 'Le culte de Saint Stefan Milutin (St. Kral) aux XVe-XVIe siècles et réactualisation en Bulgarie de l'Ouest à l'époque de la Renaissance nationale', in Eleonora Kountoura-Galake, ed., *Heroes of the Orthodox Church: The New Saints, 8th-16th Centuries*, Athens, 2004, 352.

⁸¹ Todić and Čanak Medić, *The Dečani Monastery*, 32. The most extensive early vita is by Grigori Camblak. Published in Angel Davidov, ed., *Žitie na Stefan Dečanski ot Grigorij Camblak*, Sofia, 1983. Partial Italian translation in Gerardo Cioffari, *Gli zar di Serbia, la Puglia e S. Nicola. Una storia di santità e di violenza*, Bari, 1989, 119–168.

⁸² Subotić, *The Sacred Land*, 193; Danica Popović, 'Shrine of King Stefan Uroš III Dečanski', in Helen C. Evans, ed., *Byzantium: Faith and Power (1261-1557)*, New Haven, 2004, 114–5.

- ⁸³ The Monks of Dečani, ed., *Monastery Visoki Dečani: History, Treasury, Frescoes, Architecture, Monastic Life*, Dečani, 2014, 18.
- ⁸⁴ Anscombe, 'The Ottoman Empire in Recent International Politics-II', 761–7.
- ⁸⁵ Subotić, *The Sacred Land*.
- ⁸⁶ 'An Appeal for the Protection of the Serbian Population and their Sacred Monuments in Kosovo', trans. Jerodjakon Stevan, *South Slav Journal*, 5:3, 1982, 50.
- ⁸⁷ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Harmondsworth, 1995, 60–73.
- ⁸⁸ Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, New Haven, 2009, 22.
- ⁸⁹ R. J. W. Evans and Guy P. Marchal, eds., *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States: History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, Basingstoke, 2011; János M. Bak, Jörg Jarnut, Pierre Monnet, and Bernd Schneidmüller, eds., *Gebrauch und Missbrauch des Mittelalters, 19.-21. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 2009.
- ⁹⁰ As discussed by Holly in Michael Ann Holly, *The Melancholy Art*, Princeton, 2013.
- ⁹¹ 'Serbian Government for Kosovo and Metohija (2004)', <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/kosovo-metohija/en/8831> <Accessed 3 June 2024>.
- ⁹² As discussed, for example, in Keith P. F. Moxey, *Visual Time: The Image in History*, Durham, NC, 2013, 3.
- ⁹³ Holly, *The Melancholy Art*, xix–xx.
- ⁹⁴ Martin Dunford and Jack Holland, *Yugoslavia: The Rough Guide*, London, 1985, 191; Gail Warrander and Verena Knaus, *Kosovo: The Bradt Travel Guide*, Chalfont St Peter, 2010, 176.
- ⁹⁵ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 66–71.
- ⁹⁶ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 67–9. Duijzings' account is based on visits in 1986, 1990 and 1991.
- ⁹⁷ Victor W. Turner and Edith L. B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives*, Oxford, 1978, 13, 250–2.
- ⁹⁸ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 69–70.
- ⁹⁹ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 70–71.
- ¹⁰⁰ Tatomir Vukanović, 'Gypsy Pilgrimages to the Monastery of Gračanica in Serbia', *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, 45, 1966, 18. For the pilgrims' own testimony see Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 71.
- ¹⁰¹ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 71.
- ¹⁰² Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 66 n. 1.

¹⁰³ Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*, London, 1955. I am grateful to Wendy Bracewell for pointing me to West's book.

¹⁰⁴ West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, 986–7.

¹⁰⁵ West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, 988.

¹⁰⁶ For evidence from late medieval Italy see, for example, Joanna Cannon, 'Dominican Shrines and Urban Pilgrimage in Later Medieval Italy', in Paul Davies, Deborah Howard, and Wendy Pullan, eds., *Architecture and Pilgrimage, 1000-1500: Southern Europe and Beyond*, Farnham, Surrey, 2013, 154–7.

¹⁰⁷ Miklós Boskovits, David Alan Brown, and Robert Echols, *Italian Paintings of the Fifteenth Century. The Systematic Catalogue of the National Gallery of Art*, Washington, 2003, 293–299.

¹⁰⁸ Milette Gaifman and Verity Platt, 'Introduction: From Grecian Urn to Embodied Object', *Art History*, 41: 3, 2018, 404. For the sarcophagus as the 'ultimate "embodied object"' see Jaś Elsner, 'The Embodied Object: Recensions of the Dead on Roman Sarcophagi', *Art History*, 41: 3, 2018, 547.

¹⁰⁹ Michele Bacci, "'Mixed" Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', in Leonid Beliaev, ed., *Archaeologia Abrahamica: Studies in Archaeology and Artistic Tradition of Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Moscow, 2009, 433–5.

¹¹⁰ Frederick William Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, ed. Margaret Hasluck, 2 vols., Oxford, 1929.

¹¹¹ Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, Vol. 1, pp. 63-74.

¹¹² Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, Vol. 1, pp. 65-6.

¹¹³ Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam*, Vol. 1, p. 66.

¹¹⁴ '... die Türcken alle Christen under ihnen lassen bleiben bei ihrem Gottesdienst wehren ihnen weder Fasten noch Betten weder der Heiligen Fest noch Bildtnus sonder sie selb betten unnd fasten sie selbs ehren auch unsere Heiligen'. Peter Villinger, *Bilgerfahrt und Beschreibung der Hierusolomitischen Reiß in das heylig Land*, Constance, 1603, 176. Translated in Bacci, "'Mixed" Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', 435.

¹¹⁵ Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, London, 1994, 191–8; H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World*, London, 1993, 82–137.

¹¹⁶ Tijana Krstić, 'The Ambiguous Politics of "Ambiguous Sanctuaries": F. Hasluck and Historiography on Syncretism and Conversion to Islam in 15th - and 16th-Century Ottoman Rumeli', in David Shankland, ed., *Archaeology, Anthropology and Heritage in the Balkans and Anatolia: the Life and Times of F.W. Hasluck, 1878-1920*, 3, Istanbul, 2013, 250–259.

- ¹¹⁷ Krstić, 'Ambiguous Politics', 252.
- ¹¹⁸ David Roxburgh, cat. no. 219 in David J. Roxburgh, ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600-1600*, London, 2005, 432; Bacci, "'Mixed" Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', 436.
- ¹¹⁹ Nicoletta Fazio, 'Across Central Asia: Cultural Crossroads, Religious Interactions? The Monastery, H.2153 fol. 131v, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul', in Antje Flüchter and Jivanta Schötlili, eds., *The Dynamics of Transculturality: Concepts and Institutions in Motion*, Cham, 2015, 223–5.
- ¹²⁰ James White, 'A Sign of the End Time: "The Monastery"', Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi H.2153 f.131b', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 27: 1, 2017, 7. Alternative transcriptions in: Fazio, 'Across Central Asia', 219, n. 1; Richard Ettinghausen, 'Some Paintings in Four Istanbul Albums', *Ars Orientalis*, 1, 1954, 97, n. 24.
- ¹²¹ Fazio, 'Across Central Asia', 228–32; White, 'A Sign of the End Time', 3–4.
- ¹²² Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 432; Bacci, "'Mixed" Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', 436.
- ¹²³ Fazio, 'Across Central Asia', 233–4; White, 'A Sign of the End Time', 2. For representations of dervishes for example on f.128r in the same album, dated to the late fourteenth century, see Catalogue no. 111 in Roxburgh, ed., *Turks*, 164, 406.
- ¹²⁴ Ettinghausen, 'Some Paintings in Four Istanbul Albums', 98 n. 24; Fazio, 'Across Central Asia', 226–7.
- ¹²⁵ Bacci, "'Mixed" Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', 436.
- ¹²⁶ White, 'A Sign of the End Time', 17–21.
- ¹²⁷ Djokić, *A Concise History of Serbia*, 162–4, 329–30; Malcolm, *Kosovo*, 211–4.
- ¹²⁸ Lopašić, 'Islamization of The Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia', 178–9; Stavro Skendi, 'Religion in Albania during the Ottoman Rule', *Südost Forschungen*, 15, 1956, 315–9.
- ¹²⁹ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 158–60; Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 222–3.
- ¹³⁰ Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 223–4.
- ¹³¹ Jelavich and Jelavich, *The Balkan National States*, 229.
- ¹³² Skendi, 'Religion in Albania during the Ottoman Rule', 313–14; Stavro Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912*, Princeton, 1967, 123. Note especially Naim Frashëri's *Historia e Skenderbeut* of 1898. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, 166–68.
- ¹³³ Harry Hodgkinson, *Scanderbeg*, London, 1999, 152; Fan Stylian Noli, 'George Castrioti Scanderbeg (1405-1468)', 1945, 200. For example a letter of Calixtus III of 1457 published in Augustin Theiner, ed., *Vetera monumenta historica Hungariam sacram illustrantia*, 2, Rome, 1860, 303–4.

¹³⁴ Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism*, 71.

¹³⁵ Gülru Necipoğlu, 'The Life of An Imperial Monument: Hagia Sophia After Byzantium', in Robert Mark and Ahmet Çakmak, eds., *Hagia Sophia from the Age of Justinian to the Present*, Cambridge, 1992, 195–225; Süleyman Kırımtayf, *Converted Byzantine Churches in Istanbul: Their Transformation into Mosques and Masjids*, Istanbul, 2001.

¹³⁶ Vırmiça, *Kosova 'da Fatih Devri Eserleri*, 52–9.

¹³⁷ Bacci, '“Mixed” Shrines in the Late Byzantine Period', 437–8.

¹³⁸ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 71.

¹³⁹ Robert Maniura, *Pilgrimage to Images in the Fifteenth Century: the Origins of the Cult of Our Lady of Częstochowa*, Woodbridge, 2004, 106–112.

¹⁴⁰ Sheila Blair, 'Votive Giving in Islamic Societies', in Ittai Weinryb, ed., *Agents of Faith: Votive Objects in Time and Place*, New York, 2018, 224–39; Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 67; Vukanović, 'Gypsy Pilgrimages', 19.

¹⁴¹ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, 69.

¹⁴² Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*, Oxford, 1988, 29–108; Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*, New Haven, 1980, 143–163.

¹⁴³ 'Gazing Otherwise: Modalities of Seeing in and Beyond the Lands of Islam', special issue of *Muqarnas*, 32, 2015; Hans Belting, *Florence and Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science*, Cambridge, MA, 2011; David J. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image: the Writing of Art History in Sixteenth-Century Iran*, Leiden, 2001.

¹⁴⁴ See, for example, the introduction to John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, eds., *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*, London, 1991, 1–29.

¹⁴⁵ Maniura, *Pilgrimage to Images*, 88.

¹⁴⁶ Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity*, xii.