

ROMANESQUE BELL TOWERS AND OTTOMAN CLOCK TOWERS: THE MEETING BETWEEN TWO CULTURES?

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Abstract

In the territory of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Christian population lived until the 15th century. When in the 15th century the Ottomans conquered this territory, they brought the Islamic religion and influences to the areas of everyday life, culture, art, and architecture. However, the connections between the Christian and the new Islamic world continued to intertwine in this region, which still today is characterized by a blend of multiple cultures. In this article, the authors explore the influence of Christian Romanesque architecture on the construction of Islamic structures after the conquest of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory.

Throughout the entire Middle Ages and later, the neighbouring Croatian region of Dalmatia was a centre of cultural life in the Adriatic and received various influences from Western European countries. Dalmatia has been directly connected to the Bosnian-Herzegovinian region for centuries. It is known from sources that Dalmatian citizens founded colonies in the Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina region and participated in various aspects of life, including the construction of new Islamic structures.

The Ottomans began building clock towers for the first time in the Balkans, and these structures would only spread to other Ottoman lands and present-day Turkey two centuries later. Based on the significant similarities between Christian Romanesque bell towers and Islamic clock towers, both in floor plans, decoration, and utility, the authors try to answer the question: Is it possible that builders from Dalmatia, carrying influences from the past Romanesque style, influenced the construction of the Ottoman clock towers?

Keywords: Romanesque architecture, bell towers, Ottoman architecture, Ottoman clock towers.

Resumen

En el territorio de la actual Bosnia y Herzegovina residió población cristiana hasta el siglo XV. Entonces, los otomanos conquistaron este territorio y trajeron la reli-

gión y las influencias islámicas a los ámbitos de la vida cotidiana, la cultura, el arte y la arquitectura. Sin embargo, las conexiones entre el mundo cristiano y el nuevo mundo islámico siguieron entrelazándose en esta región, que aún hoy se caracteriza por la mezcla de múltiples culturas. En este artículo, los autores exploran la influencia de la arquitectura románica cristiana en la construcción de estructuras islámicas tras la conquista del territorio bosnio-herzegovino.

Durante toda la Edad Media y posteriormente, la vecina región croata de Dalmacia fue un centro de vida cultural en el Adriático y recibió diversas influencias de los países de Europa occidental. Dalmacia ha estado directamente conectada con la región bosnio-herzegovina durante siglos. Se sabe por fuentes que ciudadanos dálmatas fundaron colonias en la región otomana de Bosnia-Herzegovina y participaron en diversos aspectos de la vida, incluida la construcción de nuevas estructuras islámicas.

Los otomanos comenzaron a construir torres de reloj por primera vez en los Balcanes, y estas estructuras no se extenderían a otras tierras otomanas y a la actual Turquía hasta dos siglos más tarde. Basándose en las significativas similitudes entre los campanarios románicos cristianos y las torres de reloj islámicas, tanto en planta como en decoración y utilidad, los autores intentan responder a la pregunta: ¿Es posible que los constructores de Dalmacia, portadores de influencias del pasado estilo románico, influyeran en la construcción de las torres de reloj otomanas?

Palabras clave: Arquitectura románica, campanarios, arquitectura otomana, torres de reloj otomanas.

Introduction

The historical territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina was conquered by the Ottomans at the end of the 15th century. Observing the European capitals of this time, we notice the replacement of Gothic art with the Renaissance. However, the region of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not follow the rapid developments in artistic expression; consequently, architectural structures emerged that only subtly hinted at the existence of a specific artistic style. Architectural creations were shaped according to the local Bosnian-Herzegovinian tradition or a somewhat delayed adaptation of a particular stylistic period. While styles were discernible, they were not fully revived in the same sense as in the Western European sphere.

Throughout the Middle Ages, Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself at the crossroads of diverse cultures, influenced by Byzantine, Mediterranean, and Western European traditions. However, the arrival of the Ottomans in the 15th century introduced new Oriental influences. Despite encountering a predominantly Christian population in the Balkans, the Ottomans respected established ways of life (Matić 2017: 61), ensuring religious freedoms for non-Muslims through guarantee letters known as *ahdnamas*. In this context where multiple cultures cohabited, the assimilation of Ottoman influences along with local traditions contributed to the emergence of a unique stylistic identity.

In this paper we will delve into the comparison between Romanesque bell towers and Ottoman clock towers, exploring the evolution of this architectural novelty of the Balkans at the intersection of diverse cultural currents.

Dalmatian influence? Connections between Dalmatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian territories throughout centuries

Since the first century, when the urbanization of the provinces of Dalmatia and Pannonia began, the Romans started building roads, especially between the main centres of the province, such as Salona, and other important inland centres. These roads, strategically laid out in terrains like river valleys and mountain passes, aimed to expedite travel between different important points. Throughout the Middle Ages, Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoyed great connectivity with the Dalmatian region, with trade routes predominantly leading to Split and Dubrovnik (Ivić 2019: 110-112). The renowned *Via Ragusina* emerged as a bustling caravan route, facilitated by trade agreements between Dalmatian cities and their hinterland counterparts (Fisković 1973: 160).

Yet, the most intriguing form of communication for this study lies in the collaboration between Dalmatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian craftsmen, architects, sculptors, and painters. Dalmatian builders travelled to present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina during the Middle Ages, contributing to the construction of churches, bridges, fortresses, and more. While archival records from the early Middle Ages are scant, the architectural similarities during this period are visible in floor plans and sculpture and they suggest a tangible connection.¹ The Dalmatian influence can also be traced in later periods, for example in the bell tower of the Church of St. Luke in Jajce, displaying Romanesque elements, while Gothic doors and windows hint at construction in the late 15th or early 16th century, revealing a delayed adoption of styles from Dalmatia. Interestingly, C. Fisković also notes possible Dalmatian influences in the *stećci*, nowadays famous Bosnian-Herzegovinian tombstones erected from the 13th to the 15th century. Motifs such as rosettes, adorned crosses, winding vines, blind arcades, twisted ropes, etc., raise the question of whether these monuments also originated in contact with Dalmatian craftsmen (Fisković 1973: 147-162). Particularly interesting is the fact that the largest number of *stećci* is found in southern Herzegovina, which had, as we previously mentioned, the strongest connection to the Dubrovnik area and Dalmatia, through caravan routes, such as the famous *Via Ragusina*.

The cultural ties between Dalmatian architecture and Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a significant surge from the 14th to the 16th century.

1. Noteworthy examples include Bosnian-Herzegovinian churches in Zavala, Livno, Vrutci, and Glamočko Polje, featuring interlace ornaments akin to Dalmatian churches from the 10th to the 12th centuries. Furthermore, the hexaconch ground plan observed in the pre-Romanesque church in Rogačići near Blažuj mirrors Dalmatian counterparts.

Young individuals from Bosnia and Herzegovina sought education under Dalmatian masters in cities like Dubrovnik, Split, Trogir, Šibenik, and Zadar. Particularly during the 15th and 16th centuries, when Dubrovnik fortified itself against Turkish attacks, the knowledge of stonemasonry became not just desirable but essential. Even after the Turkish conquest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dalmatian masters continued their work in the region, transitioning from building Christian structures to contributing to the construction of Islamic landmarks such as caravanserais, bridges, mosques, and fortresses (Fisković 1973: 147-162).

Despite their geographical proximity, Dalmatia and the territories of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 15th and 16th centuries inhabited distinct worlds. While Dalmatia, with cultural hubs like Šibenik, Split, Zadar, and Dubrovnik, leaned towards Western European artistic traditions, Bosnia and Herzegovina thrived under Ottoman rule, emerging as a centre of Oriental art and culture. Dalmatia boasted Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance monuments, while Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed the construction of Ottoman buildings in the Oriental style, but influenced by Western-European styles, using constructive and decorative elements such as Romanesque, Renaissance, and Gothic. Therefore, this blend of approaches led to the specific architecture, which could be described as a mix of Oriental and Mediterranean heritage.

Evidence of artistic exchange between Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina abounds, driven by two primary factors. Firstly, education and apprenticeship drew young men from Bosnia and Herzegovina to workshops in Dalmatia, such as that of Juraj Dalmatinac² in Šibenik (Fisković 1962: 41-42).³ Secondly, participation in construction projects also facilitated cultural exchange, with apprentices from Juraj's workshop contributing to projects in Bosnia (Anđelić 1982: 206).⁴

This paper will specifically delve into the second aspect of cultural exchange: artists from Dalmatian regions who arrived in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina to collaborate with Ottoman craftsmen in constructing new Islamic structures.

Dalmatia, owing to its strategic geographical location, has been a historical melting pot of diverse artistic and cultural influences. The dynamic exchange was not confined to local boundaries, as many Dalmatians traversed Europe for trade and education, returning home with a wealth of knowledge. Notably, individuals from Dubrovnik established colonies in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, where their presence significantly impacted various aspects of society, economy, architecture, and art (Alebić 2015: 239-240).

2. In non-Croatian scholarly papers known as Giorgio da Sebenico or Giorgio Orsini.

3. Students like Antun Drastić from Livno and Radovan Radoslavčić-Alegretus from Jajce benefited from this educational journey (Fisković 1962: 41-42).

4. A preserved document from 1462 reveals that the sculptor Ivan Hreljić, a student of Juraj, committed to work on the Church of St. Mary in Vranduk for three months (Anđelić 1982: 206).

Following the Ottoman Empire's conquest of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 15th century, there arose a need for the construction of new architectural structures, both religious and civil. Preserved contracts, archival documents, and the architectural heritage itself attest to the influx of coastal craftsmen during the 15th and 16th centuries. Engaging in these projects, they brought forth the Western European or "Mediterranean style of shaping," resulting in a captivating fusion of some 16th-century Islamic monuments. Here, elements of Romanesque, Gothic, and even Renaissance styles intertwine (Andrejević 1984: 68), reflecting a unique blend described by B. Zlatar (2003: 69) as Ottoman in form, coastal in execution, and over time, it acquired the character of a certain local feature.

Craftsmen from Dubrovnik and other Dalmatian regions, while participating in the construction of monuments during the Ottoman era, either embraced the Islamic style fully or integrated Western architectural marks and earlier Mediterranean styles, such as Romanesque (Fisković 1973: 164). Notable examples include their contributions to the Gazi Husrev Bey Mosque in Sarajevo, Aladža Mosque in Foča, Karađoz Bey Mosque in Mostar, and the famous Old Bridge in Mostar. In Mostar, moreover, their influence is evident in the Nesuh-aga Vučijaković Mosque, showcasing Dalmatian Renaissance elements like columns with leafy capitals and windows with pointed arches exuding Gothic and Renaissance influences (Andrejević 1984: 68). Interestingly, even the minarets in Vakuf, Nevesinje, Plana, the one next to the Predojević Mosque in Bileća [Fig. 1], or the destroyed Kadun-Fatima Mosque in Mostar, bear resemblance to Romanesque bell towers (Fisković 1973: 164).



Fig. 1. Minaret in Bileća, 16th century. Source: <https://vakuf.ba/bs>

The clock towers, central to this study, also share evident similarities with Romanesque bell towers. To explore this subject, first, we will briefly discuss the origins and the story behind clock towers, which were for the first time built in the Balkan region.

Ottoman clock towers: from Balkans to Turkey

Time measurement has roots dating back to 3000-2000 BCE in Mesopotamia and Egypt, where methods such as using sunlight, sand, water, or oil were employed to gauge time (Acun 2011: 3). The initial attempts at measuring time through mechanical means, laying the groundwork for the production of mechanical clocks in Europe, were carried out by monks. These early mechanisms would generate sounds, such as bell strikes, at specific intervals, serving as rudimentary alarm clocks, devoid of hands or dials. The first public clocks appeared in the 13th century (Borstin 1983: 39-42). Subsequently, larger clockwork mechanisms were developed for installation on towers near churches, designed to strike bells automatically.

In contrast to other Western advancements that the Ottoman Empire typically adopted, clock towers emerged in the Ottoman Empire around 200 years later than in Europe. When the traveller Hans Dernschwam visited the Ottoman Empire between 1533 and 1555, he noted the absence of clockwork mechanisms. Similarly, Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq, an ambassador to Ferdinand I, visited Sultan Suleiman in 1560 and was surprised not to encounter any towers with public clocks, despite their widespread presence in Europe (Acun 2011: 2-35).

It is important to emphasize the fact that the Ottoman clock towers were for the first time constructed in the Balkan region during the Ottoman rule⁵, for the first time in the 16th century. Later, due to their utilitarian value, they spread to the areas of present-day Turkey, but only in the 18th and 19th centuries. According to travel writers, sultans developed a political-religious conspiracy based on the function and sound of bells in the Christian world. The Ottomans often used resistance to Western technical innovations as a cover, citing that such novelties were incompatible with the Islamic holy book (Lyberatos 2012: 231-254). Sultans adhered to the Quran, which strictly forbids the introduction of novelties, considering them unnecessary since the Quran contains all necessary religious information (‘Id El-Hilali 2014: 232-234). Consequently, the probable reason for the absence of clock towers in other Ottoman territories until the 18th century is likely due to the sultan’s belief that they represented a form of promotion of other religious principles incompatible with Islamic be-

5. In 1571, Karl Rym mentioned a clock tower in Osijek (Croatia), which could then be seen as the earliest clock tower in the Ottoman Empire (Karač and Žunić 2018: 77). Another clock tower was constructed in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) in 1588 (Acun 2011: 4).

liefs, defining them as novelties, which is not permitted according to the Islamic holy book.

The significant attention given to time measurement in Islamic society is linked to the performance of the five daily prayers. Therefore, before clock towers, sundials were used, divided into twelve-hour segments. The day started with the nighttime segment, lasting twelve hours until sunrise, marking the beginning of the daytime segment. The clock would then be adjusted to display the twelve-hour time again. The task of operating, adjusting, and caring for the clock and clock towers was carried out by *muwaqqits* – experts in time measurement who tracked the movement of planets and astronomical and astrological aspects. *Dar al-Muwaqqit*, institutions for time measurement, were located within mosques (Matić 2017: 61). When clock towers became integrated into society and daily life, the sound of the clock tower informed the faithful about prayer times. It can be said that, due to their initially utilitarian and later religious significance, clock towers had a positive impact on society. In this way, they transcended the sultan's doubts, and over time, their construction began to spread throughout the entire empire.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are a total of nineteen clock towers. These Ottoman structures have a square floor plan, are built from stone, and feature a four-sided roof. They are devoid of extensive decoration and are all constructed according to the same architectural principles, with the only difference being in dimensions and the location where they were built. The base sides range from 3.07 to 4 meters, while the height can vary from 10 to 28 meters, with wall thickness ranging from 65 to 100 centimetres. Unlike in Western European countries, where the bell towers were integrated in the church, or located next to it, the Ottoman clock towers were often separate constructions that were placed in marketplaces, fortresses, or mosques, and mostly in elevated positions, enhancing their visibility (Kreševljaković 1957: 18).

While it would exceed the length of this paper to write about all nineteen clock towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (and this is not the purpose of our paper), in the following paragraphs we will examine shortly three examples of clock towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to detail their characteristics to the readers.

A prime example of studying Ottoman clock towers in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina is the clock tower located in the city of Mostar [Fig. 2]. Built in 1636, it was established as an endowment by Fatima-kadun Šarić. The renowned travel writer Evlija Čelebija stated that the sound of this clock tower could be heard up to three hours away from Mostar. The floor plan of this clock tower is square, with each side of the tower measuring 3.45 meters, and the height reaching 15 meters (Kreševljaković 1975: 24). It is constructed of irregular stone ashlar and is covered with a four-sided pyramidal roof. The door of the clock tower is made of wood and faces southward. A clock is situated on the western facade. Above the clock, there is a cornice, and on each facade above it, there is a single monofora. Below the roof, there is another cornice, and on the roof's edges, there are acroteria.



Fig. 2. The clock tower in Mostar. Provided by Dora Sesar.

While clock towers were most commonly built in the centre of the cities, there are a few examples in Bosnia and Herzegovina where they were built alongside fortresses. That is the case of the Počitelj clock tower, whose construction was ordered by Ibrahim Ćuprilić in 1664 [Fig. 3]. In addition to the clock tower, he also had a madrasa, han, and hamam constructed. The floor plan of the clock tower is square-shaped, with sides measuring 3.22 x 3.26 meters, and a height of around 16 meters (Kreševljaković 1975: 14). In this example, we can see a pronounced Mediterranean-Dalmatian influence. Architecturally, it resembles the Romanesque bell towers of Dalmatia. While the stone masonry is still irregular, in this example there are some processed pieces on the edges of the tower. The roof is again a four-sided pyramidal roof. The clock was located on the northeast side, while the other sides are devoid of any decorations or architectural solutions except for a part at the top where the walls are opened by a single monofora.



Fig. 3. The clock tower in Počitelj. Provided by Dora Sesar.

The clock tower in Nevesinje was built in the city centre, near the mosque, in 1664 [Fig. 4]. As is often the case, this clock tower is located near the mosque. According to the floor plan, it has a square base with sides measuring 3 meters and a height of 14 meters (Kreševljaković 1975: 31). In comparison to other clock towers mentioned, the Nevesinje clock tower is built of regularly shaped stone. Moreover, another difference is that it has a clock at the top on all four sides of the construction. Above the clocks, there is a cornice, above which there is one small monofora on each side. Beneath the simple food-sided roof, there is a row of small corbels, a decorative element also common on the Dalmatian Romanesque bell-towers, but this comparison of the architectural and decorative elements between the Romanesque bell-towers and the Ottoman clock towers will be a subject of the following chapter.



Fig. 4. The clock tower in Nevesinje.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sahat_kula_Nevesinje.jpg

Romanesque bell towers: inspiration for the Ottoman clock towers?

While Ottoman clock towers do generate certain interest in scientific literature, mostly in the sense of their purpose, symbolism, and political and ideological meaning, the similarity with Romanesque bell towers has not often been a subject of research. In the Balkan art history circles, this question was mostly only mentioned in a few sentences. However, the subject seems worth of attention.

We know that the Romanesque was the first (more or less) unified style in Christian Europe, which emerged amidst the great economic, political, demographic, and social changes and improvements of the 11th century. In this period, architecture was dominant, especially in the realm of the sacred, while painting and sculpture were subordinated to it. Speaking of sacred buildings, they all had a bell tower, a crucial element of Romanesque architecture, with various typologies, like freestanding bell towers, bell towers integrated into the perimeter of the church, or axial bell towers. The towers adjacent to the church were monumental and they could be seen from different points of the city or the village. They all had a few purposes. First of all, in the 11th century with the set of the reforms in the church, the tall bell tower became a symbol of a renovated, powerful church. Moreover, in these medieval times, the bell towers served a defensive function as well; from their height, it was possible to control the territory and see the enemies approaching (Charles y Carl 2008, 17). Of course, with their bells, they also served to measure time and call for prayer. Last but not least, they had an aesthetic role in shaping the Romanesque cities.

As we already established in the preceding paragraphs, the connection between Dalmatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina existed and was common from the Roman times, throughout the whole Middle Ages, and it persisted during the Ottoman period. Knowing that the Bosnian-Herzegovinian craftsmen went to study at Dalmatian workshops and that the Dalmatian masters often came to work together with the local architects in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian cities makes us think that it is very possible that these similarities between Romanesque bell towers and Ottoman clock towers are not fortuitous, just as in the case of the rest of architecture, like mosques and minarets that we mentioned previously.

While, of course, all bell towers adjacent to churches share similarities with clock towers to some extent in the sense of their floor plan, height, and functions such as measuring time and calling for prayer, it is the Dalmatian early Romanesque bell towers that exhibit the most similar characteristics [Fig. 5, Fig. 6]. Unlike the towers of the later styles, even the late-Romanesque, which tend to be significantly more monumental, with plenty of decoration, openings, etc., the early Romanesque Dalmatian bell towers are simple tall structures, with a square floor plan. They are built of stone, with irregular or regular stone ashlars. The decoration is scarce; it is mostly present in architectural decorative elements such as lesenes, arches, or corbels. The walls are opened by simple windows, mostly just beneath the pyramidal roof, and these tend to be simple monoforas or biforas. With this short description of the early Romanesque Dalmatian towers, we can already see that they share a lot of similarities with the later Ottoman clock towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Fig. 5. The bell tower of the church of Our Lady of the Belfry in Split.
Provided by Dora Sesar.



Fig. 6.
St. John the Baptist (St. Nediljica)
in Zadar, 11th century.
According to Smirich and Errard.

What is a pity is the fact that the early Romanesque architecture in Dalmatia is not very well conserved, such as in some other European areas, as is the case in Catalonia. It would be very interesting to know more examples of these towers to delve deeper into this examination, but unfortunately, a lot of these constructions are not conserved until today. This is particularly the case for the Dubrovnik region. As mentioned earlier, we know that the majority of coastal craftsmen who arrived in the Ottoman territory were from Dubrovnik. Unfortunately, numerous demolitions of Dubrovnik's buildings during various wars did not contribute to the preservation of Romanesque monuments (Beritić 1956: 61). Particularly significant was the Dubrovnik Great Earthquake, a powerful earthquake that struck Dubrovnik on April 6, 1667. This devastating earthquake in a few minutes destroyed the splendid and wealthy city in its full swing (Novak 1970: 12). Therefore, the Romanesque part of the Dubrovnik heritage is almost unknown to us today. However, the examples of the bell towers conserved in the rest of the Dalmatian cities, serve us to take a closer look at the comparison between these Christian bell towers and Islamic clock towers.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the question we aimed to address in this article was whether it is possible that the Romanesque bell towers influenced the construction of the Ottoman clock towers. To conclude this query, it seems best to compare these architectural forms across several dimensions: floor plan, height, decoration, windows, location, and utility.

Both Romanesque bell towers and Ottoman clock towers feature rectangular floor plans and significant heights, often covered with pyramidal roofs. While decorative elements are generally sparse in both cases, Romanesque towers tend to incorporate features such as blind arches, lesenes, or corbels, whereas Ottoman clock towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina typically maintain a minimalist aesthetic. However, there are exceptions; for instance, the clock tower in Nevesinje has small corbels beneath the roof, very similar to those often found in Romanesque bell towers, such as in the one of the church of Our Lady of the Belfry in Split.

Regarding window design, Romanesque towers commonly display monoforas, biforas, or triforas, while Ottoman clock towers predominantly feature monoforas. In Romanesque bell towers it is common to encounter several rows of openings; on the other hand, in Ottoman clock towers, they are only beneath the roof.

Both types of towers are often strategically located near places of worship, highlighting their cultural significance within their respective communities. Romanesque towers and their associated churches are typically situated in city or village centers, or sometimes adjacent to fortifications. The same can be said for clock towers. Functionally, these structures serve similar purposes, acting

as timekeeping devices, call-to-prayer platforms, and defensive installations, while also enhancing the visual appeal of their urban or rural surroundings.

While the Romanesque bell towers seem to have influenced the most the Ottoman clock towers, it has to be said that there are also other Dalmatian influences from later styles, such as the Gothic, found in the elements like pointed windows present in Mostar and Počitelj clocktower, or acroteria in the Mostar clock tower.

To our belief, it seems very plausible that when the Ottomans conquered these lands, and encountered the Christian religion and culture, they got to see the bell towers of the churches, which seemed useful in the sense of marking the time for the prayers. Moreover, it is known that builders from Dalmatia had direct connections with Bosnian-Herzegovinian cities. These builders likely taught local craftsmen in Bosnia and Herzegovina, passing on their knowledge, and even collaborated with them in the building of the new architecture. As already mentioned, the analogy between Romanesque bell towers and clock towers is seldom discussed in scientific circles; this issue has only been briefly addressed in papers. By juxtaposing these two architectural structures, we not only deepen our understanding of historical and artistic realities but also consider cultural and social aspects. It is known that Dalmatian masters played a role in the life of Ottoman Bosnia and Herzegovina, bringing with them their knowledge and experience, particularly the unmistakable Mediterranean style of construction evident in the clock towers of Herzegovina.

It is noteworthy that clock towers are primarily found in larger cities, linking the coastal region with the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The historical communication link between the Eastern Adriatic and the interior of Bosnia and Herzegovina has always been recognized, and the construction of clock towers in such bustling locations may further indicate the connection between these regions. While the Romanesque style had become outdated in other European regions by the time clock towers were being built in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it somehow resurfaced in these structures, blending with the local tradition and Ottoman architectural features.

Despite their differences, coastal craftsmen who migrated to Ottoman territories in present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina managed to create harmonious works, collaborating with Ottoman and local Bosnian-Herzegovinian builders. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a fusion of East and West, an intersection of Islamic or oriental and Christian Mediterranean architecture. Despite wars and conflicts, these seemingly disparate cultures converge in art and architecture to establish a harmonious and unique tradition of local heritage.

While this article gives an overview of the subject, it would be interesting to see in future more research on the topic of the Ottoman clock towers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that this is a vast subject, not yet fully discovered and that with work on the archival records, and study of particular clock towers over the country, important and interesting information can be collected about their architecture, craftsmen, possible influences, connections, etc.

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